WHY ΒΊΟς?: ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOSPEL GENRE AND IMPLIED AUDIENCE

Justin Marc Smith

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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

ST MARY'S COLLEGE

Why Βίος?:

On the Relationship Between Gospel Genre and Implied Audience

A THESIS SUBMITTED BY

Justin Marc Smith

TO THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ST ANDREWS, SCOTLAND

January 31, 2010

Declarations

I, Justin Marc Smith, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September, 2005 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in April, 2006; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2005 and 2010.

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the gap in the scholarly record pertaining to the explicit relationship between gospel genre and implied audience. This thesis challenges the consensus that the canonical gospels were written to/for individual communities/churches and that these documents (gospels) address the specific historical/social circumstances of each community. It is argued in the thesis that the Evangelists chose the genre of biography because it was the genre that was best suited to present the words and deeds of Jesus to the largest possible audience. The central thesis is supported by four lines of evidence: two external and two internal (Chapters 3-6). Furthermore, the thesis is bolstered by a new typology for Greco-Roman biography that arranges the biographical examples within a relational matrix.

Chapter 2 is integral to the main thesis of this dissertation in that it proposes nuanced language capable of being applied to specific kinds of biographies with the emphasis on the relationship to implied audience. Chapter 2 sets the boundaries of the discussion of genre as a vital factor in potentially determining audience as well as raising the important consideration that genres are representative of authorial choice and intent.

Chapters 3 and 4 take up the discussion of the two lines of external evidence pertinent to placing the Gospels within the relational typology proposed in chapter 2. Chapter 3 supports the main argument of the thesis in that it demonstrates that the earliest Christian interpreters of the Gospels did not understand them to be sectarian documents written specifically to and/or for specific sectarian Christian communities. The second line of external evidence, taken up in chapter 4, deals with the wider context of Jesus literature in the second/third century. We argue that these texts, if any of them are indeed biographies, were part of the wider Christian practice of writing and disseminating literary presentations of Jesus and Jesus traditions.

Chapters 5 and 6 address the lines of internal evidence and chapter 5 deals specifically with the difficulty in reconstructing the various gospel communities that might lie behind the gospel texts. It is argued that the genre of biography does not allow us to reconstruct these communities with any detail. Finally, chapter 6 is concerned with the ‘all nations’ motif present in all four of the canonical gospels. The ‘all nations’ and ‘sending’ motifs in the Gospels suggest an evangelistic tone for the Gospels and further suggest an ideal secondary audience beyond those who could be identified as Christian.

Aknowledgements

The process of undertaking the writing of a PhD thesis (dissertation) is always an interesting one. While the end result is often viewed as the work of one person, the reality is that the process is often more collaborative than individual. To pretend that this work was completed purely of my own volition would do injustice to the process as a whole and would certainly ignore the varied and important contributions offered by many throughout the entire process.

I was privileged to work directly with a number of gifted and patient supervisors over the course of my study. Richard Bauckham, who originally accepted me as a student and whom I credit with bringing me to St. Andrews, has been instrumental in the crafting and refining of the thesis at every stage. It was after reading his introductory essay in *The Gospels for All Christians* that I began to entertain the formative thoughts that would become this thesis. It was Professor Bauckham that guided me in the direction of many of the innovations present in this thesis and I am forever indebted to him for his valuable insight and supervision. Upon Richard's retirement from St. Andrews I was fortunate to have Bruce Longenecker pilot me through a tumultuous and difficult year before turning me over to Kelly Iverson. I am grateful to Bruce for his encouragement and compassion during what was one of the most difficult periods of time. I cannot fully express how grateful I am to Kelly Iverson for his work and continued guidance not only on the thesis itself but through the examination process as well. I am fortunate enough to count Kelly as a trusted colleague and friend. Kelly helped usher me through the writing process and worked diligently and selflessly on the project. I am especially appreciative of the timely manner in which he was able to read and respond to various drafts of various chapters as we approached the deadline for submission. I will be forever beholden to Dr. Iverson.

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List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AH	Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*
AJP	*The American Journal of Philology*
AJT	*The American Journal of Theology*
Alcid. *Hom.*	Alicidamas, *On Homer*
AncW	*Ancient World*
Anon. *Vit. Aesop*	Anonymous, *Life of Aesop*
Anon. *Vit. Sec.*	Anonymous, *Life of Secundus the Silent Philosopher*
ANRW	*Aufsteig Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt*
AnSoc	*Ancient Society*
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
Arist. *Poet.*	Aristotle, *Poetics*
Arr. *Anab.*	Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*
AThR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BT	*The Bible Translator*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BTF	*Bangalore Theological Forum*
BTS	Biblisch-theologische Studien
CBET	*Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CCS	Concordia Commentary Series
CH	*Church History*
Cic. *Leg.*	Cicero, *De legibus*
Cic. *Orat*.	Cicero, *Orator ad M. Brutum*
CJ	*The Classical Journal*
ClAnt	*Classical Antiquity*
Comm John	Origen, *Commentary on John*
Comm Matt	Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*
CPh	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*The Classical Quarterly*
CR	*The Classical Review*
CritInq	*Critical Inquiry*

CSHJ	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
CurBS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
CurTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
CW	*The Classical World*
De Princip	Origen, *De Principiis*
Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.*	Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Immanent Philosophers*
EH	Eusebius*, Ecclesiastical History*
Epi. *Pan.*	Epipahnius, *Panarion*
Eunap. VS	Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*
EuroJTh	*European Journal of Theology*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
Exhort Mar	Origen, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FC	The Fathers of the Church
GE	*Gospel of the Ebionites*
GH	*Gospel of the Hebrews*
GN	*Gospel of the Nazoreans*
GOTR	*Greek Orthodox Theological Review*
GP	*Gospel of Peter*
GR	*Greece and Rome*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman & Byzantine Studies*
GT	*Gospel of Thomas*
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
Hom Matt	John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*
HTCNT	Herders Theological Commentary on the New Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HvTSt	*Hervormde Teologiese Studies*
Iambl. *VP*	Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*
IBS	*Irish Biblical Studies*
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
ILSSR	International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction
Isoc. *Evag*.	Isocrates, *Evagoras*
ISLL	Illinois Studies in Language and Literature
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBLMS	Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
JCPS	Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
Jer. *De vir. ill.*	Jerome, *De viris illustribus*
JGRChJ	*Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*
JHS	*The Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JRH	*Journal of Religious History*
JRS	*The Journal of Roman Studies*
JRT	*Journal of Religious Thought*

JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism: Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
Luc. *Alex*.	Lucian, *Alexander*
Luc. *Demon*.	Lucian, *Demonax*
Luc. *Hist. conscr.*	Lucian, *How to Write History*
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MBCBSup	Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca Classica Batavia Supplementum
MGWJ	*Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
MH	*Museum Helveticum*
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
Nep. *Att*.	Cornelius Nepos, *Atticus*
Nep. *Cato*	Cornelius Nepos, *Cato*
Nep. *Pelop.*	Cornelius Nepos, *Pelopidas*
Nep. *De vir. ill.*	Cornelius Nepos, *De viris illustribus*
NGS	New Gospel Studies
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
NTC	The New Testament in Context
NTM	New Testament Monographs
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents
NVBS	New Voices in Biblical Studies
Philo *Abr*.	Philo, *Abraham*
Philo *Mos*.	Philo, *Moses*
Philostr. *VA*	Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*
Philostr. *VS*	Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*
Pl. *Phdr.*	Plato, *Phaedrus*
Pl. *Rep*	Plato, *Republic*
Plin. (Y) *Ep*.	Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* (Letters)
Plut. *Alex*.	Plutarch, *Alexander*
Plut. *Crass.*	Plutarch, *Crassus*
Plut. *Artax*.	Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*
Plut. *Cor.*	Plutarch, *Coriolanus*
Plut. *Galb.*	Plutarch, *Galba*
Plut. *Nic*.	Plutarch, *Nicias*

Plut. *Oth.*	Plutarch, *Otho*
Plut. *Rom.*	Plutarch*, Romulus*
Plut. *Thes.*	Plutarch, *Theseus*
Plut. *Ti. Gracch.*	Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*
Plut. *Vit.*	Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*
PMAPA	Philological Monographs Published by the American Philological Association
Porph. *Plot.*	Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*
PRSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
PSTJ	*Perkins (School of Theology) Journal*
QJS	*Quarterly Journal of Speech*
RBén	*Revue Bénédictine*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RP	*The Review of Politics*
S.H.A. *Hist. August.*	Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *Historiae Augustae*
SAM	Studies in Ancient Medicine
Satyr. *Vit. Eur.*	Satyrus, *Life of Euripides*
SBL	The Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	The Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Language Symposium Series
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
ST	*Studia Theologica*
Suet. *Aug.*	Suetonius, *Divine Augustus*
Suet. *Calig.*	Suetonius, *Caligula*
Suet. *Claud.*	Suetonius, *Claudius*
Suet. *Dom.*	Suetonius, *Domitian*
Suet. *Iul.*	Suetonius, *Divine Julius*
Suet. *Ner.*	Suetonius, *Nero*
Suet. *Tib.*	Suetonius, *Tiberius*
Suet. *Tit.*	Suetonius, *Divine Titus*
Suet. *Vesp.*	Suetonius, *Divine Vespasian*
Suet. *Vit. Caes.*	Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*
SVTP	Studia In Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
Tac. *Agr.*	Tacitus, *Agricola*
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*
TBT	*The Bible Today*
TheolEv	*Theologica Evangelica*
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TS	*Theological Studies*
USQR	*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*

VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WTJ	*The Westminster Theological Journal*
WUNT	Wissenschafliche Untersuchungen zum Nuen Testament
Xen. *Ages.*	Xenophon, *Agesilaus*
Xen. *An.*	Xenophon, *Anabasis*
Xen. *Eq.*	Xenophon, *On the Art of Horsmanship*
Xen. *Lac*.	Xenophon, *The Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*
Xen. *Mem*.	Xenophon, *Memorabilia*
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*

Chapter 1. Why Βίος? Assessing the Relationships Between Gospel Genre and Audience

Introduction: Bauckham's *The Gospel for All Christians*

Richard Bauckham's essay, 'For Whom Were Gospels Written?' serves as the starting point for this thesis, inasmuch as Bauckham's inquiry raises fundamental questions about the nature and relationship of gospel genre and audiences.[1] The purpose of Bauckham's essay is to challenge the unquestioned assumption in biblical scholarship that the Gospels were each written to a specific gospel community and that each gospel mirrored the social and historical circumstances of those communities. The consensus has been, in effect, that the Gospels provide the opportunity to mirror-read the social and historical circumstances embedded in each gospel in order to reconstruct the community (or communities) that lay behind each individual gospel. These communities and the social and historical influences on them could then be used as an interpretative tool to exegete the text. Bauckham's contention is that 1) this presupposition, namely the writing of gospels to individual communities, has gone virtually unquestioned by the academy and; 2) the prevailing evidence from the New Testament texts themselves seems to indicate that the communities of the early Christian movement were in constant contact. As such the constant movement of Christians and the transmissions of texts and traditions among various churches indicate that it is more likely that the Gospels were written with a broader Christian audience in mind as opposed to a specific church or group of like-minded churches.

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[1] Richard J. Bauckham, 'For Whom Were Gospels Written? in Richard J. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 9-48.

In the course of Bauckham's discussion he raised the issue of the connection between gospel genre and the potential effect on implied audiences. Bauckham writes:

> Of course, the genre of the Gospels is debated, but recent discussion has very much strengthened the case – in fact all but conclusively established the case – that contemporaries would have recognized them as a special category of the Graeco-Roman *bios* (which we can translate "biography" provided we understand the term in the sense of ancient, not modern biography). Although the implied readership of the ancient biography is a topic which might repay investigation, it seems unlikely that anyone would expect a *bios* to address the very specific circumstances of a small group of people. A *bios* certainly aimed at relevance to its readers. Its subject could be highly propagandist literature, recommending a political, philosophical, or religious point of view. But its relevance would be pitched in relatively broad terms for any competent reader.[2]

Here Bauckham expresses two of the issues central to this thesis. 1) Bauckham underscores the importance of the relationship between genres and authorial and audience expectations. Authors write within certain genres because those genres are best suited for presenting the message/material that the author is attempting to convey. Genres then form a sort of contract that guides the expectations of the reader/hearer. The reader/hearer understands how to interpret the information offered by the author because the reader/hearer understands that the genre acts as an interpretative guide. 2) Bauckham hints at the specific connection between biography and gospel (as a literary category), specifically that evidence from the genre of Greco-Roman biography suggests that biographies were not written for small groups. If the Gospels are in fact biographies then two proposals are possible. Either the Gospels followed the basic generic pattern of biography and were written for a wide potential audience or the Gospels were used in an innovative way, breaking with the generic pattern (and expectation) and were written for minute and definite (sectarian) audiences. Furthermore, Bauckham broadens the question posed by Stanton in the sense that he questions why a person would write at all, whereas

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[2] Bauckham, 'For Whom?' p. 28.

Stanton questioned whether or not an evangelist would write a narrative to such a small group of people.[3] Stanton notices that the genre of the Gospels themselves provide some significant challenges in reconstructing the *Sitz im Leben* associated with them.[4] The primary focus of the Gospels and by extension, the primary focus of the evangelists was the person and work of Jesus as told in the narrative of his words and deeds. Both Bauckham and Stanton point to the central question of this thesis: Why did the evangelists choose to use βίος as the genre through which to communicate the Jesus traditions? Despite Bauckham's innovative work, one of the questions that he did not address, and has not adequately been explored, is the precise nature of the relationship between gospel genre and implied/intended audiences.[5] This thesis seeks to address that specific issue and further it seeks to serve as a corrective to the general lack of in-depth engagement of this generic relationship in current gospels scholarship.

Richard Burridge's 'About People, By People, for People: Gospel Genre and Audiences'

To date, the only significant treatment pertaining to the relationship between gospel genre and audience is Richard Burridge's 'About People, By People, For People: Gospel Genre and Audiences.'[6] Burridge begins his discussion by drawing out how 'the issues of genre, subject, and audience are bound up with the question of genre.'[7] Genre serves as the literary bond that holds subjects and audiences in relationship. We would add that genre is the literary bond that holds authors, subjects and audiences together in relationship, as the author chooses the genre that will best communicate the subject to the audience. Here Burridge points out that biographies were written by individuals and not by schools or committees.[8] Burridge states, 'the biographical genre for the Gospels argues against too much community emphasis; the evangelists' selection of previous material and their treatment of their sources, plus their own special material, all imply the creative personality of an author.'[9] This cannot be understated. The evangelists themselves demonstrate a significant sensitivity not only to the collection and codification of Jesus traditions, but also to the act of placing those traditions in a coherent theological and narrative structure. Certainly their narrative presentations of Jesus are reflective of their own theological viewpoint, and it is reasonable to conclude that these viewpoints were shared by others. However, the literary sophistication of the Gospels indicates that they were crafted by individuals (and not schools or groups specifically) with the aim of saying something about the person Jesus. Further, he notes that since the Gospels are examples of Greco-Roman biography, the subject is the person of Jesus and not the hypothetical communities that may or may not have existed behind the separate gospels.[10] Again, the importance here is simply this: the Gospels are ultimately about Jesus and are representative of an effort on the part of each of the evangelists to present a specific (and often different) portrayal of the person Jesus. They are not specifically records of the life and experiences of various and individual Christian communities in the first century Mediterranean world. On the contrary, they are narratives about the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth. Finally, and most importantly for the present study, Burridge argues that biographies would have been written to suitably large audience groups.[11] Burridge describes these audience groups as a 'target audience' or a 'market niche.'[12] In this way Burridge significantly nuances the language employed by Bauckham to describe gospel audiences. Bauckham's language of 'specific' and 'indefinite' as it relates to audience groups is perhaps too vague to adequately address the complexities of audience groups in the ancient Mediterranean.[13] Here Burridge offers categories that recognize that authors could 'market' their biographies to groups, but that these groups would be considerably large in size and could be geographically dispersed. Even as important and thorough as Burridge's treatment of the subject has been, there are still a number of questions left to be answered in regard to the genre of the Gospels and their implied audiences and a number of these questions have been raised since the publication of Burridge's important and insightful essay.

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[3] Graham N. Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' in Jack D. Kingsbury, ed., *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1997), pp. 49-64; esp. pp. 51 & 58.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 51.

[5] Here we are using 'implied audience' to mean the audience that we are able to glean from the text as opposed to the 'intended audience' which is the audience that an author indicates directly.

[6] Richard A. Burridge, 'About People, By People, For People: Gospel Genre and Audiences' in Richard J. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 113-46. Burridge's essay entitled 'Who Writes, Why, and For Whom?' in Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner, eds., *The Written Gospel*, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 99-115, also adds significantly to the discussion of gospel genre and audience.

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[7] *Ibid*., p. 119.
[8] *Ibid*., pp. 125-30.
[9] *Ibid*., p. 126.
[10] *Ibid*., pp. 120-5.

Responses to *The Gospels for All Christians*

While the responses to Bauckham's central thesis has been mixed, in general his thesis has been received well.[14] A number of important and critical responses have been offered to Bauckham's thesis.[15] The purpose here is not to discuss all of the reservations raised by these scholars; rather, the purpose is to address the criticisms of Esler and Sim as they relate to the broader hypothesis that the Gospels are examples of Greco-Roman biography. [16] The criticisms of Mitchell and Marcus will be addressed in subsequent chapters. Admittedly, we presuppose that the Gospels are indeed examples of βίοι/*vitae* as Burridge has convincingly argued elsewhere.[17]

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[11] *Ibid*., pp. 130-44.

[12] *Ibid*., p. 143.

[13] Richard J. Bauckham, 'Introduction to *The Gospels for All Christians*,' in Richard J. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 1-7; p. 1.

[14] See Michael F. Bird, 'Bauckham's *The Gospel For All Christians* Revisited,' *EuroJTh 15*.1 (2006), pp. 5-13; and Edward W. Klink III, 'The Gospel Community Debate: The State of the Question,' *CBR* 3.1 (2004), pp. 60-85 for some discussion of the response the Bauckham's thesis.

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[15] Philip F. Esler, 'Community and Gospel in Early Christianity: A Response to Richard Bauckham's *Gospels for All Christians*,' *SJT* 51.3 (1998), pp. 235-48; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27, (New York: Doubleday, 2000), pp. 25-8; David C. Sim, 'The Gospels for All Christians? A Response to Richard Bauckham,' *JSNT* 84 (2001), pp. 3-27; Wendy Sproston North, '*John* for *Readers* of *Mark*? A Response to Richard Bauckham's Proposal,' *JSNT* 25.4 (2003), pp. 449-68; and Margaret M. Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim that 'The Gospels Were Written for All Christians,'' *NTS* 51.1 (2005), pp. 36-79.

[16] We are also not attempting to assess each and every contribution to *The Gospels for All Christians*. While not discussed at length in the thesis the contribution by Loveday Alexander on book production and portability and the contribution by Michael B. Thompson on travel and communication between churches in early Christianity further strengthens the general thesis that the gospels were produced with wide circulation in mind. The portability of codices over and against that of scrolls may have helped in the circulation of texts and the general ability to travel with some measure of certainty also points to wider circulation as a legitimate expectation on the part of Christian authors. See. Michael B. Thompson, 'The Holy internet: Communication Between Churches in the First Christian Generation,' in Richard J. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 49-70; and Loveday Alexander, 'Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels,' in Richard J. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 71-112.

[17] Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004). Some discussion of the relationship between the Synoptic Problem and the current thesis as it relates to the genre and purpose of the gospels will be of some use here. Of interest is the essential question of literary interdependence in general as it relates to the Synoptic Gospels. Stein has identified four criteria for establishing literary interdependence; 1) 'agreement in wording;' 2) 'agreement in order;' 3) 'agreement in parenthetical material;' and 4) the references to written sources in the preface to Luke (1.1-4) (Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction*, [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987], pp. 29-43). Agreement in wording can be seen both in terms of verbatim agreement between parallel passages in Matthew, Mark and Luke (ex. Mt 19.13-15/Mk 10.13-16/Lk 18.15-17 with verbatim agreement at Mk 10.14 and Lk 18.16 (ἄφετε τὰ παιδία ἔρχεσθαι πρός με/'let the children come to me') and significant verbal agreement with Mt 19.14 (ἄφετε τὰ παιδία καὶ μὴ κωλύετε αὐτὰ ἐλθεῖν πρός με/'permit the children to come to me and do not hinder them'). The simple phrase ἄφετε τὰ παιδία ('let/permit the children') is found verbatim in the parallel verses in all three Synoptics. Furthermore, there is direct verbatim agreement between Mk 13.15 and Lk 18.17 (ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὃς ἂν μὴ δέξηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς παιδίον, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν/'truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child, will not enter it.' While a number of possible explanations for verbatim and/or close verbal agreements between the Synoptics are possible the most reasonable explanation is the use of common material and/or a common source (either written or oral). On the topic of agreement in terms of the ordering of the material in the Synoptics, Stein presents compelling evidence to suggest that on the whole the Synoptics order the material in a similar way with the ordering generally following that of Mark (Stein, *The Synoptic Problem*, pp. 34-7). This ordering can be seen especially well in the following

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sections: Mt 8.14-10.4/Mk 1.21-3.19/Lk 4.31-6.16; Mt 16.13-20.34/Mk 8.27-10.52/Lk 9.18-18.43; and Mt 12.46-13.58/Mk 3.31-6.6a/Lk 8.19-8.56. Stein notices that some of the material in the Synoptics is organized chronologically while other material is organized topically (Mk 1.23-2.12 (healing miracles); and Mk 2.13-3.6 (controversy episodes) (Stein, *The Synoptic Problem*, pp. 36-7). This fits within the broad pattern of Greco-Roman biography where the material would be organized chronologically, topically or both (see Xen. *Ages*. as an example of both chronological and topical ordering within the same biography). The existence of common parenthetical material at Mt 24.15/Mk 13.14 (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω/’let the reader understand’); Mt 9.6/Mk 2.10/Lk 5.24; Mk 5.8/Lk 8.29; and Mt 27.18/Mk 15.10 further points to literary interdependence. It is far more likely that these instances of literary similarity are the result of the use of a common source than the result of three different authors opting independently to include the same or similar editorial comments in the same places in the narrative (Stein, *The Synoptic Problem*, p. 37). The inclusion of the following statement at the outset of Luke’s gospel is telling: ʼΕπειδήπερ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων́ 2 καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγού 3 ἔδοξε κἀμοὶ παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαί κράτιστε Θεόφιλέ 4 ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαǹ (Lk 1.1-4) (‘Since many have endeavored to compile an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and servants of the word, and I decided after carefully investigating everything from the beginning to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you might know the truth concerning the things which you have been taught.’). For Stein, the implication is that Luke has gathered and used written sources as a means of producing his own account (Stein, *The Synoptic Problem*, p. 42). However, there is nothing in the preface to suggest that Luke is referring explicitly to written accounts and it may be the case that he is referring to any number of accounts (orderly or otherwise) that were either written or oral. As Alexander states, ‘he says merely that they had tried to “put together an account” – a splendidly ambiguous phrase which could be interpreted in a number of historically plausible ways’ (Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, [SNTSMA 78, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], p. 115). Both Stein and Alexander are correct: Stein is correct in the sense that the preface to Luke indicates that Jesus traditions were in circulation and were being compiled by the time of his writing and Alexander is correct to point out that Luke does not directly point to any one written document as his source material. However, the overwhelming textual evidence points to Luke having used some form of Mark’s gospel to craft his own narrative presentation of the person and work of Jesus. While it is difficult to determine the precise direction of the literary interdependence a number of factors point toward Markan priority. 1) As Dunn points out ‘there is hardly anything distinctive in Mark which is not also present in Matthew’ (James D. G. Dunn, *Christianity In The Making, Vol. 1: Jesus Remembered*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], p. 144; see also B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, [London: Macmillian, 1924], pp. 195-6). 2) While it is possible that Mark represents an abbreviated or shortened version of Matthew (see Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity*, trans. John Bowden, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], pp. 8-13, esp. 10-13 for a discussion of the preference of ancient authors to abbreviate their sources) it seems unlikely that Mark, who presents ‘Jesus as teacher’, would edit out much of the significant teaching material found in Matthew (eg. Mt 5-7) (Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 145). 3) A number of significant differences between Matthew and Mark can be explained in terms of ‘Matthew’s improvement on Mark’s style or Matthew’s avoidance of dubious implications which could be drawn from Mark’s language (eg. Mt 13.58/Mk 6.5; and Mt 19.16-17/Mk 10.17-18) (Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 145). The relationships between the Synoptics and John are less clear. Dunn is correct to conclude that some of the material included at the beginning of John’s gospel (beginning of Jesus’ ministry) is material excluded by the other evangelists and the basic assertion that John included material excluded by the other evangelists was an idea shared in antiquity (*EH* 3.24.8) (Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 166). Dunn suggests that ‘the discourse material, the number of sayings embedded within the discourses, which have parallels in the Synoptics, is best explained by the fact that the Fourth Evangelist knew and used a Synoptic-like tradition. Indeed, again and again it looks as though the Johannine discourses are based on particular sayings of Jesus, similar to the Synoptic sayings in character. Moreover, the regular Johannine pattern of miracle (‘sign’) followed by discourse, and the ‘farewell discourses’ of John 14-17 strongly suggest that what we have in the Fourth Gospel is the Evangelist’s meditations on significant words and deeds of Jesus (Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, pp. 166-7). At the very

Philip Esler

Esler's critique of Bauckham, and by extension, Burridge, on the topic of gospels as biography, hinges on Bauckham's argument that 'biography is a genre unsuited to reflect community concerns.'[18] Esler sees the alterations made to Mark's text by Matthew (Mk 7.24-30; Mt 15.21-28) as indicative of the Matthean evangelist reflecting the concerns of his community over and against those of the Markan community. In Mark, Jesus is portrayed as being open, at least in part to Gentile inclusion in the community, whereas in Matthew it is unclear as to whether or not he is being portrayed

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least John was aware of Jesus traditions similar to those of the Synoptics, but John's adoption and adaptation of the biographical genre also suggests that he was familiar either with other biographical presentations of the person and work of Jesus (such as the Synoptics) or he was aware that biographical presentations of Jesus were being circulated, read and accepted by Christians. John's recognition of the biographical genre as an acceptable means for presenting the Jesus traditions known to him, points in the direction of John's awareness of the Synoptics if not having used them directly. The issue of interrelatedness (textual or otherwise) for the canonical gospels speaks to one of the wider implications of this thesis: namely, that however we understand the direction what emerges is the historical reality of circulated texts and traditions. For some discussion of the relationship between John and the Synoptics see D. Moody Smith, *John Among the Gospels: The Relationship in Twentieth-Century Research* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999); Richard J. Bauckham, 'John for Readers of Mark ' in Richard J. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 147-71; and North, 'J*ohn* for *Readers* of *Mark*?'. For further discussion of the Synoptic Problem see Henry J. Cadburry, 'Between Jesus and the Gospels,' *HTS* 16.1 (1923), pp. 81-92; B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, (London: Macmillian, 1924); Reginald H. Crompton, *The Synoptic Problem and a New Solution*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928); Maurice Goguel, 'Luke and Mark: With a Discussion of Streeter's Theory,' *HTS* 26.1 (1933), pp. 1-55; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, 'Memory and Manuscript: The Origins and Transmission of Gospel Tradition,' *TS* 23.3 (1962), pp. 442-57; William R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis*, (New York: Macmillian, 1964); 'Source Criticism: Some Comments on the Present Situation,' *USQR* 42.1-2 (1988), pp. 49-57; Christopher M. Tuckett, 'The Griesbach Hypothesis in the 19th Century,' *JSNT* 3 (1979), pp. 29-60; Gordon D. Fee, 'A Text-Critical Look at the Synoptic Problem,' *NovT* 22.1 (1980), pp. 12-28; Charles H. Dyer, 'Do the Synoptics Depend on Each Other?' *BSac* 138.551 (1981), pp. 230-45; Peter W. Agnew '*The "Two-Gospel" Hypothesis and a Biographical Genre for the Gospels*,' in William R. Farmer, ed., *New Synoptic Studies: The Cambridge Conference and Beyond*, (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983), pp. 481-99; Philip L. Shuler, '*Genre Criticism and the Synoptic Problem*,' in William R. Farmer, ed., *New Synoptic Studies: The Cambridge Conference and Beyond*, (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983), pp. 467-80; Willis Longstaff, Thomas Richmond, and Page A. Thomas, eds., *The Synoptic Problem: A Bibliography, 1716-1988*, 4 vols., (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988); Helmut H. Koester, 'From the Kerygma-Gospel to Written Gospels,' *NTS* 35.3 (1989), pp. 361-81; John Halverson, 'Oral and Written Gospel: A Critique of Werner Kelber,' *NTS* 40.2 (1994), pp. 180-95; Mark S. Goodacre, 'Beyond the Q Impasse Or Down a Blind Alley,' *JSNT* 76 (1999), p. 33-52; *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze*, (London: Continuum, 2001); John S. Kloppenborg, 'On Dispensing With Q? Goodacre on the Relation of Luke to Matthew, *NTS* 4.2 (2003), pp. 210-36; and Kelly R. Iverson 'Orality and the Gospels: A Survey of Recent Research,' *CBR* 8.1 (2009), pp. 71-106.

[18] Esler, 'Community and Gospel,' p. 243. See Richard J. Bauckham, 'Response to Philip Esler,' *SJT* 51.3 (1998), pp. 249-53.

as resistant to Gentile inclusion. According to Esler, the issue of Jewish-Gentile relations is in question, and Matthew reflects the situation current to his community, either as a confirmation of their actions or as a call to act differently.[19] Esler's strongest critique of Bauckham's position is the suggestion that Bauckham presents a false dichotomy of Gospel audiences as either being only specific localized communities or only for wide circulation to Christians in general.[20] However, Esler presents a third possible option. He writes,

> Yet Bauckham has failed to envisage a third hypothesis. This is that each evangelist primarily shaped his Gospel in accordance with the faith and understanding of his local community (a process rendered *prima facie* likely by the extent to which ancient Mediterranean persons were embedded in groups), but also contemplated the possibility that it would travel further afield, in which case he hoped that his version would compete with and even supplant the unsatisfactory Gospels of others.[21]

Esler's preference, it seems, would be for understanding of the Gospels as embedded in the social circumstance of specific Christian communities and that these communities (and possibly other like-minded communities) would be the audience for the Gospels.[22] So while Esler nuances Bauckham's presentation to a degree, he ultimately rejects the third option (both local and general Christian audiences) for the false dichotomy of either local or general Christian audiences. By default he accepts the very position he critiques as conflict amongst early Christian groups dominates his interpretation of the relevant texts. Ironically, as Esler acknowledges, even this conflict and the desire to propagate local ideas in geographically dispersed Christian communities would lead, potentially, to wide circulation of the Gospels[23] This would lead to a similar result as Bauckham's proposal, even if Bauckham and Esler offer different motives for the spread of the written gospel to various Christian communities.

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[19] *Ibid*.
[20] *Ibid*., p. 242; Bauckham, 'For Whom?' p. 11 & 43.
[21] *Ibid*.
[22] *Ibid*., pp. 242-4.
[23] *Ibid*., p. 243.

Esler's second criticism is that the evangelists were far removed from the social and educational levels of the biographers mentioned by Burridge. This assertion is based on Esler's preconceived notions about the social location of the evangelists and is not representative of the Gospels themselves.[24] Esler's argument seems to be based on an understanding of education and literacy in the ancient Mediterranean that presupposes that literacy and education were necessarily tied to social status. While it may be generally true that social status and education were related, the educational contexts of the Greco-Roman world are far too complex and varied to accept such an assumption unequivocally. There is a wealth of evidence from the ancient world to suggest that those of lower social classes could in fact be quite literate with varying levels of formal education depending on their occupations[25]. Alexander has argued convincingly from her analysis of the preface to Luke that, 'the preface does provide a link with Greek culture, but not with the high literary culture of the upper classes. Rather it reveals a connection with an 'alternative' culture, despised by its contemporaries and largely ignored by subsequent scholarship, a culture which consciously holds itself aloof from the prevailing passion for rhetoric, while admitting the usefulness of a limited number of rhetorical devices at certain formal points of composition.'[26] In this way literary output was not confined to the stark dichotomy of upper and lower class only. On the contrary, as Alexander has pointed out, there was a middle group or 'intermediate zone' consisting of artisans and tradespersons that were acquainted with a wide variety of literature and could create literature at a high level, if not at the same level as those of the more distinguished class.[27] Simply put, the fact that the evangelists are literate and capable of piecing together a number of literary and oral sources into a clear and coherent narrative

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[24] *Ibid*., p. 244.

[25] This would be true both of slaves and freedmen. Derrenbacker has argued the following, '…literacy could be directly connected to the levels and extent of education. While both elementary and secondary education was typically reserved for upper class males, so too was a person's ability to read and write. Generally, women were not part of the educational process, including those attached to upper class households. Since education could often take place in the public sphere, a realm reserved exclusively for the males of antiquity, females were usually consigned to the private sphere of the household, and therefore outside of the public sphere of education. There were, of course, many exceptions to this general trend, the most interesting of which is the training of slaves for scribal activities.' Robert A. Derrenbacker, Jr., 'Writing, Books and Readers in the Ancient World,' in M. Tacke, ed., *Summary of Proceedings: Fifty-second Annual Conference of the American Theological Library Association*, (Evanston, IL: American Theological Library Association, 1998), pp. 205-29; p. 208. See also Derrenbacker, *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), pp. 25-26. The general pattern was for the wealthy to have access to advanced literary education whereas those of the lower classes would only have access to such an education if it was integral to a trade (Derrenbacker, 'Writing, Books and Readers,' p. 208). The employment of professional scribes and grammarians would not be uncommon in the public realm as well as the private. Pliny the Younger illustrates the varied social contexts for literary output in discussing his uncle, Pliny the Elder, in his letter to Baebius Macer. According to the younger Pliny, the elder Pliny would have books read to him by a slave while he was relaxing, eating dinner, during his bath, while traveling and presumably while moving about through the city (Plin. (Y) *Ep*., 3.5. 10-16). This points to two important conclusions: 1) literary activity could potentially take place in any number of social contexts, from the public to the private and from the marketplace to the bath; and 2) one need not be of an advanced social class to be literate as evidenced by the reading of literature to Pliny the Elder by his

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slave/servant. As a result, we need not imagine the Evangelists as members of the social elite in order to envisage them as members of the literary elite. They could have been quite literate either as slaves or as freedmen who had been trained for a specific trade that required the reading and writing of texts. Furthermore as evidenced by the habits of Pliny the Elder (and the Apostle Paul) one could dictate complex thoughts which would be written down by scribes (see Plin. (Y) *Ep*., 3.5.15; Gal 6.11; and Phlm 1.19 with the implication being that Paul makes special notice of the times when he, and note a scribe, is writing). For some discussion of literacy across social levels and literacy in general in the ancient world see Elizabeth Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (London: Duckworth, 1985), pp. 233-84, especially pp. 244-48 ;William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 13-24. See also, Thomas E. Bommershine, 'Jesus of Nazareth and the Watershed of ancient Orality and Literacy,' *Semeia* 65, (1994), pp. 7-36; Ian M. Young, 'Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence - Part I,' *VT* 48.2 (1998), pp. 239-53; 'Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence - Part II,' VT 48.3 (1998), pp. 408-22; and Richard S. Hess, 'Writing About Writing: Abecedaries and Evidence for Literacy in Ancient Israel,' *VT* 56.3 (2006), pp. 342-46 for discussion of literacy in both the Greco-Roman and ancient Israelite contexts. For some discussion of Greco-Roman architecture as it relates household dynamics to the context in which reading and writing took place see David L. Balch, 'Rich Pompeiian Houses, Shops for Rent, and the Huge Apartment Building in Herculaneum As Typical Spaces for Pauline House Churches,' *JSNT* 27.2 (2004), pp. 27-46; and especially Michele George, 'Domestic Architecture and Household Relations: Pompeii and Roman Ephesus,' JSNT 27.1 (2004), pp. 7-25. Also see, Amy-Jill Levine, 'Gender, Judaism, and Literature: Unwelcome Guests in Household Configurations,' *BibInt* 11.2 (2002), pp. 239-46; Catherine Hezser, 'The Impact of Household Slaves On the Jewish Family in Roman Palestine,' *JSJ* 34.3 (2003), pp. 375-424; and Beryl Rawson, ''The Roman Family' In Recent Research: State of the Question,' *BibInt* 11.2 (2003), pp. 119-38 for some discussion on familial/domestic dynamics as it relates both to Christian worship and literacy.

[26] Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, p 183.

[27] *Ibid*., pp. 178-9; see pp. 168-86; and pp. 176-84.

indicates that they are closer in educational status to the Greco-Roman biographers than Esler would concede. The texts indicate that the evangelists were on par, in terms of the sophistication of their literary output, with many other biographers.

David C. Sim

Following Esler, Sim levels a similar criticism at Bauckham's thesis in general and Burridge's findings in particular.[28] Sim writes, 'Even if we grant that the Gospels belong in general terms to the genre of Graeco-Roman biography, there is little similarity between the Evangelists and the classical biographers.'[29] Similar to Esler, Sim understands the classical biographers to be members of the social elite whereas the evangelists were not.[30] On the surface this seems like a legitimate criticism. However, we know nothing of the social status of the evangelists. In fact we know little to nothing of the evangelists at all outside of the texts attributed to them. In this sense the texts themselves become the means through which we come to know anything about the evangelists. Again, we would suggest that the evangelists by virtue of the fact that they were creative literary figures, who produced significant literature, are closer to the educational milieu of the classical biographers than either Sim or Esler would grant. At best, their work is on par with the works of Nepos, and the anonymous authors of *Vit. Sec.* and *Vit. Aesop*, if not with Tacitus and Plutarch. Both Esler and Sim fail to recognize that the genre of biography encompasses a literary development of almost 800 years with the Gospels being four examples among many available to us.[31] Furthermore, Sim suggests that it is possible that the Gospels, in going against their generic type, were in fact written for smaller groups.[32] While this is possible, it remains to be proven. Finally, Sim seeks to compare the Gospels with Christian literature of the second and third centuries.[33] Here he compares the Gospels to other 'gospels' that are supposed to have had either local or sectarian audiences. This specific topic will be addressed in chapter 4, but at the outset it can be said that what Sim fails to do is to examine these examples critically. All literary creations that are given the title 'gospel' are not indicative of the same genre. In one sense we may think of all 'gospels' as examples of Jesus literature or literature that attempts to say something about Jesus. However, all gospels are not biographies and this is all the more true for the 'gospels' that are written after the canonical gospels. Greater care and detail is needed when comparing Jesus literature especially when these comparisons take us across genres. The criticisms of both Esler and Sim indicate that the questions surrounding gospel genre and its relationship to implied audiences are far from resolved. The expressed interest of this thesis is to continue the discussion further.

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[28] Macaskill has suggested that Sim's Matthean community reconstruction and his reading of the apocalyptic elements of Matthew are interrelated. Sim proposes a community for Matthew situated in Antioch sometime around 80 CE and this community is at odds to some degree with some form of formative Judaism (David C. Sim, *Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*, [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998], pp. 31-62; and pp. 109-64). However, as Macaskill points out, Sim's reading of the apocalyptic elements of Matthew as well as other apocalyptic texts 'flattens out…the diversity of worldviews and opinions reflected by the apocalyptic literature;' Grant Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, JSJSup 115, (Leiden, Brill: 2007), p. 248. Sim takes a similar approach to the issue of gospel genre by assuming all authors of biographies must be of the same social stratum. In this way he obscures the diversity present in Greco-Roman biographical literature which develops over an 800 year period. Sim has a vested interest in detracting from the possibility for wider intended circulation for the gospels as his reading of both Matthew and apocalyptic material are tied to his reconstruction of the Matthean community. See Macaskill *Revealed Wisdom*, pp. 246-8 for a further critique of Sim. Also, see David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, SNTSMS 88, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1996), pp. 14-5 for his discussion of Matthean community reconstruction.

[29] Sim, 'The Gospels for All Christians?' p. 18.

[30] *Ibid*.

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[31] Greco-Roman biographic literature may begin as early as Skylax's presentation of Heraclides of Mylasa in the 5th century BCE and it extends at least to Iambl. *VP* in the 4th century CE. See Klaus Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen Im Neuen Testament,' *ANRW* II.25.2 (1984), pp. 1031-1432. See Appendix 1.
[32] Sim, 'The Gospels for All Christians?' p. 18.
[33] *Ibid*., p. 19.

The Proposed Course of the Current Thesis

As previously mentioned the central question to this thesis is: Why did the evangelists choose to present the Jesus traditions to them in the generic form of βίος/*vita*? We would suggest that the evangelists chose the genre of biography because it was the genre that was best suited to present the words and deeds of Jesus to the largest possible audience. This potential audience would include both a primary (Christian) audience and a broad secondary audience including any who became interested in the person and work of Jesus. Tied to this main question are questions relating to the relationships between authors and their subjects and authors and their audiences. Genres ultimately become the literary (in cases of written material) means through which an author is able to present the subject to the audience. Chapter 2 explores the nature of genres in general as a means through which one addresses and interprets a text. It will be argued that genres are inherently flexible and there can be a significant variation in how material can be organized under generic patterns. This is not to say that genres are so flexible as to not give any meaningful information as to how a given text is to be read and understood. On the contrary genres form the contract (of sorts) which governs both how material is presented and how material is read/heard. Through this basic understanding of genre and the validity of genre criticism a specific sub-generic classification for biography will be suggested. The reason for presenting a new typology for biography is that the current typologies are reductionist and/or do not account for wider relational patterns in biographic literature. Simply, the current typologies for Greco-Roman biography give little to no indication to the relationship between authors and their subjects and the authors and their audiences. Since these relationships can be of vital importance to the interpretation of biographies in general, and the Gospels in particular, a typology that classifies these texts within a relational matrix will be of use. The chapter concludes with the aforementioned typology of: 1) **Contemporary-Open**; 2) **Contemporary-Focused**; 3) **Non-Contemporary-Open**; and 4) **Non-Contemporary-Focused** biographies.[34] The contemporary or non-contemporary nature of the biographies relates to the relationship between the author and the subject and the focused and open categories relate to the relationship between the author and the audience.[35] We would suggest that the Gospels are best understood as examples of contemporary-focused biographies, with the evangelists as contemporary to the subject Jesus, and the implied audience as focused (Christian), albeit quite large and diverse. In order to successfully place the Gospels within this category, we suggest four lines of criteria, two external and two internal. The individual lines of external and internal evidence form a movement with a temporal trajectory moving from the Ante-Nicene, Constantinian and Post-Constantinian periods (2nd-5th centuries CE [chapter 3]) through to the formative periods of the early Church (1st-2nd centuries CE [chapters 4-6]). The purpose of this material is to trace the development both of the gospel literature (canonical and non-canonical) as well as to trace the development of the traditions concerning the authorship and audiences of the Gospels. An emphasis is placed on the role that genre comparisons and genre criticism play in this process. The attribution of genre criticism throughout the thesis is one of the chief developments and innovations of the current project. As it will be argued in chapters 3 and 4 genre has generally not been considered of much importance in the discussions of the patristic material as it relates to gospel audiences nor has it been considered significant in the comparisons between the canonical and non-canonical gospels and their corresponding implied audiences. Genre establishes an important interpretative force and this force indicates and dictates how texts are to be (ideally) read and understood. When genre is left unconsidered there is the strong possibility that the texts in question will either be misinterpreted or that they will be interpreted with parameters that the genres (and the texts) themselves are incapable of supporting. This extends not only to the Gospels but to the non-canonical literature and the literature written about the Gospels and gospel audiences by the earliest Christian interpreters as well. Genre plays a part in the interpretative process related to the primary texts (canonical and non-canonical gospels) as well as the secondary texts (literature about the Gospels). The assessment of gospel audiences while intricately tied to the Gospels is not singularly tied to genre alone. Continued consideration of the traditions (however loosely associated) related to the Gospels is also profitable for the current discussion. In this way, tracing the traditions (at least in part) from the Post-Constantinian period back to the first century (chapters 3-6) and tracing the formation of the Gospels will aid in providing a wider literary context for the Gospels.

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[34] See Appendix 1.1 and Appendix 1.2.

[35] Focused biographies are representative of biographies that were written with a particular 'market niche' in view, but this 'niche' is not to be conceived of as indicating a group as small as a sect or specific community. An open biography is one where no specific 'market niche' can be determined from the text.

Chapter 3 takes up the first line of external evidence. Specifically, issues pertaining to how the gospel audiences were being read and understood by the earliest Christian interpreters will be explored. The gospel origin traditions, or the narratives about by whom, when and where the Gospels were written are of special importance. Mitchell has argued that the early church fathers understood there to be a dichotomy or tension between the particularity of the gospel origin traditions and the universal applicability of the Gospels for the life of the church universal.[36] We attempt to place the gospel origin traditions into the wider context of Greco-Roman biographical conventions and conclude that these traditions are similar to, but distinct from, the *vitae* of poets and philosophers. The gospel origin traditions are similar to the *vitae* of literary figures on the grounds the evangelists were also producers of literature. However, the biographies of poets and philosophers were derived from the works of the poets and philosophers themselves, and were intended to be read as prefaces to the literary works in question. On the contrary, the gospel origin traditions focused less on imparting informative and interesting biographical presentations of the evangelists than on establishing authority for the four gospels over and against all others. The gospel origin traditions were intended to establish authority for the four gospels by presenting them as coming from the pens of authoritative persons in authoritative places. In all instances the evangelists were placed in relationship with either the apostles or with Jesus directly. Ultimately, we argue that the gospel origin traditions did not produce a clear and coherent reading/interpretative strategy and that the true tension at play for early interpreters was between the four gospels and the one gospel of Jesus Christ and not the particularity and/or universality of the Gospels.

The second line of external evidence, advanced in chapter 4, deals with the general context of Jesus literature in the second century. The explosion of Jesus literature in the second century suggests that there was a profound interest in the person and work of Jesus as well as the various Jesus traditions. Often, the more sectarian ‘gospels’ are used to project a sectarian socio-historical context onto the canonical gospels. Two specific difficulties arise here. 1) Many of the examples used to indicate the sectarian nature of the canonical gospels are of a different genre than the canonical gospels. *Gospel of Thomas* is a collection of sayings and is not a biography. The so-called Jewish-Christian gospels are so fragmentary that their genres are uncertain. It is unclear as to the extent that these literary examples are indicative of the social contexts of the canonical gospels. 2) In the case of the Jewish-Christian gospels it is unclear as to whether or not they are indicative of sectarian Christianity. Their sectarian nature is dependent on the testimony of later Christian interpreters that often cast them in a pejorative light and their fragmentary nature makes it difficult to determine their sectarian nature with any certainty. Finally, all of the non-canonical gospels discussed in chapter 4 are situated within the wider context of circulated texts and traditions in the first and second centuries. Circulated texts and traditions were utilized in the production of non-canonical Jesus literature, and the finished texts were copied and circulated as well. We argue that these texts, if any of them are indeed biographies, were part of the wider Christian practice of writing and disseminating literary presentations of Jesus and Jesus traditions.

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[36] Mitchell, ‘Patristic Counter Evidence,’ p. 46.

Chapter 5 addresses the first line of internal evidence which specifically deals with the difficulties related to reconstructing the various communities that may lie behind the gospel texts. We argue that the genre of biography does not allow us to reconstruct these communities with any detail as the Gospels are not portraits of Christian communities but portraits of the person Jesus. We agree with the contention that each of the Gospels was produced in a specific socio-historical context; but those contexts cannot be gleaned with any specificity from the gospel texts. Furthermore, the Gospels were produced within the larger context of first century Christianity, and this diverse movement is reflected to a certain extent in each of the four gospels. The lack of a consensus within community reconstructions continues to suggest that the Gospels are not of a genre capable of providing the specificity necessary to present this diversity in great detail.

Finally, chapter 6 is concerned with the ‘all nations’ motif present in all four of the canonical gospels. The Gospels are once again placed into the greater context of Greco-Roman biography and specifically within the discussion of other contemporary biographies. We contend that most often, the authors of contemporary biographies demonstrated a particular personal relationship to their subjects. They were friends, students or relatives and as such they had a vested interest in preserving the memories of their subjects. We argue that the evangelists, as disciples/followers of Jesus, had a vested interest in keeping the memory of Jesus alive. Jesus is presented in the Gospels as one who was interested in and promoted the dissemination of his teachings to ‘all nations.’ Even if ‘all nations’ are seen as a secondary and ideal audience, it still remains that the evangelists hoped that their works would be copied and read widely, as other biographers did, but moreover, they wrote with that aim specifically in mind. Ultimately, we propose that the evangelists chose the genre of biography because it was the genre that was best suited to present the words and deeds of Jesus to the largest possible audience. The recognition of the genre of the Gospels as it relates to the implied audience should serve as a corrective to the current consensus and should continue to move us in the direction of reading the Gospels in light of what they are attempting to say about the subject, Jesus.

It has been recently suggested that the sort of generic analysis being offered here (specifically typographical analysis) is ‘a blunt tool for determining the exact nature of the audience assumed’ and that the current ‘genre based solutions’ are still ‘a limited tool.’[37] This criticism is based on the assertion that genre analysis as it relates to audience is somehow rooted in ‘an authorial intention.’[38] This is certainly true and unavoidable. The texts themselves are grounded in some sort of authorial intention. The specific challenge for the interpreters of the Gospels is that outside of a few specific comments made in the prefaces to Luke and Acts (see chapter 2) there is little in the Gospels to directly indicate the authorial intent of the evangelists.[39] As a result we are forced to look for statements within the Gospels that may point toward their intentions or we are forced to suggest something of their intention based on how the circumstances for the publication of the Gospels are understood or both. But in either case we are still relying on some sort of hermeneutical circle. In the first case our reading of specific passages informs our reading of the whole and our reading of the whole effects how certain passages are read and interpreted. In the second case the reconstructed historical circumstances interpretatively applied to the texts create the context in which the texts were created and this context becomes the means through which the text is interpreted. However, the text itself is the chief means through which the context is reconstructed. In this way the text is used to interpret itself. At nearly every point when considering the reasons for the writing of the Gospels and to/for whom the Gospels were written we are forced to deal with 'the invisible intention of the evangelists.'[40] The current thesis suggests that the choosing, accepting and adaptation of genres by authors in general and the evangelists in particular gives an indication of authorial intent, as well as the implied readership of the Gospels.

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[37] Edward W. Klink III, ‘Conclusion: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity,’ in Edward W. Klink, III, ed., *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*, LNTS 353, (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), pp. 153-66; pp. 156 & 158.

[38] *Ibid*., p. 158.

[39] The author of John gives some indication as to one of the purposes for the gospel. He writes, ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ (‘But these things have been written so that you (pl.) might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you (pl.) might have life in His name [Jn 20.31]’). Statements related to the purpose of Luke’s gospel will be discussed in chapter 2.

The evangelists either chose or accepted the biographical genre as the means through which to disseminate the traditions about Jesus that were available to them. These choices could be either conscious or unconscious.[41] We would suggest that it might be more difficult to argue for Mark's adoption of the biographical genre as being one of conscious choice, but the subsequent adoption of the form by Matthew, Luke and John and the break with the generic pattern by the author/compiler of *Gospel of Thomas*, as well as the authors of many of the other non-canonical gospels, points to active choices as to how the Jesus traditions would be and could be presented in literary form. The typology presented here attempts to take into account the sorts of relationships that emerge from the biographical record as to the connections between the authors and their subjects and the authors and their audiences. This typology, one of the chief innovations presented in the thesis, 'challenges the axis of degrees' with the descriptions of audience groups as being 'more or less focused' or more or less open as opposed to referring to gospel audiences as 'definite or indefinite.'[42] This new terminology is introduced precisely because the genre of biography cannot bear the weight of 'definite or indefinite' as it relates to implied audiences.[43] This innovation is partnered with the other unique contributions of this thesis, namely the continued application of generic analysis not only to Greco-Roman biography in general and to the Gospels specifically but also to the literature associated with the Gospels (non-canonical and traditional), and the suggestion that the choosing of one genre over another (whether conscious or unconscious) represents some indication of the intent of the author. In this way we recognize the invisibility of authorial intent but suggest that generic choices shed some significant light on the process of writing and disseminating literature. Thus, the purpose of this thesis, by advancing generically based criticism (typology, generic comparisons, generic analysis, etc.), is to explore the use of genre as a means to understand better the implied audiences anticipated by those responsible for the composition of the Gospels.

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[40] Klink, 'Conclusion,' p. 158.

[41] Loveday Alexander, 'Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface Writing,' *NovT* 28.1 (1986), pp. 48-74; p. 65

[42] Klink, 'Conclusion,' p. 157.

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[43] *Ibid*.

Chapter 2. Genre, Sub-Genre and Questions of Audience: A Proposed Typology for Greco-Roman Biography

Introduction: Genre, Sub-Genre and the Search for Meaning

Even as the scholarly consensus has begun to turn toward the acceptance of Greco-Roman biography as the genre of the canonical gospels, there is little agreement as to a biographical type for the Gospels. Wide varieties of sub-generic classifications have been offered for βίοι/*vitae*, with differing degrees of acceptance and credibility. One of the difficulties in determining the sub-genre for a given genre of literature is the criterion by which the genre is further sub-divided. Inherently, the genre itself has already been separated from other literary types in that it has some sort of external or internal features that make it distinct, at least in part, from other literary expressions.[1] How then are genres further sub-divided into sub-genres? Most often sub-genres are sorted according to 'subject matter or motifs' as well as substance, configuration, or 'the influence of neighbouring genres.' [2] Yet the questions we ask of a piece of literature may not apply to any of these sub-categories. For instance, if we are interested in determining the relationship between the genre and the audience, a sub-genre based on the configuration of the material may be of little value. It will certainly be helpful as a way to categorize and organize the material, but it will not be useful for advancing questions of audience. Another classification would be necessary in order to address that specific undertaking.

If one aspect of determining or assigning genre classification to a literary work is the act of ascertaining its significance, then the process of establishing effective and useful sub-genres is a further aspect of understanding meaning.[3] One potentially lucrative avenue for discovering the meaning of βίοι in general and the Gospels in particular is the intersection of author, genre and audience.[4] What are the relationships and expectations that exist among the three? Genre, at least in part, serves to form a binding contract (to varying degrees) between the author and the audience.[5] By choosing a specific genre as the literary means through which an author intends to convey a particular message, story, or view, the author agrees to conform to the structures of the chosen literary pattern.[6] Similarly, the audience agrees to read and understand the information presented in light of and in conjunction with the genre.[7] Thus, the genre serves as the agreed and ideal structure through which profitable communication is able to take place. Both author and audience bring certain expectations and understandings to the genre and it is the recognition of and adherence to these conventions (at least in part) that allows the author to convey meaning and the audience to understand meaning.[8] Conversely, one can imagine the confusion that would prevail if the author purported to present the information in a particular generic form (as a comedy for instance), but actually presented the material in another genre (a tragedy perhaps). The information would essentially be the same, but the meaning and interpretative process on the part of the audience would be quite different. Both author and audience must be in some agreement as to the expectations and patterns of genre if effective communication is to be achieved.

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[1] Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genre and Modes*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 111-2.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 112; Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* p. 77.

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[3] Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 38.

[4] Todorov argues for the relationship between the institutionalized nature of genres and the 'contractual' nature of the shared expectations of authors and audiences/readers. See Tzvetan Todorov, 'The Origin of Genres,' in David Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory*, (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), pp. 193-209; pp. 199-200.

[5] Heather Dubrow, *Genre*, (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 31.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] *Ibid*. See Thomas Kent, *Interpretation and Genre: The Role of Generic Perception in the Study of Narrative Texts*, (Cranbury, NJ : Associated University Presses, Inc., 1986), pp. 16-20.

[8] Kent, *Interpretation and Genre*, pp. 19-20.

What is of interest here is the genre that the author chooses as the form through which the message or information is transmitted. Why choose one genre over another when disclosing a particular message? More appropriate to the central question of this thesis: Why did the gospel writers choose βίοι as the literary means to tell the Jesus story? Was there something inherent within the genre itself that was particularly effective in disseminating the Jesus traditions?

In consideration of these questions this chapter has three aims: 1) to present a clear and consistent theory of genre and sub-genre that takes into account the flexibility and diversity within βίοι as it developed from the fifth century BCE to the fourth century CE; 2) to present and critique current typologies (sub-generic classifications) for the genre of βίος; and 3) to propose a new sub-genre for βίος based on the relationship between author, subject and the implied audience. The aim is the production of a helpful and useful typology for βίος, with a particular emphasis on the question of authorship and audience, as well as recognition of the impact that such a typology may have on further Gospel study.

Genre Theory: Relational and Familial Functions of Genre and Sub-Genre

At the outset, it should be acknowledged that all texts or literary works belong to a genre or genres.[9] Framing a particular work or set of works within a generic schema enables reader and researcher alike to better extrapolate the meaning and message of the text. Without some generic comprehension, either conscious or sub-conscious, the reader will be unable to unpack fully, if at all, the communicative efforts of the author. However, before one can engage the subject of genre formation and function, one first has to tackle the issue of genre itself.

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[9] Jacques Deridda, 'The Law of Genre,' in David Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory*, (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), pp. 219-31; p. 230.

What is Genre? Some Ancient and Contemporary Approaches

Freedman and Medway have argued that, 'traditional definitions of genre focused on textual regularities. In traditional literary studies the genres – sonnet, tragedy, ode, etc. – were defined by conventions of form and content.'[10] Thus, genres were defined rigidly according to organization and subject matter. Indeed, this desire for conformity dominates the discussions of antiquarian literary critics of differing eras (Pl. *Rep*, 392d; Arist. *Poet.*, 1447a-1448a; and Cic. *Orat.*, 70-75) where an adherence to 'types' is of great importance.[11] However, there are two important provisos to be considered when attempting to construct or reconstruct systems of generic theory in antiquity. First, the definition of genre itself runs the risk of being reduced to futility if all the subdivisions that the ancient commentators acknowledged are thought to be genres in and of themselves.[12] While ancient literary critics were well acquainted with genre and genre distinctions, this does not imply that these distinctions were universally followed, which brings us to the second proviso.[13] While generic and aesthetic distinctions were recognized in antiquity neither the critics nor authors adhered to the rules of genre consistently. Often writers, critics and authors alike, would acknowledge the principles of generic construction and would ignore them just as frequently in their own compositions. Philosophical reasons aside, the existence of texts that do not conform to the rules of *decorum* would provide an impetus for literary critics to take up the pen in defense of aesthetic sensibility.

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[10] Aviva Freedman & Peter Medway, 'Locating Genre Studies: Antecedents and Prospects,' in Aviva Freedman & Peter Medway, eds., *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), pp. 1-20; p. 1.

[11] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, pp. 26-7; in acknowledging Aristotle's desire to avoid the mixing of styles, Colie points to the connection between the aesthetic and social dimensions. She writes, 'It was in the service of this mimesis that Aristotle contributed a social dimension, or decorum, to the literary modes he canonized, narrative, dramatic, and lyric, modes then subdivided into genres - epic, tragic, comic, etc. In the imitation of reality, a high style benefits its high subject - epic or tragic; a low style a low subject, comedy or some lyric forms. Since Cicero expressed outright what is implied in Aristotle's formula, namely that styles must not be mixed (comic style is a defect in tragedy, tragic style in comedy, etc.)...The breaking of decorum, in this case, has to do with social as well as aesthetic premises.' Rosalie Colie, 'Genre-Systems and the Functions of Literature,' in David Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory*, (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000), pp. 148-66; p. 151.

It has been suggested that the ancient classifications of genre are unclear, especially regarding biography, and as a result, the employment of modern literary theory may be of some use.[14] Yet, it is fundamental to remember that the application of modern theory to ancient texts is done with the aim of providing a useful and helpful way of organizing and understanding the material. What is to be avoided is the act of infusing ancient texts with anachronistic views and expectations, thus doing violence to the texts and *Weltanschauung.* With this in mind, we would like to adopt the working definition of genre as put forth by Depew and Obbink which defines genre as 'a conceptual orienting device that suggests to a hearer the sort of receptional conditions in which a fictive discourse might have been delivered.'[15] Communication, written or otherwise, is in effect always a discourse, actualized or fictive. As a result, genre enables the hearer/reader to understand the conditions and expectations of the discourse. This definition is advantageous for the following reasons: 1) it imagines genre as an integral part of discourse and thereby acknowledges the roles of the deliverer and receiver in this process; 2) it is not confined to literary transmission as the sole representation of generic output and as such, it allows for a wider discussion of generic features including orality, oral transmission and oral performance; and 3) it allows for a greater measure of flexibility as it posits genre to be a conceptual device and it is not an attempt to couch genre in specific structural or thematic terms.[16] This definition is broad enough to cover the development of a particular genre over a period of time as well as being specific enough to locate genre within a communicative matrix.[17] Whereas in antiquity, literary critics regarded a genre as a static set of rules and expectations for how literature was to be produced, with a heavy emphasis on aesthetic concerns, modern conceptualizations of genre emphasize its role in communication, apart from artistic value.

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[12] Ineke Slutier, 'The Dialectics of Genre: Some Aspects of Secondary Literature and Genre in Antiquity,' in Mary Depew & Dirk Obbink, eds., *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 183-203; p. 203.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, pp. 59-60; Joseph Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1985), pp. 12-14.

[15] Mary Depew & Dirk Obbink, 'Introduction,' in Mary Depew & Dirk Obbink, eds., *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 1-14; p. 6.

How Do Genres Function? Flexibility and Familial Relationships

Glenn W. Most in his study of genre has observed that there is an undeniable relationship between authors and genres: one cannot exist without the other.[18] Most has identified eight principles of genre function that he concludes are 'self-evident'.[19] While far from being self-evident, the principles he delineates are helpful for understanding how genres operate. According to Most, genres perform in the followings ways: 1) genres give voice to authors to express their experiences and worldview; 2) some genres allow for the perceptible role of the authors, while others do not; 3) any generic rule can be violated, and no two rules have the same weight; 4) generic roles often function at a sub-conscious level; 5) authors are able to express their individuality vis-à-vis their imitation and/or defiance of generic conventions; 6) no text is exclusive to one genre or is fully representative of an entire genre;[20] 7) new genres can only be created by transforming older ones; and 8) a text's use of genre is in reality a reflection of the genre, the text itself, and genres in general.[21] Furthermore, as genre functions as a set of expectations it allows a wide variety of participants, with differing skill levels, to participate in communicative and 'literary procedures.'[22]

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[16] This can be compared with the work of Yury Tynyanov who sees no static definition of genre. Furthermore, genres evolve and fluctuate often at the expense of generic features. Yury Tynyanov, 'The Literary Fact,' in David Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory*, (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), pp. 29-49; p. 32.

[17] Kent, *Interpretation and Genre*, pp. 15-6.

[18] Glenn W. Most, 'Generating Genres: The Idea of the Tragic,' in Mary Depew & Dirk Obbink, eds., *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 15-35; p. 16.

[19] *Ibid*.

The sort of flexibility that is established in Most's model is demonstrated especially well when one considers how new genres are formed. Contrary to certain strands within biblical scholarship, genres are not formed *ex nihilo* or apart from other genres.[23] On the contrary, new genres come from pre-existing ones and genres rarely completely disappear, even in the face of new generic forms, but rather, they are replaced.[24] This versatility of function can be seen in Kurylowicz's fourth law of analogy: 'When two forms come into competition for one function, the newer form may take over that function, and the older form may become relegated to a sub-category of its earlier function.'[25] To provide a concrete example, it may be the case that at one point encomia were used as a means of distributing biographical information about important persons albeit with less focus on historicity and with a greater concern for praise of the individual.[26] However, as biography developed and took up the function of disseminating similar information, encomium did not disappear, *per se*, but became subsumed under the new genre of biography and thus became a 'type' of biography. It may be the case then that the texts that managed to survive as encomia themselves, no longer served a biographical purpose but one primarily of acclamation.[27]

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[20] This type of flexibility can be seen in another way in Burridge's assertion concerning fluid generic boundaries and the possibility for one genre to employ other generic forms. See Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* pp. 62-6.

[21] Most, 'Generating Genres,' p. 16

[22] *Ibid*., pp. 17-8.

[23] Cf. Rudolph Bultmann, 'The Gospels (Form),' in Jaroslav Pelikan, ed., *Twentieth Century Theology In the Making*, trans. R. A. Wilson, (London: UK, 1969), pp. 86-92; p. 89; *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), pp. 373-4. Robert Guelich sees the Gospels as derivative in form but unique in content. Robert Guelich, *Mark 1-8.26*, WBC 34A (Dallas: Word, 1989), pp. xix-xxii.

[24] Tzvetan Todorov, 'The Origin of Genres,' pp. 195-7.

Largely, the discussion of any genre is a discussion of the 'history of individual instances.'[28] Such instances cannot always be used to piece together a strict and stringent rule of generic function. To this end the use of certain types of expressions, literary or otherwise, is not the codification of rules and designations.[29] Furthermore, the genres that function within a given society are chosen/accepted by a culture because they are the ones that conform most closely to societal ideologies.[30] This is why some genres appear in certain cultures and not in others.[31] The relationship between ideology and genre may explain why there were no βίοι proper in Greece prior to the fourth century BCE, as the emphasis on the individual was not a widely accepted Greek ideology in the preceding centuries. If the chief operating feature of genres is their flexibility and lack of formal designations, then what, if anything, can we say about how they behave as an organizing force?

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[25] Gregory Nagy, 'Reading Bakhtin Reading the Classics: An Epic Fate for Conveyors of the Historic Past,' in Bracht R. Branham, ed., *Bakhtin and the Classics*, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002), pp. 71-96; p. 73.

[26] Ian Worthington recognizes the dubious use of historical facts on the part of orators and this raises some questions as to the historicity of Isoc. *Evag*. as a biographical sketch. In a related discussion, Fantuzzi explores Theocritus' use of demythologized characters in his bucolic poetry and encomium. This raises further questions as to the relationship between historical fact in the biographical presentations of encomium and the nature of the innovations from encomium to biography as it relates to a more 'factual' presentation. Cf. Ian Worthington, 'History and Rhetorical Exploration,' in Ian Worthington, ed., *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, (New York/London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 109-29; p. 109; Marco Fantuzzi, 'Theocritus and the 'Demythologizing' of Poetry,' in Mary Depew & Dirk Obbink, eds., *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 135-51; pp. 150-1.

[27] For some discussion on flexibility within narrative and the possibility of innovations while adhering to stock forms and traditional materials, especially within gnomai see, Christopher Carey, 'Rhetorical Means of Expression,' in Ian Worthington, ed., *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, (New York/London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 26-68; p. 42; André Lardinois, 'The Wisdom and Wit of Many: The Orality of Greek Proverbial Expressions,' in Janet Watson, ed., *Speaking Volumes: Orality and Literacy In the Greek and Roman World*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 93-107; p. 105-6. Similarly, on the power dynamics within genres and the relationship of dominant genres to lesser genres see John Snyder, *Prospects of Power: Tragedy, Satire, the Essay, and the Theory of Genre*, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991).

[28] Snyder, *Prospects of Power*, p. 1.

Genres are inherently functional as they serve to order and form how a particular piece of literature is experienced as a communicative expression.[32] They provide an organizing principle that is much 'more like that of families than classes.'[33] Alastair Fowler's work on genre theory has proven to be of great benefit to this discussion. He writes the following on generic classifications:

> In literature, the basis of resemblance lies in literary tradition. What produces generic resemblances, reflection soon shows, is tradition: a sequence of influence and imitation and inherited codes connecting works in the genre. As kinship makes a family, so literary relations of this sort form a genre. Poems are made in part from older poems: each is the child (to use Keats' metaphor) of an earlier representative of the genre and may yet be the mother of a subsequent representative. Naturally, the genetic make-up alters with slow time, so that we may find the genre's various historical states to be very different from one another. Both historically and within a single period, the family grouping allows for wide variation in the type.[34]

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[29] Benedetto Croce, 'Criticism of the Theory of Artistic and Literary Kinds,' in David Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory*, (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), pp. 25-8; p. 28.

[30] Todorov, 'The Origin of Genres,' p. 200. Peter Toohey has observed the rise of literacy within the elite and as a replacement of oral expression in the writings of Apollonius of Alexandria (296-235 CE). The rise of literacy may be connected to 'interiorization'. This raises questions as to the rise of the importance of the individual as a historical and intellectual subject and the importance of biographical literature in this enterprise. Cf. Peter Toohey, 'Epic and Rhetoric,' in Ian Worthington, ed., *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, (New York/London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 153-75; pp. 163-70.

[31] *Ibid*.

[32] Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 38.

[33] *Ibid*., p. 41.

[34] *Ibid*., pp. 42-3.

The process of imitation and influence, much like the practice of mimesis in ancient literature, works to unite certain individual works together in a familial framework. It is the similarities that arise from common sources and examples that unite distinct works into a common family. It is not the adherence to a static set of rules or expectations that creates a genre over and against another. On the contrary, it is the received tradition, the culmination of common source materials and literary relationships, which forms a particular genre. These familial relationships are further demonstrated by the evolution and innovation that takes place within a genre over time. Often these changes take place at a sub-conscious level, both on the part of the author and the reader.[35] One expression of the evolution of generic types is the specific recognition of producing literature that is different in form and function from that of literature of a neighboring genre, such as the specific differentiation between history and biography (e.g. Plut. *Alex*., 1.1-3, Plut. *Nic.* 1.5 and Nep. *Pelop.* 1.1). Thus, it is possible for a wide variety of literature (such as the βίοι which develop from the fourth century BCE to the fourth century CE) to fit into the same generic family.

Sub-genres share a similar function as that of genres. They are also flexible and serve a functional and descriptive role. Sub-genres are intrinsically subjective. They serve to apportion generic material in any number of ways (structure, content, etc.) and the manner by which they are chosen correlates directly to the conscious or sub-conscious concerns of the one seeking to sort a given genre into sub-genres. Certainly, sub-genres bear a familial resemblance to the genres to which they belong, but sub-generic categories can take any number of forms. In the same way that no one example of literature exhausts the limits of a genre, and just as no piece of literature is confined to only one genre, so is it the case that no one typology of sub-genre is adequate to definitively sub-divide the literature of a particular genre.[36] In order to cope with the variety present within genres a number of sub-genres may be needed. It is precisely the attempts to deduce a definitive typology that have hindered the understanding of Greco-Roman biography. Undoubtedly, the questions that the scholar wishes to ask of the text will be the basis for the typology that is produced to organize the text.

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[35] Most, 'Generating Genres, p. 16.

In summation: 1) genres are flexible and they can be subsumed by other stronger genres at different periods of development. Further, genres are reflective of the ideologies of the societies in which they function. Societal ideology accounts for the differences that exist in generic expression from one culture to the next. 2) Genres function in familial relationships. They are not a static set of rules but a set of expectations, on the part of the author and audience and they are shaped and influenced by tradition, emulation, and innovation. 3) Sub-genres are similarly flexible and they are functional as they are effective in answering the questions that the reader brings to a group of texts (genre). Both genres and sub-genres are essentially descriptive and not prescriptive. What is of interest here are the various typologies that have been offered for βίοι and what, if anything, they tell us about Greco-Roman biography.

Current Typologies of Βίοι/*Vitae*

Friedrich Leo

Written in 1901, Friedrich Leo's work, *Die Griechish-Römische Biographie Nach Ihrer Literarischen Form*, stands as the classic text on the history and development of

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[36] Most, 'Generating Genres,' p. 16.

Greco-Roman biography.[37] Among Leo's achievements in his study of ancient biography is the typology he proposed for βίοι, which consists of two types. Leo recognizes the profound difficulty in attempting to reconstruct the history and development of ideas and literary forms that evolved over nearly eight centuries.[38] In addition, the progression of βίοι is further obscured due to the forms (intermediate and otherwise) and expressions of the genre that are lost and no longer available to us.[39] Leo argues that the roots of βίοι are to be found in the Athenian interest in individuals as examples worthy of moral imitation, and in particular, the biographical writings of the Peripatetics.[40] A potential difficulty in this argument is what Momigliano sees as the antecedents to βίοι in the century before the Socratics.[41] Further, the rise of biography may be attributable to the cultural exchange between the Greeks in the west and the Persians in the east, with biographical and autobiographical expressions already in existence in Persia.[42] While the Peripatetics, as an extension of the Socratics, cannot be fully credited with the production of biography, it should be noted that the Socratics were the pioneers of biographical endeavors of the fourth century BCE.[43]

Out of the historical framework of the Peripatos, under the influence of Aristotle, two distinct types of biography emerge.[44] Peripatetic biography, which grew out of the

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[37] Friedrich Leo, *Die griechisch-römische Biographie nach ihrer literarischen Form* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901).
[38] *Ibid*., p. 315.
[39] *Ibid*.
[40] *Ibid*., pp. 315-16.
[41] Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1993), pp. 23-33. Two examples of biographical expression/experimentation from the fifth century BCE are Skylax's biography of Heraclides of Mylasa and Xanthus of Lydia's *Life of Empedocles*. For a more complete presentation of the arguments concerning these two works, see Momigliano, *Development*, pp. 28-33. See Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen Im Neuen Testament,' pp. 1232-6.
[42] *Ibid*., pp. 33-8.
[43] *Ibid*., p. 46.
[44] Leo, *Die griechisch-römische Biographie*, pp. 316-7.

Peripatos, (which Leo associated with Plut. *Vit.*, where Plutarch adapts his material to conform to an earlier established Peripatetic model) was arranged in a chronological structure with attention to literary development, with a possible emphasis on the oral performance of these works and with the lives of generals and politicians as the preferred subjects.[45] Leo attributes the origination of the Peripatetic strand of biography to Aristoxenus of Tarentum (fourth century BCE) with his biographical presentations of Archytas, Socrates and Plato.[46] Alexandrian biography (associated with Suet. *Vit. Caes.*) had none of the literary ambitions of the Peripatetic type, as it was intended for private study as opposed to public performance.[47] This biographical type avoided the chronological order of the Peripatetic type and arranged the material in a systematic or itemized manner. This type of biography was associated with the grammarians at the Museum of Alexandria and was well suited for the lives of poets and artists, and in particular, this biographical arrangement can be seen in Satyr. *Vit. Eur.* (third century BCE).[48]

Few scholars continue to accept Leo's findings unchecked. At least two attempts have been made to reform his typology. Fritz Wehrli modified Leo's two-fold structure to include three types of biography as well as the possible inclusion of transitional forms.[49] Wehrli proposes that Greco-Roman biography can be delineated as 1) lives of philosophers and poets (with the material being chronologically arranged); 2) encomia of generals and political leaders and; 3) lives of literary characters.[50] Similarly, Klaus Berger has proposed the following typology: 1) The Encomium type (Isocrates, Xenophon, Philo, Tacitus, and Lucian); 2) the Peripatetic type, which is a chronological representation of the moral character of a person as seen through their actions (Plutarch); 3) the popular-novelistic type (Anon. *Vit. Aesop*; Anon. *Vit. Sec.*); and 4) the Alexandrian type, consisting of a systematic presentation of the life events (Suetonius).[51] The two-fold typology of Leo is not equipped to handle the diversity of literature that makes up βίοι or the biographically inclined genres.

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[45] *Ibid*.

[46] *Ibid*., p. 102; Duane Reed Stuart, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography*, (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 1928), p. 130; Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen Im Neuen Testament,' p. 1233.

[47] *Ibid*., p. 318.

[48] *Ibid*. For more discussion of this period of biographical development and Leo's contribution to its study see Stuart, *Epochs*, pp. 155-88, esp. 185-7; Charles H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), pp. 92-3; Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1983, pp. 6-12; David E. Aune, 'Greco-Roman Biography,' in David Aune, ed., *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 107-26; esp. p. 108; Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, pp. 71-2.

The clear-cut typology of Leo based primarily on the arrangement of the material as either chronological (Peripatetic) or as systematic (Alexandrian), fails as it is unable to account for biographical works where both organizational structures are included.[52] One such example is Xen. *Ages.* which combines both chronological (1-2) and topical (3-11) presentations of the life of the hero. Joseph Geiger has raised serious doubts as to the accuracy that political biography, as either a genre or type among Peripatetic biography, existed in the Hellenistic period.[53] Moreover, Geiger argues that political biography was a creation of the Imperial period and was necessary as a means to separate the biography of political figures from historiography of similar subjects.[54] There was no such problem with biographies of literary figures as there was no other genre that threatened to blur the lines of literary biography in the same way that historiography threatened biographies of political figures.[55] Further, there is significant doubt as to whether the term Peripatetic was used in a definitively technical sense in ancient times and there is doubt as to the extent that 'Peripatetics' had common 'interests and methods.'[56]

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[49] Fritz Wehrli, 'Gnome, Anekdote und Biographie,' *MH* 30 (1973), pp. 193-208; p. 193.

[50] *Ibid*.

[51] Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen Im Neuen Testament,' p. 1236. Also, see Stuart, *Epochs*, p. 157-8 for another possible typology for ancient biography based on authorial intent and intended audience.

[52] Aune, 'Greco-Roman Biography,' p. 108; Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, p. 73.

[53] Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography*, p. 32.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 22-3.

While Leo's typology is advantageous as a means of identifying certain structural features of βίοι and in particular subject matter and arrangement of material, it proves to be incapable of giving a satisfactory account of βίοι. The highly nuanced nature of the material, the extensive time frame in which βίοι develops as well as the gaps present in the literary evidence render it unsatisfactory. Leo's typological attempt highlights some of the unique challenges that are requisite with characterizations of literature of this sort. Significant attention needs to be given to 1) the role of sub-genre/types of literature and the methodology by which they are defined; 2) the particular history of the development of the genre of βίοι; and 3) the diversity and flexibility of the genre of βίοι and its relationship to other *genera proxima*.

Charles H. Talbert

Charles Talbert's contributions to the discussion of the relationship of the genre of the Gospels to that of Greco-Roman biography have been important and varied.[57] While

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[55] *Ibid*.

[56] Stephanie West, 'Satyrus: Peripatetic or Alexandrian?' *GRBS* 15.3 (1974), pp. 279-97; p. 281.

[57] Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, SBLMS 20 (Missoula: Scholars, 1974); 'The Concept of Immortals in Mediterranean Antiquity,' *JBL* 94 (1975), pp. 419-36; 'The Myth of a Descending-Ascending Redeemer in Mediterranean Antiquity,' *NTS* 22 (1976), pp. 418-40; *What is a Gospel?*; 'Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propaganda in Mediterranean Antiquity,' *ANRW* I.16.2 (1978), pp. 1619-51; 'Once Again: Gospel Genre,' *Semeia* 43 (1988), pp. 53-73; 'Reading Aune's Reading of Talbert,' in *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu*, SNTSMS 107, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 57-63; 'Prophecies of Future Greatness: The Contributions of Greco-Roman Biographies to an Understanding of Luke 1:5-4:1,' in *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu*, SNTSMS 107, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 65-77;

Talbert's work spans a number of issues related to Gospel genre and its ancient parallels, the issue that is of particular interest here is his proposed classification for Greco-Roman biography. In *What is a Gospel?* Talbert identifies four main types within existing classifications of Greco-Roman biography. In conjunction with the Peripatetic and Alexandrian types, Talbert distinguishes an Encomium type of ancient biography, characterized by Isoc. *Evag*., as well as Xen. *Ages*. and Tac. *Agr*. [58] To these three types, Talbert would add a fourth categorization or the 'romantic or popular' type such as Anon. *Vit. Sec.* and Anon. *Vit. Aesop*.[59] Talbert argues that such classifications are based essentially on two principles: 1) the composition of formal elements; and 2) the extent to which each is historically reliable.[60] Furthermore, and perhaps more significant, Talbert asserts that any such classification is 'purely descriptive' and that classifications of this sort are only valuable as they are viable.[61] Talbert raises the question as to what extent such classifications are useful for saying anything meaningful about the literature in question. Such classifications can confine as much as expand the discussion. As a result, Talbert suggests that it may be useful to construct new organizational patterns as a means of culling fresh insights from the material.

In light of his suggestion that a fresh classification for ancient biography may be necessary, Talbert suggests a two-fold classification that is to be used in conjunction with that of Leo as opposed to replacing it. Talbert proposes that Greco-Roman biography be categorized as either didactic or non-didactic with didactic 'Lives' calling 'for emulation of the hero or avoidance of his example and non-didactic Lives that are unconcerned with moral example.'[62] Talbert establishes his classification 'on the basis of the criterion of the *function*(*s*) of the writings in their social-intellectual-spiritual milieu.'[63] Thus, ancient biography can be classified as didactic or non-didactic, with didactic lives being interested in the propagandistic enterprise of compelling an audience toward or away from the emulation of a certain person of note. The vast majority of Greco-Roman biography would be considered didactic, with propagandistic functions (encomium, peripatetic and popular-romantic), while the 'Alexandrian or grammatical-type' would be non-didactic.[64] Talbert subdivides didactic biographies into five categories or functions: 1) Type A: Biographies that function as a pattern of emulation (e.g. Luc. *Demon*.); 2) Type B: Biographies that function to replace a false image of a teacher or figure of renown with a true representation that should then be seen as worthy of emulation (e.g. Xen. *Mem*.); 3) Type C: Biographies that function to expose a teacher or individual as false or flawed (e.g. Luc. *Alex*.); 4) Type D: Biographies that function to record and establish the true delineation of a particular school or philosophy by documenting the succession of the students from the teacher and thus establishing orthodoxy via succession; and 5) Type E: Biographies that function to shed understanding on the behavior or teachings of a particular figure especially in instances where the behavior is peculiar, strange, or out of step with social norms (e.g. Anon. *Vit. Sec.*).[65]

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[58] Talbert, *What is A Gospel?*, p. 92.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 93.
[61] *Ibid.*

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[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *Ibid* (emphasis original). Much of Talbert's argumentation here stems from what is the central focus of the work in question, namely a refutation of Bultmann and the form-critical assertions that the Gospels do not belong to any ancient genre. For a treatment of Talbert's arguments against Bultmann see David E. Aune, 'The Problem of the Genre of the Gospels: A Critique of C. H. Talbert's What Is a Gospel?' in R. T. France & David Wenham, eds., *Gospel Perspectives II: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), pp. 9-60; and Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, pp. 80-1.

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 94-6.

In his 1974 monograph, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, Talbert compares the generic features of Luke-Acts to those of Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil*.[66] Through his analysis of the parallel structures of the two works, he is able to conclude that Luke-Acts fits most appropriately within the genre of Graeco-Roman biography and that it most closely conforms to the sub-genre of biographies that 'dealt with the lives of philosophers and their successors.'[67] This work proved to be important as a foundational study into the genre of the Gospels and their connections to contemporary first-century literature. However, Talbert's conclusions, in terms of both typology and the generic relatedness of Luke-Acts, have proven to be problematic.

David E. Aune has raised a number of criticisms of Talbert's typology. Aune has argued that while Talbert focuses his typology on the function of the different types of βίοι, this structure ignores other 'important generic features' and as such, it is incapable of accounting for the complexities of the biographic genre.[68] Talbert's typology offers little in the way of a formalistic classification for biography and does not establish a clear differentiation between genre and type or sub-genre. [69] The lack of consideration of genre and literary theory raises questions as to what extent Talbert's sub-genres of didactic and non-didactic biography can be further subdivided along his five-part structure of function as well as raising questions as to 'how genres and 'types' are determined.'[70] Furthermore, as both Burridge and Aune have suggested, the structure that Talbert proposes is problematic in and of itself. Burridge has pointed out that while Talbert seeks to differentiate the sub-genres of βίοι on the grounds of function, his classification is best understood as one of purpose.[71] Consequently, it is possible to argue that many βίοι had multiple purposes and so it is not possible to place them so neatly into Talbert's categories. Similarly, Aune has argued that even if the assertion that biography can be sub-divided along the lines of social function, it is nearly impossible to determine the exact social function of a given biography and thus Talbert's classification fails his own criterion of efficacy.[72]

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[66] Talbert, *Literary Patterns*, pp. 125-40.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 134
[68] Aune, 'Greco-Roman Biography,' p. 109. Of some interest are the comments that Aune makes concerning the Gospels as 'a *subtype* of Greco-Roman biography determined by *content*, reflecting Judeo-Christian assumptions,' David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), p. 46. However, Aune does not flesh out his assertion as a potential type for Greco-Roman biography,
[69] Aune, 'The Problem of the Genre of the Gospels,' p. 39.

Talbert's designation of Luke-Acts as belonging to the sub-genre of 'succession narratives' points to one of the more glaring difficulties in his typology or sub-categorization of biography. Talbert proposes that Mark and John are 'Type B' biographies; Matthew is a 'Type E' biography, while Luke-Acts is 'Type D'. This presents a rather confused picture of the Gospels with the Synoptics being of completely different types. In addition, Talbert's use of the primary sources, particularly Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* is suspect both in terms of the proposed formal and generic connections between it and Luke-Acts and in terms of the formal designation of Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* as comprising a distinct sub-genre of 'succession narrative'.[73] Thus, Talbert's conclusions place each of the synoptic Gospels into a different sub-genre with Luke-Acts occupying a dubious 'type' at best.

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[70] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, p. 82. One of the difficulties here arises from what seems to be the interchangeable way that Talbert employs 'classification' and 'type'. While it may be possible that a 'type can be entirely represented in a single instance,' as Talbert proposes with his Type D or 'Succession' Type, 'a class is usually thought of as an array of instances,' cf. E. Donald Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 50. Talbert's proposal becomes muddled, as he makes no distinction between class and type.

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Aune, 'The Problem of the Genre of the Gospels,' p. 40.

[73] Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, p. 79.

Talbert's typology is unsuccessful for three reasons. First, he fails to give a proper account of genre theory and ignores the difficulties that are associated with how genres and types are determined. Second, he fails to acknowledge the historical development of βίος as a genre and places βίοι from differing historical periods side by side as though they formed a strictly homogenous literary tradition.[74] Third, the rigidity of Talbert's typology is incapable of adequately handling the fluidity of the genre of βίος as he forces sub-genres onto material that may not adequately support them.[75] Although his typology is flawed, Talbert should be commended for suggesting a new and inventive way to view Greco-Roman biography. Furthermore, his recognition that typologies are inherently descriptive is an important observation for future attempts to classify βίος. Finally, Talbert should be credited with advancing the discussion of Gospel genre beyond the arguments of the form critics and he should be credited with helping to move the discussion of Gospel genre into the mainstream of biblical studies.

Richard A. Burridge

Richard A. Burridge's *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* stands as a landmark work in the field of biblical studies and serves as the definitive discussion, to date, on the genre of the Gospels. Burridge's work has made remarkable strides in turning the scholarly consensus toward viewing the Gospels as examples of βίοι. *What Are the Gospels?* has proven to be important for its contributions to the discussion of the generic features of βίοι and their relationship to the Gospels.

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[74] Talbert does attempt to differentiate what is essential and what is non-essential to the genre of βίος. While this proves to be helpful in some ways, Talbert concludes that the only thing that is essential to βίος is that the work be devoted to describing the essence of a prominent person. This does little in the way of acknowledging the historical development of Greco-Roman biography. See Talbert, 'Once Again,' pp. 54-8. For Talbert's defense of his work, see Talbert, 'Reading Aune's Reading of Talbert,' pp. 57-63.

[75] The use of Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* and fragmentary evidence for a third century BCE *Life of Aristotle* as the sole representatives of Type D biographies, presents an interesting if not plausible case. However, the lack of evidence makes assigning this material to a specific sub-genre disputable and further highlights the difficulty of the task of establishing a typology when much of the material in question is now lost to us. See Talbert, *Literary Patterns*, pp. 125-40; *What Is a Gospel?* pp. 95-6.

Burridge has shown a great sensitivity to the matters of genre analysis and theory as well as sensitivity to the historical development of βίος as a genre. He devotes an entire chapter to genre criticism and literary theory (chapter 2) and is able to conclude following: first, the Gospels are not '*unique in terms of genre*,' as this is a literary impossibility.[76] Each genre has in itself the resonance of other generic forms that precede it. Literature is not created in a vacuum, and as such, any generic form is dependent on other forms even if the 'new' form presents material in an entirely innovative way.[77] Second, '*the gospels must be compared with literature of their own day*.'[78] The temptation to compare the Gospels with modern biography must be avoided as it will produce dubious results and subject the Gospels to literary criteria that are not suitable for correct comparison. Finally, most of the genres that have been suggested for the Gospels have not properly taken into account genre theory and the appropriate literary levels that are at work in generic analysis.[79] There has been widespread confusion between modes (or literary types) and genres, thus, while one can conclude that Luke is a historiography because it contains certain historiographical modes; Luke is better understood as βίος upon a closer review of its form, content and especially its subject matter.[80]

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[76] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, p. 51 (italics original). Also see Richard A. Burridge, 'Biography,' in Stanley porter, ed., *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 B.C.- A.D. 400)*, ed., (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 371-420; 'The Gospels and Acts,' in Stanley porter, ed., *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 B.C.- A.D. 400)*, ed., (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 507-32; 'About People,' pp. 99-15.

[74] *Ibid* (all italics are original unless noted).

[78] *Ibid*.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 51-2.

One of Burridge's most important contributions to the discussion of Gospel genre is his recognition of the fundamentally flexible nature of βίος as a genre and its symbiotic relationship with other genres such as encomium, historiography, novel, philosophical polemic and the like.[81] This facility within which βίος operates helps to explain the overlap between it and other literary modes present in similar genres. However, the accommodating literary nature of βίος should not be misunderstood, as there are distinguishable characteristics, both external and internal, that separate βίος from neighbouring genres. As Burridge has observed, any '*attempt to consider the gospels as βίοι must always take account of this wider picture of its flexible and developing nature.*'[82]

Burridge devotes three chapters to the subject of the generic features of βίοι in theory as well as to its generic development through the Hellenistic and Imperial periods (chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively). Here he separates the generic characteristics into opening features, subject, external features and internal features.[83] Burridge further subdivides the opening features into 1) title and 2) opening formulae/prologue/preface.[84] He breaks down subjects into 1) an analysis of the verbs' subjects and 2) allocation of space.[85] The external features are separated into 1) mode of representation, 2) meter, 3) size and length, 4) structure or sequence, 5) scale, 6) literary units, 7) use of sources and 8) methods of characterization.[86] Finally, he allocates the internal features into 1) setting, 2) topics/τόποι/motifs, 3) style, 4) tone/mood/attitude/values, 5) quality of characterization, 6) social setting and occasion, and 7) authorial intention and purpose.[87] Burridge's study of the generic features of βίοι is helpful both as a means of putting ancient biography into a complete and structured literary framework and also as a study of the formal changes and adaptations of βίοι from the early Greco-Roman period to its latter stages. Thus, Burridge is able to avoid Talbert's oversight in placing βίοι in fixed state.[88] Burridge, as previously noted, more than adequately deals with the complexities of genre theory as well as recognizing the fluidity of the genre itself.

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[80] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 107. Cf. David L. Barr & Judith L. Wentling, 'The Conventions of Classical Biography and the Genre of Luke-Acts: A Preliminary Study,' in Charles H. Talbert, ed., *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, (New York: Crossroad, 1984), pp. 63-88, esp. pp. 67-71, for a discussion of the conventions of classical biography. They recognize a similar shared relationship between βίοι and its literary neighbors. However, the defining factor is the purpose of the work, which is, following Talbert, to relate to the reader the essence of the person in question. Also see Talbert, *What is A Gospel?*, p. 16; 'Once Again: Gospel Genre,' pp. 55-6.

[84] *Ibid*, pp. 108-9.

Burridge does not offer a detailed and systematic typology or categorization for the sub-division of βίοι. He mentions a number of possible sub-genres but does not propose a specific system. He states the following: 'Subgenres within βίος literature may be defined in terms of content (political v. philosophical-literary βίοι) or structure (chronological v. topical) or the influence of neighbouring genres (historical v. encomiastic).'[89] Perhaps this brings the discussion back to Talbert's assertion that the questions that one asks of the text are going to determine the sorts of classifications used.[90] Consequently, if one is interested in the content of βίοι, a classification like Leo's which is based on structure will not suffice. To Burridge's credit, his objective is not to establish a definitive arrangement of the sub-genres of βίοι, and so it is no wonder that his work excludes one. What both Burridge and Talbert point to is the flexibility with which subgenres can be employed. As new questions arise, new designations become increasingly important. A rigid classification such as Leo's, or to a lesser extent, Talbert's, may be helpful, but they are not always useful. Subsequently, it is necessary to offer a new typology of βίοι that is better equipped to answer questions of the text related to the relationship between the author, subject and audience.

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[85] *Ibid*, pp. 109-13.
[86] *Ibid*, pp. 113-7.
[87] *Ibid*, pp. 117-22.
[88] Talbert, *What is A Gospel?* p. 98.
[89] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, p. 77. Burridge also proposes that the canonical gospels may form a sub-genre of 'Jesus biographies,' p. 243.
[90] Talbert, *What is A Gospel?* p. 93.

What Audience? Considering the Greco-Roman Audience

Before we can propose a neoteric classification for the sub-genres of βίοι, some attention should be paid to the issues of audience in the Greco-Roman world.[91] There are two areas of concern: 1) the function of literacy and orality in Greco-Roman culture; and 2) the ways in which audience 'markets' functioned.[92] It is a mistake to suppose that literature functioned in the Roman Empire in the same way as our current context. Similarly, the effect of literacy on the greater public will be of importance to the issues of genre and audience.

Literacy and Orality

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[91] For the sake of brevity, we will focus our efforts on the second and first centuries BCE and the first century CE as this is the literary and cultural context approximate to the Gospels. More will be said later in reference to a wider literary and cultural background. For some discussion, see Harris, *Ancient Literacy*; and Rawson, *Intellectual Life* .

[92] Markets in this sense should be seen as analogous and not as 'markets' in the sense of targeted economically empowered consumer groups. We are not referring to markets in the sense of an advertising demographic, but more as an interest group.

William V. Harris has argued for an illiteracy rate in the early stages of the Roman Empire in the range of 90% or more.[93] If this is understood to be even remotely accurate, to what extent then can literature be seen to function in a society where few can read and write effectively? Harris has further argued, 'There was no such thing as 'popular literature' in the Roman Empire, if that means literature which became known to tens or hundreds of thousands of people by means of personal reading.'[94] Even in the advanced stages of the Empire society remained highly oral and the gradual shift towards the use of literature as a tool to disseminate information did not overtake the preexisting oral transmission of texts and ideas for both education and entertainment.[95] The elite often had texts read to them by slaves and reading of poetry and other sorts of literature was often undertaken as part of entertainment at dinner parties and other social functions.[96] In conjunction with private readings, public readings and lectures were not uncommon.[97] Histories, poetry, oratory, philosophical explications and dramas were all performed in the public sphere.[98] While it is clear that the oral performance of texts added to the overall level of literary awareness, it is unclear as to what extent this awareness permeated the lower social classes.

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[93] Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, pp. 22; 323-37; particularly p. 329. Here literacy is the ability to read and write simple sentences.

[94] *Ibid*., p. 227. This assertion may cast doubts on the ability to classify biographies as popular, unless there is a literary innovation after the first century BCE that increased the literacy rates to the point where one can actually conceive of literature as functioning on a 'popular' level. Rawson seems to contradict this assertion with the mention of a number of 'popular' literary types. However, it is unclear to what extent this sort of literature can be considered 'popular' in the wider sense in a society where literacy was 10% or less. However, it is possible that a market niche for 'lower' literary forms existed. Cf. Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, p. 50-1.

[95] Ibid., p. 226; and Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, p. 51. Similar conclusions can be made to the rise of rhetoric as a classifiable set of speech expectations and the legal contexts through which rhetoric rises. In the case of rhetoric, it overtook the utilitarian pre-rhetorical speech conventions, whereas literacy never completely overtook orality, even in the late Empire. One avenue for discussion is the connection between the rise of rhetoric and literacy in legal contexts. See Michael Gagarin, 'Probability and Persuasion: Plato and Early Greek Rhetoric, in Ian Worthington, ed.,' *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 46-68; esp. p. 59; and Carol G. Thomas & Edward Kent Webb, 'From Orality To Rhetoric: An Intellectual Transformation,' in Ian Worthington, ed., *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 3-25; esp. p. 10.

[96] Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, p. 51. See also Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, p. 226.

[97] Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, pp. 51-3.

Elizabeth Rawson has argued that illiteracy would not have been a complete impediment to intellectual activity.[99] It was possible that even the poorly educated would have been able to acquire a measure of literacy and thus have been able to participate in the intellectual life of the Empire on some basis.[100] At the very least, the illiterate or semi-literate could engage in intellectual activities that were visually transmitted (statues or paintings).[101] Additionally, Rawson suggests that the unemployed, in both rural and urban settings, would have had spare time that could have been spent attending the theatre, which would have been available to most, as well as the possibility of taking in the occasional public reading or lecture.[102] While this is certainly possible, it is altogether unclear as to the probability that the poor and unemployed would have filled their 'leisure' time with public readings and lectures. Nevertheless, the existence of public readings and performances presents the possibility that literature of a variety of types could have reached the 'masses' if in no other way than through oral transmission.

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[98] *Ibid*. There may be some connections between genre and performance, as emoted literary pieces were intended to elicit a response/action from the audience. This would be as true of religious invocations as it would be of historical presentations or poetry. Performance was/is integral to the 'generic force' of a given piece of literature. See Joseph W. Day, 'Epigram and Reader: Generic Force as (Re-) Activation of Ritual,' in Mary Depew & Dirk Obbink, eds., *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 37-57; pp. 37-8. The role of performance in indoctrination of social values and norms is also an important avenue for research. This has a connection to the subject of declamation as an educational tool for forming and re-forming norms. This use of oral performance raises some interesting questions as to the oral performance of Christian texts in the early Church. See Margaret Imber, 'Practiced Speech: Oral and Written Conventions in Roman Declamation,' in Janet Watson, ed., *Speaking Volumes: Orality and Literacy In the Greek and Roman World*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 201-12; pp. 211-2.

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[100] *Ibid*. We are thinking here of some stock phrases or words that the illiterate would have been able to read. This may have worked with speaking (Latin, Greek, etc.) languages that were not the native tongue as well.

[101] *Ibid*.

[102] *Ibid*.

The oral nature of Roman society would seem to indicate that the practice of personal reading, that is the practice of reading texts by oneself and for oneself, was relatively rare. This is not to say that it did not happen, but that the practice of personal reading occurred most often among 'scholars and writers, professional or amateur, Greek or Roman, of whom there was a larger number than is sometimes supposed.'[103] It is also likely that there were other groups that would have read the literature that was deposited in public and private collections. This wider group of readers would include a number of freedmen, a limited number of women, scribes and bureaucrats and educated slaves.[104] This group would not have been highly educated but their reading and writing knowledge would have been functional and they would have had a greater access to texts than would the uneducated poor.

Audiences as Markets

Writers often produce literature with multiple audiences in mind. Conceptions of audience work most effectively when they take into account the notion that authors often intend for their works to be read (or heard) widely and by diverse groups. This is as true now as it was in ancient times. While this may not hold true for all types of literature (certainly private correspondences and the like are not generally meant for multiple audiences), it certainly holds true for βίοι.[105] While there is a justifiable temptation to suppose that ancient biographies were written with singular audiences in mind, this was rarely the case, and in a number of instances literature was produced with multiple audiences in mind. Given this observation, how then do we understand the implied audiences of βίοι/*vitae*? As Richard Burridge has argued, it may be better to understand audiences of biographies in terms of 'market niches,' by way of analogy, as opposed to discrete communities.[106] When contemplating 'markets' or 'market niches' as audience models, three issues should be considered: 1) the existence of literary 'communities'; 2) primary and secondary audiences; and 3) focused and open audiences/markets.

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[103] *Ibid*.
[104] *Ibid*.
[105] See Plin. (Y) *Ep*., 1.1 1-2.

Audience as 'Community'

The notions of audiences of ancient biography as communities may function at some level (i.e. a particular philosophical school, occupation, religious tradition, etc.); however, the implied audiences of biography were rarely, if ever, confined to such determinate audience groups.[107] On the contrary, quite often one group or individual could use a βίος as a means of directing a message to those of other groups.[108] As Burridge has shown, several examples emerge from the literary evidence including the use of polemic and apology in the corpus of 'Cato literature,' which emerged after the death of Cato the Younger.[109] The struggle over the collective memory of Cato as either a traitor or exemplar was carried out through the production of biographic literature. In some instances, the biographical memory was used to defame him (directed to those who revered him) and at other times, biographic literature was used to defend him (directed at those who defamed him).[110] Similarly, Tac. *Agr.* was intended to defend Tacitus' father-in-law against those who associated him with the depravity of Domitian's reign as well as against the jealous aspersions of Agricola's detractors.[111]

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[106] Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People,' p. 143.
[107] See Edward W. Klink III, *The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 42-87 for a discussion of early Christian community models.
[108] Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People,' p. 131.
[109] *Ibid*., p. 132.

Two points emerge here: 1) biographies can be written for those outside of the 'community' that produces them;[112] and 2) the practice of biographical representation is in effect an act of legitimization and exercise of power over the memory of the subject. First, the use of polemic and apology within biographical representations points to an audience outside of the group producing the biography. Thus, the biography can function simultaneously to embolden the supporters of the subject and challenge those who are not. Accordingly, it makes little sense to speak of Cato 'communities' or 'Tacitean communities.'[113] On the contrary, these biographical works were intended for a wider audience group that encompassed those who were invested in Cato or Agricola as polarizing figures or those interested in the subject generally.[114]

Secondly, the constructing of βίοι/*vitae* is an act of creating and exercising legitimacy over the memory and representation of an individual of note. Certainly the aim of any biography was to gather accurate information about the subject, albeit more or less historically viable, and thus to present an authoritative presentation of his life.[115] The creation of biographical literature is the 'codification' of the individual's life and is done with the aims and purposes of the author as integral to the shaping and publication of the material.[116] The formulation and shaping of biographical material into a legitimate βίος takes on a wider range of meaning when the impetus for such a piece of literature can be 'identified with particular aims.'[117] In this way, biographies cease to be mere entertainment or stories and take on a greater sense of meaning. This appropriated meaning of the life of an individual could then be aimed to those who had adopted a complementary view or to those who had not. In both instances the authoritative portrait of the figure would affect a number of groups (supporters as a bolstering effect to their memories of the figure and the detractors as a challenge to their portrait), these groups, as polarized as they could be, would not constitute 'communities' as such and the biographical literature produced as a result of their debates would have been read by others as well.

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[110] *Ibid*.
[111] Cf. Tac. *Agr.*, 1.4; and 42.1-42.4. See also Bird, 'Bauckham's *The Gospel For All Christians*,' p. 6.
[112] Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People,' pp. 132-33.
[113] *Ibid*., p. 133.
[114] *Ibid*.
[115] Simon Swain, 'Biography and Biographic in the Literature of the Roman Empire,' in M. J. Edwards & Simon Swain, eds., *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 1-37; p. 2.

Primary and Secondary Audiences

The inclusion of dedicatory references in a number of βίοι/*vitae* can lead to the mistaken conclusion that biographies were written with a singular audience in mind. On the contrary, as Rawson has acknowledged, the Roman literary landscape was one dominated by patronage (at least in the general sense of the exchange of 'reciprocal services between individuals of equal or unequal status').[118] The dedication of particular works to a patron did not necessarily dictate a modification of the material to fit the needs, education or personality of the patron.[119] In some instances, the patron functioned as part of the primary audience of the work, in other instances, where there is no dedication; another primary audience may be envisioned.[120] However, the presence of a patron is not indicative of the patron as the sole audience.

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[116] *Ibid*.
[117] *Ibid*.
[118] Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, p. 38.
[119] *Ibid*., p. 58.

Nepos includes a dedication to Atticus, but it is clear from the preface that Nepos intends for his work to be read by a wider (secondary) audience, and one that may not be familiar with Greek customs.[121] Similarly, there may be some connection between the work of Philostratus and the literary circles to which he was a member as the primary audience of his biography of Apollonius of Tyana; yet, it is clear that he intends for his work to alleviate the general misunderstandings associated with his subject.[122] Here Philostratus may have a primary audience (literary circle/sophists) in mind as well as a secondary audience (those generally interested in Apollonius). The same can be said for Philo (Philo *Mos*. 1.1 1-4) who clearly has a specific audience in mind for his apologetic biography of Moses and may have had a secondary audience in mind as well (a non-specific, philosophically-minded audience, as well as an interested Jewish audience) and similar arguments can be made for Plutarch's (Plut. *Thes.* 1.1) primary and secondary audiences.[123] Authors often wrote biographies with multiple audiences in mind and with a view that their work could and would be read widely.[124]

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[120] What I mean by primary audience here is an audience group that can be successfully determined either from the text or from the specific historical/social location of the author. The secondary audience would be any audience group beyond the primary audience and would tend to be significantly large and undeterminable. Warren Carter, 'Recalling the Lord's Prayer: The Authorial Audience and Matthew's Prayer as Familiar Liturgical Experience,' CBQ 57.3 (1995), pp. 514-30; esp. pp. 518-19. Warren Carter's conception of 'authorial audience' is of some help here. He writes, 'the notion of the 'authorial audience' derives from the audience-oriented criticism of P. J. Rabinowitz. It refers to the 'intended reader,' that is, the readers that the author has in mind in creating the text. The author assumes that this audience possesses the socio-cultural knowledge and interpretative skills necessary to actualize the text's meaning. This audience is 'a contextualized implied reader,' not 'present in' the text, as an implied reader is usually said to be, but 'presupposed' by the text. The authorial audience 'is not reducible to textual features but can be determined only by an examination of the interrelation between the text and the context in which the work was produced.' Carter quotes, Peter J. Rabinowitz, 'Whirl without End: Audience Oriented Criticism,' in D. G. Atkins & L. Morrow, eds., *Contemporary Literary Theory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1989), pp. 81-100; p. 85. See Peter J. Rabinowitz, 'Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences,' *CritInq* 4 (1977), pp. 121-42; and *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 15-46.

[121] Nep. *De vir. ill.*,1-8. Loveday Alexander has done extensive work on the topic of dedicatory prefaces and their relationship to the audience, cf. 'Luke's Preface,' pp. 48-74; *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*; and 'Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography,' in Bruce W. Winter & Andrew D. Clarke, eds., *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1993), pp. 31-63.

[122] Philostr. *VA*, 1.3.1; and 1.2.3.

Prefaces, Dedications and Assessing Primary and Secondary Audiences

Alexander has suggested that the transition from an oral to a written medium as a viable tool for communication in the Greek world during the fourth century BCE marks a significant and important shift.[125] Prior to the fourth century most writing was used as a means to remember (‘*aide-mémoire*’) the things that one had already heard or knew and ‘the classic literary forms were still those of oral literature: epic and lyric verse, drama and rhetoric.’[126] As the importance and viability of writing grew into the fourth century, new forms of literature emerged in order to handle the demands of new literary needs. One of the important innovations of this age was the inclusion of both ‘readers as well as hearers’ as part of the implied and intended audiences of written texts.[127] However, the move to written communication was not embraced unequivocally and there was some concern that written texts would be void of the specific context that accompanied oral performance.[128] Plato expresses this concern in the following way:

> δεινὸν γάρ που, ὦ Φαῖδρε, τοῦτ’ ἔχει γραφή, καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὅμοιον ζωγραφίᾳ. καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἐκείνης ἔκγονα ἕστηκε μὲν ὡς ζῶντα, ἐὰν δ’ ἀνέρῃ τι, σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγᾷ. ταὐτὸν δὲ καὶ οἱ λόγοι: δόξαις μὲν ἂν ὥς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, ἐὰν δέ τι ἔρῃ τῶν λεγομένων βουλόμενος μαθεῖν, ἕν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταὐτὸν ἀεί. ὅταν δὲ ἅπαξ γραφῇ, κυλινδεῖται μὲν πανταχοῦ πᾶς λόγος ὁμοίως παρὰ τοῖς ἐπαΐουσιν, ὡς δ’ αὔτως παρ’ οἷς οὐδὲν προσήκει, καὶ οὐκ ἐπίσταται λέγειν οἷς δεῖ γε καὶ

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[123] Cf. Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, p. 44; Alan Wardman, *Plutarch’s Lives*, (London: Elek Books Ltd., 1974), pp. 37-48; esp. p. 45.

[124] The readership would most likely have been those among the educated and semi-educated. The oral viability of these texts may make a more expansive audience possible.

[125] Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospe*l, p. 18.

[126] *Ibid.*

[127] *Ibid.*

[128] *Ibid.*

> μή. πλημμελούμενος δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἐν δίκῃ λοιδορηθεὶς τοῦ πατρὸς ἀεὶ δεῖται βοηθοῦ: αὐτὸς γὰρ οὔτ᾽ ἀμύνασθαι οὔτε βοηθῆσαι δυνατὸς αὑτῷ (Pl. *Phdr.*, 275 d-e).[129]

Plato's concern seems to be two-fold: 1) that texts cannot speak for themselves and so offer no opportunity for dialog or discussion; and 2) since the texts cannot speak for themselves and since they offer no explanation or rebuttal they can be interpreted/misinterpreted in any number of ways in any number of contexts into which they might circulate. According to Plato the written text will always need someone or something to serve as an interpretative guide so that the texts is read and understood properly. Conversely, Isocrates embraced the prospect of texts circulating widely and wrote his published oration in honor of Evagoras with wide circulation in view. He writes,

> ἐγὼ δ᾽, ὦ Νικόκλεις, ἡγοῦμαι καλὰ μὲν εἶναι μνημεῖα καὶ τὰς τῶν σωμάτων εἰκόνας, πολὺ μέντοι πλείονος ἀξίας τὰς τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῆς διανοίας, ἃς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἄν τις μόνον τοῖς τεχνικῶς ἔχουσι θεωρήσειεν. προκρίνω δὲ ταύτας πρῶτον μὲν εἰδὼς τοὺς καλοὺς κἀγαθοὺς τῶν ἀνδρῶν οὐχ οὕτως ἐπὶ τῷ κάλλει τοῦ σώματος σεμνυνομένους ὡς ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ φιλοτιμουμένους: ἔπειθ᾽ ὅτι τοὺς μὲν τύπους ἀναγκαῖον παρὰ τούτοις εἶναι μόνοις, παρ᾽ οἷς ἂν σταθῶσι, τοὺς δὲ λόγους ἐξενεχθῆναί θ᾽ οἷόν τ᾽ ἐστὶν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα καί, διαδοθέντας ἐν ταῖς τῶν εὖ φρονούντων διατριβαῖς, ἀγαπᾶσθαι παρ᾽ οἷς κρεῖττόν ἐστιν ἢ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν εὐδοκιμεῖν: πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ὅτι τοῖς μὲν πεπλασμένοις καὶ τοῖς γεγραμμένοις οὐδεὶς ἂν τὴν τοῦ σώματος φύσιν ὁμοιώσειε, τοὺς δὲ τρόπους τοὺς ἀλλήλων καὶ τὰς διανοίας τὰς ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἐνούσας ῥᾴδιόν ἐστι μιμεῖσθαι τοῖς μὴ ῥᾳθυμεῖν αἱρουμένοις, ἀλλὰ χρηστοῖς εἶναι βουλομένοις. (Isoc. *Evag.*, 73-75).[130]

For Isocrates the written and published oration transcended the specific occasion for which it was originally composed (in this instance, the festival held in honor of Evagoras) and the act of writing (and publishing) extends the audience beyond the immediate primary audience to a wider secondary audience. The immediate context serves as some interpretative control for Isoc. *Evag*. but it is clear from the text itself that Isocrates wrote down his oration and composed the material in such a way as to reach a wide audience. Isocrates writes for the following reasons: 1) wise men wish to be honored for their character and not for their physical beauty (Isoc. *Evag.*, 73); 2) statues and other physical representations or memorials of the individual cannot travel and as such they must remain in the places where they are erected. This prevents the widest possible audience from knowing, appreciating and emulating the deeds and characteristics of the honorable person. A written record/presentation of the words and deeds of the honorable man can be copied and read widely. In this way the honorable person can be emulated by as many as are willing to follow his example (Isoc. *Evag.*, 74). 3) One cannot emulate a statue or a painting but one can emulate the deeds and characteristics of an honorable person (Isoc. *Evag.*, 75). For Isocrates there does not seem to be as much of a concern for interpretative control in writing. We would suggest that the introduction of and use of biographical literature (amongst other literary innovations) in this period points to the creation and/or adaptation of different types of literary expressions that contained interpretative controls within them.[131] For instance, as Alexander has noted, Plato's own publication of his dialogues carried with them a 'sort of explanatory scene-setting' which was often 'provided by an introductory scene or framework dialogue so that the dramatic mould of the whole is not broken.'[132] The inclusions of dedications could be seen to add a measure of interpretative control with the dedicatee as an indication of the implied audience. However, we would suggest that in the case of biography the genre itself establishes interpretative control with the emphasis being on the words and deeds of the subject and not on the implied or expressed audience (either primary and/or secondary).[133]

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[129] Plato, *Plato, Vol. 1: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo and Phaedrus*, LCL 36, trans. Harold North Fowler, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 564 & 566.

[130] Isocrates, *Isocrates, Vol. III: Evagoras, Helen, Busiris, Plataicus, Concerning the Team of Horses, Trapeziticus, Against Callimachus, Aegineticus, Against Lochites, Against Euthynus, Letters*, LCL 373, trans. Larue Van Hook, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 44 & 46.

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[131] Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, p. 19. Also see pp. 54-6 for further discussion.
[132] *Ibid*.

Alexander points out that while the practice of including explanatory prefaces was part of the literary tradition of the historians from the fifth century BCE on these historical prefaces are significantly different from the preface found at the beginning of Luke (Lk 1.1-4) and that these historical prefaces may not have been the literary tradition out of which Luke crafted his preface.[134] Alexander argues that the prefatory patterns exhibited in Luke fit most closely within the category of literature described as 'technical or professional prose' which she terms 'scientific' literature.[135] The prefatory material would seem to have had its origins in the historical literature of the fifth century BCE when the general patterns for writing both history and historical prefaces were established.[136] Alexander distinguishes a number of 'formal characteristics' 1) author's name; 2) dedication; 3) the subject of the book; 4) length of the preface and three 'recurrent topics' a) magnitude of the subject; b) the aims and values of history; c) the author's sources of information in historical prefaces.[137] Alexander also notes the formal characteristics of the prefaces of the 'scientific literature' as follows: 1) the author's decision to write; 2) subject and contents of the book; 3) dedication (with second person address); 4) the nature of the subject matter; 5) others who have written on the subject; 6) the author's qualifications; and 7) general remarks on methodology.[138] This list of general characteristics for both historical and scientific prefaces has been applied to the prefaces of select biographies[139].

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[133] See Plut. *Alex.,* 1.1-3, Plut. *Nic.* 1.5 and Nep. *Pelop*., 1.1. The emphasis here is generally on making a differentiation between history and biography. However, the comments by the writers themselves seem to suggest that if one is not aware of the generic parameters then one will not read the text correctly. Moreover, the reader will consider the work a failure if certain material is not included. Here the inclusions of qualifying statements give an indication of the extent of the interpretative control and emphasis of the biographical genre. It should be read as a biography and not as a history and as such it will include material pertinent to the words and deeds demonstrative of the character of the subject in question and it will not be an exhaustive presentation of each and every aspect of the subject's life.

[134] Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, p. 20. Alexander notes that, 'It is perhaps significant that classical literature shows this reluctance to step outside the bounds of a given literary form to add the kind of explanatory 'label' that we find in Luke 1.1-4. Certainly it is on the fringes of that literature, and in minor works falling less readily into the classical forms, that we begin to find the explanatory prefaces closer to what we are looking for (p. 20).' She notes that the literature of Xenophon (Xen. *Ages*, Xen. *Lac.* and Xen. *Eq.*) has prefaces that are similar to Luke's (p. 20). It is interesting to note that Xen. *Ages*., as one of the earliest extant examples of biography, shares some formal characteristics in its preface with the later biographical presentation of Luke.

[135] *Ibid*., p. 21. Here, Alexander understands 'scientific' to be closer to the German *wissenschaftlich* (academic/scientific) which would encompass both 'trade or professional manuals' and writings of 'the academic sphere (p. 21).

[136] *Ibid*., p. 23. Alexander notes that later rhetorician subsumed the art of historical writing into the practice of writing prefaces in general (p. 23). See Luc. *Hist. conscr.* 52-55 and Cic. *Leg*. 1.5.

Of the fifteen examples chosen, two examples no longer have their prefaces extant (Plut. *Vit.* and Suet. *Vit. Caes.*) and one has no formal preface (Porph. *Plot.*), twelve share some significant parallels (in terms of basic content) with the general characteristics of the historical and scientific prefaces.[140] All of the biographies surveyed with extant prefaces have some mention of the subject matter (present in both historical and scientific prefaces) and nine of the biographies contain some mention of the value of the subject (historical prefaces). Of the remaining five characteristics of the historical prefaces, all are represented in the biographical prefaces surveyed except the mention of the author's name. The recognition (in whole or in part) of source material occurs in seven of the biographical prefaces. In comparison to the scientific prefaces ten of the biographical prefaces contain some mention of the author's decision to write; twelve mention the subject matter or contents; five have a dedication, with three having a direct address; six mention the nature of the subject matter; eight discuss others who have written on the topic; two mention the author's qualifications for writing; and two include some sort of general remarks. Given even this brief survey a number of observations can be made.

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[137] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-34.

[138] *Ibid.*, pp. 69-91.

[139] See Appendix 2.

[140] The examples chosen represent the Greco-Roman biographical tradition from the 4th century BCE to the 4th century CE. In the case of the topics related to 'the aims and value of history' we have suggested reading the biographical prefaces in terms of their statements about the aims and values of either biography in general or the subject (person) in particular. We have omitted the relationship to the preface's length as discussed by Alexander on pp. 29-30. In general it was difficult to fit the data into the table and our readings of the texts suggested that the biographical prefaces tended to be proportional to the length of the biographies themselves. This issue of length is one of the major differences between the biographical prefaces and those of the 'scientific tradition.' In most cases the biographical prefaces are of a length that is more on par with those of the historical prefaces. The scientific prefaces tend to be quite short and so Luke's preface has that stylistic similarity with them. See Alexander, 'Luke's Preface,' pp. 213-16 where she makes some specific parallels between the structure of Luke's prefaces and the scientific prefaces. Our purpose here is to compare the biographical prefaces to the historical and scientific prefaces in terms of similarity of content. In terms of basic categories of content there is some significant similarity.

First, the prefaces of biographies in general, and that of Luke specifically, fit into the wider pattern of preface construction as a literary exercise in Greco-Roman literature. There certainly seem to be some specific affinities between Luke's preface and those of the 'scientific' literature but many of those affinities can be seen in the prefaces of biographies that pre-date (Isoc. *Evag.*), post-date (Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.*, Philostr. *VA*, Philostr. *VS*) and are roughly contemporary with Luke (Philo *Mos*. and Tac. *Agr*.). The inclusion of a preface of the type presented by Luke is well within the established generic pattern of historical, scientific and biographic literature. As such it is unclear if Luke's preface bears any stronger resemblance to the prefaces of 'scientific' literature than to those of biographies of which Luke is an example.

Second, just as Talbert has suggested that there may in fact be a number of 'non-essential' elements to be found in the presentations of Greco-Roman biographies, so too it may be the case that there are a number of optional elements that may or may not be included in the prefaces as well.[141] The aesthetic of ancient rhetoricians and grammarians aside, it remains the case that few writers included all of the ideal characteristics preferred in the writing of historical prefaces. It is more often the case that the texts display some if not all of the preferred characteristics and such is the case with the biographical prefaces surveyed here. One of the characteristics that seem to have been less than required was that of a dedication. Of the examples surveyed here, five (including Luke) include a dedication and three (Luke, Nepos and Isocrates) include a direct address to the dedicatee.[142] While the inclusion of some sort of direct address may have been necessary to the prefaces of the 'scientific' literature it may not have been for the prefaces of the biographical literature. Alexander's presentation on prefaces would have been strengthened by a comparison between the preface of Luke and those of other biographies. While Luke may share some formal similarities in terms of its preface with other scientific literature its overall content places it squarely within the genre of Greco-Roman biography. As a result, a comparison of Luke with other examples of biography would have been beneficial.[143]

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[141] Talbert, 'Once Again: Gospel Genre,' pp. 54-8.

Third, the overlap between the historical and 'scientific' prefaces and the preface of Luke continues to suggest, as Alexander has noted, that Luke may have been exposed to a wide variety of literary types.[144] While it is certainly possible that Luke drew from the 'scientific' tradition to craft the preface for his biography of Jesus we would suggest, following Alexander, that Luke's choices in the stylistic presentation of his preface were more 'unconscious' and 'instinctive' with any number of texts being the inspiration or source.[145] This should continue to challenge the ways in which we understand the literary and social levels of the evangelists in general and Luke in particular. The preface itself and the inclusion of a dedication does not necessarily lend to the suggestion that Luke was sending some 'kind of signal to his readers about the kind of book his Gospel was going to be.'[146] Luke prefaces his gospel as follows:

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[142] Isoc. *Evag.*, 1 (ὁρῶν, ὦ Νικόκλεις τιμῶντά σε τὸν τάφον τοῦ πατρὸς οὐ μόνον τῷ πλήθει); Nep. *De vir. ill.*, 1, (*Non dubito fore plerosque, Attice, qui hoc genus scripturae leve et non satis dignum summorum virorum personis iudicent, cum relatum legent, quis musicam docuerit Epaminondam, aut in eius virtutibus commemorari saltasse eum commode scienterque tibiis cantasse*); and Luke 1.3 (ἔδοξε κἀμοὶ παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαί κράτιστε Θεόφιλε).

[143] Alexander does discuss Luke in the context of being part of a philosophical biographical tradition per Talbert. However, these relationships are tenuous at best and more in-depth comparisons with a wider range of biographies would have been helpful. See Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, pp. 202-4; 'Luke's Preface,' pp. 64-9; and Talbert, *What Is A Gospel*, pp. 92-6. See also Vernon K. Robbins, 'Prefaces in Greco-Roman Biography and Luke-Acts,' in Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *1978 SBL Seminar Papers*, vol. 2, (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978), pp. 193-207.

[144] Alexander, 'Luke's Preface,' pp. 65-6; and *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, pp. 176-84. This makes further sense considering the relationships between neighboring genres (*genera proxima*) such as 'history,' 'moral philosophy,' 'religious or philosophical teaching,' 'encomium,' 'story and novel,' and 'political' presentations (Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* pp. 62-65). There is some measure of overlap between

> Ἐπειδήπερ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου, ἔδοξε κἀμοὶ παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε, ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν (Lk 1.1-4).[147]

The interest here is not in grappling with every aspect of the preface but to confine our inquiry to the role that the preface may play in establishing interpretative control and what role, if any, the dedicatee plays in this process.[148] Verse three of the preface contains two key pieces of information: Luke's purpose for writing and the dedicatee. Luke writes, ἔδοξε κἀμοὶ παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε, ('and I decided after carefully investigating everything from the beginning to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,' [Lk 1.3]).

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these neighboring genres and the material included in the 'scientific tradition' ('treatise on medicine, philosophy, mathematics, engineering, rhetoric and a wide variety of other subjects.' [Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, p. 21]). The obvious parallels are with the overlapping areas of philosophy.

[145] *Ibid*., p. 65.

[146] Alexander, 'Luke's Preface,' p. 64.

[147] 'Since many have endeavored to compile an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and servants of the word, and I decided after carefully investigating everything from the beginning to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you might know the truth concerning the things which you have been taught' (LK 1.1-4).

[148] For a detailed presentation on the grammar, syntax structure and meaning of the preface see Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, pp. 102-46.

Alexander notes that ‘the late position of the address in the sentence is post-classical. In classical rhetoric, the address normally follows the opening two or three words of the sentence.’[149] This basic pattern is followed by both Isocrates (ὁρῶν, ὦ Νικόκλεις, τιμῶντά σε τὸν τάφον τοῦ πατρὸς οὐ μόνον τῷ πλήθει καὶ τῷ κάλλει τῶν ἐπιφερομένων… [Isoc. *Evag*., 1]) and Nepos (*Non dubito fore plerosque, Attice, qui hoc genus scripturae leve et non satis dignum summorum virorum personis iudicent*… [Nep. *De vir. ill.*, 1]) and it seems to have been the practice of the ‘Scientific writers of the Hellenistic period.’[150] It is interesting to note that Luke nowhere else mentions Theophilus (other than Acts 1.1) and this lack of mention of the dedicatee seems to be common in the ‘scientific tradition’ and in the biographies as well.[151] Two specific biographical exceptions to this practice are that of Isocrates and Nepos. Isocrates mentions Nicocles, the dedicatee and son of Evagoras, once by direct address in the preface to Isoc. *Evag*. and at least twice more by name in the concluding sections. The multiple addresses to Nicocles makes some sense given the context of the oration (a speech in honor of the deceased king [Evagoras] on the occasion of the celebration of his life) and the personal relationship between Isocrates and Nicocles as teacher and pupil. Nepos addresses Atticus (the dedicatee of his collection of *Lives*) once in the preface and mentions him later in reference to Atticus’ work as an historical source and numerous times in the biography of Atticus. Likewise, Tacitus dedicates his biography of Agricola to the memory of his deceased father-in-law (*hic interim liber honori Agricolae soceri mei destinatus, professione pietatis aut laudatus erit aut excusatus* [Tac. *Agr*., 3.3]) but he does not address him directly and he mentions him numerous times throughout the biography. Philostratus dedicates his collection of lives of sophists to Antonius Gordian in a separate dedicatory sentence and never mentions him directly by name in the preface.[152] Given the relatively infrequent mention of the dedicatee over the course of these works we would continue to question the extent to which the dedicatee is a definitive indication of the specific audience for such texts. Luke's desire to write 'an orderly account (Lk 1.3)' of the material that he had gathered while informative in part, does not give any clear indication as to whether or not the preface serves as any interpretative function to the work as a whole. Furthermore, the relationship between Theophilus and Luke is vague and it is unclear what their connection to each other was. This further complicates using Theophilus as a definitive factor in determining the audience for Luke.[153] The genre of the work itself continues to be one of the most dominant interpretative forces for understanding and reading the text correctly.[154]

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[149] Alexander, ‘*Luke’s Preface*,’ p. 125.
[150] *Ibid.*
[151] *Ibid*., p. 126.

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[152] However, he does refer to Gordianus as Μουσηγέτα (leader of the muses) (*Philostr. VS*, 480).

[153] See Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, pp. 187-200. Alexander reminds us that, 'the 'personalizing' of a dedicated text tends to be limited to superficialities, and often, as with Luke's, to the preface; it cannot therefore be automatically assumed to give us a key to the nature of the text itself. Failing any other references to Theophilus or his interests in the text, it would be dangerous to assume that Luke's point of view throughout his narrative was determined by a wish to please his particular reader (pp. 199-200).' See also Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, p. 58.

[154] We have not covered the preface to Acts here because it is the preface of a second volume of a different genre. Certainly some connections can be drawn between the two prefaces of the two works. We would highlight one interesting connection. In Acts 1.1 the author writes Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιησάμην περὶ πάντων, ὦ Θεόφιλε, ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν, ('In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote concerning all that Jesus began to do and teach') with the implication being that the first volume was focuses on the words and deeds of Jesus; with words and deeds being the hallmark of a biography. While the preface to Luke does not tip the author's hand as to the specific genre of the text, the preface of Acts may point back in the direction of defining Luke as a biography: an account of the words and deeds of Jesus. See Loveday C. A. Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles*, LNTS 298, (London: T & T Clark, 2005), pp. 21-42.

Focused and Open Audiences/Markets

How were markets targeted and what sorts of markets were present in the Greco-Roman world?[155] Markets were often dictated by the distinctive ways in which biographies were used.[156] Markets would be different as biographies were intended to educate, entertain, provide moral example, or legitimate an individual. Thus, the 'market niche' for biographies intended for entertainment (Anon. *Vit. Aesop*) could be quite different from that of educational biographies (Philostr. *VA*, Philo *Mos*.).[157] Moreover, some markets were focused while others were open. Works such as Anon. *Vit. Aesop*, Luc. *Demon*., and Suet. *Vit. Caes.* were intended for open audiences.[158] Their appeal was wide and there is little or no indication that they were written with a specified audience (philosophical school, specific critics, etc.) in mind.[159] On the contrary, works such as Iambl. *VP*, Plut. *Vit*., Philo *Mos*., Porph. *Plot*., Isoc. *Evag*. and Xen. *Ages.* would have targeted a specific market. Iamblichus' and Porphyry's works served as introductory material to compilations of their subjects philosophical teachings. In these instances the focused market would be Pythagoreans and Neo-Platonists, primarily, and other philosophically minded individuals secondarily. Philo and Xenophon marketed their works to those who criticized Moses and Agesilaus, respectively. Plutarch marketed his *Lives* to the philosophically educated and Isocrates marketed *Evagoras* to all those in attendance at the celebration of the life of Evagoras (including Nicocles).[160]

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[155] Market is used here in the sense of an interest group or interested group. These groups could be of varying size and in multiple locations. We are not using market in the sense of economic exchange, although at points, the act of selling and re-selling texts could fit into a general economic scheme.

[156] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* pp. 149-52; 185-8; 'About People, by People, For People,' pp. 134-5; Talbert, 'Once Again: Gospel Genre,' pp. 57-9.

[157] This is not to say that there was not some overlap in audiences.

[158] The somewhat salacious content found in Suetonius' work indicates a much more popular (or wide) readership for his *Lives*. Similarly, Lucian gives some indication as to the ideally large readership for his work on Demonax (Luc. *Demon*., 2). Perry has described Anon. *Vit. Aesop* in the following way, 'like the fabulous history of Alexander, it is a naïve, popular, and anonymous book, composed for the entertainment and edification of the common people rather than for educated men, and making little or no pretense to historical accuracy or literary elegance (Ben E. Perry, *Studies in the Text History of the Life and Fables of Aesop*, PMAPA 7, [Haverford, PA: American Philological Association, 1936], p. 1). See Lawrence Wills, *The Quest of the Historical Gospel: Mark, John and the Origins of the Gospel Genre*, (London: Routledge, 1997) and Richard I. Pervo, 'A Nihilist Fabula: Introducing the *Life of Aesop*,' in Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance and Judith Perkins, eds., *Ancient Christian Fiction and Early Christian Narrative*, SBLSS 6 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), pp. 77-120.

[159] There is no evidence to support the notion that biographies were written for a small, enumerated audience that the author could list by name. The size definiteness of the audience seems to be determined by the subject matter.

Focused audiences could be quite large. There is a noticeable difference between a group of undisclosed Pythagoreans and a specific Pythagorean 'community'. While Pythagoreans or those interested in Pythagoreanism represent a focused 'market niche' the niche is large enough to be prohibitive in assigning particular individuals or groups of individuals ('communities') to it. Similarly, the critics that Philo addresses are specific enough to account for a definitive literary audience, but it is nearly impossible to surmise the specific critics or 'schools' about which Philo is concerned. Likewise, open audiences could be quite large and could include those from the highly educated to the illiterate (who could have had access to biographies via public readings or performances).

To summarize, literacy in the Roman world precluded a large number of individuals partaking in personal reading for leisure. Most personal reading was undertaken by scholars or the highly educated and most often with education as the purpose. Recreational reading most often took the form of public or semi-public readings (a slave to a master, entertainment at a dinner, the reading of technical/vocational manuals, drama, etc.) and as such, literature was able to reach a semi-literate and illiterate public in some fashion.[161] While there is little evidence to support the notions of popular literature, various types of literature, biographies included, would have been marketed to any number of niches in Roman society. The 'market niches' would often be dictated by the purpose of the literature (entertainment, polemic, etc.). The markets could be focused or open, and there is little indication that biographical literature was intended for small, confined audiences or communities.[162] Generally, authors wrote with a multiplicity of audiences in mind (primary and secondary) and as such, their work could be directed to more than one 'market niche.'[163]

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[160] Isoc. *Evag.*, 73-81.
[161] Plin. (Y) *Ep.*, 3.5.10-16.

A Proposed Typology for Greco-Roman Biography[164]

At the outset it should be noted that the schema we are suggesting here is a modern one and not one imposed on these texts by ancient critics and/or authors. This modern classification certainly allows for an appropriate classification of Greco-Roman biographical texts as the differentiation between non-contemporary and contemporary in terms of sources (if not in terms of a classification for the texts themselves) would have resonated with ancient audiences conceptually if not with the specific language being employed here. The preference for contemporary and eye-witness testimony/sources is well documented in the historical tradition. On the subject Alexander writes,

> The importance of having proper sources of information, and of verifying and testing the information received from tradition or from hearsay, was recognized in Greek historiography at least from the time of Herodotus. Herodotus, however, does not discuss his sources in general terms *in his preface*: his much quote remarks on the value of eyewitnesses occur not in the preface but as *obiter dicta* attached to specific items of information.[165]

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[162] Those in a 'market niche' need not have anything in common other than a general interest in the same topic. This differs from 'communities' in the sense that 'communities' share more than a passing interest in a particular figure or subject. A general philosophical interest does not constitute a community. The confinement of communities can be both ideological and geographical phenomena. This same confinement is not necessarily a hallmark of 'market niches.'

[163] Cf. Isoc. *Evag.,* 73-75; Nep. *De vir.* ill., 1-3; and Plut. *Thes*., 1.1-2. See Bird, 'Bauckham's *The Gospel For All Christians*,' p. 11.

[164] This is a re-working of the typology proposed in Justin M. Smith, 'Genre, Sub-Genre and Questions of Audience: A Proposed Typology for Greco-Roman Biography,' *JGRChJ* 4 (2007), pp. 184-216; pp. 212-14. See Patricia Cox Miller, 'Strategies of Representation in Collective Biography: Constructing the Subject as Holy,' in Tomas Hägg & Philip Rousseau, eds., *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 209-54 for a discussion of the relationship between subjects and authors in collective biographies in late antiquity.

[165] Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, p. 32.

Elsewhere she states,

> From Herodotus onwards, the importance of not being credulous was emphasized: it was recognized that one must have some way of assessing the reliability of informants, if only by recognizing and discounting any bias they might have… A prime value was placed was places on 'seeing for oneself', or failing that on finding and questioning eyewitnesses.[166]

The implication here is that for ancient historians 'contemporary history was the only proper subject for a real historian.'[167] We would suggest that a similar emphasis on contemporary sources would have been placed on the act of biographical writing.[168] A number of examples lend to the conclusion that there was a preference for contemporary sources when crafting an accurate and trustworthy *bios*. Plutarch opts for the eyewitness account of Ctesias (physician of Artaxerxes) over the account of the historian Deinon (not an eyewitness) in his biography of Artaxerxes (Plut., *Artax*., 6.6).[169] Both Lucian (Luc. *Alex*., 54-57) and Porphyry (Porph. *Plot*., 2.10,*ff*.; 4.1,*ff*.; 5.1,*ff*.; 7.50,*ff*.., etc.) base a significant portion of their respective biographies on their own eyewitness testimony of the events and subjects in question.[170] Similarly, Xenophon, Nepos (Nep. *Att*.,13.7; and 17.1) and Tacitus (Tac. *Agr*., 4.3; 24.3; and 44.5) appeal to their own personal experiences with their subjects. Alexander suggests that the 'convention of *autopsia*' or 'personal experience' provided the best basis for writing history and this same convention seems to have been at use in biographical writing.[171] Given the preference for contemporary sources it is not inconceivable that ancient authors would have understood making a differentiation between contemporary and non-contemporary biographies. Likewise, given the above discussion on genre as integral to interpretative control and the desire on the part of some authors to attempt to differentiate a context or audience for their written works it is reasonable to suggest that ancient writers would have grasped the conception differentiation between open and closed audience groups.

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[166] *Ibid*., p. 33.

[167] *Ibid*.. See Arnaldo Momigliano, *Studies in Historiography*, (Weidenfeld &Nicholson, London: 1969), pp. 130-1.

[168] This preoccupation with contemporary sources as an overlap between historical and biographic writing makes sense given the relationship between historiography and biography as neighboring genres (*genera proxima*). See Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* pp. 62-65.

[169] See Xen., *An*., 1.8.26-7.

[170] See Richard J. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), pp. 132-45 for a discussion of the eyewitness testimony of Lucian and Porphyry. See pp. 358-83 on the Gospel of John as eyewitness testimony.

As we have seen, there have been a number of typologies of βίοι/*vitae* based on a variety of organizing principles (literary structure, subject, purpose, etc.). Yet we have also acknowledged that each of these typologies is insufficient in addressing questions pertaining to the relationships between authors, subjects and audiences. Accordingly, we would propose a typology that takes both of these issues into account. Greco-Roman biography can be divided into four sub-types: 1) **Non-Contemporary-Focused**; 2) **Non-Contemporary-Open**; 3) **Contemporary-Focused**; and 4) **Contemporary-Open**.[172]

This typology is based on the following guiding principles: 1) non-contemporary biographies are those in which the subject is not within 'living memory' of the author.[173] 2) Contemporary biographies are those where the subject is accessible to the author via 'living memory'. 3) Focused biographies are those that have a distinguishable audience. 4) Open biographies are those that have no distinguishable audience group. Admittedly, there are two potential difficulties with this typology. First, the construction of audience functions on a number of levels, at least primary and secondary, and as such the secondary levels of audience tend to be less distinguishable than those of the primary levels. Second, it can be difficult to identify the relationship between the subject and author as either contemporary or non-contemporary. In some contexts this differentiation is easily achieved (e.g. Plut. *Thes.,* Plut. *Rom.*; Philostr. *VA*; and Philo *Mos*., as non-contemporary biographies and Isoc. *Evag*., Xen. *Ages*., Porph. *Plot*. and Nep. *Att*. as contemporary biographies), while in others it is more difficult (Nep. *Cato.*; Suet. *Claud.*, Suet. *Calig.* and Suet. *Ner.*).[174] It could be posited that some biographies straddle the line between open and focused audiences. This is certainly possible for those examples that seem to address a specific audience group while simultaneously envisaging a broad readership as well. It could be possible to offer further categories demonstrative of this seemingly fluid relationship. However, as we have presented the material, adding further categories would have the function of watering down the typology and obscuring the viable differences between the primary and secondary audiences for some biographies. It is unclear if any of the examples examined in the current thesis would fit comfortably into such a both/and type of category (both open and focused).

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[171] Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, p. 34. Here 'the abstract noun αὐτοψία which is formed from the personal noun αὐτόπτης (p. 34).' See pp. 34-41 for an extensive discussion of this literary convention.

[172] See Appendix 1.2.

[173] 'Living memory' means simply that the author had access to first-hand/eye-witness accounts concerning the life of the subject. These accounts can be the author's own or those of others which are accessible to the author. See Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, p. 7.

This secondary category would further obscure the potential relationship between primary and secondary audiences. The existence of multiple audience levels significantly nuances the discussions of both biographical audiences in general and potentially gospel audiences in particular. The nuanced language of 'open' (no distinguishable/determinable primary audience) and 'focused' (some determinable primary audience, but not necessarily a sectarian audience) offer more room for flexibility than language ('specific' and 'indefinite') that posits a very strict dichotomy for the audience groups. In this way the language of the proposed typology ('open' and 'focused') offers the possibility of speaking about audience groups within (or along) a spectrum without requiring additional sub-categories.

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[174] These stand just outside the lifetime of the author and as such may be at the borders of 'living memory'. The Gospel of John presents similar difficulties. However, the reliance upon, or lack thereof, of first-hand/eyewitness accounts may provide a rubric here. Those that utilize these accounts are contemporary and those that do not are best understood as non-contemporary.

1) **Non-Contemporary-Focused** biographies (e.g. Satyr. *Vit. Eur.*; Philo *Mos.*; Plut. *Alex* [the majority of Plutarch's biographies are non-contemporary with some notable exceptions mentioned below]; Arr. *Anab.*; Iambl. *VP*; and Philostr. *VS*) are biographical works about non-contemporary men of importance and are aimed at a distinguishable audience (philosophical school, educational group, critics, etc.). They are less likely to utilize verifiable eyewitness accounts and they tend to be less 'historically' reliable. Myth, fiction, and the like are readily used and without much reservation for the crafting of this type of biography.[175]

Relational Typology for Greco-Roman Biography

Non-Contemporary-Focused	**Contemporary-Focused**
Satyr. *Vit. Eur.* (3rd BCE)	Isoc. *Evag* (4th BCE)
Philo *Mos.*(1st CE)	Xen. *Ages.* (4th BCE)
Plut. *Alex.* (1st CE)	Gospels (Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn) (1st CE)
Plut. *Rom.* (1st CE)	Plut. *Galb.* (1st CE)
Arr. *Anab.* (2nd CE)	Tac. *Agr.* (1st CE)
Philostr. *VS* (3rd CE)	Porph. *Plot.* (3rd CE)
Iambl. *VP* (4th CE)	
Non-Contemporary-Open	**Contemporary-Open**
Alcid., *Hom.* (4th BCE)	Nep. *Att.* (1st BCE)
Nep. *De vir. ill.*(1st BCE)	Suet. *Vesp.* (1st CE)
Suet. *Aug.* (1st CE)	Suet. *Tit.* (1st CE)
Suet. *Iul.* (1st CE)	Suet. *Dom.* (1st CE)
Suet. *Tib.* (1st CE)	Luc. *Alex.* (2nd CE)
Anon. *Vit. Aesop* (1st CE)	Luc. *Demon.* (2nd CE)
Philostr. *VA* (3rd CE)	Anon. *Vit. Sec.* (2nd CE)

Chart 1.1

2) **Non-Contemporary-Open** biographies (e.g. Alcid., *Hom.*; Nep. *De vir. ill.* [the majority of the examples here are non-contemporary with his biography of Atticus as the notable exception]; Suet. *Iul.*, Suet. *Aug.* and Suet. *Tib.*; Anon. *Vit. Aesop*; and Philostr. *VA*), likewise, are biographical works about non-contemporary men of

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[175] C. B. R. Pelling, 'Truth and Fiction in Plutarch's Lives', in D. A. Russell, ed., *Antonine Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 19-52; esp. pp. 24-7.

importance but are aimed at an indistinguishable audience.[176] Often these audiences can be those who are generally interested in the subject, history or entertainment.[177]

3) **Contemporary-Focused** biographies (e.g. Isoc. *Evag*., Xen. *Ages*.; Plut. *Galb.*, Plut. *Oth.*; Tac. *Agr*. and Porph. *Plot*.) are works written about a person of significant interest who lived within 'living memory' of the author and are directed toward a distinguishable audience.[178] Eyewitness accounts are of vital importance to these types of biographies and they are frequently used to refute criticisms aimed at the subject.[179] Often, in this type of biography, there exists a personal relationship between the author and subject that transcends a conventional interest in the subject as a moral example or person of interest.

4) **Contemporary-Open** biographies (ex. Nep. *Att*.; Suet. *Vesp*., Suet. *Tit*. and Suet, *Dom*.; Anon. *Vit. Sec.* and Luc. *Demon*.) are works written about a person of significant interest who lived within the 'living memory' of the author and are directed toward an indistinguishable audience.[180] This type of biography tends to be geared toward education and entertainment.[181] As with other contemporary biographies, contemporary-open biographies are often dependent on eyewitness/first-hand accounts. Again, the contemporary nature of these biographies often points to a personal

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[176] See Barry Baldwin, *Suetonius*, (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1983), pp. 101-213.

[177] Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, p. 49.

[178] Justin M. Smith, 'About Friends, By Friends, For Others: Author-Subject Relationships in Contemporary Greco-Roman Biographies,' in Edward W. Klink, III, ed., *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*, LNTS 353, (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), pp. 49-67 for a more complete discussion of the relationships between contemporary biographers and their subjects.

[179] Cf. Isoc. *Evag*., 4-6; Xen. *Ages*., 3.1; 10.3; and Tac. *Agr*. 4.3; 24.3; 44.5.

[180] While this typology ends up separating some of the works of Plutarch, Nepos and Suetonius into different 'types' (based the relationship of the subject and the author), the separation is representative of the differing subject matter (contemporary or non-contemporary) as opposed to structural differences or differences in purpose. See Talbert, 'What is A Gospel?' pp. 93-98.

[181] See Philostr. *VA*, 1.2.3; Luc. *Demon*., 1-2; and *Anon. Vit. Sec.*, 1.1-5 as examples of an educational impetus for writing βίοι.

relationship between the author and subject, and as such, the author often has a stake in telling/re-telling the life of the subject.[182]

What is being proposed is a typology for βίοι that takes into account the relationships that exist between the author and the subject and the author and the audience. In some instances, authors have chosen to write about men of renown who are removed from the writers' own context but whose reputation and status render them as important subjects. Some of these biographies are written with focused audiences in mind **(Non-Contemporary-Focused**) while others are written with reference to no focused audience (**Non-Contemporary-Open**). In other instances, authors have chosen as biographical subjects persons who are closer in chronological proximity to them. Often, the authors have a personal relationship with the subject (friend, teacher, mentor, etc.) and thus have personal reasons for recording the subject's life. Similarly, these biographies can be written with a distinguishable **(Contemporary-Focused**) or indistinguishable (**Contemporary-Open**) audience in mind. This typology has the distinct advantage of being flexible enough to accommodate the generic diversity, yet concrete enough to offer distinct insight into the author-subject-audience relationships that exist in Greco-Roman biography.[183] What remains to be determined is into which categories the canonical gospels belong and how does this inform our reading of them?

Conclusion

The establishment of generic and sub-generic classification is in effect the establishment of hermeneutical rubrics. Genre provides an important literary context through which we are able to interpret and understand texts. Genres serve as an agreed upon set of expectations for both the author and recipients and these expectations guide how texts are written and read. Genres and subgenres are flexible and do not represent a codified set of hard and fast rules. On the contrary, they are better understood in terms of family resemblances. These resemblances can be seen in the ways in which individual examples of a genre conform or violate generic expectations. These conformities and violations are often manifested through the similarities and dissimilarities a specific text exhibits with neighboring genres. Genres are socially conditioned and they reflect the ethos and concerns of the societies in which they emerge. Genres and sub-genres are inherently descriptive and not prescriptive.

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[182] Swain, 'Biography and Biographic,' p. 2.

[183] For instance, if one example proves to fit better in another category, the entire typology is not undermined unlike typologies based on literary structure.

Many sub-generic classifications are useful but they are not always helpful. As we formulate new questions for a set of texts, often we are also in need of forming new classifications to address adequately those questions. Classifications that deal with literary structure are helpful but they are not always useful for dealing with questions related to authors, subjects and audiences. Past classifications for βίοι have dealt with either literary structure (Leo) or purpose (Talbert). None of them have dealt directly with the relationship between genre and audience. Further, these classifications have not fully considered the implications of genre theory. As a result, the classifications themselves have proven to be so rigid that they are unable to stand up to scrutiny.

While modern genre theory can be a useful tool for understanding how literature functions and evolves, it is also necessary to place βίοι in their Greco-Roman context. This is especially true when one considers the issue of literacy as determining audience. The overall lack of literacy in Rome excluded many from reading texts privately. Most recreational reading was done in a public or semi-public setting. Readings could be performed for singular individuals or groups and they could take place in private homes or public venues. The purpose of the writing (education, entertainment, polemic, apology, etc.) would often dictate the ‘market niche’ to which the work was directed. Given that an author could expect his work to be read or performed in a variety of settings (Isoc. *Evag*., 73-75); it is possible that some authors would write βίοι with multiple audiences in mind.

We have proposed a typology for Greco-Roman biography that takes the relationships between authors, subjects and audiences into account. Some authors chose to write about exemplary figures from the past, and they would often rely on written sources, both fictional and historical, to shape the biography. Others wrote about contemporary figures, figures that existed within the living memory of the author. These authors, as students, disciples or friends of the subject, would often rely on firsthand accounts and reminiscences as well as written texts as a means of constructing the narrative. These biographies could be directed toward focused ‘market niches’ or more or less focused groups. Of interest here is how to classify the canonical gospels and what those classifications convey about the intentions of the authors and their relationship to gospel audiences.

Chapter 3. Authoritative People, Authoritative Places and Authoritative Gospels: The Crafting of Gospel Authority in the Patristic References to Gospel Origins

Introduction: Gospel Audiences and Patristic Interpretations[1]

Considering the relational typology that has been proposed for Greco-Roman βίοι/*vitae* the question that still remains unanswered is this: what kind or type of biography are the Gospels? While not without some difficulties, determining the temporal relationship between authors and their subjects in βίοι presents us with fewer problems. In the case of most biographies it is not difficult to determine whether or not the subject fell within the bounds of living memory.[2] This would also seem to be the case with all four of the Gospels. It is most likely, if not certain, that all four were written within living memory of their subject, Jesus of Nazareth and thus should be counted as examples of contemporary βίοι. What is of less certainty is the relationship between the authors and their implied audiences. Were the Gospels intended for a wider, more open audience? Or were they intended for a more focused audience? At the outset it must be noticed that the kind of definite implied readership that Bauckham has intended to challenge does not seem to apply to the genre of Greco-Roman biography.[3] There is little evidence to support the notion that '…a single, coherent body of believers that forms either one church or a few close-knit churches in a symbiotic relationship' would have been the target audience for biographies.[4] This is not to say that this could not have been the case for the Gospels, yet there is little evidence to support the notion that biographies in general were ever written for such definitive audiences. Even in the instances where biographies are written of philosophers, a social situation closer to that of the early Christian movement, there is little to suggest that these biographies were intended only for the students of the philosopher.[5] What emerges from the biographical tradition are audience groups that are not different in kind (i.e. definite or indefinite) but audience groups that differ in degree (focused or open). In relation to gospel audiences, the question becomes the following: Were the implied gospel audiences open or focused? Patristic citations concerning the gospel origin traditions as they relate to gospel audiences will prove to be of great help in continuing to work through this question. To this end, the work of Margaret Mitchell on the subject will be incredibly important. Mitchell has presented the patristic gospel origin traditions and early gospel interpretation in the following manner:

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[1] See Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Collection and Origin of the Canonical Gospels*, trans. John Bowden, (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000), pp. 10-33 for a discussion of a number of topics addressed in the current chapter.

[2] Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, p. 7. See also Simon Swain, 'The Reliability of Philostratus's *Lives of the Sophists*,' *ClAnt* 10.1 (1991), pp. 148-63; p. 152. Swain states, 'Indeed, given that Philostratus depends greatly on oral sources, it may well be that Nicetes, who lived about 170 years before the *Lives* were published, might represent the upper limit for recollection.' This may point to an upper limit for the recognition and use of oral sources.

[3] Bauckham, 'Introduction to *The Gospels for All Christians*,' p. 1.

> The Gospels ultimately were read as addressing 'All Christians' in that they were regarded as having communicated a universal divine truth. That they could so effectively be read this way was in fact their genius and it was a major factor in the rise and missionary success of the Christian cult. But recognition of that universal readership did not concomitantly require later Christian readers…to disregard circumstances of an original, specific, local origin. Patristic

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[4] Klink, *The Sheep of the Fold*, p. 92.

[5] Iambl. *VP* served as an introduction to a larger work on the philosophy of Pythagoras. While there is evidence to suggest the existence of Pythagorean communities in the fifth century BCE, there is little evidence to suggest that these communities persisted to the time of Iamblichus. It is unlikely that Iamblichus intended the biography for only a Pythagorean community. It is more likely that he intended it for use in his own school and that it would be useful for anyone interested in philosophy in general or for those interested in Pythagoras specifically, see John Dillon & Jackson Hershell, *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life, Text, Translation, and Notes* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 14-16. Dillon & Hershell also suggest that *Iambl. VP* has a 'strong protreptic purpose' and consider the work to be a gospel of sorts, p. 25. The protreptic nature of the work would indicate that it was intended to attract those beyond the school, either that of Pythagoras or that of Iamblichus himself. Similarly, Lucian intends his biography of the philosopher Demonax to be read widely (Luc. *Demon.*, 2); Philostratus intends his biography of Apollonius to tackle the issue of a general ignorance or misunderstanding in regard to his subject, an ignorance that extends beyond his immediate literary and philosophical circles (*Philostr. VA*, 1.2.3). See Smith, 'About Friends,' pp. 49-67.

> authors…found many creative ways to hold in tension the Gospels' historical particularity and theological universality.[6]

For Mitchell, the earliest interpreters of the Gospels found a way to maintain and recognize the validity of the origin traditions that proposed specific localities and audiences for each of the Gospels, while still maintaining an understanding of the usefulness of the Gospels for disseminating a 'universal divine truth.'[7] In effect, Mitchell presents a dichotomy of universal and particular that is kept in balance by the theological rendering of the readers and thinkers in the early church. While this thesis seems reasonable it may be presenting a false dichotomy, with the particularity of the traditions being ultimately overridden by the universal applicability of the Gospels.

The purpose this chapter is not to critique each and every aspect of Mitchell's presentation. Other responses to Mitchell have been made and some of the questions raised by them will be continued here.[8] The purpose here is to further the conversation regarding the origin traditions of the Gospels by placing them in context. 1) The origin traditions need to be placed first in their Greco-Roman context as either similar to or distinct from other biographical traditions related to authors in the ancient world. Specifically, do these traditions conform to the patterns and purposes of the biographies of poets and philosophers? As writers and thinkers/teachers, these historical figures, and the biographical interest in them, as well as their works/teachings, would seem to provide some of the closest parallels to the gospel origin traditions. 2) The origin traditions need to be placed into their immediate context. Many of the traditions that have come down to us have come through quotations and fragments. How were these quotations used and what purpose did they serve? Finally, 3) these traditions need to be placed into the hermeneutical context of the early church. Did these traditions have any effect on how the Gospels were read and interpreted? Or were there other overarching hermeneutical approaches that superseded the specificity of the origin traditions? The hope here is that by putting these traditions into context we may be better able to ascertain the role they

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[6] Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 46.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] Considering much could be made of the debate between Bauckham and Mitchell on the nature of Patristic evidence/counter-evidence as it relates to Bauckham's thesis concerning the wider implied audience for the gospels, some comments on the matter are required here. Bauckham's introductory essay in *The Gospels for All Christians* has raised the question as to the validity of what he describes as the 'assumption' that the individual canonical gospels were written specifically for individual Christian communities (Bauckham, 'For Whom,' p. 10). His essay challenges this widely held assumption on a number of grounds. 1) The broad contours of the early Christian movement (*ibid*., pp. 30-44) indicates that travel was common amongst Christian communities and points to the strong possibility not only of accidental dissemination of texts and ideas but the purposeful circulation of texts (gospels); 2) he suggests that the gospels should not be used to mirror-read social contexts back onto the gospels in a way analogous to the Pauline epistles since different genres require different reading strategies (*ibid*., pp. 26-30); 3) Bauckham suggests that given the general pattern of travel and movement by individuals in the early Church, it is reasonable to conclude that some, if not all of the evangelists, would have been familiar with multiple Christian contexts and as such they would not necessarily have envisaged their works for only one community or only one context (*ibid*., pp. 37-8). Mitchell's response to Bauckham's essay takes up primarily the issue of the 'hermeneutical relevance' of the perceived local audiences of the gospels as being a modern and not an ancient concern (*ibid*., p. 47; Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 46). The crux of Mitchell's argument is that while 'the gospels were ultimately regarded as addressing 'all Christians' in that they were regarded as having communicated a universal divine truth…Patristic authors…found many creative ways to hold in tension the gospel's historical particularity and theological unity (*ibid*., p. 46). To advance her argument, Mitchell presents a wide array of Patristic evidence (the works of Papias, Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, as well as various ancient prologues the gospels) to demonstrate that the particular local audiences for the gospels were a preoccupation of the Patristic authors.

Bauckham has since countered Mitchell's counter-argument on a number of fronts: 1) ancient evidence (Galen) suggests that oral performances could be written down for private use but that this context is not analogous to the situation envisaged by proponents of the gospel community hypothesis (Richard J. Bauckham, 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence? A Response to Margaret Mitchell,' in Edward W. Klink, III, ed., *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*, LNTS 353, (London: T. &. T. Clark, 2010), pp. 68-110; pp. 72-8); 2) that an audience requesting a particular text be written (as evidenced in some of the Patristic citations) does not necessarily mean that those requesting the texts are the sole audience or recipients (*ibid*., pp. 78-82); 3) Bauckham continues to press the issue as to the hermeneutical relevance of the gospel origin traditions (*ibid*., pp. 83-90, 92-110) and questions whether the ancient interpreters found the supposed local gospel audiences important to the interpretation of the gospels; and 4) Bauckham suggests that the gospel prologues that recount some biographical details of the evangelists as well as particular audiences are similar to the *Lives* of poets and philosophers which are preoccupied with saying something about the authors of certain works and were not intended to provide interpretative relevance to the texts they introduced (pp. 90-2). For more discussion on the debate between Bauckham and Mitchell see Bird, 'Bauckham's *The Gospel For All Christians*,' p. 11; Klink, 'The Gospel Community Debate,' pp. 60-85; *The Sheep of the Fold*, pp. 87-106; and Bauckham, 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence?

played in the interpretation and understanding of gospel audiences by early Christian interpreters.[9]

This, of course, is not to suggest that all of the traditions recorded in the patristic material are of equal historical value. On the contrary, we are not assessing the historical viability of the traditions, rather we are assessing the traditions as they relate specifically to how the Gospels were being read and interpreted in light of the gospel origin traditions. For instance, we are neither proposing that Papias' testimony concerning the Gospel of Matthew being written initially in Hebrew (Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνετάξατο – 'Matthew organized the sayings in the Hebrew language,' [*EH* 3.39.16]) nor that any of the other gospel origin traditions are specifically historically accurate. What is of importance here is how the gospel origin traditions were being construed and whether that interpretation had any bearing on how the patristic authors read and understood the Gospels themselves. In this way, traditions that may be of dubious factual value can still be seen to have both interpretative value (as they were used to form a reading strategy for the Gospels) and historical value as they are representative of how early Christian interpreters were understanding the origins of their own sacred texts.

Gospel Origin Traditions in the Greco-Roman Literary Context

In the process of assessing the purpose of the gospel origin traditions[10] some attention must be paid to their place in the greater Greco-Roman literary context. If these traditions carry within them some biographical information, then it would seem appropriate to compare them, either in whole or in part, to other examples of biographic presentations of literary figures. It may be the case that these origin traditions originally arose as a means of giving some information about the authors and the interest of the audiences in them lie in their ability to inform, even in part, about who the gospel writers were. If so, they would seem to be in close literary proximity to the *Lives* of poets and philosophers.[11]

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[9] For some discussion of the wider issues associated with patristic research see Dennis E. Groh, 'Changing Points of View in Patristic Scholarship,' *AThR* 60.4 (1978), pp. 447-65; Eric F. Osborn, 'Methods and Problems in Patristic Study,' *USQR* 36.1 (1980), pp. 45-54; for some discussion on the traditions attributed to Papias see Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, pp. 12-3; and Hengel, *The Four Gospels*, pp. 65-76.

Gospel Origin Traditions and the *Lives* of Literary Figures: *Lives* of Poets

The production of the literature concerning the lives of poets originated from a wide variety of motives including entertainment and education. For many, they served as an opportunity to know and understand the ways in which writers and experts of earlier generations had come to know and understand the work and relevance of the poets.[12] These *Lives* 'preserved a distant sense of critical judgments passed on by the experts.'[13] Certainly, the interest in poets went beyond critical assessments. Those who had heard or read the work of the poets would have wanted to know something about Hesiod or Homer or Aeschylus. The interests of the biographers may have been similar. The *Lives* of the poets would have been produced as a result of the interest in the lives and

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[10] The translations of the relevant citations, used for the sake of continuity, will be Mitchell's except where noted. For Papias see *EH* 3.39.15-16; for Clement see *EH* 2.15.1-2; 6.14.6-7; for Origen see, *EH* 6.25.4-6; for Irenaeus see *AH* 3.1.1., *ff*; for the 'anonymous' gospel origin traditions in Eusebius see, *EH* 3.4.6; 3.24.5-7; 11-12; 3.24.15; for the 'Anti-Marcionite' Prologues see, Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Margaret M. Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 56; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)* AB 28, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), p. 38, *ff*.; and Benjamin W. Bacon, 'The Anti-Marcionite Prologue to John,' *JBL* 49. 1 (1930), pp. 43-54; p. 44.

[11] The *Lives* of certain poets would be suitable for comparison as producers of literature (similar to the evangelists) and similarly the *Lives* of philosophers would be of some interest as examples of teachers/orators (similar to the apostles/evangelists).

[12] Mary K. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1981), p. 137.

[13] *Ibid*.

experiences of these artists as well as the literary aspirations of the biographers themselves.[14] Lefkowitz has argued that the biographers intended for their *Lives* to be read as prefaces or introductions to the works of the poets.[15] In the process of piecing together the biographies of poets, the biographers misconstrued and mishandled the information available to them and as such often misrepresented the work and intentions of the poets.[16]

Many of the difficulties associated with the *Lives* of the poets originates in the source material (or lack thereof) for the *Lives*. In most cases there was little to no external source material for crafting these biographies. Most often the works of these poets became the source material for their biographies.[17] To a certain extent this makes sense. The poets would have existed outside the military and political realms (in most cases) and would have been less likely to have been included in the historical record.[18] There may be some biographical information to be culled from some public records, but these sources would give little in the way of information on the inner-workings and personal interests of the writer.[19] But the interest in the works of the poets for information on their lives went beyond a mere lack of sources: a person's work said something about them. Moreover, 'a certain character was bound to produce a certain type of work and would be incapable of producing anything but this type.'[20] The work of the author served as a character blueprint from which to draw observations about what kind of person (moral and otherwise) the author was.[21] Ultimately, the crafting of biographies of literary figures was a complex and in-depth process: one that took into account the interests of the audiences as well as the interests of the biographers themselves.

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[14] *Ibid*., p. 138.
[15] *Ibid*.
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] This is the central thesis of Lefkowitz which is articulated on p. viii. See also Duane Reed Stuart, 'Authors Lives as Revealed in Their Works: A Critical Resume,' *Classical Studies in Honor of John C. Rolfe*, ed. George D. Hadzsits, (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1967), pp. 284-304; Janet A. Fairweather, 'Fiction and the Biographies of Ancient Writers,' *AnSoc* 5 (1974), pp. 231-75. The result is material in the biographies that is less than historically viable. See T. W. Allen, 'Lives of Homer,' *JHS* 32 (1912), pp. 250-60, p. 250.
[18] Stuart, 'Authors Lives,' p. 295. The evangelists would most likely have found themselves on the fringes of the historical records and so alternative sources would have been needed for the biographical presentations about them. Certainly oral traditions as well as later written traditions, from the time of Papais on, would have served as the main source material for biographical presentations of them. See Fairweather, 'Fiction and the Biographies,' pp. 242-7 for a discussion of the types of sources used in the writing of biographies for poets and philosophers.
[19] *Ibid*.

Given our discussion of potential source material for the *Lives* of literary figures, we may inquire as to the kinds of information included and its arrangement in the biographies. As indicated earlier, genres themselves are incredibly flexible and so it should come as no surprise that the *Lives* of poets and others would be extremely fluid in terms of the information included as well as the structuring of the narrative.[22] Employing the topical lists of Ps. Hermogenes, Aphthonius, Nicolaus and Theon, Martin has suggested that certain topics were, at least theoretically, 'the essential components of a life' and would have been considered necessary to include in accurate biography.[23] While these topics, ranging from nationality, family, birth and training to deeds and death, would be most often used, they could be arranged in a number of ways and all of the topics need not be included.[24] In order for a work to be a biography, certain kinds of information needed to be included even if not all of the topics were covered. Of the *Lives* included in the appendix of Lefkowitz's volume, six contain information on origins, city of birth, deeds and death.[25] Three contain comments on birth,[26] four discuss training,[27] three mention the time in which the subjects lived,[28] four include the events of the burial,[29] and two offer comparisons of the subject with other poets.[30] Only one makes any mention of the moral virtues of the poet[31] and there is no mention of their physical appearances. Clearly, none of these *Lives* contain all of the rubrics suggested by Martin, but they all contain some of the topics.[32]

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[20] *Ibid*., p. 301.

[21] *Ibid*.

[22] See Burridge, *What are the Gospels?* pp. 59-66; and Smith, 'Genre, Sub-Genre and Questions of Audience,' pp. 188-92.

[23] Michael W. Martin, 'Progymnastic Topic Lists: A Compositional Template for Luke and Other Bioi?' *NTS* 54. 1 (2008), pp. 18-41; p. 21.

[24] *Ibid*., pp. 21-3. Martin's list of topics includes (reproduced here almost verbatim), 1) national origin; 2) city; 3) family; 4) marvelous occurrences at birth; 5) nurture; 6) upbringing/training; 7) body; 8) mind/virtues; 9) pursuits and deeds; 10) externals; 11) time; 12) manner of death; 13) greatness of the one who killed the subject; 14) events after death; and comparison, p. 22. Martin mentions prooemium as another topic, but these do not appear in the examples presented by Lefkowitz. This is similar to the list of

Gospel Origin Traditions and the *Lives* of Literary Figures: *Lives* of Philosophers

A fair number of biographies of philosophers remain available to us due in large part to the collections of *Lives* written by Diogenes Laertius, Philostratus and Eunapius.[33] Of great value are also the *Lives* of Plotinus and Pythagoras written by Porphyry and Iamblichus, respectively. Many of these biographies date to the same period as the

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internal features given by Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* pp. 140-3. Burridge suggests that some of these lists are later than the gospels (and thus the *Lives* of many of the poets) and as such they are of dubious use, pp. 200-1. However, they certainly are of use in discussions of the arrangement of topics in later *Lives* and they may point back to arrangement of biographical topics in an earlier era. Martin argues that these lists can be used as a rubric in the biographical works of a number of authors (Plutarch, Philostratus, Philo, Josephus and the Lukan evangelist) that are roughly contemporary to the gospels.

[25] Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets*, pp. 136-73. The examples used here are the *Lives* of Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes.

[26] *Homer*, *Sophocles* and *Euripides*.

[27] *Homer*, *Pindar*, *Sophocles* and *Euripides*.

[28] *Homer, Pindar* and *Aeschylus*.

[29] *Homer*, *Pindar*, *Sophocles* and *Aeschylus*.

[30] *Aeschylus* and *Euripides*.

[31] S*ophocles*.

[32] The work on Homer is the most representative of the list with the inclusion of eleven topics. The biography of Aristophanes is the least inclusive with only four topics (origin, city of birth, deeds and death) covered. These four topics may represent the very least that could be included in a proper biography.

[33] Miller, 'Strategies of Representation,' p. 249, sees the collection of lives as a separate genre in late antiquity. See Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, 'The Early Beginnings of the Notion of 'Uomini Famosi' and the 'De Viris Illustribus' in Greco-Roman Literary Tradition,' *Artibus et Historiae* 3.6 (1982), pp. 97-115; pp. 113-14.

gospel origin traditions and so they provide interesting insight into the biographical interests of writers from the second century through the fourth century CE. Both Plotinus and Iamblichus intended their biographies to serve as introductions to the philosophical works of their subjects.[34] Laertius' concern was primarily in the philosophers themselves and not their teachings or philosophies.[35] Laertius' preference for discussions of philosophers and their lives is demonstrated in his emphasis on their character over their teachings.[36] Similarly, Eunapius was interested in the lives of the philosophers and his interest only turned to written works as they were useful for unearthing something of the character of his subjects.[37] Philostratus' focus was not so much on the lives of the sophists he portrayed, but in 'establishing an historical pedigree for the sophists of his own era.'[38] Thus, the *Lives* of philosophers were written from pedagogical as well as biographical and personal motivations.

Similar to the *Lives* of poets and other literary figures, the authors of the *Lives* of philosophers often resorted to the works of their subjects in order to find source material for their biographies. Eunapius suggested that one can piece together the life of Plutarch by reading his works.[39] References to odd behavior or political leanings were often taken as biographical or autobiographical.[40] In conjunction with the research into a writer's works the biographers would also consult any written information on the subject produced by the subject's contemporaries.[41] In some cases there would be letters, poetry, speeches or biographical sketches available.[42] There is evidence to support the conclusion that Philostratus relied heavily on oral sources for his *Lives*.[43] Part of the process of utilizing these oral sources was the preservation of information received from friends and teachers and an alteration of the material would have been seen as disrespectful and there is little to suggest that Philostratus betrayed this trust in the crafting of his *Lives*.[44] Much like the biographers of poets, the biographers of philosophers depended heavily on the works of their subjects for their biographical information. As with some of the poets, the philosophers would occasionally have some aspects of their lives recorded in historical documents.[45] All too often this was not the case and the biographers were forced to turn to any available sources to find meaningful material suitable for the *Lives*.[46]

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[34] Iamblichus' *A Compendium of Pythagorean Doctrine*, a ten volume work of which the *Life* was the first volume, served as some sort of introductory course to his own philosophical school, see Dillon & Hershell, *Iamblichus*, p. 21. Porphyry wrote his biography of Plotinus as an introduction to his collection of Plotinus' works.

[35] Jørgen Mejer, *Diogenes Laertius and His Hellenistic Background* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978), p. 2. See also Dillon and Hershell, *Iamblichus*, pp. 11-13. Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil*., 1.21; 2.47, 85; 8.50; 9.115; and 10.138.

[36] *Ibid*., p. 3.

[37] Robert J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A. D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis*, (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), p. 33. This lack of literary interest is of some importance to the discussion of gospel origin traditions as the primary interest seems to be in establishing a particular relationship between the evangelists and their works.

[38] Miller, 'Strategies of Representation,' p. 219. This motivation can be contrasted with that proposed by A. F. Norman where Philostratus' 'primary purpose is to show in himself that attainment of the height of sophistic achievement in exactly the same way as it is shown in the manual of sophistic deportment, the *Lives* of Philostratus.' A. F. Norman, 'Philostratus and Libanius,' *CPh* 48. 1 (1953), pp. 20-23; p. 22.

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[39] 'Thus for example, the inspired Plutarch records in statements scattered here and there in his books, both his own life and that of his teacher…But he does not entitle these records a *Life*, though he might well have done so, since his most successful work is that entitled *The Parallel Lives* of men most celebrated for their deeds and achievements. But his own life and that of his teacher he scattered piecemeal throughout every one of his books; so that if one should keep a sharp look out for these references and track them as they occur and appear, and read them intelligently one after another, one would know most of the events of their lives (Eunap. *VS*, 454).' The translation is from Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists*, trans. Wilmer C. Wright, LCL 134 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). See Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists*, p. 35.

[40] Fairweather, 'Fiction and the Biographies,' p. 238.

[41] *Ibid*., pp. 242-3.

[42] *Ibid*., pp. 242-9.

[43] Swain, 'The Reliability of Philostratus,' p. 149.

[44] *Ibid*., pp. 152-3.

[45] Joost-Gaugier, 'The Early Beginnings,' p. 109.

[46] Fairweather offers that histories, both political and local, as well as guidebooks, inscriptions and portraits could be used as biographical material. See Fairweather, 'Fiction and the Biographies,' pp. 249-56.

In line with the work of Delatte, Sollenberger has argued that Laertius used certain topics or rubrics as organizing principles.[47] These rubrics form the basis for his biographical sketches and they are used throughout the *Lives*, though not all the rubrics are used in every instance.[48] Furthermore, 'Not only do the reappearances of these rubrics from life to life give definite indications of Diogenes' own interests, systematic spirit, and his methods of collecting, classifying and compiling, but they also weave something of a unifying thread through the whole work, furnishing it with some degree of continuity and integrity.'[49] The categories utilized by Sollenberger are quite similar to those deduced by Martin and to a lesser extent those of Burridge.[50] Sollenberger, acknowledges the fifteen rubrics of Delatte but offers that the first eleven can be subsumed under the category of 'biography proper' and that the remaining categories should stand unaltered as 'they contain quite different sorts of information.'[51] As mentioned previously, these rubrics are used quite flexibly and not every biography contains all of them. They are organized differently in different sketches and so demonstrate the kind of flexibility one would expect in the genre of biography. However, similar to the internal features of *Lives* suggested by Burridge and the topic lists put forth by Martin, these rubrics provide a unifying structure in terms of the author's interest and suggest that there were certain kinds of information that would have been expected to be included in a biography. Some of the topics to be covered were 1) ancestry/origin/birth; 2) training/education; 3) deeds; 4) virtues; and 5) death.[52] Other topics would have been included as well. With biographies of literary figures often some mention of their works would be included. The emphasis was not on the works themselves but on what the works said about the author.[53] This continues to fit with the overarching emphasis of the *Lives*: that is an interest in the individuals themselves which was sparked by a number of concerns on the part of the biographers.

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[47] Michael G. Sollenberger, 'The Lives of the Peripatetics: The Analysis of the Contents and Structure of Diogenes Laertius' 'Vitae Philosophorum' Book 5,' *ANRW* II.36.6 (1992), pp. 3793-979; p. 3800. See also Michael G. Sollenberger, 'Diogenes Laertius' Life of Demetrius of Phalerum,' in *Demetrius of Phalerum: Text, Translation and Discussion*, ed. William W. Fortenbaugh & Ekart Schütrumpf, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2000), pp. 311-329; p. 313. See Armond Delatte, *La Vie de Pythagore de Diogène Laërce: Édition Critique avec Introduction & Commentaire par A. Delatte*, (Bruxelles: Lamertin, 1922), pp. 54-63, with an emphasis on pp. 54-55 for his identification of Laertius' rubrics.

[48] Sollenberger, 'Diogenes Laertius' Life of Demetrius,' p. 313.

[49] Sollenberger, 'The Lives of the Peripatetics,' p. 3800.

[50] *Ibid*., pp. 3800-1. He lists the rubrics as 1. Origin; 2. Education; 3. Foundation of or Succession to Headship of the School; 4. Physical Appearance and Personal Qualities; 5. Political Activities; 6. Disciples or Students; 7. Other Important Events; 8. Anecdotes; 9. Apothegms; 10. Chronological Information; 11. Death; 12. Writings; 13. Doctrines; 14. Personal Documents; and 15. Homonyms.

[51] *Ibid*., p. 3804.

Lives **of Literary Figures and the Gospel Origin Traditions: A Comparison**

Given that the *Lives* of poets and philosophers (literary figures) would seem to be the closest biographical literary form to the gospel origin traditions a comparison of the topics covered in both types of literature will be helpful in ascertaining their relationship and ultimately the purposes for each.[54] Mitchell has argued,

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[52] This list is drawn from where the lists of Burridge, Martin and Sollenberger overlap. Other topics could be included and some of these topics would be left off. This list provides us with perhaps the bare minimum of topics to be covered. But there would still be a great amount of fluidity in the arrangement and inclusion of these topics.

[53] 'Diogenes is due many thanks for having preserved a list of writings for as many philosophers as he has. While these lists may sadden us because they highlight how very little of an individual philosopher's output has come down to us, they also afford us a glance at the sort of research and study in which an individual engaged. Moreover, since titles can disclose general interests and thus give us some idea of career patterns or aspirations, and even reveal character, we should look at them closely (Sollenberger, 'Diogenes Laertius' Life of Demetrius,' p. 323).'

[54] See Bauckham, 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence?' pp. 90-92. Bauckham cites some important examples of shorter biographical sketches contained in the works of Jerome and Laertius as well at the 'Anti-Marcionite' Prologues and some of the shorter *Lives* of Homer. While these serve as excellent examples as to how some of these biographical sketches may have functioned Bauckham doesn't reckon with the fact that the examples he cites are biographies whereas the gospel origin traditions are not. Generic expectations would have to apply here. Bauckham also does not take into direct account the expressed purpose of some of these authors (Jerome and Laertius) for their writing. This would also shed some light on the differences in purpose between the *Lives* and the gospel origin traditions. Furthermore, it is unclear as to the extent that the later origin traditions are influenced by the innovations in the genre of biography itself where Laertius, Philostratus and Eunapius are seeking to be thorough in their detailing of the successions of their subjects as opposed to including a large amount of detail. It may be difficult to

> Along with other ancient literary critics, early Christian biblical interpreters were concerned with at least two 'historical preoccupations': 'problems of authenticity, and biographical facts about authors'. The prevailing solutions in Christian circles were to coalesce the two concerns, such that the authenticity of the Gospels was grounded in their apostolic or sub-apostolic authorship. But biographical details about the evangelists of necessity required consideration of their homes and the audiences of their preaching and writings. A full biographical curriculum (influenced by ancient encomiastic traditions) for each would emerge which included their own homeland, the language and place in which they wrote and, often, the specific occasion that moved them to do so, which involved a particular audience and a need that had to be addressed.[55]

While this 'historical preoccupation' may have been a concern of literary critics, these same concerns may not be transferred to early Christian interpreters.[56] Can the material that is included in the gospel origin traditions be considered biographical? In his discussion of the traditions attributed to Papias preserved in the writings of Eusebius, Hill has suggested a list of 'common concerns' indicative of these traditions.[57] These concerns are the following,

> (a) that each Gospel had its origin in the preaching of one or more of the apostles of Jesus, (b) that the evangelists wrote at the request of others[58], (c) a form of the word 'remember' (cf. John 14:26)

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compare the individual gospel origin traditions to shorter biographies in these collections (the *Suda* included) on the basis of what appear to be generic affinities. The differences need to be taken into account as well.

[55] Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 55.

[56] D. A. Russell, *Criticism in Antiquity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 159.

[57] Charles E. Hill, 'Papias of Hierapolis,' *ExpTim* 117. 8 (2006), pp. 309-15; p. 312. See Charles E. Hill, 'What Papias Said about John (and Luke): A 'New' Papian Fragment,' *JTS* 49.2 (1998), pp. 582-692; pp. 596-606 where he notes certain structural/topical affinities with other writers that knew Papias' work. He offers the following parallels; 1) 'writing by request'; 2) 'order in the Gospels'; 3) 'the evangelists as publishers'; 4) 'the number and order of the Gospels'; and 5) 'inspiration'.

[58] Mitchell makes some mention of audience request traditions as integral to patristic understanding of gospel audiences, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' pp. 52-8. Audience requests seem to be part of some biographical traditions, especially those related to biographies of teachers/philosophers who were less inclined to write down their own teachings/sayings. For instance, Porphyry writes at the request of those who wanted clarification on some of Plotinus' teachings, 'So we arranged the fifty-four books in this way in six Enneads; and we have included commentaries on some of them, irregularly, because friends pressed us to write on points they wanted cleared up for them (*Porph. Plot.*, 26.28-34).' Also, he states concerning Plotinus 'I, Porphyry, had in fact already been in Rome a little before the tenth year of Gallienius, while Plotinus was taking his summer holiday and only engaging in general conversation with his friends. While I was with him this year and for five years afterwards, in these six years many discussions took place in the meetings of the school and Amelius and I kept urging him to write, so he wrote... (*Porph. Plot.*, 5.1-8)' The above translation is from Plotinus, *Porphyry on Plotinus* and *Ennead I*, trans. A. H. Armstrong, LCL 440, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Similarly, Nepos in his brief biography of Cato writes, 'Concerning this man's life and character I have given fuller details in the separate book which I devoted to his biography at the urgent request of Titus Pomponius Atticus. Therefore I may refer those who are interested in Cato to that volume (Nep. *Cato*, 24.3.5)', translation from Cornelius Nepos, *Cornelius*

> to describe these Gospels as firsthand reports of the Lord's disciples, (d) a concern for the 'order' or 'arrangement' of their contents, (e) the attempts to find an 'endorsement' for each Gospel from another accepted, apostolic source.[59]

This basic set of 'concerns' is a helpful guide to the content attributed to Papias and some of these 'concerns' are found in other 'gospel origin traditions.' Of these 'concerns' (a) and (e) deserve special notice.

Gospel Origin Traditions: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

When the gospel origin traditions for the Gospel of Matthew are surveyed common material emerges. 1) The author wrote in his native tongue/letters[60]; 2) he published a gospel for the Hebrews/believers from Judaism[61]; 3) he published his gospel

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Nepos, trans. J. C. Rolfe, LCL 467 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Similarly, Eusebius records that Clement of Alexandria '…was compelled to commit to writing traditions that he had heard from the elders of olden time, for the benefit of those that should come after (*EH* 6.13.9),' translation from Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History, Vol.* II, trans. J. E. L. Oulton, LCL 265 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932). Diogenes Laertius also indicates that certain information included in his biographies is by request, either direct or indirect (Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil*., 3.47 & 10.29). In these instances there is no indication that the requests dictate the audience. In writing their biographies of literary figures all of the above biographers expected a broad readership (more or less focused). See Jørgen Mejer, *Diogenes Laertius*, p. 17. See also Bauckham, 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence?' pp. 72-83 for a discussion of examples of common request traditions as they relate potentially to the gospels. Here Bauckham cites Galen as an example of a similar situation. However, Bauckham does not take in to account that Galen and the evangelist were writing in two different genres. Generic considerations may be important here as well. One possible origin for the request tradition is the desire to present the subjects as modest and therefore not interested in literary output. Thus, it is only at the request of others that they write. The introductions written by many authors, which included request traditions, were themselves the product of literary conventions. The introductions did not necessarily indicate the sole audience for the work. Bauckham includes the introduction to Luke as well as the introduction to Nepos' collection of *Lives*. See Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, pp. 57-63 for a discussion on the relationship between dedications and audiences in Greco-Roman scientific prefaces. The discussion on pp. 62-3 is particularly useful as it relates to a specific audience request tradition (Galen) and the implications for that specific request to reflect a wider audience.

[59] Hill, 'Papias of Hierapolis,' p. 312. See Bauckham, 'Is there Patristic-Counter-Evidence?' pp. 86-90. Bauckham sees a similar function for the gospel origin traditions with the main concerns being apostolic authority and the differences in the gospels.

[60] See *EH* 3.24-6; (Clement) 6.25.3-4; Jerome, Preface to the Commentary on Matthew; a text attributed to Dorotheus of Tyre in Herman F. von Sodden, *Die Schriften Des Neuen Testaments, in Ihrer ältesten Erreichbaren Textgestalt Hergestellt Auf Grund Ihrer Textgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Dunckler, 1902) p. 307, translated in Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 53-4, n. 51.

[61] See *EH* 3.24.5-6; (Clement) 6.25.3-4; *AH* 3.1.1; and Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Matthew*.

in Judea.[62] Some traditions record other miscellaneous facts, but the information rarely heads to the truly biographical.[63] On the contrary, unlike the *Lives* of literary figures, there is little mention (if any) of any biographical details at all. The origin traditions for Matthew's gospel are centered on establishing the authority of the writing. This conforms most closely to the 'concerns' (a) and (e) presented by Hill. There is no mention of the topics that would have been expected in even the most basic biographies.[64] The mention of Matthew as a tax collector by Origen and Jerome is the most that would account for information that would have been expected in a proper biography. Even the shortest biographies written by Laertius and Philostratus, which are little more than lists of literary works attributed to various philosophers or sophists, intend the focus to be on the individual presented and the works listed are included as a means of determining something about the subjects in question.[65] The origin traditions for Matthew are less focused on Matthew than on establishing authority or credibility for his gospel. This would seem to fit Mitchell's suggestion that the traditional critical concerns with credibility and biography were condensed into one presentation.[66] However, that assumes that some meaningful biographical material remains in the origin traditions; material that says something about the character or person of the evangelist in question. Matthew's native language and the place from which he wrote offer little in relation to the character of the man. What is emphasized is the fact that Matthew, as an apostle, wrote with authority from a geographic area (Judea) that itself was authoritative, and thus his gospel was itself authoritative.

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[62] Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Matthew*.

[63] Matthew preached to the 'Hebrews' (*EH* 3.24.5-6); he collected the sayings of Jesus in Hebrew/Hebrew letters (Papias; *EH* 3.39.16); and he wrote before leaving his immediate audience (*EH* 3.24.5-6), indicating that Matthew preached/wrote in multiple locations. Cf. *EH* 2.16.1 on Mark taking a copy of his written gospel to Alexandria and using it as a source for his own preaching there.

[64] 1) ancestry/origin/birth; 2) training/education; 3) deeds; 4) virtues; and 5) death.

[65] Cf. Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil*., 2.124; 2.125; 8.83; 8.84-5; and Philost. *VS*, 484 (*Eudoxus*); 486 (*Dias*, *Carneades* and *Theomnestus*) which are incredibly short and contain no mention of written works and little to no biographical details. They may have been included in an effort to be thorough, even though there was little in the way of biographical sources available to Philostratus.

[66] Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 55.

Given Mark's 'sub-apostolic' status more in the way of biographical material could be expected to be included in the origin traditions for his gospel.[67] What was of the utmost importance for Mark's gospel was the establishment of legitimate ties to an apostolic source. The material common to all or most of the origin traditions for Mark include 1) the hearers of Peter's preaching at Rome wanted a written record[68]; 2) Mark was Peter's disciple[69]; 3) Mark was Peter's interpreter[70]; 4) Mark wrote in accordance with Peter's instructions; 5)Mark's account was accurate but not in order; and 6) Mark was 'pressed' to write. The biographical information for Mark is essentially limited to his relationship to Peter. The interest is not in Mark as a person but in Mark as the one through whom Peter, a person of authority, disseminated his teachings about Jesus. This profound lack of interest in Mark himself, further places the origin traditions about Mark's gospel on the margins of ancient biographical literature and indicates that they have little generic affinity to βίοι/*vitae*. The so-called 'Anti-Marcionite Prologue' of Mark provides us with one piece of anecdotal/biographical information on Mark, specifically, that he was called 'stump-fingered' because his fingers were short in comparison to his other limbs.[71] Certainly bodily descriptions would have been included in biographical sketches and biographies proper, but this reference, apart from differentiating Mark from others named Mark, gives little in the way of description of Mark's character.[72] The *Monarchial Prologue* to Mark is itself the kind of biographical presentation one would expect to find for a literary figure like Mark. The author of the prologue clearly uses the gospel itself, in conjunction with the other traditions available, to craft a more complete biographical sketch of Mark. It includes 'that Mark was baptized by Peter; that he had at once exercised the Levitical priesthood, from which he later disqualified himself by self-mutilation; that he came to be bishop in Alexandria…' all of which provides the sort of biographical material excluded elsewhere.[73] The major difficulty in the use of this prologue for biographical comparison is the fact that the biographical sketch of Mark is subsumed within a particular theological interpretation and the interpretation, endorsed by an accepted 'apostolic/sub-apostolic' figure such as Mark (with his ties to the Apostle Peter intact), takes precedence over the character of Mark.[74] This, presumably, fourth century prologue uses the authority of Mark to put forward a theological agenda while pushing the biographical interest to the margins, as opposed to other traditions that pushed for the authority of Mark's gospel through the association with an authoritative person (Peter) in an authoritative place (Rome/Italy), while relegating the biographical interest to the background.[75]

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[67] *Ibid*.
[68] *EH* (Clement) 2.15.1-2; (Clement) 6.14.5-6; *AH* 3.1.1; and Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Matthew*.
[69] *EH* (Clement) 2.15.1-2; 3.39.15; and *AH* 3.1.1.
[70] *EH* (Papias) 3.39.15; *AH* 3.1.1; and Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Matthew*.
[71] Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, p. 3. Cf. the discussion on pp. 2-3 on the tradition suggesting that Mark wrote after the death of Peter. Other traditions included in the patristic citations included that 1) Mark wrote per Peter's instructions (*EH* 6.25.5); 2) Mark's account was accurate but disorderly (Papias; *EH* 3.39.15 and Jerome, *Preface to the Commentary on Matthew*); 3) Mark was pressed/encouraged to write (Clement; *EH* 2.15.1-2; 6.14.5-6); 4) Mark distributed his gospel to those who requested its writing

Luke is the recipient of one of the more detailed biographical treatments presumably because of the information available about him in the writings of Paul and

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(Clement; *EH* 6.14.5-6); 5) the gospel was ratified by Peter for us in the churches (Clement; *EH* 2.15.1-2); and 6) Mark took his written gospel to Alexandria and preached it there (*EH* 2.16.1).

[72] Cf. C. Clifton Black, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), pp. 118-125, for a more detailed discussion of the 'Anti-Marcionite' Prologue as well as the Monarchian Prologue.

[73] *Ibid*., p. 122.

[74] *Ibid*., p. 122-5. Black is correct in his assertion it was only after the questions relating to Mark's authority were answered that such a detailed theological rendering could be accomplished, p. 124.

[75] *Ibid*., p. 121.

the ‘autobiographical’ sections of Acts.[76] The reconstruction of Luke’s life from a reading of his own works fits within the basic pattern employed by biographers of literary figures. The biographical facts common to a number of gospel origin traditions are the following: 1) Luke was Antiochian[77]; 2) he was a physician[78]; 3) he was a companion/disciple of Paul[79]; 4) the content of his gospel came through conversations with eyewitnesses/apostles.[80] The ‘Anti Marcionite’ prologue gives a few more details of his life, his age and location at death and his marital status, but this is nothing like a full blown biography. On the whole, the treatment of Luke in the patristic witness gives more in the way of biographic detail (birthplace, profession, place of death, marital status and age at death)[81], yet these facts do not constitute a biography. This again points to the purpose of these origin traditions. The traditions served not to give any more biographical detail other than that which would lend to the credibility of the book in question. With Luke as with Matthew and Mark, the traditions associated with the writing of his gospel serve to establish his relationship to an authoritative person (Paul) while writing from an authoritative place (Achaia)[82], all of which established the authority of his gospel. Again, biographical interest pales in comparison to the establishment of authority for the writer/writing in question.

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[76] Cf. *EH* 3.4. 4; Col. 4:12; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 1:24; and Acts 20:6 ff.

[77] *EH* 3.5.6; Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Matthew*.

[78] *EH* 3.5.6; *Muratorian Canon*; Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Matthew*.

[79] *EH* 3.5.6; *Muratorian Canon*; *Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke*.

[80] *EH* 3.5.6; *Muratorian Canon*.

[81] Other traditions associated with Luke are 1) his gospel was a written record of Paul’s preaching (*AH* 3.1.1); 2) Luke wrote for gentile converts (Origen; *EH* 6.25.5-6); and 3) Luke wrote in Achaia and Boeotia (Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Matthew*).

[82] Cf. Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Matthew*. Achaia as can be seen as authoritative/apostolic as a geographic area associated with Pauline mission, cf. Acts 19:21; Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 15:16; 2 Cor. 1:1; 9:2; 11:10; 1 Thess. 1:7-8.

The gospel of John appears to have offered serious challenges to the Christian interpreters of the first four centuries because of its unique content. We would suggest that the content of John's gospel, otherwise unattested in the Synoptics, required some degree of explanation. In the anonymous tradition recorded by Eusebius, it is made clear that John wrote after the other three gospels had been written and distributed to all.[83] As Bauckham has argued, 'the differences of order among the Synoptics did not greatly matter to ancient readers by comparison with the differences between John and the Synoptics,' and so the differences in content were ultimately accounted for in the various origin traditions for John's gospel.[84] Eusebius' preference is to suggest that the difference in content is not one of order, with one arrangement preferred to another, but rather that John includes material that covers Jesus' ministry prior to the imprisonment of John the Baptist.[85] In this way John is not in conflict with the Synoptics, but corrects a deficiency that all three have in recording the life of Jesus.[86] Of the gospel origin traditions surveyed all are in agreement with John having a relationship to the city of Ephesus.[87] Two separate occasions are given for the composition of the gospel: Eusebius records that is was composed as a corrective in that the material prior to John the Baptist's imprisonment was not included in the Synoptics and Jerome includes both this tradition and that John's gospel was a corrective against those who raised questions about both Jesus' preexistence and incarnation.[88] Both sets of traditions include exhortations on the part of others as an influence on the writing of the gospel. This should not come as a surprise considering similar exhortations in other gospel origin traditions and the existence of similar exhortations in the biographic traditions of literary figures. What again stands out in comparison to other *Lives* is the overall lack of biographical information. Jerome gives the most information in *Jer. De vir. ill.*, itself patterned in part after other biographical collections. What is included in most of the origin traditions for John is an association of him with an apostolic place (Ephesus), the establishment of him as an apostolic witness and the acknowledgement of his work as authoritative. The biographical material is included as it enhances the arguments for his work as authoritative, especially as it records traditions different to those of the Synoptics.[89]

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[83] Cf. *EH* 3.24.5-7; 11-12.

[84] Richard J. Bauckham, 'Papias and Polycrates on the Origin of the Fourth Gospel,' *JTS* 44.1 (1993), pp. 24-69; p. 50.

[85] *Ibid*., p. 52.

[86] *Ibid*.

[87] Cf. *EH* 3.1.1; *AH* 3.1.1; Jer. *De vir. ill.*, 9; *Preface to Commentary of Matthew*.

[88] *EH* 3.24.5-7; 11-12; and Jer. *De vir. ill.*, 9; *Preface to Commentary of Matthew*.

In summation: 1) the *Lives* of poets and philosophers were often derived from the works of the subjects themselves. Any sort of biographical or autobiographical statement that could be found in a given work was used to craft part of the *Life*. A similar approach was taken by some who collected and published gospel origin traditions. This is especially true for those subjects that had more than one work attributed to them (Luke and John) or those who were mentioned in works other than their own (Luke and Mark).[90] 2) The use of the works of the subjects as source material was not done only because of a lack of external sources, but because there was a belief that the works themselves said something about the authors and that the works were reflective of whom the authors were. If the gospel origin traditions are to be compared to *Lives* of literary figures, there should be something in them that indicates the character (moral or otherwise) of the evangelists, and this does not seem to be the case.[91] The Gospels themselves, much like the work of the poets, could give us an indication of some of the characteristics of the evangelists, but the gospel origin traditions are quite scarce on biographical detail and pale in comparison to the more complete biographical sketches of other literary and philosophical figures. On the contrary, the biographical elements of the origin traditions point to the authority of the author and ultimately the author's work. The biographical interest in the evangelists is overtaken by the interest in establishing authority for the Gospels. 3) The biographers tended to utilize certain topics in the crafting of their works. Not all of these 'topics' would be used, but many were included and could be done so in variable arrangements. Few, if any of these topics, are found in the biographical presentations of the evangelists. While acknowledging the flexibility of genres in general and biography in particular, one would still expect to see some, if not all, of these topics addressed. The common themes or topics in the origin traditions are instead focused on the establishment of authoritative persons (or relationships to them), and authoritative places, which designate the four canonical gospels as authoritative as well. Finally, 4) the expectations of the audiences and the intent of the biographers differed. The audiences were interested in the *Lives* as a means of learning something about the character of the literary figures as well as gaining access to the thoughts and opinions of literary critics. As Lefkowitz has suggested, the biographers themselves wrote with the view that their work would eventually be read before, or at least in conjunction with the works of their subjects.[92] There may have been some interest on the part of the readers/hearers of the Gospels as to who wrote them, when and why. However, there is little to indicate that the compilers of these traditions shared this interest. Often, the biographical presentation is marginalized or omitted in favor of material establishing authority (both for the evangelist and the gospel). In the case of the gospel prologues, there could have been the expectation that these would have been read prior to the individual gospels, but they would not have rivaled the Gospels in importance. Our most developed biographical treatments of the evangelists at this stage, Jer. *De vir. ill.* and the Monarchian Prologue to Mark are themselves preoccupied with theological/apologetic concerns to the detriment of biographical representation.[93]

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[89] Cf. Bauckham, 'Papias and Polycrates,' p. 68. In reference to Irenaeus' discussion of the author of the forth gospel, he writes: 'All these passages reflect Irenaeus' concern with apostolicity as the criterion of truth against the Gnostics, including both the apostolicity of the reliable scriptures of the New Testament and the succession of public teaching from the apostles through the bishops of the apostolic sees. In these contexts, the term 'apostle' indicates reliable authority, authorized by Christ, publicly recognized…' Thus, authoritative (apostolic) people, associated with authoritative (apostolic) places are the only ones recognized as producing authoritative works.

[90] Cf. Jer. *De vir. ill.*, 'Still, Eusebius Pamphilus in the ten books of his *Ecclesiastical History*, has been of the greatest help to me, and the volumes of the individuals about whom I propose to write often provide insights into the lives of their authors.' Translation taken from Jerome, *On Illustrious Men*, trans. Thomas P. Halton, FC 100 (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1999). All subsequent translations from *Jer. De vir. ill*, will be Halton's unless otherwise stipulated.

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[91] With the Evangelists, their character is indicated most often by theirs associations; either with the apostles (Mark and Luke) or with Jesus himself (Matthew and John). In this case authority, character and relationship are intertwined.

Gospel Origin Traditions in Patristic Interpretation and Exegesis

In light of the Greco-Roman literary context regarding the *Lives* of poets and philosophers in relation to the biographical information in the gospel origin traditions it becomes necessary to turn to the use and interpretation of these traditions by the patristic writers. The point here is not to be comprehensive in covering all of the references to gospel origin traditions in the patristic literature; rather, the goal is to choose examples that have enough of a theological context to place the traditions into the interpretative framework of the author in question. The purpose is to ascertain the extent to which the audience groups mentioned in the gospel origin traditions constitute a significant interpretative strategy for these authors.

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[92] Lefkowitz, *Lives of the Greek Poets*, p. 138. Allen notes that a wide range of information was included as integral to interpreting homer from the Byzantine period forward. This information included the '…grammatical, metrical, exegetical, and also biographical…' and it was often placed '…at the beginning of a copy of the poems.' See Allen, 'Lives of Homer,' p. 250.

[93] Cf. Jer. *De vir. ill.*. In the preface he gives an indication of his purpose. He writes, 'Dexter, you urge me that I, following the example of Tranquillus, prepare an orderly presentation of the ecclesiastical writers, and do for our writers what he did in chronicling eminent secular authors, that is, that I set forth for you a brief treatment of all those who have published anything memorable on the Holy Scriptures form the time of Christ's passion down to the fourteenth year of the emperor Theodosius.' Furthermore, he states his other intention, writing: 'Let Celsus, then, learn, and Porphyry and Julian, those rabid dogs barking against Christ; let their followers learn--those who think that the church has had no philosophers, no orators, no men of learning; let them learn the number and quality of the men who founded, built, and adorned the church, and let them stop accusing our faith of such rustic simplicity, and recognize instead their own ignorance (Jer. *De vir. ill.*, preface).' For Jerome collecting these sketches is an attempt to silence the critics of Christianity who claim that it as a tradition, is one made up of ignorant and unlearned individuals. Thus he patterns his work after Nepos and others, but diverges from biography in that his emphasis is on the scholastic relevance of the figures mentioned, not themselves or their character. Biographical details are only included as part of pre-existing and accepted tradition and to enhance statements of literary achievements for his subjects.

Irenaeus

One of the most important and influential references to the gospel origin traditions is in book three of *AH*. The work on the whole is polemical and as Rankin has observed there is little to no engagement with Greco-Roman society at large.[94] Irenaeus' main concern was with those he deemed heretics from within the Christian tradition as opposed to perceived threats from pagan circles.[95] Any discussion of Irenaeus' use or representation of gospel origin traditions must take into account the expressed purpose of his work as a whole, namely a desire to refute any and all heretical claims in as systematic a way as possible.[96] Thus, the gospel origin traditions themselves would seem to fit, at least in part, into the grand scope of the work as a whole and their use or inclusion would either be to bolster Irenaeus' own claims to legitimate interpretation of Christian tradition or as a means of refuting other claims to legitimacy. Given this context it becomes germane to ask: 'What role would particular or local gospel audiences play in this process of legitimization/de-legitimization?'

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[94] David I. Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers* (Aldershot, England/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 107-8.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[96] See Irenaeus, *AH* (preface to Book 2).

Irenaeus' treatment of the four gospels epitomizes the core of his concerns, namely the desire to establish the orthodox and correct teachings and traditions of the church over and against the teachings, interpretations and traditions of the Valentinians (and others). Pagels has argued effectively that '…in regard to Irenaeus, we need to consider what constitutes 'heresy' not so much, as we have traditionally, in terms of people holding different *beliefs and ideas*, but in terms of people involved in different forms of *practice, both hermeneutical and ritual*.'[97] Thus, the concern for Irenaeus extends beyond theological concepts alone to how ideas inform observance both in terms of actions and interpretations. Pagels has also correctly pointed out that there was an immense amount of diversity both within the broader collection of Christian ideas, traditions and doctrines that he sought to accept as well as within those he sought to exclude.[98] Yet, this diversity did not trouble Irenaeus,

> …on the contrary, he seems to regard it as evidence of the 'catholicity' he claimed for the 'church...scattered throughout the whole world.'[99] We need only recall, for example, how he argued against Christians who accepted only one gospel account,[100] and, how, unlike Justin's other student, Tatian, he made no attempt to harmonize the various accounts into one. On the contrary, so far as we know, he became the first to urge believers to accept four distinct writings, despite their obvious differences, and join them into the collage that he called the 'four-formed gospel.'[101]

His primary concern then was not in rectifying the present diversity in the church (or the texts of the Gospels, for that matter), but a concern to, '…strengthen these threatened believers and join them into a worldwide network' and in the process weed out whatever was ‘seriously divisive.’[102] It was in the course of addressing these overarching issues that Irenaeus turned to the ‘canon of truth.’[103]

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[97] Elaine Pagels, 'Irenaeus, the 'Canon of Truth,' and the 'Gospel of John': 'Making a Difference' Through Hermeneutics and Ritual,' *VC* 56.4 (2002), pp. 339-371, p. 341. The italics are Pagels'.

[98] *Ibid*., p. 347.

[99] *AH* 1.10.2.

[100] *AH* 3.11.7.

[101] *Ibid*., See *AH* 3.11.8. See also Graham N. Stanton, 'The Four-Fold Gospel,' *NTS* 43. 3 (1997), pp. 317-346; pp. 319-22.

For Irenaeus both the genesis and the interpretation of the Gospels are to be found in their divine origin.[104] While Irenaeus does devote some effort to relating the origin traditions of the four gospels, ‘he retains the earlier emphasis on the Gospel as the preaching of the apostles, legitimizing these texts through appeals to apostolic authority that remain couched in the traditional rhetoric of orality.’[105] The authority of the Gospels and the importance of their origins for Irenaeus does not lie in the biographical information included in these traditions but in the linking of these authors and texts to authoritative people and traditions and ultimately to Jesus and authoritative Jesus traditions. It is difficult to see in what ways the local situations recounted for the Gospels by Irenaeus serve as any serious grounds for interpretation of the Gospels themselves. On the contrary, for Irenaeus, the *logos* is the source of the gospel in both its oral and written forms and as such the human writers, their local situations and implied audiences play little to no role in the formulation of the gospel.[106] Further, according to Irenaeus, the ‘four-fold gospel’ represents a singular message delivered by the four evangelists.[107] As Reed has observed, Irenaeus seeks ‘to articulate the one Christian message that unifies the multiplicity of authentic apostolic witnesses and, above all, to demonstrate the unquestionable unity of its divine source.'[108] The definitive hermeneutical structure through which Irenaeus reads and understands not just the Gospels but all scripture is the 'canon of truth' as he envisions it as the acceptance and acknowledgement of 'God, *logos*, and Jesus Christ as ontologically equivalent' and the belief in the *logos* as the source for the Gospels.[109] The inclusion of the gospel origin traditions and their references to specific localities does not constitute a reading strategy for Irenaeus, but rather is part and parcel of his greater concern: namely, refuting those he sees as teaching and practicing Christian traditions and doctrines outside of those he views as authoritative.

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[102] *Ibid*., pp. 348-9.

[103] See *AH* 1.9.4, 22.1; 2.25.2, 27.1, 28.1, 28.3; 3.15.1 for Irenaeus’ use of the ‘canon of truth’ in relation to orthodox teachings. See also, Graham N. Stanton, ‘The Four-Fold Gospel,’ p. 319; Annette Yoshiko Reed, ‘ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ: Orality, Textuality and the Christian Truth in Irenaeus' ‘Adversus Haereses’,’ *VC* 56.1 (2002), pp. 11-46, esp. p. 13; and Pagels, ‘The ‘Canon of Truth,’’ p. 362, where Pagels relates Irenaeus’ hermeneutical strategy as follows,’…[Irenaeus] boldly reformulates the ‘canon of truth’ using precisely the terminology and concepts he finds in the *Gospel of John*. To understand ‘the church's gospel’ rightly Irenaeus declares, one must recognize God, *logos*, and Jesus Christ as ontologically equivalent… This ‘*canon of truth*,’ amplified in third and fourth century creeds, thus will become--together with the *Gospel of John* from which he forges it--the lens through which believers henceforth are to interpret not only ‘the gospel’ but all of ‘the scriptures’.’

[104] *AH* 3.5-11, esp. 3.11.8.

[105] Reed, ‘ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ,’ p. 25.

[106] *AH* 3.11.8; Reed, ‘ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ,’ p. 31.

[107] Stanton, ‘The Four-Fold Gospel,’ p. 321; and Reed, ‘ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ,’ p. 41.

Mitchell argues that Irenaeus' '…defense that the Gospels provide universal truth for all Christians is an overtly theological, not an historical, claim.'[110] Further she poses the question 'Would he have had to make that theological argument if in fact each gospel had, already from its original publication, had a secure place and universal readership throughout the world?'[111] Here Mitchell strikes to the heart of Irenaeus' inquiry and at the same time damages her own argument. Irenaeus' concerns are deeply theological and not historical. His purpose in accessing and recounting the gospel origin traditions is not to establish the historical audiences for the four gospels for use in interpretation, but to promote the unity of the four and only the four over an against those who would read either less than or more than the four.[112] In defending the four gospels would Irenaeus have not been served to include the 'origin traditions' as part of explanation for the four?

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[108] Reed, 'ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ,' p. 42.
[109] Pagels, 'The 'Canon of Truth,'' p. 362
[110] Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 64.
[111] *Ibid*.
[112] *AH* 3.11.8-9.

Four distinct audiences would have helped his argument for limited diversity (four gospels). Yet he does not employ it presumably because his understanding of the written and proclaimed Gospel as intended for all Christians supersedes any consideration of local audiences for the Gospels. The fact that the Gospels (the four as well as others) were being read widely does not mean that the four had been accepted by all. That is precisely the point. Those who Irenaeus is arguing against have either neglected some of the four or are using others not included in the four. For Irenaeus the four were for all Christians even if all Christians were not for the four. Wide readership and a place in an un-official canon (at this point) are not the same issue.

The question that begs to be answered is: 'To what extent are any of the aforementioned gospel origin traditions 'hermeneutically relevant?'[113] Do the gospel origin traditions form part of a consistent and significant reading strategy for the Gospels on the part of early Christian writers? As we have seen with Irenaeus, gospel origin traditions play no significant role in his reading or interpretation of the Gospels. The gospel origin traditions fit into the larger scope of his work and figure into the apologetic project that he produces. There is no sense in which the localities or the potentially localized audiences for each of the four gospels figures into his reading and interpretation. On the contrary, these traditions are used to validate these gospels over and against all others and in so doing they become part of the God-inspired preaching of Jesus. Where they were written and to whom pales in comparison to the realization that the Gospels (and all of scripture) are inspired by God and useful for the entire church, however it is envisioned by Irenaeus. While this may be true of Irenaeus, dose this same reading of the gospel origin traditions ring true for other early Christian interpreters?

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[113] Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians*, p. 44; and Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 69.

Origen

Origen of Alexandria proves to be a helpful example of early Christian interpretation both for the depth of his insight and hermeneutical endeavors as well as for the volume of his work available to us. Origen was more than aware of the potential problems arising from the 'four gospels.' Irenaeus' well-known defense of the 'four-fold' gospel demonstrates difficulties that had arisen in both Christian and non-Christian circles in relation to the diversity within the gospel accounts and the possible discrepancies.[114] Origen was able to refer to the Gospels as 'the four' on some occasions while also referring to Matthew, Mark and Luke on other occasions as 'the three,' demonstrating awareness to the differences present in the Synoptics over and against John.[115] Origen is more than aware that John offers a different presentation of the life of Jesus, yet, he can still see 'the Gospels as a 'unit,' meaning a summation of the whole economy of the preaching of Christ and the Apostles.'[116] This lack of harmony in the Gospels, while problematic, was not insurmountable. For Origin such 'inharmonious' theological and hermeneutical issues required the insight of those who were able to find the harmony in the disharmony.[117] The differing accounts could be brought together into one congruous telling of the person, work and teaching of Jesus by those able to 'strike the proper chords.'[118] His theological treatment of these texts was in effect a suggestion 'that faithfulness to the text is something far different than clinging to the letter.'[119]

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[114] Bauckham has elsewhere argued that '…Clement had two concerns: to validate the apostolic origins of the Gospels and to explain how the differences between the Gospels can be reconciled with the apostolic origins of all four.' Bauckham, 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence?' p. 72. Clement and Irenaeus have similar concerns regarding the gospels: a concern shared by many other early Christian apologists and scholars.

[115] Origen, *Exhort Mar* 29. See also, Frederick W. Weidman, 'Gospels,' in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. John A. McGuckin, (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2004), pp. 113-14; p. 113.

[116] *Ibid*. The diversity within the gospel traditions itself does not bother Origen. For him 'the church has four gospels. Heretics have many.' See Origen of Alexandria, *On Prayer/Exhortation to Martyrdom*, trans. John J. O'Meara, (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1954), p. 5.

[117] Origen, *Comm Matt* 2.

Origen's most lengthy treatment of the discrepancies present between the Synoptics and John occurs in book 10 of his *Commentary on John*.[120] Here Origen tackles head-on the discrepancies in the Gospels. Mitchell mentions Origen's discussion of the translation of Thomas's name as a possible indication of Origen's concern for gospel audiences in interpretation, but she makes no mention of his protracted discussion of the discrepancies in the Gospels and how they are to be negotiated.[121] Origen's treatment of the discrepancies between the Gospels would have been the perfect place for him to interject some sort of presentation of the gospel audiences as a means of interpreting/understanding the disparities in the Gospels. A direct reference to the gospel audiences would have seemed to have been an advantageous way of explaining the differences: different authors writing to different audiences produced different accounts of the person and work of Jesus.[122] Yet, Origen did not choose this path. On the contrary, when a literal or historical reading ceased to makes sense, Origen moves to the spiritual.[123] He argues elsewhere that scripture is authored by the Holy Spirit and so is '…true, and therefore worthy of trust.'[124] Origen, like Irenaeus before him, sees God, through the Holy Spirit, as the author of scripture and as such the human authors and their implied audiences hold no significant theological sway over Origen's interpretation of scripture. Like Irenaeus, Origen is aware of the gospel origin traditions but they are not a meaningful part of his hermeneutic even in instances where they might provide some benefit to his arguments

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[118] *Ibid*.

[119] John A. McGuckin, 'Structural Design and Apologetic Intent in Origen's Commentary on John,' in Gilles Dorival & Alain Le Boulluec, eds., *Origeniana Sexta: Origène et la Bible*, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), pp. 441-57; p. 456.

[120] Mitchell focuses most of her attention on Origen on his statements regarding gospel origin traditions in his *Comm Matt* as preserved by Eusebius in *EH* 6.25.4-6. Origen offers a similar statement, albeit abbreviated in *Comm John* 1.22 where he is able to conceive of the different beginnings for the gospels (as well as their 'audiences') as leading to a common conclusion, 'For since Mathew, on the one hand, writing for the Hebrews awaiting the son of Abraham and David, says, 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham,' and Mark, knowing what he is writing, relates the 'beginning of the gospel,' perhaps we find its goal in John [when he tells of] the Word 'in the beginning,' the Word being God.' See Origen of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John, Books 1-10*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, FC 80 (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), p. 37.

[121] Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 66.

[122] Bauckham notes that '…nowhere in the extant portions of Origen's commentary on Matthew does he refer to the original language or to the original Jewish Christian audience of Matthew.' See Bauckham, 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence?' p. 84.

Origen's main interpretative endeavor in dealing with the discrepancies in the Gospels is harmonization. In seeking to harmonize the texts, he does not want to harmonize them as previous interpreters have. On the contrary, he embraces the historical differences present in the texts and he heads in the direction of realizing the 'full impossibility of any historical harmonization.'[125] For Origen, harmonization of contradictory historical facts in the Gospels has to move beyond the historical to the spiritual meaning behind the text.[126] Faced with the choice between choosing one version of the gospel (the Synoptics or John) over the other or negating the 'historicity of both' Origen opted to move beyond the historicity of the text.[127] Origin was certainly comfortable in putting forth that God could inspire the different authors of the Gospels to write different things in different places at different times.[128] However, integral to this understanding of God's action in inspiration was an understanding that the Gospels said something true about God and that while there were four gospels, each had equal value in disseminating this truth.[129] For Origen, the inspiration of the Gospels took place not only in the writing of the texts but also in the reading and interpretation of the texts.[130] It is unclear then how the gospel origin traditions form a meaningful hermeneutical approach. In Book 10 of his *Commentary on John*, Origen makes no use or mention of these traditions as he seeks to work out the spiritual meaning of the discrepancies surrounding the beginning of Jesus' ministry in John. Given his preference for spiritual interpretations where the historical realities of the texts break down it is unclear how the supposed audiences for the Gospels would have impacted his reading and interpretation of the text. He certainly mentions these traditions but he does not apply them to his reading of the texts.[131] His preference for the spiritual reading of the text over and against the historical discrepancies as well has his understanding of the texts themselves as being profoundly inspired by the Holy Spirit would leave little room for local audiences as 'hermeneutically relevant.'[132] For Origen, 'the endless searching for deeper meanings of the Holy Scripture, is based on the Holy Spirit as the author of the text and the reader as the searcher illuminated by the Holy Spirit.'[133]

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[123] Bauckham has suggested that 'what Origen holds together, insofar as he does, are not the local and the universal, but the historical-literal and the theological-symbolic.' Bauckham, 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence?'p. 85.

[124] Margaret M. Mitchell, 'Patristic Rhetoric on Allegory: Origen and Eustathius Put 1 Samuel 28 on Trial,' *JR* 85. 3 (2005), pp. 414-45; p. 424.

[125] Samuel Laeuchli, 'The Polarity of the Gospels in the Exegesis of Origen,' *CH* 21. 3, (1952), pp. 215-224); p. 215.

[126] *Ibid*. See also, Antonia Tripolitis, *Origen: A Critical Reading*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), pp. 35-37; Guy G. Stroumsa, 'Clement, Origen, and Jewish Esoteric Traditions,' in Gilles Dorival & Alain Le Boulluec, eds., *Origeniana Sexta: Origène et la Bible*, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), pp. 53-70; p. 67, in reference to Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 11.4; and *Comm. John*, 10.10; 14; and 19-20.

[127] *Ibid.*

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[128] Origen, *Comm John*, 10.3.

[129] *Ibid*. See Laeuchli, 'The Polarity of the Gospels,' p. 218.

[130] Origen, preface to *De Princip* 1.21-24; *De Princip* 1.3.1; 4.1.1-2; and *Comm John* 10.3. See also Wataru Mizugaki, ''Spirit' and 'Search': The basis of Biblical Hermeneutics in Origen's On First Principles 4.1-3,' in Harrold W. Attridge & Gohei Hata, eds., *Eusebius Christianity and Judaism*, (Leiden: Brill, 1992) pp. 563-84; Patricia Cox Miller, 'Poetic Words, Abysmal Words: Reflections on Origen's Hermeneutics,' in Charles Kannengiesser & William L. Petersen, eds., *Origen of Alexandria: His Words and His Legacy*, (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), pp. 165-78, esp. p. 171; Fred Ledegang, 'Apostles, Apostolic Writing,' in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. John A. McGuckin, (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2004), pp. 62-64; and Michihiko Kuyama, 'The Searching Spirit: The Hermeneutical Principle in the Preface of Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John,' in Gilles Dorival & Alain Le Boulluec, eds., *Origeniana Sexta: Origène et la Bible*, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), pp. 434-39 for more discussion of Origen and divine inspiration as it relates to scripture/gospels.

[131] Origen, *Comm Matt* 2; *Comm John* 1.22.

[132] Bauckham, 'For Whom?' p. 44; and Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 69.

Eusebius and The Post-Constantinian Church

Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* has provided us with many if not most of the relevant gospel origin traditions discussed here. In many instances his recording of them is the only extant version of these traditions. Yet, Eusebius momentous historical work was not composed with cold, detached, historical objectivity. On the contrary, he wrote with specific apologetic themes in mind.[134] Whether defending the church from the internal pressures of Gnosticism as both Irenaeus and Origen had done, or defending the church against pagan criticisms, as Origen had also done, Eusebius weaves together a historical treatment of the first four hundred years of the church with diverse apologetic concerns in mind. Like many of his predecessors and contemporaries, Eusebius was forced to address the difficulties surrounding the diversity present in the four accepted gospels. He confronts these difficulties early on in *EH* in Book 1 (1.7) where he deals with the discrepancies between Matthew and Luke in regard to the genealogy of Jesus.[135] There is little cause for concern on the part of Eusebius as the matter had been solved to his satisfaction by other Christian writers and because of his beliefs about the Gospels.[136] Eusebius believed that the four gospels (as well as select other documents) gave 'direct witness to the correct teachings of and about Jesus Christ.'[137] The validity and authority of these texts did not come from their corroboration with other historical sources, although Eusebius did consult Philo and Josephus when necessary, but rather from the fact that they were attributed to authoritative people (disciples of Christ or those close to the disciples) and they were accepted by authors that Eusebius found to be authoritative and trustworthy.[138] Eusebius is comfortable in producing a historical treatment of the life of Jesus based on his reading of the Gospels which he sees as 'overseen by God.'[139] He used the gospel origin traditions quite uncritically to smooth over the theological rough patches because they, like the Gospels themselves, are part of an authoritative tradition that has been handed on by authoritative persons.[140]

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[133] Michihiko Kuyama, 'The Searching Spirit,' p. 438.

[134] See Birger A. Pearson, 'Eusebius and Gnosticism,' in Harrold W. Attridge & Gohei Hata, eds., *Eusebius Christianity and Judaism*, (Leiden: Brill, 1992) pp. 291-310, p. 295; Aryeh Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism*, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 40-43; and Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 35-37 for a discussion of the various themes present in the *History*.

[135] Grant, *Eusebius*, p. 127.

[136] *Ibid*. Julius Africanus had sorted out the potential genealogical issues to the satisfaction of Eusebius (*EH* 1.7).

Eusebius, while attempting to be historical, was not above selectivity in the use of the source material available to him. Indeed, he was more than willing to exclude any historical material that conflicted with his theological point of view.[141] Papias presented him with a historical and theological dilemma. Eusebius found Papias' theological outlook to be foolish and unreliable, yet his historical testimony to the authority of certain gospels was important.[142] Eusebius was able to put aside, if only momentarily, his dislike of Papias' theology in favor of retaining his testimony about the origins/authority of the Gospels. This speaks to the importance of authority and authoritative texts in *EH*. One of the chief aims of the work was to demonstrate and preserve the 'apostolic legacy' that had been handed down from Christ to the disciples to authorized leaders and teachers and on to the time of Eusebius.[143] This focus on the 'apostolic legacy' has been proposed was the main concern of the *EH.* Accordingly, Kannengiesser writes:

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[137] Phillip Sellew, 'Eusebius and the Gospels,' in Harrold W. Attridge & Gohei Hata, eds., *Eusebius Christianity and Judaism*, (Leiden: Brill, 1992) pp. 110-38; p. 111.
[138] *Ibid.,* p. 112-14. See Grant, *Eusebius*, p. 127.
[139] *Ibid*., p. 121.
[140] *Ibid*., See *EH* 3.24.7-13.
[141] *Ibid*., p. 112.
[142] *Ibid*., pp. 122-7.

> Eusebius' program in the *History* will be systematic and deliberate. The disposition of the seven books in the original project will proceed from *one* central thesis: the apologetic legacy was faithfully transmitted from the earliest *diadochai* on until the time of Origen, and through Origen and his disciples until the present day.[144]

Given the potential for this emphasis in the *EH*, the work as a whole conforms to the concern (by Eusebius and others) to establish authoritative books, by authoritative people that are also associated with places that are known to bear a similar amount of authority. This corresponds to the larger philosophic tradition of establishing succession for a particular philosophical school where legitimacy was determined by one's 'place in the school tradition.'[145] However, there is little to suggest that these origin traditions formed a reading strategy or hermeneutic pattern for Eusebius where individual Christian audiences were considered. On the contrary, they highlighted the continued concern associated with the four gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ which Eusebius saw as unified in the four authoritative gospels.[146]

In the post-Constantinian context, John Chrysostom serves as an important example of how the gospel origin traditions were being read and interpreted. Similar to the interpreters who came before him, John was faced with the dilemma of explaining the discrepancies between the four gospels.[147] Chrysostom never attempts to maneuver out of the path of these difficulties but instead sees the diversity as 'an indication of the truth of the Gospels.'[148] As McKibbens has pointed out, Chrysostom approached the issue in two ways: 1) he argued for duplicate events in some instances; and 2) a reconciliation of other discrepancies.[149] In the instance where Luke and Matthew differed in their presentations of Jesus' genealogy, Chrysostom argued that the extent of the genealogies was dictated by authorial intent and that each included information that the other excluded.[150] Chrysostom turns to the gospel origin traditions as a means of solving inconsistencies in the Gospels and Mitchell has argued that Chrysostom uses the audience groups mentioned in these traditions as a means for dealing with the differences in the gospel genealogies.[151] However, it is unclear that his use of the gospel origin traditions forms a consistent reading/interpretative strategy for Chrysostom and may be indicative of his uncritical use of the gospel origin traditions that have come down to him.[152] For Chrysostom, the testimonies of both Matthew and Luke contribute to a complete genealogy for Jesus.[153] The true tension for Chrysostom is not between universal and particular audiences, but between the one Gospel and the four gospels and he can appeal to local audiences as part of the apostolic traditions surrounding the Gospels. However, as Mitchell notes, 'this was not necessarily John's usual hermeneutical rule or guide.'[154] Chrysostom like others before him uses all of the apostolic traditions at his disposal to rectify the potentially damaging differences found in the Gospels. Elsewhere, his mention of audience request traditions as part of the explanation for the origin of John's gospel fits into the greater project that he and other Christian theologians had for demonstrating the truth and reliability of the Gospels.[155] It is unclear that these local audiences were understood as the only audiences for the Gospels, by Chrysostom and others, or that they served as the basis for a consistent and relevant hermeneutical reading of the Gospels. Ultimately, for Chrysostom the belief that 'the word of God as a concrete whole 'cum omnibus suis partibus' is inspired' would have had a profound impact on his reading and interpretation of scripture.[156]

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[143] Charles Kannengiesser, 'Eusebius of Caesarea, Originist,' in Harrold W. Attridge & Gohei Hata, eds., *Eusebius Christianity and Judaism*, (Leiden: Brill, 1992) pp. 436-66; p. 447.

[144] *Ibid*., p. 448.

[145] Grant, *Eusebius,* p. 46. See also Talbert, *What is a Gospel?*, pp. 92-96.

[146] *EH* 3.24.13.

[147] Thomas R. McKibbens, 'The Exegesis of John Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospels,' *ExpTim* 93, (1982), pp. 264-70; p. 268. See Bauckham, 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence?' pp. 93-100 for his discussion of Chrysostom and others.

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[148] McKibbens, 'The Exegesis of John Chrysostom,' p. 268. See John Chrysostom, *Hom Matt* 1.3; and Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 70.
[149] *Ibid*., p. 268.
[150] *Ibid*., p. 269. See John Chrysostom, *Hom Matt* 1.3; 26.3.
[151] Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 71. She translates Chrysostom's *Hom Matt* 1.3 in the following way,' …it is for this reason that Matthew, for his part, inasmuch as he was writing for Hebrews, sought to prove nothing more than that Christ came from Abraham and David, whereas Luke, inasmuch as he was writing for all in Koine Greek, tells the story going further back, extending all the way to Adam.'
[152] Chrysostom seems to be basing his interpretation in part on the languages traditionally ascribed to Luke and Matthew (Hebrew and Greek respectively).
[153] Some discussion of Chrysostom's antagonism towards Jews should be considered here. Mitchell includes the following phrase in her translation,'…for nothing calms the Jew as for him to learn that Christ was the descendant of Abraham and David (*Hom Matt* 1.3),' Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 71. It may be possible that both the gospel origin traditions and Chrysostom's own anti-Judaism are influencing his interpretation here. For further discussion of Chrysostom's anti-Judaism see Gerhart B. Ladner, 'Aspects of Patristic Anti-Judaism,' *Viator* 2, (1971), pp. 355-63; and John G. Gager, *Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 118-20.

Conclusion

The Gospels emerged from a complex and varied literary tradition, one that was influenced by Hebrew literature as well as the literary traditions of the Greco-Roman world. As the Gospels were read and circulated an interest grew in their origins and in those who composed them. This interest would certainly have had its basis in the interest in literary figures and their works in the ancient world. For many, it was not enough just to have the works of literature only but some biographical presentation of the authors would have been beneficial to the reader as well. Often, these biographical presentations came about as the result of searching the available literature for any and every factoid that might have given a glimpse of the author. These facts would often then be presented in the literary pattern or arrangement of βίος/*vita*, and one would expect a similar biographical treatment for the evangelists as well. In the subsequent generations after Christ there would have been an ever-growing interest in the first generation of Christians. Yet, the gospel origin traditions as presented by Eusebius and others gave little in the way of developed biographical presentations for the evangelists.

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[154] Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence,' p. 72.

[155] *Ibid*., pp. 52-8; 73-4.

[156] Robert Hill, 'St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in 'Six Homilies on Isaiah',' *VC* 22.1, (1968), pp. 19-37; p. 28.

The gospel origin traditions focus on one area of interest almost exclusively: authority. In nearly every instance, the gospel origin traditions establish authority for the writer through relationship (either to Jesus through discipleship or to an apostle as a friend/disciple). In most cases the authors are tied to geographic locales that were known to have been areas where apostles worked, taught and ministered. These traditions gave the various gospels (Matthew, Mark Luke and John) an authoritative foothold in the sea of Jesus materials circulating in the first few centuries of the Christian church. The four were authoritative because they were written by authoritative people in authoritative places. Biographical interest paled in comparison to establishing legitimacy. This would mark a stark contrast to the biographies of poets and philosophers where biographic and critical content were the focus.

The use and interpretation of these traditions by early Christian interpreters mirrors their focus of these traditions. Most often these gospel origin traditions were used to establish authority for the four gospels over and against any others. As part of the interpretative process, these traditions served to legitimate the four and to bring the four into a tenuous historical harmony at the moments where their disagreement could prove devastating to some. There is no real sense in which the audience groups that are mentioned in these traditions formed a coherent, consistent and meaningful hermeneutical strategy for the early Christian interpreters, and in most cases the audiences mentioned are suitably large and diverse. At points they could appeal to them as part of an explanation for differences in genealogies or structure, but their reading of scripture was never overtly influenced by them and it is doubtful that they ever envisioned the Gospels being written with only a local audience in mind. As Mitchell has pointed out, the earliest gospel interpreters held the gospel audiences, both particular and universal, in tension. While this tension may have existed, to a certain extent, the local audiences were ultimately overshadowed by the belief in the divine inspiration of scripture and its intended use by all Christians. The true tension that existed in the early church was between the three (Synoptics) and the one (John). How could these different accounts of the life and work of Jesus be brought into conversation? From at least the time of Irenaeus forward to Chrysostom (and beyond) the traditions held that the four were written by authoritative people in authoritative places and that they presented the authoritative preaching of Jesus and his apostles. Within the four was contained the one Gospel of Jesus Christ, a Gospel that was intended for all who believed.

Chapter 4. Avoiding Cross-Generic Comparisons: The Role of Genre in Assessing Audience in Non-Canonical and Canonical Gospels

Introduction: The Potential for Genre Analysis in Determining Gospel Audiences

Up to this point one of the main features of this thesis has been to take the role of genre seriously in discussing the scope, purpose and meaning of texts. Certainly genre should play an important role in the interpretation of texts as we have seen with the origin traditions related to the Gospels, as well as the Gospels, themselves. An examination of the non-canonical gospels as examples of Greco-Roman literature that have a similar form, function and subject matter as the canonical gospels, would seem to be advantageous in assessing the greater question of gospel audiences.

Two recent attempts to compare the non-canonical gospels to the canonical gospels in terms of audience have produced similar results. In his article entitled 'The Gospels for All Christians? A Response to Richard Bauckham,' David C. Sim has argued, following the work of Klijn, that the Jewish-Christian Gospels 'were created for particular Christian Jewish groups in local areas (Egypt, Transjordan and Beroea).'[1] Similarly, he states that the *Gospel of Thomas*, like other Gnostic texts, was written by and specifically for Gnostic readers.[2] A stronger presentation is offered by Thomas Kazen who argues for the need for diverse Christian texts representative of the range of

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[1] David C. Sim, 'The Gospels for All Christians?' p. 19. See also Michael F. Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians? The Non-Canonical Gospels and Bauckham's *The Gospels for All Christians*,' in Edward W. Klink, III, ed., *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*, LNTS 353, (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), pp. 27-48; p. 28. One of the difficulties here is the way in which Sim accepts the work of Klijn without question or critical reflection. The issues surrounding the Jewish-Christian Gospels are more complex than Sim lets on.

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 18-19. Again, Sim does not dialogue with the relevant arguments in relation to the *Gospel of Thomas* and its composition or purpose. Genre is not considered at all in this discussion and as a whole the subject of genre is downplayed by Sim.

Christian beliefs present from the end of the first century on.[3] Here Kazen compares the *Gospel of Thomas*, Papyrus Edgerton 2, POxy 840, and *The Gospel of Peter* to the canonical gospels in order to draw the comparison that these sectarian gospels would have had an implied audience similar to those of the canonical gospels, and that both the canonical and non-canonical gospels would have originally been intended for local use despite the fact that they eventually circulated widely. In both instances, Sim and Kazen give little to no account to the issue of genre and how it serves to inform us of both authorial intent and audience expectation. The question that still remains unanswered is: What generic affinity do the non-canonical texts have to the canonical gospels, if at all? Can we compare the non-canonical gospels to the canonical gospels based purely on common subject matter, or does genre play an essential role in this process?

The relationship between the canonical gospels and the non-canonical gospels has been strained at best. Tuckett is right to suggest that all works that claim to be gospels or texts that have had the tag 'gospel' applied to them could be considered in some loose way as gospels.[4] Yet, as Tuckett notes, this broad category would exclude some important texts while including others that do not belong.[5] This broader category of literature might then be better described as 'Jesus books', or 'writings devoted to Jesus.'[6] This is too vague to account for the interpretative force indicated by genre. Presumably, there could be a collection of literary works that could be grouped together based on subject matter (all of the works with Socrates, or ancient Greece or Rome as the subject, for example), yet any number of genres could be represented in such a collection. How then might this greater collection of literature be compared? Tuckett has suggested that the criterion of gospel could be 'a text purporting to give some account of the life and/or teaching of the historical Jesus (in contrast, say, to a 'letter', sermon or doctrinal treatise).'[7] This definition undoubtedly gets closer to the definition of Greco-Roman biography as the narration of a person's (of importance) words and deeds.[8] Any such discussion of gospels indicates just how difficult it can be to group these works without a clear demarcating principle.[9] This is all the more difficult considering the development of the gospel genre from the first century on.[10] Further confusing the issue of genre is the fact that many of the non-canonical 'Jesus books' are imitations, at least in part, of the diverse genres present in the New Testament.[11]

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[3] Thomas Kazen, 'Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians? Intention and Mirror Reading in the Light of Extra-Canonical Texts,' *NTS* 51 (2005), pp. 561-78; pp. 561-66.
[4] Christopher Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels,' in Markus Bockmuhl & Donald A. Hagner, ed., *The Written Gospel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 238-53; p. 241.
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 427.

Most discussions of the subject of genre begin with some sort of analysis that is reminiscent of or indebted to form criticism. Yet, as Thatcher has observed, the traditional elements of New Testament form criticism do not seem to have applicability to the non-canonical gospels inasmuch as these elements were formed through an analysis of the Synoptic Gospels.[12] This sort of approach to gospel genre has significant drawbacks. These difficulties are seen most clearly in the approach of Helmut Koester who has confined his treatment of gospel genre to determining the *Sitz im Leben* of the material found in gospel literature.[13] The focus on the function of the literary material steers the discussion away from the literary form of the texts and presupposes a community model that may or may not be verifiable. Further, the focus on style that Koester prefers enables him to avoid the view that gospels must have some common literary form.[14] In this way, he is able to conceive of gospels as 'all those writings which are constituted by the transmission, use, and interpretation of materials and traditions from and about Jesus.'[15] This allows any Jesus book to be considered in the same conversation as the canonical gospels, regardless of literary genre.

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[7] Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels,' p. 241.

[8] Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 24; *What Are the Gospels?*, p. 241. Burridge sees the canonical gospels as comprising a literary sub-genre of βίος, 'Jesus biographies,' that are similar to philosophical biographies, *What Are the Gospels?*, p. 243.

[9] Christopher Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels,' p. 243. Tuckett suggests that the gospel literature can be divided into sub-genres based essentially on content and structure. Here we begin to see some of the difficulties in separating the material, as Tuckett observes, where some works can fall into more than one category. He sees the following options: 1) narrative gospels; 2) sayings gospels; 3) infancy gospels; and 4) resurrection discourses/dialogues. He also sees harmonies as a potential fifth category, pp. 244-8. One of the potential drawbacks, as has been noticed before, is that this loose classification is not consistent. At points it divides literature by subject and at others by literary form. Thus one work can fit into multiple sub-sections. It is unclear how helpful this becomes to the discussion of genre.

[10] Burridge sees a number of levels of development from 1) Mark who writes in a genre like that of philosophical biography, 2) to that of Matthew and Luke, who incorporate more biographical elements into their narratives, to 3) the non-canonical gospels, in which some conform to βίος, while others do not, to 4) the later genre of gospel commentaries which demonstrates a final shift away from biography as the gospels have begun to be thought of as scripture; *What Are the Gospels?*, pp. 240-3.

[11] J. K. Elliot, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), p. 1. Elliot also notices that this apocryphal literature became quite popular and was read widely and became 'the basis for much folk religion and popular piety,' p. 2.

This general notion of including all Jesus books into the common conversation has the effect of obscuring the role of genre in the interpretative process. Burridge has expressed the importance of genre in these discussions stating,

> Genre is a major literary convention, forming a 'contract' between author and reader; it provides a set of expectations for the reader about the author's intentions, which helps in the construction of the meaning on the page and the reconstruction of the author's original meaning, as well as in the interpretation and evaluation of the communication contained in the work itself.'[16]

We continue to be reminded that genre provides important parameters through which a text is evaluated and understood. In order to continue to assess the implied audience of both the canonical and non-canonical gospels, consideration must be paid to genre. Whereas Sim and Kazen give little deference to genre in their discussions of gospel audiences in relationship to the proposed audiences of the non-canonical gospels, the purpose of this chapter is to avoid such potential cross-generic comparisons on the subject of audience and to seek to interpret the implied audiences of select non-canonical gospels in light of genre.[17] More specifically, this chapter serves as a caution to assuming that non-canonical gospels and canonical gospels can be read without consideration for genre. Here the Jewish-Christian Gospels, the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Gospel of Peter* will be examined as non-canonical gospels that may differ significantly generically from the canonical gospels.[18] For each example three issues will be addressed: 1) generic comparison to the genre of Greco-Roman biography; 2) a discussion of their place within the historical matrix of circulated texts; and 3) a discussion of the implied audience as it emerges from the text. The goal here is to place these texts into the greater literary context of the Greco-Roman world and specifically the literary context of the canonical gospels as a means of furthering the discussion of gospel audiences.

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[12] Tom Thatcher, 'Early Christianities and the Synoptic Eclipse: Problems in Situating the Gospel of Thomas,' *BibInt* 7.3 (1999), pp. 323-39; p. 326. See Robert M. Grant, 'Notes on the Gospel of Thomas,' *VC* 13 (1959), pp. 170-80.

[13] Helmut Koester, 'One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels,' *HTS* 61.2 (1968), pp. 203-47; p. 204; Thatcher, 'Early Christianities,' p. 327.

[14] Thatcher, 'Early Christianities,' p. 329.

[15] Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development*, (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990), p. 46; Thatcher, 'Early Christianities,' p. 329.

[16] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, p. 247.

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[17] This is not to say that 'Jesus books' or literature about Jesus cannot be used comparatively to discuss other concerns (Christology, etc.). Certainly, comparing non-canonical and canonical gospels as well as comparing the canonical gospels with each other would be of benefit. But in terms of examining the communicative matrix of author-genre-audience, through which authors write in specific genres for certain audiences, comparing texts of the same genre will be important in assessing issues of audience.

[18] The current chapter was researched, planned and outlined before Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?' circulated to me as a proof in an edited volume to which I have also contributed. The choice of examples are the same as Bird's but Bird does not give much or any attention to this issue of genre and as such this chapter still offers original insight into the subject. I can only conjecture that Bird and I chose the same examples for similar reasons. The reasoning here being that the Jewish-Christian Gospels would seem to be important examples of sectarian works and would be interesting to bring into discussion with the canonical gospels. Being of a similar genre there may be some important insights here. *GT* is used by Kazen and Sim to support their arguments that gospels were sectarian. While it may be true that *GT* was sectarian (this is by no means certain) it is uncertain if it is of the same genre as the canonical gospels. As such it is a perfect example for comparison. Finally *GP* would seem to be of a similar genre to the canonical gospels and would also be insightful for comparison. Given the extensive amount of early Christian literature available to us a certain amount of selectivity was necessary in choosing the examples that are covered in this chapter. This is not to suggest that there are no other examples that would be worthy of study or that would not benefit from a similar comparison to the canonical gospels. *The Gospel of Judas*, the infancy narratives (*Protoevangelium of James*, *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, etc.), *The Gospel of Gamaliel* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (as well as other examples from the 'Pilate Cycle') are all worthy of consideration. *The Gospel of Judas* was not chosen because it does not seem to be analogous to the genre of the canonical gospels and given the constraints of this project comparing further examples of generically dissimilar texts to the canonical gospels did not seem prudent. Likewise most of the other examples mentioned above were excluded from the present study due to generic dissimilarity (narratives as opposed to biography proper). For some of the current discussion on *the Gospel of Judas* see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot: A New Look at Betrayer and Betrayed*, (Oxford: Oxford, 2006); Simon J. Gathercole, 'The Gospel of Judas,' *ExpTim* 118.5 (2007), pp. 209-15; *The Gospel of Judas: Rewriting Early Christianity*, (Oxford: Oxford, 2007); Stanley E. Porter and Gordon L. Heath *The Lost Gospel of Judas: Separating Fact From Fiction*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007); Frank Williams, 'The Gospel of Judas: Its Polemic, Its Exegesis, and Its Place in Church History,' *VC* 62.4

The 'Jewish-Christian Gospels'

The collection of works referred to as the Jewish-Christian Gospels (consisting of the *Gospel of the Ebionites* (*GE*), the *Gospel of the Nazoreans* (*GN*) and the *Gospel of the Hebrews* (*GH*) form an important corpus of works for generic comparison to the canonical gospels.[19] If Sim is correct and these gospels were written in sectarian communities for sectarian audiences it, may be the case that the canonical gospels fit into a similar social location.[20] Presumably these gospels would serve as congruous examples

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(2008), pp. 371-403; Gesine S. Robinson, 'The Gospel of Judas in Light of the New Testament and Early Christianity,' *ZAC* 13.1 (2009), pp. 98-107; and Andrew Gregory, 'The Non-Canonical Gospels and the Historical Jesus: Some Reflections on Issues and Methods,' *EvQ* 81.1 (2009), pp. 3-22. For general discussion of the Non-Canonical gospels see Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels'; and Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 3-225 and *New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 1: Gospels and Related Writings*, Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

[19] I am following the consensus view that there are three Jewish-Christian Gospels. I am persuaded that there may in fact be only two but time and space do not permit a further discussion. See Hans-Josef Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction*, (London: T.& T. Clark, 2003), p. 36-7; and Andrew Gregory, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' in *The Non-Canonical Gospels*, Paul Foster, ed. (London: T. & T. Clark, 2008), pp. 54-67; pp. 56-59 for a discussion of the issues related to the number of Jewish Christian Gospels.

[20] Sim, 'The Gospels for All Christians?' p. 19. Here he writes: 'A good number of Gospels were composed in the second and later centuries, and it is arguable whether any of these were intended for all Christians. Many of them were clearly composed by specific Christian groups for a very restricted readership.' He goes on to state that ,'If the Christians of the second and later centuries composed their Gospels for restricted and localized Christian readerships and not for general consumption, then it may well be the case that the canonical Evangelists did as well.' At least two issues arise here: 1) Sim is uncritical of the texts he offers as examples here and he gives little to no consideration to genre as an interpretative element (on p. 18 he downplays its usefulness entirely); and 2) Sim assumes that these texts were written

for comparison with the canonical gospels on the grounds of form, function and implied audience. Thus, the Jewish-Christian Gospels serve as an excellent starting point, but not without reservations. The Gospels themselves are available to us only as quotations in the writings of later Christian writers.[21] As such, it is with caution that we should approach the task of evaluating the texts and reconstructing the social milieu out of which they emerged.

Gregory has questioned the extent to which these texts can be properly viewed as Jewish-Christian and to what extent these texts are representative of heretical forms of Christianity.[22] He sees the Jewish-Christian Gospels on the whole as 'broadly congruent and consistent with the canonical gospels, especially the synoptic tradition.'[23] While it is true that Epiphanius (Epi. *Pan.*, 30.13.1) presents the Ebionites and their gospel as heretical; the image of Jesus that emerges (vegetarian, resistant to the temple cult) does not conflict significantly with the presentation of Jesus in the canonical gospels. Both *GN* and *GH* seem to have been viewed somewhat favorably by early Christian writers and the *GH*, while not counted as one of the (semi) officially 'recognized books', was not put into the category of heretical documents but rather as one of the 'disputed' books in line with such works as the epistles of James and Jude and the Revelation of John.[24] It

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for sectarian audiences and projects that social situation back onto all four of the canonical gospels. This need not be the case for any of the canonical gospels or for the examples that he cites.

[21] See A. F. J. Klijn & G. J Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), pp. 19-51; A. F. J.. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Traditions*, (Leiden, Brill: 1992), pp. 3-38; Philip Vielhauer & Georg Strecker, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha I: Gospels and Related Writings*, (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 134-78; and Hans-Josef Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 36-54 for relevant bibliography and discussion on the extant witnesses to the Jewish-Christian Gospels.

[22] Gregory, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' pp. 66-7.

[23] *Ibid*., p. 66.

[24] *Ibid*., p. 67. This demonstrates that *GH* had some significant appeal in the time that Eusebius was writing and if his account is correct it was read fairly widely. See *EH* 3.25 for a full account of the list of books he found to be recognized, disputed and heretical. This also assumes that the *GH* as it is reconstructed is the same *GH* as mentioned by Eusebius.

would seem unclear as to the extent to which some of these Jewish-Christian texts were thought of as heretical and to what extent they are representative of second century sectarian Christianity.[25] We would argue that the texts themselves should be used to determine their sectarian nature, as opposed to the testimony of ancient writers about the texts given the unreliable and sometimes polemical information about them that comes to us through such presentations.[26]

The 'Jewish-Christian Gospels' – Genre

Considering important questions raised by Gregory as to the relationship of the Jewish-Christian Gospels to each other as well as to their relationship to the canonical gospels, genre comparison will prove helpful in determining textual interrelatedness.[27] Considering the brief definition of βίος as the narration of a person's words and deeds, then Gregory is correct in his assertion that the Jewish-Christian Gospels have a closer generic affinity to the canonical gospels than they do to many of the other works that have been designated gospels.[28] Both *GE* and *GN* exhibit generic similarities to the genre of Greco-Roman biography. As discussed previously, biographies could include a wide range of information and topics, with the emphasis being on the words and deeds of the individual as instrumental in displaying or portraying their essence. These topics could range from nationality, family, birth and training to deeds and death, and they could be arranged in a number of ways and all of the topics need not be included.[29] In order for a work to be a biography, certain kinds of information needed to be included even if not all of the topics were covered. *GE* fits this basic pattern (assuming the fragments are representative of the work as a whole) with the inclusion not only of some of the major actions in the life of Jesus (baptism [fr. 1-3], last supper [fr. 7], passion, and resurrection) as well as an indication of the inclusion of some sayings of Jesus (a version of the Sermon on the Mount [fr. 6]) as well.[30] *GE* also seems to be a harmonistic rendering of at least Matthew and Luke and while this is not enough to render it into a different generic category it does distinguish it at least in terms of its uses of source material from the other Jewish-Christian Gospels.[31]

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[25] See Richard J. Bauckham, 'Origin of the Ebionites,' in *The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature*, Peter J. Tomson & Doris Lambers-Petry, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003), pp. 162-81, esp. p. 62 where Bauckham, following Mimouni, sees the Nazoreans as generally fitting with the theology/Christology of the Church Fathers. This agreement is due to their relative silence on the Nazoreans. See Simon C. Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancient: essais historiques*, (Paris: Cerf, 1998), p. 86, n. 3.

[26] Andrew Gregory, 'Hindrance or Help: Does the Modern Category of 'Jewish-Christian Gospel' Distort our Understanding of the Texts to Which it Refers?' *JSNT* 28.4 (2006), pp. 387-413; p. 387. Gregory cautions that 'Just as questions that we ask may determine the answers that we receive, so the categories in which we classify texts may colour and even determine the way in which we read and interpret them.' Thus the term designation Jewish-Christian may direct a reading of the text that is not necessarily supported by the text. These readings could lead to sectarian interpretations of non-sectarian texts.

[27] *Ibid*., pp. 388-89.

[28] Gregory, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' p. 55; 'Hindrance or Help,' p. 388, where Gregory states, that the canonical gospels are 'narrative texts which purport to give at least a selective account of what Jesus said and did, and to offer a sympathetic presentation of his significance.'

Similarly, *GN* exhibits generic features similar to the canonical gospels and other Greco-Roman biographies. If the fragments are indicative of the text as a whole then *GN* would seem to include narratives on the major events of Jesus' life (temptation [fr.3], baptism [fr.2], healings [fr. 10], the confession and denial of Peter [fr.19], a passion narrative [fr. 20-22] and resurrection account [fr. 23]) as well as significant teachings (fr. 3-9; 11-18).[32] On the whole it is related very closely to the Gospel of Matthew, as the quotations of it in Jerome's commentary on Matthew suggest. If it is a Semitic translation of Matthew, as has been argued, then it would also fit into the broad genre of biography and would hold to generic expectations similar to those of the canonical Matthew on the part of both the author and the audience.[33] While *GE* and *GN* seem to fit the generic pattern of βίος, *GH* presents some interesting challenges in regard to genre. Veilhauer and Strecker have recognized that *GH* differs significantly from GE and *GN* as well as the canonical gospels.[34] Similarly Gregory has stated that *GH* may represent a distinct literary genre apart from *GE*, *GN* and the canonical gospels while allowing for some overlap of synoptic material in *GH*.[35] On the contrary, Luomanen argues for the *GH* as being of the 'synoptic-type' of gospel sharing material with *GT* that itself seems to have both synoptic and non-synoptic material.[36] Further, according to Luomanen, because Eusebius does not count *GH* among the heretical books, but as a disputed work, *GH* must have been similar to the canonical gospels.[37] While containing material that was part of the larger traditions about Jesus in circulation in the first two centuries, *GH*, as we have it, does not seem to fit the generic pattern of biography and may be more closely akin to the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, itself a collection of Jesus sayings. Of the eight fragments of *GH* presented by Veilhauer and Strecker, five exhibit no narrative context (fr. 3, 4a, 4b, 5 and 6). Fragments 1, 2 and 7 have some narrative context with fr. 2 being a presentation of Jesus' words at his baptism and fr. 7 being a post-resurrection account in which James the Just is encouraged by Jesus to eat. While this indicates some narrative context for *GH*, as opposed to *GT* which begins the vast majority of the Jesus sayings with the programmatic statement, 'Jesus said,' this does not present a full biographical treatment of Jesus. Of the 111 sayings in *GT*, five (72, 79, 99, 100 and 104) are initiated by the comments of others, thus providing a moderate narrative context.[38] Of the eight quotations from *Gospel of the Egyptians* used by Clement, five (a, c, d, f, and h) are prefaced by some reference to Salome posing questions to Jesus in what seems to be a conversation between Jesus and Salome. This simple narrative context is similar to the short narrative context of *GT* (72, 79, 99, 100 and 104).[39] Even though arguments from silence are never certain, it is curious that the fragments of *GH* which are preserved in the Church Fathers contain little to no narrative structure. While *GH* does have some moderate narrative context, the extant fragments do not conclusively lend to a biographical genre for the text. Bauer may be correct in stating that the title of the *GH* was used to distinguish it from another gospel of the same or similar genre (*Gospel of the Egyptians*) at use in the same geographic location.[40] It would seem curious to need to distinguish, by title alone, two gospels of differing genres. While the fragments do not allow for a conclusive generic analysis, we would suggest that these two gospels were of a similar genre (collection of sayings with very moderate descriptive elements), but one distinct from the canonical gospels, and were thus in need of some distinction from each other.

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[29] Martin, 'Progymnastic Topic Lists,' pp. 21-3. See also Talbert, 'Once Again,' pp. 55-59 for a discussion of features that are essential and accidental in Greco-Roman biographies. For the sake of continuity I will be following the reconstructions of the Jewish-Christian Gospels as presented by Vielhauer & Strecker.

[30] Vielhauer & Strecker, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' p. 167.

[31] Gregory, 'Hindrance or Help,' p. 393. See Vielhauer & Strecker, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' p. 167. In terms of genre, a harmony of various gospel accounts can still be considered a biography or an account of the words and deeds of Jesus.

[32] Vielhauer & Strecker, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' p. 154.

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[33] *Ibid.* Veilhauer & Strecker see *GN* as an expansion of the Gospel of Matthew with new material added as well as omissions and as such it is 'a targumistic rendering' of Matthew's gospel, p. 157. See also Gregory, 'Hindrance or Help,' p. 393.

[34] Vielhauer & Strecker, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' p. 172.

[35] Andrew Gregory, 'Hindrance or Help,' p. 393

[36] Petri Luomanen, ''Let Him Who Seeks, Continue Seeking': The Relationship Between the Jewish-Christian Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas,' in Jon Ma. Asgiersson, April D. DeConick & Risto Uro, ed., *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity: The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 119-53; pp. 124-5. See Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Traditions*, pp. 36-7. Klijn argues that *GH* 'obviously consisted of a life of Jesus which spoke of his baptism, his resurrection and his temptation in the desert or his transfiguration.' Klijn is far more sure of the contents and from of *GH* than I am. While the material preserved does conform in subject to the reconstruction of Klijn, there is little narrative recorded. Given this, it is difficult to know how much of the *GH* is narrative and how much is devoted to saying of Jesus or sayings about Jesus. It is possible that *GH* is of the same genre as *GE* and *GN*, but this is far from conclusive.

[37] *Ibid*., p. 125.

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[38] We are following April D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007) in terms of her reconstruction and presentation of the text of *Gospel of Thomas*.

[39] Wilhelm Schneemelcher, 'The Gospel of the Egyptians,' in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha I: Gospels and Related Writings*, (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 209-15.

[40] Walter Baur, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, Robert A. Kraft & Gerhard Krodel, ed., (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 50-3; Vielhauer & Strecker, 'Jewish-Christian Gospels,' p. 176; Schneemelcher, 'The Gospel of the Egyptians,' p. 215 for a discussion of the *Gospel of the Egyptians* as an example of a sayings collection; a genre distinct from biography.

What may we conclude about the genre of the Jewish-Christian Gospels? First, *GE* and *GN* appear to be of the same genre and also of the same genre as the canonical gospels, namely, Greco-Roman biography. Both *GE* and *GN* exhibit the narrative framework of the words and deeds of an individual of importance that was integral to the genre of βίος. Both cover the basic features of the life of Jesus and while *GE* is presented as heretical by Epiphanius, the content does not point toward a portrait of Jesus that differs significantly from the portraits presented in the canonical gospels. Likewise, *GN* depends heavily on the gospel of Matthew as a source and reworks and supplements some material while staying comfortably within the generic parameters of biography. Second, *GH* presents some difficulties as it may or may not fit the generic pattern of biography. It may be the case that it is closer to the genre of a sayings collection than to biography. Genre remains an important factor in determining the form and scope of a text. Determining and carefully considering genre continues to be an integral part of the interpretative process. Given the generic dissimilarity between some of the Jewish-Christian Gospels and the canonical gospels, continuing to assume similar purposes and audiences for both the Jewish-Christian Gospels and the canonical gospels should be avoided. Finally, as Gregory has suggested, any treatment of these texts as Jewish-Christian (and subsequently as sectarian) must begin with the texts themselves as the preconceived notions we bring to the text color how we may read them.[41]

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[41] Gregory, 'Hindrance or Help,' p. 387.

The ‘Jewish-Christian Gospels’ – Audience

Two significant issues arise in determining the audiences for the Jewish-Christian Gospels. First, to what extent do the texts reveal a Jewish-Christian (and by extension sectarian) audience? Second, most of the information we have on the Jewish-Christian groups themselves come from sources that are often pejorative and conflicting. As such, it is difficult to determine the audiences of the Jewish-Christian Gospels apart from the texts. Furthermore, it should be noted that the attribution by the Church Fathers of certain texts to certain social groups is not conclusive evidence that these groups produced these texts. It may be the case that these texts originated outside of these reference groups but were readily accepted by them. In assessing the Jewish-Christian nature of these texts and their potential sectarian nature, we need to define what is meant by ‘Jewish-Christian.’ Both Bauckham and Gregory have offered succinct definitions that are fitting here. Bauckham sees Jewish-Christian as designating those who were ethnic Jews, who believed in Jesus and continued to observe the Law.[42] Similarly, Gregory has suggested that Jewish-Christian as indicative of ‘communities who both acknowledged Jesus as a Messianic figure (although not necessarily as divine) and also observed the Law of Moses.’[43] If the texts in question were produced by such communities, an issue such as Law observance would seem particularly striking in contrast to those outside of the Jewish community in the Church at large. We should expect for the relevant quotations of the Jewish-Christian Gospels from the Church Fathers to reflect this pro-legal stance.[44]

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[42] Bauckham, ‘Origin of the Ebionites,’ p. 162.

[43] Gregory, ‘Hindrance or Help,’ p. 390. Gregory places the emphasis on practice over and against ethnic identity with some recognition of Jesus as a Messianic figure without requiring an advanced Christology.

[44] *Ibid*., pp. 394-404 for an in-depth review of the supposed Jewish-Christian nature of these works.

The texts as we have them preserved for us do not demonstrate any significant position requiring followers of Jesus to be law-observant.[45] As mentioned previously, *GE*, while presented as heretical, does not differ significantly from the synoptic presentations of Jesus other than to show him (and John the Baptist) to be vegetarian. While Epiphanius presents the text as heretical because *GE* supposedly did not have a birth narrative, (presumably an edited form of Matthew with the birth narrative removed), this does not suggest a text with a stated emphases on Law observance. Given this, it is unclear as to the extent in which this text can be considered as Jewish-Christian, apart from its designation as such by Epiphanius and others. Similarly, *GN* does not imply an observance of the Law that is any stricter than that of Matthew. While it is possible to see fr. 15-16 as speaking to issues related to the Law, variant retellings of material found in Matthew 18:21-22 and Matthew 19:16ff (respectively) do not present a picture of Jesus or his disciples that is more law-observant than the portrayals in Matthew.[46] Similarly, the seven quotations of *GH* contain little to no reference to Law observance. The one possible connection to Jewish-Christianity is a reference to James in fr. 7. There are similar references to James in other works attributed to Jewish-Christians, but a reference to James, presumably a revered figure in Jewish-Christianity, is not a direct reference to Law observance.[47]

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[45] *Ibid*., pp. 394 and 411.

[46] Luomanen has criticized Klijn on whether fr. 16 can be used to reconstruct a smaller community of 'poor' Jews as the text has been taken to imply; Petri Luomanen, 'Where Did Another Rich Man Come From? The Jewish-Christian Profile of the Story About A Rich Man in the 'Gospel of the Hebrews' (Origen, Comm. In Math. 15.14),' *VC* 57 (2003), pp. 243-75; p. 266. Cf. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, pp. 39-40.

[47] See Robert E. Van Voorst, *The Ascents of James: History and Theology of a Jewish-Christian Community*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), esp. pp. 174-180 for his discussion of the community as he sees it immerging from the text.

Genre becomes an important factor in determining authorial intent and audience expectation especially in the case of the texts discussed above. While it is true that decisive statements about authorial intent are virtually impossible in the absence of a stated purpose, genre does give an indication of the scope and purpose of a given work. In the case of biographies the authors of these works were intending to say something about the person chosen as the subject. The narrative of deeds and words places the emphasis squarely on the individual. While there are certain indications as to the opinion and concerns of the individual writing, biographies were not specifically intended to give information about the author or his/her social location. This is not to say that these works would not or could not be written in the context of community; they certainly could be. But the works were focused on the life of the subject and are tenuous at best for reconstructing the social situations out of which they arose. What must be reckoned with is the implied audience as imbedded in the genre itself. As βίος developed from the fourth century BCE to the fourth century CE there is little evidence to support the claim that such literary presentations would have been written to or for the specific and sectarian groups assumed by many scholars.[48] It is reasonable to expect the canonical gospels and *GE* and *GN* to adhere to authorial and audience expectation as examples of βίος. The same may or may not be said of *GH* as its generic relationship to biography is unclear and therefore its use as a text stemming from a social situation analogous to the canonical gospels is also unclear.

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[48] This separates the two questions of 'to whom' a text was written and 'where' a text was written. The answers to two these questions may be one in the same, but they need not follow. It is more than possible that a writer in the Greco-Roman context could be writing for an audience or context different from his/her own. See Bauckham, 'For Whom?, p. 15.

The ‘Jewish-Christian Gospels’ – The Context of Circulated Texts

Both Thompson and Alexander have offered insightful and important contributions to the discussion of circulated texts in the first centuries of the Christian movement.[49] The copying and circulation of texts as a whole was a function of the wider literary landscape of the Greco-Roman world and is indicative of the historical and social context of both the canonical and non-canonical texts. Bird is correct in asserting that ‘reception and circulation do not require authorial intention,’ but as he and Bauckham have observed the historical reality of circulated texts provides an important balance to the hypothetical reconstruction of gospel (canonical and non-canonical) audiences.[50]

The writers/compilers of the Jewish-Christian Gospels conform to the basic pattern of both receiving texts and having texts circulated. The author of *GN* appears to have relied heavily on the Gospel of Matthew for source material. It is difficult to comprehend how a writer who used source material that has circulated to him/her would not expect or even wish their subsequent work to be circulated as well. Here the writer of *GN* is situated between both ends of circulated texts/traditions with him/her as the recipient of texts on one hand and having the *GN* circulated on the other. As has been previously stated the *GN* as well as *GE* and *GH* are known to us only through quotations of these texts by writers that were not members of Jewish-Christian communities. Furthermore, Luomanen has argued persuasively that fr. 16 of *GN* is representative of a harmonistic tradition of both Matthew and Luke.[51] Thus, it is possible that *GN* is not only based on one circulated text but a textual tradition that included more than one circulated text. In this case genre becomes an important factor again as Matthew, Luke, harmonistic presentations of the canonical gospels and *GN* all share the same genre.[52] This again may point in the direction of audience expectation of the genre of biography. Likewise, *GE* is a harmony of Matthew and Luke and like *GN* utilized circulated texts and was itself circulated.[53] It may be the case that the writer/compiler of *GE* found that there were certain important traditions or features missing from the portraits of Jesus that circulated to him/her. In this case the author of *GE* added information about Jesus that he/she thought was relevant, but the portrait of Jesus that emerges from *GE* is not significantly different from those of the Synoptics.[54] Presumably, this revision to the Jesus tradition was not aimed only at the immediate reference group of the author of *GE*. The author of *GE* was attempting to add to and amend the general understanding of Jesus as present in the larger Christian tradition. It is difficult to reconcile the crafting of a Jesus portrait for only the immediate reference group against the background of community centered social realities. Whatever portrait of Jesus was representative of the traditions available to the composer of *GE*; they would have been thought of as beneficial and necessary for the greater discussion of who Jesus was. Finally, *GH* utilized traditions that would have seemed to have circulated from a context other than the one in which it was produced. One fragment of *GH* has a parallel in the *Gospel of Thomas* (POxy 654) while the rest of the material has no parallel in the synoptic material. It is difficult to determine the source of the other material contained in *GH* but it too would seem to have harmonized Thomasine traditions with other sources to create a single text. In this way

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[49] See Thompson, ‘The Holy Internet,’ pp. 49-70; and Alexander, ‘Ancient Book Production,’ pp. 71-112.
[50] Bird, ‘Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?’, p. 39; and Bauckham, ‘For Whom?’, pp. 29-30.
[51] Luomanen, ‘Where Did Another Rich Man Come From?’, pp. 253-8; 261-5.

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[52] Harmonistic presentations of the Jesus material should be considered biographies when they follow the basic generic pattern of telling the words and deeds of Jesus. A harmony says more about the uses of sources than a particular generic innovation. That is unless the Jesus traditions are represented in another generic pattern.

[53] Gregory, 'Hindrance or Help,' p. 395. Here Gregory argues that both Matthew and Luke were in effect harmonizers of Markan material and other sources.

[54] See Bauckham, 'Origin of the Ebionites,' p. 175; see also pp. 172-175 for a discussion on the use of early Christian literature in Jewish-Christian contexts.

GH also stands at both ends of textual circulation as a recipient of texts/traditions and as a circulated text.

The above discussion of the Jewish-Christian Gospels has produced the following conclusions: 1) at least two (*GE* and *GN*) of the three Jewish-Christian Gospels are of the same genre as the canonical gospels. Given this conclusion, *GE* and *GN* would conform to the same generic expectations as other biographies. The analysis of these texts conforms to what we have seen with βίοι in general and there is not enough to conclusively prove that they were written for sectarian audiences. If they were ultimately intended for a sectarian audience, then a break with the generic pattern of Greco-Roman biography must be proven and not assumed.[55] 2) The Jewish-Christian nature of the texts has been questioned. None of the examples provide definitive evidence that the texts were representative of authors/communities that placed an emphasis on Law-observance that was more pronounced than that of the canonical gospels. We may be able to delineate some of the concerns of the authors/compliers of these texts as they are manifested in their portrayals of Jesus. Indeed, we see this at work in the canonical gospels where the portraits of Jesus are significantly nuanced by the Evangelists. These differences are noteworthy and indicative of the greater intra-Christian debates at play in the first and second century. However, in the case of the canonical gospels, as well as the Jewish-Christian Gospels, it is unclear as to whether these nuanced portrayals were intended to supplant or supplement previous presentations. If this is true of the canonical gospels it is even more so of the non-canonical gospels, many of which are fragmentary and by the nature of the texts themselves do not present us with a full representation of

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[55] The implication for *GH* is that if it is not representative of βίοι it must be considered on its own terms and in relationship with other examples of its genre in relationship to authorial intent and implied audience.

Jesus. 3) All three texts are situated squarely in the context of circulated texts. All three utilized circulated texts/traditions as source material and all three were copied and circulated. While this is not conclusive in determining authorial intent in regard to audience, it does point in the direction that the authors/compilers of these texts expected their texts to be circulated and wrote accordingly. 4) The potential for geographic dispersal for Jewish-Christians in the first few centuries of the Christian movement with communities existing in Rome, Palestine, the Trans-Jordan, Syria and Egypt, as evidenced by the Church Fathers who claimed to have had contact with such Christians, suggests that these texts could have been accepted in a number of contexts.[56] Furthermore, outside of Epiphanius, the Church Fathers seem to have embraced the Jewish-Christian Gospels for the most part further indicating that these texts were more compatible with commonly held beliefs about Jesus and not necessarily indicative of sectarian views of Jesus.

The *Gospel of Thomas*

As the immense corpus of literature on the *Gospel of Thomas* (*GT*) indicates *GT* has proven to be of great importance to the discussion of early Christianity and early Christian origins. The purpose here is not to recount the scope of the debate on the topic of the origins of *GT* or the myriad questions that have resulted from *GT* research.[57] On the contrary the issues expressed above will be the focus of the discussion of *GT*. At the least it is reasonable to assume that most of the non-canonical gospels were some sort of response to the canonical gospels, functioning as correctives or supplements to the traditions that were in circulation through the generally accepted gospel literature.[58] While Sim and Kazen appear to be confident in the sectarian nature of *GT* and confident in using it to reconstruct a particular, although vague, Thomasine community, some caution may be exercised here.[59] Uro suggests that scholars not be so quick to form conclusions on *GT* or how *GT* was read and understood.[60] Often reconstructions of gospel communities are based on the supposition that 'a single authoritative interpretation' of the text or texts in question point toward a 'harmonious' community based on common agreement on how the texts were to be interpreted.[61] Uro is correct to warn that such readings can be 'unrealistic and psychologically naïve' and that the evidence from most gospels (canonical and non-canonical) texts points to situations where interpretations both about Jesus and the traditions related to him were in question.[62] In this way we should be cautious about positing definite communities behind these texts.

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[56] Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?, p. 47; and Klijn & Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*, p. 43.

[57] Nicholas Perrin, 'Recent Trends in Gospel of Thomas Research (1991-2006): Part I, The Historical Jesus and the Synoptic Gospels, *CBR* 5.2 (2006), pp. 183-206; and April D. DeConick, *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and Its Growth*, (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 38-63 for some discussion on the current issues related to *GT* and its composition.

The *Gospel of Thomas* – Genre

As has been argued throughout this thesis, genre serves to give an indication of the purposes and intent of an author as he/she sets out to communicate a particular message. Certain genres are suitable for disseminating certain information to certain audiences. The act of choosing one genre over another says something about what message the author is trying to convey and to whom. *GT* marks a significant shift in the telling of the Jesus story or the sharing of Jesus traditions in written form. While it may be correct that some of the traditions contained in *GT* extend back to the first century and to a time when the recording of the words and deeds of Jesus in biographical form had not yet taken place, the current version of *GT* was written after the canonical gospels and takes a decided generic turn away from them.[63] *GT* is almost universally recognized as a sayings collection or even as a sayings gospel. Robinson, while recognizing that *GT* never fully identifies itself within a particular genre, identifies *GT* (and Q) with '*logoi sophon*, 'sayings of the sages' or 'words of the wise' as a designation of the gattung.'[64] This same generic designation is echoed and accepted by most scholars of *GT*.[65] The lack of a narrative framework for *GT* marks a significant shift away from the genre of the canonical gospels. There may be significant reasons for such a formal deviation in form.

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[58] Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels,' pp. 250-1, with the non-canonical gospels as representative of a growing interest in all things Jesus by Christians from the end of the first century on. Also see Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?, p. 30.

[59] Sim, 'The Gospels for All Christians?, p. 19; 24-7, for a discussion of *GT* and the canonical gospels as useful in community reconstruction; see Kazen, 'Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians? pp. 566-8; esp. p. 567 for discussion of a purported Thomasine community.

[60] Risto Uro, 'The Social World of the Gospel of Thomas,' in Jon Ma. Asgiersson, April D. DeConick and Risto Uro, ed., *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity: The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 19-38; p. 36.

[61] *Ibid*.

[62] *Ibid*.

While Crossan has argued for aphoristic sayings of the sort included in *GT* as being able to be contextualized within either narrative or 'discursive' contexts, the move away from including a narrative context to the sayings of Jesus in *GT* has a profound impact on how the text is interpreted.[66] Talbert is helpful in asserting that 'biographical narration was employed because it provided a controlling context not only for individual traditions but also for various types of traditions.'[67] Was choosing to record the various sayings traditions available to the author/complier of *GT* a conscious move to present Jesus traditions within a genre that lacked the controlling and interpretative bounds of a narrative structure? It is reasonable to assume that the author/compiler of *GT* did in fact make a decided move in presenting these traditions in a way contrary to the biographical narratives of the canonical gospels. If one accepts the Syrian provenance for *GT* it is reasonable to assume that the author of *GT* was aware of narratives about Jesus either as written texts and/or as oral traditions, and opted not to include them.[68] The effect was to shift the emphasis, generically, from the words and deeds of Jesus to the words of Jesus alone. Here the 'collection of the sayings of Jesus is intended to be a message of salvation' in one way or another.[69] As Koester has suggested, for *GT* faith is based in part on 'belief in Jesus' words, a belief which makes present and real for the believer what Jesus proclaimed.'[70] The generic shift away from biography cannot be over looked as meaningful to the purpose and scope of *GT*. The author of *GT* was attempting to present an alternative version of the Jesus traditions; one without the interpretative framework of narrative. One possible ramification of this generic shift is a presentation of Jesus traditions that was intended to subvert the current traditions in circulation. More research is warranted on the topic of sayings collections and their form and function in the greater Greco-Roman literary context. However, the unbound nature of *GT* lent itself to multiple readings and multiple interpretations from context to context. In this way *GT* could be read by some as subversive whether or not the author/compiler of *GT* intended this material to be a literary and theological break with other Jesus traditions/texts.[71]

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[63] Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels,' p. 246.

[64] Robinson, 'LOGOI SOPHON: On the Gattung of Q,' in James M. Robinson & Helmut H. Koester, ed., *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 71-113; p. 111. See also Stephen J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1993), pp. 104-10.

[65] Marvin W. Meyer, 'The Beginning of the Gospel of Thomas,' Semeia 52 (1990), pp. 161-73; Beate Blatz, 'The Coptic Gospel of Thomas,' in *New Testament Apocrypha I: Gospels and Related Writings*, Wilhem Schneemelcher, ed., (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 110-33; p. 113; Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, pp. 103-110; Richard J. Valantansis, *The Gospel of Thomas*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 6; April D. DeConick, 'The Original Gospel of Thomas,' *VC* 56 (2000), pp. 167-99; p. 180; and William G. Morice, 'Tatian and Thomas,' *ExpTim* 114.8 (2003), pp. 310-3; p. 312 are some examples but by no means exhaustive.

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[66] John Dominic Crossan, 'Aphorism in Discourse and Narrative,' *Semeia* 43 (1988), pp. 121-40.
[67] Talbert, 'Once Again,' p. 62.
[68] This assumption is reasonable given the widespread use and production of 'Jesus books' in Syria. The *Diatessaron*, *GP*, *GT* and at least one of the Jewish-Christian Gospels are all generally given a Syrian provenance. There is some evidence to support the notion that there were multiple harmonistic gospel traditions available in Syria as well. See O. C. Edwards, 'Diatessaron or Diatessera?' in Elizabeth A. Livingstone, ed., *Studia Patristica, Vol. XVI*, (Berlin: Akadamie-Verlag, 1985), pp. 88-92.
[69] Blatz, 'The Coptic Gospel of Thomas,' p. 113.
[70] Koester, 'One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels,' p. 229.

If we grant for the moment that *GT* was written within a sectarian context, which is not altogether certain, what role does genre play in assessing the audience of *GT*? *GT* represents a distinct genre apart from the canonical gospels. It is a collection of sayings, perhaps in line with sayings of the wise or *logoi sophon*, not a record of the words and deeds of Jesus. Thus what we may be able to say about the purpose and intent of *GT* need not be identical to that of the canonical gospels. The fact that the author/compiler of *GT* broke with the established generic pattern accepted by other gospel writers is significant. This is not to say that *GT* represents a new genre or one unknown to the evangelists, certainly sayings collections, as either oral or written collections were known to them, but these collections were not suitable for telling the life or βίος of Jesus alone. Given the generic differences between *GT* and the canonical gospels, and *GE* and *GN* for that matter, we should be cautious in assigning a similar audience group or social situation to texts from different genres.

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[71] Robinson, 'LOGOI SOPHON: On the Gattung of Q,' p. 113. Robinson states: 'The *Gospel of Thomas* indicates the gnosticizing distortion of sayings that took place readily within this gattung. Hence the ongoing orthodox criticism of this distortion provides something of a context for understanding the process in which Q is imbedded in the Markan outline of Matthew and Luke and continues to be acceptable in the orthodox church only in the context of this other gattung, that of 'gospel.''

The *Gospel of Thomas* – Audience

Reconstructing the audience for *GT* has been quite difficult and has produced a number of competing suggestions. The audience for *GT* has been imagined as an ascetic community engaged in the greater theological discourses (like those of Ignatius and the Johannine evangelist) of the late first century and early second century.[72] Valantansis places *GT* into an ascetic context where the audience of *GT* is presumably an ascetic community or a group that sees the ascetic life as the means through which to participate in the 'immediate experience of the living Jesus,' whereas the work of the Johannine evangelist offers the possibility of changed reality through the 'passion and death of Jesus' while Ignatius sees discipleship as an 'imitation of the life (in the church) of Jesus and participating in his death.'[73] Klauck has suggested that the community or audience of *GT* must have been a small number of isolated believers who felt their position was a privilege (*GT* 23; 25).[74] Yet, Klauck's reading of *GT* also posits a community (*GT* 34; 39; 44; and 102) reacting to those outside who differ with them or who have not accepted their beliefs as authoritative.[75] Patterson has put forward that the Thomasine community was one of 'wandering radicalism' and 'Thomas Christianity' as 'a lingering movement of itinerant social radicals.'[76] These descriptions can be buttressed up against the previous consensus that *GT* was a Gnostic text representative of one of the various forms of Gnostic Christianity.[77] Thus the audience for *GT* has been read as 1) a community that is ascetically minded but part of a larger Christian debate as to the nature of Christianity;

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[72] Valantansis, *The Gospel of Thomas*, pp. 13; 21.

[73] *Ibid*., p. 21. See pp. 21-24 for his discussion on the ascetic elements in *GT*.

[74] Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 112.

[75] *Ibid*.

[76] Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, p. 195.

[77] Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?' pp. 40-2. Bird seems to accept the view of *GT* as Gnostic somewhat uncritically. Granted his purpose is to argue that the non-canonical gospels did not necessarily indicate sectarian audiences for the canonical gospels.

2) a wandering group of social radicals; 3) a small, close-knit community that is engaged with some debate with those outside of the privileged few; and 4) as part of the greater scope of Gnostic Christianity. While none of these designations are mutually exclusive, the inability to nail down the Thomasine community may indicate something about the text itself and the context(s) in which it developed.

Uro's caution that searching for a 'single authoritative interpretation' on the part of the 'Thomasine community' or the positing of 'a harmonious Thomasine community' in which there was an agreed upon and commonly accepted interpretation and praxis of *GT* is seriously warranted.[78] Thus the socially radical elements of *GT* could transmit 'a unified social experience or just a (sub) culturally conditioned topos.'[79] In this way these motifs could be read in any number of ways depending on the social location of the reader/hearer; the meanings could differ quite widely 'if the hearer was a man or woman, a master or slave, a craftsman or a member of the elite class.'[80] In this way Uro has opted away from placing *GT* into the context of a definite Thomasine Community and opts instead for discussing *GT* within the greater realm of Syrian Christianity in and around the city of Edessa; a widely varied context capable of explaining the various strands of tradition in *GT*.[81] Similarly, Patterson has pointed out that the reality of the history and development of Early Christianity is not neat and concise.[82] On the contrary, *GT* is indicative of the complicated and muddled development of the early Church.[83] Thus, *GT* does not necessarily represent the notes of a secluded sectarian community, but *GT* is representative of the larger debate over the memory and interpretation of Jesus and Jesus traditions. The fact that *GT* does not fit cleanly into the reconstruction of a single Thomasine community may indicate a social background that is far more diverse and complicated than simple community hypotheses can support. We must continue to question what role the form (genre) of *GT* means to the discussion. As Patterson has pointed out, 'the people who found the *Gospel of Thomas* useful did not need a story.'[84] This lack of narrative enabled the sayings of *GT* to be read and interpreted in a number of ways and in a number of contexts. This free interpretation of the Jesus traditions may further point in the direction of *GT* as a compositional text that developed over time and influenced by numerous social contexts before being codified in the early to mid-second century.

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[78] Uro, 'The Social World of the Gospel of Thomas,' p. 36.
[79] *Ibid*.
[80] *Ibid*.
[81] *Ibid*., pp. 26-30.
[82] Stephen J. Patterson, 'The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Beginnings,' in Jon Ma. Asgiersson, April D. DeConick & Risto Uro, ed., *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity: The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 1-17; p. 17.
[83] *Ibid*.

The *Gospel of Thomas* – The Context of Circulated Texts

As has already been noted, there was a flurry of literary production by Christians at the end of the first century and well into the second century. A number of the texts being considered in this chapter had their genesis in this period. Yet the question remains as to their relationship to the canonical gospels in terms of purpose as well as sources. Given that other gospel literature was in place why were these texts written? Were they intended to complement or supplant?[85] The existence of both canonical and non-canonical gospels indicated that while some texts were getting closer to be recognized as the official presentations of the Jesus traditions there was no widespread consensus and there was still significant contention over the establishment and use of Jesus traditions.

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[84] *Ibid*., p. 8.
[85] Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels,' pp. 150-51.

Above and beyond the spread of texts for use as source material in the construction and publication of other texts, this common literary context of development, appropriation and re-appropriation of Jesus traditions should continue to point us in the direction of understanding the early Christian movement not as a collection of cells of small groups or communities producing texts primarily for their own use, but a movement where texts were being produced as attempts to engage in the larger conversation as to who Jesus was, how he was understood and what relevance his words and deeds had for believers post-Easter.

GT, as the text is preserved for us, comes out of this greater early Christian literary context. DeConick has presented a model for the development of *GT* that places *GT* in at least two distinct social contexts.[86] She sees a portion of *GT* as originating in Jerusalem prior to 50 CE where the material was used as part of the preaching ministry associated with the church there.[87] The sayings collection was arranged in five speeches concerned with 'eschatological themes.'[88] This collection of sayings circulated to Syria where it was appended over time with material that was intended to meet the needs and address the issues of the Christian community there.[89] DeConick demarcates the various layers of the text corresponding to the various issues and crises that warranted a theological response.[90] While helpful for understanding the potential social backgrounds for *GT*, these various theological crises need not be seen as particular to Syrian Christianity in the latter half of the first century. On the contrary these concerns were fairly typical of most Christian communities. Problems related to issues such as 'leadership,' 'accommodation to Gentiles,' 'death of eyewitnesses,' 'Christological developments,' and continued confusion over the delayed *parousia* and other eschatological developments were quite common.[91] *GT* may represent a profoundly Syrian Christian response to these issues, but even this is unclear as Syria itself was a repository of a wide range of religious beliefs including 'Gentile, Jewish and Christian.'[92] This leads to the following conclusions: 1) the issues addressed by *GT* were broad enough to concern and affect any number of Christians or Christian communities in the second century; and 2) *GT* fits into the greater context of circulating Christian texts in the second century as it was circulated from (presumably) Jerusalem to Syria.[93] The material was not so specific that portions of it could not have resonated with Christians other than those in Syria or those associated with the author/compiler of *GT*.

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[86] April D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation*, (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), pp. 7-13.
[87] *Ibid*., p. 8.
[88] *Ibid*.
[89] *Ibid*., pp. 8-10.
[90] *Ibid*.

GT exists as a text that was part of and influenced by the greater literary milieu of Syrian Christianity. Perrin has argued effectively for *GT* as a text influenced by Diatessaronic or harmonistic renditions of the synoptic texts.[94] Following the work of Quispel, Perrin notes that there are well over thirty logia in *GT* that share 'Diatessaronic influences' over and against the synoptic texts.[95] It has also been suggested that *GT* may indicate a dependence on one or more of the Jewish-Christian Gospels.[96] While this may be debatable, the potential relationships between *GT* and other examples of Syrian Christian literature points in the direction of circulated texts and texts that were written with circulation in mind as part of the greater conversations going in Syrian Christianity in the second century. Like the Jewish-Christian Gospels, *GT* finds itself situated between the two opposing ends of the historical reality of circulated texts: circulated texts used as source material on the one end and finished texts circulated outside of the immediate reference group/social situation on the other end. Again, the fact that *GT* was written in Syria in an Aramaic dialect and then subsequently translated in Greek and Coptic and circulated as far south as Egypt does not conclusively prove authorial intent.[97] What this does do is continue to place *GT* in the greater environment of the production and circulation of Christian texts in the second century. At the least *GT* utilizes Jesus traditions (in some form) that circulated to Syria. Those traditions were appropriated/re-appropriated and presented in a text that departed from the biographical narratives of the life of Jesus that were already in circulation. It should be posited again as to whether or not this was a conscious choice on the part of the author/compiler of *GT* and what (if anything) this generic choice says about the intent of the author in regard to audience. Certainly the presentation of the Jesus traditions as a collection of sayings has the effect of preserving material that was deemed by some to be authentic material that was capable of addressing a number of Christian circumstances outside the provenance of the text.

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[91] *Ibid*., p. 8.

[92] Uro, 'The Social World of the Gospel of Thomas,' p. 36.

[93] See Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?, pp. 38-40 for his discussion of *GT* as a text that was intended to be circulated widely. He suggests this for the following reasons: 1) *GT* as eventually composed/translated in Greek presumes a wider audience than vernacular texts; 2) the 'elect' nature of the audience of *GT* does not necessarily imply a local audience; 3) the fact that it was composed in Syria, translated into Greek and Coptic and found in textual witness as far away as Egypt points to *GT* as a text intended to be copied and circulated; and 4) *GT* may indicate interaction between various groups of Christians which would point toward the interpretation that *GT* could simultaneously be aimed at the immediate reference group as well as critics of that group.

[94] Nicholas Perrin, 'Thomas: The Fifth Gospel?' *JETS* 49.1 (2006, pp. 67-80. See also Nicholas Perrin, 'NHC, II2 and the Oxyrynchus Fragments (P.Oxy 1, 654, 655): Overlooked Evidence for a Syriac Gospel of Thomas,' *VC* 58 (2004), pp. 138-51; 'The Aramaic Origins of the Gospel of Thomas – Revisited,' in Jörg Frey; Enno Edzard Popkes & Jens Schröter, ed., *Das Thomasevangelium: Enstehung - Rezeption – Theologie*, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2008), pp. 50-8.

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[95] *Ibid*., p. 70. See Gillies Quispel, *Tatian and the Gospel of Thomas: Studies in the History of the Western Diatessaron*, (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 174-90. Perrin states: '[Logia] that do show distinctively Diatessaronic characteristics are as follows: *Gos. Thom.* 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 20, 21, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 47, 48, 55, 58, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 73, 76, 78, 79, 86, 89, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 100, 104, 109, and 113,' p. 70.

[96] *Ibid*.

[97] Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?,' pp. 38-9.

The *Gospel of Peter*

Foster is right to remind us that of the recent discoveries of non-canonical gospel materials, *Gospel of Peter* (*GP*) is the first and often the most overlooked.[98] While Kazen includes *GP* in his discussion of non-canonical gospels that point toward the limited implied audiences of the canonical gospels, it is difficult to make definitive statements about the implied audience of complete texts let alone texts that are known only in a fragmentary form.[99] This involves reconstructing the mindset of an author not known to us from a work that is not complete. *GP* is known in one extant fragment found in Akhmîm, Egypt dating from the 8th-9th centuries. There has been some recent debate over the possibility that POxy 2949 may also attest to *GP*.[100] Foster doubts that *GP* can be attested to in anything other than the fragment found at Akhmîm. Beyond the limited textual attestation van Minnen has cast significant doubt as to whether or not *GP*, as it is known to us, is an accurate reflection of the second century text.[101] The codex containing *GP* also contains an edited version of the *Apocalypse of Peter* which may indicate that *GP* has also been edited, possibly in such a manner as to exclude the docetic tendencies noticed by Serapion and reported by Eusebius.[102] It is not completely clear as to the extent in which *GP* can be seen to be an accurate reflection of the second century text of *GP*, if indeed the text we now have is identical with the text mentioned by Serapion. Consequently, we should proceed with extreme caution in assessing the relevance of *GP* with the other 'Jesus books.'

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[98] Paul Foster, 'Gospel of Peter,' *ExpTim* 118.7 (2007), pp. 318-325; p. 319.

[99] Kazen, 'Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?, pp. 368-9.

[100] For some discussion of the debate on the attestation of *GP* see Paul Foster, 'The Disputed Early Fragments of the So-Called Gospel of Peter—Once Again,' *NovT* 49 (2007), pp. 402-6.

[101] Peter van Minnen, 'The Akhmîm Gospel of Peter,' in Tomas J. Kraus & Tobias Nicklas, ed., *Das Evangelium nach Petrus: Text, Kontexte, Intertexte*, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 53-60; p. 60.

[102] *Ibid*. *EH* 4.12.1-6. van Minnen questions whether *GP* was copied from an edited exemplar with the portion of the text that is currently preserved having been specifically chosen.

The *Gospel of Peter* – Genre

GP has been counted as among the 'Passion Gospels' or 'Gospels About Jesus' Death and Resurrection' or more generally among the 'Narrative Gospels.'[103] Tuckett suggests that the text may be more than just a passion narrative, as 'it may have contained not only an account of Jesus passion, but also elements of Jesus' teachings as well.'[104] Yet this is purely speculative and we know that narratives about Jesus could contain only a small portion of his life. The 'Infancy Gospels' indicate that there was significant interest in the life of the boy Jesus apart from the material included in the canonical gospels. In the case of the 'Infancy Gospels' this interest often extended beyond just the boy Jesus and included an interest in Mary and Joseph as well. The 'Infancy Gospels' as well as the narratives that are interested only in the passion of Jesus indicate the existence of an interest in texts that deal only with one aspect of the life of Jesus. It is possible, given the extant text of *GP*, that *GP* is one of these shorter narratives. While it may be the case that POxy 2949 and POxy 4009 attest to *GP*, this is not certain, and given what text we have with certainty, it is safe to conclude that *GP* is a narrative about the passion and resurrection of Jesus.[105] If it is only a passion/resurrection narrative then it is not of the same genre as the canonical gospels and we cannot conclusively say it was written for an audience analogous to the gospel audiences. Similarly if it was a biography, replete with the words and deeds of Jesus, then we should expect it to conform commonly to the generic structures of Greco-Roman biographies.[106]

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[103] See Stephen Gero, 'Apocryphal Gospels: A Survey of Textual and Literary Problems,' *ANRW* II 25.2 (1988), pp. 3969-96, p. 3985; Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 92-88 (along with the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the *Gospel of Bartholomew*); and Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels,' pp. 239; 244-45. B. A. Johnson, 'The Gospel of Peter: Between Apocalypse and Romance,' in Elizabeth A. Livingstone, ed., *Studia Patristica, Vol. XVI*, (Berlin: Akadamie-Verlag, 1985), pp. 170-4 finds *GP* in congruence with both the genre of the canonical gospels and that of the genre of romance. This may demonstrate some generic flexibility.

[104] Tuckett, 'Forty Other Gospels,' pp. 244.

The *Gospel of Peter* – Audience

The location of *GP* and the community/group behind it within the broad scope of sectarian Christianity in the second century stems from Serapion's presentation of *GP* as a text with docetic tendencies. Assuming that the text of *GP* is the same or at least significantly similar to the text known to Serapion, what material in it is representative of docetic interpretation? The one statement uttered by Jesus in *GP*, 'My Power, O Power, why hast thou forsaken me? (*GP* 19)' has been read as a docetic declaration presenting Jesus as having been imbued with a power that departed from him thus leaving a purely human Jesus on the cross to suffer. Foster has pointed out that this statement is hardly representative of a docetic Jesus and it could be a further re-working of the more embarrassing elements of Jesus' words on the cross in Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46.[107]

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[105] See Paul Foster 'Gospel of Peter,' in *The Non-Canonical Gospels*, Paul Foster, ed. (London: T. & T. Clark, 2008), pp. 30-42; 'Are There Any Early Fragments of the So-Called *Gospel of Peter*?' *NTS* 52 (2006, pp. 1-28. Foster notes that the similarities between the Akhmîm fragment and POxy 2949 consist of 44 letters out of a total of 238. It is uncertain if that is enough to consider POxy 2949 as a textual attestation to *GP*.

[106] It is of interest that *GP* records Jesus' words only once and that is the utterance of 'My Power, O Power, thou hast forsaken me!' This can be contrasted with the canonical gospels where Jesus is attributed words both during the passion and after the resurrection. This may speak to the redaction of the sources on the part of the author of *GP*. But it may also speak to an editorial choice in terms of genre as well. Ultimately it is inconclusive, but there seems to be little interest in the words of Jesus in *GP*. If this is the case, then it marks a departure from the genre of βίος. The above translation is by Maurer & Schneemelcher.

[107] Foster, 'Gospel of Peter,' p. 321. See Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?, p. 44; Hans-Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 88; and Peter Head, 'On the Christology of the Gospel of Peter,' *VC* 46 (1992), pp. 209-24; p. 218.

There is a motif within docetic writings to separate the divine Christ from the human Jesus, with the human Jesus being left to suffer on the cross.[108] It is possible that *GP* chapter 4 could be read as docetic with Jesus keeping quiet in the midst of his suffering as 'if he felt no pain.'[109] Yet this presentation of Jesus as silent in the face of his persecutors is not significantly different from the canonical gospels nor does it lead to a specifically docetic reading. It is more likely that the author of *GP* furthered the theological trend of discomfort with Jesus' statements of abandonment from the cross as articulated in Luke.[110] Thus, the text of *GP* as we have it need not necessarily preclude a docetic reading nor a docetic Christian community positioned behind the text.

GP has been presented as a theologically rustic and popular re-telling of the gospel narratives.[111] The narrative is augmented with more fantastical and mythical elements, replete with a talking cross, and Pilate is absolved further of his responsibility in the death of Jesus while the Jews/Jewish leadership is made more responsible. It has been suggested that *GP* originated in a Jewish-Christian milieu but this suggestion is not conclusive. Kirk sees certain elements of social memory at work on the text of *GP* with the Jesus traditions 'being brought into dramatic alignment with the social realities impinging' on the community responsible for producing *GP*.[112] The antagonistic relationship between church and synagogue in the second century is represented by the general absence of culpability for the death of Jesus on the part of the Romans while the role of the Jews is heightened.[113] For Kirk, the crafting and editing of the narrative to include and exclude certain features is indicative of tailoring the narrative to conform to the experiences of the community.[114] Elsewhere, Kirk has argued that *GP* addresses both Jews and Jewish Christians with a message that intends to justify the marginal response to the gospel on the part of the Jews while insisting that they have been led astray by their leaders as well as attempting to deter movement from the church back to the synagogue on the part of Jewish-Christians.[115] Yet, this reading again presupposes a specific community behind the text and a community that can be read and understood in light of a single reading of the text. As Verheyden has suggested, the anti-Jewish nature of the text seems to be on par with the general anti-Jewish sentiments present in the greater Greco-Roman context in the second century and *GP* reflects these issue, somewhat uncritically.[116] This broad context is further reflected in the 'popularizing' elements of *GP* and it is difficult to place the *GP* in the midst of a specific community docetic, Jewish-Christian or otherwise.[117] More broadly, *GP* seems to fit into the larger literary context of Syrian Christianity in the second century; a context that produced a number of the works discussed in this chapter.[118]

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[108] *Ibid*. See *Acts of John* 101-102. For example, 'Therefore I have suffered none of the things which they will say of me: that suffering which I showed to you and the rest in dance, I wish it to be called a mystery…You hear that I suffered, yet I suffered not; that I suffered not, yet did I suffer; that I was pierced, yet was I not wounded; hanged, and I was not hanged; that blood flowed from me, yet it did not flow; and, in a word, those things they say of me I did not endure, and the things that they do not say those I suffered (*Acts of John*, 101). Translation from Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 321.

[109] The above translation is from Christian Maurer & Wilhelm Schneemelcher, 'The Gospel of Peter,' Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha I: Gospels and Related Writings*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 216-27. Cf. Mark 14:61 and parallels; and 15:5 and parallels.

[110] Foster, 'Gospel of Peter,' p. 321.

[111] *Ibid*., p. 323; Head, 'Christology of the Gospel of Peter,' p. 218; and Joseph Verheyden, 'Some Reflections on Determining the Purpose of the 'Gospel of Peter,'' in Tomas J. Kraus & Tobias Nicklas, ed., *Das Evangelium nach Petrus: Text, Kontexte, Intertexte*, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 281-300; p. 298.

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[112] Alan Kirk, 'Tradition and Memory in the Gospel of Peter,' in Tomas J. Kraus & Tobias Nicklas, ed., *Das Evangelium nach Petrus: Text, Kontexte, Intertexte*, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 135-58.
[113] *Ibid*., p. 157.
[114] *Ibid*.
[115] Alan Kirk, 'The Johannine Jesus in the Gospel of Peter: A Social Memory Approach,' in Robert T. Fortna & Tom Thatcher, ed., *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 313-21; p. 319-21; Verheyden, 'Some Reflections,' p. 291.
[116] Verheyden, 'Some Reflections,' p. 298.
[117] *Ibid*.

The *Gospel of Peter* – The Context of Circulated Texts

The relationship between *GP* and the canonical gospels is a complex one. At best there is some literary interconnection between the canonical gospels and *GP*, however direct or indirect. While the consensus of *GP* scholarship points to a second century Syrian provenance for *GP*, Crossan has argued that *GP* has its roots in a pre-synoptic 'Cross Gospel' that serves as the source for the majority of *GP*.[119] Crossan acknowledges that certain sections of *GP* show a dependence on the canonical gospels, which indicates that *GP* in its current form used circulated texts (either the Cross Gospel and the canonical gospels or the canonical gospels alone if there was no separate Cross Gospel) in the crafting of the narrative. This again places *GP* in the context of circulated Christian texts in the second century much like the Jewish-Christian Gospels and *GT*. While it is certainly possible to envision an early source lying behind *GP*, there are far too many questions encompassing such a hypothesis to accept it with any certainty. Both Foster and Klauck have suggested using caution here and both see the theological developments of *GP* as consistent with a text that is borrowing from and expanding certain canonical gospel traditions.[120] If Verheyden is correct then *GP* can be seen in the greater context of harmonistic treatments of the canonical gospels.[121] Here *GP* is not an attempt to resolve every issue present in the canonical gospels, nor is it an attempt to include every tradition found in them.[122] On the whole *GP* seems to represent a harmonistic tradition different from the Diatessaronic tradition but congruent with other harmonistic traditions in circulation in the second century.[123] *GP* does not seem to be an attempt to supplant other harmonistic accounts or the other separate narrative presentations of the life of Jesus.[124] It is uncertain just how far *GP* circulated, but if POxy 2949 and POxy 4009 are representative of *GP* then *GP* circulated to Egypt sometime before 200. Again, *GP* is situated at both ends of the spectrum of circulation: the author/compiler received canonical traditions about Jesus (written or oral) and used them to produce a popular version of the passion narrative (at least) that was presumably circulated elsewhere.

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[118] Kazen, 'Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?', p. 569 recognizes that *GP* 'could have been intended for a very broad target group.' Further he places all of the canonical gospels in Syria, which expands the bounds of representations of Jesus in Syrian Christianity, p. 578. See Maurer & Schneemelcher, 'The Gospel of Peter,' p. 221 for a discussion of the Syrian provenance for *GP*.

[119] John Dominic Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); *Who Killed Jesus? : Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 19950; and 'The Gospel of Peter and the Canonical Gospels,' in Tomas J. Kraus & Tobias Nicklas, ed., *Das Evangelium nach Petrus: Text, Kontexte, Intertexte*, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 117-34. Cf. Foster, 'Gospel of Peter,' p. 324.

Summary/Conclusion

Kazen proposes reading the Gospels in light of communities that can be seen as an 'associated group of churches, possibly covering a larger geographic area.'[125] With this model it would be unlikely that the Gospels could be used to reconstruct the specific dynamics or issues at work in any one community, or 'a particular house church,' or 'a particular town or village' but it could lead to observations about the 'crucial characteristics of the community environment.'[126] This would seem to fit within the pattern of market niches or target groups some of which could be quite large and geographically dispersed. One of the benefits of this proposal is that it modifies the strict dichotomy of 'all Christians' over and against 'isolated Christian communities.'[127] In this case a large number of Christians spread out over a distance or region could have similar concerns and so a gospel could be intended for their consumption as opposed to just one house church or even a small cluster of house churches. This would point to audiences for the Gospels and various forms of early Christian literature as more or less focused. This proposal is more nuanced and offers more in the way of demarcating the complexity of both human and literary relationships.

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[120] Foster, 'Gospel of Peter,' p. 324; Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 87-8.
[121] Verheyden, 'Some Reflections,' p. 289.
[122] *Ibid*.
[123] *Ibid*.
[124] *Ibid*., pp. 288-89. See Curt Peters, *Das Diatessaron Tatians: Seine Überlieferung und sein Nachwirken im Morgen- und Abendland sowie der heutige Stand seiner Erforschung*, (Rome: Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 1939), where Peters places the Diatessaron as originating in Rome which would further indicate harmonistic traditions as representative of circulated texts. See O. C. Edwards, 'Diatessaron or Diatessera?', pp. 90-1 for a varied harmonistic tradition with multiple harmonies of the canonical material.
[125] Kazen, 'Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?', p. 564.

However, Kazen, while surveying some of the relevant examples of non-canonical gospel texts, ignores his own results and still finds that the Gospels were 'being produced regionally for relatively limited circles of associated churches.'[128] This conclusion is not based on a reading of the texts, an analysis of the audience groups that emerge from the texts or through a consideration of genre and literary form. On the contrary, Kazen bases his conclusion on the assumption that the Gospels were written for liturgical purposes and the use of them in local worship contexts suggests a local audience.[129] It is unclear whether the Gospels were written for only one purpose and while liturgical use certainly seems to be appropriate, this literature could have had any number of purposes that need not suggest a local audience alone. Kazen's lack of attention to genre as an important interpretative structure significantly weakens his thesis. The genre of Greco-Roman biography, the genre to which the canonical gospels belong, could be composed for any number of reasons. Talbert has delineated some of these purposes but it is safe to say that the Gospels could have been written with some sort of evangelistic purpose in mind as well as with a liturgical emphasis (however that functioned in the first century).[130] An assumption of purpose does not necessarily lead to conclusions about audience.

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[126] *Ibid*. See Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?', pp. 478.

[127] Bird, 'Sectarian Gospels for Sectarian Christians?', pp. 478.

[128] Kazen, 'Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?', p. 565 & 577.

[129] *Ibid*.

The non-canonical gospels fit into this discussion as examples of the ongoing attempt to craft authoritative portraits of Jesus. At least two of the non-canonical gospels discussed in this chapter, *GE* and *GN*, are representative of the genre of biography and while they have been considered examples of Jewish-Christian literature the texts themselves give us little indication of their audience or specific context. At best we can suggest that *GE* and *GN* were written for an audience group that may be as focused as Jewish-Christians, in the broadest sense of the term, but there is little in the text itself to suggest much more. These two works can be seen as more focused than texts aimed at any or every interested person, but not so focused as to indicate a specific group or community of Jewish-Christians. *GE* presents Jesus (and John the Baptist) as vegetarian but it is unclear what the theological ramifications are and the rest of the portrait of Jesus emerging from *GE*, while distinct in some ways, is still conducive to the other portraits of

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[130] Talbert, *What is a Gospel?*, pp. 92-5; here Talbert sees biographies as written with either didactic or non-didactic purposes. The didactic βίοι have a propagandistic function that can be displayed in the following ways: 1) Pattern to emulate (Luc. *Demon.*); 2) To exchange a false image of the teacher and replace it by a true image, which is to be followed (Xen. *Mem.*); 3) Discredit a teacher by expose (Luc. *Alex*. 4) The establishment of the 'true' tradition of a given school through the 'biography' of the successors; 5) Provide a hermeneutical key to the teachings of the philosopher or to show how the teacher's doctrine is valid (Anon. *Vit. Sec.*). While I do not accept all of Talbert's findings he does point to the fact that biographies can have many purposes and a single βίος can have more than one purpose. It is reasonable to postulate that the canonical gospels were also multi-purposed.

Jesus in the canonical gospels. *GT* and *GH* may represent a different generic presentation of the Jesus traditions. *GT* is certainly a distinct presentation and, as has been suggested here, represents a deliberate break with the canonical presentations on the grounds of genre. The choice to record Jesus traditions in a genre distinct from the canonical gospels may represent an attempt to break with the canonical traditions in more ways than content alone. We cannot assume that *GT* had the same purpose or the same implied audience as the canonical gospels. It may have, but it, as an example of a different genre, should give us pause and push us in the direction of considering the roles and purposes of literature of this kind. *GH* is difficult to classify and can be seen as possibly a sayings collection like *GT* or a biography like *GE* and *GN*. In either instance *GH* should be interpreted, at least in part, in terms of genre. Finally, *GP* may be representative of biography or it may represent a shorter narrative focused on one aspect of Jesus' life. Again, we should exercise caution in assuming too much about purpose and audience with literature that remains generically dubious. Finally, none of the literary examples surveyed above produced definitive reconstructions of sectarian or heretical communities. The compositional nature of all of these texts makes it difficult to place them with certainty into any of the known or proposed heretical or sectarian Christian groups of the first and second centuries. Given this, we should be careful about assigning a sectarian reading to them.

The above examples seem to fit into the wider context of second century Syrian Christianity. This is hardly specific enough to indicate a definite Christian community or audience for each of these texts. This is not to deny that there were sectarian Christians, as this is still significantly possible. However, these texts cannot be situated conclusively into those contexts. Syria was a diverse region, representative of a mixture of religious and philosophical ideas. It is no wonder that the texts that emerge from this locale are also diverse and resonated with Christians in other parts of the Mediterranean world. At best, we can speak of audience groups for these non-canonical texts as being more or less focused and terms like Jewish-Christian or even Syrian-Christian may be as precise as we can get. While this narrows the focus of the audience to a degree it is not so narrow as to produce a specific sectarian community in which and for whom these texts were written. As such, we cannot expect to find a singular reading or interpretation of these texts in the second century capable of reconstructing a singular community. The historical reality of circulated texts should serve as a corrective to the historical reconstructions of Christian communities. Even if we grant that Mark did not have circulation in mind when he wrote it is difficult to allow for that possibility with Matthew, Luke and the subsequent authors of 'Jesus books.' The fact that the authors/compilers of the non-canonical gospels surveyed here all used material that circulated to them and subsequently had their works circulated cannot be overlooked. It places these texts in the spectrum of circulated texts and as well as placing these texts within the public Christian discourse about the person and meaning of Jesus Christ. These texts are not the notes or private conversations about Jesus but are the records of how Christians were comprehending, representing and interpreting the life of Jesus in a dynamic environment. The amount of literature produced further indicates an interest in Jesus that was not locally situated but geographically diverse.

This broad interest in Jesus unites the themes of chapters two and three of this thesis. The interest in Jesus and all things Jesus by early Christians led to an explosion of

'Jesus books' of various genres. In the face of these various works there became a need to differentiate them and to discern which ones were authentic and ultimately authoritative for the Church. We can see similar issues arising over the collective memory of persons of note (Socrates and Cato for example) and how individuals on either side of the debate (positive or negative) struggled to present the authoritative memory of the person in question. In the process of determining which texts were authentic, gospel origin traditions were relied upon to establish certain texts as authoritative over and against those that were claiming to be authoritative as well. The gospel origin traditions while biographical in some of their content, were not biographies and even the more complex gospel origin traditions did not serve the same purpose as the more compact βίοι of poets and philosophers. Whereas those *vitae* could and would be used to interpret texts, the gospel origin traditions did not consistently hold a similar use. On the contrary, there is little evidence to support the notion that the gospel origin traditions were considered hermeneutically relevant in reading and interpreting the canonical gospels. While they were recognized and sometimes alluded to by early Christian writers, there is no clear and consistent evidence that the gospel origin traditions and the supposed audiences for the Gospels they included were used to form a consistent reading strategy. The tension that existed was not between particular and universal audiences for the Gospels, but a tension between the four and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was in resolving this tension that the gospel origin traditions became important. They gave apostolic authority to the four gospels and only the four gospels and for the Church Fathers it was these four that contained the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the entire church.

The growing interest in Jesus produced the varied Jesus literature of the first and second centuries. Some of this literature followed the generic patterns of the canonical gospels while others departed from this form of presenting the Jesus traditions. The choices of genre and the ways in which these traditions were appropriated and re-appropriated indicate the differences (and similarities) that were functioning within the Christian movement as a whole. This is not to say that these differences were unimportant or that they do not give modern interpreters clues as to how Jesus was being understood. On the contrary these differing portrayals of Jesus are informative and representative of the larger Christian debate about who Jesus was. But these debates were taking place in the public sphere and were carried on in the Christian literature that was being produced and circulated. Chapters three and four have been an attempt to assess gospel audiences from two distinct lines of evidence external to the canonical gospels themselves. The first issue being the ways in which gospel audiences were being discussed by the Church Fathers from the fifth century back to the second century. This pointed toward the second line of evidence and the presentations of Jesus in some non-canonical gospels of the second-century. Moving backward from the fifth century to the second and examining patristic and non-canonical literature has suggested that after the distribution of the canonical gospels, the trend in Christian literature was toward wide circulation and interpretations exclusive of local gospel audiences. While these lines of evidence are not conclusive on their own, they continue to point us in the direction of the canonical gospels and where they fit into the broader generic expectations of βίοι and the Christian discourses of the first century on the person and work of Jesus.

Chapter 5. Defining Gospel Audiences: Gospel Communities, Gospel Audiences and Focused Βίοι

Introduction: Gospel Audiences or Gospel Communities? (Re)Considering Gospel Sub-Genre

At the outset a few comments need to be made in reference to the typology proposed in chapter two. A specific distinction and break has been made with the language that Bauckham has employed in reference to Gospel audiences (both actual and reconstructed). Whereas Bauckham refers to audience groups as 'definite' or 'indefinite,' we have chosen the terms open or focused.[1] The contrast between definite and indefinite is too stark to account for the complexity of literary relationships, both between the author and their works, and between the works and the readers/hearers. Definite and indefinite audiences imply an all or nothing dichotomy where texts are either only written for all (anyone) or are only written for a small number of carefully defined persons (community). Bauckham's discussion of texts as either 'open' or 'closed' (following Umberto Eco) is a bit more helpful in the sense that 'open' texts 'leave their implied readership relatively open,' whereas 'closed' texts have a readership that is 'very specifically' defined.[2] In this way, Burridge's discussion of 'market niches,' and 'target audiences' for Greco-Roman biographies are more appropriate and appropriately flexible in allowing for audiences groups to be more or less open or more or less focused without requiring the kind of community reconstructions that often accompany current interpretations of the Gospels.[3] If we accept that these designations are suitable for describing and discussing the audiences for the Gospels, then the question again emerges:

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[1] Bauckham, 'Introduction to *The Gospels for All Christians*,' p. 1.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 2. See Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
[3] Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People,' pp. 131-34.

What kind of biography are the Gospels? More specifically to the question of audience: Are the canonical gospels examples of open or focused biographies?

There are some significant difficulties in reconstructing with detail and certainty the communities that are presumed to lie behind the canonical gospels. We noticed a similar difficulty in reconstructing the social conditions behind a number of the non-canonical gospels that are thought to be analogous in some way to the social circumstances behind the canonical gospels. The following are some of the issues that make reconstructing the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospels complex. 1) There is a general uncertainty as to the precise nature of the reconstructions of gospel 'communities.' The fact that there have been a number of permutations that are either significantly nuanced or altogether different from one another, respective to each of the four gospels points to the difficulty of such community reconstructions. A number of scholars have suggested restraint in sketching out portraits of gospel communities in definitive terms.[4] At best we may be in a position to make general comments about the social location of the gospel audiences, but we should be careful to use measured restraint in developing complex reconstructions. This stems primarily from the fact that there is little known of the circumstances that necessitated the writing of the Gospels, apart from the texts, and it remains unclear as to the extent that biographical narratives can be used to reconstruct such contexts in definitive terms. 2) The methodologies of social scientific criticism tend to highlight differences over and against cohesion in describing the social circumstance behind the Gospels.[5] This may be a product of the texts themselves in the sense that if one assumes a sectarian context for the Gospels, then the texts themselves would be reflective of the differences in various Jesus sects.[6] While this approach has proven to be beneficial in introducing language and concepts from the social sciences into the discussion of the growth and development of early Christianity, this approach has all but ignored the role of genre in the communicative process. In short, some account of genre must be given when attempting to reconstruct models of social interaction and development when texts are the main (or only source) for reconstructions. It must be considered what the Gospels as examples of βίοι are capable of adding to this approach. Biographical narratives would seem to have the opposite effect, instead of being demonstrative of differences between groups, biographies often served to unite groups (audiences) in the veneration of a particular individual (or avoidance, in pejorative instances) or in holding the individual up as a moral example (either positive or negative).[7] 3) As previously discussed with examples of non-canonical gospels, the historical reality of circulated texts is part of the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospels. The evangelists as recipients of circulated Jesus traditions (either written or oral) would have had that in mind as they engaged in crafting their literary presentations of Jesus. As Stanton has argued, Matthew and by extension Luke (if not John) in accepting and using Mark also accepted the genre (biography) in which he wrote.[8] Stanton writes, 'Once we accept that Matthew has included most of Mark's gospel then it is clear that he has adapted the genre of Mark… Adaptation of a literary genre is more common than its close imitation. By his addition of infancy narratives and his fuller passion and resurrection narratives, Matthew links his gospel even more closely to the ancient biographical tradition.'[9] It would seem then that the evangelists after Mark recognized the use of the genre Mark employed in presenting the Jesus traditions they had at their disposal. This further brings into focus the contexts of the social networks available to various Christians/Christian groups in the first century. Even if we imagine a strongly sectarian context within early Christianity, we must reckon with the movement of ideas, texts and persons among the various Christian communities whose boundaries and borders were far from fixed.[10] In this way the circulation/movement of ideas, people and texts formed as much of the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospels as particular local circumstances. 4) The use of narrative on the part of the evangelists presents us with significant difficulties in reconstructing the communities or situations that lie behind the crafting of the Gospels. Other literary examples from other genres may be better suited

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[4] Donald A. Carson, 'The Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Reappraisal,' *JETS* 25.2 (1982), pp. 161-74; p. 174; Graham N. Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' in Jack D. Kingsburry, ed., *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1997), pp. 49-64; pp. 51-2; Dale C. Allison, 'Was There a 'Lukan' Community'?' *IBS* 10 (1988), pp. 62-70; Luke Timothy Johnson, 'On Finding the Lukan Community: A Cautious Cautionary Essay,' in Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *1979 SBL Seminar Papers*, (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 87-100; pp. 89-92; Stephen C. Barton, 'Can We Identify the Gospel Audiences?' in Richard J. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 173-94; Dwight N. Peterson, The *Origins of Mark: The Markan Community in Current Debate*, BIS 48(Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 152-3. Also see Klink, 'The Gospel Community Debate,' pp. 60-85.

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[5] Joseph Blenkensopp, 'Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism: An Aspect of Second Temple History,' in E. P. Sanders, ed., *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol.* 2, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 1-24; pp. 1-2; Philip F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lukan* Theology, SNTSMS 57, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 10; L. Michael White, 'Shifting Sectarian Boundaries in Early Christianity,' *BJRL* 70.3 (1988), pp. 7-24, esp. p. 14; and Graham N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), pp. 88-107

[6] Bas ter Haar Romeny, 'Hypotheses on the Development of Judaism and Christianity in Syria in the Period after 70 C.E.,' in Huub van de Saant, ed., *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?*, (Assn: Royal Van Gorcum, 2005), pp. 13-33; p. 33.

[7] David L. Balch follows Aune in suggesting that Luke-Acts be seen as an example of historiography. While this works for Acts, Luke should be seen as a biography of Jesus. The fact that the author of Luke-Acts opted to write a two-volume set in differing genres should not trouble us nor lead us to assume that both works are of the same genre (see Porphyry in terms of his writings on Plotinus and the arrangement of his works). Interestingly, while denying the biographical character of Luke, Balch, goes on to use various other examples of Greco-Roman biographies, most notably, Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* to demonstrate that biographies can be used to indicate and reinforce social (moral) norms. Presumably, the gospels could also have served a similar function with the central figure of Jesus providing both the moral guide and authority. David L. Balch, 'Rich and Poor, Proud and Humble In Luke-Acts,' in L. Michael White & O. Larry

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Yarbrough, ed., *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 214-33. See also Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, pp. 77-115.

[8] Stanton, *A Gospel for A New People*, p. 66.

[9] *Ibid*.

[10] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, CSHJ (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 202.

for recreating the social situations that prompted their creation. Certainly epistles, in some cases, allow us a better glimpse at the situation that prompted the writing. Yet, the evangelists chose to present the Jesus traditions in biographical form. This should give us some indication of the authorial intent. Simply put, the Gospels are attempts to say something about Jesus, and by utilizing βίοι the Evangelists place the literary force and emphasis of their works on Jesus and the portraits/presentations of him that each produce. We may be able to glean some inferences to criticisms leveled at Jesus (and by extension his followers), but we should be cautious about expecting to speak definitively about the 'communities' behind the gospel texts. It is unclear that biographies ever served such a purpose (either before or after the Gospels). This again highlights the importance of generic recognition in the interpretative process. Certain genres are capable of giving certain kinds of information (social location of the audience, etc.), and others are not.

The purpose of this chapter is to further the discussion of open and focused biographies as a means of approaching the relationship between gospel genre and implied audience. An extended discussion of some of the examples of Greco-Roman biography as mentioned in chapter two will be presented here with some discussion devoted to why/how they fit into a particular sub-generic category. The rest of the chapter will be devoted to placing the canonical gospels into one of two categories, either open or focused biographies, with some assessment of what that might mean for continued gospels research.

Biographical Communities or Biographical Audiences?: Open and Focused Biographies

While the reconstruction of the communities that lie behind the Gospels has dominated New Testament studies for the better part of a century, the same sort of social reconstructions have not had a similar hold on the field of Classics, and in particular the audiences for Greco-Roman biographies. On the contrary, there is little to no interest in reconstructing audience groups for βίοι to the extent that it is undertaken for gospels' study. While it may be pointed out that the social circumstances and even the social location of the authors of most βίοι differ greatly from those of the evangelists, there are indications that βίοι were written with either polemical or apologetic purposes, and those purposes could conform closely to the purposes that lie behind the writing of one or more of the Gospels.[11] While not definitive, the approach on the part of Classicists should give us pause as we seek to piece together the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospels as a necessary part of their interpretative framework. The audience groups that emerge from βίοι are significantly vague, and to a certain extent may be roughly designated as supporters or critics. Simply put, in the instances where some sort of audience group can be detected in a βίος it may be narrowed (in some cases) to a group representative of supporters of the subject (central figure) or to a group of detractors. However, a separate and distinct community of friends/followers or enemies of the subject cannot be determined.[12] This again may speak to the genre of ancient biography and what information it is equipped to disseminate. Ultimately, the goal of a biography is to say something about the subject (person of interest), and direct references to the circumstances that necessitated the writing of the biography are secondary to the project of preserving the literary portrait of the individual.

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[11] Rorbaugh has suggested that, 'it is not necessary that the social level of the audience match that of the author, especially since Mark's Gospel was almost certainly written to be read aloud or recited from memory.' This may point in the direction of including a wider distribution of social locations for both the evangelists and their audiences. Since there is nothing outside of the texts (gospels) themselves to indicate the social location of the evangelists, we should consider the gospels as an indication of their social location. As such the literary sophistication of the gospels indicates that the evangelists were of a social location closer in some respects to the authors of βίοι than is often credited to them. This is not to say they were of the social elite, but suggests that they were capable of reading and producing literature on par with other biographers in the Greco-Roman world. Richard L. Rorbaugh, 'The Social Location of the Markan Audience,' in Jack D. Kingsbury, ed., *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1997), pp. 106-122; p. 108. See chapter 2 of this thesis, pp. 52-63 for some discussion on primary and secondary audiences as well as discussion of the literary practice of direct address in prefatory material.

Encomium and Transitional Βίοι

Greco-Roman biography represents a literary development beginning with Skylax's work on Heraclides of Mylasa in the fifth century BCE and continuing on to the S.H.A. *Hist. August.* and Iambl. *VP* in the fourth century CE.[13] Thus βίος as a genre is representative of a series of literary and cultural developments over an 800 year period. It is difficult to conceive of any classification (or sub-classification) of the genre that would adequately encompasses this broad array of literature. However, as we have suggested, a relational approach to classifying the literature is helpful for discussing the connections between authors-subjects-audiences in βίοι.[14] We have suggested a classification that is sufficiently flexible to account for this diversity while still offering something meaningful to the discussion. For our purposes open βίοι are those biographies that have no distinguishable audience group.

In some instances authors envision one or more audience groups (primary and secondary), and so designating some examples can be difficult. Isoc. *Evag*. is a prime example of the tension between a focused primary audience and an open secondary audience. We would suggest that this tension arises from the transitional nature of the text and the fact that it blurs the lines between genres (encomium and biography). The oral and dramatizing elements of encomia generally provide a specific social context/circumstance for the work. This is contrasted with what appears to be far more general circumstances for the writing and circulation of biographies in general. So, with Isoc. *Evag*. we have both the specific audience (Nicocles and attendees of the celebration) necessitated by the specific situation that occasioned the encomia and the broader anticipation of wide readership and distribution that accompanied written communication. We should expect just such a tension with a transitional generic expression such as Isoc. *Evag.*

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[12] Burridge, 'About People, By People, for People,' pp. 131-34.

[13] See Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen Im Neuen Testament,' pp. 1232-36. See Appendix 1.

[14] This interest again points to the concern within Biblical Studies as to the *Sitz im Leben* of the gospels and the desire to reconstruct with as much detail as possible the circumstances that produced the gospels. These circumstances and/or communities behind the gospels become an integral part of the interpretative framework. This same concern does not seem to be shared by Classicists.

Isocrates has written to/for Evagoras' son Nicocles, (and all those in attendance at the festival honoring the king), offering his encomiastic biography as an example for them to follow (Isoc. *Evag.,* 49-51) (focused primary audience). Yet, Isocrates also envisages his work to stand as a testimony to Evagoras in both time and space as he has purposely chosen to memorialize Evagoras in spoken (and written) words so that he will be remembered and emulated from generation to generation (open secondary audience). Isocrates writes,

> [73]ἐγὼ δ᾽, ὦ Νικόκλεις, ἡγοῦμαι καλὰ μὲν εἶναι μνημεῖα καὶ τὰς τῶν σωμάτων εἰκόνας, πολὺ μέντοι πλείονος ἀξίας τὰς τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῆς διανοίας, ἃς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἄν τις μόνον τοῖς τεχνικῶς ἔχουσι θεωρήσειεν. [74] προκρίνω δὲ ταύτας πρῶτον μὲν εἰδὼς τοὺς καλοὺς κἀγαθοὺς τῶν ἀνδρῶν οὐχ οὕτως ἐπὶ τῷ κάλλει τοῦ σώματος σεμνυνομένους ὡς ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ φιλοτιμουμένους: ἔπειθ᾽ ὅτι τοὺς μὲν τύπους ἀναγκαῖον παρὰ τούτοις εἶναι μόνοις, παρ᾽ οἷς ἂν σταθῶσι, τοὺς δὲ λόγους ἐξενεχθῆναί θ᾽ οἷόν τ᾽ ἐστὶν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα καί, διαδοθέντας ἐν ταῖς τῶν εὖ φρονούντων διατριβαῖς, ἀγαπᾶσθαι παρ᾽ οἷς κρεῖττόν ἐστιν ἢ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν εὐδοκιμεῖν: 75πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ὅτι τοῖς μὲν πεπλασμένοις καὶ τοῖς γεγραμμένοις οὐδεὶς ἂν τὴν τοῦ σώματος φύσιν ὁμοιώσειε, τοὺς δὲ τρόπους τοὺς ἀλλήλων καὶ τὰς διανοίας τὰς ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἐνούσας ῥᾴδιόν ἐστι μιμεῖσθαι τοῖς μὴ ῥᾳθυμεῖν αἱρουμένοις, ἀλλὰ χρηστοῖς εἶναι βουλομένοις (Isoc. *Evag*., 73-75).

> For my part, Nicocles, I think while effigies of the body are fine memorials, yet likenesses of deeds and of the character are far greater value, and these are to be observed only in discourses composed according to the rules of art. These I prefer to statues because I know, in the first place, that honorable men pride themselves not so much on bodily beauty as they desire to be honored for their deeds and their wisdom; *in the second place, because I know that images must of necessity remain solely among those in whose cities they were set up, whereas portrayals in words may be published throughout Hellas, and having been spread abroad in the gatherings of enlightened men, are welcomed among those whose approval is more to be desired than that of all others*; and finally, while no one can make the bodily nature resemble molded statues and portraits in painting, yet for those who do not choose to be slothful, but desire to be good men, it is easy to imitate the character of their fellow men and their thoughts and purposes–those, I mean that are embodied in the spoken word .[15]

Here the implied secondary audience reaches beyond just that of Nicocles (and those in attendance at the festival) to a much broader and open audience. In fact, Isocrates has produced this literary portrait precisely because he knows it can and will be published, copied and spread abroad. In this way we can fit Isoc. *Evag.* into the broad category of focused biographies while still recognizing that this focused audience could be quite large (all in attendance at a large festival) and while recognizing that the secondary audience envisaged by Isocrates is larger still.

'Open' Βίοι

While indicating some veiled references to critics of one of his subjects (Atticus), Nep. *De vir. ill.*, as a collection biographies, seems to be aimed at a broad readership and one that is not necessarily as educated or aware as Atticus (the one to whom the collection is dedicated) is as to the importance and cultural/moral ramifications of some of the material that has been included in reference to the lives of the Greek generals. Nepos acknowledges that some of the information will be lost on his readers (Nep. *De vir. ill.*, 1-8). The impression that is left is that Nepos is writing with a wide audience in mind, both those who are acquainted with Greek culture and customs and those who are not. As such, Nepos' work would seem to best fit the category of open biography, with no real discernable audience able to be detected. However, the biography that Nepos writes concerning Atticus himself, seems to have some apologetic elements to it and thus could be seen as a reaction to those who are critics of Atticus.[16] Even in this case, the wider audience of readers supersedes the potential critics being addressed, and Nep. *De vir. ill.* stands as an example of a collection of open biographies.

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[15] Translation and text are from Isocrates, *Isocrates, Vol. III*, pp. 45-7. Italics added for emphasis.

Other examples of open βίοι include Luc. *Demon.*, Anon. *Vit. Aesop*, Anon. *Vit. Sec.*, Philostr. *VA* and the collected biographies of Suetonius.[17] Lucian indicates his purpose in composing the life of Demonax by stating that he has written the work so that 'men of culture' and 'young men of good instincts' may have a moral example to follow and to aspire to (Luc. *Demon.*, 2).[18] If we take Lucian's comments at face value, we can surmise that his audience is quite broad and cannot be seen to be indicative of a closed or even a focused audience group. Any decent person would be considered a part of Lucian's audience. There is an educational element to Lucian's biography that is similar to elements found in Philostr. *VA*. Philostratus writes, 'to remedy the general ignorance and to give an accurate account of the Master, observing the chronology of his words and acts, and the special character of the wisdom by which he came close to being thought possessed and inspired (Philostr. *VA*, 1.2.3).'[19] Even though Philostratus is socially located within a particular literary circle, there is no indication that this work is only for them and Philostratus seems to envision a much larger and wider audience. Likewise, the more popular presentations of Anon. *Vit. Sec.* and Anon. *Vit. Aesop* imply a broad audience.[20] Similarly, there is little in the text of Suetonius to suggest anything other than a broad readership with the emphasis being on what kind of emperors his subjects were and whether or not they conformed to the expectations of the ideal emperor.

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[16] See Smith, 'About Friends,' pp. 61-2 for discussion on the potential criticisms being responded to by Nepos. Even in this sense, the critics should not be conceived of as an 'Anti-Atticus' community as the text is far too vague to support any kind of community hypothesis.

[17] Biographical collections in a sense should almost be considered a separate sub-classification of biography to a certain extent. In most cases the scope of the collection surpasses the interest in the individuals presented. They stand as representations of moral characteristics (positive or negative) and the relationship of the author to the subject is limited. This is certainly the case with Plutarch and Suetonius. Nep. *Att.* stands as an exception. See Smith, 'About Friends,' p. 61 for a brief discussion.

[18] Text and translation from Lucian, *Volume I*, LCL 14, trans. A. M. Harmon, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 143.

'Focused' Βίοι

As previously presented, focused βίοι are those that have a distinguishable audience in even the broadest sense. Again, we would stress that 'focused' does not mean a community or even a specific philosophical school in the sense of have closed boundaries. It is certainly possible to conceive of such a narrowly defined audience, but the texts in question do not make such hypothetical reconstructions viable. Culpepper has argued for the gospel of John as a product of a school (closed group) on par with the schools of Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus and Philo.[21] However, much of what we continue to know about these philosophers and their schools come from biographies written after the time of these individuals and by persons not necessarily associated with any of the schools in question. Often, what we know about Aristotle,

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[19] Text and translation from Philostratus, *Apollonius of Tyana, Books I-IV*, LCL 16, trans. Christopher P. Jones, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 37.

[20] See Anon. *Vit. Sec.*, 1.1-5. See Perry, *Studies in the Text History*, pp. 1-4.

[21] R. Alan Culpepper*, The Johannine School: An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools*, SBLDS 26, (Missula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); for the Pythagorean school, pp. 39-60; the Academy (Plato), pp. 61-82; the Lyceum (Aristotle), pp. 83-100; the Garden (Epicurus) pp. 101-122; the Stoa (Zeno), pp. 123-144; Qumran, pp. 145-170; House of Hillel, pp. 171-196; Philo's School, pp. 197-214; the school of Jesus, pp. 215-246; and the Johannine School, pp. 261-290.

Plato and the like come from biographies of these philosophers; biographies that were geared to a large if not more or less focused audience.

Some examples of focused biographies include: Satyr. *Vit. Eur.*, Philo *Mos*., Plut. *Vit.*, Arr. *Anab.*, Iambl. *VP*, Xen. *Ages.*, Tac. *Agr*. and Porph. *Plot*. If the extant fragments of Satyrus' work are any indication there was somewhat of an apologetic tone or motif to his biography of Euripides.[22] There are elements of Satyrus' biography that offer a defense of the poet after his death as a means of venerating him and his work.[23] There is some sense then that Satyrus is offering a defense of Euripides against his critics and in this way the implied audience of the biography may be seen to be more focused than an audience made up of anyone interested in Euripides or his works or poetry in general. But it would be difficult to imagine a specific community or group that Satyrus intends to address. Arrian in composing his biography of Alexander has in mind to create a literary work on par with other great historical and biographical works. In choosing a high style and emulating the works of Xenophon, Arrian sought to present his work to an elite and educated audience. His work was intended to be something other than another popular presentation of the life and deeds of Alexander.[24] So in some sense we may argue for a more focused audience (educated elite), but the implied audience is not so focused as to indicate a particular community. Similarly, Plutarch's audience is difficult to determine, but there are some indications as to the target audience for his works. Wardman argues that Plutarch's negative comments directed toward 'the many' at various points in the *Lives* indicate that he was not intending his works to be read on a popular level.[25] Wardman writes, 'The *Lives*, then, were intended for a minority, if not an elite; they imply a readership with sufficient leisure and social status to have spent time studying philosophy. Though the *Lives* are readable and often run fluently, they require an acquaintance with philosophy that makes it difficult to think of them as 'popular' in the sense that we would understand the idea.'[26] Plutarch has marketed his *Lives* to the philosophically minded and does not write in such a way as to make his material accessible to all.[27] Plutarch is not addressing specific critics *per se* but he is demarcating his audience as one that is elite, educated and aware of the philosophical ramifications he is attempting to reveal through his *Lives*. His target audience is similar in some ways to that of Arrian, and while focused to a certain extent, it is not indicative of a particular community or sect.

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[22] David Kovacs, *Euripidea, Vol. 1*, Mnemosyne Supplimentum 132, (Leiden: Brill, 1994) pp. 15-27.

[23] Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets*, pp. 89-107; esp. pp. 96-98. See also pp. 163-9 for a reconstruction of the text.

[24] Arrian, *Vol. 1: Anabasis of Alexander, Books 1-4*, LCL 236, trans. P. A. Brunt (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). Brunt writes, that Arian has 'adopted the style and language of the past, imitating Xenophon in particular. In the *Anabasis* he writes in the old Attic, while in the *Indica* he seeks to reproduce the Ionic of Herodotus, in each case he eschewing the idioms of the living language,' p. xiv. Arrian presents us with an interesting example as he intends to write in a high style for an educated/elite audience but he also intends for his work to be for all (1.12.4). Thus, Arrian can envision a multivalent audience, one that is elite and educated but at the same time one comprised of all or all educated persons. This further indicates the varying degrees of implied audiences in biographies: one that is simultaneously elite and broad.

Both Porphyry and Iamblichus intended their biographies to reach a more focused and philosophically minded audience, not altogether unlike Plutarch's market niche. Porphyry wrote in part to defend his teacher Plotinus against criticism leveled at his work (Porph. *Plot.*, 6) and in part to defend himself against potential criticisms leveled at him as the complier of Plotinus' work. Similarly, Iambl. *VP* served as an introduction to a larger edition of Pythagorean works. It is likely that he intended it for use in his own school and that it would be useful for anyone interested in philosophy in general or for those interested in Pythagoras specifically.[28] Again, we may think of these audience groups as focused but not to the point of including only definite community. In the examples of Satyrus, Arrian, Porphyry and Iamblichus the focus of the audience groups can be seen as educated elites, the philosophically minded or those who are generally critical of the work of the subject. This narrows the audience to a degree, but does not imply a specific community or school as the addressee of these biographies.

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[25] Wardman, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 37.

[26] *Ibid*., p. 47. See for example, Plut. *Crass.*, 24.7 for a contrasting of the 'men of intelligence' and the 'many.'

[27] See Plut. *Cor.*, 21.1-2 and Plut. *Art.*, 24.5-6 for philosophical asides on the topics of anger as a form of pain (Plut. *Cor.*, 21.1-2); Dealing with injury and insult as a sign of weakness (Plut. *Cor.*, 21.1-20; and cowardly behavior as a sign of a bad or weak nature (Plut. *Art.*, 24.5-6). See Alan Wardman, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 43.

Philo *Mos*., Xen. *Mem*., and Tac. *Agr*. represent a reaction on the part of the authors to critics of the subjects of their biographies. Philo makes it clear from his introduction to his βίος of Moses that he intends his work to present Moses in a positive light and to hold him up as a worthy example given the fact that many others have taken it upon themselves to either degrade Moses in some way or to ignore him altogether.[29] While it may be possible to assume a particular 'School of Philo,' as Culpepper has suggested, there is little in the content of Philo *Mos*. to suggest that the work was written for such a school or that it was written with that school in mind.[30] Likewise, there is no sense in which Philo can be seen to be directly addressing a specific group of critics, but that he is working to address both the general ignorance surrounding Moses and those philosophically-minded critics that do not count Moses as one of the great/important philosophers. Xenophon wrote his encomiastic biography shortly after the death of Agesilaus and there are some indications from the text that Xenophon was answering negative claims.[31] Again, while critics are being addressed, there is no sense in which these critics comprise a specific group. These criticisms were quite broad and could have come from any number or kind of circle. What is at stake is the reputation of Xenophon's friend Agesilaus and so the audience is one, at the same time, narrowed to include critics of Agesilaus, and widened to include all those who loved and supported him. Finally, Tac. *Agr.*, written as a defense of his father-in-law in the wake of the reign of Domitian, addresses the criticisms leveled at Agricola (and possibly Tacitus) for complying with an evil emperor (Tac. *Agr.*, 42.4). Yet, as Burridge has pointed out 'this is a long way from talking of a 'Tacitean community' within which and for which the book is written.'[32] To borrow language from social-scientific criticism, there is no 'parent group' from which any of the above authors is seeking to differentiate.[33] On the contrary the acts of 'legitimation' are not for a specific group but for a specific person through the genre of biography. In 'legitimating' the subject of the biography as one whose values and morals are on par with accepted values and morals, both the subject and those who are in a positive relationship with him are 'legitimated.' While some degree of audience can be determined, even in the instances when critics are being addressed, these audience groups are never so focused as to indicate a specific sect or community built around the central subject. In the end, 'the portrait of the subject matters more than the readership.'[34]

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[28] See Dillon & Hershell, *Iamblichus*, pp. 14-16.

[29] Philo *Mos*., 1.1-4. *Moses* serves an example of a biography written from within one reference group (Judaism) while the intended audience is from another group altogether (critics). Colson sees *Philo Mos.* as written 'to make the story and character of the great legislator known to the outer world.' Philo, *Philo, Vol. VI: On Abraham. On Joseph. On Moses*., LCL 289, trans. F. H. Colson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), pp. xiv-xv.

[30] Culpepper*, The Johannine School*, pp. 197-214. See Wayne A Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, (Leiden: Brill, 1967), pp. 100-45.

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[31] Xen. *Ages.*, 2.21; 4.3; 5.6; and 7.7.

[32] Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People,' p. 133.

[33] Aristoxenus of Tarent wrote a series of scathing biographies on Socrates and Plato after being passed over as the successor to Aristotle. The point was to discredit Socrates, Plato and by extension Aristotle. The impression is that these biographies were aimed at others not representative of Aristoxenus' own reference group. Here there may be some differentiation form a 'parent group' but the biographies were aimed at an audience comprising both members of the 'parent group' and others. See Rudolph G. H. Westphal, Aristoxenus *von Tarent: Melik und Rhythmik des classischen Hellenenthums*, (Leipzig: A. Abel, 1893), pp. i-xii; esp. pp. v-xi; Henry S. Macran, *The Harmonics of Aristoxenus: Edited with Translation Notes, Introduction and Index of Words*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1902), pp. 86-7; and Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People,' pp. 131-2. Here Stanton's discussion of legitimation is helpful for comparison. Stanton writes, 'Legitimation is the collection of ways a social institution is explained and justified to its members,' p. 104. Further he states, 'Legitimation includes the use of polemic to denounce the parent group and to differentiate the new group; both have internal consumption of the group responses to the hostile allegations of the parent group... Legitimation includes the claim of the new group that it is *not* innovatory; it is the parent group that has gone astray. The new group is the legitimate heir to shared traditions which are now interpreted in light of new convictions,' Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, pp. 104-5. It is difficult to imagine any such group dynamics lying behind any of the biographies mentioned above. Biographical literature does not seem to have been used in such a way as to legitimate one group over and against another. Even in the instance of Aristoxenus he is not trying to legitimate his sectarian group over and against to those of the Academy, etc. On the contrary, he is seeking to discredit Socrates, and Plato altogether. Ultimately, the production and use biographies in these instances amounted to preserving an 'official' memory of a person of interest. This could be done in the face of criticism of the subject, but those who favored the subject were seeking justification for the subject and justification for themselves only secondarily as they were in relationship with/to the subject. This may speak to an honor/shame dynamic with honor being brought to the individual (and his associates) via a positive biography with shame being brought to an individual (and his associates) via a negative biography.

The Canonical Gospels: 'Open' or 'Focused' Βίοι?

The purpose here is not to suggest that reconstructions of gospel communities have no merit or that by suggesting that the Gospels were written for a more or less focused audience group that there were not specific and localized issues/circumstance that affected the writing of the Gospels or the specific portraits of Jesus found in them.[35] The point is to continue to press the issue of the difference between 'the context *within which* the Gospel was composed and the audience *for whom* it was written.'[36] As our discussion of βίοι have presented, the social location of the author is not always a direct indicator of the intended audience. We continued to be forced to deal with the complexities of reconstructing both gospel 'communities' and gospel audiences not only as they relate to their social, cultural and religious milieu but their literary milieu as well.[37]

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[34] Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People,' p. 133

[35] We would side with Barton here in the sense that 'the quest for the Gospel *audiences* and their social location(s)' is a legitimate project. In fact, 'it is an important act of the historical and social-scientific imagination.' However, we would also share his caution in assuming that we can reconstruct gospel audiences with any specificity. Barton, 'Can We Identify?' p. 194.

[36] Burridge, 'About People, by People, for People,' p. 144.

Gospel 'Communities' and/or 'Audiences'

We would like to begin here by offering some observations and some cautions as we proceed with discussions of specific gospel audiences. First, the contributions from the social-sciences as it relates to 'distant comparisons' and 'close comparisons' of social settings has enabled Biblical Studies to continue to fine-tune our approaches to gospel audiences. In particular it has influenced discussions related to the social and cultural setting of the church in the first century. While Stanton is right in suggesting that 'distant comparisons,' while helpful for placing certain social institutions into a broader context, they are not useful for discussing the differences that occur between groups.[38] Here, 'close comparisons' help illuminate the important differences that lead to the distinctiveness of differing groups (sects) within a larger parent group. One concern though is that the emphasis on difference seems at points to overshadow the commonalities of these smaller groups over and against the parent group. Difference does not imply conflict in every instance, and it might be prudent to refrain from assuming that difference and conflict are synonymous, especially as it relates to early Christianity and gospel audiences.

Second, sectarian models, while helpful, do not always account for the complex nature of the relationships that exist not only between the parent body and the sect, but the sect and the parent body over and against the larger cultural landscape. White has offered the following definition of a sect, which Stanton sees as applying more to 'distant comparisons.'[39] White states that a sect is a 'deviant or separatist movement within a cohesive and religiously defined dominant culture. Thus despite expressed hostilities and exclusivism, the sect shares the same basic constellation of beliefs or 'worldview' of the dominant cultural idiom.'[40] This definition takes into account the potential commonalities between the sect and the parent body, but presumably says little of the relationship between the parent body and the larger cultural context. Similarly, Blenkinsopp defines a sect as 'not only a minority, and not only characterized by opposition to norms accepted by the parent-body, but also claims in a more or less exclusive way to be what the parent-body claims to be. Whether such a group formally severs itself, or is excommunicated, will depend largely on the degree of self-definition attained by the parent-body and the level of tolerance obtaining within it.'[41] Stanton sees this definition as more capable of describing sectarianism on the level of 'close comparison.'[42] As Saldarini has suggested, the diversity of religious and philosophical ideas and the frequent movement of people and ideas made the boundaries separating groups in the first century incredibly flexible.[43] In this way we should continue to question strictly sectarian models for the gospel communities/audiences as we assess the ways in which they both conformed to and challenged the norms of both the parent group and Greco-Roman culture on the whole.

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[37] We would argue that the literary milieu cannot be distinguished definitively from the cultural and social milieu.

[38] Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, p. 88.

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[39] *Ibid*., pp. 90-1.

[40] L. Michael White, 'Shifting Sectarian Boundaries In Early Christianity,' *BJRL* 70.3 (1988), pp. 7-24; p. 14.

[41] Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism: An Aspect of Second Temple History,' in E. P. Sanders, ed., *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition II*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 1-26; pp. 1-2.

[42] Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, p. 90.

[43] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 202.

Finally, genre, as we have argued, sets an important interpretative framework for accessing meaning. The evangelists opted to use the genre of biography to present their ideas and information about Jesus. There were any number of literary genres and conventions available to them to preserve and transmit the Jesus traditions that had been circulated to them. Yet, they chose to write in a well-known and well attested genre that focused not on the doctrines or teachings of a specific group, but one that focused on the words and deeds of an individual (Jesus) as a model for the group to emulate. To this end, the Gospels are inherently Christological with the primary concern of the Evangelists being an interest in saying something about the person Jesus.[44] Our primary focus in reading the Gospels should be on ascertaining what it is the evangelists were attempting to say about Jesus and extracting the social location of the writing of these texts, while important, should serve as a secondary interest. Given the generic restraints, we should not be surprised or disappointed when we are less able to mirror-read a specific social context for each of the Gospels. Again, even if we suppose a sectarian context for one or more of the Gospels, that does not necessarily presume a sectarian audience for the Gospels, as there is little evidence within the scope of biographical literature (both proceeding and following the Gospels) that biographies were ever written exclusively to/for sectarian audiences.[45]

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[44] Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, p. 168; and Adam D. Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*, WUNT II 245, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), p. 41.

[45] Graham N. Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' in Jack D. Kingsbury, ed., *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1997), pp. 49-64; pp. 58-9.

Reconstructing Matthean 'Communities'

The purpose here is not to critique each and every community model that has been offered for the audience of Matthew.[46] On the contrary, the purpose is to survey a number of relevant reconstructions in order to determine what audience groups emerges from these detailed treatments of Matthew's gospel.[47] We would suggest that many of the matters related to the social setting of the gospel of Matthew are inherently related to introductory issues and specifically to the problems related to Matthean provenance. There seems to be a scholarly consensus emerging that Matthew was written between the 80s and 90's (85-95) following the Jewish revolt in the 70s.[48] While there is a fair amount of agreement on the dating of Matthew, there is little agreement as to the location where Matthew was written.[49] A number of options have been suggested including 'Alexandria, Caesarea Maritima, Caesarea Philippi, Transjordan, Damascus, Phoenicia, and Edessa.'[50] Of the proposed locations for the writing of Matthew, Syrian Antioch and the region of Galilee have gained the most support. Antioch is preferred by many as the location for the writing of Matthew because it represents a suitably large urban environment in the East of the empire and this location seems to be corroborated by elements found in Matthew.[51] Further, Antioch plays a prominent role in the life of the early church and Peter was known to have played a large role there as he does in Matthew's gospel.[52] Antioch is also advantageous because its history is well attested as is the Christian influence there.[53] Thus, 'this enables us not merely to describe the social and religious settings of the Matthean community at the time the Gospel was composed, but to plot all the social and historical forces that shaped his [the evangelist's] particular church over many decades.'[54] However, there is no consensus on how that history or development is to be understood. Galilee offers the advantage of placing the gospel in a context where some encounter with formative Judaism is to be expected in the period just following the Jewish Revolt.[55] This would seem to fit with the situation that is assumed from Matthew as it posited that Matthew's community was in some sort of serious conflict with the Judaism of its day.[56] Given the variety of possible locations for the composition of Matthew, we should again question whether the text and the genre are capable of providing the sort of specificity required for in-depth reconstructions.[57]

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[46] Barton, 'Can We Identify?' pp. 180-2 for some criticism.

[47] Cf. Stephenson H. Brooks, *Matthew's Community: The Evidence of His Special Sayings Material*, JSNTS 16, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987); Warren Carter, 'Recalling the Lord's Prayer, pp. 514-30; 'Matthew 4:18-22 and Matthean Discipleship: An Audience-Oriented Perspective,' *CBQ* 59.1 (1997), pp. 58-75; Petri Luomanen, 'Corpus Mixtum--An Appropriate Description of Matthew's Community,' JBL 117.3 (1998), pp. 469-80; J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community*, (Minneapolis,: Fortress Press, 1990); *Church and Community in Crisis: The Gospel According to Matthew*, (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1996); Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*; Sim, *Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, pp. 31-62; 'Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of Matthew: Methods, Sources and Possible Results,' in Huub van de Sandt & Jürgen K. Zangenberg, eds., *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), pp. 13-32; Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*; 'Revisiting Matthew's Communities,' *HvTSt* 52 (1996), pp. 379-94; 'The Communities of Matthew;' and Wim J. C. Weren, 'The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community,' in Huub van de Sandt, ed., *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?* (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2005), pp. 51-62.

[48] See Sim, 'Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of Matthew,' pp. 15- 19 for discussion on the consensus and a possible later dating of Matthew to account for potential contact between Matthew's community and formative Judaism.

[49] Both dating and location become important factors in socially locating the gospels, not just Matthew. Presumably, the more that is known about when and where the book was written the better we will be able to interpret the material in the gospel(s).

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[50] Sim, 'Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of Matthew,' p. 20. See the footnotes for various works suggesting these locations. See W. D. Davies & Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Matthew*, vol. 1, ICC, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), pp. 138-47 for the local origin of Matthew with Jerusalem or Palestine, pp. 139-141; Alexandria, p. 139; Caesarea Maritima, pp. 141-2; East of the Jordan, pp. 142; and Syrian Antioch, pp. 143-47 as possibilities.
[51] *Ibid*.
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] *Ibid*. See John P. Meier, 'Antioch,' in Raymond E. Brown & John P. Meier, eds., *Antioch and Rome: The New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), pp. 12-86; esp. pp. 25-6.
[54] *Ibid*., p. 25.
[55] *Ibid*., p. 21.
[56] Carson, 'The Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel, p. 161.

The specific reconstructions of the Matthean 'community' are no less uncertain. Overman, Saldarini and Sim see Matthew's community as a Jewish community in disagreement in one form or another with formative Judaism.[58] Sim states this relationship to formative Judaism in the following way:

> The Gospel evidence is overwhelming that the Matthean community came into conflict with formative Judaism over a number of issues… it will be argued that this was an inner Jewish debate (Christian Judaism versus formative Judaism) and not a dispute between Judaism and Christianity. The intense conflict between these two Jewish parties resulted in the departure of Matthew's group from the official place of worship, and its development into an identifiable sectarian community intent on legitimating its particular beliefs and practices. The attempt by the Matthean community to establish itself as a rival to the Jewish parent body, led eventually to its persecution by the proponents of formative Judaism.[59]

For Sim, Saldarini and Overman the relationship between Matthew's community and Judaism is still one of debate and definition between two competing forms of Judaism. This picture differs significantly from Stanton, Luomanen and Weren who see the relationship between Matthew's group and Judaism as formally severed.[60] Stanton states it this way:

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[57] See Sim, 'The Gospels for All Christians?' p. 18, where Sim is particularly dismissive of the arguments related to genre. Sim assumes that the evangelists were so far removed from the social situations of Greco-Roman biographers that 'it remains unclear just what can be deduced from their adoption and adaptation of this particular genre.' Following Esler, Sim assumes the social location of the evangelists, not based on the texts themselves, but on assumptions about who ancient biographers were. Suetonius, Tacitus and Plutarch were not the only ones to write biographies, and as we have seen, writers wrote biographies to audience groups that could be of significantly different social locations than their own. Esler writes, 'Most of them [biographers], like Plutarch and Tacitus, were heavy establishment figures. When they wrote they no doubt had in mind reaching wide stretches of this primary reference group or at least particular sections within it. Their position, was in short, utterly different from that of the small groups of people who acknowledged a human being known as Jesus Christ as their savior and who had faced the possibility of a serious persecution since the time of Nero at least.' Esler, *Community and Gospel*, p. 244. While this may be true of some biographers this is not necessarily true of the social location of all biographers and Esler confines his discussion of biography to only a few examples. He does not consider the wide variety of βίοι of which the Gospels and the works of Plutarch and Tacitus are only some examples. Certainly the relationships between some biographers and their subjects, particularly in contemporary biographies, indicate a relationship that placed the biographer in a contentious relationship with others without suggesting a particular community affiliation. This also raises questions as to the ways in which sectarian reconstructions and conflict theory emphasizes divisiveness and conflict over and against unity in community. See Klink, *The Sheep of the Fold*, pp. 42-106.

[58] Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, pp. 150-61; Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish-Christian Community*, p. 115; and Sim, *Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 12-27; 109-63.

[59] Sim, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 109. Cf. Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish-Christian Community*, pp. 107-16.

> Matthew's community has recently parted company with Judaism after a period of prolonged hostility. Opposition, rejection and persecution from some Jewish quarters is not just a matter of past experience: for the evangelist and his community the threat is still felt strongly and keenly. Matthew is puzzled – indeed pained – by Israel's continued rejection of Jesus and of Christian messengers who have proclaimed Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's hopes... The evangelist is, as it were, coming to terms with the trauma of separation from Judaism and the continuing threat of hostility and persecution.[61]

Utilizing the same text, these scholars have come up with opposing reconstructions of the Matthean community: some see it as a community within Judaism seeking legitimation within the parent body, while others see it as coming to grips with its formal separation from Judaism. What then can we say about Matthew's audience?

We would suggest the following: Matthew was writing to an audience of believers in Jesus that were experiencing a contentious relationship with Judaism either from within Judaism itself or as separated (formally or otherwise) from Judaism. To put it simply, Matthew's audience was Jewish-Christian/Christian-Jewish. There may have been some specific situations behind the writing of Matthew's gospel but the issues that are presented in the gospel are vague enough and speak to a wide variety of social settings/locations in the first century where believers in Jesus were at odds (in one way or another) with Judaism. The text is not specific enough to permit us to speculate much further as to a particular community or church being addressed by Matthew. In fact, as we have suggested, the genre points to a wider audience than just one community or even group of communities.[62] The audience group of Matthew's gospel is more focused (Jewish-Christian/Christian-Jewish) than a Christian audience (all or any Christians) but not so focused as to indicate it being only written for one community.[63] Matthew's legitimation of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and authoritative interpreter of Torah is an issue that would resonate, in whole or in part, with any number of Jewish-Christian/Christian-Jewish communities in the first century.[64]

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[60] Luomanen, 'Corpus Mixtum,' p. 278, n. 25; Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' pp. 52-55; and Weren, 'The History and Social Setting,' pp. 51-61; 'The Ideal Community According to Matthew, James and Didache,' in Huub van de Sandt & Jürgen K. Zangenberg, eds., *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), pp. 177-201.

[61] Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, pp. 156-7.

Reconstructing Markan 'Communities'

Many of the concerns expressed above will carry over to discussions of reconstructions of the Markan community (and the Lukan and Johannine communities as well).[65] Two of the initial concerns, similar to Matthew, is that we do not know when or where the gospel of Mark was composed. Again, the prevailing and not totally undue assumption is that by socially locating Mark (or any of the Gospels) in a particular place and at a particular time, we will be able to use historical and social contexts as an interpretative control. Of the possible locations for the writing of Mark two options have emerged as the most probable and popular choices among Markan scholars: Rome or an eastern location, preferably Galilee/Southern Syria.[66] Even a brief survey of the relevant scholarly contributions on the subject demonstrates that there is no consensus on the exact location for the writing of the gospel of Mark. As has been previously suggested, the genre of Mark makes delineating a precise location for its writing and a subsequent social setting for its interpretation incredibly difficult. Collins expressed this regional ambiguity in the following way, 'the evidence is not strong enough to point definitively to either Rome or Antioch, but it is compatible with both locations (and others).'[67] In other words, the material in Mark is ambiguous enough to enable social reconstructions that would fit in any number of cities in any number of parts of the Mediterranean world in the first century. Similarly, dating Mark has been quite difficult with dates ranging from pre 65 CE to post 70 CE and specifically during the reign of Vespasian as possibilities.[68] Peterson expresses the frustration and ambiguity of socially locating Mark and his 'community' in the following way: 'The community behind the gospel of Mark lives either before 70 or after 70, either in the tense times leading up to the destruction of the temple or in its aftermath. It lived in Rome, or in Galilee, or in Southern Syria. It

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[62] Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' p. 58; Weren, 'The History and Social Setting,' p. 62.

[63] Cf. Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish-Christian Community*, p. 202.

[64] Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' p. 59; Weren, 'The History and Social Setting,' p. 62.

[65] For recent criticism of Marcan community reconstructions see Barton, 'Can We Identify?' pp. 182-6; Peterson, The *Origins of Mark*; and Michael F. Bird, 'The Markan Community, Myth or Maze? Bauckham's The Gospel For All Christians Revisited,' *JTS* 57.2 (2006), pp. 474-86.

[66] For Rome see Benjamin W,. Bacon, *Is Mark a Roman Gospel?*' (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), esp. pp. 99-106; Samuel G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), pp. 221-82; Ralph P. Martin, *Mark—Evangelist and Theologian*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1972), pp. 221-82; Rudolph Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, vol. 1, HTKNT, (Freiburg: Herder, 1966-7), pp. 3-12; Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, pp. 28-30; John R. Donahue, 'Windows and Mirrors: The Setting of Mark's Gospel,' *CBQ* 57 (1995), pp. 1-26; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); pp. 1026-45; C. Clifton Black, 'Was Mark a Roman Gospel?' *ExpT* 105 (1993), pp. 36-40; *Mark: Images of an Apostolic*

Interpreter, pp. 238; Donald Senior, 'The Gospel of Mark in Context,' *TBT* 34 (1996), pp. 215-21; Brian J. Insignieri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel*, BIS 65, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), esp. pp. 362-5; Ivan head, 'Mark as a Roman Document from the Year 69: Testing Martin Hengel's Thesis,' *JRH* 28, (2004), pp. 240-59; and Adam D. Win, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel*, pp. 77-91. For Galilee/Syrian Eastern locales see Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies in the Redaction History of the Gospel*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1969), pp. 54-116; Werner H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Time and a New Place*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), p. 130; Helmut H. Koester, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 2, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1975), pp. 166-7; Howard C. Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel*, (London: SCM, 1977); pp. 102-5; Paul J. Achtemeier, *Mark*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), pp. 125-31; Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, HNT 3, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), pp. 6-7; Burton Mack, *Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 315; Gerd Thiessen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), p. 257; Ched Myers, *Binding the Strongman: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), pp. 53-4; Joel Marcus; 'The Jewish War and the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark,' *JBL* 111 (1992), pp. 441-62; *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27, (New York,: Doubleday, 200), p. 36; Helen N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in its Historical and Social Context*, NTS 114, (Leiden: Brill, 2004); and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), pp. 7-10; 96-102.

[67] Collins, *Mark*, p. 101.

[68] See Win, *The Purpose of Mark*, pp. 43-76 for a survey on the proposals of Mark's dating. Winn opts for a date after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE and during the reign of Vespasian (69-79 CE) with Mark as a response to Vespaian's imperial propaganda.

was a Gentile community, or a mixture of Jews and Gentiles or a Jewish community.'[69] Again, the point here is not to suggest that there was no community associated with Mark (the evangelist or text) or that the social/historical situation of Mark is of no hermeneutical relevance. On the contrary this would all be helpful in interpreting Mark if there were any way to recover this context with a greater measure of certainty. Mark's text does not afford us that opportunity and so our discussions and reconstructions of Mark's context should be appropriately vague.[70]

Peterson has raised some valuable objections to reconstructing the community/audience of Mark.[71] The objections center around the issue of just what Mark intended to do, that is, the assumption that Mark was written to address a 'specific and identifiable' situation in a 'specific and identifiable' community with 'specific and identifiable' problems or issues.[72] Given that Mark was written to address these specific issues, it is then possible to reconstruct these issues/concerns from the text and the subsequent group(s) that would have been affected by such issues in the ancient world. This again brings us to the issue of genre. Marcus and others have demonstrated that there were certainly a number of first century documents that can potentially be employed for mirror-reading into the contexts that influenced their production.[73] However, most of these comparisons entail equating examples of literature from differing genres. Again, while this may be helpful for discussions of theological concepts and the like, this is more like the 'distant comparisons' of social-scientific criticism where the differences are diminished in favor of the similarities. We must continue to assess the efficacy of asking biographies, a genre with an individual as its focus, to provide us with detailed information about the social circumstances behind it and/or the audience for whom it was written.[74] As Peterson points out 'the Markan community is the result of an interpretation of Mark,' and the various interpretations have presented us with various and conflicting communities.[75]

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[69] Peterson, *The Origins of Mark*, p. 152.

[70] Best gives such a description: 'Mark's readers were Greek speakers and did not know Aramaic or Syriac. They were not worried by a Greek which reflected Latin influence and may have belonged to an area where such influence existed and Roman coinage was used. It was an area where it was possible for women to divorce their husbands. It was probably a very restricted area. The readers or hearers know something of Palestine, but most of what they know they may have learnt since they became Christian. Not all their knowledge was accurate, and this is true also of their understanding of Judaism, which might suggest that they did not live in an area where Jews formed a reasonable proportion of the population. Finally their practices and beliefs were much like those of other contemporary Christians.' Ernest Best, 'Mark's Readers: A Profile,' in F. Van Segbroeck, et. al., eds., *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift for Frans Neirynck*, vol. 2, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), pp. 839-58; pp. 857-58. Cf. Richard L. Rorbaugh, 'The Social Location of the Markan Audience,' where Mark is 'written in a village or small town context in either southern Syria, Transjordan, or upper Galilee and at a date very close to the events of 70 CE,' (p. 106) and where Mark's community/audience is 'all those unholy types with whom Jesus interacts in his story and who, in Mark's day, were to be defended as being part of the people of God,' p. 118.

[71] Peterson, The *Origins of Mark*, pp. 158-73.

[72] *Ibid*., p. 157.

So what can we say for the audience of Mark? Of the options mentioned above for the purposes and intent of Mark, many or most would have resonated in any number of Christian communities in any number of locations in the first century. The establishment of a new community in light of the events of 70 CE (Kelber, Kee and

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[73] Marcus mentions *The Epistle of Aristeas*, *Joseph and Asenath*, and *The Teaching of Addai*; Stanton compares Matthew to the Damascus document. See Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 27 and Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, pp. 85-107.

[74] See Marcus, *Mark 1-8, pp. 64-9;* Michael E. Vines, *The Problem of Markan Genre: The Gospel of Mark and the Jewish Novel*, (Atlanta: SBL, 2002); and Collins, *Mark*, pp. 15-43 for some discussion on genres for Mark other than biography. This continues to highlight how genre determines the reading of a text.

[75] The interests of the Markan community have been described 'as primarily to establish itself in opposition to a discredited Jerusalem Christianity (Kelber), to forge a new, apocalyptic community (Kee), to steer a mediating path between Roman imperialism and Jerusalem hegemony (Myers), to the distance itself from Judaism in the Roman imagination because of the recent destruction of the temple (Fredrickson, Brandon), to forge a new myth of Christian origins out of a variety of disparate traditions (Mack), to explain to Mark's Jewish-Christian community why the temple was destroyed and replace Israel with Mark's Jewish-Christian community in God's plan (Marcus).' More recently the concerns of the community have been seen as addressing the issues arising after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (Insignieri), as an apology against 'the charge of causing social unrest and endangering civic order' (Roskam), and as a Christological response to the propaganda of Vespasian (Winn). Dwight N. Peterson, The *Origins of Mark*, p. 163 and 153 respectively; and Helen N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark*, p. 238; Win, *The Purpose of Mark*, p. 173.

Marcus) and attempts to navigate the Roman imperial world and potential persecution (from a number of quarters) (Myers, Fredrickson, Brandon, Insignieri, Roskam and Winn) would have had meaning in whole or in part with Christians in general. This is not to say that there was not potentially a specific situation behind Mark, but the text renders the details of such a community and its *Sitz im Leben* tentative. There is a strong temptation to take the distinctive elements of the gospel presentations and use them to build specific social situations as the impetus for them. However, Stanton is correct in suggesting that not every detail in the Gospels has a specific situation behind it, and at points it is difficult to know what is incidental to the story.[76] Further, we should not expect every aspect of the presentation of Mark to resound with every person envisioned in the audience (however open or focused).[77] Some elements of Mark's presentation of Jesus would strike closer to home for some readers/hearers and less for others, much in the same way that the presentations of other figures in βίοι would reverberate more with some members of the 'reading' public and less with others. Given the uncertainty of the evidence and the constraints of the genre, we should envision Mark's audience as an audience of mixed (Jewish and Gentile) Christians. Here the audience is more focused than say all Christians or any person with an interest in the person Jesus, but not so focused as to suggest 'a specific and identifiable historical situation which involved specific and identifiable people faced with specific and identifiable exigencies' or a definite group of Christians.[78]

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[76] Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' pp. 51-52. He uses the example of Matthew 5: 23-4 and questions whether this points to a specific issue current to Matthew's community or as an issue in the past, but no longer specifically relevant to the *Sitz im Leben*.

[77] Cf. Best, 'Mark's Readers,' p. 857; Bauckham, 'For Whom?' pp. 24-5; and Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, pp. 27-8 for discussion of Mark 15:21 as demonstrating the local audience for Mark. Cf. Mark 7:3-4 and Nep. *De vir. ill.*,1-8, where Mark is discussion washing rituals presumably because some in his audience are unfamiliar with the practice and Nepos is discussing unfamiliar Greek cultural practices. In both cases there is nothing to suggest an overly focused readership based on the explanation of unfamiliar customs.

Reconstructing Lukan 'Communities'

Of the four gospels, Luke presents the most difficulties in terms of delineating a particular community/audience reconstruction.[79] Allison and Nolland have both cast serious doubts as to the extent to which a Lukan community can be definitively constructed.[80] Few scholars of Luke attempt to reconstruct the Lukan community with any specificity and those attempts to recreate the Lukan community from the text are significantly vague. Esler describes Luke's community as 'mainly Jews and Gentiles (including some Romans) who had been associated with synagogues before becoming Christians, some of whom were rich and some poor,' and as a community that 'needed strong assurance that their decision to convert and to adopt a different lifestyle had been the correct one.'[81] Here, Esler argues that the purpose for the writing of Luke is an act of legitimation on the part of the evangelist as a means demonstrating how the move from Judaism was an appropriate choice. While this may be correct, does this indicate a specific community for Luke, or does this speak to a general situation that could affect any number of Christians in the late first century? If Esler is correct that Luke was written for a mixed community that had come out of the synagogue context and needed reassurance on their decision in the latter third (85-95 CE) of the first century, would this social situation be so unique that it would exclude Christians from other communities as part of a potential audience group?[82] Esler admits that, 'these relationships if not restricted to one community, would only have been obtained in an ensemble of Christian congregations of a certain type, all of them being characterized by a quite circumscribed set of tensions within the memberships and with the world outside.'[83] Conceivably, the shared experience of conversion from Judaism and/or the movement from the synagogue and the resulting uncertainty would result in 'congregations of a certain type' in any number of locales in the late first century. In this case shared experience and a belief in Jesus would constitute the bounds of the community (in part) and a specific locale need not be envisaged.[84] Karris and Moxnes present community models that are similarly ambiguous.[85] Karris envisions a community behind Luke consisting of rich and poor, with the wealthy as a significant portion of the membership.[86] Moxnes envisions a Lukan community that is 'culturally and ethnically mixed' with the vast majority of the members being of a non-elite status, but with some social elites as members of the community.[87] Thus, Esler, Karris and Moxnes present community reconstructions that are similarly ambiguous with the options being a community of rich and poor (Karris and Moxnes) and/or a community of Jewish and Gentile Christians that have left the synagogue and need to be reassured of their conversion (Esler).

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[78] Peterson, The *Origins of Mark*, p. 157.
[79] See chapter 2, pp. 53-62.
[80] Dale C. Allison, 'Was There a 'Lukan Community?'' *IBS* 10 (1988), pp. 62-70; John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, WBC 35A, (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), pp. xxxix. Cf. Johnson, 'On Finding the Lukan Community,' p. 92; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke, I-IX: Introduction, Translation and Notes,* AB 28, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), pp. 57-9; C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, (London: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 14-5; and Barton, 'Can We Identify?' pp. 186-89.
[81] Esler, *Community and Gospel*, p. 16.

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[82] *Ibid*. pp. 30-46; esp. 45-46. Cf. Schuyler Brown, 'The Role of the Prologues in Determining the Purpose of Luke-Acts,' in Charles H. Talbert, ed., *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1978), pp. 99-111; p. 100-8; Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke, I-IX* , p. 59; Evans, *Saint Luke*, pp. 104-11 for purposes of Luke. Also Cf. Loveday C. A. Alexander, 'Luke's Preface;' and *The Role of the Prologues*, to Brown on the role of the prologues in determining the purpose of Luke-Acts.

[83] *Ibid*., 26. Esler sees the Lukan community as an urban community similar to the community described by Luke in Ephesus (Acts 20. 17-35). See pp. 26-30.

[84] See Mary A. Moscato, 'Current Theories Regarding the Audience of Luke-Acts,' *CurTM* 3.6 (1976), pp. 355-61 for a discussion of the various proposals of the *Sitz im Leben* of Luke prior to 1976. See also Robert J. Karris, 'Poor and Rich: The Lukan Sitz im Leben,' in Charles H. Talbert, ed., *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1978), pp. 112-25; pp. 113-16 for a similar discussion through 1978. Here she suggests a group of Gentile and Jewish Christians with the emphasis of the gospel on creating continuity between Judaism and Christianity, p. 359. She also suggests that the Jewish Christians in this community may have been similar to the Nazoreans, pp. 360-1.

[85] Karris, 'Poor and Rich,' p. 124; Halvor Moxnes, 'Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts,' in Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 241-70; 'The Social Context of Luke's Community,' in Jack D. Kingsbury, ed., *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1997), pp. 166-77.

[86] Karris, 'Poor and Rich,' p. 124.

The above discussion is not meant to diminish the work of the scholars in their reconstructions of the Lukan community/audience. On the contrary the contributions of Esler and Moxnes especially in regard to social-scientific criticism are valid and important. However, the above mentioned reconstructions continue to highlight the difficulties associated with using the Gospels to reconstruct the *Sitz im Leben* and the subsequent gospel audiences. Esler's work highlights the complexity of human relationships and the complexity of defining community. Esler is correct in his assertion that the 'group-orientation' of the first century Mediterranean world would have played a dominant role in the crafting of Luke's gospel.[88] It is more than possible that Luke would have been influenced by the local situation in play as he wrote his gospel, but as Esler has acknowledged, Luke may have 'also contemplated the possibility that it would travel further afield, in which case he hoped his version would compete with and even supplant the unsatisfactory Gospels of others.'[89] In this way Luke, like other biographers, would be writing within a particular social setting while understanding and even expecting their work to circulate widely. This potential for circulation has to be considered as part of the audience for not only Luke but the other evangelists as well. Esler is far too dismissive of the role of genre in the process of determining audience groups. The genre of Greco-

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[87] Moxnes, 'The Social Context of Luke's Community,' p. 175. Moxnes offers a similar construction previously, 'Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts,' p. 267.
[88] Esler, 'Community and Gospel,' p. 240.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 242.

Roman biography is diverse enough that suggesting that the authors of biography were only of elite status is to misread the genre.[90] Furthermore, we would suggest viewing the texts as integral to indicating the social status of the evangelists. As with the constructions of Karris and Moxnes, there is a good likelihood the evangelists would have been among the intellectual elite as they produced literature that is theologically and literarily complex.[91] We are neither debating the extent to which persons in the first century were 'dyadic' nor debating the fact that people in the Mediterranean world understood themselves in relationship to their 'kinship groups.'[92] What is being questioned is how we define and understand these kinship groups and the ways in which community is understood.[93] Again, the question is not whether there were audience groups for the Gospels, but how we define/understand them? Luke presents us with a text that does not afford us the opportunity to define this audience group in definite terms. The audience of Luke may be focused to the point of suggesting a Gentile-Christian audience or perhaps even a Jewish/Gentile Christian audience, but the portrait of Jesus present in the gospel does not provide enough contextual specificity to reconstruct a Lukan community or communities.

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[90] *Ibid*., p. 244.

[91] They should at least be considered on par in terms of their composition with Nepos and the writers of Anon. *Vit. Sec.* and Anon. *Vit. Aesop*.

[92] Bruce J. Malina & Jerome H. Neyrey, 'First-Century Personality: Dyadic, Not Individualistic,' in Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 67-96; p. 95.

[93] Bauckham offers an interesting commentary on group dynamics. He writes, 'What we are considering is group-identity and group-orientation within a new (Jewish) religious movement which rapidly spread through the Mediterranean world and (as we show from the evidence) maintained constant contact and close communications throughout its constituent communities. Members of the movement were re-socialized into this new social context. So far as I am aware, Mediterranean anthropology provides us with no analogy for this kind of social phenomenon.' Bauckham, 'Response to Philip Esler,' pp. 250-51.

Reconstructing Johannine 'Communities'

The recent monograph by Edward Klink has cast serious doubt as to the efficacy of Johannine community reconstructions and Klink has argued for a wider audience for the gospel.[94] One of Klink's strongest contributions is on the discussion of the sectarian nature of John and by extension the sectarian nature of the early church.[95] While sectarian models may help explain some of the particular features of some of the gospel material, sectarian models tend to be too rigid and do not account for the complexity of human relationships and the flexibility that can occur within them. Stanton, Harland and Klink all point to the flexible nature of these relationships especially within sects where actively engaging the outside world was necessary in order to gain new members as a means of survival.[96] Furthermore, it is possible that in a social matrix like that of the first century Mediterranean world, individuals could find themselves identifying with more than one association or reference group.[97] Sectarian models do not account for multiple affiliations. This recognition of group affiliation stems from the interpretation of these texts as well as the texts themselves. On one hand, if the texts are in some way sectarian we should expect the emphasis of the texts to be on highlighting and demonstrating the ways in which the in group is distinct from either the parent group or society as a whole.[98] In that case it would be difficult to determine the ways in which the sect is in continuity with other groups. Simply put: To what extent do the Gospels indicate closed groups and to what extent do they indicate (even as an ideal) a more open group? Thus, although sectarian models of relationship appoint to part of the relational dynamic they are not inclusive of all of the possible social and group interactions. Any models that attempt to describe human behavior and interaction need to allow for an appropriate amount of flexibility even in social structures where individuals are heavily embedded in groups. Some account must be given for how new groups and new social structures conform to and diverge from norms.[99]

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[94] Klink, *The Sheep of the Fold*.

[95] *Ibid*., pp. 64-86; esp. pp. 64-74 for discussion on millenarian and sectarian constructions for the early church.

[96] Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' p. 57; Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), pp. 8-15, 180-269; and Klink, *Sheep of the Fold*, p. 71.

[97] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregation*, p. 184.

[98] Bas ter Haar Romeny, 'Hypotheses on the Development of Judaism,' p. 33. See also Carter, 'Matthew 4:18-22 and Matthean Discipleship,' pp. 58-9; 73. Carter Argues for Matthew's community as being a 'voluntary marginal' group (p. 58), with concerns related to social structures other than the only synagogue (p. 73).

How then do we reconstruct the Johannine community and what sort of audience emerges? Of the numerous studies on the *Sitz Im Leben* and subsequent community of the gospel of John, those of Martyn, Meeks, Brown and Malina have been the most influential.[100] Martyn has argued that through John's gospel it was possible to reconstruct and understand the specific circumstances that were faced by John's audience (community) and that he 'writes *in response to contemporary events and issues*' that were experienced by and affected all or most of the members of John's community.[101] Martyn advocated a reading that took into account the traditions of the early church in a broad sense but that also accounted for the particular issues that faced John's community.[102] Martyn argued that the evangelist was drawing from a common pool of traditions but was interpreting and presenting the traditions in such a way as to make them meaningful to his specific audience.[103] This process would be true for all of the evangelists and in comparing and contrasting their use of the common traditions one could determine, at least in part, the social and historical situations at work in their respective communities.[104] Martyn's reading included the gospel as a witness to the events of the person and work of Jesus as well as a witness to the interpretation of Jesus in the life and experiences of John's community.[105] Martyn's work is important if for no other reason than he helped to solidify the notion that John wrote his gospel and shaped his presentation of the traditions about Jesus to conform to and specifically address the needs and experiences of his community. It is in following Martyn's work that others have attempted to differentiate the specific contours of the Johannine community.

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[99] In relation to John specifically as it relates to the use of idiosyncratic language see Stephen C. Barton, 'Early Christianity and the Sociology of the Sect,' in Francis Watson, ed., *The Open Text: New Directions for Biblical Studies?* (London: SCM Press, 1993), p. 148. Here Barton argues that much of the language that is attributed as anti-language in John can be seen as much more open language that resonated within the Jewish and greater Mediterranean milieus.

[100] J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd edition, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003); Wayne A. Meeks, 'The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,' *JBL* 91.1 (1972) pp. 44-72; Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979); and Bruce J. Malina, 'John's: The Maverick Christian Group: The Evidence of Sociolinguistics,' *BTB* 24 (1994) pp. 167-82. For relevant bibliography on the state of Johannine research prior to Martyn see Klink, *Sheep of the Fold*, pp. 24-7. See note 104 on p. 24 for discussion of relevant scholarship prior to the 20th century.

[101] J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology*, p. 29.

Raymond Brown's work on the reconstruction of the Johannine community stands as important to the study of Johannine community reconstructions as a comprehensive discussion of the growth and development of the community over time. Also, Brown's work *Community of the Beloved Disciple* is indispensable in that it presents a number of other Johannine community reconstructions. Brown's work also highlights the difficulties in reconstructions that have been discussed throughout this chapter: namely that many different scholars reading the same texts have come up with a number of different possible reconstructions, and many of them are in direct opposition to each other. This difficulty in reconstructing the Johannine context, specifically, and the contexts for the Gospels generally, is further highlighted by the various permutations of Brown's own reconstruction of the Johannine community in various works over time.[106] This again spotlights the difficulties in using the Gospels to mirror-read social contexts. Brown sees the history of the Johannine community as developing over a period of several years with four (later five) distinct phases.[107] 1) During the first phase of the history of the community (mid-50s to late-80s) a group of Jewish believers in Jesus as the 'Messiah' (among them was the 'Beloved Disciple') combined with a group of Jewish believers in Jesus who were 'anti-Temple and saw Jesus in a Mosaic role.[108] This group of Jewish believers was eventually expelled from the synagogues as their developing high Christology left them at odds with mainline Judaism. The 'Beloved Disciple' helped soften the blow of rejection and helped to transition this community from the synagogues.[109] At this point Gentile converts to Jesus joined the group.[110] 2) During the second phase (*ca*. 90) the community continued to reach out to the Gentile world and may have relocated to the Diaspora as a means of achieving the mission to the Gentiles.[111] Continued rejection and persecution by 'the Jews' and others led the community to withdraw from 'the world' which was now seen to be diametrically opposed to its mission, and a rejection of the high Christology of some of the Jewish-Christians in the community led to a significant rift and significant differences between the community and the 'Apostolic Christians.'[112] 3) The rift in the community (*ca*. 100) was addressed by the Johannine epistles where one group was seeking to be eventually rejoined with the 'Apostolic Christians' and the separatist group opting for a Christology that bordered on Gnosticism.[113] 4) The fourth phase took place in the second century with one part of the community formally reuniting with the church at large, and the separatist group gravitating more extensively toward Gnosticism/Gnostic thought.[114] This description of the development of the life of the Johannine community is an expansion of Brown's hypothesis previously presented in his commentary on John.[115] Here the community is defined by the events associated with the expulsion of Christian-Jews form the synagogue (bound historically on one end with the decisions of the Council of Jamnia) and the resulting tensions from 'Crypto-Christians' that remained within the synagogue context after many of their fellow believers had been expelled.[116] What is apparent here is that Brown sought to identify the particular language of the gospel ('world,' 'the Jews,' 'the Beloved Disciple,' etc.) with specific historical/social situations within the community.[117] While this is certainly possible, it highlights the difficulties of taking specific 'insider' language and applying it to specific historical reconstructions. If the language is so specific as to indicate that only those from within the community can identify and understand it, then how are we, as interpreters removed from the in-group, supposed to use this language to reconstruct the historical reality of the community? Again, as helpful as Brown's reconstruction is, it supposes far more detail than the text can realistically provide.[118] Kysar has offered the following critique of Brown's reconstruction (s):

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[102] *Ibid*., pp. 30-1.
[103] *Ibid*., p. 30.
[104] *Ibid*., p. 32.
[105] *Ibid*., p. 40.

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[106] Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., AB 29, 29A, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966, 1970); *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*; *The Epistles of John*, AB 30, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984); and *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, Fancis J. Moloney, ed., (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

[107] Brown proposed a fifth stage of development where the community is ultimately at odds over gospel interpretation. See Brown, *The Epistles of John*, pp. 70-71; and 94-97. Here Brown identifies a 'Johannine School' within the larger Johannine community that was responsible for the collection and recording of the community's traditions (*ibid*., pp. 96-7). This serves as a corrective to Culpepper's concept of a larger Johannine School, on par with the classical philosophical schools, as collectors and recorders of the traditions. In this way individuals and not communities are responsible for the writing of the Johannine material. See Robert Kysar, 'The Whence and Whiter of the Johannine Community,' in John R. Donahue, ed., *Life in Abundance: Studies of John's Gospel in Tribute to Raymond E. Brown*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), pp. 65-81; p. 66.

[108] Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple*, p. 166. See pp. 24-26.

[109] *Ibid*.

[110] *Ibid*.

[111] *Ibid*.

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[112] *Ibid*.
[113] *Ibid*.
[114] *Ibid*.
[115] Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 1, pp. lxx-lxxxvi.
[116] *Ibid*., pp. lxx-lxxiv. See Kysar, 'The Whence and Whither,' pp. 67-8.
[117] See Brown, *Introduction to John*, p. 183.

> What is worth noting about [Brown's] proposal is the way in which it is wrapped up in the other introductory issues involved in the Fourth Gospel. His appeal to a single community to which the gospel was directed attempts to take into account the peculiar features of the document by references to several events in the community's life. *Consequently, the community concept grew out of Brown's efforts to explicate the peculiarities of the gospel.*[119]

Here the project of community reconstruction is an extension of the wider concern of sorting out the introductory issues associated with the Gospel of John. However, this presupposes 'that we can look through the text to reconstruct its original context and this will enable us to understand what the text was *intended* to mean!'[120] This presumption needs to continue to be challenged especially considering the supposedly opaque nature of the language peculiar to John.

Similarly the reconstructions of Martyn, Richter, Cullmann, Boismard and Langbrandtner offer complex (more or less) reconstructions of the life of the Johannine community. Martyn sees the community developing in three stages: 1) the 'Early Period' (60s-80s) with a single community of 'Christian Jews' who were still apart of the synagogue while at the same time believers in Jesus; 2) the 'Middle Period' (late 80s) the group/community of 'Christian Jews' were eventually repelled from the synagogue and became 'Jewish Christians' signifying a formal break with Judaism and the necessitating of a dualistic outlook; and 3) the 'Late Period' where the further deepening of the rift between the Johannine community and relationships to other groups ('the Jews', Christians that remained in the synagogue, and other groups of Jewish Christians) produced the finished form of the gospel of John.[121] This view can be directly contrasted with that of Georg Richter who traced four distinct communities at work behind the gospel of John as opposed to Martyn's one continuous community.[122] Cullman sums up his basic reconstruction of the life of the Johannine community in the following sentence: 'We thus arrive in the following line, moving back in time: Johannine community—special Hellenist group in the early community in Jerusalem—Johannine circle of disciples—disciples of the Baptist—heterodox marginal Judaism.'[123] Boismard and Langbrandtner both reconstruct the gospel in terms of various stages of literary composition, and both see the development of the gospel tied to particular writers and/or redactors.[124]

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[118] *Ibid*., p. 18. Brown writes, 'While I accept in principle the ability to detect Christian community life beneath the surface of the Gospel story, I wish to be clear about the methodological difficulties of applying such a principle. Since the presentation of Jesus and his message is of primary interest, the deeds and words of Jesus are included in the Gospels because the evangelist sees that they are (or have been) useful to members of his community. From that we gain general knowledge about the life of the community, but it is difficult to move to specifics.'

[119] Kysar, 'The Whence and Whither,' pp. 67-8. See Robert Kysar, *Voyages With John: Charting the Fourth Gospel*, (Waco: Baylor, 2005), pp. 237-45; esp. pp. 237-8; and 242.

[120] Kysar, *Voyages With John*, p. 240. Luke Timothy Johnson has significantly criticized the prospect of reconstructing the Johannine community as a project that lacks any significant historical controls. The result of the reconstruction is ultimately dependent on the interpretation of the one engaging in the reconstruction and not on any verifiable historical reality. See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), p. 100. See also Adele Reinhartz, 'Building Skyscrapers on Toothpicks: The Literary-Critical Challenge to Historical Criticism,' in Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore, eds., *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The past Present, And Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature*, (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), pp. 55-76 for further discussion of the difficulty of Johannine community reconstructions.

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[121] J. Louis Martyn, 'Glimpses into the History of the Johannine Community,' in M. de Jonge, ed., *L'Evangile de Jean: Sources, rédaction, théologie*, (Gembloux: Duculot, 1977), pp. 149-75. This article also appears reprinted in J. Louis Martyn, *The Gospel of John in Christian History: Essays for Interpreters*, (New York, Paulist Press, 1978), pp. 90-121. See pp. 93-102, esp. p. 102 for the 'Early Period,' pp. 102-7, esp. pp. 106-7 for the 'Middle Period,' and pp. 107- 121 for the 'Late Period.'

[122] Georg Richter, 'Präsentische und futurische Eschatologie im 4. Evangelium,' in Peter Fielder and Dieter Zeller, ed., *Gegenwart und kommendes Reich*, (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1975), pp. 117-52. See Andrew J. Mattill, 'Johannine Communities Behind the Fourth Gospel: Georg Richter's Analysis,' *TS* 38 (1977), pp. 294-315 for a helpful English summary on Richter's work.

[123] Oscar Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle: Its Place in Judaism, Among the Disciples of Jesus and in Early Christianity: A Study in the Origin of the Gospel of John*, (London: SCM Press, 1976), p. 87. See Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, pp. 176-78 for a helpful discussion on Cullmann.

We are left with a number of possible reconstructions of the Johannine community, but to what extent are any such detailed descriptions possible? Certainly the work of Meeks and Malina has heightened the extent to which the Johannine community can be viewed as a sectarian group.[125] However, even if we accept the sectarian nature of a group or community behind John, there is no clear indication that the sectarian nature of the group designates that the gospel was written only for that group.[126] Not all of the material in John supports such a straightforward sectarian interpretation (e.g. John 3.1-21; 4.7-42). Further, the reconstructions above leave us with a Johannine community that is in many ways similar to other Christian 'communities' in the ancient Mediterranean. We are left with either a group of Christian-Jews that eventually became Jewish-Christians as they were expelled from the synagogues for their belief in Jesus (Martyn), or a group of 'heterodox marginal' Jews that gradually developed into a mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians over time (Cullmann), or a group of mixed believers after Christian Jews were expelled from the synagogue. Again, the portrait that emerges is one of a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile Christians. Genre becomes an important factor here. Brown acknowledges at least in part that the purpose of the gospel is to say something of the words and deeds of Jesus.[127] This recounting of the words and deeds of Jesus places John squarely in the generic bounds of Greco-Roman biography, and John should continue to be read accordingly. As has been discussed previously, there is little evidence to support the notion that biographies were ever written solely for such sectarian audiences. The emphasis on the character (Jesus) indicates an act of legitimating the person Jesus to others. While it is certainly possible that the function of the biography in this case could be to embolden the believers in Christ, we should also imagine that it is being directed to those outside of the immediate reference group. The peculiar language of John should not indicate only a sectarian audience. It is specific enough in some ways to indicate insider language that some apart from the community would not interpret correctly. Yet at the same time, the language employs concepts that were familiar enough across a wide number of reference groups in the ancient Mediterranean. This again begs the question as to whether or not every aspect of a biography would need to resonate with every possible audience member. While we would like to be able to narrow the community of John to a specific time and place and thus to a specific social history, the text itself makes that project nearly impossible. At best, again, we can narrow the audience of John to a mixed Christian audience, one that is at a point where a formal split between Judaism and Christianity is becoming tangible. So the audience is focused in the sense of being a mixed (Jewish/Gentile) Christian audience, but beyond that no specific community can be discerned.

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[124] Marie-Emile Boismard, *L'Evangile de Jean: Synopse des quatre évangiles en français*, vol. III, Marie-Emile Boismard & Arnaud Lamouille, ed., (Paris: Du Cerf, 1977); Wolfgang Langbrandtner, *Weltferner Gott der Liebe: Die Ketzerstreit in der johanneischen Kirche*, (Frankfurt: Lang, 1977). See Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple*, pp. 178-82.

[125] Meeks, 'The Man From Heaven;' and Malina, 'John's: The Maverick Christian Group.'

[126] Barton, 'Can We Identify?' pp. 189-93.

[127] Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple*, p. 18.

Conclusion

We have proposed a specific sub-generic classification for Greco-Roman biography, and by extension, for the canonical gospels. As previously discussed the Gospels are best understood as contemporary biographies, biographies written within living memory of the subject. The four gospels seem to fit well within the range of living memory, even if John is on the far end of the temporal spectrum. Until now, we have been hesitant to suggest exactly where the Gospels fit within the spectrum of possible audience groups. We have suggested that biographies can be seen as written to/for open or focused audience groups, with open groups being groups that have no discernable orientation (any interested person) as opposed to focused audience groups. We have opted for ‘focused’ as opposed to ‘closed’ as ‘closed’ audience groups do not fit with any of the implied audience groups that emerge from reading Greco-Roman biographies. Focused groups allow us to speak of audience groups with more flexibility. We can speak of an audience group as more or less focused as opposed to definite (closed) or indefinite (open). This language allows us to account for the imprecise nature of implied audiences in Greco-Roman biography. We would suggest that the imprecise nature of audience groups is a hallmark of the genre itself as it is unclear that βίοι were ever written for definite audiences. Even in instances where the subjects were of a more focused nature (philosophers, etc.) the audience groups were never so focused as to indicate a closed community. On the contrary, it is much more likely that biographies were intended to be read as widely as possible and that wide readership/dissemination was part of the impetus in writing. This would be the case where figures were being defended, with the biography intending to legitimate both the figure and those associated with him, and in the case where figures were being held up as worthy of emulation.[128]

Admittedly, it is not always clear where a given example fits into this matrix of relationship and this is certainly true of the Gospels. While we would like to be able to mirror-read the Gospels as a means of reconstructing the *Sitz im Leben* of the texts, the genre itself does not afford us the opportunity to do so with great detail. The emphasis of biography is on the subject and not on the potential situation behind the writing of the biography. What is important is not the audience but the subject. This emphasis on the subject does not indicate some sort of cross-cultural or anachronistic attention to individualism projected onto the *weltanschauung* of the first century world. Quite the contrary, the portraits of individuals were held up as examples representative of values and norms that extended beyond the individual to various reference groups. The portrait of the individual was worthy (or not worthy) for many to emulate as the subject conformed to and upheld social and moral norms. The positive biographies attempted to show how the subject was in line with such norms even when, by outward appearances, the subject may not to be. This extends to the Gospels as biographies of Jesus. Each of the evangelists was attempting to offer a presentation of the words and deeds of Jesus. It is possible that we can narrow the focus of their presentations first to Christians, in general, and secondly to certain types of Christians (Jewish, Gentile, mixed), but beyond that there is not enough definitive proof to reconstruct specific communities behind the Gospels. In some cases certain historical circumstances may be surmised, but historical circumstances are not enough to constitute a community. The purpose here has not been to criticize the notion that individuals in the Mediterranean world were embedded in groups or to suggest that there were not communities behind the Gospels. However, we are not confident in the ability to reconstruct those communities given the genre of the Gospels. We would also continue to question how ‘community’ is being defined and to continue to question the ways in which the early church both affirmed and challenged social relationships in the first century Mediterranean world. Finally, while the audience of the Gospels can be seen as more or less focused, this focus is not so definite as to imply a specific community or group of communities.

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[128] The negative examples could fulfill a similar function in that they could be used to discredit an individual and his associates to as many as possible.

Chapter 6. Envisaging Gospel Audiences in Space and Time: ‘Contemporary’ Βίοι and the Gospels for ‘All Nations’

Introduction: Multivalent Audience Groups in Greco-Roman Biographies

As we have argued elsewhere, audience groups for Greco-Roman biographies cannot be easily reduced to only one specific group of intended or implied readers.[1] In some instances writers supply a preface that gives some indication both of the primary audience and the purpose of the writing.[2] However, it is rarely the case that this primary audience (either as an individual patron or a potential reference group) is envisioned as the only audience group.[3] If Isocrates’ *Evagoras* can serve as any indication for the impulse to biographical writing, then we may be able to suggest that a wide readership/audience was part and parcel of biographical interest. He writes, ἔπειθ’ ὅτι τοὺς μὲν τύπους ἀναγκαῖον παρὰ τούτοις εἶναι μόνοις, παρ’ οἷς ἂν σταθῶσι, τοὺς δὲ λόγους ἐξενεχθῆναί θ’ οἷόν τ’ ἐστὶν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα (‘I know that images must of necessity remain solely among those in whose cities they were set up, whereas portrayals in words may be published throughout Hellas’ [Isoc., *Evag*., 74]).[4] Elsewhere, he states that the words written about Evagoras will present him an example that will be for all and will stand the test of time.[5] Isocrates contrasts the lengths that great men go to have their memories recorded for posterity and suggests that the recording of the deeds of Evagoras in literature will outlast all other attempts to establish a lasting memory.[6] While there is more than a fair amount of rhetorical presentation on the part of Isocrates, this does not diminish the fact that Isocrates recognizes that the literary presentation of the life of Evagoras will depict the ethical and moral values to audiences in time and space. Isocrates envisions his work as presenting a person worthy of emulation across generations and for as many as would be interested in following such a man of character.[7] Similarly, following the literary example of Isocrates, Xenophon writes his encomiastic biography of Agesilaus with the understanding that his presentation will serve as an example for generations to come.[8] We would suggest that the authors of biographies wrote with the expectation that their works would be read and copied widely. The reason for taking up the pen was to craft an authoritative literary memorial for the subject at hand. In so doing they envisioned both primary and secondary audiences, with the secondary audiences being those who would read their works as they were circulated (space) and as they were preserved for future generations (time).

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[1] Smith, ‘Genre, Sub-Genre and Questions of Audience,’ pp. 208-10.

[2] See chapter 2, pp. 53-62; and chapter 5, pp. 163-5.

[3] See Elend D. MacGillivary, ‘Re-Evaluating Patronage and Reciprocity in Antiquity and New Testament Studies,’ *JGRChJ* 6 (2009), pp. 37-81 for a discussion on patronage and its use (limited or otherwise) in New Testament studies.

[4] Isoc., *Evag*., 74. On the occasion for the writing/oration of Isoc. *Evag*. Van Hook writes that it, ‘was composed for a festival held by Nicocles in memory of his father Evagoras, king of the Cyprian kingdom of Salamis (*Isocrates, Vol. III*, p. 2).’ Here we would again argue for a specific primary audience (Nicocles as the patron of Isocrates as well as all in attendance at the oration and/or the festival) and a very broad secondary audience (all who might be interested in the person Evagoras).

[5] Isoc., *Evag*., 4.

If we grant even the possibility that biographers had in mind that their works would (ideally) be copied and read widely (and from generation to generation), then we can return to Stanton's inquiry as to why the evangelists chose to present the Jesus traditions in a narrative (biography) as opposed to an epistle or treatise.[9] We would argue that the genre of biography was the genre best suited for presenting the words and deeds of Jesus to the largest possible audience. Or to put it negatively, neither an epistle nor a literary presentation of another genre would be generically equipped to tell the story of Jesus in the same manner as a narrative. If it follows that biographies had the authorial expectation embedded in them that they would be copied and read widely, then we need to reckon with the full generic impact of the Evangelists opting for βίος as the literary form chosen to present the Jesus traditions. In this sense we should understand that the Evangelists envisioned an audience extending beyond the primary Christian audience to a secondary audience incorporating any who had interest in the person Jesus. If the Evangelists had some sense of an audience expectation beyond the immediate Christian context then we need to continue to reconsider and reassess gospel audiences. This is not to say that the Evangelists were not embedded in primary reference groups and that these reference groups did not have any effect on the production of Jesus biographies. On the contrary, they did have some impact, but it is unclear how to gauge that impact. Moreover, if the Evangelists envisaged an audience beyond Christian audiences, then we must reckon with that (ideal) audience as also having some impact on the crafting of the individual gospels.

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[6] Isoc., *Evag*., 3

[7] See chapter 2, pp. 53-62; and chapter 5, pp. 163-5 and Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, p. 18.

[8] Xen. *Ages*., 10.2. Cf. Luc. *Demon*., 1-2; Nep. *Att*., 19.1-2; Philo *Abr*., 4-5; and Philostr. *VA*, 1.2.3 and 1.3.2 for some dialog of the desire to record the lives of individuals to serve as examples for future generations.

[9] Stanton, *A Gospel* Stanton *for a New People*, p. 168.

In response to the assertion that the Gospels could have been written with a larger audience than just the Evangelists' own audience in mind, Insignieri suggests that the Evangelists (Mark in particular) wrote their gospels because they cared so much for their local congregations.[10] We have argued elsewhere that those who wrote contemporary biographies often had a personal relationship with the subject and as such had a vested interest in keeping the memory of the subject alive.[11] It was the care that the writers had for the subject that drove them to preserve the words and deeds of the individual. This is not to say that there were no other motives in writing or to say that all contemporary biographies exhibit this personal relationship.[12] We would argue that the 'care' on the part of the Evangelists extends not only to their respective communities but to the subject (Jesus) and to any others who may potentially encounter it through their writings. Here we would return to our previous caution concerning mirror-reading elements of the Gospels into specific social/historical situations. There is more at work in the process of gospel composition than a one-for-one relationship between the events/issues occurring in a specific community and the embedding of those issues in narratives about Jesus.

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[10] Insignieri, *The Gospel to the Romans*, p. 34. See Bauckham, 'For Whom?' p. 30.

[11] Smith, 'About Friends,' pp. 49-67.

The purpose of this chapter is 1) to present and discuss some pertinent examples of contemporary biographies where a particular personal relationship between the subject and the author can be determined. The intent is to draw out further the desire on the part of the biographers to preserve the memory of their subjects for the largest possible audience, even if the largest possible audience is envisioned as an ideal secondary audience. The Gospels as examples of contemporary biographies would seem to fit into this wider discussion. 2) There is an identifiable 'all nations' motif that is found in the Synoptics and a similar motif in John that points toward a wider audience group than only Christians or Christian communities in the first century. If it can be demonstrated that this 'all nations' motif is indicative of an awareness or a concern on the part of the Evangelists that their works would be spread widely, then we will need to continue to account for that concern/awareness in our reading of the Gospels.

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[12] Neither Plutarch nor Suetonius exhibits any particularly close relationship to their contemporary biographical subjects. We would argue that generally, in the case of collections of biographies such as Plutarch's and Suetonius' the literary aims of the collection overshadow author-subject relationships. One notable exception is Nep. *Att.*.

Author-Subject Relationships in 'Contemporary' Βίοι

A brief discussion of specific examples of contemporary Greco-Roman biographies will be helpful for illustrating the relationships between the writers and their subjects within the genre. The examples that are presented here are representative of the development of βίοι/*vitae* from the fourth century BCE (Isoc. *Evag*.) to the fourth century CE (Porph. *Plot*.). While not exhaustive, these examples provide a relational pattern for the development and treatment of contemporary subjects in Greco-Roman biography.

Isocrates, *Evagoras*[13]

Isoc. *Evag*. serves as an important example of Greco-Roman biographical literature. Between 370-65 BCE, on the occasion of the festival held by Nicocles to commemorate his father Evagoras, Isocrates composed Isoc. *Evag*. as the first attempt by anyone to eulogize an individual in prose and not in poetry.[14] *Isoc. Evag.* is important for a number of reasons. First, as Burridge has noted, '*Evagoras* may be seen as crossing over from rhetoric to βίος; it takes the form of a funeral eulogy praising the king, rather than a full biography', and it stands as a transitional expression of biographical literature.[15] It is somewhere between encomium and biography and is one of the earliest examples of Hellenistic biographical literature, if not a full-fledged biography. Second, Isoc. *Evag*. is important as Isocrates sought to use it as a means to move Nicocles (and all those in attendance at the oration) toward moral action.[16] This further separates *Evagoras* from the tradition of festival or funerary oration. Whereas typical festival orations would be seen as an opportunity for the rhetorician to display verbal prowess, Isocrates has it in mind to use the opportunity to encourage the audience to live lives worthy of the moral example set by his father. This moves the biographical efforts of Isocrates into the realm of exhortation to emulation and makes the figure of Evagoras one that should be studied and followed by future generations (Isoc. *Evag.,* 5 and 77). Finally, Isoc. *Evag*. is important as an example of biographic literature, and perhaps the first of its kind, as Isocrates chose 'a contemporary [rather than a mythical personage] as the subject.'[17] It is in Isocrates' desire to bring these two aims together, the traditional poetic purpose of demonstrating the 'essential character of the dead' and the historical purpose of providing 'the hearers with the larger context of their tradition', that Isocrates is able to present Evagoras as both historically relevant and the personification of true moral character.[18]

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[13] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* p. 125 for a short introduction to this work. See also Momigliano, *Development*, pp. 46-9; Stuart, *Epochs*, pp. 77-118; Takis Poulakos, 'Isocrates Use of Narrative in the *Evagoras*: Epideictic Rhetoric and Moral Action', *QJS* 73 (1987), pp. 317-328; Stephen Halliwell, 'Traditional Greek Conceptions of Character', in *Characterization and Individuality*, (Oxford: UOP, 1990), pp. 32-59; and William H. Race, 'Pindaric Encomium and Isokrates' Evagoras', *TAPA* 117 (1987), pp. 131-55. The following section is from Smith, 'About Friends,' pp. 58-65.

[14] Isoc. *Evag*., 8.

[15] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* p. 125.

It is unclear from the text what the nature and extent of the relationship was between Isocrates and Evagoras. There is some indication that Isocrates was privy to information about Evagoras not available to everyone, and this may indicate a more intimate or personal relationship (Isoc. *Evag*., 21). However, it is possible that this information was known by others but was not readily known by the general public. The relationship between Isocrates and Nicocles is easier to discern. Isocrates seems to have counted himself among the friends of Nicocles (Isoc. *Evag*., 80), and given the fact that Isocrates composed a number of admonitions to Nicocles, it may be the case that

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[16] Poulakos, 'Isocrates Use of Narrative', p. 317.
[17] *Ibid*., p. 318; see also Race, 'Pindaric Encomium', p. 133, where Isocrates acknowledges that in choosing a contemporary example it will leave his presentation open to scrutiny in regard to historicity (Isoc. *Evag.,* 5).
[18] *Ibid*., p. 318.

Nicocles was a student of Isocrates. As such, Isocrates would have had an interest in preserving the memory of Evagoras above and beyond rhetorical or literary conventions. In so doing he expects not only those in attendance of the oration (Nicocles, *et al.*) but many others to remember and follow the moral example of Evagoras, and it is precisely the written word which will make this possible (Isoc. *Evag*., 73-78).

Xenophon, *Agesilaus*[19]

Xenophon, most likely using Isoc. *Evag*. as an example, composed Xen. *Ages.*in honor of his friend Agesilaus, the recently deceased king of Sparta. Isocrates claimed to be the first to write a prose narrative that combined a discussion of the actions (deeds) of the subject and honored his virtues.[20] As Marchant states, 'in the first portion of the Agesilaus (I-II), Xenophon has clearly taken Isoc. *Evag*.as a model.'[21] This *memesis* is demonstrated in the chronological ordering of the events of Agesilaus' life and the discussion of the virtuous nature of his deeds, and a similar literary presentation is offered by Isocrates in his work on Evagoras.[22] The purpose of the composition seems to have been a reaction to critics who accused Agesilaus of being responsible for the failures of Sparta.[23] Xenophon seeks to vindicate his friend and alludes to a number of the criticisms leveled against him.[24] It is certain that this is an edited portrayal of Agesilaus as Xenophon omits many of the less flattering aspects of his subject's life. Many of these elements will be included in the later biographical presentation of Agesilaus by Plutarch.[25] Agesilaus is portrayed as being 'a paragon of traditional piety' and as 'devoted to the service of his state, to self-control, justice, piety, the support of his friends, and to the idea of panhellenism.'[26]

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[19] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* pp. 127-8. See also Momigliano, *Development*. Pp. 49-57; Stuart, *Epochs*, pp. 69-90; J. K. Anderson, *Xenophon* (London: Duckworth, 1974, esp. chs. 12-13; Samuel E. Bassett, 'Wit and Humor in Xenophon', *CJ* 12.9 (1917), pp. 565-74; G. J. D. Aalders, 'Date and Intention of Xenophon's "Hiero"', *Mnemosyne* 6.3 (1953), pp. 208-15; Michael A. Flower, 'Agesilaus of Sparta and the Origins of the Ruler Cult', *CQ* 38.1 (1988), pp. 123-34; and Charles D. Hamilton, 'Plutarch and Xenophon on Agesilaus' *AncW* 25 (1994), pp. 202-12.

[20] See Marchant's comments in Xenophon, *Xenophon: Scripta Minora*, trans. E. C. Marchant, LCL 183, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. xviii. See Isoc. *Evag*., 8-9.

[21] *Ibid*., p. xix.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Hamilton, 'Plutarch and Xenophon', p. 212.

[24] *Ibid*., p. 212; Xen. *Ages.*, 2.21, 4.3, 5.6 and 8.7.

As one who had traveled and fought under Agesilaus, and as one who considered him a friend, Xenophon would have had a profound and personal interest in preserving the life of Agesilaus in words. One aspect of the work was to serve as a defense of the life and the conduct of the king, but that should not obscure the fact that Xenophon presented Agesilaus as a moral example worthy of emulation.[27] The emphasis on Agesilaus as a moral example is seen in the dual portrayal of Agesilaus' character, first in a chronological arrangement and secondly as a summary of the king's virtues so that they might be more readily remembered (Xen. *Ages.*, 11.1). Xenophon would have expected his work to be read and studied by future generations in the same way that Isoc. *Evag.* had served as a literary example for his composition.[28] The use of Isoc. *Evag.* by Xenophon points to two issues. First, it illustrates that biographical texts were being copied and read outside of their immediate contexts and in this case Isoc. *Evag.* had been copied and circulated within a period of five years (in the case of Isocrates and Xenophon). Second, because texts were being copied and used as sources either of information or for emulation, it is fair to conclude that authors were expecting (and perhaps hoping) that their works were going to be copied and spread widely. Xenophon wanted to present the life of Agesilaus both as a refutation to those who defamed his friend's character and to serve as an example of virtue for others.

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[26] Flower, 'Agesilaus of Sparta', p. 127; and Hamilton, 'Plutarch and Xenophon', p. 212.

[27] Xen. *Ages.*, 10.2 and 11.1.

[28] See Xen. *Ages.*, 8.6; 10.2; 11.7, 14 and 16. For some discussion on literary emulation see Thomas L. Brodie, *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings*, NTM1, (Sheffield; Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004), pp. 3-23; and Myles McDonnell, 'Writing, Copying, and Autograph Manuscripts in Ancient Rome', *CQ* 46.2 (1996), pp. 469-91.

Cornelius Nepos, *Atticus*[29]

Titus Pomponius Atticus was the patron and friend of Cornelius Nepos. It is no wonder that Nepos both dedicated his work to Atticus and includes his biography as one of those among Nep. *De vir. ill.* As in the case with other contemporary biographies there was a pre-existing relationship between the subject and the author. Nep. *Att.* serves as an interesting example as it departs to a certain extent from other examples of contemporary Greco-Roman biographies that are a part of a larger set or work. In the work of Suetonius and Plutarch there are examples of biographies of contemporary figures, but there is little indication that either of these writers has any sort of special relationship to the subjects.[30] Through the biography of Atticus, Nepos presents the political neutrality of his friend and patron as virtuous and as a benefit not just for 'Atticus but all his friends and dependents.'[31]

As a personal friend of Atticus, Nepos undertook the writing of the biography while Atticus was still alive. A first edition of the biography was completed before Atticus' death in 32 BCE, with the second edition containing the addition of chapters 19-

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[29] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* pp. 127-8. See also Edna Jenkins, 'Nepos – An Introduction to Latin Biography', in T. A. Dorey, ed., *Latin Biography*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), pp. 1-15; Joseph Geiger *Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography*; A. C. Dionisotti, 'Nepos and the Generals', *JRS* 78 (1988), pp. 35-49; Fergus Millar, 'Cornelius Nepos, 'Atticus' and the Roman Revolution', *GR* 35.1 (April, 1988), pp. 40-55; and Louis E. Lord, 'The Biographical Interests of Nepos', *CJ* 22.7 (1927), pp. 498-503.

[30] See for example Plut. *Galb.* and Plut. *Oth.*

[31] Dionisotti, 'Nepos and the Generals', p. 45.

22 after the death of Atticus.[32] Nep. *Att.* is remarkable for what it is as much as for what it is not. It is not the presentation of the life of an individual who is spurred on to the undertaking of great or heroic acts, but the presentation of the life of a man who was spurred on toward neutrality.[33] The biography 'presents the most troubled period of Roman history' from the perspective of a man who stood at the very center of the Roman cultural and political world, yet remained amazingly distant from the fray.[34] Undoubtedly there would have been some that were critical of Atticus' lack of involvement in the Roman Civil War and Nepos holds up Atticus as a hero who is judged in terms of what he 'did not do, of the temptations presented by public life, and the changes of political fortune, to which he did not succumb.'[35] The actions of Atticus would have required some explanation on the part of Nepos. It is reasonable to conclude that Nepos intended the biography to correct the misconceptions that some held concerning his friend. Yet, the presentation and explanation of deeds or actions that would ordinarily have been seen as disgraceful or embarrassing were a function of Nep. *De vir. ill.* and this presentation extended at least in part to *Atticus*.[36] Nepos' work was intended for a wider Roman audience as evidenced by his reference to the general category of 'readers' in the preface and his need to explain strange Greek customs that were unfamiliar to his Roman audience. This would have included those with a particular interest in Atticus as well as those interested in the broader subject matter of the lives of illustrious men.[37]

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[32] Millar, 'Cornelius Nepos,' p. 41.
[33] *Ibid*., p. 42. Millar writes, 'It is the biography of one who endured and survived, not who acted.'
[34] *Ibid*
[35] *Ibid*.; Nep. *Att*., 19.1-2.
[36] Nep. *De vir. ill*., 1-8.
[37] Nep. *De vir. ill*., 1.

Tacitus, *Agricola*[38]

Tac. *Agr*. centered on the subject of Tacitus' father-in-law Agricola. As such it is a biography devoted to a subject/person with whom Tacitus had intimate knowledge. This is not to say that all of the material included in the Tac. *Agr*. comes from first-hand experience.[39] However, the relationship between the author (Tacitus) and the subject (Agricola) makes this work one of a 'deeply personal' nature.[40] The personal nature of the work can be attributed both to Tacitus' relationship to the subject matter and his relationship to the lager social concerns underlying the *vita*. These very same issues affect not just the telling/re-telling of the life of Agricola, but also have a profound effect on the person and work of Tacitus himself.

While there is significant debate as to the reasons for the writing of the *Agricola* we can identify two key reasons for the crafting of the biography. First, Tacitus wishes to present the life of Agricola in order to 'foster the memory of excellence, [which was] more acceptable in earlier times when *virtus* was most easily demonstrated.'[41] Furthermore, 'Agricola's *virtues* are to be contemplated and imitated as qualities which will ensure his continued memory since they have been expressed in literary form.'[42] For Tacitus it was not enough for a few select persons to know the deeds of the great. On the contrary it is precisely in writing and choosing the written word (as opposed to other means of commemorating the individual) that the authors of ancient biography intended their tributes to be read and studied by future generations.[43] It was not enough for just a few select persons to have access to these βίοι/*vitae*. Tacitus had a vested interest in seeing his father-in-law presented and remembered correctly. Tacitus' work was not only a work of literary achievement, but one of personal and political interest.[44] Second, Tacitus wished to defend Agricola (and perhaps himself) from criticisms leveled against those who served under the tyrant Domitian.[45] The mention of the names of Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio in Tac. *Agr.* suggests that the work was aimed, at least in part, to those who were admirers of those who had opposed Domitian.[46] Thus, the work can be seen to have at least two purposes that are not at odds with each other. Tacitus simultaneously intended for his work to present the life and deeds of his father-in-law for all posterity, and in so doing correct the misconceptions that others have had about Agricola (and Tacitus by extension) in terms of their perceived acquiescence under Domitian.[47] Tacitus' writing is not one of a detached academic work but one of personal investment.[48]

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[38] See Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?* p. 151. See also M. M. Sage, 'Tacitus' Historical Works: A Survey and Appraisal', *ANRW* II.33.2 (1990), pp. 851-1030, pp. 854-5; T. A. Dorey, 'Agricola and Domitian', *GR* 7 (1960), pp. 66-71; Ronald Martin, *Tacitus* (London: Batsford, 1981), pp. 39-49; For further discussion see Janet P. Bews, 'Language and Style in Tacitus' 'Agricola'', *GR* 34.2 (October, 1987), pp. 201-11; W. Liebeschuetz, 'The Theme of Liberty in the Agricola of Tacitus', *CQ* 16.1 (1966), pp. 126-139; A. G. Woodhead, 'Tacitus and Agricola', *Phoenix* 2.2 (1948), pp. 45-55; Charles Christopher Mierow, 'Tacitus the Biographer', *CPh* 34.1 (1939), pp. 36-44; M. A. Fitzsimons, 'The Mind of Tacitus', *RP* 38.4 (1976), pp. 473-93; Stephen G. Ditz, 'Tacitus' Technique of Character Portrayal', *AJP* 81.1 (1960), pp. 30-52; and Dylan Sailor, 'Becoming Tacitus: Significance and Inconsequentiality in the Prologue of the Agricola', *ClAnt* 23.1 (2004), pp. 139-77.

[39] See Ronald Syme, 'Tacitus: Some Sources of His Information', *JRS* 72 (1982), pp. 68-82 for a treatment of some of the sources available to Tacitus. Also see Kurt Von Fritz, 'Tacitus, Agricola, Domitian, and the Problem of the Principate', *CPh* 52.2 (1957), pp. 73-97, esp. 75-6 for some discussion of the difficulties in the reliability of Tacitus' portrayal of Agricola.

[40] Bews, 'Language and Style', p. 201.

[41] *Ibid*., p. 202. *Sed apud priores ut agere digna memoratu pronum magisque in aperto erat, ita celeberrimus quisque ingenio adprodendam virtutis memoriam sine gratia aut ambitione bonae* (Tac. *Agr*., 1.2).

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[42] *Ibid*. See Tac. *Agr*. 46.1-4.

[43] See Isoc. *Evag*., 4; 73-75; Tac. *Agr*., 42.3.

[44] Sailor, 'Becoming Tacitus', p. 140. Sailor has argued, 'Literature is politically and ideologically engaged. This is true not simply of a text's relationship to large-scale discourse about, say, empire or social status, but also of its function as a representative of an author, for whom its circulation and consumption has social consequences.' This is certainly true of Tac. *Agr.* which has political overtones running through it. Moreover, as Tacitus' first foray into writing on of this sort in the public sphere it serves as his introduction to the Roman reading public. Therefore, there is certainly some measure of literary pretense on the part of Tacitus but the entire work cannot be reduced to only a literary exercise. The content and presentation are far more personal.

[45] Burridge, 'About People, By People and For People', p. 133. See also Liebeschuetz, 'The Theme of Liberty', p. 129.

[46] Tac. *Agr*., 2.1; Liebeschuetz, 'The Theme of Liberty', p. 129. Domitian had the works of these two individuals burned. Geiger has suggested that although '…a full-scale account of the life of the hero was given, a special emphasis was laid on detailed pictures of their last hours and death. Thus, for instance, Arulenus Rusticus' biography of Thrasea Paetus and Herennius Senecio's Life of Helvidius Priscus no doubt reached their climaxes in depicting the martyrdom of the heroes.' Joseph Geiger, 'Munatius Rufus and Thrasea Paetus On Cato the Younger' *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), pp. 48-72; p. 62. What is of interest here is 1) all four individuals were engaged in the work of biographical writing; Paetus and Priscus on the subject of Cato and Rusticus and Senecio on the subjects of Paetus and Priscus, respectively. 2) All four used the biographical genre to demonstrate political points or emphases. This is similar then to the presentation of Agricola by Tacitus, where Tacitus is tapping into a pre-existent literary trend which used biography to present an apology and/or a political view-point. This is all the more interesting since he is directing (at least in part) his biography of Agricola towards those who admired Rusticus and Senecio. See also Sailor, 'Becoming Tacitus', p. 148.

Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*[49]

As a student and disciple of Plotinus, Porphyry wished his work to stand as a means of preserving the memory of his teacher for posterity.[50] According to Porphyry, commemorating the life of the individual, and especially the philosopher, was more aptly accomplished by writing the life of the subject as opposed to having the subject commemorated though statuary or portraiture.[51] Porphyry intended for his work to stand as the introduction to his edited versions of Plotinus' work.[52] Porphyry was interested in placing the treatises of Plotinus into a particular chronological framework that coincided with particular phases in the life of Plotinus. In so doing, Porphyry not only placed Plotinus' work into a particular context, but he was able to place himself into that context as well as a student, friend and first-hand observer of the life and work of Plotinus.

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[47] Tac. *Agr.*, 42.4.

[48] See Tac. *Agr.*, 46.1-4. '*Admiratione te potius et immortalibus laudibus et, si natura suppeditet, similitudine colamus: is verus honos, ea coniunctissimi cuiusque pietas. Id filiae quoque uxorique praeceperim, sic patris, sic mariti memoriam venerari, ut omnia facta dictaque eius secum revolvant, formamque ac figuram animi magis quam corporis complectantur, non quia intercedendum putem imaginibus quae marmore aut aere finguntur, sed ut vultus hominum, ita simulacra vultus imbecilla ac mortalia sunt, forma mentis aeterna, quam tenere et exprimere non per alienam materiam et artem, sed tuis ipse moribus possis. Quidquid ex Agricola amavimus, quidquid mirati sumus, manet mansurumque est in animis hominum in aeternitae temporum, fama rerum; nam multos veterum velut inglorios et ignobilis oblivio obruit:* ***Agricola posteritati narratus et traditus superstes erit*** (Tac. *Agr.*, 46.2-4) (bold type is mine and is added for emphasis).' The view here is one of posterity with Tacitus envisioning the narrative of Agricola's life and virtues living on in written form as a benefit for future generations.

[49] See D. J. O'Meara, *Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity*; Gillian Clark, 'Philosophic Lives and the Philosophic Life: Porphyry and Iamblichus', in Thomas Hägg & Phillip Rousseau, eds., *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California press, 2000), pp. 29-51; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses,* pp. 137-47; M. J. Edwards, 'A Portrait of Plotinus', *CQ* 43.2 (1993), pp. 480-90; Leonardo Taran, 'Amelius-Amerius: Porphyry Vita Plotini 7 and Eunapius Vitae Soph 4.2', *AJP* 105.4 (1984), pp. 476-9; M. J. Boyd, 'The Chronology in Porphyry's Vita Plotini', *CPh* 32.3 (July, 1937), pp. 241-57; Roger Miller Jones, 'Notes on Porphyry's Life of Plotinus', *Classical Philology* 23.4 (1928), pp. 371-6.

[50] M. J. Edwards, 'A Portrait of Plotinus', p. 481. Porphyry's work on Plotinus may be one of the earliest extant biographies of a philosopher by a student.

[51] *Ibid*. Edwards argues that 'portraiture competed with philosophy and biography for the distinction of bestowing immortality; philosophers could scorn it as a trifling substitute, but the biographer must take some pains to show the inferiority of this rival form of art,' Edwards, 'A Portrait of Plotinus,' p. 481. This rival form of art is subtly undermined in Porph. *Plot.*, 1.1-20. Similarly Isocrates also argues that the

Porphyry's biography served the purpose of apology for both himself and Plotinus. Porphyry was the one to whom the task of collecting and editing the manuscripts was given, even though there were students of Plotinus that had been with him longer. Moreover, Porphyry seemed to take a certain amount of pride in the fact that Plotinus' best work was done during the years that Porphyry was in residence with him (Porph. *Plot*., 6.26-37). Thus not only does Porphyry wish to defend the work of his teacher and friend, he also attempts to distance himself from the other disciples as the one who was entrusted with the task of preserving the memory of the teacher and his works.[53] As one closely associated with Plotinus, Porphyry had a vested interested in preserving the life and work of his master as much as he had a personal interest in proving himself worthy of the task. Presumably, the hope was that both the life and work of Plotinus would be remembered by future generations.[54]

To summarize, quite often contemporary biographies were written by authors who had a particular personal relationship to the subject. In some instances the relationship

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written word is far more suitable for capturing the essence of the individual and is much better as the written word is able to travel abroad and affect a wider audience (Isoc. *Evag*., 73-78).

[52] Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, p. 137.

[53] This can be contrasted with Amelius, another of Plotinus' trusted disciples who did not record much of Plotinus' teachings and who attempted to have an artist make a portrait of Plotinus against his wishes and without his knowledge (Porph. *Plot*., 1.1-20 and 6. 4.1-7).

[54] See Porph. *Plot*., 24. 1-18. The implication here is that the publication and correct ordering of Plotinus' treatises by Prohyry will secure the legacy of Plotinus. It is reasonable to conclude that the accompanying biography will also aid not only in the interpretation of the treatises but also serve as an authoritative presentation of the life of Plotinus and a presentation that venerates the person and work of the philosopher.

was a negative one with the intent of the biography to expose the subject as a fraud or model of moral avoidance (the Anti-Cato literature, Luc. *Alex*.). In other instances authors wrote biographies about friends, teachers and/or family members as a way of protecting and preserving their memory/legacy for future generations (Xen. *Ages*., Tac. *Agr*.). In some instances the biographies served as a corrective to defend the subject from slander or misinformation; in other instances they served as written monuments to the life and work of the individual. In either instance the nature of the relationships that most often induced the writing of this material was personal (whether positive or negative), and would seem to have been integral to the impulse to publish these *vitae* for the widest possible (ideal) audience.

The personal nature of these biographies would seem to indicate a desire on the part of the authors to have their works read widely. Even in the case of works lacking a personal relationship (Plutarch), the desire on the part of the authors was to have their works read widely and to have a lasting effect on the readers/hearers of their work. This desire for a wide acceptance/readership would work whether the biographies were intended to defame or promote the individual. It may be the case then that one of the functions of the genre of biography itself was to disseminate information about individuals of note to the widest possible audience. While it may be the case that some biographic presentations were directed at more focused audience groups, that does not suggest that βίος/*vita*, as a genre, was directed to definite groups or communities.[55] On the contrary, at best we can distinguish between audiences in terms of degrees (more or less focused) as opposed to different types of audiences or audience groups (definite or indefinite).[56] Ultimately, as Burridge has suggested, 'in biographies, the portrait of the subject matters more than the readership'.[57]

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[55] Burridge, ‘About People, by People, For People’, pp. 130-4.

The 'All Nations' Motif in the Gospels

The 'all nations' motif as it is presented here is represented by Mk 13:10 (and to a lesser extent Mk 11:17) where the evangelist records Jesus proclaiming that the end of times will not come until the gospel is preached to 'all nations.' This motif is picked up in Mt 24.14 and 28.19 as well as Lk 24.47. In each of the above instances there is a sense in which the proclaiming of the gospel to a wide audience ('all nations') points toward an audience group above and beyond Christians alone. Similarly, as Klink has pointed out, there is a strong sense of mission in John, with 'belief' in Jesus being the primary purpose of the gospel.[58] Returning to the issue of biography, if it can be demonstrated that the Evangelists are portraying Jesus as one who has an interest in those outside of the community, and more specifically if he is portrayed as one that wants his disciples to be interested in those outside of the immediate community, then we may be in the position to speak about a broad (ideal) audience for the Gospels.

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[56] Burridge, 'Who Writes, Why and For Whom?' pp. 110-112.

[57] Burridge, 'About People, by People, For People', pp. 133.

[58] Klink, *Sheep of the Fold*, pp. 185-246; esp. pp. 220-238. Klink offers five 'test cases' in determining the purpose of the gospel with Jn 1.12-20.31 forming an *inclusio* on belief, p. 189. Contra Martyn, *The Gospel of John,* p, 91; Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, p. 17; and Bruce J. Malina & Richard L. Rohrbaugh, 'Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John,' (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), pp. 9-21. Klink states, 'the community interpretations of the [fourth gospel] have assumed that the purpose of the Gospel was to reinforce the ideology of the [Johannine Community], since the setting in which the [fourth gospel] was written was assumed to be 'communal,'' (Klink, *Sheep of the Fold*, p. 213).

The 'All Nations' Motif in Mark

A number of recent studies have posited that the Gentile Mission is a key theme or concern of Mark.[59] This interest on the part of Mark to portray Jesus as interested in and in relationship with Gentiles during his earthly ministry serves as an important indicator to the implied secondary audience of Mark. If Mark is presenting Jesus as a model for emulation, then emulating Jesus' desire to have his message proclaimed to 'all nations' would seem to be part and parcel of discipleship.[60] This interest in a 'mixed community' is presented in Mark elsewhere and other than in 13.10. Gibson notes a number of instances where the Markan Jesus is engaged in extending the gift of salvation to individuals other than those traditionally considered as belonging within the bounds of the community.[61] Gibson suggests that the extension of salvation by the Markan Jesus can be seen in Jesus' attitude towards the marginalized--the healing of a leper (1.40-5), his relationship to the socially undesirable (2.15-17), and his healing of the man with the withered hand (3.1-6)--and most poignantly in his interaction with Gentiles--his healing of the demoniac in the area of the Gerasenes (5.1-20), his healing of the Gentile woman's daughter (7.24-30), and his healing the deaf man in the Decapolis (7.31-37).[62] The Markan Jesus' repeated dealings with those outside of the traditional community would seem to indicate that Mark envisages Jesus as one who had concern for the Gentiles and by extension those who except/believe in/follow him should as well.

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[59] Jeffrey B. Gibson, 'The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mark 8:14-21,' *JSNT* 27 (1986), pp. 31-47; Eric K. Wefald, 'The Separate Gentile Mission in Mark: A Narrative Explanation of Markan Geography, the Two Feeding Accounts and Exorcisms,' *JSNT* 60 (1995), pp. 3-26; Jesper Svartvik, *Mark and Mission: Mk 7:1-23 in its Narrative and Historical Contexts*, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2000); Kelly R. Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark: Even the Dogs Under the Table Eat the Children's Crumbs*, LNTS 339, (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007); and J. Ted Blakley*, Incomprehension or Resistance?: The Markan Disciples and the Narrative Logic of Mark 4:1—8:30*, PhD Thesis, University of St. Andrews, 2008. See also Michael F. Bird, *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission*, LNTS 331, (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007) for a discussion of the 'Historical' Jesus' relationship to the Gentile Mission and Elizabeth S. Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark*, NVBS, (San Francisco: Harper & Row; 1986) for a discussion of 'spaces' in Mark as determinative of Jesus' relationships to others.

[60] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, p. 183. Burridge writes, 'Thus Mark's narrative makes the important point that following Jesus can never be simply an individual matter. Discipleship takes place within the context of the community of all those who are responding, though that may be a very mixed group which includes others with whom we might not normally consort.'

[61] Gibson, 'The Rebuke of the Disciples,' pp. 32-6 . This includes Jews that would have been marginalized as well. Jesus' interactions with Gentiles are demonstrated by his movement from geographic locations that can be understood as Jewish and those that can be seen to be understood as Gentile. See Malbon, *Narrative Space*, pp. 40-4; Wefald, 'The Separate Gentile Mission,' pp. 9-13; and Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, p. 17.

Mk 7.24-30 offers an interesting challenge to the notion that Jesus is presented by Mark as one with an interest in and positive relationship to Gentiles. Jesus' initial refusal to heal the woman's daughter and his potential insult to her would seem to provide a significant break to the portrayal of Jesus as Gentile-friendly. We would put forward two observations here: 1) the fact that Jesus can be convinced to heal the little girl indicates that Jesus intends to extend his mission (in some way) to the Gentiles.[63] 2) Jesus indicates that his mission was first to be for Israel and secondarily for the Gentiles. This episode indicates that Jesus was not opposed to a Gentile Mission but that it was secondary to that of Israel.[64] This may indicate, as Wefald has argued, a separate mission for Israel and a separate mission for the Gentiles. This separate Gentile Mission is demarked by four separate visits by Jesus into Gentile territory.[65] Wefald sees these journeys taking place in 1)4.35-5.21; 2) 6.45-6.53; 3) 7.24-8.10; and 4) 8.13-9.20.[66] During these separate visits into Gentile territory Jesus performs a feeding miracle (8.1-10) and several healings (5.1-20; 7.24-30; and 9.14-29).[67] However, while the missions may be seen to be distinct, Mark presents a Jesus who nonetheless has a concern to extend his message and all it provides to those beyond the immediate community.[68]

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[62] *Ibid*., p. 33.
[63] Wefald, 'The Separate Gentile Mission,' p. 4.
[64] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, pp. 48-54.
[65] Wefald, 'The Separate Gentile Mission,' pp. 5-13.
[66] *Ibid*., p. 13.
[67] *Ibid*. See Svartvik, *Mark and Mission*, pp. 297-301.

This brings us to Mk 13.10 and its possible ramifications for understanding Mark as envisioning an audience for his work beyond the immediate Christian audience. Jesus' statement that the gospel must be proclaimed to 'all nations' (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) before the end will come, becomes programmatic in a sense to the mission he has carried out over the course of Mark's narrative. This is not to suggest that the Gentile Mission as it is presented in Mark is indicative of the activity of the historical Jesus: that is a separate question.[69] What is of interest here is how 13.10 figures into Mark's portrayal of Jesus. Here it is clear that Mark sees Jesus as interested in the world-wide proclamation of his message.[70] The immediate context of the end of times adds weight to the prediction/direction of Jesus on a potential world-wide mission. This mission must take place before the end comes. It has been suggested that Mark has already experienced this mission or that this mission could have been envisioned to have happened within a generation or so.[71] The historical viability of the text, while important, is not of the main interest here. What is important is that Mark portrays Jesus as understanding that a mission to ‘all nations’ (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) must take place before the end will eventually come. This places the idealized secondary audience for the gospel in time (before the eschatological conclusion) and in geographical and ethnic space (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη). This broadly envisioned audience, even if it functions as a secondary audience, would have been in mind as Mark crafted his portrait of Jesus. In this way, Mark envisioned his audience, not as only one distinct Christian community or even a collection of Christian communities, but as an audience of all those who are interested in Jesus. This fits broadly into the pattern established within the genre of biography of preserving an authoritative rendering of the words and deeds of an individual that was to be copied and distributed widely. Mark understands Jesus to be mandating the worldwide spread of the gospel and presumably Mark’s written account of the person and work of Jesus would contribute to that process.[72] This proclamation of the gospel through the written work of Mark is further solidified by Mark 14.9 (ἀμὴν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅπου ἐὰν κηρυχθῇ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ὃ ἐποίησεν αὕτη λαληθήσεται εἰς μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς.) where the Markan Jesus states that the story of the woman who has anointed him will be told throughout the world as a testimony to her faith. Mark clearly envisages his gospel as the means through which her story and the story of Jesus will be told and remembered.

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[68] Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of* Mark, pp. 179-80. Iverson's discussion of how Gentiles are portrayed in Mark is very helpful here. Iverson observes that the Gentiles are portrayed with the primary characteristics of 'desperation,' 'faith,' and understanding.' The Gentiles are portrayed as 'people for whom Jesus cares.' Iverson writes, 'all of the Gentiles prior to the passion narrative are the recipients of Jesus' compassion.' We would adjust this slightly and suggest that from a biographical standpoint, Jesus is portrayed by Mark as one who cares for the Gentiles. Ideally, Mark's audience would care for them as well and the gospel would be extended to them. See pp. 180-2 for negative portrayals of Gentiles.

[69] See Bird, *Jesus and the Origins*, pp. 168-72 on issues related to Mark 13.10 and the historical Jesus. See also George D. Kilpatrick, 'The Gentile Mission in Mark and Mark 13.9-11,' in Dennis E. Nineham, ed., *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957), pp. 145-8 for a reworking of the grammar of 13.10 that removes the Gentile Mission from the context.

[70] Fernando Belo, *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981), p. 113; Stephen Barton, 'The Miraculous Feedings in Mark, *ExpT* 96.4 (1986), pp. 112-3; p. 113; Gundry, *Mark*, p. 739; Marcus; 'The Jewish War,' p. 447; Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, WBC 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), p. 310; Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 344; Michael F. Bird, 'Mission as an Apocalyptic Event: Reflections on Luke 10:18 and Mark 13:10,' *EvQ* 76.2 (2004), pp. 117-134; p. 132; and Collins, *Mark*, p. 607. Cf. C. S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), p. 518, who sees so significant Gentile Mission in Mark. The evidence is overwhelming in support of a mission and/or inclusion of the Gentiles in Mark.

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[71] Belo, *A Materialist Reading*, p. 113; Evans, *Mark*, p. 301; and Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), p. 600.

[72] One potential argument that can be raised here is on the difference between the written and proclaimed (spoken) gospel. While that is a legitimate concern we would offer the following observations: 1) Mk 1.1 indicates that Mark understands his written work to either be a ‘gospel’ or representative of the ‘gospel’ in the sense that it is a record of the person and work of Jesus; 2) the adoption of both the terminology of Mark and the literary form of Mark by Matthew and others suggest that this sort of written presentation of the life of Jesus was accepted and acceptable for Christians who wanted to ‘proclaim’ the gospel. See Hengel, *The Four Gospels*, pp. 90-6; and pp. 106-115 for Hengel’s discussion of the gospels as for the ‘whole church.’

The 'All Nations' Motif in Matthew

There is a significant tension in Matthew between the potential for a mission to the Gentiles or the gospel for/to 'all nations' (πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) (Mt 24.14; 28.19) and Jesus' mission and (by extension) the mission of the disciples as being only to Israel (Mt 10.5-6; 15.24).[73] Brown attempts to resolve the tension in two ways: 1) he suggests that the worldwide vision of 28.19 and 24.14 is to be seen as representative of the character of the mission post-Easter, whereas the disciples' mission pre-Easter is indicative of the prohibition to evangelize gentiles (Mt 10.5-6).[74] 2) Brown suggests that these two mission motifs in Matthew are representative of two distinct opinions on the matter available to Matthew. There was a significant group within Matthew's community that believed that the gospel was only for Israel while Matthew and others in the community believed (due to the circumstances post 70) that the mission was now to be extended to the Gentiles. While we would be hesitant to agree with Brown in his insistence that Matthew's account is shaped directly by the thoughts/concerns of his 'community' we do accept that there were some significant tensions and questions regarding the expansion of the gospel to include others than Israel alone. Matthew presents a Jesus that has a paradoxical relationship with gentiles. Matthew depicts Jesus as indicating that the new kingdom will be widened in such a way as to include gentiles (Mt 8.5-13; 15.13; 21.41-

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[73] Morna D. Hooker, 'Uncomfortable Words: X: The Prohibition of Foreign Missions,' *ExpTim* 82 (1971), pp. 361-5; Schuyler Brown, 'Two-Fold Representation of the Mission in Matthew's Gospel,' *ST* 31.1 (1977), pp. 21-32; and 'The Matthean Community and the Gentile Mission,' *NovT* 22.3 (1980), pp. 193-221.

[74] Brown, 'Two-Fold Representation,' pp. 29-30; 'The Matthean Community,' p. 215.

43), yet, he also indicates some significant differences (Mt 5.47; 6.7; 6.32) with gentiles to the extent that believers in Jesus will be persecuted by them (Gentiles).[75] This ambivalent relationship to the Gentiles is certainly expressed in 10.5-6 and 15.24.[76] So what then of the instances where a Gentile Mission of some sort is envisioned? Harrington suggests that the inclusion of Gentiles post-Easter is an extension of the previous mission to Israel where the extended mission is inclusive of both Jews and Gentiles and where Matthew (post 70) presents 'Christian Judaism' as 'the best way to carry on the Jewish tradition.'[77] The inclusion of 10.5-6 was not a matter of unconsciously including Jesus traditions that were available to him, but it reflects his understanding of a significant difference in the mission of Jesus pre and post-Easter as well as presenting Jesus congruent with God's promises to Israel.[78] Here again genre becomes helpful for sorting through the aforementioned tension. The narrative limits Matthew's ability to explicitly present his theological position on the nature and course of the mission. As such he places the emphasis in the mouth of Jesus when he issues his instructions in 28.19. Here Matthew presents Jesus as one (at least post-Easter) who is interested in a mission to the Gentiles with the goal now for the disciples to both accept and further this mission.[79]

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[75] Stanton, 'The Communities of Matthew,' pp. 54-6. Turner sees 8.11; 10.18; 21.43 and 22.9 as pointing further toward a Gentile mission. David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), p. 268.

[76] Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς παραγγείλας αὐτοῖς λέγων· εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθητε καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθητε· πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ (Mt 10.5-6); and ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ (Mt 15.24).

[77] Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, SP, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 143. See Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew : A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 144.

[78] W. D. Davies & Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Matthew*, vol. 2, ICC, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), p. 167; see pp. 167-69 for further discussion. Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, WBC 33A, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), p 271). Also see Frederick D. Bruner, *Matthew, A Commentary: Vol. 1 The Christbook, Matthew 1-12*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 459-61; James LaGrand, *The Earliest Christian Mission to 'All Nations' in the Light of Matthew's Gospel*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 199), pp. 194-200 & 207-10; Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political Religious Reading*, JSNTSS 204, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), p. 234; and Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), pp. 73-4.

The point here is not to gloss over the potential tensions between Mt 10.5-6 (and 15.24) and Mt 24.14 (and 28.19) but to suggest that Matthew, much like Mark, is presenting Jesus as one who is interested in continuing or extending his mission beyond those who are immediately represented.[80] Brown suggests that Matthew's use of Mark's gospel, and in particular the material in 13.10, further points toward the Matthean understanding of the importance of the spread of the gospel to a wider potential and/or ideal audience.[81] Presumably, this is just the sort of material that Matthew could have redacted out of the narrative if it differed significantly with his own understand of Jesus. The fact that he retains it (Mt 24.14; 28.19) indicates that Matthew, too, understood a more universalistic scope for the gospel, and he presents Jesus accordingly. Bruner has gone to lengths to suggest that what Matthew hopes to promote is the telling and re-telling of his version of the gospel (preserved in written form) as the version that will go to 'all nations.'[82] While we would be hesitant to follow Bruner completely here, we would suggest that Matthew does seem to anticipate the possibility for his work to be copied and read widely (as Mark's work had). In re-working the Markan material Matthew has placed the proclamation about the gospel going 'to 'all nations' as part of the explanation for the delayed *parousia*.[83] Further, there is an essential difference in the narratives of Matthew and Mark. Whereas Mark portrays Jesus as initiating and participating in a Gentile Mission pre-Easter, Matthew reserves the specific Gentile Mission as a proclamation of the post-Easter Jesus. Here again we see the widening of the audience in time and space. The gospel is to go to 'all nations' (geographic/ethnic space) and before τὸ τέλος (Mt 24.14) (time). The proclamation of the gospel now extends beyond Israel alone, according to Matthew, and extends to the Gentiles. This does not necessarily imply that Jews are no longer envisioned as an audience for the Gospels, but they are joined in the broader mission to 'all nations.'[84] Contra Sim, Matthew is clearly envisioning a mission that includes Gentiles in the broadest sense and not just those who have come to convert to Judaism.[85] Sim argues, per his reconstruction of the Matthean community, that Matthew had a limited view of the Gentile Mission and that he only envisioned those Gentiles that had converted to Judaism as those indicated in the proclamation to 'all nations.' We object to this portrayal of Matthew for the following reasons: 1) this view of Gentile inclusion is based on a re-construction of a hypothetical Matthean community. The text serves as the only significant source for this reconstruction, and as such the statements in Mt 24.14 and 28.19 attributed to Jesus bear no qualification similar to what Sim suggests. 2) Sim's reconstruction does not take Mt 24.14 and 28.19 into account, and as such he is forced to argue around them in order for them to fit into his understanding of the social and historical circumstances that lay behind Matthew. 3) The previously mentioned use of Mark's gospel continues to indicate that Matthew had a number of Jesus traditions at his disposal and so could have chosen to redact the references to 'all nations'. The Matthean narrator did not redact this material out of his Jesus narrative. This would have strengthened his presentation of a Jesus who was concerned primarily with Israel over and against the Gentiles vis-à-vis a community that itself is in conflict with formative Judaism. Instead, Matthew presents a Jesus that is concerned first with Israel, as an extension of and continuation of God's promise to them and secondarily as concerned with extending this promise of salvation to a wider, Gentile audience.

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[79] Brown, 'Two-Fold Representation,' p. 31.
[80] Burridge argues for the depiction of discipleship in Matthew to be one of inclusion where 'the call to perfection is addressed to sinners who are setting out on the journey towards holiness in the mixed company of others who respond in their own way.' Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, p. 222. For further discussion see pp. 218-25.
[81] Brown, 'The Matthean Community,' p. 217.
[82] See Frederick D. Bruner, *Matthew, A Commentary: Vol. 2 The Christbook, Matthew 13-28*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), p. 491.

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[83] Harrington, *Matthew*, pp. 333-4; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, WBC 33B (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1995), p. 670; and Patte, *Matthew*, pp. 337-8.

[84] Stanton, *A Gospel* Stanton *for a New People*, p. 138; Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 81; Carter, 'Recalling the Lord's Prayer,' p. 519; W. D. Davies & Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Matthew*, vol. 3, ICC, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), p. 344; R. T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 909; and Turner, *Matthew*, pp. 574-5.

[85] Sim, *Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 215-56; esp. pp. 246-7 & 256.

While there has been some significant debate as to the extent of the terminology 'all nations' in 28.19 we need not be concerned here.[86] If 'all nations' means all nations or all peoples in the broadest possible sense (Meier) or just the Gentiles (Hare and Harrington) the sense of a wide possible audience and one that includes both those outside of Israel (both geographically and ethnically) and those beyond believers in Jesus remains complete.[87] It has been suggested by a number of commentators that 28.19 serves as the climax or summary of the whole of Matthew's presentation of Jesus.[88] The emphasis here is the mandated mission on the part of the Matthean Jesus who now commands his disciples to go into the entire world and make more disciples. As Hagner suggests, this 'moves the situation from mere telling/re-telling of the Jesus story to the active process and more difficult process of making disciples.[89] Hagner sees this 'full inclusion of the Gentiles' as 'something hinted at in the Gospel from the very beginning and throughout (cf. the allusion to Abraham in Mt 1.1 but also the magi in Mt 2.1-12, the centurion in Mt 8.5-13, and the Canaanite woman's daughter in Mt 15.21-28).'[90] It may be the case, as Saldarini has argued, that 'the non-Jews who appear in Matthew's narrative are peripheral and occasional' and 'they do not have independent standing in the narrative or in relationship to Jesus.'[91] However, in the final scenes of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is again presented as one who has concern for all and as one who wants the message about him to be circulated to all the nations. This falls well within the aforementioned expectations of contemporary biographies. As with other biographies of contemporary subjects, the author (Matthew) is interested in seeing the literary memory of his subject (Jesus) remembered in time (until the end of times) and in space (to the ends of the earth/to 'all nations'). In the case of the Gospels and especially here with Matthew, the literary expectation of wide dissemination is strengthened by a call from the subject himself to spread the 'good news.' The effect is far more active than the passive expectation of other biographical writers.

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[86] Douglas R. A. Hare & Daniel J. Harrington, 'Make Disciples of All the Gentiles (Mt 28:19),' *CBQ* 37.3 (1975), pp. 359-69; and John P. Meier, 'Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19,' *CBQ* 39.1 (1977), pp. 94-102.

[87] Hare & Harrington, 'Make Disciples,' p. 359; and Meier, 'Nations,' p. 102.

[88] Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 416; Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, p. 137; Davies & Allison, *Matthew*, vol. 3, p. 688.

[89] Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, p. 887. See France, *Matthew*, p. 1115.

The 'All Nations' Motif in Luke

In regard to Mark and Matthew we have discussed what we have termed the 'all nations' motif in both gospels. In both instances the Gentile Mission has played a significant role in the discussion. The same is true to a certain extent with Luke. Esler has suggested that there are several instances where Luke points toward 'a universalist theme that is an undoubted interest of its author in the non-Jewish world as a locus for the salvation effective in Christ.'[92] This theme begins with the words of Simeon (2.31-2) and is continued in Luke's expansion of the quotation of Isaiah 40 used by Mark (Lk 3.5-6).[93] Further, Luke's tracing of the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam may function to lend credibility to the person and work of Jesus as well as suggest a potential 'universal mission.'[94] The references to the healings of Elijah and Elisha in Lk 4.25-7 can be seen 'to foreshadow a mission among non-Jews' with those narratives being used to legitimate such a mission.'[95] Luke expands the saying about the banquet in the Heavenly Kingdom (Mt 8.11) to include not only those from the east and west, (per Matthew) but also those from the north and south which would indicate an even larger group to whom the gospel/salvation will be extended.[96] Finally, there is the Lukan version of the 'Great Banquet' (Lk 14.15-24; Mt 22.1-14) where those invited to the banquet include 'the poor, crippled, blind and lame' as well as 'people form the open roads and hedgerows; and the final message delivered by the risen Jesus to his disciples that opens the gospel to 'all nations' (24.47).'[97] Bird, following Allison and others, sees Lk 13.28 as directed toward the Jews and not as including the Gentiles explicitly.[98] While Bird raises some important objections to the direct inclusion of the Gentiles in this passage ('the logion appears in a non-Gentile context in Lk 13.22-20 and there is no substantial proof that the 'many' (Matthew) or the 'they' (Luke) are unequivocally identified as Gentiles') he ultimately ties the gathering of the peoples from 'east and west' and 'north and south' to the larger gathering of Israel from the Diaspora which will also lead to a later inclusion of the Gentiles.[99] In either sense, as part of the suggested eschatological expectation of the Lukan Jesus with the Gentiles specifically being included or as a part of the larger eschatological gathering of Israel, the Lukan Jesus is presented as one who, like the Markan and Matthean Jesus, is concerned with the salvation of the Gentiles.[100]

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[90] *Ibid*.

[91] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 75.

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[92] Esler, *Community and Gospel*, p. 33. Contra George D. Kilpatrick, 'The Gentiles and the Strata of Luke,' in O. Böcher & K. Haacker eds., *Verborum Veritas: Festschrift für G. Stählin*, (Wuppertal: Theologisher Verlag Rolf Brockhaus, 1970), pp. 83-8; and 'Λαος at Luke II.31 and Acts IV.25, 27,' *JTS* 16 (1965), p. 127. See Paul D. Meyer, 'The Gentile Mission in Q,' *JBL* 89.4 (1970), pp. 405-417; and Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

[93] Esler, *Community and Gospel*, p. 33. Here Esler envisages devout gentiles ('God-Fearers') as the gentiles to be included, pp. 24-44, esp. 44. Cf. Sim, *Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 215-56; esp. pp. 246-7 & 256.

[94] *Ibid*.

[95] *Ibid*., p. 34.

[96] *Ibid*., p. 84. According to Esler, this inclusion of the Gentiles does not suggest an exclusion of the Jews.

[97] *Ibid*., p. 34. See John H. Elliot, 'Temple Versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions,' in Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 211-240; p. 227-8 for a discussion of the 'symbolical family or household of God' as being expanded 'to include the marginalized, the outcasts, Samaritans, and Gentiles,' p. 227.

[98] Bird, *Jesus and the Origins*, pp. 83-93. See Dale C. Allison, 'Who Will Come from East and West? Observations on Matt. 8.11-12-Luke 13.28-29,' *IBS* 11 (1989), pp. 158-70; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol. 2, pp. 27-9; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, (London: SCM, 1985), pp. 219-20; E. P. Sanders &

The conclusion of Luke (24.47) and the opening chapter of Acts (1.8) further indicate Luke's desire to present Jesus as one who is interested in spreading the Gospel widely. There is little to denote that Luke is presenting Jesus as anything other than one interested in a universal mission in 24.47.[101] As has been suggested at numerous points in Luke, Jesus in the final scene, much like Matthew's gospel, issues a charge that the

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Margaret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, (London: SCM, 1989), pp. 311-2; and John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, WBC 35B, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), pp. 735-6.

[99] Bird, *Jesus and the Origins*, p. 84. Bird writes, 'the phrase 'east and west' evoke a larger narrative in Israel's sacred traditions which connotes the salvation of the Gentiles as an immediate consequence of the eschatological regathering of Israel.'

[100] See William F. Arndt, *Luke*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1956) p. 333; Darrell L. Bock, Luke, *Volume 2: 9:51-24:53*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), pp. 1238-40, he sees some Gentiles included in Lk 13.28-30; Evans, *Saint Luke*, 558-9; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, AB 28A, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), p. 1023; Frederick Louis Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1959), pp. 125-7; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, SP, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), pp. 731-44; and I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC, (Exeter, Paternoster: 1978), p. 568. Geldenhuys and Plummer see the Jews as excluded here in favor of the Gentiles; Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), p. 38; and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, ICC, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1913, pp. 347-8.

[101] Bock, Luke, *Volume 2*, p. 1940; Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 924; Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, pp. 1578-85; Godet, *Luke*, p. 360; Johnson, *Luke*, pp. 400-6; Marshal, *Luke*, p. 906; and John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, WBC 35C, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), pp. 1216-22.

message of forgiveness and repentance is to be proclaimed to ‘all nations.’[102] Again, this points in the direction of a Lukan Jesus who is interested in those outside of the community (here the community of believers) and desires for them (Gentiles, generally, not ‘God-Fearers, contra Esler) to become part of the community. Similar to Matthew and Mark, what is envisioned is a far more active spread of the gospel, and by extension the written gospel, than what was envisioned with other biographies. Yet, like other contemporary biographies, the Evangelists have a particular personal relationship to the subject (Jesus) and as such had a vested interest in seeing their literary representations of Jesus preserved in time and space. Acts 1.8, furthers the spatial aspect ‘to the ends of the earth’ while downplaying the potential temporal aspects of Matthew and Luke. In both Lk 24.47 and Acts 1.8 the spread of the gospel is removed from a specific eschatological context with the spatial aspect becoming the more important feature.[103] As with the other biographers surveyed above, the personal relationship that the Evangelists had to Jesus pushed the impetus from a desire to see the memory of a friend or mentor remembered through time and space to the active written and spoken proclamation of the person and work of Jesus.

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[102] A similar motif can be seen in the abrupt original ending to Mark. Here the narrative force draws the reader into the story and encourages them to participate in the spreading of the gospel in a different but no less powerful way than Matthew's narrative.

[103] Marshal, *Luke*, p. 906. Most of the scholarly discussion surrounding Acts 1.8 deals with the issue not of the inclusion of Gentiles in 1.8 but the geographic extent of the mission. See T. C. G. Thornton, ‘To the End of the Earth : Acts 1:8,’ *ExpT* 89.12 (1978), p. 374; E. Earle Ellis, ‘’The End of the Earth’ (Acts 1.8),’ *BBR* 1 (1991), pp. 123-32; Thomas S. Moore, ‘’To the End of the Earth’ : The Geographic and Ethnic Universalism of Acts 1:8 in Light of Isaianic Influence on Luke,’ *JETS* 40.3 (1997), pp. 389-99; and Bertram L. Melbourne, ‘Acts 1:8 Re-examined: Is Acts 8 Its Fulfillment?’ *JRT* 57.2-58.1/2 (2005), pp. 1-18.

The 'All Nations' Motif in John

Certainly John's gospel presents us with some interesting challenges in terms of the ways in which it represents Jesus. The direct literary relationship between John and the Synoptics is uncertain even as there is an indication that all four utilized certain Jesus traditions in common.[104] However, like the Synoptics, John is a representative of the genre of βίος, and so we can still consider John as part of that larger conversation, both generically and thematically. If Klink is correct and Jn 1.12 and 20.31 form an *inclusio*, then the central theme and purpose of John's gospel is related to the issue of belief in Jesus.[105] Even if we are slow to accept this conclusion, the theme of belief/unbelief is significant in John and therefore worthy of consideration. References to belief appear well over 50 times in the gospel from 1.7-20.31. It would be safe to conclude that belief is a major issue/theme presented by John in relationship to the person and work of Jesus. We would suggest, contra Malina and Rohrbaugh, that the 'anti-language' in John is best understood in light of the simple dichotomy between those that believe and those that do not believe in Jesus.[106]

The reconstructing of John's social situation through language and anti-language has some significant difficulties. 1) Malina and Rohrbaugh use anti-language taken from the Omaha Police Department *Gang Slang Dictionary* and appropriate it as a significant example of anti-language similar in function to the anti-language they see at use in John's gospel.[107] One significant difference here is that this language is codified in a dictionary with a specific designation for each term. The codification of these terms makes it possible to understand what each term means. Here there is a possibility to understand the terminology apart from the social context in which it is used. There is no such external documentation for the anti-language of John. Just as the reconstructions of the Johannine community are done through an explication of the text, so too the deciphering of the anti-language is accomplished through a particular reading of the text. The texts indicate the meaning of the language and the language indicates how the text is to be read. It is no less circular than community reconstruction. 2) The language mentioned in the *Gang Slang Dictionary* is not unique to Omaha gang culture. Many of the terms codified here were and are part of the wider verbal expression of American gang-culture in particular and slang generally.[108] Thus the use and dispersal of this language can be quite large, geographically, with any number of groups or gangs using the same or similar language. The use of certain language within the Johannine corpus that is not used in the same way in other Christian texts is not necessarily representative of intentionally crafted anti-language. John represents a particular stage in gospel development that is later than that of the Synoptics and community reconstructions, built on John's particular usage of language, amount to an argument from silence. 3) If the anti-language is opaque enough to be used to separate one community from society as a whole, and if that language is appropriate only to that community (or collection of like-minded communities) then outside readers should not be able to make sense of the language. As Barton has suggested the 'metaphors like light, bread, water, wine, shepherd, way, vine, temple,

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[104] See Richard J. Bauckham, 'John for Readers of Mark,' in Richard J. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 147-71. See North, '*John* for *Readers* of *Mark*?' pp. 449-68 for a counter proposal.
[105] Klink, *Sheep of the Fold*, p. 189.
[106] Malina & Rohrbaugh, 'Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John,' pp. 4-14.
[107] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

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[108] *Ibid*. In fact, we could identify 35 of the 48 or so terms listed by Malina & Rohrbaugh without the help of the dictionary. Of the remaining terms a number of them could be figured out in context and others were representative of regional slang. The point here is that the opacity of anti-language can be called into question and differences in language cannot necessarily lead to the conclusion that some language is being used to function to separate one group from another in the direct sense that Malina & Rohrbaugh suggest.

Logos, Son of God, and so on – each of them with deep roots in the biblical and Jewish traditions and not without a certain currency in the wider Hellenistic milieu either' are not nearly as 'opaque and hermetic' as some scholars make them out to be.[109] Either the language is so opaque that it sets the anti-society apart in such a way as to be significantly insulated and isolated from society at large, or it is clear enough to give a strong indication as to how this group functions and understands itself in relationship to society at large. It can't be both opaque and clear. If it differentiates this group significantly, then we cannot hope to decipher the language without an outside reference source. If the language is vague enough to offer some insight, then we need to be willing to entertain the possibility that the language is specialized but not completely exclusionary. Such language could resonate in whole or in part with any number of groups (Christian in this context) in the ancient Mediterranean in a similar way that the gang slang of Omaha would resonate in other distinct cultural and geographic areas of the United States.[110] We would suggest that Malina and Rohrbaugh are closer to the mark when they write: 'In concrete terms, the larger groups, which John's collectivity opposes, include 'the (this) world' (79 times in John; 9 times in Matthew and 3 each in Mark and Luke), and 'the Judeans' (71 times in John; 5 times in Matthew and Luke; 7 times in Mark). These groups adamantly refuse to believe in Jesus as Israel's Messiah, and therefore the Johannine group stands over against them.'[111] Here again, we would suggest that John is concerned with those who do not believe, generally, and any attempt to construct a specific group beyond that is asking more than the text can supply.[112]

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[109] Barton, 'Can We Identify?' p. 192. Cf. Meeks, 'The Man From Heaven,' pp. 68-72; and Malina & Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science*, pp. 7-10.

[110] See Klink, *Sheep of the Fold*, pp. 74-86 for an extended critique of anti-language.

[111] Malina & Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science*, p. 10.

What is often overlooked by Johannine community reconstructions is the significance of the mission theme in John.[113] Köstenberger has identified some 22 separate instances in the gospel of John where he sees the mission motif at play, especially in regard to the notion of 'sending.'[114] He separates the wider mission motif into two distinct missions (Jesus' mission/disciples' mission) with Jesus' mission dominating the first half of the book (chapters 1-12) with the disciples' mission mentioned only in reference to following Jesus.[115] In the instances where the disciples' mission is mentioned (10.16; 14.12; 15.16; 17.18; and 20.21) there is an indication that this mission is to take place in the future, presumably after the resurrection and departure of Jesus.[116] Our place of departure for further inquiry will be Jn 12.32 in which Jesus mentions when he will draw 'all people' to himself; and Jn 17.18 and Jn 20.21 where Jesus indicates the institution of a mission on behalf of the disciples into the world. The immediate context of Jn 12.32 indicates that the occasion that was partly responsible for

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[112] Here we can think of 'non-believing Jews' and all other 'non-believers' as being under the broad heading of 'un-believers'. We might be able to separate them into Jewish and Gentile unbelievers but the fact that they don't believe in Jesus is the issue. That makes Jn 20.31 all the more central to the purpose of John's gospel.

[113] Klink, *Sheep of the Fold*, pp. 220-38. See Calvin Mercer, 'APOSTELLEIN and PEMPEIN in John,' *NTS* 36 (1990), pp. 619-24; Andreas J. Köstenberger, 'Mission in the Fourth Gospel: A Semantic Field Study,' *44th Annual ETS Meeting*, San Francisco, CA (1992), pp. 1-6; *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel : With Implications for the Fourth Gospel's Purpose and the Mission of the Contemporary Church*, (Grand Rapids: 1998); J. Louis Martyn, 'A Gentile Mission That Replaces an Earlier Jewish Mission?' in R. Alan Culpepper & C. Clifton Black, *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996), pp. 124-44; and Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1-42*, WUNT 2, Reihe 31 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1998), for some relevant discussion on the theme of mission in John.

[114] Köstenberger, 'Mission in the Fourth Gospel,' p. 6. Köstenberger's paper totaled 16 pages but only the first eight contain text, specifically. All quotations are taken form the first 8 pages. Köstenberger defines mission in the following way: 'Mission is the specific task with which a person or group is charged. Mission may involve the following components: (1) a purpose, (2) a manner in which the mission is to be carried out, (3) a differentiation of roles if given to a group, and (4) a delegation of authority,' p. 6.

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[116] *Ibid.*

Jesus stating that after he was lifted up he would ‘draw all peoples’ to himself was the presence of some Greeks that had come to Jerusalem for Passover (Jn 12.21). It is the presence of Greeks (either as Hellenistic Jews or Gentiles) that indicates that Jesus’ comments in 12.32 point toward a universal mission.[117] John does not use the specific ‘all nations’ language that we have observed in the Synoptics, but the force is the same with ‘all people’ being gathered to Jesus after his crucifixion. The point here is similar to that of Mk 13.10, Mt 24.14 (28.19) and Lk 24.47 with John presenting a Jesus that is both interested in a universal mission and one that envisions a future time when all will have the gospel made available to them. Again, the purpose here is not to suggest that this is indicative of the historical Jesus or to argue that the historical Jesus envisaged a universal mission, but merely to suggest that John presents Jesus as having this interest. Again, John, like the other evangelists, envisions a wide audience for the gospel, with ‘all people’ being the secondary focus.

Both Jn 17.18 and 20.21 are indicators of the Johannine Jesus’ interest in the spread of the gospel. To an extent, the mission of the Son (3.16) is now extended to the disciples, and it is theirs to take up and continue with the help of the spirit. In opposition to Brown, this mission is not a matter of challenging the world and separating the ‘sons of light from the sons of darkness who surround them.'[118] Rather it is the mission to bring the gospel to the world (unbelievers) and in that process those who remain unbelievers will separate themselves from believers through their unbelief. Bultman sees the community and the world both as dynamic, and the world's unbelief will be the source of its ultimate judgment.[119] The fact that Jesus prays for his disciples' mission into the world further indicates that the relationship between the disciples and the world, let alone Jesus and the world, has not come to the point of an irrevocable break.[120] Whatever the break or separation is between the believers and the world, it is one of 'values not geography,' and there is little to indicate a formal sequestering of the believers from the world.[121] On the contrary, in the sense that the disciples came from the world (5.19), they are now being sent to 'engage in the mission to the world' which indicates 'they are continuing the locus of 3.16.'[122] This mission motif is again supported and mandated by the Johannine Jesus in 20.21. Here, 'John joins the common Gospel tradition that the risen Jesus constituted apostles by entrusting a salvific mission to those to whom he appeared. The special contribution to the theology of this mission is that the Father's sending of the Son serves as both the model and the ground for the Son's sending of the disciples.'[123] The disciples continue the mission of the Son, and the Son's mission and concerns serve as the model for their own mission and concerns.[124] It is the unity that Jesus has with the Father which serves as the model that the disciples are to have with each other as they prepare to go into the world and disseminate the gospel.[125] In the same way that the Son is presented as having the mission of the Father as his priority, now the disciples are depicted as having the mission of the Son, an extension of the Father's mission, as their priority. It is their belief in the Son that is the crux of the mission and the gospel (20.31) and the source of their differentiation from the world (non-believers).

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[117] Rudolf K. Bultman, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1971), p. 423; 431-2; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), p. 444; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, revised ed. NICNT, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 532; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), p. 355; *The Gospel of John: Text and Context*, BIS 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 43); D. Moody Smith, *John*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999), pp. 237-40; George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC 36, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), p. 214; Martyn, *History and Theology*, p. 135; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), p. 881; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), p. 384; and Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2007), pp. 215-220. See Charles C. Torrey, ‘’When I am Lifted Up from the Earth,’ John 12.32,’ *JBL* 51.4 (1932), pp. 320-2.

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[118] Brown, *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)*, p. 764.
[119] Bultman, *The Gospel of John*, p. 510.
[120] Carson, *John*, p. 567.
[121] Keener, *John*, p. 1060.
[122] Carson, *John*, p. 567. Contra Malina & Rohrbaugh who see this as Jesus sending 'them to live in Israel as he did (v. 18), but he wants them to be 'consecrated in truth'—that is, to be truly and faithfully set apart, exclusive, without social admixture and contamination—just as Jesus was for their sake.' This position seems untenable given the broader mission motif of John. Further, it is difficult to appropriate the 'sending' language of Jn 17.18 if Jesus is 'sending' them to be set apart. Sending implies a movement either geographically or ideologically. Neither seems to apply to a group that is already seeing itself as set apart. Malina & Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science*, p. 245.
[123] Brown, Brown, *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)*, p. 1036.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to continue to place the Gospels into the broader context of Greco-Roman biography. We have argued that often in contemporary biographies there existed a particular personal relationship between the author and the subject that had an effect on the ways in which the subject was rendered literarily. Often contemporary biographies were written by friends or students as a way of providing an authoritative and often, positive portrait of the subject. This treatment of the subject indicates a vested interest on the part of the author to tell the story of the subject with veracity. The honor of the author would be tied to that of the subject as they were understood to be in relationship with each other. Thus, Tacitus defends himself and Agricola simultaneously as did Isocrates with Evagoras and Xenophon with Agesilaus, etc. These men were worthy of respect and emulation (according to their biographers) and these authors knew these men well and wanted to see them remembered from generation to generation and by as many as possible.

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[124] *Ibid*.
[125] Smith, *John*, p. 380.

The Gospels fit into the broad patterns established within the genre of Greco-Roman biography. The Evangelists were devoted to the person Jesus and had a relationship to him (first-person or otherwise). They had a vested interest in the preservation of the memory of Jesus and chose to do so within the genre of biography. The typology presented in the thesis (see Appendix 1.2) has categorized βίοι according to relational elements coinciding with subject and audience associations to the author. The biographical literary record indicates that the general pattern was for the authors of contemporary biographies to write about subjects with which they had a personal relationship. The personal nature of the relationship often dictated or inspired a desire on the part of the biographers to have their works read and copied widely. In fact the expectation of wide distribution and the hope for a large readership was embedded in the texts and clearly expressed by the authors.

We find similar forces at work in the Gospels. Whereas ancient biographers expressed their desire for their works to be read and spread widely, the Evangelists give no such direct statements as to the extent of their intentions. Instead they place the rhetorical force for the spread and dissemination of the teachings about Jesus into the mouth of Jesus himself. Instead of expressing the idea of wide dissemination themselves as though it were their desire, the Evangelists express it as part of the mission and work of Jesus, thus giving the charge to spread the gospel (both written and proclaimed) a stronger dramatic and theological emphasis. All four evangelists present Jesus as one who was interested in and cared for those outside of his immediate reference group (some expression of Palestinian Judaism), and all four characterized him as commissioning his followers to actively promote and spread his teachings. The ‘all nations’ motif in the Gospels further complicates readings of the Gospels that envisage them as sectarian documents intended for only a small group of believers. On the contrary, the internal evidence as surveyed in chapters 5 and 6 indicate that the reconstructions of such groups come from texts that indicate a primary audience of believers and a secondary audience of all those interested in the person and work of Jesus. In this way it is best to understand the Gospels as documents written by persons (the Evangelists) who believed something specific (indicative of their unique presentations) about a person (Jesus) in a genre (βίος) that was well suited to be copied and disseminated widely.

We can therefore conceive of the primary audiences of the Gospels as focused in the sense that the texts were marketed to Christians as the initial audience. The biographical record does not allow us to conclude that the primary audiences for the Gospels were individual house churches or even collections of churches in a close geographical proximity. There is little if anything to suggest that biographies were ever intended for such localized use. If the Gospels were intended for such use it remains to be proven and, as we have argued in chapter 5, there is not enough evidence from within the Gospels themselves to support the reconstruction of specific gospel communities.

It is reasonable to conclude that the Gospels as Christian documents, produced by believers in Christ, were originally intended to be read by other believers in Christ. However, the evangelistic nature of the Jesus documented in the Gospels suggests that the authors (through the words and deeds of Jesus) envisaged a broad secondary audience. This should not suggest the primary audience has no generic or rhetorical force but it suggests that ancient authors could envision audiences as much more diverse than just the immediate or primary audience (whatever that may have been) and it was not difficult for them to market their material for primary audiences while recognizing and even hoping for a larger secondary audience. The temptation to link primary audience groups with a dedicatee (e.g. Theophilus) should be avoided as the existence of a dedicatee is not necessarily an indication of either the primary or secondary audience.[126] Similarly, we should avoid the temptation to skip from the primary audience (when identifiable) to the secondary audience as though the primary audience had no interpretative force. Yet, the interpretative force of the primary audience was such that the material in a given biography could be presented with both a focused (united by common experience or interest) audience in mind as well as a broad secondary audience in mind. As evidenced by the act of writing and publishing itself the audience inherently expands and shifts as literature circulates outside and away from the immediate context, whatever it may be. It would be difficult to maintain that the possibility of wide distribution was lost on the Evangelists as they wrote down the Jesus traditions. Publication was a function of this sort of ancient literature (especially the historically inclined genres) and would have been part of the authorial expectation whether conscious or unconscious.

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[126] Alexander writes, 'But it is vital to remember that neither the patron nor the 'amateur' auditor should be allotted an exclusive role in the production of texts of the 'scientific' type. The social context provided by the dedication (whatever it was) is not sufficient to account for the existence of the text. If it were, we should have no scientific texts which were not dedicated…' Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel*, p. 199. As we have argued the similarities between the prefaces to the 'scientific' literature and the prefaces to the biographical literature suggest that dedications did not play a significant role in determining the cause for writing or the specific audience (see Appendix 2).

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This thesis has proposed to address the gap in the current scholarly record on the subject of genre and its relationship to gospel audiences. We have argued that the Evangelists chose the genre of biography because it was the genre that was best suited to present the words and deeds of Jesus to the largest possible audience. This potential audience would include both a primary (Christian) audience and a broad secondary audience including any who became interested in the person and work of Jesus. Furthermore, as we have argued throughout this thesis the recognition of genre as part of the interpretative process is vital to a complete understanding of any text, let alone the Gospels. All too often scholars have either misused genre in the process of interpretation, or they have ignored it altogether. As a result, we would suggest that interpretative methods should include some significant account for genre and how genre sets and moves the boundaries of a given text and how these parameters effect how the text is to be read and understood. Kent has offered the following on the subject:

> In one sense, a genre is a system of codifiable conventions, in another sense, it is a continually changing cultural artifact…Or, to state this idea more simply, we may say that a set of readers must agree at some historical moment that a specific lexical arrangement shall be called a [specific genre]. So, in this frame of reference, [the genre] has its own, unique history; it has a diachronic dimension. A genre, then, reflects in its very character the paradox of the part and the whole, the paradox of the well-known hermeneutical circle. We recognize a genre by the conventions native to it, but to recognize the conventions we must first know the genre. Our recognition that a specific text is a member of a particular genre creates, in turn, certain generic expectations, so that as we read a [work of a particular genre], we expect to discover certain elements common to this particular genre. Our generic perception—our ability to identify texts as members of specific genres—seems, therefore, to operate much the same as our reading experience. To understand a sentence, we must understand the words that constitute it, but to understand the full meaning of the words, we must also understand the sentence. Like our perception of individual sentences, our generic perception requires the interaction of both a text and a context. [1]

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[1] Kent, *Interpretation and Genre*, p. 15.

For our purposes then, genre becomes a means through which we understand how to read and comprehend a text. Genres serve as an agreed upon set of expectations for both the author and recipients, and these expectations guide how texts are written and read. In the case of the Gospels, genre enables the interpreter to better understand both the intention of the author and the scope of the audience. This is not to say that the intent of the author becomes transparent in every way through genre analysis. However, we are better able to grasp what the author is trying to convey as we continue to put the author's work into the wider literary and generic context. Ignoring genre as a potential avenue through which to interpret texts is detrimental to the interpretative process. Genres are informative of the rules of expectation for both authors and their audiences, and texts of different genres require nuanced interpretations. While we can compare texts of a similar milieu across genres, those comparisons will not yield the same kind of information as the comparison of texts from the same genre.

In order to either comprehend a specific text or compare multiple texts we must first know and understand which genre(s) a given text belongs to and how those generic parameters effect our interpretation of the text. This thesis has sought to address both the diachronic and synchronic elements of genre. Specifically, the examination of a number of ancient biographies (4th century BCE - 4th century CE) has produced a number of observations that conform to the synchronic and diachronic elements of genre, respectively. Synchronically, we have noticed that certain formal elements remain consistent throughout the roughly 800 year period of Greco-Roman biographical development. The emphasis on the words and deeds of a particular individual is the hallmark of this literature. Fundamentally, a work can be understood to be a biography if the focus of the work is the presentation of the life of an individual of importance (and often one worthy of emulation) via their words and deeds. The formal structure, style, arrangement and presentation of the material can vary from author to author and so creates a fair amount of diversity within the genre. This diversity is constitutive of the sorts of changes, variations and innovations that we would expect as this genre (or any genre) advanced diachronically.

In chapter 2 of the thesis we have proposed a typology for Greco-Roman biography that takes into account the relationships that exists between authors and their subjects and the relationship between the authors and their audience(s). We have presented the following typology (1) **Non-Contemporary-Focused**; 2) **Non-Contemporary-Open**; 3) **Contemporary-Focused**; and 4) **Contemporary-Open**) as a means of appropriately grouping various Greco-Roman biographies along the communicative matrix of authorial relationship to both subject and audience.[2] One of the primary purposes for this grouping of the material is to bring specific biographic examples into an appropriate space for comparison and close reading. Our research has shown that not all biographies were written with the same aims and designs and not all biographical authors wrote with the same relationship to their subjects. As we have argued, the communicative matrix of author-genre-audience is important to the process of establishing meaning for a text. Yet, that is not the only set of relationships at play in the authoring of texts. Authors have a relationship to their subject and at times that relationship is detached and the course of writing is such that certain facts or ideas are intended to be expressed without any sort of personal attachment. At other points, authors have a personal relationship to their subjects, either as abstract ideas or concrete entities, and as such they have a personal stake in how the information is transmitted and to whom. Assessing these relationships, admittedly, can be a murky enterprise. However, these relationships are an important means through which we continue to interpret and understand texts. Authors write about particular subjects and for particular audiences. The better we understand these relationships, the better we will be able to understand the scope and meaning of the text. In considering βίοι specifically, some authors were far more personally connected to their subjects and that connection had an impact on how the biography was constructed and to whom it was written.

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[2] See Appendix 1.1 and 1.2.

Throughout the process of the development of the genre of Greco-Roman biography there is little to suggest the biographies (even in their earliest transitional stages) were ever intended solely (if at all) for the sort of definite audiences envisaged as the implied audiences of the Gospels. The Gospels, as biographies, would be seen to conform to the same broad generic expectations as other biographies. As it has been suggested, to continue to read the Gospels as though they were part of some generic classification of literature that catered to the specific needs of a definite audience (as epistles and other genres could) is to read and interpret the texts inappropriately and to load the texts with an interpretative weight they cannot bear. It is not enough to acknowledge the biographical nature of the Gospels but we are required to read them as such. In the process of reading the Gospels as ancient biographies we have suggested the biographical genre carries with it certain expectations with regard to audience. We have argued that the Gospels belong to a group of biographies (**Contemporary-Focused**) that have a focused primary audience with the subject having been contemporary to the authors. The suggestion of a focused primary audience does not suggest an audience that is so focused that it represents a specific Christian community or even a group of like-minded Christian communities. At best, we can envision a Christian audience, in general, as the primary audience for the Gospels with the potential for some emphasis on Jewish (Hebrew) Christians and/or Gentile Christians in some texts. This wide degree of audience identification is a hallmark of the genre. In the other examples presented in the thesis there is little to suggest that biographies of a focused type were ever intended for such definite audiences. These texts could be broadly marketed to philosophical schools or the philosophically-minded but the strong emphasis on emulation (or avoidance in the negative examples) suggests as wide a readership as possible, as does the act of publishing these texts. In this way we have sought to bring the Gospels into closer readings with other examples of the genre that share this relational affinity.

Chapter 2 is integral to the main thesis of this dissertation in that it proposes both nuanced language capable of being applied to specific kinds of biographies with the emphasis on the relationship to implied audience (a central feature of the thesis). Furthermore, chapter 2 sets the boundaries of the discussion of genre as an important factor in potentially determining audience as well as raising the important consideration that genres are representative (in some way) of authorial choice and intent. Chapter 2 presents the notion that it is reasonable and feasible to group Greco-Roman biography along the lines proposed here (matrix of authorial relationships to subjects and audiences). One of the more important contributions of this chapter to the overall thesis is the recognition that the kinds of genres authors choose to use are as important as the information expressed.

In the absence of overt comments on the part of the Evangelists as to their specific aims and declarations for their intended audiences we have offered four lines of evidence (two external and two internal) as a means of placing the canonical gospels into the communicative matrix and typology described in chapter 2. Chapter 3 takes up the first line of external evidence, the testimony of the patristic authors, and it begins our inquiry into the non-canonical literature as a means of assessing gospel audiences. Mitchell has been correct to suggest that the patristic authors and the earliest interpreters of the Gospels should be considered when discussing how gospel audiences were being understood in the formative periods of the church. Yet, such an inquiry also requires a consideration of genre and how genre effects how texts were being read and understood in the original context and how genre effects how we are reading them in the current context.

It is safe to assert that the Gospels emerged from a complex and varied literary tradition, one that was influenced by Hebrew literature as well as the literary traditions of the Greco-Roman world. The interest in the person and work of Jesus extended beyond the literary investigations and output of the Evangelists in the first century and extended well into the second and third centuries and beyond. The further Christian interpreters were from the immediate context of the writing of the canonical gospels the more important it became to find some means to verify those gospels as the authoritative texts for the life of the church.

This process of verification took the form, at least in part, of the crafting and codification of gospel origin traditions. These traditions linked each of the canonical gospels with an authoritative person (either an apostle or an associate of an apostle) and in an authoritative place (cities/locations with apostolic relationship) as a means of establishing the authority of these texts. The gospel origin traditions recorded in the patristic literature tended to serve an apologetic purpose and there is little to suggest that these traditions served any consistent hermeneutical purpose. On the contrary, most often they were ignored at the precise moments when they would have been most helpful for navigating certain interpretative difficulties. The establishment of authoritative texts and traditions became all the more important in the second and third centuries with the continued explosion of Jesus literature. As the interest in Jesus continued to foment the production of texts on or about him flourished. The early interpreters were forced to delineate between authoritative and spurious traditions. The existence of four authoritative gospels created an interpretative dilemma for the early church fathers. They were compelled to deal with the existence of one common (if not ideal) universal gospel of Jesus Christ mediated by the Holy Spirit while wrestling with the four distinct presentations of the person and work of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. A tension existed between the four gospels and the one message of Jesus. The fathers were not concerned with the local origins for the individual gospels over and against their use for the church universal. For them the universal acceptance and use of the Gospels, for 'all Christians,' trumped the hermeneutical relevance of the traditional locales of gospel composition. Local origins were only profitable as they established apostolic relationship and authority. Local origins for the Gospels did not form a consistent and meaningful interpretative strategy, and the church fathers did not consistently interpret the Gospels in light of their supposed local contexts.

It is important to note that while many of the gospel origin traditions contain biographical elements, they should not be confused with the extant examples of βίοι available to us. Whereas the emphasis of biography was on the individual the emphasis of the gospel origin traditions were on establishing authoritative texts and traditions through authoritative figures. The weight was placed not on the individuals but rather on their role as members of an authoritative tradition. The patristic authors were well aware of the genre of biography (as they were certainly aware of the Gospels) and could have chosen to present the traditions available to them via this genre. They chose to present the traditions available to them in other generic forms. In this way we have to continue to recognize the use of genres as an exercise of authorial choice. Chapter 3 supports the main argument of the thesis in that it demonstrates that the earliest Christian interpreters of the Gospels did not understand them to be sectarian documents written specifically to and/or for specific sectarian Christian communities. The earliest interpreters understood them to be Christian documents that were authoritative for the entire church. Granted, this understanding of the Gospels on the part of the patristic authors is demonstrative of significant theological development from the first century onward. However, the existence of biographically inclined traditions for each of the Evangelists suggests an interest in the lives of the Evangelists if for no other reason than to establish the authority of their works. However, this interest never overshadowed the interest in the Gospels themselves and there is no clear indication on the part of the patristic authors that these traditions ever contributed to a consistent reading strategy for the Gospels. While not necessarily indicative of the original audiences for the Gospels, these early Christian readings of the Gospels suggest that early Christians could envisage their texts as being both specifically Christian and at the same time profitable for the dissemination of a much greater truth.

Chapter 4 relates particularly to the thesis in that it takes up the second line of external evidence related to the implied audiences of the Gospels within the wider Christian literary context of the first and second centuries CE. Several scholars have suggested that appropriate comparisons can be made between the canonical gospels, as examples of βίοι, and other early Christian 'gospels.' Many of the non-canonical gospels provide instances of generic choice. It is clear that there were diverse Jesus traditions available from the first century on and that these traditions could be and were presented in a number of generic forms. The existence of various genres for the presentation of Jesus traditions should again point us toward the literary reality of genre as indicative of authorial choice, both conscious and unconscious. We have argued that such comparisons between non-canonical and canonical gospels can be profitable for drawing out thematic and theological similarities, but do not necessarily provide analogous social contexts in the instances where the non-canonical 'gospels' are of a genre different than that of the canonical gospels. The Evangelists chose, we would suggest consciously, the genre of βίος as the means through which to disseminate the Jesus traditions available to them. They chose biography because it was the genre best suited for disseminating these traditions to the widest possible audience. Furthermore, we have argued that the non-canonical Jesus literature that conformed to this same generic pattern would also have had a similarly broad implied audience whereas the non-canonical Jesus literature that broke with this generic pattern would not necessarily have implied as broad an audience and that some non-canonical literature (literature of a generic form other than βίος) could have had specific (sectarian) implied audiences.

Again, the choosing of one genre over another indicates something of the purpose of the texts as well as the expectations of the author. When other Christian authors chose to adapt and accept the genre of biography, the genre of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they chose to accept the generic limitations and expectations as well. We should be prepared to reassess the 'sectarian' Jewish-Christian Gospels that share the genre of the canonical gospels instead of assuming their sectarian nature based on the pejorative reporting of the church fathers or presuppositions about the sectarian nature of the groups associated with these texts. The Jewish-Christian Gospels are too fragmentary to support any significant community/group reconstruction, and it is unclear as to the extent to which they represent sectarian forms of Christianity. *GT* presents a generic break with the canonical gospels. We would argue that this generic break signals a conscious choice on the part of the author to present alternative Jesus traditions in an alternative form. If this is the case, *GT* could then serve as a substitute to the narratives about Jesus. The lack of a contextualizing narrative in *GT* would serve to free the Jesus traditions and open them to a wide variety of interpretations. Furthermore, this non-canonical Jesus literature was a part of the larger context of shared and circulated texts and traditions in early Christianity. Circulated texts were utilized in their composition, and these 'gospels' were circulated as well. The copying and circulation of texts and traditions in the first few centuries of the Christian movement were as much a part of the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospels as were the local circumstances that may have influenced their writing.

The mirror-reading of contexts into the non-canonical texts is similar to the project of the mirror reading of socio-historical contexts into the canonical gospels. This issue has been specifically addressed in chapter 5 where the canonical gospels have been analyzed in order to determine whether or not they contain the sort of material that is suitable for re-constructing a specific implied audience. It has been argued here that the Gospels do not include the kind of material required to effectively re-construct specific gospel communities. We have been able to suggest a more or less focused audience for each of the Gospels (Christian, broadly, with the possibility of Gentile and/or Jewish-Christians) but we have not been able to support the assertion of very specific and/or sectarian audiences for the Gospels using the texts themselves as substantiation. The purpose of this thesis has not been to suggest that the reconstruction of gospel 'communities' has no merit. On the contrary, we would like to be able to reconstruct the specific circumstances that necessitated the writing of the Gospels. Unfortunately we do not think that biography as a genre is well suited to the task. Fundamentally, biographies are about the person of interest (subject) and are not about the author or the audience. As we have argued in chapter 3, ancient literary critics and commentators exhibited no interest in reconstructing the audiences of the works of literary figures. On the contrary, they culled the texts looking for biographical material about the authors, not their audiences. The hope was that the text would reveal something about the author, not his audience. There was neither the desire nor the expectation that the text gave any significant indication of an audience above and beyond the information provided in prefaces, etc.

It is clear from the biographical record that there was some potential generic confusion on the part of readers of history and biography. Such confusion was alleviated by the short comments of some biographers (e.g. Plut. *Alex*., 1.1-3; Plut. *Nic*., 1.5 and Nep. *Pelop.,* 1.1) who differentiated between the aims and purposes of biography over and against those of history. We see no such comments in the Gospels. There is no indication of generic confusion nor is there any indication that the Evangelists felt compelled to explain to their audience(s) what sort of literature they were writing.[3] On the contrary, silence on the issue (while not conclusive) points to a shared generic expectation on the part of the Evangelists and the audience. We have argued that this generic expectation was shared by most readers of ancient biography and similarly by the Christian audiences for the Gospels. The motivation for the author of Mark to adopt and adapt the genre of biography for the presentation of the Jesus traditions available to him is unclear. Perhaps it was just the most appropriate way to present material that was already circulating as collections of words and/or deeds of Jesus. However, the continued employment of the genre by Matthew, Luke and John suggests a conscious choice on the part of the other Evangelists to continue to present the Jesus traditions in biographical form.

The Gospels are about Jesus as he is defined by his words and deeds. The numerous and conflicting gospel community reconstructions reflect the difficulty arising from this literary form for community reconstruction. For each of the Gospels there exists a wide variety of potential reconstructions but no consensus. In some instances the reconstructions are diametrically opposed. Yet, each one of these reconstructions is based divergent readings of common texts. Furthermore, the texts themselves stand as the basis for the reconstructions, which are then used to interpret the texts. This creates a hermeneutical circle with little to no independent verification. The suggestion by social-scientific criticism that individuals in the ancient world were embedded in social groups is not being debated here. We accept that as part of the social reality of the first-century Mediterranean milieu. What we dispute is the extent to which texts about the individual, Jesus, can be used to make definitive statements about these very specific social groups. While we would agree that the use of biographies could function to legitimate a particular group, we remain critical of the assertion that these texts would have only been used within and for one specific (and small) group. The Evangelists use of circulated texts and traditions (Mark and some collection(s) of 'sayings' material by Matthew and Luke) strongly points toward the authorial expectation that the Evangelists expected their works to be circulated as well. This context of circulated texts and traditions fits well within the expected generic patterns of biographical literature. The larger generic pattern of biography suggests that these kinds of texts could be aimed simultaneously at those within and outside of the immediate reference group. Ultimately, βίος as a genre is not well suited to the task of community/group reconstruction with any measure of specificity and at best we can only hope to identify gospel audiences as more or less focused (Gentile, Jewish and/or mixed).

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[3] The author of Luke-Acts come the closest to generic differentiation when he writes, Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιησάμην περὶ πάντων, ὦ Θεόφιλε, ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν (Ac. 1.1). Here the emphasis of the first volume (Luke) is on the recording of ‘all that Jesus did and taught.’ The emphasis on words and deeds would seem to point to the recognition on the part of the evangelist that his previous volume was a biography. But, there is no discussion of differentiating it generically from other works or even from the second volume, for that matter.

Chapter 6 has presented the final line of evidence for assessing the implied audiences for the Gospels and has suggested that the texts themselves point to a wide ideal audience. In the broadest sense of the term the Gospels were marketed to a Christian audience and, as it has been argued in chapter 5, the delineation of an audience group beyond the focus of Christian is not possible from the texts. What continues to complicate the assertion that the Gospels are sectarian documents are the themes and specific statements found in each of the canonical gospels that point to a wider secondary audience. This secondary audience as presented via the 'all nations' motif in the Synoptics and the 'mission' motif in John suggests that the Evangelists portrayed Jesus as one who envisaged and promoted a mission to those outside of the immediate reference group (Palestinian Judaism) and one who intended his followers to do likewise. Community reconstructions have not taken a full account of this material in the Gospels. Often the reconstructions obscure the difficult passages that do not conform to the reconstructed community models being proposed. If the consensus concerning the gospel audiences is correct, it becomes difficult to reconcile evangelists who were primarily concerned with the issues and affairs of their own communities (or cluster of like-minded communities) with their portraits of a Jesus who envisages a universal mission for the gospel. Even if we grant that portrayal to Mark, we would expect Matthew, Luke or John to significantly tailor that presentation. Matthew, who presents Jesus as coming first to Israel, presents Jesus as commissioning the preaching of the gospel to 'all nations.' Even if Matthew presents a portrait of Jesus that differs with that of the understanding and expectation of those in his own immediate reference group, as some have argued, it still presents a Jesus who desires the gospel to be spread to others. The audience envisaged in the Gospels is Christian first and 'all nations' second. The mission to 'all nations' carries with it the eschatological expectation that once this is accomplished the world will end.

This active dissemination of traditions of and about Jesus also fits within the larger generic pattern of biography and contemporary biographies in particular. Most often those writing biographies of contemporary subjects had a personal relationship to the subject and therefore a vested interest in the presentation of the person of interest. Contemporary biographies were often written by friends, students or relatives as a way of presenting an authoritative (and positive) memory of the subject. The literary memory was intended to be read widely and to stand as an example for generations to come. Certainly, negative examples could be produced but with a similar negative aim: the defamation of the character of the subject and the avoidance of the example of the subject for generations to come. The Evangelists like other biographers had a vested interest in keeping the memory of Jesus alive through time (generational) and in space (geographical – to ‘all nations’). The project was more than one of academic or literary expression: it was an attempt to say something meaningful and true about the person and work of Jesus.

Returning to the central question of this thesis: Why did the Evangelists choose βίος as the literary means through which to disseminate the Jesus traditions? The genre of ancient biography was the genre best suited to imparting the words and deeds of Jesus to the widest possible audience. Epistles and treatises, while effective, could be limited in scope and the authority of those kinds of works would often rest on the author. The benefit of biography was that its focus was on the subject. The narrative structure of the Gospels as biographies allowed for an incredible amount of flexibility in the arrangement and presentation of the Jesus materials. The genre provided the Evangelists with a literary structure that gave them the room and flexibility to express their individual theological outlooks while keeping the focus on Jesus. Biography, as a neighboring genre to other historically inclined genres, allowed the Evangelists to present the Jesus traditions in a historical narrative as opposed to a fictional or novelistic portrayal of Jesus. These literary portraits were indicative of the larger discourse about Jesus taking place within first-century Christianity. The literary presentations of Jesus by the Evangelists formed part of the larger Christian discourse—a discourse that was unifying in some ways and divisive in others. Ultimately, the Gospels became self-reflective of the Jesus presented in them, a Jesus that envisaged a mission to all, and a mission that the written gospels expressed and a mission in which they were utilized.

Moving forward it will not be satisfactory to recognize the Gospels as biographies yet continue to interpret them without taking seriously the biographical nature of the texts. While the project of constructing and reconstructing gospel audiences remains of a benefit for future hermeneutical and interpretative endeavors the texts themselves present the venture with significant challenges. At their core, the Gospels are about a person (Jesus) and their focus is not on the author of the text nor is it on the audience that exists somewhere beyond or underneath the texts. The Gospels are about Jesus, and not explicitly about first century Christian communities. Had the Evangelists had the expressed interests in presenting material about Christian communities they had a number of genres at their disposal. Instead, they recorded the traditions about the words and deeds of the person Jesus: they wrote biographies about Jesus not histories of Christian communities. As such the continued focus of gospel interpreters should be on what the Gospels present about Jesus. We have argued that all four gospels present Jesus as one that envisaged his teachings for both primary (Christian) and secondary ('all nations') audiences. We should not shy away from or be uncomfortable about the inherently evangelical presentation of Jesus in the Gospels. The proclamation and presentation (written) of the words and deeds of the person Jesus is a hallmark of the early Christian movement and it is echoed and recorded in the biographies of Jesus written by the Evangelists. This is not to say that continued interest into early Christian audiences is unwarranted or unfruitful. Nor has this thesis suggested that genre criticism solves all of the remaining interpretative issues associated with the Gospels. Quite the contrary, genre criticism often raises as many (or more) questions as it answers and it along with the other critical tools should be considered for the task of interpreting the Gospels. What remains is a call to explore further the ramifications of reading the Gospels as biographies, with a concern for how that continues to challenge and affirm our current readings of the literature about the person and work of Jesus.

Appendix: Introduction

An appendix has been included as a means of charting and summarizing material found in the thesis. Some of the material included here is not specifically presented elsewhere in the thesis (Appendix 1), whereas the majority of the remaining material is included in the thesis, albeit not in the form it appears in the following sections.

Appendix 1: Appendix 1 is a presentation of most of the known examples of Greco-Roman biography and biographical literature from the 5th century BCE to the 4th century CE. This chart is an amended presentation of the list of biographical works presented by Klaus Berger. This chart remains true to his presentation with few exceptions. The chart gives an indication of the wide array of biographical literature present in antiquity. While extensive, the list is by no means exhaustive.

Appendix 1.1: This is a presentation of the relevant typologies that have been put forth for the genre of Greco-Roman biography. Included here are the typologies of Leo, Wehrli, Berger, Talbert and the current typology presented in the thesis.

Appendix 1.2: Appendix 1.2 presents a charting of some select examples of Greco-Roman biography within the current relationally oriented typology presented in the thesis. The examples were chosen for the following reasons: 1) they represent a reasonable cross section of the genre over its development from the 5th or 4th century BCE to the 4th century CE; and 2) the examples chosen are easily accessible and have a significant amount of corresponding secondary literature.

Appendix 2: The charts presented in Appendix 2 are graphic representations of the comparisons between the structural elements of historical and scientific prefaces with the structural elements present in biographical prefaces. The criteria selected for the comparisons are drawn from the formal elements in historical and scientific prefaces as presented by Loveday Alexander. A number of examples spanning the scope of Greco-Roman biography have been presented. In each case the specific sections (citations) where each of the biographical prefaces match the structural (formal) elements of either the historical or scientific prefaces has been noted.

Appendix 2.1: Appendix 2.1 contains specific examples of Greco-Roman biographical prefaces and compares then the structural (formal) elements of those found in the scientific prefaces. In each case the texts are presented in the original language and then some commentary is provided as to how the examples meet the relevant formal prefatory structures.

Appendix 3: The passages related to the ‘all nations’ motif in the Canonical Gospels have been presented for comparison side by side in Greek and English translation. The purpose here is to suggest that the passages from the Synoptic Gospels (and similar but not verbatim passages from John) suggest a strong emphasis on the part of the Evangelists for presenting Jesus as one interested in having his teachings spread broadly (to ’all nations’). Similarly, John echoes the emphasis on sending as well as a presentation of Jesus as one who would draw all to himself at the end of times (Jn 12.31-32).

Appendix 1. Greco-Roman Biography (Biographical Literature) (5th Century BCE – 4th Century CE)[1]

Century	**Author**	***Title*/Subject**
5th Century BCE	Skylax	Heraclides of Mylasa
4th Century BCE	Isocrates	*Evagoras*
	Alcidimas	Homer and Hesiod
	Xenophon	*Agesilaus*, *Memorabilia* (Socrates) & *Cyropaedia* (Cyrus)
	Plato	*Apology* (Socrates)
	Clearchus of Soli	Plato (encomium)
	Aristoxenus of Tarent	Pythagoras, Archytas, Socrates, Plato
	Dicaearchus of Messene	Pythagoras
3rd Century BCE	Anon. (P.Graec.Hauniensis 6)	Biographies of the Ptolemies
	Satyrus (P.Oxy 1176)	*Life of Euripides*
	Antigonus of Carystus	*Successions of Philosophers*
	Hermippus of Smyrna	*Lives* (Philosophers)
	Ariston of Ceos	Epicurus
2nd Century BCE	Polybius	Philopoimen (encomium)
	Heraclides Lembus (P.Oxy 1367)	*Epitome of Hermippus*
	Anon. (P.Lit.Lond. 123)	*Life of Aristotle*
	Anon. (P.S.I. 144)	*Life of Alcibiades*
	Anon. (P.Mich. 10)	*Life of Demosthenes*
	Anon.	Encomium on Demosthenes
	Sotion of Alexandria	*Successions* (Philosophers)
1st Century BCE	Philodemus	*On Epicurus*
	Cornelius Nepos	*De viris illustribus*
	Stratocles of Rhodes	*History of the Stoa*
	Anon.	*Life of Hippocrates*
	Demetrius of Magnesia	*Dictionary of Men of the Same Name*
1st Century CE	Nicolaus of Damascus	*Life of Augustus*
	Philo of Alexandria	*Life of Moses*
	Anon.	Gospels: M*atthew*, *Mark*, *Luk*e, & *John*
	Anon.	*Life of Aesop*
	Tacitus	*Agricola*
	Suetonius	*Lives of the Twelve Caesars*
	Plutarch	*Parallel Lives*
2nd Century CE	Lucian	*Demonax* & *Alexander the False Prophet*
	Quintus Curtius Rufus	*Historiae Alexandri Magni*

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[1] Klaus Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," *ANRW* II.25.2 (1984): 1031-1432; 1232-36.

	Anon.	*Life of Secundus the Silent Philosopher*
	Arrian	*Anabasis of Alexander*
	Marius Maximus	Biographies of the Caesars (following Suetonius)
	Anon. (P.Oxy. 2438)	*Life of Pindar*
	Ps.-Herodutus	*Life of Homer*
	Ps.-Plutarch	*Life of Homer*
3rd Century CE	Diogenes Laertius	*Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*
	Philostratus	*Life of Apollonius of Tyana* & *Lives of the Sophists*
	Ps.-Callisthenes	*Life of Alexander* (Romance)
	Porphyry	*Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books*
4th Century BCE	Iamblichus	*On the Pythagorean Way of Life*
	Scriptores Historiae Augustae	*The Augustan History*
	Eunapius	*Lives of the Sophists*

Appendix 1.1. Typologies For Greco Roman Biography

A. Friedrich Leo, *Die Griechish-Römische Biographie Nach Ihrer Literarischen Form* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901)

1) **Peripatetic Biography**: (Plut. *Vit.*) Biographies arranged chronologically with political figures as frequent subjects.

2) **Alexandrian Biography**: (Suet. *Vit. Caes.)* Biographies arranged in a systematic (topical) manner.

B. Fritz Wehrli, "Gnome, Anekdote und Biographie," *MH* 30 (1973), pp. 193-208; p. 193.

1) **Lives of Philosophers and Poets**

2) **Encomium of Generals and Political Leaders**

3) **Lives of Literary Characters**

C. Klaus Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen Im Neuen Testament," *ANRW* II.25.2 (1984), pp. 1031-1432; p. 157-8.

1) **The Encomium Type**: (Isoc. *Evag*., Xen. *Ages.*, Philo *Mos*., Tac. *Agr*., and Luc. *Demon*.)

2) **The Peripatetic Type**: (Plut. *Vit.)* A Chronological presentation of the moral attributes of a subject (person).

3) **The Popular-Novelistic Type**: (Anon. *Vit. Aesop*; and Anon. *Vit. Sec.*)

4) **The Alexandrian Type**: (Suet. *Vit. Caes.*) Systematic/topical presentation of the life of an individual.

D. Charles H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), pp. 92-3.

1) **Non-Didactic Lives**: Biographies that are unconcerned with moral example ('Alexandrian' Type).

2) **Didactic Lives**: Biographies calling for emulation or avoidance of the subject (Encomiastic, Peripatetic and Popular-Type Biographies).

   (Sub-Types)

   a. **Type A**: Biographies that function as a pattern of emulation (e.g. Luc. *Demon*.)
   b. **Type B**: Biographies that function to replace the false representation of an individual with a representation worthy of emulation (e.g. Xen., *Mem*).
   c. **Type C**: Biographies that function to expose an immoral character (e.g. Luc. *Alex*.).
   d. **Type D**: Biographies that function to record and establish development and delineation of a particular philosophical school or group via the biographies of the successive members of the group (e.g. Lk, Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.)*.
   e. **Type E**: Biographies that function to clarify the odd behavior of an individual (e.g. Anon. *Vit. Sec.*).

E. Justin M. Smith, 'About Friends, By Friends, For Others: Author-Subject Relationships in Contemporary Greco-Roman Biographies,' in Edward W. Klink, III, ed., *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*, LNTS 353, (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), pp. 49-67; pp. 54-6.

1) **Non-Contemporary-Focused**: (e.g. Satyr. *Vit. Eur.*; Philo *Mos*.; Plut. *Vit.*; Arr. *Anab.*; Iambl. *VP*; and Philostr. *VS*) Biographical works about ancient men of importance and are aimed at a distinguishable audience (philosophical school, educational group, critics, etc.).

2) **Non-Contemporary-Open**: (e.g. Anon. *Vit. Aesop*; Philostr. *VA*; Nep. *De vir. ill.*; and Suet. *Aug.,* Suet. *Iul*., and Suet. *Tib.*) Biographical works about ancient men of importance but are aimed at an indistinguishable audience.

3) **Contemporary-Focused**: (e.g. Isoc. *Evag*.; Xen. *Ages.*; Tac. *Agr*.; Plut. *Galb.*, Plut. *Oth.*; and Porph. *Plot*.) Biographies written about a person of significant interest who lived within living memory of the author and are directed toward a distinguishable audience.

4) **Contemporary-Open**: (e.g. Nep. *Att*.; Anon. *Vit. Sec.*; Luc. *Demon*., and Suet., *Vesp*., Suet. *Tit*., and Suet. *Dom.*) are Biographies about a person of significant interest who lived within the living memory of the author and are directed toward an indistinguishable audience.

Appendix 1.2. Relational Typology for Greco-Roman Biography (Selected Examples)

Non-Contemporary-Focused	**Contemporary-Focused**
Satyr. *Vit. Eur.* (3rd BCE)	Isoc. *Evag.* (4th BCE)*[1]
Philo *Mos.*(1st CE)	Xen. *Ages.* (4th BCE)
Plut. *Alex.*; (1st CE)	Plut. *Galb.*; (1st CE)
Plut. *Thes.*(1st CE)	Plut. *Oth.* (1st CE)
Arr. *Anab.* (2nd CE)	Canonical Gospels (Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn) (1st CE)
Philostr. *VS* (3rd CE)	Tac. *Agr.* (1st CE)*
Iambl. *VP* (4th CE)	Porph. *Plot.* (3rd CE)
Non-Contemporary-Open	**Contemporary-Open**
Alcid., *Hom.* (4th BCE)	Nep. *Att.* (1st BCE)*
Nep. *De vir. ill.* (1st BCE)	Suet. *Vesp.*; (1st CE)
Suet. *Aug.*; (1st CE)	Suet. *Tit.*; (1st CE)
Suet. *Iul.*; (1st CE)	Suet. *Dom.* (1st CE)
Suet. *Tib.*; (1st CE)	Luc. *Alex.*; (2nd CE)
Anon. *Vit. Aesop* (1st CE)	Luc. *Demon.* (2nd CE)
Philostr. *VA* (3rd CE)	Anon. *Vit. Sec.* (2nd CE)

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[1] The three examples above that are demarked with an asterisk deserve some brief discussion here. In consideration of the discussion of primary and secondary audiences above, Isoc. *Evag* can be seen to be an example of a focused βίος in the sense that the primary audience was a focused audience. In this case the specific socio-historical context for this text gives an indication of the implied audience. Specifically, Isoc. *Evag*, was composed and delivered at the celebration of the life of the king (Evagoras) and was intended not only for the King's son,(Nicocles) but for all in attendance. While this focuses the audience to an extent it is undeterminable how large the primary audience was. Furthermore, the secondary audience envisaged by Isocrates was quite large and he expected this work to be circulated widely. Similarly, Agricola was addressing critics (unnamed) in Tac. *Agr.*, and so the audience can be seen as focused with a much larger audience envisaged as the secondary audience. Finally, while Nepos may be addressing some criticism of his friend Atticus, it is unclear if he envisioned his collection of biographies as a whole for a focused audience.

Appendix 2. Comparison of Structural Elements in Biographical Prefaces and the Prefaces in the Historical and Scientific Traditions[1]

Comparison with Historical Prefaces

	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6	H7
Isocrates - *Evagoras*	NA	1	4	11	1-4	8-11	NA
Xenophon - *Agesilaus*	NA	NA	1.1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nepos - *De Viris Illustrubus*	NA	1	8	8	NA	1-7	NA
Philo – *Moses*	NA	NA	1.1.1	NA	1.1.1-4	1.1.1-4	1.1.4
Luke - *Gospel of Luke*	NA	1.3	NA	NA	NA	1.4	1.2-3
Tacitus – *Agricola*	NA	3.3	3.3	NA	1.1-3.2	1.1	NA
Plutarch - *Vitae Parallelae*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Suetonius - *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lucian – *Demonax*	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	2	1
Arrian - *Anabasis of Alexander*	NA	NA	1-3	3	NA	NA	1-2
Diogenes Laertius - *Lives of Philos.*	NA	NA	1.1-21	1.21	NA	NA	1.1-21
Philostratus - *Apollonius of Tyana*	NA	NA	1.2.3	NA	1.2.3	1.3.2	1.3.1-2
Philostratus - *Lives of the Sophists*	NA	479	479	480	480	480	NA
Porphyry - *Vita Plotini*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Eunapius - *Vitae Sophistarum*	NA	NA	453	NA	NA	453	454-5

Structural Elements of Historical Prefaces
Historical Preface 1 (H1)- Author's Name
Historical Preface 2 (H2) – Dedication
Historical Preface 3 (H3) – Subject
Historical Preface 4 (H4) – Transition
Historical Preface 5 (H5) – Magnitude of Subject
Historical Preface 6 (H6) – Aims (Value of History)
Historical Preface 7 (H7) - Sources

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[1] Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 23-34; 69-91.

Comparison with Scientific Prefaces

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7
Isocrates - *Evagoras*	4	1-4	1	8	8-11	NA	NA
Xenophon - *Agesilaus*	1.1	1.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nepos - *De Viris Illustrubus*	NA	8	1	1-7	NA	NA	NA
Philo - *Moses*	1.1.1	1.1.1	NA	1.1.1-4	1.1.3	1.1.4	NA
Luke - *Gospel of Luke*	1.3	1.1	1.3	NA	1.1	1.3	NA
Tacitus - *Agricola*	1.1	3.3	3.3	NA	NA	3.3	NA
Plutarch - *Vitae Parallelae*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Suetonius - *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lucian - *Demonax*	2	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Arrian - *Anabasis of Alexander*	3	1-3	NA	NA	2-3	1-2	NA
Diogenes Laertius - *Lives of Philos.*	NA	1.1-21	NA	1.18-21	1.1-21	NA	1.1-21
Philostratus - *Apollonius of Tyana*	1.2.3	1.2.3	NA	NA	1.3.1-2	NA	1.1-3
Philostratus - *Lives of the Sophists*	479-80	479	479	480	480	NA	NA
Porphyry - *Vita Plotini*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Eunapius - *Vitae Sophistarum*	453	454-5	NA	454-5	454-5	NA	NA

Structural Elements of Scientific Prefaces
Scientific Preface 1 (S1) – Author's Decision to Write
Scientific Preface 2 (S2) – Subject & Contents
Scientific Preface 3 (S3) – Dedication
Scientific Preface 4 (S4) – Nature of Subject Matter
Scientific Preface 5 (S5) – Others Who Have Written
Scientific Preface 6 (S6) – Author's Qualifications
Scientific Preface 7 (S7) – General Remarks

Appendix 2.1. Discussion of Selected Biographical Prefaces with the Structural Elements of the Scientific Prefaces

Luke 1.1-4/Acts 1.1-2	**Comments**	**Nepos, *De viris illustribus* (Preface, 1-2; 8)**	**Comments**
Επειδήπερ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων́ 2 καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγού 3 ἔδοξε κἀμοὶ παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαί κράτιστε Θεόφιλέ 4 ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαǹ (Lk 1.1-4) Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιησάμην περὶ πάντων́ ὦ Θεόφιλέ ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν́ 2 ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου οὓς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήμφθὴ (Ac. 1.1-2)	Verse 1 indicates that others have undertaken the task of writing (S5) about the events that have happened and have been handed on by eyewitnesses (S2) (v. 2). Verse 3 includes some indication of the author's qualifications (one who has researched the subject) (S6) as well as an indication of the author's intent to write (linked to v.1) (because others had written and because he had gathered the pertinent information as well as well as drawing out the benefits for the addressee [v. 4]). Verse 3 also includes the direct address (Θεόφιλε, voc.) to the addressee (S3). The preface to Acts shares little with the basic structural elements of prefaces from within the Scientific tradition but it is helpful for suggesting the genre of Luke (biography - πάντων…ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν- 'all that Jesus did and taught') as well as reiterating the addressee.	*1 Non dubito fore plerosque*, *Attice, qui hoc genus scripturae leve et non satis dignum summorum virorum personis iudicent, cum relatum legent, quis musicam docuerit Epaminondam, aut in eius virtutibus commemorari saltasse eum commode scienterque tibiis cantasse. 2 Sed hi erunt fere, qui expertes litterarum Graecarum nihil rectum, nisi quod ipsorum moribus conveniat, putabunt.* (lines 3-7) *8 Sed hic plura persequi cum magnitudo voluminis prohibet tum festinatio, ut ea explicem, quae exorsus sum. Qua re ad propositum veniemus et in hoc exponemus libro de vita excellentium imperatorum.*	Line 1 contains the direct address (Attice, voc.) of Nepos to the addressee Atticus (S3) and begins the longer discussion of the nature of the subject matter as it relates to revealing the character of individuals of importance (S4) (lines 3-7). Nepos gives no specific qualification for his authorship other than demonstrating knowledge of the subject at hand (S6) (lines 1-7). Similarly, he makes no mention of other writers that have undertaken similar literature (S5). Line 8 gives an indication as to the course of the proposed set of biographies (Qua re ad propositum veniemus et in hoc exponemus libro de vita excellentium imperatorum) as well as indicating the subject matter, namely the lives of prominent generals (S2). There is no clear indication on Nepos' decision to write other than the indication throughout the preface that the subject itself is important and the work would help educate those who know nothing of Greek customs.
Philo, *Moses*, 1.1.1-4	**Comments**	**Arrian, *Anabasis*, Book 1 (Preface, 1-3)**	**Comments**
Μωυσέως τοῦ κατὰ μέν τινας νομοθέτου τῶν Ἰουδαίων́ κατὰ δέ τινας ἑρμηνέως νόμων ἱερῶν́ τὸν βίον ἀναγράψαι διενοήθην́ ἀνδρὸς τὰ πάντα μεγίστου καὶ τελειοτάτού καὶ γνώριμον τοῖς ἀξίοις μὴ ἀγνοεῖν αὐτὸν ἀποφῆναὶ 2 Τῶν μὲν γὰρ νόμων τὸ κλέός οὓς ἀπολέλοιπέ διὰ	Philo makes clear his intention for writing the life of Moses is an attempt to erase the general and widespread ignorance of the man and his achievements (1.1.1) (S1). He also states clearly that the subject of the biography is Moses (1.1.1) (S2). 1.1.3-4 give some indication of those who have written on the subject of	Πτολωμαῖος ὁ Λάγου καὶ ᾿Αριστόβουλος ὁ ᾿Αριστοβούλου ὅσα μὲν ταὐτὰ ἄμφω περὶ ῾Αλεξάνδρου τοῦ Φιλίππου συνέγραψαν, ταῦτα ἐγὼ ὡς πάντῃ ἀληθῆ ἀναγράφω, ὅσα δὲ οὐ ταὐτά, τούτων τὰ πιστότερα ἐμοὶ Φαινόμενα καὶ ἅμα ἀξιαφηγητότερα ἐπιλεξάμενος. 2 ἄλλοι μὲν δὴ Ἄλλα ὑπὲρ ᾿Αλεξάνδρου	Arrian states clearly that the subject of his work is Alexander and that he is depending heavily on the works of Ptolemy and Aristobulus for the content for his presentation (S2) (1-3). He acknowledges that he has used other sources as well as those mentioned above and that there are a number of other histories written on the

πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης πεφοιτηκὸς ἄχρι καὶ τῶν τῆς γῆς τερμάτων ἔφθακέν αὐτὸν δὲ ὅστις ἦν ἐπ᾽ ἀληθείας ἴσασιν οὐ πολλοῖ διὰ φθόνον ἴσως καὶ ἐν οὐκ ὀλίγοις τῶν διατεταγμένων ὑπὸ τῶν κατὰ πόλεις νομοθετῶν ἐναντίωσιν οὐκ ἐθελησάντων αὐτὸν μνήμης ἀξιῶσαι τῶν παρ᾽ Ἕλλησι λογίων· 3 ὧν οἱ πλείους τὰς δυνάμεις ἃς ἔσχον διὰ παιδείας ὕβρισαν ἔν τε ποιήμασι καὶ τοῖς καταλογάδην συγγράμμασι κωμῳδίας καὶ συβαριτικὰς ἀσελγείας συνθέντες́ περιβόητον αἰσχύνην́ οὕς ἔδει ταῖς φύσεσι καταχρήσασθαι πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ βίων ὑφήγησίν ἵνα μήτε τι καλὸν ἡσυχίᾳ παραδοθὲν ἀρχαῖον ἢ νέον ἀφανισθῇ λάμψαι δυνάμενον μήτ᾽ αὖ τὰς ἀμείνους ὑποθέσεις παρελθόντες τὰς ἀναξίους ἀκοῆς προκρῖναι δοκῶσι σπουδάζοντες τὰ κακὰ καλῶς ἀπαγγέλλειν εἰς ὀνειδῶν ἐπιφάνειαν̀ 4 ἀλλ᾽ ἔγωγε τὴν τούτων βασκανίαν ὑπερβὰς τὰ περὶ τὸν ἄνδρα μηνύσω μαθὼν αὐτὰ κἀκ βίβλων τῶν ἱερῶν́ ἃς θαυμάσια μνημεῖα τῆς αὐτοῦ σοφίας ἀπολέλοιπέ καὶ παρά τινων ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθνους πρεσβυτέρων· τὰ γὰρ λεγόμενα τοῖς ἀναγινωσκομένοις ἀεὶ συνύφαινον καὶ διὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἔδοξα μᾶλλον ἑτέρων τὰ περὶ τὸν βίον ἀκριβῶσαὶ.	Moses (both those with an accurate understanding and those with a less than complimentary view) and this corresponds both to the topics of subject matter (S4) and information related to others who have written on the subject (S5) (1.1.3). Philo's knowledge of the subject both in terms of his reading and understanding of scripture and his familiarity with the traditions of the elders qualifies him as more of an expert on the subject than those have also written (unflatteringly) on the subject prior to him (S6).	ἀνέγρψαν, οὐδ᾽ ἔστιν ὑπὲρ ὅτου πλείονες ἤ ἀξυμφωνότεροι ἐς ἀλλήλους· ἀλλ᾽ ἐμοὶ Πτολεμαῖός τε καὶ ᾽Αριστόβουλος πιστότεροι ἔδοξαν ἐς τὴν ἀφήγησιν́ ὁ μὲν ὅτι συνεστράτευσε βασιλεῖ ᾽Αλεξάνδρῳ, ᾽Αριστόβουλος, Πτολεμαῖος δὲ πρὸς τῷ ξυστρατεῦσαι ὅτι καὶ αὐτῷ βασιλεῖ ὄντι αἰσχρότερον ἤ τῳ ἄλλῳ ψεύσασθαι ἦν· ἄμφω δέ, ὅτι τετελευτηκότος ἤδη ᾽Αλεξάδρου ξυγγράφυσιν [ὅτε] αὐτοῖς ἥ τε ἀνάγκη καὶ ὁ μισθὸς τοῦ ἄλλως τι ἤ ὡς σουνηνέχθη ξυγγράφαι ἀπῆν. 3 ἔστι δὲ ἅ καὶ πρὸς ἄλλων ξυγγεγραμμένα, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὰ ἀξιαφήγητα τέ μοι ἔδοξε καὶ οὐ πάντῃ ἄπιστα, ὡς λεγόμενα μόνον ὑπέρ ᾽Αλεξάνδρου ἀνέγραψα. ὅστις δὲ Θαυμάσεται ἀνθ᾽ ὅτου ἐπι τοσοῖσδε συγγραφεῦσι καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐπι νοῦν ἦλθεν ἥδε ἡ συγγραφή, τά ἐκείνων πάντα τις ἀαλεξάμενος καὶ τοῖσδε τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἐντυχὼν οὕτω θαυμαζέτω.	subject (2-3) (S5). While Arrian has aspirations to write history as Xenophon and others had previously this does not obscure the fact that in the end he presents more of a biography of Alexander than a history *per se*. It is the quality and presumably the depth of his work (S6) (2-3) that will ultimately separate him from other writers and the topic itself (namely Alexander the Great) that stands as the only significant reason for his writing (S1) (3).

Appendix 3. Synoptic Presentation of the ‘All Nations’ Motif in the Canonical Gospels

Mark 11.17; 13.9-10	**Translation**	**Matthew 24.14; 28.18-20**	**Translation**
Καὶ ἐδίδασκεν καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· οὐ γέγραπται ὅτι ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται **πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν**; ὑμεῖς δὲ πεποιήκατε αὐτὸν σπήλαιον λῃστῶν. (Mk 11.17) Βλέπετε δὲ ὑμεῖς ἑαυτούς· παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγὰς δαρήσεσθε καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνων καὶ βασιλέων σταθήσεσθε ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς. 10 Καὶ εἰς **πάντα τὰ ἔθνη** πρῶτον δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. (Mk 13.9-10)	And he was teaching and was saying to them, ‘It is not written that my house will be called a house of prayer for **all the nations**? But you have made it into a den of robbers.’ (Mk 11.17) But watch out for yourselves; they will hand you over to councils and you will be beaten in synagogues and you will be made to stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. 10 But first the gospel (good news) must be proclaimed to **all nations.**	Καὶ κηρυχθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ εἰς μαρτύριον **πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν**, καὶ τότε ἥξει τὸ τέλος. (Mt 24.14) Καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς. 19 Πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε **πάντα τὰ ἔθνη**, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, 20 διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. (Mt 28.18-20)	And this good news (gospel) of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the entire world, as a testimony to **all the nations**, and then the end will come. (Mt 24.14) And Jesus came to them and he spoke to them saying, ‘All authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to keep all that I have commanded you; and behold I am with you always, until the end of the age.’ (Mt 28.18-20)
Luke 24.45-47; Acts 1.8	**Translation**	**John 12.31-32; 17.18; 20.31**	**Translation**
Τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς· 46 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὕτως γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, 47 καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς **πάντα τὰ ἔθνη**. ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλὴμ. (Lk 24.45-47) ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἔν τε Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ **ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.** (Ac. 1.8)	Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures; 46 and he said to them, ’Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to be raised from the dead on the third day, 47 and in his name repentance and the forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to **all nations**, beginning from Jerusalem (Lk 24.45-47) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to **the ends of the earth**. (Ac. 1.8)	Νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, νῦν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω· 32 κἀγὼ ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς**, πάντας** ἑλκύσω πρὸς ἐμαυτόν. (Jn 12.31-32) Καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, κἀγὼ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς **τὸν κόσμον**· (Jn 17.18) Ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. (Jn 20.31)	Now is the judgment of this world, now the ruler of this world will be cast outside; 32 and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw **all people** to myself. (Jn 12.31-32) Just as you sent me into the world, I have sent them into **the world**. (Jn 17.18) (see Jn 20.21) But these things are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in his name (Jn 20.31)

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