

AMIEL DRIMBE

The Church of Antioch
and the Eucharistic
Traditions (ca. 35–130 CE)

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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To

Adina and Eliana

Tocmai am terminat de scris o carte de 90.000 de cuvinte.

Și încă nu le găsesc pe cele potrivite
să vă spun cât de mult însemnați pentru mine.

Preface

There is wisdom in the remark that nobody writes alone. Even in the solitude of our own desk, we still write with somebody else: scholars that precede us, authors we agree or disagree with, people who shaped our thinking and so on.¹ This remark is even truer with regard to a doctoral thesis. Since this monograph is a slightly revised version of my April 2018 doctoral thesis at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, I wish to acknowledge those who contributed to attaining what, at times, seemed an unreachable goal.

First and foremost, may this study be for the greater glory of God, to whom I owe everything. Then, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my most excellent supervisors, Prof. Andrew D. Clarke and Prof. Mark J. Edwards. The depth and breadth of their expertise was equalled by their kindness, patience, and benevolence toward my rather ponderous progress. They are both models of academic excellence which I admire and to which I strive.

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I am grateful to the Rector of the Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest, Dr. Daniel Mariş, and to my colleagues in the faculty. They kindly covered for

¹ As Beverly Roberts Gaventa put it in a lecture delivered in 2012 at the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, St. Paul, Minnesota.

my long absences in Oxford and were a constant encouragement. I treasure their friendship and collegiality.

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations used for ancient texts, periodicals, and reference works are almost entirely according to B.J. Collins, B. Buller and J.F. Kutsko (eds.), *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines* (2nd ed; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014). In certain instances, the suggested guidelines have been amended for stylistic reasons and greater convenience. In addition, the following abbreviations are used:

ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
AC	<i>Antike und Christentum</i>
ACC	Alcuin Club Collections
AV	Die Apostolischen Väter
AYBC	Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries
AZK	<i>Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte</i>
BHGNT	Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament
BT	Bibliothèque théologique
CHS	Church Historical Society
CThM	Calwer theologische Monographien
Diodorus, <i>Bibl. hist.</i>	Diodorus Siculus, <i>Bibliotheca historica</i>
Diogenes, <i>Fragm.</i>	Diogenes of Oinoanda, <i>Fragmenta (Fragments)</i>
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
FBC	Focus on the Bible Commentary
FKD	Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte
FThSt	Freiburger theologische Studien
GP	Gospel Perspectives
IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
JCP	Jewish and Christian Perspectives
<i>JPEC</i>	<i>Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture</i>
KAV	Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern
Martial, <i>Epigr.</i>	Martial, <i>Epigrammata (Epigrams)</i>
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary

NGS	New Gospel Studies
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NTR	New Testament Readings
NTT	New Testament Theology
Papias, <i>Fragm.</i>	Papias, <i>Fragmenta (Fragments)</i>
PAST	Pauline Studies
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PSB	Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești
Ps.-Athanasius, <i>De virg.</i>	Pseudo-Athanasius, <i>De virginitate (On virginity)</i>
<i>RivAC</i>	<i>Rivista di archeologia Cristiana</i>
RNTS	Reading the New Testament Series
Seneca, <i>De prov.</i>	Seneca (the Younger), <i>De providentia (On providence)</i>
Serapion, <i>Euch.</i>	Serapion of Thmuis, <i>Euchologion</i>
SFC	Selections from the Fathers of the Church
SHVL	Skrifter utgivna av Kungliga Humanistiska vetenskapssamfundet i Lund
<i>SL</i>	<i>Studia Liturgica</i>
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
TCH	The Transformation of the Classical Heritage
Theodoret, <i>Dial. Immutab.</i>	Theodoret, <i>Dialogue I: The Immutable</i>
<i>TheoLib</i>	<i>Theological Librarianship</i>
ULB	Université libre de Bruxelles
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
<i>WS</i>	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
ZSNT	Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament Series

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Antioch, the cradle of earliest Christianity¹

Antioch on the Orontes (Ἀντιόχεια ἡ ἐπὶ Ὀρόντου) was the capital of Roman Syria and one of the chief cities of the East. According to Josephus (*J.W.* 3.2.4),² it was the third metropolis of the Empire,³ '[a city] intended to embody and represent in the Eastern world the grandeur and magnificence of Greek civilisation.'⁴ During its Greek and Roman administrations, Antioch became renowned for both 'its scholarship'⁵ and 'architectural splendour'.⁶ Moreover, as M. Slee asserts, 'the geographical position of Antioch (in particular its accessibility to Asia Minor) was a significant factor in its growing prestige.'⁷ It is of no surprise, then, that the city attracted numerous inhabitants, from various regions of the Empire (Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2.4–10).⁸ Therefore, by the first century CE, 'It was both an important area for commerce and trade, and a critical military base. Furthermore, a wide variety of people constantly passed through the city, often with news of developments (both political and religious) in other parts of the Empire.'⁹

¹ Throughout this study, 'earliest Christianity' covers the first hundred years of the Christian era (*ca.* 30–130 CE), not just the so-called 'Apostolic age' (*ca.* 30–90 CE).

² Josephus ranks Antioch as 'unquestionably third among the cities of the Roman world', after Rome and Alexandria. See W.J. Woodhouse, "Antioch," in T.K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Biblica: A Dictionary of the Bible* (vol. 1; Toronto: George N. Morang & Co, 1899), 184–86. Cf. the more general estimation of W.A. Meeks and R.L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* (SBL; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 1: 'Antioch on the Orontes was a key city [...] one of the three or four most important cities in the Roman Empire.'

³ J.P. Meier, "Antioch," in R.E. Brown and J.P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 85–86.

⁴ M. Slee, *The Church in Antioch in the First Century C.E.: Communion and Conflict* (JSNTSup 244; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 1.

⁵ Antioch was an important learning centre, famous for its library (Cicero, *Arch.* 3.4). See G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria: From Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 94, 132.

⁶ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 1.

⁷ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 1.

⁸ T.A. Robinson, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Parting of the Ways: Early Jewish-Christian Relations* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009), 14–16.

⁹ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 1.

In nuce, Slee describes a city that was, in various ways, both influenced and influential. Of course, this could be said of all major cities of the ancient world, in general. In particular, this could be said of Antioch and its influence on Christianity.¹⁰ As J.P. Meier notices, ‘Antioch was the first important urban center of the Christian movement outside Jerusalem’ (see Acts 11.19–21).¹¹ According to Acts 11.26, it was at Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first called Χριστιανοί (‘Christians’).¹² Also, the earliest extant instance of the term Χριστιανισμός (‘Christianity’) is found in the epistolary corpus of Ignatius of Antioch (see *Magn.* 10.1, 3; *Rom.* 3.3; *Phld.* 6.1).¹³ For these reasons, certain scholars designated the city of Antioch ‘the cradle of Christianity’.¹⁴ So, given its prominence in the earliest Christian movement, it is also of no surprise that the city attracted numerous adherents to Christianity from various regions of the East (Acts 13.1).

Therefore, as the earliest Christian writings show, the so-called ‘cradle of Christianity’ was both influenced (e.g., Gal. 2.11–14; Acts 11.19–27; 13.1; 15.1–35) and influential (e.g., Acts 13.2–3; 14.26–28; 15.36–41; 18.22–23; Ignatius, *Pol.* 8.1–2).¹⁵ As Meier concludes his research about the first century of Christianity at Antioch (*ca.* 40–140 CE),¹⁶ it was here that the ‘divergent theological traditions’ of the various Christian groups that inhabited the city were ‘drawn together and synthesized’, ‘for the sake of Christian unity’.¹⁷ ‘Peter, Matthew, and Ignatius all had to undertake a delicate balancing act between left and right as they struggled for a middle position in what was to become this universal church.’¹⁸

To summarize Meier’s argument, there were ‘divergent theological traditions’, of various Jewish and Gentile groups, that came together in the church of

¹⁰ The influence of the Antiochene church during the first century CE is noted in the impressive list of Meier, “Antioch,” 85–86.

¹¹ Meier, “Antioch,” 12.

¹² A possible explanation for this term comes from J. Taylor, “Why Were the Disciples First Called ‘Christians’ at Antioch? (Ac 11, 26),” *RB* 101/1 (1994): 75–94.

¹³ In Ignatius, the term appears as an identity marker, set in opposition to ‘Judaism’. See, for instance, Robinson, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 88.

¹⁴ Meier, “Antioch,” 12. For Woodhouse, “Antioch,” 1:186, it is ‘the cradle of the church’.

¹⁵ For the historical reliability of Acts, with special reference to the texts concerning Antioch (11.19–27; 13.1–2; 14.26–28; 15.1–41; 18.22–23), see the later discussions (section 3.1.2). For the general use of Acts for the historical reconstruction of early Christianity, see (inter alia): B. Witherington III (ed.), *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); L.C. Alexander, “Mapping Early Christianity: Acts and the Shape of Early Church History,” *Int* 57 (2003): 163–73; C.K. Rothschild, *Luke–Acts and the Rhetoric of History* (WUNT II/175; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

¹⁶ Meier, “Antioch,” 28–84.

¹⁷ Meier, “Antioch,” 86.

¹⁸ Meier, “Antioch,” 85.

Antioch. Yet there, these traditions were ‘balanced’ and ‘synthesized’. So, from Antioch, there emerged a ‘middle position’ (*via media*) that facilitated the ‘Christian unity’ of the ‘universal church’, as it offered a way of keeping together the divergent groups.¹⁹ This view has largely been accepted by subsequent scholarship, becoming a widespread consensus.²⁰

1.2 Aims and objectives

This study aims to challenge the consensus expressed by Meier and propose a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of the (theological) traditions in the church of Antioch, during the first century of its existence (*ca.* 35–130 CE).²¹ It is beyond reasonable dispute that ‘divergent traditions’ were gathered at Antioch. However, the case for the formulation of a ‘synthesized... middle position’ needs to be re-examined. For the re-examination of this view, I have chosen 1) to analyse the eucharistic traditions of earliest Christianity; and 2) to trace their use within the church of Antioch, focusing on the following key texts: 1 Cor. 11.23–25, Matt. 26.26–29, *Did.* 9.1–10.6, and Ignatius, *Phld.* 4.1.

Therefore, connecting the four eucharistic texts to the early church of Antioch constitutes the main objective of this study. Once connected to Antioch, a subsequent objective is to unravel their internal dynamics. And finally, since the Meier consensus mentions both the ‘divergent groups/traditions’ and ‘the Christian unity... of the universal church’, a third objective is to locate these internal dynamics into the larger context of the ‘unity and diversity in earliest Christianity’.

¹⁹ Meier, “Antioch,” 85–86. I wonder how much influence from G.W.F. Hegel and F.C. Baur is reminiscent in Meier’s synthesis. For a more recent evaluation of their influence, see B.L. White, *Remembering Paul: Ancient and Modern Contests over the Image of the Apostle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁰ Inter alia: W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (vol. 1; ICC; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 146 (n. 126); D.A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004), 238 (n. 11). See also the reviews of S.C. Barton (*ExpTim* 95.4/1984), I.H. Marshall (*JSNT* 8.25/1985), A. Logan (*SJT* 38.2/1985), and D.L. Balch (*JBL* 104.4/1985). Meier himself builds upon the conclusions of B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 511–16.

²¹ This study follows the dating suggested by D.C. Sim, “How Many Jews Became Christians in the First Century? The Failure of the Christian Mission to the Jews,” *HvTSt* 61 (2005): 429: ‘The church in Antioch on the Orontes was established in the early to mid 30s, by certain Hellenists.’ For the dating of the Ignatian corpus (*ca.* 115–130 CE), see section 8.1.1 (1).

1.3 A history of scholarship

The focus on the eucharistic traditions and the selection of the key texts is dictated by the history of scholarship to which I now turn. Moreover, since this task brings together 1) the history of the early church of Antioch and its traditions and 2) the issue of unity and diversity in earliest Christianity, the following history of scholarship will address both matters.

1.3.1 *The church of Antioch in modern research*

Since the church of Antioch was highly influential in early Christianity, it is expected that numerous studies would have focused on its rise and evolution.²² Many of these studies address the state of the early church of Antioch indirectly, especially scholarship on Galatians, the Gospel of Matthew, the Acts of the Apostles, the *Didache*, and Ignatius of Antioch.²³ However, my history of scholarship will be limited to several monographs that examine the Antiochene church directly, particularly, and diachronically. But before I begin to assess some of these monographs, a general appraisal is required.

²² Inter alia: C.H. Kraeling, "The Jewish Community at Antioch," *JBL* 51 (1932): 130–60; B.M. Metzger, "Antioch-on-the-Orontes," *BA* 11 (1948): 69–88; Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 13–25; W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 61–76; D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch: A Study of Early Christian Thought in the East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1–26; Meier, "Antioch," 12–86; N.H. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); E. Rau, *Von Jesus zu Paulus: Entwicklung und Rezeption der antiochenischen Theologie im Urchristentum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994); M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* (trans., J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1997), 178–310; J. Crowe, *From Jerusalem to Antioch: The Gospel Across Cultures* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1997); Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 12–164; M. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Social-Scientific Approach to the Separation Between Judaism and Christianity* (London/New York: Routledge, 2003).

²³ Inter alia: S.A. Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch: Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2* (SNTSMS 114; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Davies/Allison, *Matthew*, 1:143–46; D.C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 91–125; Taylor, "Disciples First Called 'Christians' at Antioch," 75–94; M. Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (trans., J. Bowden; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 99–110; H. van de Sandt (ed.), *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); H. van de Sandt and J.K. Zangenberg (eds.), *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings* (SBLSymS 45; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008); W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 10–11; Robinson, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 1–88.

If Josephus' account is accurate,²⁴ the Jews were among the original settlers of Syrian Antioch (*Ag. Ap.* 2.4; *Ant.* 12.3.1; *J.W.* 7.3.3). Although he doesn't give specific figures, the historian considers the Jewish population living there to be numerous: 'had the greatest multitudes in Antioch' (*J.W.* 7.3.3). In the estimation of W.A. Meeks and R.L. Wilken, during the first century CE the Jewish population of Antioch was about 22,000,²⁵ while C.H. Kraeling suggests 45,000²⁶ out of a total of 300,000–400,000 inhabitants.²⁷ In Antioch, therefore, Christianity evolved alongside Judaism – in its various forms.²⁸ Moreover, as D.C. Sim estimates, not many Jews of Antioch adhered to the emerging Christianity.²⁹ Rather, there was a growing 'partition' since the beginnings of Antiochene Christianity,³⁰ as the movement there was predominantly Gentile (e.g., Acts 11.19–26; 15.1–35; *Did.* 1.1–6.3; 8.1–2; Ignatius, *Magn.* 10.1–3; *Phld.* 6.1): 'Antioch was the starting point for self-conscious mission to gentiles who had not previously become Jewish proselytes.³¹ Moreover, the separation caused, at times, tensions and 'conflicts'³² between the groups. So, given this broad context, it is understandable why most studies on the early church of Antioch would focus almost entirely on the complex relations between Christianity and Judaism on the one hand, and Gentile and Jewish Christianity on the other. This tendency will be apparent in the following overview:

(1) W.A. Meeks and R.L. Wilken (1978) examine briefly 'the story of Christianity's beginnings in Antioch'.³³ Their historical analysis is limited to 'the first

²⁴ For a discussion on the accuracy of Josephus' figures, see Zetterholm, *Christianity in Antioch*, 32–37.

²⁵ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 8.

²⁶ Kraeling, "Jewish Community at Antioch," 143.

²⁷ Zetterholm, *Christianity in Antioch*, 28. See also G. Downey, "The Size of the Population of Antioch," *TAPA* 89 (1958): 84–91; R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), 147–62 (150).

²⁸ For a thorough description of the various Jewish groups in Antioch, see Zetterholm, *Christianity in Antioch*, 55–58, 61–100.

²⁹ Sim, "How Many Jews Became Christians," 417–39.

³⁰ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 18; Meier, "Antioch," 36–44, 57–72; Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 12–52; Robinson, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 69–88; J.D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (2nd ed.; London: SCM Press), 154–214.

³¹ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 15.

³² Actually, 'conflict' is a keyword in many of these studies. See, for instance, the subtitle of Slee's work, 'Communion and Conflict'; M. Zetterholm and S. Byrskog (eds.), *The Making of Christianity: Conflicts, Contacts, and Constructions* (ConBNT 47; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012); C. Bennema, "The Ethnic Conflict in Early Christianity: An Appraisal of Bauckham's Proposal on the Antioch Crisis and the Jerusalem Council," *JETS* 56/4 (2013): 753–63.

³³ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 13.

interactions between Jews and Christians there’,³⁴ or to ‘Christian-Jewish relations’.³⁵ It is also restricted to a few passages from Acts (11.19–26; 13.1; 15.1–35) and Galatians (2.11–21), and some fragments from the Ignatian corpus (*Magn.* 8.1–2; 10.3; *Phld.* 6.1; 8.2).³⁶ In their view, ‘Antioch at [its] earliest point in the church’s history looks [...] like a place of compromise, a bridge between Jewish and gentile Christianity.’³⁷ However, ‘at the instigation of certain people from Jerusalem’ (see Gal. 2.12), the ‘bridge’ is damaged and the ‘division’ or ‘partition’ soon begins, i.e., in the early 40s CE.³⁸

The form of the compromise after the crisis and Paul’s withdrawal is not altogether clear, although it looks from Gal. 2:12f. as if former Jews and former gentiles formed henceforth separate fellowships, presumably meeting in different houses. There is also no mention of hostility from synagogue authorities in Antioch, although an argument from this silence would be precarious.³⁹

The ‘partition’ becomes even more conspicuous after the events of 66–70 CE, as the letters of Ignatius reveal (see *Magn.* 8.1–2; 10.3; *Phld.* 6.1; 8.2).⁴⁰ However, this exacerbated separation should not be interpreted as a ‘decisive break’.⁴¹

if such a separation did take place around 70, it certainly did not mean the once-for-all isolation of the Judaeo-Christians from gentile Christians nor of Jews from Christians. The active influence of Judaism upon Christianity in Antioch was perennial until Christian leaders succeeded at last in driving the Jews from the city in the seventh century.⁴²

Throughout their study, Meeks/Wilken mention only one ‘liturgical’⁴³ text that is connected to first-century Antioch; yet its mention is entirely subjected to the main focus, i.e., the ‘Christian-Jewish relations’. They consider that, in *Smyrn.* 1.1–2, Ignatius quotes a ‘baptismal reunification formula [...] which probably

³⁴ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 13.

³⁵ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 19.

³⁶ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 13–21.

³⁷ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 18.

³⁸ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 18.

³⁹ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 18.

⁴⁰ As Meier, “Antioch,” 13, notices, Meeks/Wilken do not offer primary sources for the period 40–70 CE.

⁴¹ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 18, challenge the view of W.R. Farmer, “The Post-Sectarian Character of Matthew and Its Post-war Setting in Antioch of Syria,” *PRSt3* (1976): 235–47. Farmer has argued that, at Antioch, there was a ‘decisive break’ between Jews and Christians in the aftermath of the Jewish war (66–70 CE).

⁴² Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 18.

⁴³ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 19. Throughout this study, I make a plain distinction between ‘liturgical’ and ‘ritual’. In my view, the term ‘ritual’ is the preferable one, when referring to the use of the earliest Christian traditions and creeds (ca. 30–70 CE). The term ‘liturgical’, I suggest, involves both steady formulation and deeper theological reflection, not just the ritual use. See the later discussions: sections 3.2.2.1; 5.1; 7.1.4 (3).

echoes the liturgy of baptism at Antioch':⁴⁴ '... his holy and faithful ones, whether among Jews or Gentiles, in the one body of his church' (see Gal. 3.27–28).⁴⁵ Although this could be fundamental for the church of Antioch in the early second century (ca. 100–130 CE),⁴⁶ the baptismal fragment is only mentioned by Meeks/Wilken to contrast Ignatius' radical attitude against the Jewish Christians (*Magn.* 8.1–2; 10.3; *Phld.* 6.1; 8.2).⁴⁷

(2) J.P. Meier (1983) notices the time gap between Galatians and Acts (ca. 50–70s CE), on the one hand, and the writings of Ignatius (ca. 108–117 CE), on the other.⁴⁸ Consequently, for a more elaborate reconstruction of the early church of Antioch, he adds the Gospel of Matthew (ca. 80–90 CE),⁴⁹ for it offers 'reliable information about the period in-between'.⁵⁰ As a result, Meier proposes the examination of the literature of the first three 'generations' of Christians at Antioch: 1) the literature of the first generation (ca. 40–70 CE), Galatians and Acts; 2) the second generation (ca. 70–100 CE), the Gospel of Matthew; 3) the third generation (ca. 100–140 CE), the writings of Ignatius.⁵¹

As was mentioned above, Meier is particularly interested in the formation of a theological 'middle position' that facilitated 'the Christian unity' of the 'universal church'.⁵² Therefore, he sees the church of Antioch as the place in which 'divergent theological traditions' came together and were 'balanced' and harmonized ('synthesized').⁵³ It was also the place in which divergent Christian groups learned to cohabit, despite their differences.⁵⁴ To prove these points, he focuses on Peter (representing the first generation), Matthew (second generation), and Ignatius (third generation). Following B.H. Streeter⁵⁵ and B. Holmberg,⁵⁶ Meier sees Peter as representing the *via media* between the 'liberalism' of Paul and the

⁴⁴ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 19.

⁴⁵ For the view that, in Gal. 3.27–28, Paul is quoting an earlier ritual (baptismal) formula, see H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979), 181–85; R.N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990), 151; J.L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation and Introduction with Commentary* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 378–83.

⁴⁶ Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 220–24.

⁴⁷ Meeks/Wilken, *Jews and Christians*, 19–20.

⁴⁸ Meier, "Antioch," 13.

⁴⁹ Meier's arguments for the Antiochene provenance of Matthew are listed in "Antioch," 15–27.

⁵⁰ Meier, "Antioch," 13.

⁵¹ Meier, "Antioch," 13.

⁵² Meier, "Antioch," 85.

⁵³ Meier, "Antioch," 57, 86.

⁵⁴ Meier, "Antioch," 41–43, 53–57, 78–79.

⁵⁵ Streeter, *Four Gospels*, 504, 511–16.

⁵⁶ B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 22.

‘conservatism’ of James: ‘In the face of these divisions and tensions within the Christian community, Peter may have played a moderating role, helping to keep the compromise solution from degenerating into complete schism.’⁵⁷

According to Meier, ‘Peter’s pivotal role at Antioch, holding the two groups of Antiochene Christians together’,⁵⁸ was later assumed by Matthew, in whose Gospel Peter is a major character. For him, the Gospel of Matthew is ‘a theological and pastoral response to a crisis of self-identity and function in the Antiochene church’.⁵⁹ This crisis of identity was caused by the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, followed by the extinction of the Jerusalemite mother-church, the separation from the local synagogue,⁶⁰ and the death of Peter and James, the influential figures of the past generation.⁶¹ Moreover, this crisis led to the rigidification of three competing factions: 1) ‘the extreme Judaizers’ (refusing to accept the Gentiles into the community); 2) ‘the James group’ (accepting the Gentiles in the church, but requiring ‘stringent observance of the Mosaic Law’); 3) ‘the Hellenists’ (insisting on the acceptance of the Gentiles, without the requirements of the Law).⁶² Thus, Matthew attempts to ‘embrace, reinterpret, and synthesize the competing traditions’ of the three groups, in order to realize an ‘inclusive synthesis’ that would hold them together.⁶³

The church of Ignatius was so different from the church of Matthew that ‘we may be inclined to ask ourselves whether the latter could possibly be the descendant of the former.’⁶⁴ And yet, ‘Ignatius had inherited, in a more developed form, the tensions present in the Antiochene church from the days of Peter and Matthew.’⁶⁵ Accordingly, similar to Matthew, Ignatius ‘seeks a middle path between two extremes’:⁶⁶ the docetists (‘the left wing’) and the Judaizers (‘the right wing’).⁶⁷ In the words of V. Corwin, whom Meier cites, Ignatius was ‘the leader of the centrist party, which was maintaining a balance between the two extremes... [so, Ignatius’ theology] relies... on a strategy of inclusiveness.’⁶⁸ In regard to the ‘inclusiveness’ of the ‘divergent traditions’, Meier concludes: ‘Ignatius was moved by [the analogous] theological crisis to take a direction similar

⁵⁷ Meier, “Antioch,” 41.

⁵⁸ Meier, “Antioch,” 41.

⁵⁹ Meier, “Antioch,” 57.

⁶⁰ Meier, “Antioch,” 61.

⁶¹ Meier, “Antioch,” 57–58.

⁶² Meier, “Antioch,” 53–55.

⁶³ Meier, “Antioch,” 57.

⁶⁴ Meier, “Antioch,” 74.

⁶⁵ Meier, “Antioch,” 81.

⁶⁶ Meier, “Antioch,” 79 (n. 176).

⁶⁷ Meier, “Antioch,” 79.

⁶⁸ V. Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 64; Meier, “Antioch,” 79 (n. 176).

to that of Matthew: to draw together venerable Christian traditions from different, even divergent streams, all in the service of the unity of the church...⁶⁹

Meier refers repeatedly to the ‘divergent traditions’ that were ‘synthesised’ within the church of Antioch. And yet he fails to address in depth the issue of the eucharistic traditions, all the more as these could invalidate or, at least, nuance his conclusions, as I will attempt to show later.⁷⁰ He does argue, however, that the eucharistic tradition of Matt. 26.26–29 was composed in Antioch, although it differs from the traditions of Paul (1 Cor. 11.23–26) and Luke (22.17–20), that were ‘used in Antioch in the 40s’.⁷¹ Moreover, although there was only one Antiochene church,⁷² he admits that, even since the time of Paul and Peter, the divergent groups of Antioch held the Eucharists separately.⁷³ The situation remains unchanged by the time of Ignatius, when at least one faction of the church (i.e., the docetists) rejected the bishop’s Eucharist.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Meier does not draw much from these very brief references.

(3) M. Slee (2003) criticizes Meier for his failing ‘to take into account the evidence of the *Didache*... as primary [resource] for the situation in the Antioch church in the first century CE’.⁷⁵ Moreover, she considers her addition of the *Didache* a ‘relatively unprecedented step’.⁷⁶ In her own words, Slee aims to ‘examine the problem of Gentile entry into the church in Antioch during the period 50–100 CE and the related issue of Jewish–Gentile tablefellowship’.⁷⁷ So, adding the *Didache* to the existing list of ‘primary resources’, the ‘key texts’ Slee examines are ‘Acts 15, Gal. 2.1–14, the *Didache*, and the Gospel of Matthew’.⁷⁸ Since her study concerns ‘the period 50–100 CE’, the omission of Ignatius is justified.

As anticipated in her ‘Aims and Objectives’ section, Slee examines 1) the ‘conflictual’ relations between Jews and Gentiles and 2) their effect on the participation at the Eucharist. Actually, this double task is also emphasised in the subtitle of her monograph, i.e., ‘Communion and Conflict’. With regard to these two matters, Slee develops an argument similar to Meier’s:

⁶⁹ Meier, “Antioch,” 78.

⁷⁰ I admit that the examination of the eucharistic traditions goes beyond the declared purpose of Meier’s study (see Meier, “Antioch,” 12–14). However, I am raising this point for, as I mentioned above, it could invalidate or, at least, nuance Meier’s conclusions.

⁷¹ Meier, “Antioch,” 25–26.

⁷² Meier, “Antioch,” 40, 80.

⁷³ Meier, “Antioch,” 40, 80.

⁷⁴ Meier, “Antioch,” 80.

⁷⁵ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 3. Cf. Meier, “Antioch,” 81–84.

⁷⁶ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 3.

⁷⁷ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 1.

⁷⁸ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 1.

That these issues nearly destroyed the Antioch church will be demonstrated, as will the fact that it was the Antioch church itself that managed to produce an effective solution to these issues, a solution that restored unity to the church and ensured its survival.⁷⁹

In my opinion, Slee's treatment of the two 'issues' (the 'communion' and 'conflict') is fairly unbalanced. Although its sub-title places first the 'communion', the main focus of the study is on the 'conflict'. In this regard, Slee follows previous scholars. For instance, throughout the three chapters dedicated to the Gospel of Matthew there are no references to the 'communion' of the Matthean church, nor to the eucharistic form of Matthew (Matt. 26.26–29).⁸⁰ Also, the placing of Matthew's Gospel after the *Didache* has not gained wide acceptance among NT scholars.⁸¹ Then, Slee considers that 'the Antioch incident', the dispute between Paul and Peter (Gal. 2.11–14), involves the eucharistic meals, which is also a minority view in modern scholarship.⁸² At the same time, she does not connect Paul's eucharistic form (1 Cor. 11.23–26) to the church of Antioch, a view with a much larger acceptance.⁸³ The only section in which a eucharistic text receives adequate attention is the section on the *Didache*.⁸⁴ In conclusion, given her unbalanced focus on the 'conflictual' issue, Slee should have reversed the subtitle of her study, i.e., 'Conflict and Communion'.

1.3.1.1 Placing this study in the history of research: The Church of Antioch and eucharistic traditions

The history of research was limited to the three studies above,⁸⁵ since I will attempt to construct the current study in the line of their progression. First of all, it

⁷⁹ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 1.

⁸⁰ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 118–55.

⁸¹ G.N. Stanton, "The Early Church of Antioch: Review," *ExpTim* 116/9 (2005): 294.

⁸² Stanton, "The Early Church of Antioch," 294. Slee follows P.F. Esler, *Galatians* (NTR; London/New York: Routledge, 2003), 135–40.

⁸³ Inter alia: J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (trans., N. Perrin; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 188; G.D. Kilpatrick, *The Eucharist in Bible and Liturgy: The Moorhouse Lectures 1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 23; L. Goppelt, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (UTB; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 356; G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1988), 548 (n. 18); B.L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1991), 102–120 (116); F. Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 150, 153, 157–60; B. Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995), 250; J.A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYBC 32; New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2008), 429; J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 207. See the later discussions (section 3.2.3).

⁸⁴ Slee, *Church in Antioch*, 94–100.

⁸⁵ I have omitted some major works (e.g., Downey, *History of Antioch*; Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*; Zetterholm, *Christianity in Antioch*) for reasons given in this section.

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