

RUBEN VAN WINGERDEN

Cross-bearing in Early Christianity

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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Cross-bearing
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For Janien and Avner

Preface

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Ruben van Wingerden
Bilthoven, St. Martins Day 2025

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Interpreting religious texts can be a hazardous undertaking. Interpreting a religious text calling for radical behaviour according to its “literal” sense is strikingly different from allegorising it. Early Christianity recorded many statements by Jesus, some popular and easy to understand, some opaque, and others downright harsh and challenging. In two of those radical statements, which were and are highly influential in Christian thought, Jesus calls upon his followers to “take up their cross” and follow him (Mark 8:34; Matt 16:24; Luke 9:23) and says: “whoever does not carry his cross is not worthy of me/cannot be my disciple” (Matt 10:38; Luke 14:27). The notion of following Jesus and, thus, the call to bear one’s cross, has always been central to believers and faith communities. However, it has also given rise to countless divergent interpretations: some thought Jesus wanted his followers to be executed, others thought Jesus could not have demanded such a thing and sought more metaphoric or spiritual ways to make sense of the sayings. Both these extremities are found in ancient as well as modern interpretations. More modern interpretations focus on “carrying” suffering, such as disease, family issues, etc.

But according to Joanna Dewey, cross-bearing is comparable to “instructing someone today to ‘take up their electric chair’”¹. That is, to choose a horrific death associated with the worst crimes and criminals. Although such an image may evoke specific horror for North American audiences, all can see why the comparison is made. I think, however, that we lack an adequate analogy in our Western “civilised” world; we are short of an apt analogy which incorporates all the brutal violence, public display of humiliation, dehumanising and sadistic aspects in one, although we do not underestimate what modern humans are

¹ Joanna Dewey, “‘Let Them Renounce Themselves and Take up Their Cross’: A Feminist Reading of Mark 8:34 in Mark’s Social and Narrative World,” *BTB* 34 (2004): 98–104 at 101–102.

capable of. Extreme interpretations of cross-bearing still abound today, as evidenced by the yearly crucifixion enactment in the Philippines² or Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik, who invoked “cross-bearing” in his manifesto.³ Consequently, how Jesus’ statement is interpreted, matters, especially in the early stages of (the many forms of) Christianity.

In Early Christianity, Jesus’ call was often interpreted as a call to martyrdom, for example, by Tertullian (ca. 160 – ca. 230 CE), who says:

Observe, then, the difference between pagans and the faithful in death: If you die for God, as the Paraclete recommends, then not by some gentle fevers and on beds, but in martyrdom. You should take up your cross and follow the Lord, as he himself has instructed. The key to the complete paradise is your own blood. (translation my own, see ch. 9.2)

Tertullian’s example shows that (seeking) martyrdom was part of Early Christianity as well, and Tertullian’s view is representative of many, as we will see in this study. How did one come to such an interpretation? One must assume that this image of cross-bearing is somehow based on history. In the Roman world, the prospect of someone bearing a cross was death by crucifixion (see below).⁴ Tertullian shows that he takes “cross-bearing” seriously when he relates it to martyrdom. The analogy is easily made: martyrdom means physical

² Julius Bautista, “Hesukristo Superstar: Entrusted Agency and Passion Rituals in the Roman Catholic Philippines,” *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 28 (2017): 152–164; Peter J. Bräunlein, “Negotiating Charisma: The Social Dimension of Philippine Crucifixion Rituals,” *Asian Journal of Social Science* 37 (2009): 892–917.

³ Anders B. Breivik, 2083. *A European Declaration of Independence* (2011), 145. <https://publicintelli-gence.net/anders-behring-breiviks-complete-manifesto-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence/>, accessed 6 December 2017.

⁴ In the last decades, a lot of significant studies on crucifixion appeared, see Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, “Die Kreuzstrafe während der frühen Kaiserzeit. Ihre Wirklichkeit und Wertung in der Umwelt des Urchristentums,” *ANRW* II.25.1: 648–793; P. Cristoforo Iavicoli, *La Crocifissione nell’ambiente ebraico*, ed. A. de Simone (Firenze: MEF Firenze Atheneum, 2006); Wenhua Shi, *Paul’s Message of the Cross as Body Language*, WUNT II 254 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 20–52; Sverre Bøe, *Cross-bearing in Luke*, WUNT II 278 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Gunnar Samuelsson, *Crucifixion in Antiquity: An Inquiry into the Background and Significance of the New Testament Terminology of Crucifixion*, 2nd ed., WUNT II 310 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); David W. Chapman and Eckhard J. Schnabel, *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus: Texts and Commentary*, WUNT 344 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 282–292; John Granger Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World*, 2nd ed., WUNT 327 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019). For a comprehensive review article on the methods of Chapman (and Schnabel), Cook, and Samuelsson, see Felicity Harley, “Crucifixion in Roman Antiquity: The State of the Field,” *J ECS* 27/2 (2019): 303–323. See also John Granger Cook’s many articles: John Granger Cook, “Envisioning Crucifixion: Light from Several Inscriptions and the Palatine Grafitto,” *NovT* 50 (2008): 262–285; John Granger Cook, “Crucifixion as Spectacle in Roman Campania,” *NovT* 54 (2012): 68–100; John Granger Cook, “John 19:17 and the Man on

death, cross-bearing leads to crucifixion, that is, physical death, and *voilà*, we have a call to martyrdom by Jesus. Yet, these words were interpreted in other than such a (seemingly) literal sense. Luke introduces a figurative interpretation in his Gospel when he notes that one must take up his cross “daily” (Luke 9:23). It is figurative because one can be crucified only once (presuming that cross-bearing was the prelude to being crucified). How can these words about cross-bearing lead to such divergent interpretations? For almost two thousand years, readers have been divided over what cross-bearing means in Early Christianity as much as today. There is no interpretative consensus; the range is still from martyrologic to allegorical. Why is that? What happened when these traditions were interpreted? Or, more specifically, what happened between tradition – or text – and the reader? How did the interpretation processes involved in these Early Christian traditions work? In this study, we will dive into the wondrous world of divergent interpretations and how these interpretations were formed. We will primarily focus on possible interpretations for the ancient reader/hearer.

1.1. Presentation of the Study

Cross-bearing appears in early Christian texts for the first time in the New Testament. We see two forms.⁵ The first form is found among the presumed sayings of Jesus, recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. The cross-bearing *sayings* of Jesus can be categorised into two forms: the positively and negatively formulated sayings. The ‘positive’ form is contested in the Synoptic Gospels⁶:

the *Patibulum* in the Arieti Tomb,” *Early Christianity* 4 (2013): 427–453; John Granger Cook, “Roman Crucifixions: From the Second Punic War to Constantine,” *ZNW* 104 (2013): 1–32. Also see: Ruben van Wingerden, “Carrying a *patibulum*: A Reassessment of Non-Christian Latin Sources,” *NTS* 66 (2020): 433–453; Ruben van Wingerden, “Carrying a *σταυρός*: A Re-Assessment of the Non-Christian Greek Sources,” *NTS* 67 (2021): 336–355; Ruben van Wingerden, “Crucifixion Practices. How to Attach a *patibulum* to a *stipes*,” *NovT* 64 (2022): 269–276. doi: 10.1163/15685365-bja10021; Ruben van Wingerden, “The Descent from the Cross” and Roman Crucifixion Practice,” *NovT* 67.2 (2025): 182–197. doi: 10.1163/15685365-bja10088.

⁵ See Chapters 4, 5, and 6 for a treatment of how these sayings were interpreted in the synoptic Gospels (i.e., how the composers of the Synoptic gospels integrated them).

⁶ Own translation.

<i>Mark 8:34</i>	<i>Matt 16:24</i>	<i>Luke 9:23</i>
And he called the crowd together with this disciples and said to them	Then Jesus said to his disciples	(But/Then) he said to all
If someone wants to follow after me,	If someone wants to come after me	If someone wants to come behind me
let him deny himself and let him take up his cross and let him follow me.	let him deny himself and let him take up his cross and let him follow me.	let him deny himself and let him take up his cross daily and let him follow me.

Then there are the two negatively formulated sayings, presenting the call for cross-bearing somewhat differently – only present in Matthew and Luke.⁷

<i>Matt 10:38</i>	<i>Luke 14:27</i>
And whoever does not take upon himself his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.	Who carries not his cross and comes after me, he cannot be my disciple.

The Gospel of John contains no cross-sayings of Jesus.

The second form is found in the passion narratives. They tell of someone who carried Jesus' cross. The Synoptic gospels tell that this was Simon of Cyrene who was forced to carry Jesus' cross (Mark 15:21; Matt 27:32; Luke 23:26). But in John, Simon of Cyrene is absent; it is uniquely Jesus himself who carries the cross (John 19:17). We will discuss these interpretations of the passion narratives in their corresponding chapters.

<i>Mark 15:21</i>	<i>Matt 27:32</i>	<i>Luke 23:26</i>	<i>John 19:17</i>
And they forced a passer-by, a certain Simon of Cyrene, coming from the land, the father of Alexander and Rufus,	As they went out, they found a man from Cyrene, named Simon, this one they forced	As they led him away, seizing Simon, a Cyrenian, coming from the land, they laid the cross on him	
so that he would take up his cross.	so that he would take up his cross.	to carry after Jesus.	And carrying his own cross...

The abovementioned New Testament witnesses are already interpretations of preserved traditions on cross-bearing. The Gospel writers composed their works using earlier traditions. If we follow the consensus among New Testament scholars that the Gospel of Mark was composed earlier than the Gospels

⁷ The negatively formulated saying is also found in the Gospel of Thomas, *Logion 55*, but its composition is generally assumed to be in the second century. See Chapter 8.

of Matthew and Luke, Matthew and Luke already interpreted Mark with a different choice of words and a different context for the saying (Mark 8:34, Matt 16:24 and Luke 9:23).⁸

Cross-bearing does not appear in the New Testament apart from the Gospels, i.e., mentioning verbs in the semantic range of <carrying> and the umbrella-term *σταυρός*. There is one possible *reference* to the practice of cross-bearing in John 21:18, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. We find no references to cross-bearing (i.e., referring to the act of carrying a *σταυρός*) in the Pauline literature⁹ or Hebrews, although some scholars see these as references.¹⁰ Cross-

⁸ There are many theories for dealing with the synoptic problem. However, I assume that Matthew and Luke knew Mark and had a physical copy in front of them. Oral tradition could also account for many differences in the Gospels, including minor agreements. There is probably no conclusive evidence to tip the balance, e.g., Arie W. Zwiép, *Jairus's Daughter and the Haemorrhaging Woman. Tradition and Interpretation of an Early Christian Miracle Story*. WUNT 421 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 189–221. See also Chapter 4, *General Introduction*, below.

⁹ See for a lengthy discussion on Pauline “cognates”, John Glenn Rumble, “‘Take up the Cross’ (Mark 8:34 and par.). The History and Function of the Cross-Saying in Earliest Christianity,” (PhD diss, University of Edinburgh, 2008), 147–202. See, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, “Paul in Mark 8:34–9:1: Mark on what it is to be a Christian,” in *Mark and Paul: Comparative Essays Part II. For and Against Pauline Influence on Mark*, ed. Eve-Marie Becker, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Mogens Mueller, BZNW 199 (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 189–209. See Chapter 4n40 below why I do not believe the Pauline references are cognates.

¹⁰ See e.g., Hebrews 13:12: Διὸ καὶ Ἰησοῦς, ἵνα ἀγιάσῃ διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος τὸν λαόν, ἔξω τῆς πόλης ἔπαθεν. E.g., Larry W. Hurtado, “Jesus’ Death as paradigmatic in the New Testament,” *SJT* 54(4) (2004): 413–433, at 423 and Iavicoli, *La Crocifissione*, 376 connect ἔξω τῆς πόλης ἔπαθεν to cross-bearing, but the text is too open to make a case for such a statement. It seems more reasonable that the text generally refers to the crucifixion, e.g., Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews. A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 348–349. Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 399 connects ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς τὸν ὀνειδισμόν αὐτοῦ φέροντες from Heb 13:13 with cross-bearing, but without substantiation. Some see 1 Pet 2:24a speaking of cross-bearing: ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον (cf., Hurtado, “Death as paradigmatic,” 423). While the verb ἀναφέρω implies movement, the text reads *on* (ἐπὶ) the wood, i.e., the cross (see Gal 3:13; Acts 5:30; 10:39; Rev 22:14, etc.). In any case, this connection is not found in Early Christian literature and makes a reference to cross-bearing very unlikely.

bearing does not appear in the Apostolic Fathers¹¹ or early “apologetic” literature.¹² Tatian’s Diatessaron (about 175 CE) significantly impacted Eastern Christianity up to the fifth century but will not be examined here, as the study of the lost work is fraught with methodological difficulties and would consume too much space and time.¹³

We will examine NT passages concerning cross-bearing and subsequent interpretations from Greek, Latin and Sahidic (Coptic) Christian written documents. We will provide a brief reception history of the cross-sayings as Maria Ko Ha Fong did and examine interpretations of cross-bearing in the Passion traditions.¹⁴

¹¹ Cf. Maria Ko Ha Fong, *Crucem tollendo. Christum sequi: Untersuchung zum Verständnis eines Logions Jesu in der alten Kirche*, MBTh 52 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), 27–32; and more generally on the New Testament, Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett, eds., *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). See also various contributions in D. Jeffrey Bingham and Clayton N. Jefford, eds., *Intertextuality in the Second Century*, The Bible in Ancient Christianity 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2016). See *Diogn.* 12.8 for an interesting parallel with carrying wood (i.e., the tree of knowledge, there is no indication to interpret this as a crucifixion context or referring to the cross-saying): οὗ ξύλον φέρων. Crucifixion as a subject or the noun σταυρός appears in *Barn.* 9.8, 11.8, 12.1–8; Shephard of Hermas, 10.9. Although Ignatius’ letters contain many hints of martyrdom, references to cross-bearing are absent, see, e.g., Tobias Nicklas, “Leid, Kreuz und Kreuzesnachfolge bei Ignatius von Antiochien,” in *Gelitten, Gestorben, Auferstanden. Passions- und Ostertraditionen im Antiken Christentum*, ed. Tobias Nicklas, Andreas Merkt, and Joseph Verheyden, WUNT II 273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 267–298, and literature cited there.

¹² Cf. Fong, *Crucem Tollendo*, 32–34; I include the writings Aristides, *apol.*; Justin Martyr, *apol.* 1 and 2, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*; Athenagoras of Athens, *Legatio Pro Christianis*; Tatian, *or. ad Graecos*; Theophilus of Antioch, *apol. ad Autolyicum*; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*. An obscure passage is Justin, *apol.* 1.35.2: ὃ προσέθηκε τοὺς ὄμους σταυρωθεὶς (having been crucified, he applied his shoulders?). We will not examine whether “applying his shoulders” can refer to the σταυρός being carried because the aor. participle shows that “σταυρωθεὶς” is completed *before* the main verb, i.e., προσέθηκε. Even more so, it is likely a reference to LXX Is. 9:5, referred to by Justin just above our passage (οὗ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐγενήθη ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄμου αὐτοῦ).

¹³ If William L. Petersen is right about the evidence of Diatessaronic readings in Romanos’ (born c. 485 CE) *Hymnes*, then we have another two second-century occurrences of cross-bearing, see William L. Petersen, “Romanos and the Diatessaron: Readings and method,” *NTS* 29 (1983): 484–507, reprinted in William L. Petersen, Jan Krans, Joseph Verheyden, eds., *Patristic and Text-Critical Studies: The Collected Essays of William L. Petersen*, NTTSD 40 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 20–46. We find no cross-bearing sayings in Ephrem the Syrian’s (c.306–373) Commentary on the Diatessaron; see Carmel McCarthy, *Saint Ephrem’s Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron: an English translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709*, *JSS* Supplement 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Fong, *Crucem tollendo*. In the next chapter, we will show that we complement and expand Fong’s study considerably.

Besides providing a reception history of cross-bearing in Early Christianity, we try to describe the formation of these interpretations. For analyses of the interpretations – the processes that resulted in the interpretations – we lean on Umberto Eco’s model of the cooperative reader, specifically the notion of the so-called “encyclopaedia” – see Chapter 3.

1.2. Preliminary Scholarly Discussion

Cross-bearing as a separate topic has been the subject of very few monographs, as we will see in the following chapter. Nevertheless, cross-bearing has been treated in thousands of articles and commentaries, be it academic or devotional; the latter because of its importance for discipleship and how people shape their lives. Crucifixion studies have been the subject of several recent monographs in the last decade. However, these were often a treatment of crucifixion practices or crucifixion terminology used in Antiquity. The study of cross-bearing in Antiquity (apart from the NT and later interpretations and appearances in Early Christian extant literature) has always been a part of crucifixion studies. The extant sources on cross-bearing in Antiquity (apart from the NT or “Christian” world) have not been critically assessed on their own until recently.¹⁵

Assessing the scholarly literature on cross-bearing is, therefore, a laborious task. We refer to Sverre Bøe’s excellent literature survey and his systematisation, as we will see in Chapter 2. We will address some of the literature he discussed for the sake of our own study, and we will pick up where he has left, addressing the most recent works on ancient crucifixion.

We will also survey the most important literature in Biblical Studies in general and New Testament studies in particular, in which Umberto Eco’s ideas, including his model of the cooperative reader, are incorporated.

1.3. Basic Problems, Terminology, and Ancient Context

This study’s accessible sources come from extant Christian Greek, Latin and Sahidic literature, from the earliest start of the Christian movements – the New Testament – to literature from the third century.

Why do we examine cross-bearing in the early stages of Early Christianity? The “availability” of social practices ranging from actual crucifixion to spiritual asceticism associated with cross-bearing in the first three centuries provides the ideal backdrop for analysing the reception history of early Christian cross-bearing interpretations. It is generally agreed that emperor Constantine

¹⁵ See Van Wingerden, “Carrying a *patibulum*”; Van Wingerden, “Carrying a σταυρός.”

(† 334) wished to abolish crucifixion and that “officially sanctioned crucifixions virtually disappear after his death until the Muslim conquest of Spain.”¹⁶ This project covers the period in which the practice of crucifixion and early Christianity intersected (roughly the first through the third century CE), a period when a wide range of more literal interpretations competed with more moderate ones, as we will see. A more practical reason for limiting this study to the first three centuries is the increase of early Christian writings after the third century (at least the amount of literature from the fourth century is much larger than that of the centuries before). For this reason, Christian writings in Syriac, Armenian and other ancient languages are also not considered.

The ancient written sources do not represent all social classes from Antiquity. On the contrary, this study analyses the extant writings of an upper class who could write or had access to literary means, which may not have reflected general sentiment. We do not assume that the interpretations expressed by the ancient writers under scrutiny represent the general people of the Ancient Mediterranean world. Furthermore, many written documents from Antiquity are unavailable today for various reasons. This means that texts in this study are not a homogenous group but a collection by chance, consisting of multiple genres, such as letters, homilies, commentaries, exhortations, etc.

As we deal with many primary sources, it is vital to take some space for the definitions and terminology used to render our writing as transparent as possible. We need to stress that we are not seeking to discover *the* meaning of cross-bearing as if such a fixed thing would exist (the plethora of interpretations should be a reminder that interpretation is context-based). We are primarily interested in the *processes* of forming these interpretations and which interpretations could arise from the texts.

When using *logia*, sayings of Jesus, I refer to the collected sayings as recorded by the Gospel traditions. This study does not intend to embark on a recovery of the *ipsissima verba Jesu*.¹⁷ This study focuses only on Early Christian interpretations of the cross-bearing traditions (i.e., the cross-sayings and Passion instances).

For the Greek text of the New Testament, NA²⁸ is always used. Masculine personal pronouns are used when referring to the Gospel writers and authors of other NT material, as is conventional. In our survey data, all writings have likely been composed by male authors.

In the analysis of the interpretation processes, the less-than and greater-than signs are used for certain words or word phrases/groups which represent themes, concepts or abstractions that are encountered in the text under scrutiny

¹⁶ Cook, *Crucifixion*, 398–416; quotation from 398.

¹⁷ The historical phenomenon of cross-bearing as a punishment preceding crucifixion enhances the historicity of the sayings considerably. Consequently, it weakens the argument that the cross-bearing sayings represent inventions of later communities.

(e.g., <loss>, <gain>). This use is conventional in semiotic studies (amongst others, Umberto Eco) to demarcate the themes and concepts from the rest of the sentence.

1.3.1. Crucifixion and Cross-bearing Terminology and Context

Crucifixion in the ancient world has been studied intensively over the last decades, especially its terminology and broader use in the ancient world. But what is crucifixion, and how did ancient writers describe it? This paragraph will briefly introduce the terms and terminology we use in this study. We will not, however, present the reader with a complete overview of crucifixion studies and the complexities involved with the terms.¹⁸ Crucifixion, as we commonly refer to it, was a Roman capital punishment. Although it often occurs in Graeco-Roman literature, crucifixion is almost nowhere described in great detail, perhaps because it was considered a punishment unworthy of a Roman citizen.¹⁹ It was a punishment mainly for slaves and those who did not have Roman citizenship (e.g., bandits, rioters, etc.). Literary evidence shows that the condemned individual often had to undergo some form of torture preceding crucifixion, such as beatings or flagellations. Some sources speak of the condemned walking in chains to the execution site – often outside the city. Other sources do not say anything about the way to the crucifixion site. Sometimes, the condemned carried their cross (*patibulum*, which was the crossbeam)²⁰ to the vertical pole (*crux*; the whole structure was referred to as *crux*, and prior to Christian usage, in some rare cases, *patibulum* is identified with *crux*²¹). However, in classical literature, we find no occurrence of a *crux* being carried. The actual practice of attaching the two beams is not known.²² There are two options for attaching the *patibulum* to the *stipes*, both at the execution site:

¹⁸ For this paragraph, I draw on the following monographs: Hengel, *Crucifixion*, Samuelsson, *Crucifixion*, Cook, *Crucifixion*, esp. 423–430, and Chapman and Schnabel, *Trial*.

¹⁹ Often mentioned is Cicero *Verr.* 2.5.168, where it is called *summum supplicium*, also see Cicero *Verr.* 2.5.165, 169. Also for Cicero's attitude, *Rab. Perd.* 16. For discussion, see Cook, *Crucifixion*, 359, 365.

²⁰ The following passages are often mentioned as evidence of carrying a *patibulum*: Plautus, *Bacch.* 361–362; *Carb. fr.* 2; *Mil. glor.* 358–360; *Most.* 56–57; Clodius Licinus, *Rer. Rom.* 21; Firmicus Maternus, *Math.* 6.31.58; Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.11.3–5 and the *Lex Puteolana* II 8,9. For a detailed analysis, see Van Wingerden, “Carrying a *patibulum*,” 433–453. In support of the *patibulum* being horizontal, see Ruben van Wingerden, “Horizontal or Not? The *Patibulum* in Sallust *Hist.* 3 Frg. 9,” *Bib* 99.4 (2018): 592–599.

²¹ Cf. Cook, *Crucifixion*, 23–26, who notes Cicero, *Verr.* 2.4.90; Seneca, *Dial.* 6.20.3; 7.19.3. However, *patibulum* as a reference to the whole apparatus on which Jesus was crucified, is very common; see, e.g., Tertullian, *Nat.* 1.12.5; *Marc.* 4.42; Arnobius, *Nat.* 1.62; Zeno of Verona 1.16.5; Sulpicius Severus, *Chron.* 2.34.3; Lactantius, *Epit.* 40.9; 42.1; Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 37.3M; Paulinus of Nola, *Epist.* 31, 5, and many more.

²² The following is drawn from Van Wingerden, “Crucifixion Practices.”

1. The *patibulum* was hoisted on a standing *stipes* (upright stake);
2. The beams were fastened together on the ground and then hoisted up. On this basis, scholars assume there was some distinction between *patibulum* and *crux*. The Greek language had only one word for *patibulum* and *crux*: σταυρός. In ancient texts other than the NT, a σταυρός was also carried, and people were crucified on a σταυρός.²³

We will leave further details concerning crucifixion to the secondary literature. However, something should be said about the further development of ancient crucifixion terminology in the Christian era. Whereas the Greek-speaking Christian community continued to use the semantic umbrella term σταυρός, the Latin-speaking Christians did not refer to *patibulum* anymore when speaking of cross-bearing.²⁴ Instead, they used the term *crux*, possibly because *patibulum* was a relatively rare and technical term: from then on, carrying a cross-bar was expressed with “carrying a *crux*”.²⁵ Further terms were developed in both Greek and Latin to refer to the cross, such as *ligno* in Latin and ξύλον, κέρας, and σημεῖον in Greek.²⁶ The relevant crucifixion terminology on cross-bearing in the NT will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

²³ In support of carrying a σταυρός, the following passages are often mentioned: Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* VII.69; Chariton, *Chaer.* 4.2.7; 4.3.10; Plutarch, *Sera/Mor.* 554AB; Artemidorus, *Onir.* 2.56. For a detailed analysis, see Van Wingerden, “Carrying a σταυρός,” 336–355.

²⁴ According to Cook, *Crucifixion*, 27, only Ambrose uses *patibulum*, Ambrose *Abr.* 1.8.72. For a useful discussion, see Cook, *Crucifixion*, 26–28. There are, however, at least two other instances by Cassiodorus, *Inst. 2 Concl.5: et Vita omnium crucis elegerit sustinere patibulum* (<http://digiliblt.lett.unipmn.it/xtf/view?query=&brand=default;docId=dlt000078/dlt000078.xml>, accessed 26 September 2022) and Evagrius, *Altercatio Legis* 13: *Christus autem si patibulum mortis huius sustinuit et in cruce pependit...* (CSEL 45:25) and possibly Eucherius of Lyon, *Instr.* 1,7: *Nec mirum, sed dicatur patibulum subisse, quem nos etiam ad inferna descendisse fateamur* (CSEL 31:81).

²⁵ Cook, *Crucifixion*, 26–28 on the use of *patibulum* in Christian writings. He notes that Christian writers adopted synecdoche, but the reason remains unclear. For the use of *crux* in the oldest Latin cross-bearing passages of the Gospels, see e.g., the *Vetus Latina* on John, <http://www.iohannes.com/vetuslatina/index.html> (accessed 1 November 2018) and Jean-Claude Haelewyck, ed., *Evangelium Secundum Marcum. Fascicule 6. Mc 8,11 – 9,46*, AGLB 17 (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 422–424; Jean-Claude Haelewyck, ed., *Evangelium Secundum Marcum. Fascicule 10. Mc 14,44 – fin*, AGLB 17 (Freiburg: Herder, 2019), 763–764.

²⁶ Gerardus Quirinus Reijnders, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature. As Based upon Old Testament Typology* (Nijmegen/Utrecht: Dekker & Van de Vegt N.V., 1965) is very useful in this respect.

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