

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN ASIA MINOR INTO THE EARLY SECOND CENTURY: IGNATIUS AND OTHERS AS WITNESSES AGAINST BAUER

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I. INTRODUCTION

Walter Bauer's book *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* was published in 1934. The English translation, entitled *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* and published in 1971,¹ gave the book a new lease on life. This book has had a significant impact on scholarship on the NT and the early Church. It is to this work and its legacy that I will devote this paper.

Bauer summarized his argument in this way: "Perhaps—I repeat, *perhaps*—certain manifestations of Christian life that the authors of the church renounce as 'heresies' originally had not been such at all, but, at least here and there, were the only form of the new religion—that is, for those regions they were simply 'Christianity.' The possibility also exists that their adherents constituted the majority, and that they looked down with hatred and scorn on the orthodox, who for them were the false believers."² Both chronological and numerical dimensions were important in Bauer's argument. He thought that what would later be called heresy was often "primary" and hence the original form of Christianity, and that in some places and at some times, heresy had a numerical advantage and outnumbered what came to be called orthodoxy.³

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¹ It was translated by the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins, edited by Robert Kraft and Gerhard Krodel, and published by Fortress. The original German edition was published by J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) in Tübingen.

² Bauer, *Orthodoxy* xxii. Strecker helpfully summarized Bauer's thesis in this way (see Bauer, *Orthodoxy* xi): "In earliest Christianity, orthodoxy and heresy do not stand in relation to one another as primary to secondary, but in many regions heresy is the original manifestation of Christianity." Bauer also argued that from the early second century, Roman Christianity was the dominant influence in the formation of orthodoxy. On this see F. W. Norris, "Ignatius, Polycarp, and I Clement: Walter Bauer Reconsidered," VC 30 (1976) 23–44, here 36–41. Norris notes (p. 41): "Bauer's second thesis fails to stand up to scrutiny because he underrated the strength and influence of centers in Asia Minor and Syria."

³ Bauer (*Orthodoxy* 194) comes to the general conclusion from a discussion of "The Use of Literature in the Conflict" that "the heretics considerably outnumbered the orthodox." The terms "heresy" and "orthodoxy" are somewhat problematic, and Bauer himself was very aware that they

Bauer did not use the phrases “lost Christianities” or “lost Scriptures,” but they are clearly implicit in his work. If heresy was the earliest form in some places, then it has a certain primacy, which suggests it should not have been suppressed, nor its writings lost. And if what became “orthodoxy” was a minority in some places, with heresy actually being dominant, then some would argue that the decisions in favor of “orthodoxy” can be seen as very political decisions, which may involve power and politics more than a claim that this particular form of Christianity was a faithful witness to Jesus Christ. Thus the claim that what became orthodox Christianity involved the triumph simply of “the winners” gains much support from Bauer. But Bauer’s thesis also raises the issue of the extent and nature of diversity in earliest Christianity and asks us to examine what might hold the movement together and hence allow us to speak of any sort of unity.

Bauer’s work has been very influential in the ongoing discussion of these matters.⁴ Writing in 1971, Jaroslav Pelikan could say that “Bauer’s thesis has shaped an entire generation of scholars since its first appearance in 1934.”⁵ In 1981, Robert Wilken aptly said that Bauer had created “a new paradigm.”⁶ Helmet Koester explicitly follows Bauer’s approach in a number of his works,⁷ and scholars such as Gerd Lüdemann and Bart Ehrman also

were later terms, and can only be used of the early second century with hindsight. But he wrote (*Orthodoxy* xxii–xxiii) that in his book “‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heresy’ will refer to what one customarily and usually understands them to mean.” On Bauer’s use of these terms see B. D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture. The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 7–8, also 11–15. On the difficulty associated with their use see J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament. An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (2d ed.; London: SCM, 1990) 5–6 (who favors “unity and diversity”) and A. J. Hultgren, *The Rise of Normative Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 3–5 (who favors the term “normative Christianity”). For a defense of the use of the terms “orthodox” and “heterodox” see C. E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 3–9.

⁴ Hill (*Johannine Corpus* 13) notes that Bauer’s thesis has been challenged but “[n]evertheless, as a grand, organizing principle for understanding the spread of Christianity in the second century, his approach has retained much of its force among scholars, particularly since the appearance of the English translation of the book.”

⁵ See J. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine. Volume I: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) 365. Hultgren (*Rise* 9) notes: “Bauer’s work is provocative, controversial, and influential. Its influence continues to exert itself in ways both explicit and implicit in New Testament scholarship and studies in early church history.”

⁶ R. L. Wilken, “Diversity and Unity in Early Christianity,” *SecCent* 1 (1981) 101–10, here 103.

⁷ See H. Koester, “GNOMAI DIAPHOROI: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity,” in *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (ed. H. Koester, J. M. Robinson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 114–57; H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament Volume Two: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (New York; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982) 220–22. Koester begins his influential 1971 essay (originally published in 1965) in this way (“GNOMAI DIAPHOROI” 114): “Walter Bauer, well known as a lexicographer but unfortunately little known as a historian of the ancient church, demonstrated convincingly in a brilliant monograph of 1934 that Christian groups later labelled heretical actually predominated in the first two or three centuries, both geographically and theologically. Recent discoveries, especially those at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt, have made it even clearer that Bauer was essentially right, and that a thorough and extensive reevaluation of early Christian history is called for.” Koester’s 1971 essay seeks to apply Bauer’s approach to the NT itself.

indicate their support for Bauer.⁸ Bauer's influence continues to be alive and well.⁹

How did Bauer argue his case? Bauer started with a geographical approach and investigated Christian communities in Edessa, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Rome. He discussed Ignatius in relation to Antioch and Polycarp in relation to Smyrna and then turned to themes such as the influence of Roman Christianity, the use of literature in various conflicts, the role of the OT, and traditions about Jesus and the apostles.

In this paper I will focus particularly on what Bauer says about Western Asia Minor. This is an area for which we have some good sources and so it provides a useful testing ground for Bauer's thesis. Can Bauer's thesis be sustained for Western Asia Minor? If it does not hold here, questions are raised about whether it holds elsewhere. Here I will draw on Revelation and particularly on Ignatius, and then more broadly on literature from Western Asia Minor.

II. IGNATIUS

Ignatius was the bishop of Antioch in Syria (Ign. *Rom.* 2.2), where he was arrested and sent to Rome under armed guard (Ign. *Rom.* 5.1).¹⁰ He probably

⁸ See Ehrman, *Orthodox* 7–9; Ehrman (p. 7) calls Bauer's book "possibly the most significant book on early Christianity written in modern times." See also B. D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities. The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 172–79; G. Lüdemann, *Heretics. The Other Side of Early Christianity* (London: SCM, 1996) 9–11, 242–45; E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979) xxii–xxiii, xxxi.

⁹ There have been numerous reviews and critical responses to Bauer. See Appendix 2 in Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 286–316 ("The Reception of the Book," by Georg Strecker, revised and augmented by Robert A. Kraft); H. E. W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth. A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church* (London: Mowbray & Co., 1954) 39–80; S. E. Johnson, "Unsolved Questions about Early Christianity in Anatolia," in *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (ed. D. E. Aune, NovTSup 33, Leiden: Brill, 1972) 181–93, here 186–87; Norris, "Ignatius" 23–44; F. W. Norris, "Asia Minor before Ignatius: Walter Bauer Reconsidered," in *Studia Evangelica VII* (ed. E. A. Livingstone; Berlin: Akademie, 1982) 365–77; J. F. McCue, "Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians," *VC* 33 (1979) 118–30; D. J. Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity During the Last Decade," in *Light of All Nations. Essays on the Church in New Testament Research* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1982) 162–73; Dunn, *Unity* 3–7; T. A. Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined. The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church* (Lewiston/Queenston: Mellen, 1988); M. Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of Αἰρεσις in the Early Christian Era," *SecCent* 8 (1991) 65–82; W. R. Schoedel, "Polycarp of Smyrna and Ignatius of Antioch," in *ANRW II.27.1* (1992) 272–358, here 301–2; Hultgren, *Rise* 9–13; E. M. Yamauchi, "Gnosticism and Early Christianity," in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World* (ed. W. E. Helleman; Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1994) 29–61, here 41–44; E. Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Second-Century Rome," *HTR* 93 (2004) 241–56; M. Myllykoski, "Wild Beasts and Rabid Dogs. The Riddle of the Heretics in the Letters of Ignatius," in *The Formation of the Early Church* (ed. J. Ädna; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 342–77, here 342–44. I cannot enter into all the details of Bauer's argument here, but see the detailed discussion of Bauer's thesis in Robinson, *Bauer Thesis*.

¹⁰ On the circumstances of his arrest and why he was being taken to Rome see B. D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers I* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) 208–9. The Greek text followed here is from Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*; English quotations will generally follow his translation.

traveled by ship from Antioch to a port on the southern coast of Asia Minor, although he could have gone by land.¹¹ Ignatius passed through Philadelphia, where he met Christians from that community (Ign. *Phld.* 7.1). He then traveled to Smyrna where he got to know Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna¹² and where he was visited by Christians from Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles, whom he had contacted to inform them of his journey.¹³ He then wrote letters to each of these communities in return,¹⁴ and also to the church in Rome.¹⁵ He then went on to Troas, and from there wrote to the churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna and also to Polycarp. We know that he was then taken to Philippi (Pol., *Phil.* 9.1); we do not know for certain that he was martyred in Rome, although we have no reason to doubt this.¹⁶

Although the authenticity of Ignatius's letters has been challenged a number of times, most recently by Hübner, most scholars agree that what is called the middle recension of the seven letters is reliable.¹⁷ Dating the letters is somewhat uncertain, but a date between AD 105–110 seems to be the most plausible.¹⁸

¹¹ Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers* 204 thinks he traveled by land over Asia Minor.

¹² For what we know of the Christian community in Smyrna see P. Hartog, *Polycarp and the New Testament. The Occasion, Rhetoric, Theme, and Unity of the Epistle to the Philippians and Its Allusions to New Testament Literature* (WUNT 2/134; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 47–53.

¹³ Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles did not lie on Ignatius's direct route, as he notes in Ign. *Rom.* 9.3. Hence W. R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 12 comments, "en route across Asia Minor someone had gone on to Ephesus, Magnesia and Tralles to alert the Christians of those communities to Ignatius' arrival in Smyrna." See also V. Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch* (Yale Publications in Religion 1; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960) 16. Further, messengers who had previously been sent to Rome to prepare for Ignatius's arrival there are probably referred to in Ign. *Rom.* 10.2 (see Schoedel, *Ignatius* 191), which increases the likelihood that messengers had also been sent to Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles to encourage the Christians in those places to send representatives to see Ignatius. We do not know if Ignatius contacted other Christian communities who did not send representatives to visit him. Ign. *Mgn.* 15 suggests he did not have the opportunity to write to all the churches who sent representatives to visit him in Smyrna. Schoedel (*Ignatius* 132) notes: "He probably gave special attention to those whose representation seemed most to demand it."

¹⁴ Ign. *Eph.* 21.1; Ign. *Mgn.* 15.1; Ign. *Trall.* 12.1.

¹⁵ He wrote to Rome to tell them of his impending arrival and to urge them not to attempt to prevent his martyrdom.

¹⁶ Polycarp, in writing to the Philippians presumed that Ignatius had died a martyr's death but was not certain (Pol., *Phil.* 9:2; 13:2). Similarly, Eusebius (*H.E.* 3.36.3) noted only that "[t]he story goes that he was sent from Syria to Rome to be eaten by beasts." On the unity of Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, including a convincing critique of Harrison's views, see Hartog, *Polycarp* 69–72, 148–69. Polycarp's letter would have been written quite soon after Ignatius's journey through Philippi (Hartog, *Polycarp* 169 suggests within a year this journey), since at the time of writing Polycarp is seeking further details about Ignatius's death (see Hartog, *Polycarp* 166–68), and so can be dated to around AD 115 (see Hartog, *Polycarp* 169).

¹⁷ See Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers* 209–13; P. R. Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (WUNT 166; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 631–32.

¹⁸ In his *Chronicon*, written early in the fourth century, Eusebius dates both Ignatius's martyrdom and Pliny's letter to Trajan in the tenth year of Trajan's reign, which was AD 107 (see also *H.E.* 3.36). There is no compelling reason to reject this placement in Trajan's reign (although Eusebius seems to have no accurate information about the year itself), and so the majority of scholars have dated the letters between AD 98 and 117. But can we be more precise than this? Ignatius calls for Christians to meet more frequently (Ign. *Pol.* 4.2; Ign. *Eph.* 13.1) which suggests

III. BAUER'S USE OF REVELATION AND OF IGNATIUS'S LETTERS WITH REGARD TO WESTERN ASIA MINOR?

How does Bauer use Ignatius's letters—and other documents, too—in his argument? Do they support his reconstruction of Christianity in Western Asia Minor? Here I will argue that Ignatius is actually a witness *against* Bauer, on four significant points.¹⁹ I will draw on Revelation as well.

1. *The nature of Ignatius's opponents.* Bauer thought that Ignatius wrote about one group of opponents in the churches of Western Asia Minor and that they were what he calls Judaizing Gnostics.²⁰ Gnosticism in particular

Christianity was not regarded as an illegal *collegium* at this time. We should contrast this implied situation with Pliny's remark to Trajan (*Ep.* 10.96): "Even this practice [partaking of food], however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, by which according to your orders, I had forbidden political associations." This shows that in Pontus and Bithynia in Pliny's time some Christians had stopped meeting for communal meals because of pressure from the Romans. Since it is likely that Pliny wrote *Ep.* 10.96 in AD 110 (see A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1966] 80–81, 691), C. Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius of Antioch in Syria and Asia* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 29; Queenston, Lampeter: Mellen, 1992) 6 notes: "if such an edict had not been applied in the eastern provinces before the time of which Pliny wrote, then possibly (given Ignatius's seeming lack of fear of action against such gatherings) a pre-111 CE date for the letters is indicated." See the discussion of the rest of the evidence in Trevett, *Study* 3–8. J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers Pt II; S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp* (3 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co, 1889) 2, 435–72 and Schoedel (*Ignatius* 5) argue for AD 100–118; Corwin (*St. Ignatius* 3) dates the letters between AD 108 and 117; M. Hengel (*The Johannine Question* [London: SCM, 1989], 14 and 152, n. 84) opts for a date not later than AD 113; Hartog (*Polycarp* 58–60) argues for before AD 117, perhaps 114; Hill (*Johannine Corpus* 421) for around AD 110.

¹⁹ Note that in Appendix 2 ("The Reception of the Book" by G. Strecker, revised and augmented by R. A. Kraft) of the English edition of Bauer's book (*Orthodoxy* 286–316), and in response to reviews, Bauer's treatment of the evidence from Ignatius is described as "[e]specially open to question," along with some other areas. Two other points can be briefly made. Bauer (*Orthodoxy* 62) thought that the emergence of monepiscopacy points to a time of opposition and conflict, when one person seeks "a dictatorship that would establish the supremacy of his own party." This led him to think that the "orthodox" were a minority. But this is to attempt to explain a complex development in purely psychological and sociological terms, and the development of monepiscopacy is better seen as a process, with the earlier stages being evident in the Pastorals and elsewhere (see further Turner, *Pattern* 61; Norris, "Ignatius" 24–29). Secondly, Bauer (*Orthodoxy* 68–69) fails to recognize elements of Ignatius's rhetoric, which means we should not read all that Ignatius says on the same level. On Ignatius's rhetoric see S. Carruth, "Praise for the Churches: The Rhetorical Function of the Opening Sections of the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch," in *Reimagining Christian Origins. A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (ed. E. A. Castelli, H. Taussig; Valley Forge, PA: TPI, 1996) 295–310; Trebilco, *Early Christians* 634–39; H. O. Maier, "The Politics of the Silent Bishop: Silence and Persuasion in Ignatius of Antioch," *JTS* n.s. 55 (2004) 503–19; M. Isacson, "Follow Your Bishop! Rhetorical Strategies in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch," in *The Formation of the Early Church* (ed. J. Ådna; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 317–40.

²⁰ See Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 78. Bauer (*ibid.*) also thinks that John in Revelation is writing "in opposition to a false teaching of an unmistakably Gnostic brand—a heresy which pursues its path within the churches themselves, and not alongside them." Bauer (*ibid.*) thinks Ignatius opposes the same teaching. See also R. Knopf, *Das Nachapostolische Zeitalter. Geschichte der christlichen Gemeinden vom Beginn der Flavierdynastie bis zum Ende Hadrians* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1905) 290–93 to which Bauer refers.

is regarded as a major threat, and those groups which were not orthodox or were not written to by John in Revelation or by Ignatius were seen by Bauer as Gnostics.

There has been much subsequent study both of Gnosticism and of these opponents. It now seems most likely that Ignatius faced two sets of opponents—Judaizers in Magnesia and Philadelphia, and docetists in Tralles and Smyrna and of whom he warned in Ephesus.²¹ The identity of the opponents is significant with regard to discussion about the origin and development of Gnosticism, which has itself become a problematic category. It is important to note that most scholars would not now want to argue that Ignatius faced fully-developed “Gnosticism.”²²

But, with regard to Ignatius’s opponents, Bauer’s thesis can be countered to some extent. As we have noted, one element of Bauer’s overall thesis was that what came to be called heresy at times was the *original* form of Christianity. Is this the case where we can investigate the matter in Western Asia Minor?

In Rev 2:8–11 John writes to the church in Smyrna. The main issue concerns slander from the local Jewish synagogue. Nothing is said about docetism, which features in Ignatius’s letter to Smyrna.

With regard to docetism, it seems clear that it only emerges in its most rudimentary form towards the end of the NT period. Hengel argues that docetism is the result of what he calls the first Hellenization of Christianity. Hengel writes: “‘docetism’ which did away with the scandal of the death of Jesus on the cross in the interest of the impassibility of the God of the philosophers demonstrates that the gnostic systems [which for Hengel include docetism] are *secondary attempts at an ‘acute Hellenization’ of the Christian*

²¹ See Ign. *Mgn.* 8–10; Ign. *Phld.* 5–9; Ign. *Trall.* 9–11; Ign. *Smyrn.* 2–3, 6; Ign. *Eph.* 6.2–9.2; 16–19. There has been much discussion about the nature of the errors Ignatius combated. Some have argued that he combated one group, often thought of as Judaizing Gnosticism (see e.g. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers* 1.373–88; Koester, “GNOMAI DIAPHOROI” 148). Others, and in my view correctly, claim he combated two errors; they note that it is only to Philadelphia and Magnesia that he deals with the problem of Judaizers and only to Tralles and Smyrna that he addresses the issue of docetism. This suggests he is dealing with two different groups; see e.g. D. L. Hoffman, “Ignatius and Early Anti-Docetic Realism in the Eucharist,” *Fides Historia* 30 (1998) 74–88; C. T. Brown, *The Gospel and Ignatius of Antioch* (Studies in Biblical Literature 12; New York: Peter Lang, 2000) 176–98; C. Trevett, “Prophecy and Anti-Episcopal Activity: A Third Error Combated by Ignatius?” *JEH* 34 (1983) 1–18; *Study* 155–73, also suggests a third group involved in “anti-episcopal activity.” See further below, with regard to those who are “opposing the bishop.” For further discussions of the opponents see J. L. Sumney, “Those Who ‘Ignorantly Deny Him’: The Opponents of Ignatius of Antioch,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993) 345–65; M. D. Goulder, “Ignatius’ ‘Docetists,’” *VC* 53 (1999) 16–30; Myllykoski, “Wild Beasts” 342–77; J. W. Marshall, “The Objects of Ignatius’ Wrath and Jewish Angelic Mediators,” *JEH* 56 (2005) 1–23 (who argues that Ignatius is facing one group).

²² Sumney (“Opponents” 353) notes of the docetists: “There is no evidence that they are Gnostics, a Docetic Christology not being sufficient evidence to identify a view as Gnostic.” See also Yamauchi, “Gnosticism” 38; K. L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003) 175; C. Marksches, *Gnosis: An Introduction* (London: T & T Clark, 2003) 67–69; cf. Koester, *Introduction* 286. For discussions of “Gnosticism” see Yamauchi, “Gnosticism” 29–61; M. A. Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); G. Theissen, *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion* (London: SCM, 1999) 231–39; Marksches, *Gnosis*.

creed, i.e. necessary consequences of a popular philosophical influence. On many occasions in the Graeco-Roman world we come across the idea that offensive happenings should not be ascribed to revered divine beings or demi-gods themselves, but only to their ‘representations.’²³

Thus, Hengel sees in the view that Jesus only *seemed* to be of real flesh an attempt to accommodate Christian belief to Greco-Roman views about divinity and thus to make Christianity compatible with a Greco-Roman mindset. Hence the actual *nature* of docetism seems to presuppose an underlying high Christology to start with. Jesus is first seen as divine, and *then*, as a subsequent move, and because of certain views of the incompatibility of true deity with real humanity, Jesus’ humanity is seen as partial, or as an allusion, or it is said that he only seemed to be crucified. Accordingly, it is *unlikely* that docetism was the first form of Christianity in any center, whether Tralles, or Smyrna, or elsewhere.²⁴ It is possible that docetic teachers travelled to Smyrna from elsewhere, but we note that there is no hint of docetism in John’s letter to the community in Smyrna in Rev 2:8–11, which suggests that docetism developed in Smyrna between AD 95, when John probably wrote Revelation,²⁵ and AD 110. It is not, then, the “original” form of Christianity in Smyrna.²⁶

²³ M. Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (London: SCM, 1977) 16 (emphasis added). Note that Hengel calls docetism “gnostic”; in my view, it would be better to simply speak of “docetism” here. Note also Hengel, *Crucifixion* 15: “With its paradoxical contrast between the divine nature of the pre-existent Son of God and his shameful death on the cross, the first Christian proclamation shattered all analogies and parallels to Christology which could be produced in the world of the time, whether from polytheism or from monotheistic philosophy. We have points of comparison for the conceptions of exaltation, ascension and even resurrection. But the suffering of a god soon had to be shown to be mere simulation.” And Hengel, *Crucifixion* 21 (emphasis original): “Thus we can understand all too well how in the pseudo-scientific, popular Platonic arguments used in Gnosticism, this scandal [of the cross], which deeply offended both religious and philosophical thought in antiquity, was eliminated by the theory that the Son of God had only *seemed* to be crucified. In reality he did not suffer at all.” See also Marksches, *Gnosis* 55.

²⁴ This explains that the first real hints of docetic-type views are found with regard to the secessionists of 1 John 2:18–19, 22; 4:1–3; and 2 John 7, to be dated around AD 90–100; see Trebilco, *Early Christians* 271–88.

²⁵ On the dating of Revelation see A. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 54–83; L. L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 13–15; G. Biguzzi, “Ephesus, its Artemision, its Temple to the Flavian Emperors, and Idolatry in Revelation,” *NovT* 40 (1998) 276–90; S. J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John. Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 136–51. The other options are the reign of Trajan (AD 98–117) or the reign of Nero (AD 54–68; see M. Wilson, “The Early Christians in Ephesus and the Date of Revelation, Again,” *Neot* 39 (2004) 163–93 in support of an early dating). D. E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5* (WBC; Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1997) cxviii–cxxxiv gives a detailed proposal of stages of composition, which helps to explain the existence of features in Revelation which have led some scholars to date Revelation to the late 60s AD. Aune (*Revelation 1–5* cxxxii) dates the completion of Revelation to “the last decade of the first century A.D., perhaps even after the turn of the century during the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98–117).”

²⁶ We simply have no information with regard to Tralles. McCue (“Orthodoxy” 118–30) makes a similar point with regard to Valentianism, arguing that it “developed within a mid-second century orthodox matrix” (p. 120) and was not “independent from orthodoxy in its origins” (p. 122). He also argues that relative to the orthodox, the Valentianians were a minority.

Further, Ignatius writes of Judaizers in Magnesia and Philadelphia. We have no other information for Magnesia but John also writes to Philadelphia in Rev 3:7–13 and gives no indication of Judaizers there. This is not because John hesitates to point out the errors of the seven churches—far from it. So, it seems unlikely that a Judaizing form of Christianity was the original form of Christianity in Philadelphia. Hence, we can counter Bauer’s general thesis that “heresy” is early and strong with regard to the situation in these centers.

2. *The churches to which John in Revelation and Ignatius did not write.* Bauer thought that the churches to which John in Revelation and/or Ignatius did not write were heretical; John and Ignatius avoided these communities because they knew they could gain no support there. Hence, Bauer builds up a list of “heretical” communities simply by noting known Christian communities to which John or Ignatius did not send letters.²⁷

For example, we know that a Christian community was established in Colossae by Epaphras (Col 1:7–8; 4:12), and was addressed by Paul in Colossians. But neither John in Revelation, nor Ignatius wrote to Colossae. Similarly, there was a Christian community in Hierapolis (Col 4:13) which neither John nor Ignatius addressed. To explain this Bauer suggests: “John selected the most prominent communities from those in his area which met the prerequisite of seeming to afford him the possibility of exerting a real influence.”²⁸ Thus, Bauer infers that John did not write to some communities—such as Colossae and Hierapolis—because they did not agree with him theologically, and so are to be seen as heretical. Bauer notes that Ignatius does not write to these communities either. He writes: “The community of Hierapolis (Col 4.13) and that of Colossae are bypassed in icy silence by both John and Ignatius.”²⁹

What do we make of this argument? Colossae was overshadowed by Hierapolis (15 miles away) and particularly Laodicea (11 miles away), which was the most prominent city in the Lycus Valley by the Roman imperial period.³⁰ Colossae was probably hit by an earthquake in AD 60,³¹ but we do not know how quickly it recovered, since it has never been excavated.³²

²⁷ Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 78, also thought that John wanted to address seven churches, but could not find seven that were free of heresy and so had to address some “heretical churches,” which shows that heresy was widespread. But it is much more likely that these were the churches that John knew well, and also that he wanted to combat the teaching of the Nicolaitans that he considered false. See also Robinson, *Bauer Thesis* 145–50.

²⁸ Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 78 (emphasis added).

²⁹ *Ibid.* 80. Bauer (*ibid.*) thought Ignatius travelled through Hierapolis, and close by Colossae; this is possible, but not certain. For what we do know of his route see Schoedel, *Ignatius* 11.

³⁰ See C. E. Arnold in *ABD* 1.1089; see also Strabo *Geog.* 12.8.16.

³¹ Tacitus (*Ann.* 14.27.1) notes that Laodicea was destroyed; Colossae is not mentioned, but it was probably damaged; see D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the end of the third century after Christ* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950) 564, 1421, n. 73; Arnold in *ABD* 1.1089.

³² Magie (*Roman Rule* 986, n. 22) notes “Colossae was an important place in the imperial period, for an inscription of this time and coins issued in the second and third centuries after Christ show

It is precarious to argue that John and Ignatius *both chose* not to address the Christian community in Colossae because they knew it was “heretical” and so not in agreement with them. It is just as possible that the Christian community was very small in the city between 95 and 110 because of the slow recovery from the earthquake.

What of Hierapolis? We learn of the Christian group in the city from Col 4:13, and it is likely that Philip and some of his daughters settled in Hierapolis sometime around AD 70.³³ Papias, who wrote “An Exposition of Dominical Sayings” between AD 120–135, was bishop of Hierapolis.³⁴ This is all we know. To say that John and Ignatius avoided writing to the Christian community in Hierapolis because of its theological position is possible, but given our very fragmentary knowledge, this seems unwise.

We should also note that scholars have had very different views about why John chose his particular seven churches.³⁵ It is possible that they were all on a postal route as Ramsay suggested,³⁶ but positive evidence for this is lacking.³⁷ Was it simply that, as an itinerant prophet,³⁸ these were the churches with which John had had regular contact? He knows their situation well and clearly has had pastoral involvement with them in the

the usual officials.” See also P. T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1982) xxvi–xxvii; M. Barth, H. Blanke, *Colossians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1994) 9–10 note that coins minted about AD 150 attest that Colossae was in existence at that time, but we do not know anything more about the late first century. See also Robinson, *Bauer Thesis* 151–52. Unfortunately, there are no Christian inscriptions from this area from the second century which might aid us here; see S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 2, 37–43. For the later history see J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (2d ed.; London: Macmillan and Co, 1875) 45–72.

³³ See F. F. Bruce in *ABD* 3.195; Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.31.2–5; 3.39.9; 5.24.2; see also F. F. Bruce, “Jews and Christians in the Lycus Valley,” *BSac* 141/561 (1984) 10; L. J. Kreitzer, “The Plutonium of Hierapolis and the Descent of Christ into the ‘Lowermost Parts of the Earth’ (Ephesians 4,9),” *Bib* 79 (1998) 381–93.

³⁴ See the discussion of dating in Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 383–84; he suggests Papias wrote “probably in the 120s or possibly as late as the early 130s.” Compare W. R. Schoedel, “Papias,” in *ANRW II.27.1* (1992) 236–37, who opts for a date around AD 110. On Papias in general see Schoedel, “Papias” 235–70.

³⁵ On the symbolism of the number seven, see A. Yarbro Collins, “Numerical Symbolism in Jewish and Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature,” in *ANRW*, II.21.2 (1984) 1275–79. Aune (*Revelation 1–5* 29) comments, “The number is not chosen to symbolize the universal Church . . . (since ‘seven’ does not symbolize ‘completeness’ . . .). Rather, the number seven emphasizes the divine origin and authority of the message of John, since seven is primarily a number with cosmic significance and is therefore associated with heavenly realities.” While the number seven is clearly symbolic, this does not tell us why John chose these particular seven churches. It remains possible that he intended these seven to be representative of a range of spiritual conditions.

³⁶ W. M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904) 185–96; see also C. J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (JSNTSS 11; Sheffield: JSOT, 1986) 14–15.

³⁷ See Aune, *Revelation 1–5* 131, who notes, “Ramsay’s hypothesis of a circular post road has no firm basis in archeological fact but is rather an inference based on the location of cities.”

³⁸ On John as an itinerant prophet see D. E. Aune, “The Social Matrix of the Apocalypse of John,” *BR* 26 (1981) 26–27; R. Schnackenburg, “Ephesus: Entwicklung einer Gemeinde von Paulus zu Johannes,” *BZ* 35 (1991) 56.

past (see e.g. Rev 2:21); there would be a limit to the number of churches with which John could have had such pastoral interaction.³⁹ Thus, he may not have written to Colossae and Hierapolis simply because he did not know them well—they were not part of his “circuit,” as it were. But the fact that we can give a range of possible explanations for John’s choice of churches—and hence for why he did not choose some other places—means that we *cannot* infer that the communities he left out were heretical.

What of the communities addressed by John but not by Ignatius? Ignatius writes to three of the communities addressed by John—Ephesus, Smyrna, and Philadelphia—but does not address four of John’s seven churches—Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea.⁴⁰ Bauer asks:

Is it by chance that the communities of Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea are missing from Ignatius’ audience—communities that [John] the seer vehemently rebukes. . . . Is it too much to claim if, on the basis of what Ignatius both says and does not say, and considering the evidence of the Apocalypse, one concludes that in his attempt to stretch the circle of his influence as widely as possible for the sake of his constituency there was nothing Ignatius could hope for from the Christian groups represented at Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea, because no points of contact existed for him there—no “bishop” was present whom he could press into service, because the heretics had maintained, or had come to exercise, leadership there?⁴¹

Yet we do not know why Ignatius chose to write to particular communities. Ignatius clearly did not determine the route that he took through Asia Minor—nor do we know exactly what that route was.⁴² So it is futile to speculate that he went through a particular place and yet ignored the Christians there. This is entirely an argument from silence, and again there are alternative explanations.⁴³

Take Sardis as one example. John writes to Sardis, but Ignatius does not. Does this mean that by AD 110 it had been lost to heretics, as Bauer suggests?⁴⁴ This is possible, but it is an argument from silence. We should

³⁹ Aune (*Revelation 1–5* 131) notes that all seven were within 100 miles of Ephesus “and might have formed an established circular route for itinerant Christian prophets and teachers, perhaps since Paul’s day.”

⁴⁰ Bauer (*Orthodoxy* 78) writes: “Subsequently, Ignatius apparently followed a similar procedure [to John] and in turn made a selection from among those seven communities.”

⁴¹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 79–80; see also Koester, “GNOMAI DIAPHOROI” 148.

⁴² See Schoedel, *Ignatius* 11–12.

⁴³ See further Norris, “Asia Minor” 374–75. Bauer is aware of the problem of using the argument from silence, but continues to do so. He writes (*Orthodoxy* 74): “Were I not fearful of misusing the argument from silence, I would now have to raise the question as to why we hear nothing at all about the community in neighbouring Thessalonica in this connection?” But, despite the caution, he writes at length about the community at Thessalonica, and makes much of the fact that Polycarp does not seem to have written to Thessalonica (when he did write to Philippi) and that Ignatius had asked the Philippians to be involved in the support for Antioch (Pol. *Phil.* 1.1; 9.1; 13.1–2), but not the Thessalonians. He suggests that the explanation is that at Thessalonica the majority were “heretics” (pp. 74–75). But this is a complete argument from silence. As Bauer himself admits (*Orthodoxy* 75), “To be sure, this is only a conjecture and nothing more!”

⁴⁴ See Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 79–80.

note that since Bauer wrote, Melito's *On the Pascha* has been discovered. This is probably to be dated a little before AD 164, too late to be decisive in this debate.⁴⁵ The text does not explicitly refer to Christians in Sardis, but clearly shows that there was a community of Christians in the city in the AD 160s.⁴⁶ Whilst we cannot deduce from this sermon what the situation was in the city 50 years earlier, it is at least clear that in the AD 160s Sardis was not a city that only had heretical Christians.⁴⁷ Further, the discovery of Melito's sermon reminds us of the fragility of the argument from silence—which is what Bauer's argument is at this point. So, the further evidence that has been discovered since Bauer's time certainly does not support his view.⁴⁸

But we can note that Bauer's argument from silence—which he used extensively—is fragile. We cannot say that there were heretical communities in Colossae, Hierapolis, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea simply on the basis that John and/or Ignatius did not write to these places.

3. *Some disagreements with the bishop were related to church structure rather than theology.* In Bauer's view, "all his [Ignatius's] letters to the Asiatic Christians bear eloquent testimony to this acute danger of heresy."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ On the date see Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 294–95; see also S. G. Hall, *Melito of Sardis on Pascha and Fragments. Texts and Translations* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) xxii.

⁴⁶ There are very few references to the audience of Melito's *Peri Pascha* (PP), but note the address as "beloved" (PP 2, 35) and references to "us" (PP 67), and "our salvation" (PP 69); see also PP 103.

⁴⁷ The sermon contains anti-gnostic features; see Hall, *Melito* xli. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3d ed.; ed. F. L. Cross, E. A. Livingstone; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 1068 notes, "There is an anti-Gnostic insistence on the true humanity of Christ and on the unity of the Old and New Covenants." For a discussion of Melito's own theological position see Hall, *Melito* xl–xlv.

⁴⁸ Note also that the little we know of Laodicea in the second century indicates it was not heretical. Bruce (in *ABD* 4.231) notes the warning to the church in Rev 3:14–22 and goes on, "The warning was apparently effective: the church of Laodicea continued for long to maintain its Christian witness. Between A.D. 161 and 167 a bishop of Laodicea, Sagaris by name, suffered martyrdom. In his time, said Melito, bishop of Sardis, at the beginning of his Easter Festival, there was much debate at Laodicea about the proper day for the celebration of Easter (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 4.26.3)." But again, this evidence is too late to be definitive with respect to Bauer's views.

⁴⁹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 65. He also thinks that there was an acute danger from heresy in Antioch (see 63–67). However, it is far from clear that the problem in Antioch (which led Ignatius to ask for a range of churches in Asia Minor to send representatives to visit Antioch, or to write letters) was a doctrinal issue (see Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers* 208). We note that Ignatius was told that the church at Antioch had regained its "peace" (see Ign. *Phld.* 10.1; Ign. *Smyrn.* 11.2–3; Ign. *Pol.* 7), but it seems unlikely that the victory of one theological group over another could be announced in quite these terms. If the initial trouble was caused by theological differences, we would expect Ignatius to say that the troublemakers had left, or something similar; given Ignatius's concerns about different doctrine, if false teachers (if such there were) had remained as part of the church but simply agreed not to teach different doctrine, it seems very unlikely that Ignatius would describe this as "peace." The decisive arrival of "peace," as Ignatius announces it, sounds as if it is about quite a different matter. It seems more likely that "peace" refers to the appointment as a successor to Ignatius of someone who shared his views about episcopacy. If this was the case, then Bauer's view of the predominance of "heresy" at Antioch is undermined. Again, Bauer is probably wrong to see all conflict as theological. See also Hultgren, *Rise* 12–13; Hartog, *Polycarp* 75–76.

Bauer reaches this opinion in part by taking all dissension, all indications of conflict with the bishop, as evidence for *theological* disagreement between the (orthodox) bishop and (heretical) church members.⁵⁰ Now while clearly theological issues were sometimes at stake in the disputes Ignatius reports, this was certainly not always the case, and Bauer overlooks this. We will argue here that on some occasions, the reasons for people “opposing the bishop” was that a change in church structure was occurring, with which some Christians in Western Asia Minor did *not* agree. If so, this is *not* evidence for “heresy.”⁵¹

Evidence for Christians “opposing the bishop” comes from Ign. *Eph.* 5.2–3:

Let no one be deceived. Anyone who is not inside the sanctuary lacks the bread of God. For if the prayer of one or two persons has such power, how much more will that of the bishop and the entire church (καὶ πάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας)? Therefore the one who does not join the entire congregation (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό) is already haughty and passes judgment on himself. For it is written, “God opposes the haughty.” And so we should be eager not to oppose the bishop, that we may be subject to God.

Ignatius is referring to gatherings for worship here, as the reference to corporate prayer makes clear. The passage suggests that a small group of people are meeting together, but *apart from* the bishop and the rest of the church.⁵² This is implied by the phrase, “For if the prayer of one or two persons has such power, how much more will that of the bishop and the entire church (καὶ πάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας)?” (Ign. *Eph.* 5.2). These people who are praying together are not, however, joining with the entire congregation (Ign. *Eph.* 5.3), which is the gathering under the bishop,⁵³ since these people are said to “oppose the bishop.” Nor are they “inside the sanctuary,” that is, they are not a part of the community over which the bishop presides, and so

⁵⁰ See e.g. Ign. *Trall.* 2–3 and 12.2–3 with their summons to submit to the bishop, which is dealt with below, which Bauer (*Orthodoxy* 68–69) interprets as relating to theological matters (he writes of Ign. *Trall.* 2–3, “which make her seem to be particularly susceptible to false teaching [Trall. 6]”). He also includes Tralles in his discussion about heretical minorities on p. 69. Note also his comments on p. 67, where, having just discussed heresy, he argues that the various bishops in Asia Minor did not exercise “unlimited power over the shaping of Christian faith and life in those cities,” again interpreting all conflict as doctrinal.

⁵¹ Here I am building on the work of Trevett, “Prophecy” 1–18 (see also *Study* 194–203), who argued that Ignatius was confronting a third group who opposed his notion of monepiscopacy. However, rather than seeing them as a “third” group, which risks seeing them as a “false teaching” alongside docetism and Judaizing, it seems best to see this rather as a “tendency” amongst Ignatius’s readers. Note also Ehrman’s comment (*Apostolic Fathers* 206–7) about Trevett’s view: “It is not clear, however, if his polemic in this case is directed against a specific group or a general tendency found throughout the early Christian communities.” See also L. K. Pietersen, *The Polemic of the Pastorals. A Sociological Examination of the Development of Pauline Christianity* (JSNTSS 264; London: T & T Clark International, 2004) 97–101.

⁵² Ignatius does not seem to be thinking of external opponents here (see Ign. *Eph.* 7, 9, 16–17), since his language is much harsher when they are in view (see Schoedel, *Ignatius* 54).

⁵³ See A. Hensley, “Submission to Bishop, Presbytery and Deacons in the Letters of St Ignatius of Antioch,” *Lutheran Theological Journal* 35 (2001) 81. We will show below that for Ignatius the only valid assembly is under the bishop.

lack, in Ignatius's opinion, the true "bread of God" (Ign. *Eph.* 5.2). Ignatius exhorts them to join with the bishop and the whole church, for then their prayer will be even more powerful.⁵⁴

We see, then, that some Christians in Ephesus had a measure of independence from the bishop.⁵⁵ Ignatius regards such independence as haughtiness (Ign. *Eph.* 5.3);⁵⁶ the offenders should obey the bishop by coming together in unity in order that they may be subject to God, rather than be haughty. But the haughtiness of these people seems to be simply that they believe they can worship apart from the bishop.

Ignatius also addresses this issue in writing to Tralles. In Ign. *Trall.* 7.2 he writes: "The one who is inside the sanctuary is pure but the one outside the sanctuary is not pure. This means that the one who does anything apart from the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons is not pure in conscience." Again, it seems clear that some people are acting "apart from the bishop."⁵⁷

Thus, people seem to have been meeting "apart from the bishop" in Ephesus and Tralles and in each case no doctrinal issue seems to be at stake. The situation was similar, though slightly more complex, in Philadelphia.⁵⁸ Those who were meeting apart from the bishop were probably

⁵⁴ Ignatius returns to this theme in Ign. *Eph.* 13.1–2; 20.2.

⁵⁵ Schoedel (*Ignatius* 54) speaks of some Ephesians who "exercised a measure of independent judgment."

⁵⁶ He gives a quotation from Prov 3:34 to the effect that God opposes the haughty.

⁵⁷ See also *Trall.* 2–3, 12.2. Thus in Ign. *Trall.* 2.2 (where he says "as is already the case" with regard to not engaging in activity apart from the bishop), Ignatius seems to be using the rhetorical device of ascribing fulfillment in advance in order to soften a recommendation.

⁵⁸ In Ign. *Phld.* 4, Ignatius writes: "And so be eager to celebrate just one eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup that brings the unity of his blood, and one altar, as there is one bishop together with the presbytery and the deacons." This suggests that there were rival eucharists in Philadelphia. Corwin (*St. Ignatius* 58) notes (her emphasis): "the emphasis on the *one* eucharist clearly suggests the existence of competing forms." The likelihood of this is confirmed by Ign. *Phld.* 7.2–8.1: "'Do nothing apart from the bishop; keep your flesh as the Temple of God; love unity; flee divisions. . . . I was therefore acting on my own accord as a person set on unity. But where there is division and anger, God does not dwell. Thus the Lord forgives all who repent, if they return to the unity of God and the council of the bishop.'" C. Trevett, "Apocalypse, Ignatius, Montanism: Seeking the Seeds," *VC* 43 (1989) 315, comments with respect to the situation at Philadelphia that "there was the possibility of meetings organised apart from the bishop and his circle, something Ignatius deplored (1; 3.2–3; 7.1; 8.1)." See also Ign. *Phld.* inscr. In keeping with this, the term *μερισμός* ("division") occurs five times in Ign. *Phld.* (2.1; 3.1; 7.2; 8.1) and only once elsewhere (Ign. *Smyrn.* 7.2). From the letter it seems clear that the "divisions" involved "false teaching" to some extent, in this case people Ignatius regarded as Judaizers (Ign. *Phld.* 6–9). The focus of the issue was on the interpretation of the OT (see W. R. Schoedel, "Ignatius and the Archives," *HTR* 71 [1978] 97–106). However, Schoedel (*Ignatius* 205) shows that there was no serious theological disagreement between Ignatius and these opponents, such as disagreement about the person of Christ or the place of the law. Further, Sumney ("Opponents" 357–58) argues that 6.1–2 with its mention of "interpreting Judaism to you" also addresses the interpretation of Scripture, which is the focus of 8.1–2. Hence, it is the expertise in scriptural interpretation of these opponents in the community which probably posed a threat to leaders. But in addition, it seems likely that a key issue with regard to "division" focused on church governance. These opponents were the people who tried to deceive Ignatius (Ign. *Phld.* 7.1) and against whom he said: "Do nothing without the bishop" (Ign. *Phld.* 7.2), a proclamation the Spirit made through him. Thus Ign. *Phld.* 7.2–8.1, together with Ign. *Phld.* 4, suggests that there was a group within the

meeting separately in one or more house churches.⁵⁹

But why did some Christians in these cities “oppose the bishop”? Why would they pray and worship apart from him and not come to the bishop’s assembly or an assembly authorized by him when, as we have noted, no decisive theological differences were at stake?⁶⁰ The evidence suggests that this was a time of transition with regard to *church structure*, and that one reason that some were “opposing the bishop” was that they were resisting these changes.

In Ign. *Eph.* 6.1 Ignatius refers to someone being sent in this way: “For we must receive everyone that the master of the house sends to take care of his affairs as if he were the sender himself. And so we are clearly obliged to look upon the bishop as the Lord himself.” Here, using material from Christian tradition, Ignatius is saying that the bishop has been “sent” by God the master of the house, and must be “received” by the Ephesians, since, according to tradition, the one sent by God must be received as God himself.⁶¹ This, and the comment that “we are clearly obliged to look upon the bishop as the Lord himself,” suggests that some Christians in Ephesus *disagreed* that

community who acted apart from the bishop (see Trevett, *Study* 92–99). So although there are other issues involved (notably the interpretation of the OT), there were no serious doctrinal issues, and one key factor at Philadelphia is also “opposing the bishop.” By contrast, Bauer (*Orthodoxy* 69) sees this as exclusively a doctrinal issue.

In both Smyrna and Magnesia, there similarly were people meeting apart from the bishop, but in each case theological issues seem to have been the key factor. In Ign. *Smyrn.* 8.1 he writes, “Let no one do anything apart from the bishop that has to do with the church,” but this seems to refer to docetists who held their own eucharists and are opposing the bishop for theological reasons (see Ign. *Smyrn.* 7.1–9.1; see also Schoedel, *Ignatius* 240–44). In Magnesia, a group was meeting apart from the bishop (see Ign. *Mgn.* 4.1; 7.1–2; see Schoedel, *Ignatius* 116), but it seems likely that they were the Judaizers addressed in Ign. *Mgn.* 8.1–9.2.

⁵⁹ We have noted that Ign. *Eph.* 5.2 suggests that some Ephesian Christians were meeting together, but apart from the bishop and the rest of the church. It is likely that these Christians were actually meeting together separately in one or more house churches (see Ign. *Eph.* 20.2; Ign. *Mgn.* 7.2; Corwin, *St. Ignatius* 85; Schoedel, *Ignatius* 240, 243). Those who are not meeting with the bishop are probably meeting together in house churches, but apart from the bishop or without his approval (cf. Ign. *Smyrn.* 7.1). This is suggested by Ign. *Eph.* 5.2 where the contrast between “the entire church” with the bishop and the powerful prayer of one or two *apart from* the rest of the church suggests that these one or two were meeting separately in a house church. Thus the Ephesian Christians were not united, but rather different groups seem to have existed, groups that were not all under the bishop Onesimus, who was not the undisputed bishop of Ephesus.

⁶⁰ It seems unlikely that doctrinal differences were a factor in people opposing the bishop in Ephesus, since Ignatius makes it clear that, in his view, the Christian community he addressed did not tolerate false doctrine. After discussing the problem of those who “oppose the bishop” in Ign. *Eph.* 5.1–6.1 Ignatius then writes in 6.2: “Thus Onesimus himself praises you highly for being so well ordered in God, because all of you live according to the truth and no heresy resides among you. On the contrary, you no longer listen to anyone, except one who speaks truthfully about Jesus Christ.” Further, he emphasizes that they have not listened to the opponents (Ign. *Eph.* 9.1). I suggest in Trebilco, *Early Christians* 689–99 that it was not quite as straightforward as this, but it does seem clear that the Ephesians were not following other teaching in the way that had occurred in Smyrna and Philadelphia.

⁶¹ On this see Schoedel, *Ignatius* 56 n. 15, with reference to Matt 10:40; 21:33–41; John 13:20; and Gal 4:14.

the bishop had indeed been sent to them by God, and so did not receive him. Ignatius argues that Onesimus should be received, and his authority respected because he was sent by God. However, the passage suggests that one reason some Ephesians opposed the bishop was because they did not see him as one with God-given authority.⁶²

This indicates that some Ephesian Christians were resisting a change in church structure, which involved the bishop claiming to have authority over all the Christians in Ephesus. Moniscopacy would have been a significant development for Christians used to leadership being provided by a group of presbyters, with no one person being regarded as the leader of the leaders.⁶³ Some Ephesian Christians seem to have argued that the one bishop had not been “sent” to them by God, and need not be received. Thus they need not come to the bishop’s assembly, but rather could continue to meet separately. This points to a time of transition in church structure in Ephesus, a transition that was resisted by some Christians. Some were opposing the bishop because they did not agree with this change in church structure.⁶⁴

The weighty justification that Ignatius gives for the office of bishop⁶⁵ also suggests that this was a time of *transition* to a different leadership structure, and that some resisted this change because they wanted to hold on to a different church order.⁶⁶ Further, Ignatius envisages the bishop having very broad and widespread control over the life of the community, control that was much broader than we see elsewhere at this time.⁶⁷ This suggests that Ignatius was trying to consolidate and extend the authority of the bishop over the life of the church.

⁶² Trevett (“Apocalypse” 319) notes Ignatius’s language in *Ign. Eph.* 5.2–6.1 (cf. John 13:20) suggests the refusal to receive “as the Lord” those who were “sent” to them. She writes: “Bishops, in particular (and especially silent ones?) should be so received, Ignatius argued.”

⁶³ Trevett (*Study* 113, n. 74) notes: “Developing moniscopacy rather than episcopacy of the full-blown monarchical kind is reflected in these letters.”

⁶⁴ This may explain the attention Ignatius gives to explaining away Onesimus’s silence (*Ign. Eph.* 6.1; 15.1–2). What Ignatius says about Onesimus’s silence is understandable if some groups of Christians in Ephesus did not want to grant to Onesimus the right to be bishop over them. Ignatius wanted to show Onesimus, in his eyes the bishop over all Ephesian Christians, in the best possible light and to explain away his shortcomings in order to convince everyone that they should acknowledge Onesimus. But on silence see now Maier, “Politics” 503–19.

⁶⁵ See e.g. *Ign. Phld.* 3.2: “For all who are of God and Jesus Christ, these are with the bishop.” This shows how closely Ignatius identified being in the church with being with the bishop. The implication is that if one is not with the bishop, then one is not of God and Jesus Christ. This is very weighty justification for the episcopal office and suggests that this was a contentious point; see also *Ign. Eph.* 3.2; *Ign. Mgn.* 3.1–2; *Mgn.* 4.1; 6.1; 13.2; *Ign. Trall.* 2.1; 3.1; 13.2; *Ign. Phld.* inscr.; 1.1; *Ign. Smyrn.* 8.1–2; 9.1; *Ign. Pol.* 6.1.

⁶⁶ Perhaps they met apart from the bishop because they did not recognise his authority over them. Or perhaps this was how they had always met, and they were now opposing the attempts of a bishop to, as they saw it, “interfere” in their Christian group.

⁶⁷ For example, to be valid a eucharist had to be held under the bishop’s control. This could be conducted by a person to whom the bishop entrusted the eucharist; see *Ign. Smyrn.* 8.1; *Ign. Eph.* 5.2; 20.2; *Ign. Phld.* 4.1; see S. M. Gibbard, “The Eucharist in the Ignatian Epistles,” in *Studia Patristica Vol VIII* (ed. F. L. Cross; Berlin: Akademie, 1966) Part 2, 215. Further, those who marry must do so with the approval of the bishop; see *Ign. Pol.* 5.2; Schoedel, *Ignatius* 273. See also *Ign. Mgn.* 7.1–2; *Ign. Trall.* 2.2; 7.2; *Ign. Phld.* 7.2; *Ign. Smyrn.* 8.2; *Ign. Pol.* 4.1; 7.2.

This evidence builds into a cumulative case that this was a time of transition with regard to church structure in the congregations to which Ignatius wrote in Asia Minor. He knew that many of his addressees were acting apart from the bishop, but also that they did not think this was wrong and so did not agree with Ignatius about the city-wide authority of the bishop. This suggests that some of his addressees were currently convinced about the rightness of a different, more collegial model of church order. This, in turn, shows that moniscopacy was not well established in Asia, and in fact that one of the reasons that Ignatius was writing was to attempt to establish it more securely. But who were these Christians in Ephesus who were resisting such a change?

We can suggest that some Christians in Ephesus may have wanted to resist the change to moniscopacy because they valued their current system of church order. There are two possibilities here. One aspect of the opposition to the growth of the power of the one bishop in Ephesus may have been from those who belonged to the Johannine community as witnessed to by 1–3 John. The evidence that this movement should be located in Ephesus is strong, and although they valued tradition bearers like John the elder, they seem not to have had leaders who were appointed to particular offices, and the locus of authority was generally in the wider group.⁶⁸ We can suggest that they would have resisted the developments towards a much more institutionalized church structure, including the development of moniscopacy with the bishop claiming to have authority over all the Christians in Ephesus. They would have valued a much freer model of collegiality.

Secondly, another dimension of this opposition may have been from those who valued the prophetic model of leadership demonstrated by John the Seer. Trevett has noted that John wrote Revelation for Christians in Asia, including communities in Ephesus, Philadelphia, and Smyrna.⁶⁹ We can suggest that at least some of these Christians were convinced by what John wrote, and it seems likely that at least some of John's readers were also convinced about and valued prophetic leadership and associated charismata.⁷⁰ It would be unsurprising if they "opposed the bishop" and felt free to act apart from the bishop and without his authority. This view is supported by evidence that Ignatius was aware of the need to take account of the emphases of readers who valued charismata and found conducive the claim to prophetic inspiration which is fundamental to Revelation.⁷¹ Thus Christians who appreciated

⁶⁸ On their location in Ephesus see Trebilco, *Early Christians* 241–71. On the locus of authority in the Johannine Letters see Trebilco, *Early Christians* 473–90.

⁶⁹ See Trevett, "Apocalypse" 316–21, 330; see also C. Trevett, "The Other Letters to the Churches of Asia: Apocalypse and Ignatius of Antioch," *JSNT* 37 (1989) 128; see also R. B. Eno, "Authority and Conflict in the Early Church," *Église et Théologie* 7 (1976) 43–48.

⁷⁰ See D. E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 291–316 on prophecy in early Christianity in the period from AD 90–150.

⁷¹ On a number of occasions Ignatius defended his own status as a "charismatic," or writes in a way that suggests that his readers valued prophecy or charismatic gifts; see Ign. *Eph.* 5.1; 15.2; 20.2; Ign. *Phld.* inscr.; 7.1–2; Ign. *Smyrn.* inscr.; see Trevett, "Other Letters" 119–31; H. de Genouillac, *L'Église Chrétienne au temps de Saint Ignace d'Antioche* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1907) 151–53.

John's Revelation may lie behind some of the opposition to Ignatius and his fellow episcopal officials.

Those who valued the ministry of prophets, or charismatic gifts more generally, thus probably formed one dimension of the opposition in Asia to the form of church order advocated by Ignatius. These people did not necessarily disagree with Ignatius theologically, but rather they seem to have been ambivalent in their attitude to the office of bishop and may have felt free to "oppose the bishop" and to act apart from him and without his authority. As office and order were changing, these Christians may well have sought to retain their traditional freedoms, for it seems clear that the order Ignatius advocated would limit the freedom that had previously been accorded to charismatics in some earlier forms of order.

We suggest, then, that those who were opposing the bishop in Ephesus included some from the Johannine community (who may have been meeting in separate house churches, Ign. *Eph.* 5.2–3), and some of those who had received Revelation and valued the prophetic authority which is fundamental to that book. A similar situation may have occurred in Tralles and elsewhere.

What does all this mean with regard to Bauer's thesis? Some of those who are in disagreement with the bishop are arguing about church structure, *not* about theology. They are not heretics—but advocates for a different form of church leadership. Bauer does not recognize this. This means that he considerably *overestimates* the theological diversity among his addressees in Western Asia Minor. Actually, it seems much more likely that some Christians in Ephesus and Tralles, and probably elsewhere as well, were resisting a change in church structure rather than being theologically at variance with their bishops. Bauer has misread the evidence at this point.

4. *The memory of Paul in Ephesus?* Bauer writes that in Revelation

the recollection of the Pauline establishment of the church of Ephesus appears to have been completely lost, or perhaps even deliberately suppressed. . . . now it is in danger of slipping into gnosticism . . . And as far as Paul is concerned, in the Apocalypse only the names of the twelve apostles are found on the foundations of the new Jerusalem (21.14); there is no room for Paul. And at the very least, it will be but a short time before the Apostle to the Gentiles will have been totally displaced in the consciousness of the church of Ephesus in favor of one of the twelve apostles, John. In Ephesus, Paul had turned out to be too weak to drive the enemies of the church from the battlefield.⁷²

From the absence of the name of Paul in Revelation, Bauer concludes that Pauline influence was no longer present in Ephesus at the time that John

⁷² Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 83–84. E. Lohse, "The Revelation of John and Pauline Theology," in *The Future of Early Christianity. Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (ed. B. A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress) 360 takes up this view and writes of "the failure [in Revelation] to mention a single syllable of Pauline thought . . . Reading the book of Revelation . . . gives the impression that its author had never heard about Paul the apostle and his theology." Cf. K. Berger, *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums. Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen/Basel: Francke, 1995) 595–602.

wrote Revelation,⁷³ nor did it continue in the early second century.⁷⁴ Bauer concludes: "I can understand this state of affairs, which I have sketched in bold strokes, only by supposing that in Ephesus a community of apostolic origin has, through its struggles with external enemies and above all through internal discord and controversies . . . suffered such setbacks and transformations that for many, even the name of its founder became lost."⁷⁵

But *why* does John not mention Paul in Revelation? Is it because Paul is no longer remembered there? The much more likely explanation is that John and some of John's readers know the Pauline tradition well, but John has *chosen* not to speak of that tradition. It seems unlikely that Paul has been completely forgotten in Western Asia Minor. It is much more likely that John made no use of the knowledge of Paul that he had. The reason for this is that John's main opposition in the seven churches was the Nicolaitans, who were involved in eating food offered to idols and in idolatry.⁷⁶ Scholars have often drawn parallels between "the strong" at Corinth and the Nicolaitans,⁷⁷ and suggested that the Nicolaitans may have been influenced by Paul, or may have radicalized Paul's teaching. Thus the Nicolaitans probably appealed to Paul for support. In doing so, they almost certainly went much further than Paul allowed, but given their claim that Paul supported them, if John was to appeal to Paul in Revelation, he would be playing into the hands of the Nicolaitans. They could claim, "The Paul of whom you speak supports us." It seems reasonable to suggest that John has avoided any reference to Paul precisely because he is influential among John's opponents. Faced with this situation, the path of wisdom for John was not to refer to Paul.⁷⁸

We will note shortly that there is also positive evidence for Pauline tradition in Western Asia Minor through this period. It is very unlikely, then, that Paul was forgotten in Western Asia Minor, as Bauer suggested. Rather, Pauline Christianity remained influential.

⁷³ Note Bauer's comment (*Orthodoxy* 84–85): "Even the Pastorals, in agreement with Revelation, have to admit that in the second century, the Apostle had lost the contest in Ephesus." He sees Cerinthus in part behind this.

⁷⁴ He goes on to say (Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 85): "Orthodox Christianity underwent reorganization and now found an apostolic patron in that member of the twelve who shared his name with the apocalypticist and who established close connection with Jesus more securely than had Paul, which was considered to be the highest trump in the struggle with heresy. Only the canonization of the book of Acts and of the Pauline letters, including the Pastorals, once again provided clear insight into the real situation with respect to Paul." He thinks the Pastorals were written around AD 140 (see below).

⁷⁵ Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 85; see also 87.

⁷⁶ See Rev 2:6, 14–15, 20–23. On the Nicolaitans see H. Räisänen, "The Nicolaitans: Apoc. 2; Acta 6," in *ANRW*, II.26.2 (1995) 1602–44; Trebilco, *Early Christians* 315–35.

⁷⁷ See Trebilco, *Early Christians* 333–34; see also J.-W. Taeger, "Begründetes Schweigen. Paulus und paulinische Tradition in der Johannesapokalypse," in *Paulus. Apostel Jesu Christi. Festschrift für Günter Klein* (ed. M. Trowitzsch; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1998) 196; U. Vanni, "L'Apocalypse johannique. État de la question," in *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (ed. J. Lambrecht; Gembloux/Leuven: Duculot/Leuven University Press, 1980) 32.

⁷⁸ See Taeger, "Begründetes Schweigen" 198, 200–202.

IV. WHAT WAS THE SITUATION IN WESTERN ASIA MINOR INTO THE EARLY SECOND CENTURY?

How, then, should we think of the situation of Christian communities in Western Asia Minor into the second century? Here I will be drawing on the “other witnesses” mentioned in my sub-title—“Ignatius and others as witnesses against Bauer.” I cannot develop this at length, but let me note some key points towards an alternative picture to that proposed by Bauer. I will discuss the evidence for the ongoing influence of both Pauline and Johannine traditions and then will briefly note the development of “litmus tests” or criteria of belief and action that demonstrate a growing concern for the delineation of “orthodoxy” in this area.

1. *Pauline influence.* We have noted that Bauer thought Pauline influence vanished from Western Asia Minor.⁷⁹ However, it seems clear that we have the following chain of Pauline influence in the area. In the early 50s, Paul established communities in Western Asia Minor. As part of the Pauline corpus we have 1 and 2 Timothy, which were written to Ephesus;⁸⁰ if these letters were written by Paul, around 65,⁸¹ then they point to his continuing influence in Ephesus at the end of his life. If they are by a faithful Paulinist, writing perhaps around 80, then they testify to the ongoing importance of Pauline tradition at this date.⁸² Bauer does not give sufficient credence to this evidence, since he thinks the Pastorals were written after AD 140.⁸³

It seems likely that the writing of Acts, probably around AD 80,⁸⁴ would have increased the profile of Paul. Surely one of the places to which the book

⁷⁹ See Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 83–84. We cannot go into the wider question of Paul’s influence in the second century. But note that W. S. Babcock, ed., *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990) ix argues against the view “that Paul’s most characteristic theological themes were taken up by marginal or heretical Christian groups, but were repressed or diminished by the groups that would turn out to be central to the emerging Christian tradition.” By contrast he argues that (Babcock, *Paul* xiv–xv) “Paul could be and was deployed against the ‘heretics’ quite as much as by the ‘heretics’; and it is not unfair to suggest that on the ‘orthodox’ side, the Pauline texts were woven into a theology that would not have had the character that it did if Paul had not written what he wrote or been accorded the authority he was accorded.”

⁸⁰ See 1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 1:18; 4:12.

⁸¹ On authorship and dating see e.g. G. D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988) 23–26; W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000) xlv–cxix.

⁸² See Trebilco, *Early Christians* 197–205; Norris, “Asia Minor” 371. Bauer (*Orthodoxy* 223–28) overlooks the significance of the Pastorals for the strength of Pauline tradition in Western Asia Minor at this point, since he thinks that Paul was rescued from Gnostic heretics through the Pastoral Epistles being written and added to the collection of Paul’s writings, around AD 140. But there are strong arguments that Polycarp used the Pastorals much earlier than this; see Hartog, *Polycarp* 178–79.

⁸³ Bauer (*Orthodoxy* 222–27) thought the Pastorals had not been written by AD 140, when Marcion made his collection of Paul’s letters. Against this, see, e.g., Norris, “Asia Minor” 370–71; Hartog, *Polycarp* 90–91.

⁸⁴ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994, 1998) 2, xlii–xliii suggests a date in the late 80s or early 90s.

of Acts would quickly have been sent, and where it would have been avidly read, was Western Asia Minor, which featured so prominently in the story. That Polycarp probably knew Acts reinforces this.⁸⁵ It would quickly have supplemented the image of Paul among its readers. Bauer overlooks the importance of Acts here.⁸⁶

Ignatius shows that knowledge of Paul was alive in Ephesus when he wrote. In Ign. *Eph.* 12.2 we read: "You are a passageway for those slain for God; you are fellow initiates with Paul, the holy one who received a testimony and proved worthy of all fortune. When I attained to God, may I be found in his footsteps, this one who mentions you in every epistle in Christ Jesus."⁸⁷ Bauer thinks this is "in no way based upon Paul's apostolic activity but rather on the fact that the road to martyrdom, which Paul also travelled, leads past this city."⁸⁸ But that Ignatius can praise the Ephesians as "fellow initiates with Paul (Παύλου συμμύσται)" and is clearly aware that Paul mentions the Ephesians in his letters⁸⁹ strongly suggests that the Ephesians Ignatius had talked with had spoken of this as an important matter to them (and note that he had spoken with a number of Ephesians),⁹⁰ and Ignatius knows that the reference to Paul will be well received amongst his Ephesian readers. It is evidence, then, for the vitality of traditions about Paul amongst some of Ignatius's Ephesian readers.⁹¹

⁸⁵ We need to recall the very good communication between Christian communities here; see M. B. Thompson, "The Holy Internet: Communication Between Churches in the First Christian Generation," in *The Gospels for All Christians. Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (ed. R. Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 49–70. On whether Ignatius knew Acts see Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905) 73; Schoedel, *Ignatius* 228; Barrett, *Acts* 1.36. Polycarp probably knew Acts; see Pol. *Phil.* 1.2 and Acts 2:24, which share the phrase "having loosed the pains (λύσας τὰς ὀδύνας)" of death or Hades, an adaptive allusion to Ps 18:4–6. Hartog (*Polycarp* 185) notes: "It seems unlikely that both Acts and Polycarp would have made the same allusive translation independently." See also Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, *New Testament* 98; Barrett, *Acts* 1.36–37; Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers* 335. Hartog (*Polycarp* 195) notes that Polycarp may be "an important first witness to Acts." On other early witnesses to Acts see Barrett, *Acts* 1, 35–48.

⁸⁶ Bauer notes (*Orthodoxy* 85): "Only the canonization of the book of Acts and of the Pauline letters, including the Pastorals, once again provided clear insight into the real situation with respect to Paul." He refers to Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.4 and the Acts of Paul at this point, and so clearly thinks of canonization (and hence the impact of Acts) as occurring late in the second century.

⁸⁷ Ignatius also mentions Paul in Ign. *Rom.* 4.3: "I am not enjoining you as Peter and Paul did. They were apostles, I am condemned; they were free, until now I have been a slave."

⁸⁸ Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 83.

⁸⁹ There has been much debate about the phrase "who mentions you in every epistle in Christ Jesus," since the Ephesians are only mentioned in 1 Cor 15:32 and 16:8 (and 1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 1:18; 4:12). Note Lindemann's comment (A. Lindemann, "Paul in the Writings of the Apostolic Fathers," in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* [ed. W. S. Babcock; Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990] 36): "But it should be obvious that Ignatius' point is not to give precise information on the frequency of the word *Ephesus* in the Pauline corpus. Ignatius is simply trying to link the Apostle Paul and the Church of Ephesus as intimately as possible."

⁹⁰ See Ign. *Eph.* 1.3–2.1; he had met Onesimus, Crocus, Burrhus, Euplus, and Fronto.

⁹¹ See H. Koester, "Ephesus in Early Christian Literature," in *Ephesus: Metropolis of Asia. An Interdisciplinary Approach to Its Archaeology, Religion, and Culture* (ed. H. Koester; Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: TPI, 1995) 119–40, here 133, 140. The matter of whether Ignatius himself (and Antiochian Christianity) was influenced by Pauline theology is a separate point, since here we are concerned with Paul and the Ephesian Christians. But on whether Ignatius had been influenced by Pauline theology see Lindemann, "Paul" 37–41; Schoedel, "Polycarp" 307–8.

Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, whose letter to the Philippians can be dated with confidence to around AD 110–115,⁹² refers to Paul three times, including writing of “the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul,” which Polycarp says “neither I nor anyone like me is able to replicate” (Pol. *Phil.* 3.2).⁹³ It is clear that Polycarp admired and valued Paul and regarded him as an authority.⁹⁴ Polycarp also knows a number of Paul’s letters—Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and 1 Timothy, with use of 2 Corinthians and 2 Timothy being probable.⁹⁵ But Pauline influence is not limited to particular allusions, since Polycarp is indebted to Paul for elements in his thought.⁹⁶ As Lindemann notes, “There is certainly no basis for the notion that Paul was forgotten or unimportant in the (wing of the) church in which ‘Clement,’ Ignatius, and Polycarp did their work.”⁹⁷ We have a strong case, then, for Pauline influence continuing in Smyrna at this time.⁹⁸ Bauer

⁹² See Hartog, *Polycarp* 169, who dates the letter to “c. A.D. 115”; this is dependent on the unity of the Epistle, for which he argues convincingly on pp. 148–69. Hill (*Johannine Corpus* 416) dates it around AD 110.

⁹³ Polycarp goes on in Pol. *Phil.* 3.2 “When he [Paul] was with you he accurately and reliably taught the word of truth to those who were there at the time. And when he was absent he wrote you letters. If you carefully peer into them, you will be able to be built up in the faith that was given you.” The specific stress on letters relates to Paul’s letter to the Philippians; but clearly Polycarp valued Paul and held him in great esteem (see further Hartog, *Polycarp* 203; on the plural “letters” see Hartog, *Polycarp* 223–28). See also Pol. *Phil.* 9.1 (“Therefore I urge all of you to obey the word of righteousness and to practice all endurance, which you also observed with your own eyes not only in the most fortunate Ignatius, Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others who lived among you, and in Paul himself and the other apostles”); 11.2–3 (“Or do we not realize that ‘the saints will judge the world?’ For so Paul teaches. But I have neither perceived nor heard that you have any such thing in your midst, among whom the most fortunate Paul labored and who are found in the beginning of his epistle. For he exalted in you among all his churches . . .”).

⁹⁴ See Hartog, *Polycarp* 202–3, 221.

⁹⁵ See *ibid.* 177–79, 195, 228–31. For example, Gal 6:7 in Pol. *Phil.* 5.1; Rom 14:10–12 is used in Pol. *Phil.* 6.2; 1 Cor 6:2 is referred to in Pol. *Phil.* 11.2. Use of 2 Thessalonians is possible. This issue is complicated by the fact that Polycarp seems to have usually quoted from memory; see Hartog, *Polycarp* 172. On determining when literary borrowing from the NT has occurred, see the very important discussion in Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 67–71, 425–27.

⁹⁶ Lindemann (“Paul” 43) notes that Pauline influence in *Phil* extends to more general features of Polycarp’s theology (rather than simply being limited to allusions to specific verses). He notes “the transition from 1.3 to 2.1 is again reminiscent of the Pauline movement from indicative to imperative . . . At 3.2–3, one of the passages where Paul is mentioned by name, we find the well-known triad of pistis, elpis, and agape; . . . the *Haustafel* in 4.2–6.2 alludes to the corresponding deuterio-Pauline texts, with a quotation of Galatians 6:7 inserted at 5:1 . . . and when, at the end of 6.1, Polycarp writes that ‘we are all debtors to sin,’ we should note that *hamartia* is in the singular. This linguistic usage, rarely found outside the Pauline literature, is the mark of a substantial Pauline theological influence.” Any one of these points may perhaps be questioned, but when taken with the other points above, they become much more likely. Lindemann (“Paul” 44) also argues that Pauline theology in general had an influence on Polycarp.

⁹⁷ Lindemann, “Paul” 45; cf. C. J. Roetzel, “Paul in the Second Century,” in *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 227–41, here 227–28.

⁹⁸ Hartog (*Polycarp* 194) notes a very interesting case, involving the expression “poring over” a text, using the verb ἐγκύπτω. He writes: “*I Clement* repeatedly refers to ‘poring over’ the Scriptures, by which he means the Old Testament (*I Clement* 45.2; 53.1; 62.3; cf. 40.1). These Clementine references occur in paraenetic ‘disavowals of need for further instruction’: the Corinthians had pored over the Scriptures. As we have noted, Polycarp knew *I Clement* ‘almost by heart.’ But Polycarp applies Clement’s favorite term to the Pauline corpus: Paul ‘when he was

again does not take sufficient note of this evidence.⁹⁹

So, it seems most likely that there was *ongoing influence from Pauline thought* in Western Asia Minor from Paul's day to the time of Polycarp.¹⁰⁰ This is certainly more likely than Bauer's view that Paul was completely forgotten. This does not mean that some of Paul's communities did not encounter difficulties—Acts 20:30 speaks of this and the fact that Luke includes it shows that it was true in his time. But encountering difficulties with regard to false teachers is one thing; completely losing all memory of Paul is another. Again, Bauer's treatment can be seen to be inadequate. We certainly have good evidence that suggests that Pauline Christianity was a strong and significant component of Christian tradition into the early second century.

2. *Johannine influence.*¹⁰¹ Note also the chain of Johannine influence in Western Asia Minor. It seems likely that John, the author of the Gospel, arrived in Ephesus around the time of the Jewish War of AD 66–70,¹⁰² and

absent wrote letters to you, from the study of which (εἰς ἃς ἐὰν ἐγκύπτῃτε) you will be able to build yourselves up into the faith given you' (*Phil* 3.2). Polycarp appears to place the Pauline letters on the level of authoritative writings, since they require treatment similar to that of the Hebrew Scriptures." But note also the discussion of "which Paul" it is who is influential—the Paul of the letters, or "the ecclesiastical Paul" (that is, the image of Paul built up by the church) in M. C. de Boer, "Comment: Which Paul?" in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* (ed. W. S. Babcock; Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990) 45–54, here 48–54.

⁹⁹ See Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 212–28. Hartog (*Polycarp* 219) notes: "Bauer's reconstruction places great weight on the lack of Paul in mid-[second] century material and brushes aside earlier works (*I Clement*, Ignatius, and Polycarp); but as Barrett notes, 'not, I think, successfully.' Bauer argues that these Apostolic Fathers only evidence knowledge of 1 Corinthians [see Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 219]. But Paul is far more important to Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, than Bauer would have us believe. The present study has revealed that Polycarp knew and used numerous Pauline works." (The reference is to C. K. Barrett, "Pauline Controversies in the Post-Pauline Period," *NTS* 20 [1973–74] 238.) Koester (*Introduction* 307) also argues that Polycarp knew Paul's writings. Note Hill's comment (*Johannine Corpus* 417) that Polycarp's "reference to Paul, however, is quite tailored to its context. Polycarp is writing to a Pauline church in Philippi which had, as far as we know, no Johannine foundation or presence. Writing at their invitation (3.1), he mentions Paul specifically because of his personal ministry in the Philippian church (3.2; 11.3; already alluded to in 2.2, a faith 'which was famous in past years')."

¹⁰⁰ We have sought to explain the silence of John in Revelation about Paul above. Of course, this does not mean that the profundities of Pauline theology were grasped by everyone.

¹⁰¹ It has often been thought, as Bauer argued, that John's Gospel was first used by the heretics. See Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 206–8; on this see Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 13–15. He writes: "Bauer was convinced that none of the Apostolic Fathers had relied on the authority of the Fourth Gospel. It was the gnostics, the Marcionites, and the Montanists who first used it and introduced it to the Christian community in Rome" (p. 15). Hill (*Johannine Corpus* 2) convincingly opposes what he takes to be the consensus view that "the reception of this Gospel by heterodox groups is said to have been swift and enthusiastic, while among the orthodox it endured a long and mighty struggle for acceptance, until about the time of Irenaeus." He calls this (3) "orthodox Johannophobia"—the hesitation by orthodox writers to use the Fourth Gospel because of gnostic use. He shows that there was no silence among the writers of the mainstream Church with regard to the Fourth Gospel, which was known and used by many authors (see *passim*; the chart on p. 450 is a helpful summary).

¹⁰² For evidence of Jewish migration at this time, see Josephus *Ant.* 20.256; *J.W.* 7.410–19; Eusebius *H.E.* 3.31.3; 5.24.2; see Robinson, *Bauer Thesis* 98; Trebilco, *Early Christians* 270–71. On the authorship of the Fourth Gospel see Trebilco, *Early Christians* 241–58.

there are very strong grounds for Ephesus as the place where John's Gospel was written, probably in the 80s.¹⁰³ Slightly later 1–3 John were written to a community in and around Ephesus and they bear witness to the ongoing impact of Johannine thought in the area.¹⁰⁴ While Revelation may or may not be written by the same person as the Gospel, it is clearly linked theologically to the Gospel and shows the ongoing impact of the broader Johannine movement in Western Asia Minor.¹⁰⁵

The oldest clear allusion to 1 John is by Polycarp of Smyrna,¹⁰⁶ writing around AD 110–115. Although Polycarp does not directly quote John's Gospel,¹⁰⁷ the broader Johannine tradition, as shown in 1 John, is clearly known in Smyrna at this time.¹⁰⁸ Hill has argued strongly that Ignatius knew the Fourth Gospel.¹⁰⁹ This relates more strongly to the situation in Antioch, but it is also relevant to Western Asia Minor. Papias of Hierapolis, who wrote between AD 120–135, gives the first six disciples in an order which reflects John's Gospel, and additional strong arguments can also be offered that he knew the Fourth Gospel.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ See Trebilco, *Early Christians* 241–63; Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 471–72. For a discussion of the likely date of John's Gospel see G. N. Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus* (2d ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 120. With Bauckham, I do not think we can reconstruct the "Johannine community" or its history from the Gospel; see further R. Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians. Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

¹⁰⁴ See Trebilco, *Early Christians* 263–90.

¹⁰⁵ On the relationship between Revelation and John's Gospel see P. Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 36–50.

¹⁰⁶ G. Strecker, *The Johannine Letters. A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) xxix; see also H. Paulsen, W. Bauer, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Brief des Polykarp von Smyrna* (HNT 18; 2d ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1985) 120; R. E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1982) 8–9. It is generally agreed that Pol. *Phil.* 7:1–2 alludes to 1 John 4:2–3 and 2 John 7. See discussion of other possible parallels in Brown, *The Epistles* 6–9; Strecker, *Johannine Letters* xxix.

¹⁰⁷ Hill (*Johannine Corpus* 416–20) argues for allusions to the Gospel of John in Polycarp's letter. He also notes that "it is likely that the Fourth Gospel did not figure prominently in this letter simply because it offered less paraenetic material for the letter's particular purpose" (p. 417). Note also that Polycarp's letter is brief, and his two references to Paul are in the context of allusions to Paul's letter to the Philippians. Of course, John did not write to Philippi. Hill also notes that Polycarp's use of 1 John suggests he also knows the Gospel of John. Note also that according to Eusebius (*H.E.* 5.24.2–7) Polycarp followed Quartodeciman practice; this probably shows the influence of John's Gospel (see Hartog, *Polycarp* 188).

¹⁰⁸ There are good grounds for accepting the authenticity of the claim made by Irenaeus that Polycarp knew John "the disciple of the Lord" (probably John the elder); see Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.4; Eusebius *H.E.* 5.20.6; 5.24.16; Hartog, *Polycarp* 37–41; Hengel, *Johannine Question* 102–8; R. Bauckham, "Papias and Polycrates on the Origin of the Fourth Gospel," *JTS* n.s. 44 (1993) 24–69.

¹⁰⁹ See Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 421–43; he cites others who are of this opinion. See, e.g., Ign. *Mgn.* 7.1 and John 5:19; 8:28 and Ign. *Phld.* 7.1 and John 3:6, 8; 8:14. See also the Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, *New Testament* 81–83 who note that "Ignatius' use of the Fourth Gospel is highly probable, but falls some way short of certainty" (p. 83). Compare Koester, "Ephesus" 135.

¹¹⁰ See Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 385–96. See Eusebius, quoting Papias in *H.E.* 3.39.4; cf. John 1:40; 21:2. See also the additional argument given in Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 386–94 regarding Eusebius *H.E.* 3.24.5–13, for which he thinks the source is Papias. Compare Bauer's comments (*Orthodoxy* 187): "the other two gospels [Luke and John] are at least suspect to him . . . the Fourth

There is also evidence for the knowledge of John's Gospel in the *Epistula Apostolorum*.¹¹¹ Hill argues strongly for its provenance in Asia Minor.¹¹² It was probably written sometime in the AD 140s in Asia Minor, perhaps Smyrna, although it could also be dated just before AD 120.¹¹³ By contrast, Bauer thought that none of the Apostolic Fathers had relied on the authority of the Fourth Gospel—rather it was used by the heretics.¹¹⁴

Thus, we can trace a chain of Johannine tradition in Western Asia Minor from the probable arrival of John in Ephesus around AD 70, to the Johannine community evident in 1–3 John, and then the continuing influence of Johannine tradition on Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, and the author of the *Epistula Apostolorum*.¹¹⁵

This ongoing chain of both Pauline and Johannine tradition in Western Asia Minor strongly counters Bauer's thesis. He suggests that "heresy" is both early and strong. But here we have evidence, from the 50s in the case of Pauline tradition, and probably from the 80s in the case of Johannine

Gospel, no doubt, because of its content, origin, and the friends it had made. After all, the preference of the Montanists and Valentinians for the Fourth Gospel shows us that ecclesiastical circles were not the first in which it was recognized as a canonical expression of a particular religious persuasion." Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, convincingly refutes this view. Note also the tradition that "the elders" are said to have been conversant with John in Asia; see Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* 2.22.5. "The presbyters," quoted by Irenaeus in *Adv. Haer.* 5.36.1–2, are clearly making use of John's Gospel as a source of Jesus' teaching (see Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 407–16). But we do not know that they were definitely in Asia (as those mentioned in *Adv. Haer.* 2.22.5 are).

¹¹¹ See Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 366–74; see also C. E. Hill, "The *Epistula Apostolorum*: An Asian Tract from the Time of Polycarp," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7 (1999) 1–5; see, e.g., *Ep. Apost.* 5.1–3 and John 2:1–11 and Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 367–69.

¹¹² Hill, "*Epistula Apostolorum*" 1–53; see also A. Stewart-Sykes, "The Asian Context of the New Prophecy and of *Epistula Apostolorum*," VC 51 (1997) 416–38.

¹¹³ See Hill, *Johannine Corpus* 367. Hengel (*Johannine Question* 12–14) also argues strongly that Justin Martyr knows and uses the Fourth Gospel; cf. R. A. Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994) 112–14. The ongoing use of the Fourth Gospel in Asia is also noteworthy. Hengel (*Johannine Question* 5) comments: "This special significance of the Johannine Corpus (including the Apocalypse) for theology in Asia Minor becomes especially visible in the paschal dispute and the Montanist movement: the typology of the passover lamb and the chronology of the passion in the Fourth Gospel support the Quartodeciman custom of the paschal feast as practised in Asia Minor; the new prophetic movement starting from Montanus and his prophetesses could hardly have come into being without the link between the Gospel and the Apocalypse; . . . In the Montanist prophecy the Paraclete promised in the Farewell Discourses spoke to believers, and according to Maximilla the heavenly Jerusalem of Apocalypse 21 was to descend in Pepuza. However, J. J. Gunther is surely misleading in stating that 'the creation of a Johannine Asian myth started with Montanism.' This new prophetic movement, beginning about 157 (?), already presupposed it." Thus, we see that there is considerable evidence for the impact of John's Gospel in Asia Minor in the mid-second century. See also Hartog (*Polycarp* 188, quoting Farmer and Farkasfalvy): "The Gospel of John was the Gospel of Asia Minor," as the Quartodeciman controversy reveals."

¹¹⁴ See Bauer, *Orthodoxy* 209–12.

¹¹⁵ Use of Pauline or Johannine texts by a writer does not necessarily mean that the majority of the community of which he was a part was "orthodox." But given that Bauer denies the importance of both Paul's writings and John's Gospel in this period in Western Asia Minor, this evidence is significant. Further, this evidence also shows that we know of a number of influential, non-heretical Christian teachers and leaders who valued some of the key texts of later "orthodoxy."

tradition, through to the 120s and later,¹¹⁶ for the ongoing “presence” and importance of both Johannine and Pauline tradition in Western Asia Minor. As far as we can tell, both are “ongoing” traditions. Now, of course, there were strong “counter-voices”—the opponents combated in the Pastorals, the secessionists mentioned in 1 and 2 John, the Nicolaitans, the docetists and Judaizers combated by Ignatius. But the presence of what became the orthodox group—here Pauline and Johannine tradition—is early, strong, and as far as we can tell, continuous.

The strength and solidity of what we could call “proto-orthodoxy” is impressive. I would suggest that this reconstruction has much stronger support in the actual evidence than Bauer’s.

3. *Discerning right belief and behavior in Western Asia Minor.*¹¹⁷ I would like to touch on one other area in relation to Bauer’s thesis regarding Western Asia Minor. Recall that Bauer thought heresy was often early and in the majority.

But note that in the NT literature from this area we find a strong element of drawing what we might call “exclusionary lines” of belief and practice, and of drawing these lines in such a way that they are *in continuity with* later orthodoxy.¹¹⁸ This evidence suggests that, as far as Western Asia Minor is concerned, “orthodoxy” is not a later imposition of an alien form, but rather a natural outgrowth of something that has its roots in the NT period.

Both the Pastoral Epistles and the Johannine Letters were written in or to Western Asia Minor with “opponents” in view. In the Pastorals we see the drawing of boundary lines around the group, and, in the case of 1 John, a group had already left the community addressed and the author shows what the basis for their departure has been. In both cases we see *lines of exclusion*

¹¹⁶ This is simply the point to which we have limited our enquiry, and is not to suggest a sudden decline at this point. On the situation for the rest of the second century see Babcock, *Paul and Hill, Johannine Corpus*.

¹¹⁷ In this section I merely touch on what is a very substantial area in itself. For helpful discussions see Dunn, *Unity*; J. Reumann, *Variety and Unity in New Testament Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Hultgren, *Rise*; A. J. Köstenberger, “Diversity and Unity in the New Testament,” in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* (ed. S. J. Hafemann; Downers Grove: IVP, 2002) 144–58. See also the helpful proposal by E. E. Lemcio, “The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament,” *JSNT* 33 (1988) 3–17; *JSNT* 38 (1990) 3–11. He suggests (*JSNT* 33 [1988] 6) that “the kerygmatic core [of the New Testament] . . . contains six constant items, usually but not always, introduced by a statement that what follows is kerygma, gospel, or word about (1) God who (2) sent (Gospels) or raised (3) Jesus. (4) A response (receiving, repentance, faith) (5) towards God (6) brings benefits (variously described).” He notes later (*JSNT* 33 [1988] 13): “These data demonstrate that, amid the unquestionable pluralism of the New Testament, there lies a unifying, kerygmatic center. It is formal and specific rather than abstract and general, internal and native rather than external and artificial.” With regard to the role of Ephesus and the process of discerning right belief see further Norris, “Asia Minor” 371–73; “Ignatius” 38–39; E. E. Lemcio, “Ephesus and the New Testament Canon,” *BJRL* 69 (1986) 210–34.

¹¹⁸ This is not to say that the “drawing of the lines” is not present in other documents, but my focus here is Western Asia Minor. Of course, many, perhaps all, groups were involved in “drawing the lines” against others. My point in this section is that the lines we see drawn in these texts are *in continuity with* later orthodoxy.

emerging. The opponents in view in the Pastorals had an overrealized eschatology and so thought the resurrection had already arrived, practised asceticism, maintained the validity of part of the Jewish Law and their behavior led to adverse comment from outsiders. In response, in the Pastorals we see “boundary lines” being drawn with regard to eschatology, asceticism, the Law, and behavior.¹¹⁹ For 1 John, the crucial matter was the Christology of the secessionists; it seems likely that they so emphasised the divinity of Christ that they marginalised his humanity. In response, 1 John emphasises the importance of the “flesh” of Jesus.¹²⁰

Thus the two communities are developing “exclusionary principles” of belief and practice, or can be seen as drawing the “fault lines.” One feature of this is the development of “litmus tests” (to change the metaphor) that a group used with regard to their “opponents,” leading to their exclusion (or departure in the case of the secessionists). This sort of “drawing the fault lines” continues in Revelation, and in Ignatius’s writing with regard to Western Asia Minor.¹²¹ Of course, drawing the boundary lines was happening elsewhere, too, but it was clearly happening in Western Asia Minor.

So in the literature from Western Asia Minor we find a strong sense of applying criteria by which to judge whether, in the opinion of the author and his community, a certain belief or practice is in keeping with the tradition. This trend is consonant with the sense of “the tradition,” “sound teaching,” or “the truth” that we find in these documents.¹²²

Most importantly, the links in the chain of belief and practice extend from these documents to what became “orthodoxy” in the later period.¹²³ The “fault

¹¹⁹ See 1 Tim 1:7–11; 3:7; 4:1–5; 5:7, 14; 6:1; 2 Tim 2:17–18; Titus 2:9–10. See further I. H. Marshall, “Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earlier Christianity,” *Them* 2 (1976) 7–8. Of course, Paul was involved in controversy with “opponents” in Gal 1:6–8; 3:15 and 2 Cor 11:5; 13:2, for example.

¹²⁰ See 1 John 2:18–23; 4:1–5; 2 John 7. On opponents in both sets of documents see Trebilco, *Early Christians* 209–33, 273–90.

¹²¹ In Revelation, note for example what he says about the Nicolaitans; see Rev 2:6, 14–16, 20–23. We also see this strongly in Ignatius; see, e.g., *Ign. Mgn.* 10.1: “For this reason, since we are his disciples, let us learn to live according to Christianity. For whoever is called by a name other than this does not belong to God.” This is one of the reasons that Ignatius calls for subjection to the bishop; see *Ign. Trall.* 13.2; *Ign. Eph.* 6.1; *Ign. Mgn.* 7.1.

¹²² In the Pastorals see 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:12–14; and the use of “the faith” for the content of what is believed; see 1 Tim 1:19; 3:9; 4:1, 6; 5:8, 12; 6:10, 12, 21; 2 Tim 1:5; 2:18; 3:8; 4:7. In the Johannine Letters, note the emphasis on “what was from the beginning”; see 1 John 1:1; 2:7, 24; 3:11; 2 John 5–6, 9–10; 3 John 3, 12. For sound teaching in the Pastorals see 1 Tim 1:10; 4:6; 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2, 8. For “the truth” in the Johannine Letters see 1 John 1:8; 2:4, 21; 3:18–19; 4:6; 5:6; 2 John 1–4; 3 John 1, 3–4, 8, 12.

¹²³ Hill (*Johannine Corpus* 4–5) helpfully notes some “theological commonalities” in the second century which “served as boundaries between them [those later considered ‘orthodox’] and many of the ‘losers.’” He also argues that “[t]here was . . . not only a concept of what belonged to ‘right’ or ‘orthodox’ teaching and what was characteristic of the ‘catholic’ Church in the second century, but also an evolving use of these very terms” (p. 6). Hultgren (*Rise* 1) writes: “it is fitting to raise the question whether there was a ‘normative’ Christianity that was set on its course in apostolic times, providing basic norms for the flowering of orthodoxy later.” He answers the question positively, and seeks to describe this “normative Christianity” in the book.

lines” or lines of demarcation drawn by NT authors to determine the limits of acceptable belief and behavior are in continuity with later “orthodoxy.” For example, in the Pastorals we have the affirmation of the goodness of creation in 1 Tim 4:1–5; the later affirmation against Gnostics is in continuity with this.¹²⁴ And in 1 and 2 John we have the affirmation (itself forming a “litmus test”) of the true flesh of Jesus. Again, the later affirmation of the true humanity of Jesus against docetists is in keeping with this.¹²⁵

Thus the roots of later “orthodoxy” are to be found here. “Orthodoxy” is not to be seen as a later victory by those in power, or something determined by politics. It goes back to and is an organic development from the much earlier period. And although in that earlier period it would be anachronistic to speak of “orthodoxy,” the polemic against “opponents” in literature from Western Asia Minor reveals a strong sense of doctrinal self-consciousness on the part of the canonical authors. For the authors show that they are aware of holding a doctrinal or behavioral position that they wish to defend.¹²⁶ This sense of a limit, self-consciously adopted, is a very significant feature of Western Asia Minor, then. And what is self-consciously adopted and defended is in continuity with later orthodoxy.

Accordingly, we gain a quite different sense of early Christianity in Western Asia Minor from that given by Bauer. It would be wrong to think of the period from AD 65 to around 135 in Western Asia Minor as originating with and dominated by heresy, or as a blur of different groups in which there was no attention given to “right belief,” or where there was no sense of “the center of the faith.” While there were noteworthy examples of what was regarded at the time as “false belief,” where we can judge the matter this was not first, nor was it in the majority. And while there was significant diversity amongst groups that are found in the canon, there was also a strong sense of what we can call proto-orthodoxy, or embryonic orthodoxy, found alongside the “drawing of boundary lines of belief and practice.”

V. CONCLUSIONS

I hope to have shown that Bauer’s thesis does not stand up to scrutiny with regard to the situation in Western Asia Minor. Where we can investigate the matter, what Bauer calls “heresy” is neither the earliest form of Christian faith, nor is it in the majority. None of this is to deny that there was significant diversity within earliest Christianity, both in the NT period and in the second century, nor that there was theological development from the NT period onwards. But in his reconstruction, Bauer has overlooked some key elements of the evidence.

¹²⁴ See, e.g., Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.28.1; 2.Preface.1; 2.1.1. See also P. Gorday, *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (ACCS 9; Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 186–87.

¹²⁵ See 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7; see for example *Pol. Phil.* 7.1; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.23.3; 24.2–4; 3.16.1; 3.18.6–7; 4.33.5; 5.1.2; see also G. Bray, *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude* (ACCS 11; Downers Grove: IVP, 2000) 209–10, 235–36.

¹²⁶ For a similar point see Turner, *Pattern* 63.

By contrast, in the period from around AD 65 to 135, we can argue that there were strong and influential voices which stood for what later became “orthodoxy,” notably voices in both the Pauline and Johannine traditions. Further, in the documents bearing witness to these traditions, we find a strong concern to discern what the authors regarded as acceptable belief and practice—which is in continuity with what later became orthodoxy. The situation in Western Asia Minor in the early second century thus supports a quite different scenario from that proposed by Bauer.