

ALESSANDRO FALCETTA

Early Christian Teachers

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

Mohr Siebeck

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Alessandro Falcetta

Early Christian Teachers

The 'Didaskaloi' from Their Origins
to the Middle of the Second Century

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

This study is based on my postdoctoral dissertation submitted to the Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose, Bologna, in 2006. This piece of research, which has subsequently been revised and updated, has brought me into many debts. I would like to thank Prof. Lorenzo Perrone for suggesting to work on such an interesting topic. Prof. Giuseppe Alberigo gave his support to this project. Prof. Peter Hünemann made useful observations as to the way I should address my subject. Prof. Giuseppe Ruggeri and Prof. Alberto Melloni followed this work with attention and gave me many ideas and suggestions. Prof. Catherine Hezser provided important comments, which I have drawn upon in the revision process. The Italian National Council of Research (CNR) financed a three week visit to Tübingen where I had the possibility to work in the university library and the library of the faculty of theology. My greatest debt is to the late Prof. François Bovon, who supervised my work from the other side of the Atlantic, encouraging me and making invaluable remarks. Last but not least, my former doctoral and postdoctoral colleagues in Bologna were a constant source of inspiration and of much-needed support.

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This study is dedicated to my wife, Tina Dykesteen Nilsen. In this as well as in other projects she was the pillar who sustained me and the rest of the family. Tina took a great share of my family duties during the composition of the dissertation and postponed some of her own projects for my sake. She also improved my English and rescued me from countless pitfalls. Obviously, the remaining ones are my own fault.

Stavanger, 13 February 2020

Alessandro Falcetta

Table of Content

Preface	V
Abbreviations and Note.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Scholarship on Early Christian Teachers	5
1. Introduction	5
2. Beginnings: 1883–1920s.....	5
2.1 Adolf von Harnack.....	5
2.2 Rudolph Sohm and the Debate with Adolf von Harnack	8
2.3 Max Weber on Charismatic Leadership.....	9
3. Charisma and Office	11
3.1 The Protestant-Catholic Divide	11
3.2 Catholic Scholarship after Vatican II.....	13
3.3 The Use of Social Analysis	15
3.4 The Last Decades	17
3.5 Conclusions.....	18
4. Teachers Move Centre Stage	19
4.1 Karl H. Rengstorf.....	19
4.2 Heinrich Greeven	21
4.3 Helmut Merklein	22
4.4 Heinz Schürmann	24
5. Teachers as Tradents.....	25
5.1 Form Criticism and Transmission.....	26

5.2 Birger Gerhardsson	27
5.3 Alfred F. Zimmermann.....	29
5.4 Jesus the Teacher in Rainer Riesner and Samuel Byrskog	32
6. The Last Decades.....	33
6.1 John K. Coyle	34
6.2 Ulrich Neymeyr	34
6.3 Stanley F. Jones	35
7. Social Strata in Early Christianity.....	37
8. Considerations for New Research	38
Chapter 2: Teachers in non-Christian Sources	40
1. Education in the Greco-Roman World	40
1.1 The Word διδάσκαλος	40
1.2 Teachers of Philosophy or Religion.....	41
1.3 Teachers and Schools	43
2. Education in Jewish Sources.....	44
2.1 Jewish διδάσκαλοι	44
2.2 Rabbis	45
2.3 Scribes	49
2.4 Archaeological Evidence.....	49
Chapter 3: Sources on Syria.....	53
1. Acts 13:1–3	53
1.1 Introduction.....	53
1.2 Analysis	54
1.3 The Origins of Christian Teachers.....	57
1.4 Conclusions.....	59
2. 1 Corinthians 12:28–29.....	59
2.1 Introduction.....	59
2.2 Redaction Criticism.....	60
2.3 Characteristics of the Triad	63

2.3.1 Apostles.....	63
2.3.2 Prophets.....	63
2.3.3 Teachers	64
2.4 Conclusions.....	65
3. Matthew.....	65
3.1 Place and Time.....	65
3.2 Matthew 10:24–25	67
3.2.1 Analysis of the Text.....	67
3.2.2 John 13:16.20 and 15:20	70
3.2.3 Interpretation	73
3.3 Matthew 10:8b-10.....	74
3.4 Matthew 10:40–42	75
3.5 Matthew 23:8–12	77
3.5.1 Structure and Motives.....	77
3.5.2 Analysis of Matthew 23	78
3.5.3 Matthew 23:8–10.....	81
3.5.3.1 Matthew 23:8	82
3.5.3.2 Matthew 23:9	83
3.5.3.3 Matthew 23:10	85
3.5.4 Matthew 23:11–12	86
3.5.5 History of the Redaction of Matthew 23:8–12.....	87
3.6 Teaching in Matthew 5:19–20.....	89
3.7 Teachers and Titles	90
3.8 The “School of Matthew”.....	91
3.9 Leadership According to Matthew 23:34.....	91
3.10 Persecution.....	93
3.10.1 The Suffering of the Righteous and the Violent Death of the Prophet	93
3.10.2 The Persecution of the Righteous and of the Prophet in Matthew.....	95
3.11 Conclusions.....	96
4. James.....	97
4.1 Introduction.....	97
4.2 Authorship, Time and Place	98
4.3 James 3:1–2	101
4.4 James 3:3–12.....	104
4.5 James 3:13–18.....	105
4.6 Teachers as a Model for the Community	106
4.7 Characteristics of Teachers	106
4.8 What Teachers Taught	109

4.9 Conclusions.....	110
5. <i>Didache</i>	111
5.1 Introduction.....	111
5.2 Genre	112
5.3 Time and Place.....	113
5.4 Did a Teacher Write the <i>Didache</i> ?	114
5.4.1 The “Two Ways” Tract.....	115
5.4.2 Teachers as Mentors	116
5.5 <i>Didache</i> 11–13	117
5.5.1 Apostles.....	118
5.5.2 Prophets.....	120
5.5.3 Bishops and Deacons	124
5.5.4 Teachers	125
5.5.4.1 <i>Didache</i> 4.1–2	125
5.5.4.2 <i>Didache</i> 11.1–2	127
5.5.4.3 <i>Didache</i> 13.2	129
5.5.4.4 <i>Didache</i> 15.1–2	131
5.5.4.5 How to Become a Teacher.....	132
5.5.4.6 Why Does the <i>Didache</i> Say Little about Teachers?	133
5.5.4.7 Gender of Teachers	134
5.5.4.8 The Historical Development.....	135
5.6 Conclusions.....	135
 Chapter 4: Sources on Asia Minor	 136
1. Ephesians.....	136
1.1 Introduction.....	136
1.2 Authorship, Time and Place	136
1.3 Ephesians 4:11–12	137
1.3.1 Apostles and Prophets.....	140
1.3.2 Evangelists.....	142
1.3.3 Shepherds and Teachers.....	143
1.4 Conclusions.....	144
 2. Pastoral Letters	 145
2.1 Introduction.....	145
2.2 Authorship and Time.....	145
2.3 Place and Readership	146
2.4 1 Timothy.....	146

2.4.1 Paul's Adversaries	146
2.4.1.1 Identity	146
2.4.1.2 Women Teaching	148
2.4.1.3 Desire for Wealth	150
2.4.1.4 The Title "Teacher"	151
2.4.1.5 Contents of Teaching	151
2.4.2 Paul the Teacher	153
2.4.3 Paul's Successors	156
2.4.3.1 Appointment	157
2.4.3.2 Timothy's Tasks	159
2.4.3.3 Bishops and Presbyters	160
2.5.2 Timothy	164
2.5.1 False Teachers	164
2.5.2 Content of the False Teaching	166
2.5.3 Paul the Teacher and Timothy the Disciple	169
2.5.4 The Content of the Sound Teaching	170
2.5.5 Διδασκαλία in the Pastoral Epistles	172
2.5.6 Teachers and Rabbis	175
2.6 Conclusions	176
3. Letters of Ignatius	176
3.1 Introduction	176
3.2 Date	177
3.3 The Opponents	178
3.3.1 <i>Magnesians</i>	180
3.3.2 <i>Philadelphians</i>	182
3.3.3 <i>Ephesians</i>	184
3.3.4 <i>Trallians</i>	185
3.3.5 <i>Smyrnaeans</i>	186
3.4 The Three Offices	188
3.5 The Consequences of Theological and Disciplinary Divisions	191
3.6 Teachers among the Opponents	192
3.7 Teaching, Discipleship and Martyrdom	193
3.8 Jesus the Only Teacher	195
3.9 Conclusions	198
4. Polycarp	198
4.1 Ancient Sources on Polycarp as a Teacher	198
4.2 <i>Philippians</i>	201
4.3 <i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>	203
4.3.1 Date and Authenticity	203
4.3.2 Martyrdom and Gospel	204

4.3.3 <i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i> 12.....	205
4.3.4 <i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i> 16.....	206
4.3.5 <i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i> 17.....	207
4.3.6 <i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i> 19.....	209
4.3.7 The Technical Use of “Martyr”.....	209
4.3.8 Discipleship, Persecution and Martyrdom.....	210
4.4 Conclusions.....	211
Chapter 5: A Source on Rome: <i>The Shepherd of Hermas</i>	213
1. Introduction.....	213
2. Authorship, Date and Place.....	213
3. <i>Vision</i> 3.5.1.....	215
4. <i>Mandate</i> 4.3.1.....	218
5. <i>Similitude</i> 8.6.5.....	220
6. <i>Similitude</i> 9.15.4.....	221
7. <i>Similitude</i> 9.16.5–7.....	223
8. <i>Similitude</i> 9.19.2.....	223
9. <i>Similitude</i> 9.22.1–4.....	226
10. <i>Similitude</i> 9.25.1–2.....	228
11. The Emergence of Teachers in Rome.....	229
12. The Dispute between Marcion and Roman Teachers.....	231
13. Conclusions.....	232
Chapter 6: Sources of Uncertain Location	234
1. Hebrews.....	234
1.1 Authorship, Date and Place.....	234

1.2 Hebrews 5:11–14	235
1.3 Teaching Righteousness (Heb 5:13)	237
1.4 The Rudiments of Christianity (Heb 6:1–3).....	238
1.5 No Repentance (Heb 6:4–12)	240
1.6 Teachers and Leaders (Heb 13:7.17)	241
2. 2 Peter	243
2.1 Introduction.....	243
2.2 Authorship, Date and Place	243
2.3 “False Teachers”	244
3. <i>Epistle of Barnabas</i>	246
3.1 Date and Place	246
3.2 Authorship: A Teacher?	247
3.3 <i>Barnabas</i> 1.8.....	247
3.4 <i>Barnabas</i> 9.9 and 21.6.....	249
3.5 Teacher’s Language	250
3.6 Transmission.....	250
3.6.1 “School” Tracts.....	251
3.6.2 The “Two Ways” Tract.....	252
3.7 The Transmission of Knowledge.....	253
3.8 Conclusions.....	254
Conclusions.....	255
Bibliography	261
Index of References.....	285
Index of Modern Authors.....	303
Index of Subjects.....	309

Abbreviations and Note

The abbreviations used in this book are listed in Patrick H. Alexander et al., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (2nd ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2014).

Additional abbreviations are as follows:

GLTN: Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Grande Lessico Teologico del Nuovo Testamento* (Italian translation edited by Felice Montanari, Giuseppe Scarpato and Omero Soffritti; 16 vols.; Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1965–1992).

JECS: Journal of Early Christian Studies

KAV: Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern

MBT: Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie

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Introduction

The history of early Christian teachers has been a subject of scholarly attention for over a century, though only one book and a few articles have focussed on them. The interest of this topic rests on the plausible assumption that teachers played a significant role in the emerging of Christianity. Filson wrote:

I find, however, that I cannot formulate a view of the beginnings of Christianity without at least a working hypothesis concerning the place and work of the teacher. Moreover, I note in examining many books on the NT period that others also find it practically impossible to proceed in the study of this field without such a working hypothesis.¹

Four decades later Christian teachers came to be identified as the main carriers of the traditions associated to Jesus and therefore charged with the task of vouchsafing the reliability of the Gospels as a historical source.²

Christians from the first generations considered teachers together with apostles, prophets, bishops, presbyters and deacons as one of the forms through which community-leadership was exercised and the gospel proclaimed. Paul stated solemnly that “God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers” (1 Cor 12:28). Teachers were the earliest leaders of Christians in Antioch (cf. Acts 13:1–3). The author of the Letter of James was a teacher (Jas 3:1). Teachers are mentioned in works whose location ranges from Syria (James, *Didache*) to Rome (*Shepherd of Hermas*). We have enough clues to suggest that teachers were an important factor for the shaping of first and second century Christianity.

At the same time, teachers remain enigmatic figures. References to them are not so numerous as one would expect and almost everything concerning them is the object of speculation. Moreover, contrary to those who can be roughly considered their Jewish counterparts, the rabbis, Christian teachers did not come to play a major role in the subsequent history of their religion.

The challenges the inquirer faces are multiples. The main one regards the teachers’ very existence. Can we talk of teachers as a clearly identifiable role or does the word only designate one of the functions carried out by community

¹ FLOYD V. WILSON, “The Christian Teacher in the First Century,” *JBL* 60 (1941): 317–28, 318.

² ALFRED F. ZIMMERMANN, *Die urchristlichen Lehrer: Studien zum Tradentenkreis im frühen Urchristentum* (WUNT II/12; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984).

leaders? The passage from 1 Corinthians, which I examine in detail later, seems to suggest that the first is the case. It neatly distinguishes three roles and places them not within a local church, but within the church as a whole. Teachers, together with apostles and prophets, were a God-given gift. The references to teachers studied in this book and especially the polemic some authors carried against them further support Paul's statement that indeed teachers were a driving force among early Christians. A related problem is how to understand and study them. Within sociology one finds role theory as an important branch with a long history and a large bibliography.³ Roles can be described as "characteristic behavior patterns," a definition based on the idea that "persons are members of *social positions* and hold *expectations* for their behaviors and those of other partners."⁴ In other terms, roles are characterised by a set of rights and obligations, which are expected by the society in which the role is situated. This was the case for Paul's teachers in 1 Cor 12:28. They are assigned a precise position within the Christian communities and in relationship to two other roles. By leaving out additional details, Paul implies that his readers knew what to expect of teachers and what teachers should expect of them. The *Didache* seems to explicit some of these expectations: teachers have the right to be welcomed (11.1) and to be given food, while they are supposed to deliver doctrines in tune with the teaching of the *Didache* itself (13.1–2). Biblical scholars have already resorted to role theory to throw light on prophets, sages and priests in the Old Testament.⁵ One of these authors is Joseph Blenkinsopp, who lists the advantages of this approach:

Were the roles in question ascribed or achieved? What skills were required for their performance, and how did one go about acquiring them? How was the individual recruited to fill the role? What part did such important variables as gender and class play? What resources and sanctions did society have to discourage role deviance?⁶

³ BRUCE J. BIDDLE, *Role Theory: Expectations, Identities and Behaviors* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), and "Recent Developments in Role Theory," *Annual Review of Sociology* 12 (1986): 67–92; DANIEL D. MARTIN and JANELLE L. WILSON, "Role Theory," *Encyclopedia of Social Theory* (ed. GEORGE RITZER; Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2005), 1: 651–55; MARISKA VAN DER HORST, 'Role Theory,' *Oxford Bibliographies*, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com> [24.02.2019].

⁴ BIDDLE, "Recent Developments," 67; italics in original.

⁵ E.g. JON L. BERQUIST, "Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. ODED LIPSCHITS and MANFRED OEMING; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 54–66, 58–59; JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Intellectual and Religious Leadership in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); LESTER L. GRABBE, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995).

⁶ BLENKINSOPP, *Sage*, 4.

Role theory seems to open an interesting avenue of research, but the study of antiquity in general and of the early Christian teachers in particular is fretted with challenges that sociologists do not need to face. The sources are often difficult to date, to place and to ascribe, and they usually mention teachers only to illustrate other topics.⁷ Furthermore, different sources may understand teachers in different ways, so that teachers in Rome and in Antioch, for instance, may not necessarily have been the same thing.

Because of the nature of the evidence, this book does not purport to be a sociological study, but it takes from sociology the definition of role and tries to answer the questions asked by Blenkinsopp whenever the sources allow it. Its principal aim is to put a selection of texts from early Christianity under the magnifying glass of the historical-critical method and to try to squeeze out of them all the information they are able to provide.

The texts have been selected according to two criteria. The first is lexical and, with a few exceptions whose reasons I shall explain later, follows on the footsteps of Alfred Zimmermann's work on early Christian teachers:⁸ only those passages containing the word διδάσκαλος as addressed to others than Jesus are taken into account. Jesus as teacher has already been the topic of ponderous studies and it is not addressed in this work.⁹ The choice of the word διδάσκαλος has the advantage of giving a clear focus and of avoiding the risk of drowning in a sea of texts. When tackling the role of teachers, the temptation would be to address teaching in general before moving to the investigation of a precise group of people. This would entail a survey of the entire New Testament and of the rest of early Christian literature as it would be hard to find books that could not be rubricated in one way or another as teaching. Moreover, within the New Testament it would be necessary to identify the Sitz im Leben of the passage under scrutiny in order to discriminate between the teaching of Jesus and that of his followers. The criterion I have chosen reduces the corpus of evidence to a manageable size and ensures that the texts are consistently approached from the same perspective. It may be objected that teachers could be called in different ways in different texts, such as for example "scribes" (Matthew) or "evangelists" (Ephesians). However, it is not always clear how far the word διδάσκαλος is interchangeable with γραμματεὺς or εὐαγγελιστής and it is safer to examine this and similar cases only when they can be connected to διδάσκαλος. The second criterion concerns the time-frame.

⁷ Some of these problems are mentioned in BLENKINSOPP, *Sage*, 5–6. The sets of data sociologists can draw upon are of a very different character (BIDDLE, *Role Theory*, 79–84).

⁸ ZIMMERMANN, *Lehrer*, 68.

⁹ For instance RAINER RIESNER, *Jesus als Lehrer: Eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung* (WUNT II/7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981), and more recently VERONIKA TROPPER, *Jesus Didaskalos: Studien zu Jesus als Lehrer bei den Synoptikern und im Rahmen der antiken Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte* (ÖBS 42; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012).

I concentrate only on those works written before the middle of the second century. Once again, there is a practical advantage to consider. The teachers to whom the early Christian sources make reference were a phenomenon that developed over a long period of time and reached well into the third century, as we shall see in the first chapter. By concentrating on roughly the first one hundred years after Jesus' death, the amount of material to sift remains within reasonable boundaries. Moreover, the first one hundred years are also the time when the answer to two important questions is to be sought. Were teachers tradents of the material pertaining to the life and teaching of Jesus, which we find in the New Testament? Why did teachers not come to play the same role within Christianity as their counterparts, the rabbis, did within Judaism?

The present study is divided into three parts. The bibliographical survey following below lays the methodological foundations for the rest of the book. The second part contains a survey of Jewish and Greco-Roman literature with the aim to place the topic of early Christian teachers within the history of the teachers of philosophy and religion in the first centuries of our era. The remaining chapters form the third part. They examine the primary sources and distribute them according to the geographical location of the communities to which they bring witness. This means, for example, that 1 Cor 12:28 is placed in the Syrian section because it is considered a witness to the community of Antioch. Acts 13:1–3 is placed in the same section for the same reason. The order of the sources does not necessarily correspond to the date of their composition, but to the time of the traditions they employ. For this reason, the description of the original leadership of the community in Antioch in Acts 13:1–3 is the first source of the Syrian section.

Early Christian teachers make for a fascinating topic of research with far-reaching consequences for our understanding of the beginnings of Christianity and of the structures of today's churches. The following chapter shows how these consequences have been pointed out in modern scholarship.

Chapter 1

Scholarship on Early Christian Teachers

1. Introduction

When reading previous scholarship, there are at least three factors that should be kept in mind.¹ To begin with, very few works focus on early Christian teachers. Instead, teachers are usually studied along with apostles and prophets and seen in the larger context of the different roles in primitive Christianity. In this case secondary literature is legion, though the space devoted to teachers may vary a great deal. Secondly, the question of charisma and office, within which teachers are very often mentioned, is largely confessional. Many scholars have thought of recovering an ecclesiastical structure mirroring or justifying the modern organisation of their respective churches. Thirdly, teachers have been assigned a number of tasks, such as preaching, debating with non-Christians, transmitting Jesus traditions, etc., which were essential for the life of the early communities. These attributions have been made in spite of the fact that our sources say very little about what teachers actually did.

2. Beginnings: 1883–1920s

2.1 *Adolf von Harnack*

The starting point of modern research on early Christian teachers was a literary discovery. In 1883 bishop Philoteos Bryennios published a book, which he had found ten years earlier in the library of the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople.² The recovery of the *Didache* made a tremendous impact on contemporary scholarship and triggered a wealth of translations and studies.

¹ The first two points are illustrated by ZIMMERMANN, *Lehrer*, 36–37.

² PHILOTEOS BRYENNIOS, ed., *ΔΙΔΑΧΗ ΤΩΝ ΔΩΔΕΚΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ* (Constantinople, 1883). A photographic reproduction was published shortly afterwards by JAMES RENDEL HARRIS, *The Teaching of the Apostles: Newly Edited with Facsimile Text and a Commentary for the Johns Hopkins University* (London: C. J. Clay; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1887). A brief history of the discovery and scholarly reactions to it are found in AARON MILAVEC, *The Didache: Faith, Hope, & Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* (New York: The Newman Press, 2003), 3–5.

One of the most influential monographs was written – it goes almost without saying – by Adolf von Harnack.³ Harnack published the Greek text with translation and robust Prolegomena, a long section of which he dedicated to the triad apostles, prophets and teachers in the *Didache* and in the rest of early Christian literature.⁴ This section was revised in *Mission und Ausbreitung*.⁵ Harnack hailed the *Didache* as the document that could at last throw light on the texts mentioning apostles, prophets and teachers: 1 Cor 12:28–29; Acts 11:27; 13:1–2; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Rev 2:2; Matt 10 par.; Jas 3:1; Hebr 13:7, 17, and so on.⁶ All the members of the triad were “freie Lehrer”⁷ and their authority was based on charisma.⁸ The similarities between the *Didache*, 1 Cor 12:28 and Acts 13:1–2 show that the triad was acknowledged by the universal church and that its origins are to be dated in the year before 50 and placed in the post-Easter community of Jerusalem.⁹ The role of apostles was of Jewish origins,¹⁰ focussed on mission, and disappeared in the beginning of the second century.¹¹ Prophets, contrary to apostles, were not missionaries, but preachers who spoke in the spirit and built up the communities.¹² They operated until the excesses of Montanism and the challenge of impostors put an end to their work at the closing of the second century.¹³ For what concerns teachers,¹⁴ the importance attached to them is demonstrated by references in texts stretching from the first to the third/fourth century. Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 7.24.6) records that in the fourth century Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, visited some

³ In the course of time HARNACK changed his views about church structure in early Christianity: see JAMES T. BURTCHAEILL, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 82–87.

⁴ *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel nebst Untersuchungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts* (TU 2.1; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1884), Prolegomena, 93–158.

⁵ *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (4th ed.; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1924), 1:332–78. HARNACK dealt briefly with our subject in *Entstehung und Entwicklung der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts in den zwei ersten Jahrhunderten nebst einer Kritik der Abhandlung R. Sohm's: "Wesen und Ursprung des Katholizismus" und Untersuchungen über "Evangelium," "Wort Gottes" und das trinitarische Bekenntnis* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1910), 18–19 and 86–96.

⁶ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 93–94.

⁷ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 96.

⁸ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 96–98.

⁹ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 98–99 and *Mission*, 357.

¹⁰ HARNACK, *Mission*, 340–43.

¹¹ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 111–18.

¹² HARNACK, *Lehre*, 119–31.

¹³ HARNACK, *Mission*, 363.

¹⁴ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 131–37.

villages where he met presbyters and teachers (πρεσβυτέρους καὶ διδασκάλους). One became teacher as the result of a personal decision, which was made on the basis of a charisma.¹⁵ The community had the task of acknowledging the presence of a divine commission, but not that of appointing.¹⁶ Teachers were, like prophets, devoted to building up the communities,¹⁷ but, unlike prophets, they were entitled to possessions. Moreover, they were not itinerant, but resident.¹⁸ The most competent teachers soon began to address only the better educated Christians, opening the way for a model of instruction along the lines of the Greco-Roman philosophical schools. Because teachers lacked from the beginning the “enthusiastic element”¹⁹ of apostles and prophets, they functioned within the communities for a longer time and disappeared only between the third and the fourth century, when bishops took upon themselves the responsibility for teaching.

The offices of bishops and deacons were not universal but local and concerned administrative tasks.²⁰ When the *Didache* recommends that bishops and deacons should not be disregarded because they carry out the service of prophets and teachers (*Did.* 15.1–2), it shows that they took teaching functions only at a subsequent stage. The authority that bishops eventually exerted did not stem from their administrative tasks, but from assuming the attributions of apostles, prophets and teachers.²¹ Harnack believed the proclamation of the word to be the main task of the triad.

Harnack must be understood in the context of late nineteenth century scholarship. He was the leading representative of liberal theology, promoting a non-institutionalised form of Christianity, which would match the contemporary results of historical criticism.²² The *Didache* seemed to lend

¹⁵ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 97.

¹⁶ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 98.

¹⁷ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 97.

¹⁸ HARNACK, *Mission*, 365. Right to property and residency is an addition of HARNACK, *Mission*, to the corresponding text in HARNACK, *Lehre*, 131. The statement in HARNACK, *Lehre*, 96, that apostles, prophets and teachers “wandered from community to community with their preaching” is absent from the corresponding passage in HARNACK, *Mission*, 347.

¹⁹ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 134.

²⁰ ZIMMERMANN, *Lehrer*, 38, considers HARNACK’s distinction between a universal and a local organisation to be a development of EDWIN HATCH’s positions stated in a work HARNACK had translated into German: *Die Gesellschaftsverfassung der christlichen Kirchen im Alterthum: Acht Vorlesungen (vom Verfasser autorisierte Übersetzung von Adolf Harnack)* (Giessen: Ricker, 1883). Excerpts in *Das kirchliche Amt im Neuen Testament* (ed. KARL KERTELGE; Wege der Forschung 439; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977), 19–29.

²¹ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 155–57.

²² Cf. WILLIAM BAIRD, *History of New Testament Research. 2. From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 5–136.

support to this endeavour, but subsequent scholarship did not share Harnack's enthusiasm for his ally. The *Didache* is not *the* key, but *one* key to unlock the history of the earliest church structures. Moreover, virtually everything in the *Didache* is still debated and there is no consensus about the exact nature of the roles it mentions. In spite of its shortcomings, Harnack's works determined the scholarly agenda for years to come. The charismatic element in the triad, the administrative function attributed to bishops and deacons, the passage from the triad of apostles, prophets and teachers to the triad of bishops, presbyters and deacons have been the object of continuous research. Moreover, his collection of passages about teachers from the first to the fourth century is not only a most useful tool, but a pivotal one.²³ This list made it possible for the first time to identify a role of teachers in early Christianity.

2.2 Rudolph Sohm and the Debate with Adolf von Harnack

The debate between Harnack and Rudolph Sohm is a good illustration of how sensitive and confessionally charged the question of the triad was. According to Harnack, the replacement of the charismatic triad with the administrative triad was a linear process of development.²⁴ In 1892, shortly after Harnack's *Lehre*, Sohm, a canonist, wrote a classic book on church law in which he belligerently stated: "Das Kirchenrecht steht mit dem Wesen der Kirche im Widerspruch."²⁵ Since the essence of the church is spiritual, legal regulations should not find place in it. "Ecclesia" is a spiritual entity, the gathering of all Christians, of which local gatherings are only a particular form. Therefore, the church as such cannot be a formally regulated organisation, but only a charismatic one, where charismas are freely acknowledged.²⁶ Since the word of God is the foundation of the church, the charisma of teaching plays the main role and teachers, an umbrella term for apostles, prophets and teachers, are also the leaders of the community.²⁷ Teaching is divided in prophecy, διδασκαλία or teaching in the proper sense, and exhortation. Apostles are missionaries who possess all three forms of teaching and are, therefore, also prophets and teachers.²⁸ Prophets are Christians who are gifted with spiritual speech and who exercise the functions of preachers, lawgivers and community-leaders.²⁹ Prophets are also teachers. Teachers in the strict sense are community based,

²³ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 110–12 n. 23; 132–36.

²⁴ HARNACK, *Lehre*, 107–110.

²⁵ SOHM, *Kirchenrecht*, 1; *Die geschichtlichen Grundlagen* (Systematisches Handbuch der Deutschen Rechtswissenschaft 8; Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1892), 1 and 700.

²⁶ SOHM, *Kirchenrecht*, 16–28.

²⁷ SOHM, *Kirchenrecht*, 29 and 41.

²⁸ SOHM, *Kirchenrecht*, 42–45 and 46.

²⁹ SOHM, *Kirchenrecht*, 45–46.

provide authoritative teaching, and are subordinated to prophets. In due course prophets and then teachers were replaced by bishops.³⁰ The communities tested the gifts of each member of the triad and were responsible for acknowledging their authority.³¹ Beside this threefold charismatic organisation, there was the administrative organisation of bishops and deacons. The *Didache* shows that, in absence of prophets and teachers, bishops were those who were in charge of the administration of the eucharist and the offerings.³²

Harnack and Sohm held opposite views with regard to the origins of Catholicism, though Harnack came to accept some of Sohm's ideas.³³ Harnack considered the formal elements of church organisation to be present from the start, whereas Sohm judged them to be contrary to the original spiritual essence of the church. With regard to teachers, their views overlapped in several respects. All the members of the triad are teachers, though some of them are teachers *strictu sensu*. It is the teaching charisma that singles teachers out, and the community's acknowledgement that validates their decision to be teachers. Teachers were residential, exercised some form of leadership and were eventually superseded by bishops. These points of contact are all the more significant because Sohm and Harnack differed in the final assessment of the evidence.

The idea that apostles and prophets too were teachers should be highlighted. This confusion is one of the reasons why subsequent scholarship often paid little attention to teachers in the proper sense.³⁴ Another reason is that Harnack, Sohm and later scholars studied the triad in the larger context of early church organisation.³⁵

2.3 Max Weber on Charismatic Leadership

Harnack and Sohm influenced Max Weber's famous observations on authority.³⁶ Weber distinguished three types of authority: rational, traditional

³⁰ SOHM, *Kirchenrecht*, 47–48.

³¹ SOHM, *Kirchenrecht*, 52–56.

³² SOHM, *Kirchenrecht*, 83–88.

³³ The main stages of the debate were RUDOLF SOHM, *Wesen und Ursprung des Katholizismus* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1909); HARNACK, *Entstehung*, 121–86; SOHM, Preface to *Wesen* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1912), III–XXXIII. This debate can be followed in BURTCHAELL, *Synagogue*, 89–94.

³⁴ ZIMMERMANN has detected in this overlapping and in the difficulty of drawing precise boundaries between the members of the triad the cause for the small number of specific studies on teachers (*Lehrer*, 41).

³⁵ Cf. ZIMMERMANN, *Lehrer*, 49.

³⁶ MAX WEBER, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (ed. JOHANNES WINCKELMANN; 2 vols.; 4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1956), vol. 1, 124 and 140–48; vol. 2, 662–95. First edition published posthumously in 1922.

and charismatic. The first type is based on the acceptance of the legal order, the second appeals to some tradition recognised as holy, the third is grounded in the extraordinary talents of the leader, which are freely acknowledged by a group of followers.³⁷ In the course of time, the third type, which by its nature is very unstable, undergoes a process of routinisation and becomes either traditional or rational authority or both. Weber's tripartite model was promising but also of difficult application. For instance, he examined the authority of the rabbis³⁸ and proposed that, before the year 70, it was charismatic.³⁹ Then, he twisted his argument by placing its origins in their intellectual knowledge and training,⁴⁰ which are connected with traditional and rational authority.

Intriguingly, Weber's observations on charismatic leaders recall the triad of the *Didache*. Apostles, prophets and teachers were respected because they were endowed with talents that were acknowledged by the community. In the course of time, these roles disappeared in favour of a church organisation based on rational and traditional authority. These similarities are not a vagary of chance: Weber informs his readers that he derives the idea of charismatic authority from early Christian literature and makes explicit reference to Sohm's *Kirchenrecht*.⁴¹ His dependence on contemporary scholarship is likely to include Harnack as well. Jonathan A. Draper has observed that Weber mentions Harnack's work in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*.⁴² As a matter of fact, Weber did not only know Harnack's scholarship, he knew Harnack himself.⁴³ Draper

³⁷ WEBER, *Wirtschaft*, 124. He speaks actually of domination ("Herrschaft"), but this can also be interpreted as "authority" because authority is the external manifestation of domination (see BENGT HOLMBERG, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* [ConBNT 11; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1978], 136).

³⁸ MAX WEBER, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. 3. *Das antike Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1921), 408–419. For a critique of WEBER see CATHERINE HEZSER, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 450–52, with bibliography; HOLMBERG, *Paul*, 139–48.

³⁹ WEBER, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, 409.

⁴⁰ WEBER, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, 411.

⁴¹ WEBER, *Wirtschaft*, vol. 1, 124.

⁴² JONATHAN A. DRAPER, "Weber, Theissen, and 'Wandering Charismatics' in the *Didache*," *J ECS* 6 (1998): 541–76, 544–45.

⁴³ They exchanged some correspondence (MAX WEBER, *Briefe 1906–1908* [ed. M. R. LEPSIUS and WOLFGANG J. MOMMSEN; Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe 2/5; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990], 32–33). I have been informed on WEBER's acquaintance with HARNACK by Prof. Paolo Pombeni (Bologna University), during a conversation in October 2005 and in a communication dated 17 October 2006. Wolfgang Mommsen, in a conversation probably dating September 1983, told Pombeni that Weber and Harnack had lived in the same building.

Index of References

Old Testament

Genesis

1–2	152
2	152
2:17	237
2:24	152
3:15	237
5	221

Exodus

16:1b	251
16:2a	251

Numbers

25:1–8	41
--------	----

Deuteronomy

1:13	105
1:15	105
4:6	105
11:2	222
25:4	161, 162
32:10	125

1 Kings

22:22–23	244
----------	-----

2 Kings

2:12	83
6:21	84
13:14	84
8:9	84
17	95

2 Chronicles

36	95
18:21–22	244

Ezra

7:10	49
9	95

Nehemiah

9:26	93
------	----

Psalms

70[71]:19	222
-----------	-----

Proverbs

2:17	173
7:2	125

Isaiah

16:1b	251
29:13	173
30:20	86
52:13–53:12	93

Jeremiah

2:3	251
2:12–13ab	251
2:13bcd	251
3:8	251
14:14–15	244
23:25–26	244
23:32	244
33 (26):15 (LXX)	156
34:15	244
35 (28):9 (LXX)	156
44	95

Ezekiel

13:9	244
22:28	244

Daniel

5:12	105
12:1–3	94
12:3	76

Joel

2:23	86
------	----

Zechariah

13:2	244
------	-----

New Testament

Matthew

1:23	91
2:6, 15	91
3:15	66
5:11–12	92
5:17–20	90
5:19	86, 89
5:19–20	88, 89
5:20	89, 224, 237, 253
5:22	83
5:23–24	83
5:27–30	115
5:34–37	110
5:45	81
5:45, 48	85
5:47	83
6:1	81, 85
6:1–10	100
6:8	81, 85
6:89	81, 85
6:14	81, 85
6:15	85
6:19–21	74
6:24–34	74
6:25–34	75
6:26	85
6:32	85
7: 3	83
7:4	83
7:5	83
7:11	85
7:15	75
7:15–20	75, 121
8:19	85
9:11	45, 85
9:16–17	231
9:36–10:5a	67
9:36–11:1	67

10	6, 93, 171
10:1–11:1	17
10:2	71
10:4–25	22
10:5	71
10:5–15	74
10:5b–15	67
10:5b–23	67
10:8	74
10:10–13	74
10:9–10	75, 151
10:16	71
10:16–23	67
10:17	69, 92
10:17–22	68
10:17–23	210
10:17–25	68
10:22	95
10:22–25c	71
10:24	31, 79, 197
10:24–25	30, 45, 67, 68, 69, 70, 74, 85, 210, 256
10:24–42	67
10:25	37, 197, 256
10:25cd	74, 75
10:26	95
10:26–32	67
10:28	210
10:32–33	67
10:34–37	67
10:34–39	67
10:40	71, 77
10:40–41	76
10:40–42	67, 75
10:41	76, 92, 95, 224, 253
12:22–27	68
12:33–35	69

12:38	85	23:9	83, 84, 85
12:48	83	23:9–12	87
12:49	83	23:10	37, 85
12:50	83	23:11	86, 256
13:17	76	23:11–12	86, 95, 197, 256
13:43	76	23:12	89, 254
13:52	76, 91	23:13–33	121
15:9	173	23:23	79
15:13	66	23:24	24, 45, 91
15:14	69	23:29	76, 92
16:13–19	37	23:29–33	96
17:4	82	23:32–39	77
17:24	45, 85	23:34	80, 91, 92, 96, 97
17:24–27	66	23:34–35	76
18:4	86	23:34–36	80
18:15	83	23:35	76, 92, 96
18:21	83	23:37	92, 95
19:16	85	23:37–39	80
20:33	82	24:24	128
20:26	86	26:18	45
21:16	139	26:25–49	83
22:1–14	66	26:25	45, 85
22:15	78	26:49	45, 85
22:16–22	82	27:54	207
22:16	78, 82, 85	28:20	74, 88
22:23	78		
22:23–33	83	<i>Mark</i>	
22:24	78, 82, 85	3:33	83
22:34–35	78	3:34	83
22:34–40	83	3:35	83
22:36	78, 82, 85	5:35	45
23	93, 171, 192, 196	6:6–56	17
23:1–7	78	6:8	74
23:2	80	6:8–11	74
23:2–7	79	7:7	173
23:2–8	89	9:5	45, 88
23:3	88, 89, 196	9:30–37	69
23:3–7	121	9:31–41	68
23:7	82, 85, 89	9:34–35	69, 86
23:8	22, 30, 37, 45, 46, 76, 79, 82, 83, 89, 90, 103, 178, 196, 248, 254, 256	9:35	86
23:8–9	30, 85, 88	9:37	75
23:8–10	81, 89, 90, 206	9:38	69
23:8–12	67, 77, 80, 87, 89, 90, 208, 227	9:41	69
		10:17	45
		10:33–45	68
		10:34	69
		10:35	69
		10:38–39	69

10:43	86	18:14	86
10:43–44	86, 87	22:11	45
10:43–45	69	22:26	86
10:44	69	22:26–27	87
10:51	45, 88	23:47	207
11:21	45		
12:37b–40	78, 103	<i>John</i>	
13:9–13	68	1:38	45
14:14	45	1:49	45
14:45	45	3:2	45
15:39	207	3:10	45
		3:26	45
<i>Luke</i>		4:31	45
1:23	56	5:25–29	166
2:26	45	6:25	45
2:46	22	9:2	45
3:12	45	11:8	45
3:31–36	221	11:28	45
3:36–38	221	13:1–17	73
5:17	151	13:1–20	73
5:21	151	13:13	70
6:27–49	69	13:16	70, 72
6:33	83	13:20	72
6:37–38	69	15:18–19	71
6:39	69	15:20	70, 73
6:40	22, 45, 68, 69,	15:20c	71
	139	19:36	207
6:41	83	20:16	45
6:41–42	69		
6:42ab	83	<i>Acts</i>	
6:43–45	69	1:23–26	57
8:49	45	2:11	222
9:1–11	17	4:36–37	54, 55
9:3	74	5:34	55, 151
9:48	86	6:3–6	57
10:1–24	17	6:6	54, 57
10:4–12	74	7:2	83, 90
10:7	74, 130	8:1	55
10:16	75	8:4–8	142
11:39–52	80	9:1–31	55
11:49	80, 91	9:2	123
11:49–51	80	9:27	55
11:50	92	10:19	54
13:34–35	80	11	66
15:24	166	11:19–26	53
15:32	166	11:19–30	58
14:11	86	11:20	22, 53, 55, 58
17:3	83	11:22–26	55
17:4	83	11:25–26	58

11:25–26	55	<i>Romans</i>	
11:26	54, 58	1:1	155
11:27	6, 58	1:5	63
11:27–28	54, 57	2:17–24	79
11:27–30	58	2:20	45
11:30	55, 58	3:26	139
12:25	55	3:28	101
13	66	6:5	109
13:1	24, 30, 53, 55, 256	9:1	155
13:1–2	6, 22, 31, 57, 62, 131	11:13	63, 155
13:1–3	4, 23, 53, 54, 96, 158	12	16
13:2	57	12:6–7	107
13:2–3	57	12:6–8	60, 157
13:3	58	12:7	60, 173
13:15	159	12:7–8	159
13:42	120	13:6	56
14:3	120	15:2	139
14:4	120	15:4	173
14:4–14	23, 54, 55	15:16	56
14:14	120	15:18	79
14:23	57, 58, 59	15:22–23	119
14:27	58	15:27	56
15:1	58	16:3	135
15:2	58	16:7	134
15:2	58	16:12	162
15:4	58	<i>1 Corinthians</i>	
14:6	58	1:1	63, 64, 155
15:22	58	1:4	64
15:22–29	123	1:18–31	45
15:23	58	1:11	59
15:32	57	1:12	59, 65
16: 4	58	1:17	63
18:2	135	1:18–21	65
18:3	165	2:6–7	65
18:18	135	2:9	206
18:26	135	3:1–3	65
19:33–34	147	3:4–6	65
20:17	58	3:6	109
20:28	143	3:8–15	63
20:33–35	75	3:11	136
21:5	138	3:18–23	65
21:8–9	123	4:8	168
21:18	58	4:9	64, 162
22:1	83, 90	4:15	63
22:3	55	4:20	79
		5:1–6:20	59
		6:16	152
		7:1	59

7:1–40	59	15:5–8	63
7:10	26	15:7	64
7:25	26	15:9	64
7:29–31	153	15:10	162
8:1–11:1	59	15:12	166, 167, 168
9:1	63	15:12–10	140
9:1–2	140, 155	15:13–14	167
9:4–13	63	15:32	225
9:4–18	151	15:35–49	152
9:5	63, 64	16:1–4	119
9:14	130	16:19	135
9:14–18	75		
9:17	130	<i>2 Corinthians</i>	
11:2–14:20	59	4:5	63
11:5–16	152	8:23	119
11:23	253	9:1–15	119
12	16, 18, 148	9:12	56
12:4–11	137	11:7	86
12:7	65	11:7–21	75
12:8	60	11:9	151
12:8–10	60	11:13	119
12:12–27	157	12:13–18	75
12:13	150		
12:28	4, 6, 20, 21, 22, 30, 54, 55, 60, 61, 63, 65, 92, 107, 137, 142, 144, 154, 206, 207, 216	<i>Galatians</i>	
12:28a	60	1:1	63
12:28–29	6, 24, 59, 107, 256	1:18	30, 62
12:28–30	157	2:7–8	63
12:29	60, 63	2:11ff	30
12:30	60	2:11–14	58, 62
14	60, 62, 64, 103, 189	2:12	100
14:1	63	2:16	101
14:1–5	63	2:24	101
14:3	64	3:27–29	153
14:5	64	3:28	150
14:16–17	190	4:11	162
14:23–25	64	6:6	65
14:29	64	6:15	153
14:31	64		
15	194, 225	<i>Ephesians</i>	
15:1–11	140	1:1	136, 140
15:1–58	59	1:23	139
15:3	253	2:4–6	166
		2:19–20	140
		2:20	6, 136, 141, 142, 143
		2:20–22	139
		3:3, 5	150
		3:5	6, 141, 142, 143
		3:5–6	140

3:6	139	1:10	155, 173, 174
3:8	142	1:11	174
4:4	139	1:14	147
4:11	6, 20, 22, 24, 55, 136, 141, 142, 144, 216	1:18	148, 158, 159, 163
4:11–12	137	1:18–20	147
4:11–16	143	1:20	147, 150
4:13	143	2:1	155
4:14	139, 173	2:4	240
5:14	166	2:4–6	155
5:18	142	2:5–6	155
5:22	134	2:6	154, 155, 174
6:1	195	2:7	96, 146, 153, 154, 169, 174
6:18	142	2:8	148
<i>Philippians</i>		2:8–15	165
2:16	162	2:9	148
2:17	56	2:9–15	148
2:25	56, 120	2:11	148, 149
2:30	56	2:11–12	149
4:12	86	2:13–14	152
<i>Colossians</i>		2:15	149
2:12–13	166	3:1–7	148, 160
2:22	173	3:2	149, 160, 162
3:1	166	3:2–4	162
3:3–4	166	3:2–7	161
<i>1 Thessalonians</i>		3:2–12	124
2:9	75	3:5	157
4:9	250	4:1	128, 149, 150, 155, 173
5:12	162	4:1–5	153, 159, 164
<i>2 Thessalonians</i>		4:3	149
2:2	128	4:3–4	152
2:5	151	4:3–5	151
<i>1 Timothy</i>		4:4	153
1:1	155	4:6	157, 158, 163, 173, 174
1:3	146, 147, 152, 159	4:6–13	157
1:3–4	146	4:7	152, 181
1:4	152, 159, 181	4:10	155
1:7	147, 151, 152, 155, 173, 175	4:11	159, 163
1:7–10	156	4:11–12	150, 159
1:8–9	152	4:12	159
1:8–10	159	4:13	150, 155, 157, 159, 173
		4:14	157
		4:15	150, 163
		4:16	155, 159, 162, 173

5:1–2	160	2:15	169
5:7	159	2:16	164, 165, 169
5:13	149	2:17	147
5:17	155, 160, 163	2:17–18	164
5:17–18	124, 148, 161	2:18	153, 165, 167, 168, 225, 245
5:17–22	160	2:23	164, 165, 169
5:18	74, 130, 161	2:24	169
5:18–19	75	2:25	169, 240
5:21	159	2:26	150
5:22	159, 163	3:1–9	164
6:1	155, 173, 174	3:2–4	165
6:2	159, 163	3:5	151, 165, 169
6:3	173, 174	3:6	149, 164, 165
6:3–21	150	3:6–7	149
6:4	152	3:7	240
6:6	151	3:10	169, 173, 174
6:8	151	3:10–11	169
6:13	159	3:11–13	165
6:17	159, 163	3:13	149, 165
6:20	162, 163, 174	3:14	162, 169
		3:14–17	171
<i>2 Timothy</i>		3:15–16	152
1:1	155	3:16	173, 174
1:2	169	3:17	139, 253
1:3	146	4:2	169, 170, 171, 173, 174
1:5	169, 171	4:2–3	163
1:6	169	4:3	164, 169, 173, 174, 175
1:6–7	158	4:3–4	164
1:8	164, 170, 174	4:4	152, 155, 181
1:10	174	4:5	142, 169, 171
1:11	55, 96, 154, 164, 166, 169, 170, 174	4:12	146
1:12	163, 170, 174	4:14	169
1:13	162, 169, 174	4:14–15	147, 164
1:13–14	169	4:17	169, 174
1:14	162, 163, 174	4:19	135, 146
1:15	164	6:5	149
1:16–18	146		
1:17	146	<i>Titus</i>	
1:18	146	1:1	155, 240
2:1	169	1:3	162, 174
2:2	163, 169, 170	1:5	146
2:2–3	170	1:5–6	160
2:8	174	1:6–9	124
2:9	170	1:7	160
2:11–12	149	1:7–9	160, 162
2:11–13	171		
2:14	164, 165, 169		

1:9	149, 160, 173, 174	10:11	56
1:10	128, 147, 152	10:26	240
1:11	149, 174	10:26–31	219, 240
1:13	174	10:29	240
1:14	152, 181	11:3	139
1:15	152	11:32	234
2:1	173, 174	11:33	237
2:2	174	12:11	237
2:7	173	13:7	6, 241
2:8	174	13:9	242
2:10	173	13:17	6, 234, 235, 241, 242
2:11	155	13:22	159
2:15	174	13:24	234, 235
3:9	152		
3:13	146		
<i>Philemon</i>		<i>James</i>	
5	139	1:1	101
		1:2	102
<i>Hebrews</i>		1:4	106
1:5–13	234	1:4–5	105
1:7	56	1:5	106
1:9	237	1:8	98, 106, 108
1:14	56	1:12	108
2:3	242	1:13	101
2:3–4	234	1:16	102
3:12	240	1:17	101
5:10	235	1:18	106, 108
5:11	235	1:19	102, 106
5:11–6:3	235, 236	1:21	106
5:11–6:12	243	1:22	79, 110
5:11–6:20	235	1:22–25	106
5:12	235	1:25	108
5:13	224, 237, 253	1:26	106
6:1	239	1:27	106
6:1–3	238	2:1	101
6:3	239	2:1	102
6:4–6	219, 220, 240	2:5	102
6:4–8	241	2:8	108
6:4–12	240	2:12	108
6:6	240	2:14–26	108
6:12	235	2:19	101
6:13–20	235	2:21	101
7:1	235	3	31, 192
8:2	56	3:1	6, 97, 103, 104, 108, 254
8:6	56	3:1–2	101, 102, 103, 106, 107
9:14	239	3:1–12	103, 105, 106, 121
9:21	56		

3:1–18	106	1:20–21	244
3:2	103, 106, 108	2:1	128, 243, 244, 245
3:2–12	106, 108	2:2	244
3:2–18	106	2:3	244
3:3–12	104, 106	2:4–10	245
3:5	104	2:10	244, 245
3:6	104	2:10b–22	244
3:9	106	2:12	245
3:9–11	104	2:13	244, 245
3:13–18	102, 103, 105, 106	2:14	244
3:14	105	2:15	244
3:14–18	106	2:17	245
3:16	105	2:18	244
3:17	105	2:19	244, 245
3:17–18	106	2:20	240
4:5	107	2:21	224, 244, 245
4:8	106, 108	2:22	244, 253
4:10	86	3:3	128
5:7	99	3:3–10	244
5:10	107	3:15–16	244
5:12	110	3:17	345
5:13–20	100		
5:14	108	<i>1 John</i>	
5:14–16	107	2:18	128
		4:1	128
<i>1 Peter</i>		4:1–6	121
1:22–2:2	109		
2:25	143	<i>2 John</i>	
5:2–3	124	7	128
5:4–5	143	10	128
5:6	86		
		<i>Revelation</i>	
<i>2 Peter</i>		2:2	6
1:2–3:8	240	3:1–3	166
1:16	244		

Jewish Pseudepigrapha

<i>2 Baruch</i>		<i>1 Maccabees</i>	
78–87	100	12:9	159
<i>Enoch</i>		<i>2 Maccabees</i>	
1,1	77	7:22–23	166
38,2.3.4	77	15:9	159
39,6.7	77		

<i>3 Maccabees</i>		<i>Testament of Benjamin</i>	
7:22	222	7.49	96
<i>4 Maccabees</i>		<i>Testament of Judah</i>	
7:1	83	14:3	139
7:5	83	<i>Testament of Levi</i>	
7:9	83	8:17	92
18:11–13	96	12:6	92
18:11–19	94	13:7	92
<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>		<i>Testament of Zebulun</i>	
8.10–11	166	5:1	139
20.7	166	<i>Tobit</i>	
<i>Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah</i>		11:15	222
3/19–25	189	<i>Wisdom</i>	
<i>ben Sirach</i>		2:12–20	94
24:33	173	5:1–7	94
38:24–39:11	49	15:15	139
39:8	173		

Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, Philo, and Rabbinic Texts

<i>Dead Sea Scrolls</i>		<i>Damascus Document</i>	
1QapGen 2:4	46	4.2–3	77
1QapGen 2:14	46	<i>Josephus</i>	
1QapGen 2:17	46	<i>Antiquities</i>	
1QpHab	91	1.61	41
1Q20 1 I 5	46	9.13.2	95
1QH 3.19–20	166	9.14.1	95
1QS 3.20, 22	77	15.373	41
1QS 3.13–4.26	115	18.16	45
1QS 9.14	77	18.63.3	45
1QSs 1:28	45	19.172	102
1QSs 2:16	45	20.41	102
4QEn ^a 1 I 5	46	20.46	44
4QEn ^a 1 iii 13 ter	46	<i>Contra Apion</i>	
4QEn ^b 1 ii 17	46	1.176	44
4QEn ^c 1 ii 24	46	<i>Philo</i>	
4QEn ^c 1 vi 11	46		
4QEn ^e 1 vi 18	46		
11QtgJob 14:3	46		
11QtgJob 22:6	46		
11QtgJob 25:1	46		
11QtgJob 28:3	46		

Congr.		1.80	44
114	44	2.45ff	152
122	41		
Contempl.		Spec.	
13	166	1.56–57	41
		3.11	102
Her.		<i>Ps.–Philo</i>	
19	44		
Legat.		De Jona	
27; 53; 54	41	153	166
155–157	230		
Migr.		<i>Mishnah</i>	
116	41	Avot 1:6b	51
122–123	166	Avot 2:8	46
		Avot 2:18	245
Mos.		<i>Targum Pseudo–Jonathan</i>	
1.21–24	41	Gen 4:8	245

Christian Writings

<i>Acts of Philip</i>		1–5	115, 116, 125, 252
84.117	166	1–6	113, 116, 238
<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>		1–6.2	116
7.28	135	2.2	134
7.28.5	129	3.1–6	134
7.39.4	166	4.1	111, 117, 127
<i>Clement</i>		4.1–2	125
1 Clement		4.2	127
1.3	235	4.9	126, 134
5.6–7	154	6.1	127
21.6	235	6.2–3	116
30.3	79	7.1	116
36:2–6	234	7–10	113, 127
38.2	79	10.7	120, 124, 131, 190
<i>Didache</i>		11.1–2	30, 77, 111, 118, 125, 128, 130, 133, 238
1.3	116		
1.3–6	116	11.1–3	117
1.3b–6	115	11.1–6	118
1.3	113	11.2	127, 130, 224, 253
1.6	113	11.3	118, 128, 141

11.3–12	135	Panarion	
11.4	118, 122	19.1.6a, 6b	35
11.4–6	119	42.1.7	231
11.4–7	118	42.2.2	108, 231
11.4–12	117		
11.5	119	<i>Eusebius</i>	
11.6	119, 120, 122		
11.7	128	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	
11.7–8	126	3.36	177
11.7–12	118, 121	3.36.1	200
11.8	121	3.39.1	200
11.8–12	120, 129	3.39.4	200
11:9	124	3.39.5–7	200
11.9–12	124	4.15.3–45	203
11.10	121, 124, 128	5.20.5–7	199
11.10–11	126	5.20.8	201
11.11	121, 124, 130	5.24.11–17	200
11–13	75, 117, 118	7.24.6	6, 108
11–15	127		
12	119	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i>	
12.1–5	117	1.2	109, 249
12.2a	117	1.4	253
12.2b–13.7	118	1.5–8	248
12.3	117	1:6	253
13.1	117, 123	1.7	249
13.1–2	124, 132	1.8	247, 248, 249,
13.1–3	117		253
13.1–7	120	2–17	253
13.2	30, 111, 117, 125, 129, 130, 131, 133, 134, 162	4.3–5	246
		4.6	248
		4.9	249
		5.3	249, 253
13.2–7	121	5.4	253
13.3	130	5.5	250
13.3–7	122, 123	6.9	250
13.4	117	6.10	253
13.5–7	117	7.1	249, 250, 253
15.1	124, 125, 131, 132	7.4	250
		7.6	250
15.1–2	7, 111, 120, 124, 131, 133, 134	7.7	250
		79	250
		9.6	250
15.2	134	9.7	250, 253
		9.8	250, 253
<i>Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Apostles</i>		9.9	249, 250
12.1	126	10.1	253
		10.10	253
<i>Epiphanius</i>		11.2–3	251
		14.4	250

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 14.5 | 247 | 11.2 | 188 |
| 15.4 | 250 | 14.2–15.1 | 79 |
| 16.2 | 250 | 15.1 | 121, 195, 196,
205, 208, 210 |
| 6.3–4 | 246 | 15.1–2 | 188 |
| 16.7 | 247, 250 | 16.2 | 184 |
| 16.8 | 250 | 17.1 | 184, 185 |
| 16.9 | 249 | 18.2 | 185 |
| 18–20 | 252 | 19.1 | 185 |
| 18.1 | 253 | 20–21 | 194 |
| 19.9–10 | 125 | 20.2 | 188, 190 |
| 21.1 | 250 | 21.1 | 184, 186 |
| 21.5 | 253 | | |
| 21.6 | 250 | Magnesians | |
| 21:7 | 250 | 1 | 180 |
| 21:9 | 250 | 1.1 | 188 |
| | | 1.2 | 188 |
| <i>Epitome of the Canons of the Holy
Apostles</i> | | 2 | 180, 197 |
| 9 | 126 | 3 | 188 |
| | | 3.1–4.1 | 188 |
| <i>Gospel of Thomas</i> | | 4 | 198 |
| 13 | 36, 37 | 4.1 | 190 |
| | | 6.1 | 188 |
| <i>Hippolytus</i> | | 7.1 | 188, 190 |
| Haer. | | 8.1 | 152, 181, 183 |
| 9.15.1,5 | 35 | 8.2 | 181, 196 |
| 9.16.1 | 36 | 9 | 182 |
| | | 9–10.1 | 195 |
| <i>Ignatius of Antioch</i> | | 9.1 | 152, 181, 182,
193, 245 |
| Ephesians | | 9.1–2 | 181, 195, 197 |
| 1.2 | 193 | 9.2 | 196 |
| 2.1 | 184 | 10.1 | 193 |
| 2.2 | 188 | 10.3 | 181, 183 |
| 3.1 | 193 | 11.1 | 182 |
| 3.1–11 | 188 | 13.1 | 197 |
| 3.2 | 188 | 13.2 | 188, 192 |
| 4.1–5.1 | 188 | 14 | 194 |
| 5.3 | 183, 188 | 12 | 183 |
| 6.1 | 188 | 15 | 180, 186 |
| 6.2 | 184, 240 | Philadelphians | |
| 7.1 | 184, 185, 188,
202 | insc 2–3 | 182 |
| 7.2 | 185 | insc 3.2 | 188 |
| 9.1 | 180, 184, 185,
187 | insc 7.1–8.1 | 188 |
| 9.2 | 197 | 1 | 189 |
| 10.1 | 193 | 1.1 | 188 |
| | | 2.1 | 182 |
| | | 3.1 | 66, 182 |

3.3	194	12.1	186
4.1	190, 192	12.2	192
5.2	183, 187		
6.1	182	Trallians	
6.3	182	1.1	185, 186
7.2	190	2.1–3.2	188
8.1	183	2.2	190
8.2	183, 187, 197	3.3	188
9.1	188	5	190
9.2	183, 187	6.2	185
10.1	178	7.1	188
11.2	182	7.2	190
		8.1	185
Polycarp		9.1	186
1.2	188, 190	9.1–2	182, 185
2.2	190	10	186, 194
3.1	181	10.1	185, 186
6.1	188	12.1	185
7.1	193, 194	12.2	188, 194
		13.2	188
Romans			
2.2	177	<i>Irenaeus</i>	
3.1	194	Adv haer.	
4.2	193, 194	3.3.4	199, 200
4.3	188	4.41.12	84
5.1	193, 194		
5.3	193, 194	<i>Justin Martyr</i>	
Smyrnians		Dialogue with Trypho	
1.1	66, 186, 245	114.5	251
1.1–2	182		
1–2	186	<i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>	
1–6:1	187	1.1	204
2	186	1.2	204
3	186, 245	2.1	204
4.1	187	2.3	206
4.2	187, 194, 245	4.1	208
5.1	186, 201	4.2	202
5.2	187, 195	4.4	204
5.3	187	5.2	207
6.2–9.2	187	7.2	202
7.1	190, 201	9.3	200
7.2	186, 187	10.1	207
8.1	187	12.1	205
8.1–2	190	12.2	198, 205, 207
8.1–9.1	188	13.1	206
9.1	188	13.2	210
11	178	14.1	206
11.1	177		

14.2	204	4.3.1–2	220
16.1	206	4.3.1–4	218
16.2	198, 205, 206, 208	4.3.2	221
17.2–3	205, 208	4.3.4–7	218
17.3	204, 205, 206	9	216
19	209	9.6	98
19.1	198, 204, 205, 209	10.1.6	224
19.2	209, 210	10.2.3	227
20.1–2	203	11	121, 216
		11.5–17	214
		11.12	75
<i>Polycarp</i>		Sim.	
		2	215
Philippians		5.1.5	222
1.2	202	5.3.2	222
2.1	202	5.5.3	222
2.3	201	5.7.2	224, 225, 245
3.1	201	6.3.3	227
3.2	201	8	226
4.1	201	8.3.2	222
4.2–3	201, 202	8.6.5	220, 224, 225
5.3	201	8.7.1–3	221
5.3–6.1	201	8.9.1	240
6.3	185, 201, 202	9.2.6	227
7.1	202, 245	9.4.2–3	221
7.2	202	9.13.1	221
8.1	201, 202	9.15.4	217, 218, 221, 228
10.3	201	9.16.5	222, 228
11.2	201	9.16.5–7	223
<i>Pseudo–Clementines</i>		9.17.1	223
		9.17.2	223
Adjuration		9.18.2	222
1–2.1	35	9.19.1	224
4.1–3	35	9.19.2	221, 227, 228
		9.19.2–3	224, 225
Epistula Clementis		9.22.1–4	226
13–15	35	9.22.2	227
		9.25.1–2	228, 249
Homily		9.25.2	218, 223
3.71.5	35	9.26.2	217
		9.27.1–2	217
<i>Shepherd of Hermas</i>		16.6	217
		17.1	217
Mand.		19.9.2–3	225
4.2	218	25.2	217
4.2.2	227		
4.3.1	241	<i>Vis.</i>	

1.1–3	215	3.8.11	229
1.3.4	227	3.9.7	235
2.2.5	217	3.9.10	217
2.4.2	217	2.10.9	227
2.4.3	219	4.1	222
2.6	235	4.1.2	215
3	226	4.1.8	222
3.3.3	215	4.2.5	217, 222
3.3.5	215		
3.4.1	215		
3.4.3	215		
3.5.1	215, 216		
3.6.5	227		
3.7.3	228		
3.8.9	227		

Tertullian

Adversus Marcionem

3.15	231
4.11	231

Other Ancient Literature

Aeschylus

Eumenides

279	40, 41
584	40

Prometheus vincetus

109	40
322	40
373	40

Septem contra Thebas

572	40
573	41

Aristophanes

Equites

1235	41
------	----

Nubes

871	41
1147	41
1467	41

Cicero

Tusc.

1.32–33	167
---------	-----

Heraclitus

Fragment 57	41
-------------	----

Hymn to Mercury

556	40
-----	----

Isocrates

Antidosis

95	41
104	41

Lucian

Hermotimus	42
------------	----

Lysias

Oratio

12.47	41
12.78	41
14.30	41

Plato

Apologia

33ab	41
------	----

Laches

180d	41
Menexenus 236a	41
Meno 93d	41
Symposium 208d	167
Theaetetus 148e–151d	41
Timaeus 22a	152
<i>Sextus Empiricus</i>	
Pyr. 3.168	237

Index of Modern Authors

Abramowski, L.	71	Beyer, H.W.	139
Adams, J.C.	239	Biddle, B.J.	2–3
Agnes, F.H.	120	Blass, F.	84, 102
Albl, M.C.	184, 251–252	Blenkinsopp, J.	2–3
Albrig, W.F.	50	Boismard, M-E.	56
Alexander, L.C.	31, 43	Bommes, K.	190, 193–194
Allison, D.C.	65, 88–89, 98, 100– 101, 103, 105	Bonnard, P.	79, 90
Alon, G.	116	Bony, P.	139–140, 142
Amici, R.	145	Borgen, P.	44
Amphoux, C.B.	103	Boring, M.E.	67
Ash, J.L.	191	Boudillon, J.	14–15
Attridge, H.W.	234–240	Bovon, F.	57, 68–69
Audet, J-P.	113–116, 123, 126–127	Braumann, G.	109
Aune, D.E.	122–123, 216	Brent, A.	177
Backhaus, K.	234–236, 240, 242	Broadhead, E.K.	73
Baird, W.	7	Brockhaus, U.	11, 15–16, 60, 63
Barbaglio, G.	62	Brown, C.T.	182, 241
Barnard, L.W.	246–248	Brown, R.E.	66, 71–73, 136, 145– 146, 149, 168, 186–187, 195–197
Barnes, T.D.	177	Brox, N.	149, 158, 163, 166, 169, 175, 187, 193–194, 210, 213–215, 219–221, 223, 225, 228–229
Barrett, C.K.	64–67, 120, 179–181, 183–184, 191, 196	Bühner, J-A.	72
Barth, G.	166–167	Bultmann, R.	22, 26–39, 33, 77
Barth, M.	136, 138–139	Burchard, C.	98, 103–105
Bauer, J.P.	199, 201–202	Burini, C.	173, 199, 201, 203
Baumeister, T.	94, 204, 206, 209–210	Burtchaell, J.T.	6, 9, 11, 16–19, 230
Becker, H-J.	77, 79	Buschmann, G.	200, 203–209
Belle, G.B.	71–72	Byrskog, S.	32–33, 39–40, 82–83, 86, 89, 92, 110
Berquist, J.L.	2		
Best, E.	57, 69, 136–142, 173	Cacitti, R.	203
Betz, H.D.	151	Campbell, R.A.	18

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Camphenhausen, H.v. | 12–13, 29, 188,
190, 207, 209, 248 | Ellis, E.E. | 18 |
| Caulley, T.S. | 245 | Eynde, D.V.D. | 216, 248, 254 |
| Cohen, S.J.D. | 47–48, 52, 181, 183–
184 | Fabry, H-J. | 94 |
| Coleborne, W. | 214 | Faivre, A. | 19 |
| Collins, B. | 238, 240 | Falcetta, A. | 184, 211 |
| Conti, M. | 75 | Farrer, A.M. | 11–12 |
| Conzelmann, H. | 152 | Fascher, E. | 70 |
| Coppens, J. | 57 | Fasola, U. | 151, 230 |
| Corwin, V. | 179, 196 | Fee, G. | 145, 148, 156, 161, 172 |
| Coyle, J.K. | 34, 38–39 | Filson, F.V. | 1 |
| Cross, A.R. | 238 | Finlan, S. | 116 |
| Crossan, J.D. | 87, 114, 122, 134 | Fitzmyer, J.A. | 54, 56, 69 |
| Culpepper, R.A. | 42–43 | Flusser, D. | 114 |
| | | Fohrer, G. | 45 |
| | | Foster, P. | 191 |
| Daube, D. | 57, 158 | France, R.T. | 90 |
| Davids, P. | 98–100, 110, 244 | Frankemölle, R.T. | 86, 88, 90, 99–
100, 106, 109 |
| Davies, W.D. | 65–66, 70, 79–80, 85,
88–89, 92, 179 | Friedrich, G. | 154 |
| De Halleux, A. | 88, 115, 118–119, 122 | | |
| Debrunner, A. | 84 | Gager, J.G. | 16 |
| Dehandschutter, B. | 203, 205 | Garland, D.E. | 78, 80, 83, 88, 91, 93 |
| Del Verme, M. | 111, 121 | Gemünden, P.V. | 108 |
| Delling, G. | 139, 237 | Gerhardsson, B. | 27–29, 31–33, 39,
110 |
| Delorme, J. | 14, 39 | Giet, S. | 111, 214, 226 |
| Destro, A. | 73 | Gnilka, J. | 17, 65 |
| Dibelius, M. | 22–23, 25–27, 37, 39,
98, 109–110, 152, 214–216, 219,
221, 224, 226, 228–229 | Godecharle, D.R.M. | 71–72 |
| Dockx, S. | 55 | Goldhahn-Müller, I. | 219, 240–241 |
| Dodd, C.H. | 68, 70–72 | Goldstein, J.A. | 40 |
| Donahue, P.J. | 179–180, 183, 190 | Goppelt, L. | 13, 39 |
| Donelson, L.R. | 243 | Grabbe, L.L. | 2, 29 |
| Draper, J.A. | 10, 17, 111, 113–120,
123–124, 128, 131, 133, 248, 250 | Gregory, A. | 111 |
| Droge, A.J. | 94, 204 | Green, G.L. | 243–245 |
| Dunn, J.D.G. | 13, 26–27 | Grässer, E. | 236–240, 242 |
| Dupont, J. | 18, 56 | Greeven, H. | 21–23, 38–39, 62 |
| | | Grelot, P. | 14 |
| | | Gundry, R.H. | 66, 70, 74, 76–78, 80,
85, 88, 91 |
| Edgar, D.H. | 109 | Günther, E. | 210 |
| Edwards, M.J. | 177 | | |
| Eid, V. | 69 | | |

Haenchen, E.	53–54, 56, 77–79, 83, 88	Kiessling, E.	40, 50
Hadot, P.	21, 42	Kistemaker, S.J.	238, 240
Hagner, D.A.	66	Kittel, G.	110
Hahn, F.	18, 46, 144	Klaiber, W.	17–18
Hainz, J.	17	Klauck, H.-J.	139, 144
Harb, G.	68	Kleinknecht, K.T.	93–96
Harder, K.J.	111	Koch, D.-A.	142, 144
Harnack, A.	5–11, 15–17, 22, 34, 38–39, 107–108, 111, 114, 118, 122, 126, 216, 231–232	Koester, C.R.	234–235
Harrington, D.J.	89	Konradt, M.	99–100, 102, 104, 106, 108
Hartin, P.J.	77, 99, 109	Köster, H.	130, 230
Hartog, P.A.	179, 201–203, 205, 207	Kraft, R.A.	246, 251
Hatch, E.	7	Kretschmar, G.	17, 118, 122
Heil, C.	68, 70	Kümmel, W.G.	100
Hengel, M.	46, 101	Küng, H.	13–14
Henne, P.	214	Lagrange, M.-J.	85
Hezser, C.	10, 29, 45–49, 51–52	Lamouille, A.	56
Hill, D.	76	Lampe, P.	214, 221, 229–230
Hoet, R.	81, 83–84, 90	Lane, W.L.	234–240, 242
Hoffman, P.	69, 86	Laws, S.	98, 101, 104, 109
Holmberg, B.	10, 16	Legasse, S.	46, 80, 88, 92
Holtzmann, H.J.	11	Lemaire, A.	169
Hoppe, R.	109	Lesky, A.	40
Horst, M.V.D.	2	Leutzsch, M.	214
Huber, K.	88	Levine, L.I.	230
Hübner, R.M.	177	Lichtenberger, H.	230
Hummel, R.	92	Liebers, R.	167
Hvalvik, R.	246–248, 250, 252	Lieu, J.M.	206
Isacson, M.	180, 191	Lindemann, A.	60, 154, 177
Jefford, C.N.	111–112, 114	Linton, O.	11
Jeremias, J.	49, 68, 84–85	Lips, O.	156–158, 160, 165, 173–175
Jervell, J.	57	Lohfink, G.	174
Johnson, L.T.	234–235	Lohse, E.	46, 50
Jones, F.S.	35–36, 38–39	Lusini, G.	213
Karrer, M.	52	Luz, U.	49, 65–68, 71, 74–75, 77–78, 80, 84, 88–89, 92
Karris, R.J.	165–166	Maier, G.	44
Keener, C.S.	53, 55, 57, 150	Malherbe, A.J.	146, 174
Klein, M.	109	Marshall, I.H.	145, 147–148, 151– 164, 169–174
Kertelge, K.	17–18, 21	Martin, D.D.	2

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Martin, R.P. | 98–99, 101, 104–105,
109 | Ollrog, W-H. | 56 |
| McDonald, J.I.H. | 155 | O'Neill, J.C. | 139 |
| Meeks, W.A. | 37 | Osiek, C. | 214–215, 217–221, 223–
229 |
| Meier, J.P. | 32, 45, 53, 55, 66, 88,
158, 160–161, 178 | Paget, J.C. | 246–248, 252–253 |
| Meinhold, P. | 179, 188–189 | Papa, B. | 62, 129 |
| Merklein, H. | 22–23, 39, 54–55,
58, 60, 138, 140–141, 143–144, 173 | Patterson, S.J. | 117, 123 |
| Metzner, R. | 98 | Penner, T.C. | 98–99, 109–110 |
| Meyer, R.P. | 137 | Pernveden, L. | 217, 222, 227–228 |
| Meyer, R. | 56 | Peterson, E. | 56, 126, 215 |
| Michel, O. | 139 | Poschmann, B. | 219, 240 |
| Milavec, A. | 5, 112–114, 116–119,
121–125, 127, 131–132, 134 | Powell, M.A. | 79 |
| Moffatt, J. | 236–237, 239–240 | Preiss, T. | 183, 194 |
| Molland, E. | 179, 181, 183 | Prigent, P. | 126, 180, 191, 246–
249, 251, 253 |
| Morgan, T. | 43 | Prior, M. | 145 |
| Moss, C.R. | 93, 203 | Prostmeier, F.R. | 246–250, 253 |
| Mounce, W.D. | 145, 148, 154–156,
158, 161–162, 171–172 | Redalie, Y. | 165 |
| Mühlsteiger, J. | 17 | Reese, R.A. | 243 |
| Munier, C. | 178–179 | Regul, J. | 200 |
| Murphy-O'Connor, J. | 145 | Rehkopf, F. | 84 |
| Mußner, F. | 102 | Reiling, J. | 214, 216 |
| Myllykoski, M. | 179 | Reisch, E. | 40 |
| Newport, K.G. | 46, 77, 79, 84, 86–87 | Rendtorff, T. | 18 |
| Neymeyr, U. | 34, 38–39, 75, 115,
128–130, 217, 220, 226–228, 232,
248–249, 251, 260 | Rengstorf, K.H. | 19–21, 24, 35, 39–
41, 44, 46, 110, 120, 151, 173 |
| Neyrey, J. | 245 | Riesenfeld, H. | 27, 29 |
| Neyrinck, F. | 69–71 | Riesner, R. | 3, 26, 32–33, 46, 53,
68, 70, 84, 88 |
| Niebuhr, K-W. | 99 | Riggenbach, E. | 236 |
| Niederwimmer, K. | 56, 112–115,
117–124, 126 | Rius-Camps, J. | 177 |
| Niemand, C. | 72, 86, 128 | Rizzi, M. | 178 |
| Nilsson, M.P. | 51 | Roberts, J.H. | 141, 143 |
| Norelli, E. | 179, 189–190, 200 | Robinson, T.A. | 38, 77 |
| Normann, F. | 194, 197 | Rohde, J. | 189 |
| Oberlinner, L. | 148, 151, 166, 170–
172 | Roloff, J. | 17, 145, 147–148, 151–
154, 156–159, 162, 174–175 |
| | | Rordorf, W. | 56, 113–116, 119–120,
126, 135 |
| | | Rose-Gaier, D. | 134 |
| | | Rosenfeld, B.Z. | 47 |

Ruppert, L.	93–94		242
Rutgers, L.V.	230	Steck, O.H.	94–95
		Stemberger, G.	47
Saldarini, A.J.	49, 89	Stempel, A-D.	115, 117, 125
Sand, A.	76, 92	Stendahl, K.	91
Sandt, H.V.D.	114, 128	Strathmann, H.	56, 210
Saß, G.	118	Stroumsa, G.G.	206
Schams, C.	49, 76	Sukenik, E.L.	47, 49–50
Schlarb, E.	150, 152–153, 155, 162, 164–165, 167, 174–175	Sumney, J.L.	165
Schlatter, A.	68	Swartley, W.M.	192, 194
Schlier, A.	141, 236	Tabor, J.A.	94
Schlosser, J.	85–87, 164, 174	Thatcher, T.	71
Schmeller, T.	43	Theissen, G.	16–17, 39, 99, 108, 118, 122, 166
Schmitz, O.	159	Thiessen, W.	146
Schnabel, E.J.	17, 54, 120, 229–230	Thomas, J.C.	73
Schnackenburg, R.	13, 18, 71, 137– 138, 141, 144	Thomassen, E.	218–219
Schneider, F.	99, 104, 109	Thüsing, W.	236–239
Schoedel, W.R.	66, 79, 177–188, 194–196, 198, 201, 203–204	Towner, P.H.	145, 150, 153, 165, 170
Schöllgen, G.	112, 121, 124, 128, 177, 229	Trebilco, P.	145–146, 148
Schrage, W.	59, 63, 167	Trevett, C.	180, 188–189
Schreiber, A.	17	Trilling, W.	88
Schulz, S.	16	Trocme, E.	103
Schürer, E.	46	Tropper, V.	3, 45
Schürmann, H.	24–25, 33, 38–39, 56	Trummer, P.	147
Schweizer, E.	13, 18, 139	Turner, D.L.	77
Schwemer, A.M.	210	Uebele, W.	180
Seitz, O.J.F.	91	Viviano, B.T.	46, 79, 81, 86
Sellin, G.	136–137, 139, 142–143	Vogt, H.J.	177
Shepherd, M.H.	99	Vokes, F.E.	113
Sim, D.C.	66	Vööbus, A.	36
Skarsaune, O.	187, 251	Vouga, F.	104–105, 109
Slee, M.	66	Wagner, J.	18
Smith, J.C.H.	252	Wanke, J.	103, 105, 107
Smith, M.	29	Wayment, T.A.	36–37, 39
Snyman, A.H.	241	Weaver, D.J.	67
Sohm, R.	8–11, 15–17, 38	Weber, M.	9–11, 16–17
Soiron, T.	13	Wedderburn, A.J.M.	166–167
Spicq, C.	86, 145, 147–148, 150–152, 159, 161–162, 166, 236–237, 239,	Weiser, A.	152, 163–164, 169–172

Weiss, A.	37
Weiss, H-F.	234–242
Wengst, K.	246–248, 250–253

Index of Subjects

- Acts of the Apostles 14, 28–29
 —presbyters in 58
 —prophets in 53–59
 —teachers in 53–59, 159
 Adam 149, 152
 Αισθητήριο 237
 Alexander (adversary of Paul) 147,
 164–165
 Alexandria 51, 98–99
 Angels 213, 215, 220, 228
 Antioch 3–4, 22, 30–31, 39, 98, 114,
 255, 256, 257
 —Christian community in 53–58,
 92
 —conflict in 198
 —as Matthean community 66, 97
 —traditions 62
 Antoninus Pius 177
Apocalypse of Peter 244
 Apollos 234–235
 Apostasy 220, 239, 241
 Apostate 225
 Apostle 1, 6, 8, 14, 22, 216–218,
 221–224, 231, 237, 242, 255
 —death of 14
 —in the *Didache* 118–120
 —as discontinued role 201
 —in Ephesians 136–138, 140–142,
 144
 —Paul as *see* Paul
 —prophets, teachers, and *see* “triad,
 the”
 —teaching all creation 228
 —the Twelve 11, 67, 140
 Apostolic Fathers 31–32, 35
 Apostolic succession 188, 259
 appointment 14, 19
 Aristotle, Aristotelian 20
Ascensio Isaiae 189–190, 192
 Asia Minor 20, 164, 243, 247, 257–
 259
 —as recipients of letter of Ephesians
 137
 Authority 11
 —tripartite 9–10, 16
 Barnabas 53–59, 91, 97, 120, 123,
 158, 248, 250, 252, 255, 257
 —as a teacher 57, 247–251
 —commissioning 57
 —as disciple of a school 252
 —idea of knowledge 254
 —as missionary 158
 —use of scripture 251–252
 Baptism 113, 215, 218–220, 223–
 228, 239, 248n85, 251–252
 Betrayer 225
 Bishop(s) 15, 124–125, 143, 214,
 216–218, 237, 255–257, 259
 —authority 187–191
 —and presbyters, deacons 8, 156–
 157, 192
 —as adversary of Paul *see* Paul
 —appointment of 132
 —as Eucharistic celebrants 190
 —as heir to teachers 135, 168
 —as managers 131–132

- relationship to presbyters 160
- relationship to prophets 123
- requirements on 161, 163
- as successor of Paul *see* Paul
- Blasphemer 225
- Boudillon, J. 14–15
- Brockhaus, U. 15–16
- Bultmann, R. 22, 26–27
- Burtchaell, J. T. 17–18
- Byrskog, S. 32–33, 82, 110

- Campanhausen, H.V. 12
- Catholic, Catholicism 9, 15, 13–15, 19
- Catechesis 116, 174, 219
- Catechumen 214, 219
- Charisma 5–9, 11, 13–19, 23, 157
 - and office 5, 11–19, 25, 38
 - of teachers 6–7, 21, 34
 - transmission 169
- “Charismatic Triad” 8–9, 23, 216
- Christ *See* “Jesus”
- Church 13
 - organization/structure 10, 13–14, 18–19
 - ecclesia 8
 - authority of 9
- Christian Community 37–38
- 1 Clement*
 - author 230
- Clement of Alexandria 260
- Clement of Rome 219
- Codex Athous 213n3
- Corinth 15, 30, 235
 - community of 14, 59–60, 64–65, 198
- 1 Corinthians 15, 18–21, 136, 258
 - redaction issues 60, 62–63
 - relationship to Ephesians 137–138, 144
- 2 Corinthians 15
- Coyle, J.K. 34
- Crete 146

- Cyprus and Cyrene 53–54, 58

- Daniel 246n73
- David 221
- Deacon 123–125, 201–203, 214, 216–218, 237, 257
 - appointment of 132, 190
 - as adversary of Paul *see* Paul
 - as managers 131–132
- Dead Sea Scrolls 45
- Demon 150
 - as teachers, *see* Teacher, Demons as
- “Deposit”/“teaching,” 176, 257–258
- Descensus ad inferos* 223
- Devil, the 150
- Dibelius, M. 22–23, 26–27, 33, 98
- Didache* 1, 2, 5–10, 17, 30, 34, 47, 101, 111–135, 190, 192, 216, 239, 252, 254, 256–257
- Διδάσκαλος *see* Teacher,
- Dionysios of Alexandria 6–7
- Disciple(ship) 12, 20, 36, 73–75, 89–90, 231, 242, 256–258
 - and philosophic schools 20
 - as succeeding teachers 176, 194
- Docetists 179, 182, 186, 192–194, 198
- Doctrine 20

- Ecclesiology 11, 14
- Egypt 20, 41, 247, 256
- Elders 160, 231
- Encratite 153
- Ephesians (biblical book) 3, 20, 22–23, 30, 256
 - addressees 136–137
 - authorship 136, 137–138
 - community roles in 136, 138–139
 - dating 137
- Epicureans 245
- Epicureanism 245, 259
- Epiphanius of Salamis 231–232

- Ἐπίσκοπος 12, 18, 23
Epistle of Barnabas 246, 254, 258
 —authorship 247
 —composition 247
 —dating 246
 Eschatology 150, 153, 176
 Eucharist 9, 113, 187, 190
 Eusebius 6
 Eva/Eve 149, 152
 Evangelist (εὐαγγελιστής) 3, 137, 169
 —heirs of apostles and prophets 142–144
 —the Seven 142
 Evaristus 203–208, 211–212
- False Apostle 144
 False Prophet 75, 119, 121, 144, 244
 False Teacher (ψευδοδιδάσκαλος) 18, 24, 34, 243–246, 257–259
 —as Epicureans 245
 —as Gnostics 103, 245
 “Father,” title 82–85, 87
 Fiction, Pseudepigraphical 106–107, 155
 Final judgment 239, 244
 “Flesh” 225n58
 Food laws 242
 Forgiveness
 —post-baptismal 218–219
 Form criticism 26–28, 31–32
- Gamaliel 55, 151
 Γεγυμνασμένα 237
 Genesis
 —genealogies 152
 Gentile 22, 34, 140–141, 144, 198, 239
 —Gentile-Christians 112, 147, 190n222, 244, 247, 254
 —opposing Ignatius *see* Ignatius,
 Opponents
 Gerhardsson, B. 27–29, 110
- Gnosis 248n85
 Gnosticism 215, 225, 258–259
 —in the Pastoral letters 152–153
 —polemic against 168n133, 177n169, 179n176, 184, 199–201
 —teachers 180
 God-fearer 239
 Greco-Roman culture 244
 —education 42–43, 84
 Greece 20
 Greek philosophy/thought 19–22, 24–25, 41–43, 237
 Greeven, H. 21–23
- Hadrian 246n74
 Haggada 26
 Halaka 23, 26
 Harnack, A.V. 5–8, 9–11, 16, 17, 22, 34, 38–39, 111, 216, 231–232
 “Hearers” 242
 Hebrews 31, 234–237, 241, 258
 —author of 220
 Hellenists 53, 255
 Henoch 246n73
 Hermas 215–227, 241, 254
 —biography 213–214
 —polemic 225, 228–229, 232
 —role in Christian community 214, 232
 Hermogenes 164
 Herod 50, 53–56, 208
 Heterodoxy 219, 220
 Hierarchy 13, 34
 Historical Criticism 7
 Holmberg, B. 10, 16
 Holy Spirit 14, 228
 Hospitality 217
 House-churches 229–230
 Hymenaus 164–166
 Hypathia 44, 147, 164–165
 “Hypocrites” 220, 224–225
- Ignatius 212, 225, 257

- on church offices 188–190
- connection to Gospel of Matthew 176
- date of letters 177–178
- on Jesus as teacher *see* Jesus, as teacher
- on martyrdom 204, 209–211
- opponents 178–188, 191–195, 198, 202
- suffering of 175, 187
- Intellectualism 24–25
- Institution 13–14, 17, 23
- “Instructor,” title 82, 85–87
- Irenaeus 260

- James 1, 31, 254
- Letter of 97–111, 159
- Jeremiah 251
- Jerusalem 5–6, 22, 28, 30–32, 39, 47, 49, 51
- Jesus 27, 29, 31, 222, 238–239, 244
- and transmission 32–33
- and disciples 19, 28, 33, 93
- Church as the body of 137, 139, 143
- discourses of 67–70, 77–89
- as teacher 3, 21, 37, 69–70, 73, 79–80, 96, 135, 195–197, 225, 242, 256–57, 259
- as giver of leadership roles 137–138
- as high priest 235, 240
- as rabbi 45–46, 88
- as teacher 19, 24, 28, 32–33, 36–37, 88, 121, 176–177, 193, 196–197, 205, 207–211
- relationship to the author of 2 Peter 243
- resurrection of 140, 167–168, 170, 182, 225, 245, 259
- Sayings of 23, 26, 30, 39, 254
- suffering of 95–97, 154, 171, 185–186, 191–192, 194–195, 201–202, 251–252
- traditions 1, 5, 23, 25, 33, 99, 252–253
- Jews, Jewish communities 22, 34, 45, 140, 235, 239
- customs 198
- depiction in Pastoral Epistles 147
- education 27, 29, 32
- Jewish–Christians 31–32, 101, 105, 108, 115, 147, 156, 190n222
- lifestyle 29, 246–247
- literature 152, 166
- polemic against 77, 184, 206, 208
- rabbi/rabbinic tradition 1, 10, 12n49, 20–22, 24, 27–33, 39, 45–48, 50–52, 247, 255, 259
- revolts 178
- ritual 14, 246–247, 252
- sages 45–46, 49
- scribes 49, 51–52
- scriptures 176, 181–182
- synagogues 230, 232
- teachers in 6, 11–12, 19, 22–25, 30, 44–45, 169, 230, 248
- and transmission 27–28
- Jewish War (132–135) 177
- John the Baptist 45
- John, Gospel of 24, 70–73
- John as gospel writer 47
- Jones, S.F. 35–36
- Josephus 41, 44–45, 245
- Judaism 12, 19, 181, 238n37, 240, 243, 245, 259
- Judas 231
- Justin Martyr 12, 36, 96, 187, 251–252, 260

- Kirchenordnung 112
- Kretschmar, G. 17, 118

- Laying on of hand 47, 239
- Leaders (ἡγούμενοι) 235, 241–242
- function of 242

- Letter of James, The 256
 Levite(s) 54, 57, 255
 Literacy 259
 Lucian 42
 Luke, Gospel of 24, 30–31, 74, 91

 Macedonia 146
 Magnesia 180–182, 196
 Manaen 54–56, 255
 Manichees 36
 Marcion 203, 218, 231–232
 Mark, Gospel of 24, 46, 73–74, 78
 Martyr, Martyrdom 76, 93, 178, 191,
 193–195, 198, 203–205, 210–211,
 257
 Matthew 3, 30, 212, 257–258
 —persecution in 93–96
 —school of 91, 256
 —community of 33, 36–37, 52, 78,
 80, 86–87, 90–91, 96–97, 110
 Matthew, Gospel of 101, 111
 —attitude toward money 74–75
 —composition 65–66
 —preservation of Semitic features 68
 —relation to the *Didache* 114–115
 Melchizedek 235
 Meeks, W. 37
 Merklein, H. 22–23, 55, 143
 Mishna 45
 Missionaries 8, 72–76, 80, 93, 97
 Montanism 6
 Montanus 204
 Moses 41
 —“the chair of” 78–79
 —prophecies of 248
 Mount Athos 213n3

 Nero 243
 Nerva 246n74
 New Testament 3–4, 19, 24–25, 29,
 33, 35, 45–46, 138–139, 222
 Neymeyr, U. 34–35, 130, 217, 260
 Neyrey, J.H. 245

 Nicopolis 146

 Office 5, 7, 11–16, 18–19, 22–23,
 25, 30, 38–39
 Old Testament 2, 20–21, 221, 244–
 245, 251
 —martyrs 76
 —motifs 93
 —prophets in 141, 181n186, 201
 —teachers in 155, 173
 Onesimus (bishop in Ephesus) 188,
 195
 Onesiphorus 146
 Ossuaries 49–52
 Oral performance 215
 Orthodoxy 219

 Paideia, παιδεία 32, 43
 Pagan 243
 —cult 240
 —deities 239n45
 —lifestyle 239
 —teachers 24–25, 39
 Palestine 17, 20, 28–29, 32
 Paradosis 24–25
 Paraenesis 21–22, 110, 137, 248n85
 Parousia 244
 Pastoral Epistles, the 13–14, 24, 142,
 225, 257–258
 —addressees 146, 168
 —authorship 145, 150, 155, 160,
 166, 176
 —charisma in 157
 —concern with right teaching 154,
 162, 174–175, 202
 —dating 145–146, 154, 172
 —differences among 158–159
 —elders in 158
 —gnostic ideas in *see* Gnosticism
 —inscriptions 155
 —place of composition 146
 —polemics 168, 173, 181, 192–193,
 197

- rhetorical concerns 156, 164, 172
- suffering in 171
- teachers in 149, 153, 155, 159, 163, 175, 207, 211
- women in *see* Women
- Patriarchs 221
- Paul 1, 14–15, 30–31, 225, 244, 255, 257
- adversaries 146–156, 161–171, 173–176
- and gospel transmission 23–24
- apostleship 24, 54–55, 140–141, 156–157
- attacks against 151
- as author of epistles 30, 136, 146
- commissioning 57
- commissioning of Timothy 142
- communities of 14–15, 19–22, 37, 189, 198
- dispute with Peter 190n222
- ecclesiology 138
- journey with Barnabas 120, 123
- as a teacher 57, 153–156, 166, 197, 211, 225, 257–259
- suffering of 96
- succession from 156–157, 160, 162–163
- teaching 153, 157
- testament of 158–159, 164
- the triad in Paul’s thought *see* “triad, the”
- view of women 150
- wisdom of 201
- writing/teaching of 13, 16, 23, 28, 30, 33
- Persecution(s) 22, 67–68, 71–76, 92–94, 165, 175, 196, 209, 256
- Nero’s 243
- of Hellenists 53
- of the prophet 95–96
- of Polycarp 209–211
- Peter 36, 62–63, 243
- 1 Peter 244
- 2 Peter 243–246, 254, 258
- Pharisees 27–28, 31–32, 39, 49, 51–52, 77–81, 87–90, 238
- Philadelphia 182–184, 190
- Philetus 147, 164–166
- Philip 142
- Philippians 185
- Philo of Alexandria 41–42, 44, 51
- on the Pentateuch 152
- Philomelium 203
- Philosophers 151, 165, 174n162
- Philosophic Schools 7, 20, 42–43, 45
- Phygelus 164
- Pius 215
- Plato 41, 152
- Πνευματικά 14
- Pneuma(tic) 13–14, 24
- Polybius 185
- Polycarp 255
- as a teacher 198–201, 206, 209, 211, 257, 259
- letters 185, 201
- Martyrdom of* 165, 171, 203–209, 211–212, 257
- suspicion of dissidents 202
- Preacher(s) 8
- Practical teaching 34
- Presbyter 1, 7–8, 12, 18, 23–25, 34, 39, 143, 201, 214, 237, 256–257, 259
- as adversary of Paul *see* Paul
- appointment of 57, 59
- authority 188, 203
- disputing Marcion 231–232
- as heir to teachers 157, 168
- relationship to bishops 160
- relationship to shepherds 189
- requirements on 163
- in Rome 229–230
- salary 161–162
- as successor to Paul *see* Paul
- in Judaism 18
- Prophecy 8, 21, 23, 26, 192

- Prophet 6, 8, 22–24, 80, 114, 214,
 216, 221, 237, 244, 251, 255–257
 —in Antioch 54–57
 —apostles, teachers, and *see* “triad,
 the”
 —authority 189–190
 —Christian prophets 58
 —in the *Didache* 120–124, 135
 —as discontinued role 201
 —docetic 179
 —in Ephesians 136–138, 140–142,
 144
 —of the Old Testament *see* Old
 Testament
 —testing of 121–123
 —varied roles of 8
 —violent death of 95–96
 —and transmission 26
 —validation of 132–133
 Protestant, Protestantism 11, 13, 15,
 19
 Proto-rabbinic 31–33, 52
 Pseudo-Clementines 35–36,
- Q source/material 17, 30
 Qumran 42, 46, 47, 67–69, 72–73,
 92, 99
- Rabbi (רַבִּי) 82–83, 87–90, 103
 —and Christian teachers 175
 —emergence 58, 89, 168
 —ordination 57, 158
 —teachings 182
 Rabbinic schools 91
 Repentance 221, 239, 243
 —after apostasy 240–241
 —after baptism 220
 Redaction Criticism 60–62
 Rengstorf, K. 19–21, 24, 35, 39
 Resurrection 147, 225, 239, 245
 —of the believer in Jesus 225
 —of the body 167
 —of the spirit 166–168, 170, 225
 —of Jesus 167, 225
 —denial of the bodily resurrection
 245
 Revelation 20–21
 Rhode 213
 Riesenfeld, H. 27
 Riesner, R. 32–33
 Righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) 253
 —the way of 254
 —relationship to teachers 253
 Rome 1, 3, 98, 234–235–256, 258–
 259
 —Christians in 213, 215n17, 218–
 19, 229–230
 —Hermas in 213, 215, 241
 —Jews in 230
 —teachers in 218–219, 229, 231–
 232
- Sadducees 44, 49, 78, 245
 Salvation 13
 Samaria 142
 Satan 150
 “School” tracts 251–252
 Schulbetrieb 251–252
 Schulz, S. 16
 Schürmann, H. 24–25
 Schweizer, E. 13
 Scribe (γραμματεὺς) 3, 22, 76–81,
 87–90, 126, 151, 192, 238, 256, 259
 Scripture 14, 21–22, 25
 Septuagint 40, 156, 173
 Seventy, the 12, 17
 Sex, sexual behavior 59, 244–245
 Sextus Empiricus 237
 Shem 221
 Shepherd 213
 —as a title 137, 143–144, 256
 —relationship to presbyters 189
Shepherd of Hermas, The 1, 213, 217,
 258
 —authorship of 213–215
 —place of writing 215

- reception of 219
- teachers in 225, 232
- Simeon 255
- Sin 220–221, 225
- forgiveness of 218–219
- post–baptismal sin 239–241
- Smyrna 180, 184–187, 193, 198
- Sociological Models 15
- Socrates 41
- Sohm, R. 8–9, 11, 15
- Son of God 221–223
- Spirit 6, 11, 19, 25, 225n58
- bringing heavenly life 167
- deceitful 149
- gifts of 16, 157, 189–190
- upon teachers 181
- Spiritual Exercises 42
- Stephen 22, 31, 255
- Stoic, Stoicism 25, 110
- Chrysippus 20, 25
- Succession 15
- “Suffering servant” 93–94
- Synagogue 11–12, 18, 47
- Synoptics 20–21, 23
- Syria–Palestine 1, 4, 17, 30–31, 39, 47, 62, 65, 99–101, 111, 119, 215n17, 247, 252–256, 258–259
- Tarsus 12, 14, 54
- Theissen, G. 16–17
- Teacher 11, 214, 216–21, 223, 237, 246, 252, 255–257
- in Antioch 54–59
- apostles, prophets, and *see* “triad, the”
- appointment of 14, 59, 107, 144, 227, 230, 232
- authority of 12, 35, 232, 259
- the Twelve as 11
- as apostles and prophets 8–9, 20
- criteria for assessment 127–131
- in the *Didache* 133–134
- διδάσκαλος 3, 8, 19, 21, 25, 30–31, 39–41, 43–44, 50–51, 62, 65, 82–83, 116–117, 125–132, 213, 215, 220, 235, 241, 255
- as expounder of scripture 91, 254
- as leaders 21, 23
- as philosophers 33, 36
- as tradents 21, 23–33, 39, 250–251, 253–254
- and transmission 25, 33, 169–170
- as mediators 21
- content of teachings 109–110, 220, 222, 241
- development of 31, 34
- demons as 149
- disputing Marcion 231–232
- education of 259
- in Ephesians 137
- God as teacher 250
- gender of 2, 41, 134–135, 148–150, 176, 259
- pagan teachers 24–25, 39
- “of evil” 224–225, 229
- “of the law” 147, 151–152
- intellectualization of 20
- relationship to apostles 12, 143, 222, 228, 232
- relationship to bishops 1, 25, 34, 132, 135, 259–260
- relationship to disciples 1, 2, 5, 21, 37, 73–74, 246, 248–250, 254, 258–259
- relationship to false teachers 244–246
- relationship to leaders 242
- relationship to presbyters 1, 25, 34, 258–259
- relationship to prophets 1–2, 5, 7, 12, 23, 30, 143, 258
- relationship to shepherds 142
- reputation of 106–108, 227, 248–249

- role of 2–3, 5, 8–9, 106, 142–144, 242–243, 258–259
- schools of 12
- self-authenticating 226–228, 232
- social class of 37–38, 259
- teaching all creation 228
- title of 20, 25, 90, 97
- and transmission 22
- validation of 132–133
- Temple, The 47, 49, 246
- Tertullian 231
- Testament of Levi* 92
- Testimonia* 251, 252n104
- Theodicy 245
- Thomas, Gospel of* 26–37
- Thomas 36
- Timothy 142, 147, 150, 257
 - appointment of 148, 157–59
 - the epistles *see* Pastoral Epistles
 - leadership role 155–157, 159, 172
 - relationship to Paul 169–171, 174–176
 - rhetorical function 156, 160, 162–64
 - teachings 173–174
- Title 15–16
- Titus 257
 - the epistle *see* Pastoral Epistles
 - leadership role 155
 - relationship to Paul 174–176
 - teachings 173–174
- Torah 19, 27–28, 40, 45–47, 49, 79, 99, 101, 113, 128
- “Twelve, The” 11, 17, 24, 28, 32, 140
- “Two Ways,” The 112–115, 125–127, 238, 239, 248n85, 250, 252–253, 258
- “Triad, the” 5, 7–8, 10, 12–13, 18, 22, 30, 38–39, 59–60, 62–65, 76, 111
- Tradition 12
- Trallians 185–186
- Transmission
 - theme of 11, 20, 22, 25–27, 33
 - of tradition/teaching 21, 23, 39
- Troas 186
- Valentinus 218
- Wagner, J. 18
- Wayment, T.A. 36–37
- Weber, M. 9–11, 16–17
- Weiss, A. 37–38
- Widows 148–150
- Wise Men 76, 80, 92, 256
- Women
 - education 149
 - enticed by false teachers 165
 - means of salvation 149–150
 - social status 148–150, 164
 - teachers *see* Teacher, Gender of
- Zeno 20, 25
- Zimmermann, A.F. 29–32, 55, 57, 62–63, 82, 100, 108, 110, 258

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