Peter Lampe

Induction as Historiographical Tool: Methodological and Conceptual Reflections on Locally and Regionally Focused Studies

"To work inductively on the level of local history means to move from the level of the [Roman] empire down to the individual cities—and later to *compile* data from the individual cities, to *compare* them and thus to advance to more general statements." This is what I wrote almost twenty-five years ago in my book about early Christianity in Rome,[1] and today I might add that we now are in a position to focus not just on the urban centers of early Christianity but also on rural areas, as William Tabbernee and I have done in Asia Minor.[2]

The last twenty-five years saw a whole range of regional and local studies, for example, the research on the early Philippian Christians in Macedonia by Peter Pilhofer and others.[3] The current paper, however, does not attempt to give an overview of recent history of research and to synthesize it. It rather tries to outline a few methodological and conceptual issues involved in local and regional studies of early Christian groups.

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[1] *From Paul To Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (4th ed.; Minneapolis/London: Fortress/T&T Clark, 2010), 409 (emphasis 2013), English version of *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 346.

[2] W. TABBERNEE AND P. LAMPE, *Pepouza and Tymion: The Discovery and Archaeological Exploration of a Lost Ancient City and an Imperial Estate* (New York: de Gruyter, 2008).

[3] For example, P. PILHOFER, *Philippi*, vol. 1, *Die erste christliche Gemeinde Europas* (WUNT 87; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995); vol. 2, *Katalog der Inschriften von Philippi* (WUNT 119; Tübingen: Mohr, 2000); M. TELLBE, "The Sociological Factors behind Philippians 3:1–11 and the Conflict at Philippi," *JSNT* 55(1994): 97–121; L. BORMANN, *Philippi: Stadt und Christengemeinde zur Zeit des Paulus* (NT.S 78; Leiden: Brill, 1995); P. OAKES, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (SNTS.MS 110; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); M.D. HOOKER, "Philippians: Phantom Opponents and the Real Source of Conflict," in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity* (ed. I. DUNDERBERG *et al.*; NT.S 103; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 377–95; S.R. NEBREDA, *Christ Identity: A Social-Scientific Reading of Philippians 2:5–11* (FRLANT 240; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

I. How Can General Statements about Early Christianity Be Attained?

At the end of my Rome book, I warned against prematurely generalizing our insights into the city-of-Rome cluster of early Christian groups and against construing them as representative of the Christians of the entire Roman empire—although the city of Rome on the whole seems to have been more representative of the empire than any other city, as Tacitus believed.[4] But generalizations constructing an entity such as "ancient Christianity"—if such a thing existed—can only be attempted if, at first, as many other regions as possible have been studied. This means that how representative the Christians in a particular city such as Rome or Philippi might have been of the *other* Christians of the two first centuries will first become apparent when as many studies as possible from other parts of the empire have been produced. "The question cannot be answered a priori."[5] Before any generalizations are attempted, insights need to be gleaned from the most diverse regions and groups of the Roman realm. And only then will we be able via comparison—and possibly even generalization—to move on up from the grassroots level to the more abstract level of "Roman empire" and "ancient Christianity" in the first two centuries. Such an inductive methodical movement progresses from a preferably high number of individual cases to more general abstractions. In other words, only if I observe one thousand black ravens, might I comfortably say that ravens are black. First then, not before.[6]

However, such induction, secondly, also calls for using as many qualitatively diverse primary sources as possible, that is, not only literary, but also inscriptional, papyrological and archaeological evidence. In general, scholars of early Christianity still have not embraced the variety of documentary evidence enough, being still too one-sidedly focused on the literary texts and neglecting, for example, the abundance of epigraphic evidence that is being augmented year by year by archaeological fieldwork. Only the concerto of all documentary evidence helps us to

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[4] Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 409. For Tacitus, see not only, e.g., *Ann.* 15.44.3, but also his entire way of writing history of the empire. For him, this history to a great extent is portrayed as history of the capital city.

[5] Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 409.

[6] This paper employs the term "induction" in analogy to the usage of the empirical natural sciences, not in the technical-mathematical sense that Adolf v. Harnack alluded to in *Das Wesen des Christentums: Sechzehn Vorlesungen vor Studierenden aller Fakultäten im Wintersemester 1899/1900 an der Universität Berlin gehalten* (3rd ed.; ed. C.-D. Osthövener; Tübingen: Mohr, 2012). For Harnack's usage of the mathematical term "complete induction," see T. Hübner, *Adolf von Harnacks Vorlesungen über das Wesen des Christentums unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Methodenfragen als sachgemäßer Zugang zu ihrer Christologie und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Europäische Hochschulschriften XXIII/493; Frankfurt: Lang, 1994), especially 90–97.

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analyze Christian groups at the grassroots level of the Roman empire, to contextualize them within their region and within their particular social environment, and to observe them interacting with their pagan and Jewish neighbors as well as with the local authorities that for them represented the Roman state.

Within the spectrum of "secular" historiographical schools, the inductive approach is first and foremost positioned within the camp of so-called "historical anthropology," which focuses on individual humans and groups, their self-images and worldviews as well as the concrete historical conditions and particularities in which they lived. It thus concentrates on historical individuality as opposed to overarching societal regularities. Thomas Nipperdey programmatically propagated this approach already in 1967 and, integrating ethnological perspectives, Hans Medick and others modified it two decades later.[7] This school has been a counterpoint to the Bielefeld school of Jürgen Kocka, Hans-Ulrich Wehler and others.[8] Influenced by social science perspectives, the latter have been writing history of society by tracing the development of ample structures and attempting to pinpoint overarching societal regularities following set patterns. By contrast, "historical anthropology" has made sure that the individual and the specific are not drowned out by the general and the regular.

Nevertheless, the induction approach that I advocate does not stop at the grassroots of the individual. As the word *inductio* already indicates, it also attempts to attain more general statements, albeit only in a very cautious way and being open even to the remote possibility that nothing might be able to be said *in general* about an overarching entity such as early Christianity of the first two centuries.

II. Early Christian Heterogeneity and the Problem of "Orthodoxy/Heterodoxy"

In the last decades, we have covered a good stretch of the inductive path. The further we have gotten, the harder it has become to talk

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[7] T. Nipperdey, "Bemerkungen zum Problem einer historischen Anthropologie" [1967], in *Historische Anthropologie, Basistexte 1* (ed. A. Winterling; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), 81–99; H. Medick, "Missionare im Ruderboot? Ethnologische Erkenntnisweisen als Herausforderung an die Sozialgeschichte," in *Alltagsgeschichte: Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen* (ed. A. Lüdtke; Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1989), 48–84. See further R. Van Dülmen, *Historische Anthropologie* (2nd ed.; Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2000).

[8] For the Bielefeld school, see, e.g., H.-U. Wehler, *Historische Sozialwissenschaft und Geschichtsschreibung: Studien zu Aufgaben und Traditionen deutscher Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980); Idem, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (5 vols.; München: Beck, 2008); J. Kocka, *Sozialgeschichte: Begriff, Entwicklung, Probleme* (2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

abstractly about "ancient Christianity" in the first two centuries—as if it had been a relatively homogenous entity flanked by heretical groups on the margins. This view, still fostered by present-day clerical hierarchies who need such an image of church history to stabilize their own ecclesiastical power structures, has become obsolete. Instead, we have gained glimpses into an overwhelming heterogeneity of early Christians. As the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example, added to the colorfulness of the picture of Jewish culture and religion before the Fall of Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E., the inductive path chosen by early Christianity scholars so far has produced an image of diversity within ancient Christianity that renders generalizations much harder than in the past.

To dip into this past of historiography, it might be worth briefly revisiting some historiographical models used by former theologically oriented scholarship. The reformers, especially Luther and the authors of the *Magdeburger Centurien* such as Matthias Flacius, who edited this seminal corpus of sources between 1559 and 1574,[9] took a polemic stance against the papacy-based church and held that there was a dramatic gap between the beginnings of Christianity and its subsequent history.[10] Being an antithetical historiography, this view nurtured a picture of pure beginnings, which in the course of history were spoiled. History in this view became a story of decay of something that had been authentic in its beginning—and was not restored until the reformers.

The trigger for this biased historiography was the equally biased Catholic view, the roots of which go all the way back to Eusebius, for instance. According to this view, the church, tied through apostolic succession to the beginnings in Jesus, administers a supernatural reality that is beyond historical change. Alteration and variation are only brought into play by persecutions and heretical attacks on the church, that is, by a struggle between divine power and evil that characterizes history. The papacy safeguards the integrity of the supernatural dimension of the church; it warrants a static view of church history, in which stable factors such as an institutionalized church administering eternal sacraments and a pure doctrine play the dominant role.

This catholic view had been also prepared by Hegesippus, for example, who, on his trips across the Roman Empire, visited Christian congregations in the various metropolitan areas. He was interested in pure doctrine (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.2-3) "as it allegedly was passed down uninterruptedly from the apostles until the present. During his

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9 MATTHIAS FLACIUS *et al*., *Ecclesiastica Historia (Magdeburger Centurien)* (Basileae: Oporinus, 1559–1574). The copy of the Munich University Library is easily accessible online: http://www.mgh-bibliothek.de/digilib/centuriae.htm.

10 For this, see, e.g., G. EBELING, *Studium der Theologie: Eine enzyklopädische Orientierung* (2nd ed.; UTB; Tübingen: Mohr, 2012), 69–82, where also the Catholic view is discussed, against which the reformers polemicized.

trip, Hegesippus tried to convince himself that this passing down had indeed occurred in the different cities of the world,"[11] where leading figures, in his opinion, nurtured such pure doctrine. By way of example, in Rome he met Anicetus around 160 C.E., who was in charge of the communications of the Roman house congregations with churches of other cities and accordingly also took care of foreign guests such as Hegesippus.[12] The latter was glad to discover that Anicetus's doctrinal views cohered with his own. But what Hegesippus did not mention was that Anicetus, although he was a leader in Rome, was not the only outstanding representative of Christian tradition in the city, let alone a monarchical Roman bishop who could have spoken in the name of the Christians of the capital city. In fact, around 160 C.E., Christianity in Rome still consisted of various individual groups, scattered around the capital city and meeting in house congregations, so that a doctrinal heterogeneity characterized the Roman Christians at that time.[13] In other words, Hegesippus's view, based on his talks with his host Anicetus, was reductionist. Moreover, the alleged *diadoche* of pure doctrine in Rome since the beginnings was a mere hypothesis for which he does not give any evidence. He cannot mention any carriers of pure apostolic tradition before Anicetus by name, that is, before the middle of the second century. The reason is easy. There was no clear-cut chain of doctrinally "pure" individuals who, one after the other, transmitted such an apostolic tradition. A plurality of people transmitted a range of Christian tradition*s,* and within this plurality of theological opinions in Rome at that time, clear demarcation lines between allegedly orthodox and heterodox views had not been negotiated. Every group thought of itself as orthodox, and only in a few cases did they label other groups as being wrong, as in the case of Marcion, for instance. But the definition of "heterodox" and "orthodox" in most cases had not been successfully established yet, not until the great councils of the fourth and fifth centuries.

A second reason also debunks Hegesippus's view of history as fictive. Even if such a chain of individual persons existed, one after the other faithfully transmitting tradition through the times, the question is *what* they transmitted, that is, whether such a pure apostolic doctrine ever existed at the beginnings of Christianity. This is highly doubtful in view of the heterogeneity of the first century sections of the New Testament itself. What could have been apostolic doctrine at the time of the apostles *themselves*? Certainly not some monolithic teaching. We perceive a remarkable heterogeneity in the New Testament writings.

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[11] Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 404.
[12] Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 403.
[13] Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, especially 357–408.

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To be faithful to the teaching of the first century sections of the New Testament means to acknowledge the fact that the gospel can be taught in various ways according to the needs of different situations. This New Testament heterogeneity is canonized, not a monolithic doctrine that was passed down from the apostles to the later cathedra holders of the church, who needed this fiction to stabilize their power positions.

Nevertheless, the famous so-called "catalogue of Roman bishops" in Irenaeus's *Haereses* (3.3.3) built on Hegessipus's fictive view of history and even extended it by suggesting that the *diadoche* of faithful carriers of apostolic tradition, in the case of Rome, was an unbroken succession of twelve individual leaders whose names are listed in the catalog, connecting the apostle Peter with Eleutherus (c. 175–189 C.E.). Interestingly enough, this local list was composed at the same time that Rome experienced the development of a monarchical episcopacy. The catalog's historical value, however, is nil because it cannot be corroborated by sources contemporary to the allegedly individual faithful carriers of apostolic tradition.[14]

With regard to the orthodoxy/heterodoxy problem, we today thus have to acknowledge that the entire question is anachronistic with regard to the first two centuries, because it operates with categories of later times. By way of example, Victor of Rome's (c. 189–199 C.E.) dissociation from the Montanists and Gaius' subsequent Roman dialogue against them[15] was by no means a struggle of orthodoxy versus heterodoxy, because only later was Montanism definitely excluded from the community of non-Montanist churches and thus defined as heterodox by a majority of Christians. At the time of Victor, however, the power dynamics of who would win "air supremacy" in Christianity was entirely open. Montanism even came close to becoming the dominant Christian force in late antiquity. In other words, at the time of Victor, his conflict with the Montanists was an attempt to establish borderlines, because he was made believe that their way of practicing Christianity was wrong and his was right—and the Montanists probably had the reverse impression about him. No ecumenical council, no majority, had already decided in a power play what should be regarded as right or wrong.

I just refuted the classical Protestant theory according to which initial orthodoxy decayed into heterodoxy. But at the same time, I also rejected the traditionally Catholic notion of a stable continuity of orthodoxy, flanked by irritating heresies. For the first two centuries, I rather

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[14] For the details, see Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 403–406.

[15] Praxeas, who imported an anti-Montanistic stance from Asia Minor to Rome, instigated Victor to withdraw fellowship from the Roman Montanists, and about 200 C.E. Gaius in Rome had a dispute with the Montanist Proculus. See Tertullian, *Adv. Prax*. 1; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.6; 6.20.3; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 394–95.

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advocate a model in which *ab ovo*, that is, from the very post-Easter beginnings of Christianity onward, groups of various expressions of Christian teaching and practice, who considered themselves right, lived side by side in a rather uncomplicated relationship despite their diverse views. The reason was not that they were particularly virtuous or tolerant but that they often simply did not even know about the otherness of the other. Luke most probably did not know about Matthew's writing, and Paul and Mark probably did not know the Q source. This finding has to do with the *de*centralized organizational structure of Christianity at that time: at the grassroots, Christianity manifested itself only in house congregations scattered over the empire. Only sometimes, particularly toward the end of the second century, was friction felt between groups and demarcation lines drawn.

In the first century, so it seems, direct quarrels about right and wrong broke out mainly *within* individual congregations and not so much among groups. Paul, for example, hurled excommunicating words of *anathema* against intruders in his Corinthian congregation in 2 Corinthians 10–13. And in 1 Corinthians 5, he excommunicated a fornicator from the same group. As for conflict *among* groups, Revelation 2-3 is an example: John, the prophet, and his apocalyptic adherents polemicized against established congregations in western Asia Minor. But such intergroup conflict was less prominent than the intragroup contentions.

So, was Walter Bauer right, who is often quoted as claiming that heterodoxy preceded orthodoxy? Hardly, because heterodoxy remains an anachronistic term for the two first centuries, as much as orthodoxy does. Bauer praised Rome, for example, as the refuge of orthodox belief especially in the second half of the second century.[16] But again, what does that mean within the second century itself? Nothing, because only if one takes the viewpoint of later centuries can one come up with such terminologies that *presuppose* the later church historical development—and its power struggles. If the Montanists had prevailed in later times, Gaius' anti-Montanistic dialogue against Proculus would have been heterodox from the viewpoint of later centuries and Montanism would be labeled orthodox today.

In his important two-volume *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque* (1985),[17] Alain Le Boulluec proposed that the concept of heresy developed between the second and fourth centuries but that it was not clear to the groups which ones should be considered heretical. I agree.

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[16] W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1963), 118.

[17] *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe–IIIe siècles*, vol. 1, *De Justin à Irénée*; vol. 2, *Clément d'Alexandrie et Origèn* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1985. Repr. 2007).

The only problem I have with this view is that already the authors of the first-century early layers of the New Testament had the idea that some co-Christians should be rejected while others accepted. I recall Paul's *anathema* hurled against opponents in 2 Corinthians 10–13 as an example. In my opinion, the terminology of orthodox and heterodox should be dropped entirely when talking about the first two centuries. Therefore, the handy formula that orthodoxies (plural) preceded orthodoxy, with which Alain Le Boulluec's position is sometimes summarized, is not helpful either. In lieu of the traditional orthodoxy/heterodoxy terminology, we rather should use categories of conflict management or identity formation when describing early Christian struggles between groups who differed from each other.

Often modern research claims to have rediscovered the value of those Christian movements that later were banned as heretical. However, an interesting rehabilitation of the so-called heretics was already proposed three centuries earlier by Gottfried Arnold, a representative of pietism, in his—at his time—seminal work of 1699–1700, called *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie vom Anfang des Neuen Testaments bis auf das Jahr Christi 1688* (*Unbiased History of the Church and the Heretics from the Beginnings of the New Testament to the Year of Christ 1688*).[18] In a provocative way, he claimed that often the so-called heretics, and not the established church, represented the authentic Christian faith and spirituality, while the established church in his view was tainted by hierarchical offices and dogmatism. He used his heresiological historiography as a polemical tool to criticize all objectifications of Christianity that, in past history, tried to congeal the truth in offices and dogmas of pure teaching. As a pietist, Arnold found the truth in the subjective mode, not in attempted institutional objectifications of truth.

The reason why I recall his work is to show that it too was biased (despite its title), in his case pietistically predisposed. The question then arises whether or not our emphasis on the heterogeneity of early Christianity is equally biased, molded by the *Zeitgeist* of postmodern relativity. Do we also have a blind spot—despite controlled inductive methods?

III. Guidelines for Locally and Regionally Focused Studies of Early Christian Groups

Together with William Tabbernee, I have explored early Christian, especially Montanist, settlements in Phrygia in archaeological fieldwork

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18 Easily accessible facsimile of the 1729 edition (Frankfurt: Thomas Fritschens Erben, 1729) in the Library of Congress Digital Collections: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbc3&fileName=rbc0001_2010houdini13674page.db.

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during the last decade. Coming from these experiences and looking back on some aspects just mentioned, I summarize a few points that seem methodologically important for local studies, rendering them in the form of theses.

1. Local groups can only be studied in a *multidisciplinary* way. Once we get down to local grassroots, we also encounter archaeological evidence—wall structures, inscriptions, coins, images—as well as landscapes with climatic and geological conditions that influenced ancient economic life. Even if a Christian group did not leave any archaeological or epigraphic traces of its own, the archaeological and inscriptional evidence of the group's immediate environment needs to be scrutinized. Only in this way can social milieus, economic factors and possible social relations to non-Christian groups be discovered. The illusion that the historiography of early Christian groups can be based more or less exclusively on literary texts, scrutinized in university ivory towers, fosters reductionism. Rudolf Bultmann, who allegedly never set foot in Greece, cannot serve as a model.

In detail, a multidisciplinary study integrates the following scholarly fields. Besides New Testament, Judaic and patristic studies, classical history, particularly its branches of social, economic and art history as well as history of pagan religions, needs to come into play. Furthermore, archaeology, epigraphy, and numismatics need to be employed. Within the archaeological approach, ethno-archaeology, geomatics, geophysical screenings, paleobotany as well as geomorphology and medical anthropology have become standard.

2. When an archaeological investigation of a locality is undertaken in which an early Christian group lived, *all* cultural layers of this archaeological site need to be explored and documented with equal scrutiny, not only the stratum in which early Christians lived. Because any archaeological project necessarily destroys some evidence, the documentation of the entire site is mandatory. This pertains also to archaeological surface surveys. In today's fieldwork they can no longer be thematic surveys as they used to be, just focusing on one period or even one particular population group. As soon as archaeological tools are taken into hand, a zooming in on only one particular, for example, Christian, group, is methodologically inappropriate in primary field research.

3. In archaeological field research, it also has become standard not only to explore a particular settlement site by itself but also its *wider environments*, that is, isolated vestiges of ancient economic activities in the countryside, such as oil presses, mills, cisterns or quarries, traces of agricultural exploitation of the land, such as manmade terraces, as well as remains of infrastructure (roads, bridges, irrigation systems and waterways). The wide-angle lens of surface survey archaeology is interested in entire regions, in the traces of human activity and settlement

contained therein and the systemic connections between them. Like a larger mosaic in which a settlement is just *one* tile, the countryside surrounding it encapsulates a whole range of information that illuminates the everyday life of a group that lived *in* this settlement.

4. With the methods mentioned, it has become feasible also to know more about the living conditions of ancient *rural* populations. We know quite a lot about the urban populations in the Roman Empire but less about the rural ones, particularly the extant rural Christian ones—for example, in Phrygia.

Certain peculiarities of country life influenced the religiosity of people. By way of example, the successful spread not only of Montanism but also of second century Christianity in general in the Phrygian hinterland may in part be explained by the fact that rural dwellers, unlike those in the city, had fewer places to participate in the emperor cult and therefore were less likely to come into conflict with authorities if they were Christians.[19] Ironically, this even holds true for imperial estates where only very few traces of the imperial cult have been discovered so far. Not surprisingly, the Montanists of Tymion lived on such an imperial estate, as the Tymion inscription we found demonstrates. In the less densely populated countryside, it was easier to evade Roman control. The same inscription shows that the Roman procurator responsible for the imperial estate around Pepouza and Tymion had not gotten a firm grip on the rural areas.[20]

> Christoph Markschies' recent objections to our identification of the ancient sites of Pepouza and Tymion[21] lack a sound basis. (a) He erroneously reports that we locate Tymion "close to Susuzören" at "Sarayzik," which is a modern field name. However, no ancient settlement even existed at this location, only a crossroads nearby where the inscriptional stone mentioning Tymion and Simoe was found *in situ*. The settlement that we identified as Tymion was a large Hellenistic-Roman and later Byzantine settlement located around and under today's village of Sükraniye, southwest of the crossroads. The Tymion/Simoe inscription was positioned at a crossroads in the middle between Tymion and Simoe (see, e.g., our map, *Pepouza and Tymion*, p. 70 and ch. 12). (b) Markschies (1204) alleges that the Pepouza settlement in the canyon was endangered by floods, but the argumentative function of this speculation remains elusive. It certainly cannot disprove the existence of an ancient settlement in the canyon. The Pepouza settlement traces in the canyon, extending over more than 29 ha, reach all the way to the embankment of the river, and the central settlement terrace is located 14–22 m above the river (see our topographical map, *Pepouza and Ty-*

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[19] See P. LAMPE, "Methods of the Archaeological Surface Survey," in *Pepouza and Tymion*, 145. Further information about some of the guidelines outlined here can be found in the same chapter (pp. 133–55).

[20] LAMPE, "Methods," 145.

[21] C. MARKSCHIES, "Montanismus," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 24: 1202–4.

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mion, Fig. 13.1). (c) Markschies suggests that "Ethymios, abbot of the Pepouzians," did not necessarily have to have his monastery in or near Pepouza. This option, however, is highly improbable considering that Euthymios is documented in the subscription list of the fourth session of the Second Council of Nicea. In the subscription list, geographical designations are in all likelihood mentioned to point out the *current* geographical provenance of the council participants. Besides, the deplorable text editorial situation cannot cast doubt on the very existence of this "abbot of the Pepouzians," as Markschies himself concedes. (d) Whether an orthodox bishop or a "Theophylactus praeses Pepuzon" ever resided in Pepouza can indeed be questioned. But such doubt has no argumentative value for or against our Pepouza identification.

5. Nobody can imagine really understanding the *theology* of a group without learning some of the everyday *economic, social and political conditions* in which it lived. In the case of the Montanists, for example, the Tymion inscription revealed that, at the beginning of the third century, they nurtured their eschatology of a New Jerusalem soon descending on them[22] in a socioeconomic milieu in which they, as tenement farmers on a vast Phrygian imperial estate, felt overtaxed and bullied by local authorities in illegal ways. Therefore, it is not surprising that they vented their frustration in an ecstatic-prophetic religiosity and hoped for a near end of the present reality.[23]

6. Not only the socioeconomic living conditions of a population need to be explored, but also its multifaceted pagan as well as Jewish and Christian *religiosity*. There is no way to understand an early Christian group without looking at its non-Christian religious neighborhood. Whether there are traces of interaction and mutual influencing needs to be investigated. By way of example, Phrygian inscriptions and imageries often reveal a peaceful coexistence of the Christian, Jewish and pagan populations.[24] There were smooth transition zones between the

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[22] Logion 11 by Priscilla (or Quintilla) in Epiph., *Haer.* 49.1.1-3.

[23] LAMPE, "Methods," 144f. Marschies' ("Montanismus," 1214f, 1218) contention that Montanus named Pepouza and Tymion "Jerusalem" (Apollonius in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2) in order to describe a *present* eschaton and express a theological connection with the (gone-by) Jerusalem church of the first century is hardly convincing. Why would Montanus have named *two* settlements "Jerusalem"—instead of just Pepouza, his headquarters? If our identification of both places is correct, they were located several kilometers apart, separated by the fields of an imperial estate on a high plane plowed by tenant famers, who felt mistreated according to the Tymion inscription—hardly the location of a present eschaton. (In view of the inscriptional evidence, the latter even holds true if one does not want to accept our localization of Tymion.) Only if a heavenly Jerusalem was soon expected to descend on the high plane did it make sense to name both Pepouza *and* Tymion "Jerusalem" as the southern and northern portals of the celestial city. See P. LAMPE, "Das Neue Jerusalem der Montanisten in Phrygien," in *Jerusalem und die Länder: Ikonographie – Topographie – Theologie* (ed. G. THEISSEN *et al*.; NTOA 70; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 253–70, with cartographic material.

[24] Cf. LAMPE, "Methods," 144 with n. 16; S. MITCHELL, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 2, *The Rise of the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 10–99; IDEM, "An Apostle to Ankara from the New Jerusalem: Montanists and Jews in Late Roman

different spheres of culture. Correspondingly, the transition of parts of the Phrygian rural population from polytheism to Christian monotheism was efficiently supported by a tendency to a Zeus-centered henotheism in Phrygian paganism at the end of the second and beginning of the third centuries.[25] Cultures converged. At least in these parts of Asia Minor the relationship between Christian groups and their pagan environment was not antagonistic but peaceful. It therefore does not come as a surprise that some of the Phrygian henotheistic Zeus depictions remarkably resemble later Byzantine Christ images.

Another example of pagan-Christian osmosis is the phenomenon of prophecy. As Hirschmann in her study *Horrenda Secta*[26] has shown, it is worth tracing its trajectories in a more differentiated way than in the past, that is, not only from Old Testament and Jewish to Christian prophets but also from pagan oracles and prophecy to early Christian prophetic movements such as Montanism.

On the whole, plenty of work remains to be done to obtain a multidimensional picture of early Christian groups in various parts of the Roman Empire, counterbalancing any possible generalizations by careful differentiations that take into account regional (urban and rural), socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural varieties.

Peter Lampe
University of Heidelberg
peter.lampe@wts.uni-heidelberg.de

Asia Minor," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 24(2005): 207–23; E. Stephan, *Honoratioren, Griechen, Polisbürger: Kollektive Identitäten innerhalb der Oberschicht des kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien* (Hypomnemata 143; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 297; V. Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta* (Historia Einzelschriften 179; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005).

[25] Lampe, "Methods," 144 with n. 17 (based on material from PVS and Christine M. Thomas).

[26] See note 24.