

## Jesus

- I. New Testament
- II. Greco-Roman Antiquity
- III. Judaism
- IV. Christianity
- V. Islam
- VI. Other Religions
- VII. Literature
- VIII. Visual Arts
- IX. Music
- X. Film
- XI. Dance

### I. New Testament

**1. The NT's Basic Message.** The NT presents Jesus as the long awaited Messiah of the Jews and sees his mission, including his death and resurrection, as fulfilling the Jewish Scriptures. Jesus, the Christ and the Son of God, comes into the world, born of a virgin, preaches God's word and heals the diseased. Instead of reconquering the land for the people of the covenant, he founds the *ecclesia*, the church, and dies for the sins of all humankind. Guided by the Spirit, the post-resurrection church sets forth to proclaim the salvation brought by Jesus through faith in Jesus, baptizing in the name of Jesus or "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19) and celebrating the Lord's Supper until he returns. On that day of reckoning, he will judge the living and the dead. Those found in Christ will inherit eternal life in heaven while others will be condemned to damnation. Then every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**2. The Scholarly Perspective.** In scholarship, Jesus is an object of historical research, not faith. Among the aspects which this paradigm entails are a critical attitude towards the sources (mainly the synoptic tradition) and application of scholarly acceptable methods.

The following presentation starts from a notion widely, albeit not unanimously endorsed by current research, viz. that the picture the sources paint of Jesus stays broadly on target. The notion mainly derives from the observation that in the sources Jesus appears as a character plausible within his time and place – 1st-century Palestinian Judaism. In fact, this is the case insomuch that knowledge thereof is considered vital for understanding Jesus. Consequently, all valid studies of Jesus deal extensively with his Jewish context. Though rudimentary, the following presentation will also need to give some space to issues of Judaism.

A biography of Jesus does not lie within scholarly reach. Instead, scholarship focuses on certain key factors, on traditions that are regarded as the most reliable and significant historically. These vary from scholar to scholar, yet by and large they display some considerable agreement. In these tra-

ditions Jesus often appears as a doer of symbolic actions: he combines deeds with symbolic meanings presented as equally or even more real than that which the deeds mean concretely (therefore in contrast to "merely symbolic") and also as more important. The methodological considerations by which certain traditions are discerned as such key factors, and which usually cover large portions of scholarly treatments, cannot be rehearsed here.

**3. A Historical Reconstruction.** Jesus the Jew was born shortly before 4 BCE as the first child of his mother, Mary. Jesus grew up in the Galilean village Nazareth. He spoke Aramaic as his mother tongue but probably learned some Hebrew and Greek as well. Having worked as a builder, around the age of thirty he became a charismatic and a preacher traveling throughout rural Galilee and its villages. He was denounced by Jewish authorities and, possibly in 30 CE, crucified by the Romans just outside Jerusalem, the Jewish religious center. Best known about Jesus are his few last years, his so-called public activity.

Crucial to the commencement of Jesus' public activity was his contact with John the Baptist. John's was a ritual of water ablution coupled with fierce proclamation about the imminence of God's judgment and the coming of someone, mightier than himself, who would baptize with fire (Matt 3:1–11; Luke 3:3–17). Jesus accepted John's baptism (Matt 3:13; Luke 3:21; Mark 1:9). This means that he also accepted John's message. Soon, however, he gained independence and began to act as a proclaimer on his own behalf. So he reshaped the message to make it his. He also gave it a particular designation, "the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:15), embodying a familiar idea, God as king acting for his people, in unusual wording. Clearly, the designation served well, drawing attention and capturing something essential but leaving the more precise, concrete contents of the message open.

In general terms, the kingdom Jesus proclaimed was eschatological and apocalyptic. That is, it was about the "last things," the end of the world, and about God's supernatural and superhistorical intervention in the destiny of the world. Eschatology comprised two temporal aspects, "already now" (Luke 17:20–21) and "not yet" (Matt 6:10; Luke 11:2; Mark 14:25), corresponding to God's interventions for salvation and for judgment. The kingdom is already present in the work and person of Jesus who brings tidings of God's measureless forgiveness and puts this into effect by suffering doom (Mark 2:17; 10:45; Luke 19:10). Nonetheless, the kingdom will yet see consummation when those salvaged will escape the judgment befalling all humankind (Matt 13:40–43; Luke 13:28–30). The encounter with John is distinguishable here: John's expectation of the mightier one would be fulfilled in the person of Jesus. There would also be a bap-

tism of fire (i.e., doom), but it would fall as Jesus' lot (Luke 12:49–50; Mark 10:38). Even the final judgment John envisioned would come true, but it would be preceded by the time of an unfathomable salvation. More concrete articulation of the kingdom requires studying what Jesus did and taught overall.

The deeds of Jesus *par excellence* were the miracles. Their tradition widely rooted in the earliest records, current scholarship simply starts from the recognition that both Jesus' contemporaries and he himself saw him as a performer of wondrous deeds. Thereupon the deeds are also considered integral to Jesus' proclamation. They were symbolic acts and as such marked, *inter alia*, his identity as the Messiah (Matt 11:2–6; Luke 7:18–23), the presence of the kingdom of God (Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20), his authority, and the message of forgiveness and salvation (Mark 2:3–12). Historically, they explain why Jesus so quickly attracted the attention of great numbers of people and why, consequently, authorities were bound to take him seriously. The closest points of comparison to Jesus' miracle activity are found in the Jewish tradition, particularly in the figures of Moses, Elijah, and Solomon.

Teachings *par excellence* were the parables. Not symbolic deeds themselves, they often seem to clarify Jesus' doings. Jesus evidently used the parable form more than others before him. Deviating from previous and subsequent practices, he often inverted the traditional wisdom and seldom told so-called exegetical parables – parables that seek to clarify precepts of the Torah. Instead, Jesus' parables carried a message of their own. That message was the kingdom of God (Mark 4:26, 30; Matt 13:24, 33; Luke 13:20; 14:15–16). The parables were, thus, in the first instance, about God and the relationship between God and human beings, not about the mutual relations of people. In them, the kingdom radically transforms human life (Matt 13:44–46), the human presence before God who is revealed to be forgiving beyond all logic and reason (Matt 18:12–14; Luke 15:4–7; Matt 20:1–16; Luke 15:11–32). However, the parables also know the God of judgment. Jesus spoke graphically about hell, the place of everlasting punishment (Luke 16:19–31), and admonished all to stay ready and awake: the consummation of the kingdom, bringing doom, lingers and will eventually come unexpectedly (Mark 13:34–37; Matt 25:1–13).

Both symbolic actions and word traditions tell about Jesus' view on two pillars of Judaism, the law (the Torah) and the temple.

Jesus never opposed the law as such and in many ways was a devoutly pious Jew of his time. Yet occasionally he displayed a dubiously relaxed attitude towards keeping the law (Mark 2:23–28). In a separate instance he even set an important commandment aside when he denied a man the op-

portunity to bury his father (Matt 8:21–22; Luke 9:59–60). Sometimes, again, he demanded more than the law (Matt 5:34–35). No coherent pattern seems to emerge here, unless one accepts the freedom from any fixed rule itself as the pattern. Accordingly, Jesus would not have needed any extrinsic teaching such as the Torah in order to know God's will, in detail or in general. If so, he seems to have applied a new covenant ethics, the Torah being written on people's hearts for implicit knowledge about God (Jer 31:33–34). Another aspect of this ethics, then, is perceived in the demands of Jesus often characterized as utopian: one should, for instance, forgive endlessly (Matt 18:21–22), love one's enemy (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27), always speak the truth (Matt 5:37), and not divorce (Mark 10:2–12). Inseparable from each other, both aspects, knowing and doing, manifest the transforming power of the kingdom of God.

To say that Jesus was critical of the temple actually aligns him with the majority of Jews. Criticism mostly arose from a genuine concern for the Jerusalem edifice, their only legitimate place of worship, seldom preventing them from participating in the cult. To say that Jesus also awaited the destruction of the temple makes him part of a smaller group – those who considered the heavy means of ruination and rebuilding as the only way of rectifying things. However, Jesus' view of the temple appears to have been stricter than even this. The destruction would be devastating to the degree that the temple could never be rebuilt. Jesus' words in Mark 13:2 refer back to the laying of the foundation of the temple (Hag 2:15, 18), yet now they denote exactly the opposite: this temple will be denied refoundation (cf. Jer 51:26). The reason why is clearest in Mark 11:17 where Jesus echoes Jer 7:11: the temple has become a den of robbers. That is, people come there like robbers, to hide and to find security from iniquities they commit while outside. Obviously, the temple does not work but instead enables a godless life. Therefore, something new will take over. Similar to some Qumran views (1QS 8:7–8; 4QFlor 1:6), Jesus foresaw a human temple which, according to Matt 16:18, he also founded upon a rock as in Qumran (1QH 6:24–27; 7:8–9). Jesus' temple would consist in the community of his followers. Two deeply significant symbolic deeds illuminate who they were.

The first is Jesus' choosing of twelve disciples (Mark 3:16–19). Highly suggestive to his fellow Jews, the number twelve signified, *inter alia*, the tribes of Israel, and the act of choosing itself, their reemergence through Jesus' work. Interestingly, Jesus did not include himself in the number so as to have represented one of the tribes. Placing himself outside them, instead, he accentuated his position and alluded to prophecies that describe the work of God's instrument (Jer 30:3–9; Ezek 37:21–24);

*Pss. Sol.* 17). This was also analogous to his remaining outside the community temple.

Second comes the habit of dining together, a major characteristic of Jesus' public activity (Mark 2:15–17). On a basic level, commensalism was a community-building act. The joyous situation also commonly carried religious connotations. Salvation could be pictured as a banquet held at the end of days and hosted by God or his Messiah. In such a context various people now joined in companionship through their relationship with Jesus. Most conspicuous, and from the Jewish perspective alarming, was that Jesus freely shared a table even with sinners and other outcasts (Matt 11:18–19; Luke 7:33–35). Quite uniquely, the kingdom of God was offered even to them (Luke 19:1–10). However, the main point of Jesus' commensalism seems to have been that he accepted sharing his table, and his message, with all who accepted him at their table. All of them could then be included in his community.

Accounts of the Last Supper are found in two different lines of tradition, Mark 14:22–25 and Luke 22:14–20; 1 Cor 11:23–25. The event, situated in the last days of Jesus, probably included at least the blessing and breaking of bread, drinking wine from a common cup, indications of their connection with Jesus' body and blood as well as with the covenant idea, and Jesus' statement of all this taking place "for many." The particularity of the event was clear: only the twelve closest were present, Passover was near, and Jesus probably anticipated the nearness of his death. It was a continuation of the habit of dining together, but now there was more at stake. As a result, Jesus' sayings and doings were loaded with theology. Words, gestures, and the situation itself recalled a plethora of pregnant statements, including the prohibition to eat blood which makes atonement "by reason of the life" (Lev 17:11–12), the servant who gives his life for many (Isa 53:10–12), the covenant of life-saving blood (Exod 24:5–12) – and all this cast anew and forming the covenant of forgiveness (Jer 31:31–34). Such a tangle of meanings irresistibly created further associations, which was probably also Jesus' purpose.

This was now the situation for the culmination of Jesus' proclamation. Here one symbolic deed linked with another.

Knowing how swiftly Herod Antipas could take action to eliminate a potential threat – he had recently beheaded John the Baptist – Jesus could not have been so obtuse as to not consider his own life in real jeopardy. Seen from one angle, he had incited crowds, spoken dubiously about a "king(dom)" and flouted religious tenets. Aware of this, and given the recurrent imparting of his message via symbolic actions, Jesus probably sought to adapt the message to accommodate even the violent death of its pro-

claimer, if it did not comprise that from the outset (cf. the baptism with fire).

In Jewish history, a cruel death had often been the lot of the righteous, prophets, patriots, etc. Though catastrophic outwards, in interpretation it actually testified to God taking sides with those who suffered innocently. Their deaths actually proved their cause rightful. God would also reward the righteous by granting them resurrection, vindicate the prophets by letting their words come true, and avenge the patriots by freeing the people. It was even believed that their deeds and/or suffering could earn atonement for others (1QS 8:1–4; T. Mos. 9–10; 4 Macc 6:27–29; 17:21–22).

These are some of the meanings Jesus, living in the Jewish tradition, could have sought to give to his anticipated violent death. The Last Supper accounts suggest that, most of all, he wanted to be seen as dying for others, for their salvation, for forgiveness. How did this last symbolic act of Jesus play out? Seen in the light of the symbolism of the day, it clearly failed. The means of execution were numerous. Crucifixion, however, represented a particular form of retribution for the Jews. According to the Torah, those hanged on a tree were cursed by God (Deut 21:23; 11QT 64:11–13). In other words, God himself would *forsake*, not take sides nor vindicate them. That Jesus was not beheaded nor killed in any other way but was nailed on the cross, entirely ruined whatever aims he had had of assigning a reasonable, good meaning to his anticipated death. Actually, it emerged as an ultimate defeat. To interpret it otherwise would have required a hermeneutics non-existent at the time.

**4. Complementary Viewpoints.** An important part of Jesus' proclamation was Jesus himself. Scholarship has characterized Jesus as a "charismatic" and as an "eschatological prophet" and as the "Messiah." Jesus probably saw himself in terms of all these and even of other figures known from the Jewish tradition, although he would also modify the traditionally varied conceptions of them. Most creatively, he utilized the mystical, apocalyptic character of the "Son of Man" who would bring the consummation of the kingdom (Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30).

As far as the historical Jesus is concerned, Christianity did not begin mainly as a movement of individuals. From the start there was the collective, a group, a community. The kingdom of God was entered dining together, the disciples formed a new family of God, and the ethics Jesus proclaimed had in view a community of people. Unquestionably, there was also the individual, his or her faith, life and salvation, but all this was meant to be confessed, lived and taken part in with others.

Where the scholarly view of Jesus most clearly parts from the traditional Christian faith is in the interpretation of the outcome of Jesus' work. The

followers of Jesus became convinced of his resurrection. That is, he was, after all, vindicated by God. Therefore the NT story about Jesus does not end with crucifixion but stretches his importance from the first century to our time and beyond (see point 1. above). Moreover, that is why the NT story about Jesus exists in the first place. For according to Judaism, the Messiah could not be cursed by God, nor could a crucified person be vindicated by God. Only those convinced of Jesus' resurrection would have taken it upon themselves to struggle with this double quandary. They also struggled when proclaiming the risen crucified Christ to others. These hermeneutic efforts, fundamentally, became the basis for the formation of the NT.

**Bibliography:** ■ Allison, D. C., *Constructing Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 2010). ■ Becker, J., *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York 1998); trans. of id., *Jesus von Nazaret* (Berlin 1996). ■ Byrskog, S. et al. (eds.), *The Identity of Jesus: Nordic Voices* (Tübingen 2014). ■ Charlesworth, J. et al., *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 2014). ■ Dunn, J. D. G., *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 2003). ■ Estrada, B. et al. (eds.), *The Gospels: History and Christology: The Search of Joseph Ratzinger*, Benedict XVI, 2 vols. (Vatican City 2013). ■ Evans, C. A. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (New York 2008). ■ Evans, C. A./N. T. Wright, *Jesus, the Final Days* (Louisville, Ky. 2009). ■ Hägerland, T., *Jesus and the Forgiveness of Sins* (Cambridge 2012). ■ Holmén, T., *Jesus and Jewish Covenant Thinking* (Leiden 2001). ■ Holmén, T., "Crucifixion Hermeneutics in Judaism at the Time of Jesus," *JSHJ*, vol. 15 (2017). ■ Holmén, T. (ed.), *Jesus in Continuum* (Tübingen 2012). ■ Holmén, T./S. E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 4 vols. (Leiden 2011). ■ Kankaanniemi, M., *The Guards of the Tomb: Matthew's Apologetic Legend Revisited* (Åbo 2010). ■ McKnight, S., *Jesus and His Death* (Waco, Tex. 2005). ■ Meier, J. P., *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, 4 vols. (New York/London 1991–2009). ■ Schlosser, J., *Le règne de Dieu dans les dits de Jésus*, 2 vols. (Paris 1980). ■ Theissen, G., *The Shadow of the Galilean* (Minneapolis, Minn. 2007). ■ Theissen, G./A. Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis, Minn. 1998); trans. of id., *Der historische Jesus: Ein Lehrbuch* (Göttingen 1996). ■ Wright, N. T., *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, Minn. 1996).

Tom Holmén

## II. Greco-Roman Antiquity

In non-Christian Greek and Roman literature references to Jesus are scarce and historically not very informative. Suetonius mentions Jewish riots in Rome (49 or 50 CE) "at the instigation of Chrestus" (*Claud. 25.4: impulsore Chresto*). This is often taken as a garbled reference to Jesus Christ. However, this Chrestus more likely was a Jew living in Rome (Benko: 1057–61). In Nero 16.2 the *Christiani* are mentioned, but not their founder. Tacitus (*Ann. 15.44.3*) in connection with the Neronian persecution states that the Christian sect is named after Christ, who was executed under emperor Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilatus. The younger Pliny (*Ep. 10.96.7*, about 110–12 CE) mentions in connection with the trials of Christians that they

sing songs in honor of Christ as a god (*quasi deo*). Lucian (*Peregr. 11*) speaks of the founder of Christianity as "that man who was crucified in Palestine, because he introduced this new worship into the world"; later on (15) he calls him "the first law-giver" of the Christians, "the crucified sophist."

In several passages, the physician Galen (Walzer: 14–16, 48–74) criticized "the followers of Moses and Christ" for the uncritical acceptance of the laws given to them by these two leaders. The Pythagorean Numenios (frag. 10a des Places) told a story about Jesus, without mentioning the name, and gave a tropological interpretation. Emperor Alexander Severus set up images of holy men in his lararium, among them Apollonius (of Tyana), Abraham, Christ, and Orpheus (*Hist. Aug., Alex. Sev. 29.2*), and planned to dedicate a temple to Christ as a god (43.6). One of the oracles (Porphyry, *Philos. orac.*, frag. 345 Smith) praised the soul of Christ, but rejected the Christian cult. This looks like an attempt to adapt the cult of Jesus Christ to a pluralistic religion (Riedweg: 170–82).

Some texts about Jesus are fictitious or doubtful, like the correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar of Edessa or the records (*acta*) of Pilate composed from the pagan as well as from the Christian side (Schneemelcher: 389–99) A passage in Flavius Josephus (*Ant. 18.63–64*, the so-called *testimonium Flavianum*) has been much discussed. It contains a short but comprehensive report on the life and activity of Jesus. It is phrased with the objectivity of a historian, but carefully respecting Christian beliefs and even stating that Jesus was "the Christ" (i.e., the messiah). It must either be a Christian interpolation or a revision of a passage originally written by Josephus the character of which, however, would remain uncertain.

More substantial statements about Jesus are found in polemical literature against Christianity. These texts, however, are only preserved in quotations in Christian apologetic literature.

Celsus' treatise Αληθής λόγος (*The True Word*), written about 170–180 CE, can be reconstructed in large parts from Origen's *Contra Celsum*. Before tackling the religious, philosophical, and political issues, Celsus discusses personality and life of Jesus. Jesus, according to Celsus, was born in a small village by a poor, hardworking mother. She was expelled by her husband, a carpenter, for adultery and gave birth to her child under wretched conditions (*Cels. 1.28*). Her noble genealogy is improbable considering that she was the wife of a carpenter (*ibid. 2.32*).

The true father was a soldier named Panthera (*ibid. 1.32*). (This name occurs later in the *Toledot Yeshu*). Jesus went to Egypt as a laborer where he became an adept of Egyptian magical powers. After returning to Palestine, he performed miracles and declared himself a god (1.28). He gathered a group

of followers from the lowest class and some with wicked characters. He then wandered around, making a living disgracefully and wretchedly (1.62). His behaviour was undignified, full of fear and humiliation and quite unkingly (1.61). His body was small, without good looks and ignoble (6.75). He did no great deeds like the old heroes (1.67); God did not help him (1.54). His teaching was not original, he borrowed e.g., from Plato (6.16). When prosecuted by the Jews, he hid himself and was betrayed by his disciples (2.9, 12). He was punished by the Jews for misdeeds not specified (2.5). He is said to have demonstrated his power by disappearing from the cross. His resurrection is not well attested (2.55), his disciples invented the story in analogy to mythical examples. In general, Celsus aims to show that Jesus has no claim to the title “god” or “son of god” and that the prophecies of the OT cannot refer to him. His miserable life does not fit the pattern of a great religious founder. His miracles, if they are true, are similar to the tricks of vulgar Egyptian sorcerers (1.68). (The name “Jesus” does, in fact, occur in magical texts [Hoheisel: 872].)

After 268 CE, Porphyry wrote *Contra Christianos* in fifteen books. In his fundamental collection of testimonies and fragments, Adolf von Harnack in 1916 made extensive use of quotations from Makarios of Magnesia. If they are not from Porphyry himself, as some contend, they must be from a nearly contemporary source. Porphyry's approach has a scholarly character, he thoroughly studied the OT and NT and carefully noted inconsistencies, improbabilities, and obscurities. The evangelists, he concludes, wrote “as inventors, not as reporters” (frag. 15 H). The Gospels are a “clever staging” (frag. 55 H). Consequently, the real person of Jesus remains vague; critical attacks are directed rather at the biblical authors than at Jesus. The general picture is comparable to Celsus, though less of a caricature. Jesus is an undignified person. His cowardly behaviour when facing death (Matt 26:57–68) is unworthy not only of a “son of god,” but even of a wise man (frag. 62 H). He submitted to the indignities of the soldiers and had no impressive answer for Pilate (frag. 63 H). He answered a supplicant (Matt 17:15) in a tactless way (frag. 57 H). The miracles are without value, because magical arts were practiced by many in those days (frag. 4).

Hierocles Sossianus, who acted as a high official in the persecution of Decius, wrote a Φιλαλήθης λόγος πρὸς τὸν Χριστιανὸν (*The Truth-Loving Discourse for the Christians*) to which Lactantius (*Inst. 5.2.12–3.26*) and Eusebius (*Contra Hieroclem*) relate their main points. He dwelt on the inconsistencies of scripture like Porphyry and compared Jesus with Apollonius of Tyana as a model of “divine man” (θεῖος ἄντις) and miracle worker. Jesus appears as an inferior example of this type, unsuccessful and unimpressive (similar references to Apollonius are

in Porphyry frag. 4, 60 and 65 H). Only Hierocles claims that Christ was expelled by the Jews, collected 900 men and committed robberies (Lactantius, *Inst. 5.3.4*).

Julian (the apostate) wrote *Contra Galilaeos* in 362–63 CE. Fragments that are preserved (mostly recovered from Cyrilus, *Contra Julianum*), are mainly from the first book and they rarely concern the personality and the acts of Jesus. These subjects were probably treated in later books. Many points can be traced back to Celsus and Porphyry. The divine nature of Jesus is rejected; the gospels are full of fabricated miracle stories (frag. 51 M). The virgin birth is denied, Mary had intercourse before marriage with Joseph (frag. 62 M). In the Gethsemane scene Jesus is seen as a “miserable human” (ἀθλιος ἀνθρώπος), unable to face his destiny (frag. 95 M.). He was quite unsuccessful and could not win over his own people (frag. 50 M). Instead of “taking away the sin of the world” he caused strife and killings even within families (frag. 107 M). An important theme is the comparison of Jesus with pagan gods and heroes. They are the real benefactors and saviors of mankind (e.g., frag. 64 and 57 M) who are to be worshipped. Julian even transfers some Christian theological notions to them (Malley: 178–210).

**Bibliography:** ■ Benko, S., “Pagan Criticism of Christianity,” ANRW 2.23.2 (Berlin 1980) 1055–1118. ■ Bader, R., *Der Ἀληθῆς λόγος des Kelso* (Tübingen 1940). ■ Lona, H. E., *Die “Wahre Lehre” des Kelso* (KFA ErgBd. 1; Freiburg i.Br. 2005). ■ Edwards, M. J., “Porphyry and the Christians,” in *The Studies on Porphyry* (ed. G. Karamanolis; London 2007) 111–26. ■ Harnack, A. von, *Prophyrus gegen die Christen*, 15 Bücher, Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate (APAW.Ph.; Berlin 1916). ■ Hoheisel, K., “Jesus III (außerchristlich),” RAC 17 (Stuttgart 1996) 837–78. ■ (Julianus) Giuliano imperatore, *Contra Galilaeos* (ed./trans. E. Maseracchia; Rome 1990). ■ Malley, W. J., *Hellenism and Christianity* (AnGr 210; Rome 1978). ■ Riedweg, C., “Porphyrios über Christus und die Christen,” EnAC 51 (2005) 151–203. ■ Schneemelcher, W., *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, vol. 1 (Tübingen 1990). [Esp. 389–99] ■ Walzer, R., *Galen on Jews and Christians* (Oxford 1949).

Herwig Görgemanns

### III. Judaism

■ Rabbinic Judaism ■ Medieval Judaism ■ Modern Judaism

#### A. Rabbinic Judaism

In rabbinic literature Jesus is occasionally referred to as *Yeshu ha-Notsri*, Jesus the Nazarene (*bBer* 17b; *bSan* 43a, 103a, 107b; *OtsMid* 331–32, 467). Other references use patronyms with variant spellings: *Yeshu* son of Pantiri/Pandera (*Sifra* to Lev 25:36; *tHul* 2:24; *yAZ* 2:2, 40d, *yShab* 14:4, 14d; *bBM* 62a; *QohR* 1:8, 3; *EkhR* 5:16) and *Yeshu* son of Stada (*tSan* 10:11; *tShab* 11:15; *yShab* 12:4, 13d; *ySan* 6:16; *yYev* 16:6; *bSan* 67a; *bShab* 104b). The patronyms may indicate distortions of *parthenos* (virgin),

*pantheros* (panther), and *sarata* (expert at tattooing) or *satda* (unfaithful to her husband, *bShab* 104b). Jesus son of Pandera is mainly found in Palestinian traditions, whereas Jesus the Nazarene appears more frequently in the Babylonian Talmud, which took the “liberty of discussing Jesus freely” (Schäfer: 143). Jesus was viewed as a *mamzer* (illegitimate child), born from a forbidden union between a prostitute or an adulteress and a Roman soldier, which contradicted the notion of a virgin birth and Davidic descent.

Comprehensive surveys of rabbinic references to Jesus have been published by Herford, Lauterbach, and Maier. Herford viewed the Jesus passages as derived from oral traditions; Lauterbach divided the passages into “authentic” and “incorrect.” Maier has extensive synoptic comparisons, but emphasizes that the rabbinic material is nonsensical and does not contain reliable information about Jesus. Maier (25–53) highlighted that Celsus, author of *The True Doctrine*, partially preserved in Origen, *Contra Celsum* (1.28, 32, 69; 2.5) contains polemical views of Jesus that resemble passages in rabbinic literature, e.g., Jesus was the son of a Roman soldier named Panthoras and a prostitute; Jesus practiced magic; and Jewish law was applied to Jesus with negative results. Schäfer maintains that certain talmudic traditions indeed speak about Jesus; however, these passages reflect derogatory Christian materials in versions of the gospel narratives promulgated by Eastern Christianities. Schäfer investigated Jesus texts in medieval manuscripts and compiled a list of topics (133–41), e.g., Jesus was viewed as the son or disciple who turned out badly: “[May it be] that you will not have a son or disciple ... like Jesus the Nazarene” (*bSan* 103a; *bBer* 17b); or who was unworthy: “Joshua b. Perahyā pushed Jesus the Nazarene away with both hands” (*bSan* 107b; *bSot* 47a).

According to rabbinic sources, Jesus performed healing rites or people were healed in his name (*tHul* 2:22; *yAZ* 2:2, 40d; *yShab* 14:4, 14d; *QohR* 1:8, 3; *bAZ* 27b):

The grandson [of R. Joshua b. Levi] had something stuck in his throat. A man came and whispered in the name of Jesus son of Pandera, and he recovered. (*yAZ* 2:2, 40d; *yShab* 14:4, 14d)

Jesus is also portrayed as a sorcerer, who practiced magic (*bSan* 107b; *bSot* 47a; cf. *bSan* 43a):

It is taught: R. Eliezer said to the Sages, “Didn’t ben Stada bring witchcraft from Egypt by means of cuts on his skin?” They said to [R. Eliezer], “He was a fool and we don’t bring proof from fools.” The son of Stada? [Rather,] the son of Pandera. R. Hisda said: The husband was Stada and the lover was Pandera. [No,] the husband was Pappos b. Yehuda. Rather, his mother was Stada. [No,] his mother was Miriam who coiffed women’s hair. (*bShab* 104b; see also *tShab* 11:15; *yShab* 12:4, 13d; *bHag* 4b; *bSan* 67a)

Some sources depict Jesus as a teacher who had disciples: “one of the disciples of Jesus the Nazarene”

(*tHul* 2:24; *QohR* 1:8, 3; *bBM* 62a; *bAZ* 17a) and “Our rabbis taught: Jesus the Nazarene had five disciples, and these are Mattai, Nakkai, Netzer, Buni, and Todah” (*bSan* 43a–b; cf. *YalqMa* to Isa 11, 84). In midrashic fashion these names are explained, e.g., “When (*matay*) will I come and appear before God?” (*Ps* 42:3) and “When (*matay*) will he die and his name perish?” (*Ps* 41:6) (*bSan* 43a–b). These names may reflect names in the non-canonical gospels.

According to Palestinian sources, Jesus is put to death by hanging or stoning in Lod by Jewish authorities (*tSan* 10:11; *ySan* 7:16; *yYev* 16:6, 15d; *bSan* 67a). The Babylonian Talmud states: “They hanged Jesus the Nazarene on the eve of Passover [variant: on the eve of the Sabbath]. For forty days a herald went before him: He is going forth to be stoned because he practiced sorcery and he seduced and led Israel astray” (*bSan* 43b; *bSan* 67a). After his death, Jesus was punished in hell (*bGit* 57a).

Likely allusions to Jesus (Schäfer: 107–9) may include:

If a man tells you “I am God” – he is a liar; “I am the son of man” – he will regret it; “I will go up to the heavens” – he has said so, but he will not do it. (*yTaan* 2:1)

If the son of the prostitute says to you: There are two gods, say to him: It is not written here “gods spoke to you face to face,” but rather “The Lord spoke to you face to face on the mountain!” (*[Deut]* 5:4). (*PesRab* 21:13, Ulmer ed.)

There are questionable allusions to Jesus, because “it is not always clear if Jesus ... is in fact the person to whom reference is being made” (Evans: 443; cf. *bSan* 106b). Additionally, there are inversions of Jesus that demonstrate the rabbinic tendency to construct a Jewish messianic figure in terms of the inverted figure of Jesus. Psalm 22, applied to the suffering of Jesus in the Gospel of John, is cited regarding the afflictions of the Jewish Messiah Ephraim (Ulmer 2011):

[God] began to talk about the terms [of suffering] with [Messiah Ephraim], saying to him, “In the future the sins of those that have been hidden with you will bring you under an iron yoke. They make you like a calf whose eyes grow dim; and they will choke your spirit with [your] yoke; and because of their sins your ‘tongue will stick to the roof of your mouth’ (*Ps* 22:16). Are you willing [to endure] this?” (*PesRab* 36:4)

The detailed suffering of Messiah Ephraim (*PesRab* 37:4) may have been borrowed from Christianity, but it was integrated into rabbinic concepts of the Messiah (Ulmer 2013).

Master of the universe, how much can my limbs endure? How much my spirit? Am I not but flesh and blood? It was this moment that David lamented, saying, “My strength is dried up like a potsherds” [*Ps* 22:16]. (*PesRab* 36:6)

The manuscripts and printed editions of rabbinic texts mentioning Jesus were often censored by

Christians, indicating the polemical engagement between rabbinic Judaism and Christianity.

**Bibliography:** ■ Evans, C. A., “Jesus in Non-Christian Sources,” in *Studying the Historical Jesus* (ed. id.; Leiden 1994) 443–78. ■ Herford, R. T., *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London 1903). ■ Lauterbach, J. Z., “Jesus in the Talmud,” in id., *Rabbinic Essays* (Cincinnati, Ohio 1951 [repr. 1989]) 473–570. ■ Maier, J., *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Überlieferung* (Darmstadt 1978). ■ Schäfer, P., *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton, NJ. 2009). ■ Strack, H. L., *Jesus, die Häretiker und die Christen nach den ältesten jüdischen Angaben* (Leipzig 1910). ■ Ulmer, R., “Psalm 22 in Pesiqta Rabbi: The Suffering of the Jewish Messiah and Jesus,” in *The Jewish Jesus: Revelation, Reflection, Reclamation* (ed. Z. Garber; Purdue, Ind. 2011) 106–28. ■ Ulmer, R., “The Contours of the Messiah in Pesiqta Rabbi,” *HTR* 106 (2013) 115–44. ■ Zeitlin, S., “Jesus in the Early Tannaitic Literature,” in *Abhandlungen zur Erinnerung an Hirsch Perez Chajes* (Vienna 1933) 295–308.

Rivka Ulmer

## B. Medieval Judaism

Jewish reactions to Jesus in the Middle Ages were almost always negative and hostile, focusing on mockery and rejection of the beliefs about him. Some of the earliest Jewish references to Jesus are found in the Talmud; however, these are very scarce, as is the case for other late antique works. As a result of the growing power of Christianity, from the middle of the first millennium the number of references to Jesus in Jewish sources grew dramatically and reflect attempts to polemicize against Jesus from different perspectives. The references to Jesus in medieval times are found in a variety of texts and are not limited to polemical literature. Nonetheless, most medieval Jewish texts do not offer a comprehensive approach toward Jesus and in many cases merely present ad hoc comments.

One of the most elaborated discussions of Jesus in Jewish polemical literature appears in the corpus of *Toledot Yeshu* (The Life of Jesus; see Deutsch et al.) that is dated to the beginning of the second half of the first millennium. The corpus includes different texts that tell the story of Jesus from his birth until his death in a way that turns the Christian story upside down. The most common way of doing this is to accept the facts that appear in the NT about Jesus but to explain them in a way that changes their meaning completely. Thus, according to *Toledot Yeshu*, Jesus was not the son of Mary’s betrothed, Joseph, nor was he conceived from the Holy Spirit. Rather, Jesus was the illegitimate son born from Mary’s affair with another man. Similarly, according to the *Toledot Yeshu* texts, Jesus performed miracles, but not because he was the son of God, but rather because he used magic that according to some of the versions he accessed through trickery.

Starting with the text of *Qissat Mujādalat al-Uṣuf* from the 9th century, known also by its later Hebrew edition as *Sefer Nestor ha-komer* (The Book of Nestor the Priest), medieval polemical literature

contains many claims and arguments concerning beliefs about Jesus. Some of the arguments focus on the text of the NT and use it in order to reject Christianity. For example, they argue that Jesus said that he did not come to abrogate the law (Matt 5:17) and therefore Christians are not following his teachings. Using the text of the NT they also argued that Jesus did not see himself as the son of god (Berger: 108, 209). Other texts try to refute Christian interpretations of OT verses that were used by Christians to show that biblical prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus. In addition, there were philosophical arguments that claimed that Jesus could not be divine and human at the same time or be the physical Son of God and at the same time exist from eternity.

Besides the polemical literature that in many cases offers a systematic attempt to refute the stories and beliefs about Jesus, there are many pointed references to him. In the polemical literature and also in liturgical poems (*piyutim*), Jews expressed their hostility toward Jesus by using many derogatory names for him. Thus many times his name was written using the abbreviation *y-sh-w* (spelling *yeshu*) which according to the Jews stands for *yimmah shemo we-zikho* (may his name and memory be obliterated). In addition, other nicknames relate to a specific argument against Jesus. Among these nicknames we can find “bastard” (*mamzer*) which is a response to the claim the Jesus is the son of God; “the whore’s son” (*ben ha-zonah*) which refutes the claim that Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus; “the son of the menstruating woman” (*ben ha-niddah*) which is aimed at showing that he was impure; “the hanged one” (*ha-taluy*) that alludes to the biblical verse “anyone hung on a tree is under God’s curse” (Deut 21:23); and also “the cursed” (*ha-mequlla*) that alludes to the same verse.

Most of the references to Jesus in the Midrash and in biblical commentaries are not direct and do not mention his name; nonetheless close reading reveals that in some cases they are aimed at rejecting beliefs about Jesus. Many commentaries on Gen 49:10 reject the Christian argument that Shilo, that is mentioned in the verse, refers to Jesus; e.g., Samuel b. Meir (Rashbam, ca. 1085–1174) writes that Shilo is a place name and does not refer to the Messiah as the Christians say.

The negative attitude toward Jesus and the rejection of his messianic claims are also found in the legal work of Maimonides, who writes that Jesus’ claim that he was the Messiah was false and that his interpretation of the Torah leads to the nullification of the law (Kraemer: 238). Already Daniel warned against him (Dan 11:14): “Also the violent men of your people shall exalt themselves to fulfill the vision; but they shall fall” (*MishT, Sefer Shoftim, Hilkhot Melakhim uMilkhomat* 11:10). On the other hand, Maimonides acknowledges that Jesus (as well

as Muhammad) helped to prepare the nations of the world to worship the one God (*ibid.*).

Jesus is rejected by some kabbalists on different grounds. Abraham Abulafia (1240–ca.1291), the famous kabbalist who also presented himself as the Messiah, did accept the notion of God's sonship, but argued that Jesus received his power from a material source and not from divine intellect which is a spiritual power, and therefore was a false messiah (see Idel). In addition, Abulafia assigned to Jesus the aggadic-kabbalistic equation of the words “serpent” (*naḥash*) and “messiah” (*mashiaḥ*; both have the same numerical value in Hebrew). Consequently, he explained the serpent who deceived Eve in paradise as a “*praefiguration of Jesus*” (Wolfson: 210; see Sagerman).

In addition to the various attacks against Jesus, one can also find apologetic statements that are intended to contend with Christian claims that the Talmud contains texts about Jesus and his rejection and execution by the Jews. One response to these claims is the argument that first appears in the Paris disputation of 1240 that there were two Jesuses, and the one that is mentioned in the Talmud is not the one that is mentioned in the NT (Maccoby: 156).

**Bibliography:** ■ Berger, D. (ed./trans.), *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1979). ■ Berger, D., “On the Uses of History in Medieval Jewish Polemic against Christianity,” in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, FS Y. H. Yerushalmi (ed. E. Carlebach et al.; Hanover, N.H./London 1998) 25–39. ■ Bowman, S., “Jewish Responses to Byzantine Polemics from the Ninth through the Eleventh Centuries,” in *The Jewish Jesus* (ed. Z. Garber; West Lafayette, Ind. 2011) 151–203. ■ Deutsch, Y. et al. (eds.), *Toledot Yeshu Reconsidered* (Tübingen 2011). ■ Idel, M., “Abraham Abulafia: A Kabbalist ‘Son of God’ on Jesus and Christianity,” in *Jesus among the Jews* (ed. N. Stahl; London 2012) 60–93. ■ Kraemer, J. L., *Maimonides: The Life and World of One of Civilization’s Greatest Minds* (New York 2008). ■ Lasker, D./S. Stroumsa (eds./trans.), *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest, Qissat mujādālat al-usqaf and Sefer Nestor ha-komer* (Jerusalem 1996). ■ Maccoby, H. (ed./trans.), *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (London/Rutherford, NJ, 1982). ■ Sagerman, R. J., *The Serpent Kills and the Serpent Gives Life* (Leiden 2011). ■ Wolfson, E. R., “Textual Flesh, Incarnation, and the Imaginal Body: Abraham Abulafia’s Polemic with Christianity,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish Intellectual and Social History*, FS R. Chazan (ed. D. Engel et al.; Leiden 2012) 189–226.

Yaakov Deutsch

### C. Modern Judaism

The emancipation of the Jews from the constraints of the ghetto in the 18th century enabled Jews for the first time to begin to produce positive evaluations of Jesus. The Jewishness of Jesus began to be observed and increasingly appreciated. Major positive treatments of Jesus begin to appear in the 20th century, especially with the work of the British scholar Claude Goldsmid Montefiore (1858–1938), whose two-volume commentary on the Synoptic Gospels (1909) broke new ground.

It is no accident that this new development coincided with the increasing impact of biblical criticism and the rise of Reform Judaism in the 19th century. Disinterested critical study of Jesus made it clear to Jewish scholars that Jesus belonged *within Judaism* and thus began the movement called “the Jewish reclamation of Jesus.” Modern biblical criticism, as practiced mainly by liberal Protestant scholars, gradually whittled away the main doctrines of Christianity, together with the historical reliability of the Gospels, and thereby prepared the ground for the construction of a Jewish Jesus fully acceptable to Jewish scholars. It enabled the rejection of material in the Gospels that did not fit the profile of the emerging Jewish Jesus.

Today the perspective of Jewish scholars on Jesus and the Gospels is hardly distinguishable from that of radical Protestant scholarship. Thus the influential book by the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes (1924–2013), *Jesus the Jew*, has the subtitle “A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels,” and Vermes goes out of his way to insist that it is not a particularly Jewish book.

Although in recent decades the quest for the historical Jesus has gained momentum, there has been little consensus concerning the “real” Jesus. One thing that is agreed by most, however, is that the “real Jesus” will be one that fits Jewish categories to a large extent. Those categories, however, now seem broader and more varied than ever, thanks to our increasing knowledge of 1st-century Judaism. Jesus must be fitted into a Second Temple Jewish context, even if he was at points in considerable tension with that context.

Montefiore desired to mediate between Jews and Christians by getting each side to appreciate the positive value of the other. His commentary on the Synoptic Gospels set the tone and direction of future Jewish study of Jesus. Probably the most influential 20th century Jewish book on Jesus was *Jesus of Nazareth* (1922), by Joseph Klausner (1874–1958), written in Hebrew, and avowedly representing objective and scientific history, rather than being propagandistic in nature. Nevertheless, Klausner was a more conservative Jew than Montefiore, and thought that Montefiore had too high a view of the Gospels.

One of the few Jewish scholars trained also as a NT scholar was Samuel Sandmel (1911–1979). His book, *We Jews and Jesus*, not surprisingly, shows greater awareness of, and dependence upon, critical NT scholarship. Schalom Ben-Chorin (1913–1999) wrote what is perhaps the most moving Jewish book on Jesus, *Brother Jesus* (*Bruder Jesus*, 1967). Although he questions the historical reliability of the Gospels, Ben-Chorin eloquently speaks of his closeness to Jesus despite his problems with the Jesus of the Gospels. David Flusser (1917–2000), a professor of comparative religion at Hebrew University in Je-

rusalem, was a little less skeptical in general about the historical reliability of the Gospels than Ben-Chorin. His book, *Jesus* (1968), reflects a moderate critical approach and makes little of the fact that its author is Jewish.

Undoubtedly the Jewish scholar who has written the most about Jesus in recent years is Vermes, of the University of Oxford. In the first of several books, he goes out of his way to stress that he writes very explicitly as a historian. Here we see the fading distinction between Jewish and critical viewpoints.

Paula Fredriksen's (b. 1951) first Jesus book, *From Jesus to Christ*, presents a standard critical treatment of the subject. In a second book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, she takes a more independent approach, by focusing on understanding Jesus exclusively within a Jewish framework, and reasoning historically from the cause of Jesus' death. Amy-Jill Levine (b. 1956), another Jewish NT scholar, has written an appealing study of Jesus, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, in which she addresses Christian misunderstandings of Judaism and Jesus, and labors to build bridges between the synagogue and the church. Another book written at a popular level is Talmud specialist Daniel Boyarin's (b. 1946) *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, in which he also attempts to correct misunderstandings and stresses the full Jewishness of early Christianity.

Most of these writers emphasize the following points: (1) Jesus was fully loyal to the Torah, as Matt 5:17–19 stipulates. His controversial interpretations of the law were no different from the disagreements among the Pharisees. Jesus esteems the Pharisees and their teaching (Matt 23:1–3). The majority of Jewish authors conclude that there was no essential difference between Jesus and rabbinic Judaism. If there were differences, they were of minor significance. This perspective is in full agreement with most historical Jesus scholars. Very few Jewish scholars are willing to admit even a modest break with the law. The unparalleled authority of Jesus vis-à-vis the law is often noted, but its possible implications are not pursued. (2) The teaching of Jesus where good was not original, and where original was neither good nor Jewish. Jesus was wrong in his expectation of the imminence of the kingdom. Most of his ethical teaching can be paralleled in the rabbinic writings, and where not, it presents an idealistic, unrealistic standard, a kind of interim ethic before the soon to come kingdom, e.g., loving one's enemies, non-retaliation, self-renunciation, and asceticism. The best teachings of Jesus, on the other hand, e.g., the double love commandment and the golden rule, are essentially Jewish. (3) What is absolutely un-Jewish about Jesus, and therefore unacceptable to Jewish scholars, is the unique and central position given to Jesus in the Gospels: his mediatorial role in the relationship be-

tween man and God (e.g., Matt 10:37–40; 11:27); his forgiveness of sins and his acceptance of worship, thus assuming the prerogative of God (e.g., Mark 2:5–12; Matt 14:33); his understanding of his death as a vicarious, atoning sacrifice (Mark 10:45; Matt 26:28). (4) Finally, Jewish scholars give varying assessments of Jesus: e.g., Pharisee, Essene, Zealot, Hasid, charismatic miracle-worker, healer, teacher, or prophet. A few admit that Jesus may have thought of himself as Messiah, but mistakenly, since the promised age of blessing did not come. Titles such as Lord, Son of God, and Son of Man that imply deity are generally not considered, or they are understood differently from the church.

Jewish scholars argue that the Jesus of history is to be understood only against the Jewish background of the Gospels, and not against the backdrop of the later church's faith in him, which has left considerable impact on the Gospel narratives. Only when the Gospels present a Jesus who is recognizably Jewish can they be trusted as historical sources.

Jesus did not come to found a new religion, Jewish scholars argue. A decisive point occurred when somehow the messenger of the kingdom became the message. To quote words of Schalom Ben-Chorin about Jews and Christians, "The belief of Jesus unifies us; the belief in Jesus divides us" (6).

**Bibliography.** Primary: ■ Ben-Chorin, S., *Brother Jesus* (Athens, Ga. 2001); trans. of id., *Bruder Jesus* (Munich 1967). ■ Boyarin, D., *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of Jesus Christ* (New York 2012). ■ Flusser, D., *Jesus* (New York 1969); trans. of id., *Jesus in Selbstzeugnissen und Bild dokumenten* (Hamburg 1968). ■ Fredriksen, P., *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven, Conn./London 1988). ■ Fredriksen, P., *Jesus of Nazareth: King of the Jews* (New York 2000). ■ Klausner, J., *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching* (New York 1925); trans. of id., *Yeshu ha-Notsri: zemano, hayyav, we-torato* (Jerusalem 1922). ■ Levine, A.-J., *The Misunderstood Jew* (San Francisco, Calif. 2006). ■ Montefiore, C. G., *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus According to the Synoptic Gospels* (London 1910). ■ Montefiore, C. G., *The Synoptic Gospels*, 2 vols. [1909] (London 1927). ■ Montefiore, C. G., *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings* (London 1930). ■ Sandmel, S., *We Jews and Jesus* (New York 1965). ■ Vermes, G., *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (New York 1973). ■ Vermes, G., *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1981). ■ Vermes, G., *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1993). ■ Vermes, G., *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus* (London 2003).

Secondary: ■ Ben-Chorin, S., *Jesus im Judentum* (Wuppertal 1970). ■ Garber, Z. (ed.), *The Jewish Jesus: Revelation, Reflection, Reclamation* (West Lafayette, Ind. 2011). ■ Hagner, D. A., *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus: An Analysis and Critique of Modern Study of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1984). ■ Jocz, J., *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ* [1949] (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1979). ■ Jocz, J., *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ After Auschwitz* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1981). ■ Lapide, P., *Israëlis, Jews and Jesus* (New York 1979); trans. of id., "Ist das nicht Josephs Sohn?": *Jesus im heutigen Judentum* (Gütersloh 1976). ■ Lindeskog, G., *Die Jesusfrage im neuzeitlichen Judentum* [1938] (repr. with new postscript, Darmstadt 1973). ■ Vogler, W., *Jüdische Jesusinterpretationen in christlicher Sicht* (Weimar 1988).

Donald Hagner

#### IV. Christianity

- Greek and Latin Patristics ■ Medieval Times and Reformation Era ■ Modern Europe ■ Modern America ■ China ■ New Christian Movements

##### A. Greek and Latin Patristics

Jesus of Nazareth undoubtedly represents the crucial figure in patristic literature; yet the fathers rarely address the historical Jesus without dealing with Christology. However, the reality of the physical incarnation and human reality of Jesus was challenged throughout the early centuries. Gnostic ideas that denied the corporeality of Christ were severely reprimanded by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and most of the later authors. Likewise, other heretical movements have developed a similar understanding of the human form of Christ as an illusion (Marcionism, Docetism, Manichaeism), that he was not fully human (Apollinarism, Sabellianism or Patripassianism), or that he was a man adopted as son of God (Dynamic Monarchianism or Adoptionism). Thus, those patristic authors representing orthodoxy have challenged constantly these views and defended the doctrine of the two perfect natures in Christ united in a hypostatic union.

The modern quest of the historical Jesus was not a main concern of the fathers who sought to define Christ based on a more metaphysical understanding of history and Scripture. Christ's humanity and his consubstantiality with the Father and with human beings was established in its definitive expression in the formulation of the Council of Chalcedon (451), which declared the true humanity and divinity of Jesus.

Early patristic authors relied mainly on the canonical gospels for the history of Christ's life on earth. Yet it is apparent that some of the early authors drew also on oral tradition. Thus, Justin Martyr affirms that Jesus, the son of Joseph, "grew up like all other men" and worked as a carpenter (*Dial.* 88).

Ignatius of Antioch, in the second century, affirms that Jesus was both born and not born (*Ign. Eph.* 7:2), who "ate and drank" and was persecuted, crucified, and raised from the dead (*Ign. Trall.* 9:1; cf. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Ancor.* 33), belonging to the family of David and born of a Virgin. He suffered in the flesh in the days of Herod and Pontius Pilate (*Ign. Smyrn.* 1:1) so that humans can be saved. Jesus is both perfect man and God who recapitulates "all things in himself" (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.16.6; cf. Hippolytus, *Haer.* 17). It is in his physical body that he brought himself a sacrifice for our sins (Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.40.3), a body like ours albeit without sin (Tertullian, *An.* 41.3). The reality of his crucifixion substantiates the faith of Christianity (Tertullian, *Carn. Chr.* 5.2) and the manifestation of his divinity in humanity restored the human nature to the heavenly realm (Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 10.110.1). The fathers insist on the physicality of

Christ's body against those who assert that Jesus was a "mere phantasm" (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.9.71.1; Origen, *Princ.* 1; Novatian, *Trin.* 10; Didymus the Blind, *Man.* 3.21). His body is created, although the Word is uncreated and pre-existent (Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 2.70; cf. *Ep. Epict.* 6). This reality of Christ's true humanity is the key aspect of faith in the patristic period, as evident in the doctrine of *deification*. Because Christ assumed a condition like ours, his salvation is effective (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cathech.* 4.9; Basil the Great, *Ep.* 261.2). For Hilary of Poitiers, the flesh of Christ is not to be ignored, for it is essential to confess him as both "Word and flesh" (*Trin.* 9.3), not as God indwelling in man but as God made flesh from the Virgin (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 77.29). He is one person with two unconfused natures in indescribable union (John Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 11.1; cf. Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Epistula synodalis*). Leo the Great, in the 5th century, accentuates that "true man was united to true God" (*Ep.* 35.3) and that in the reality of this unity the sacraments have their foundation (*Ep.* 124.3).

**Bibliography:** ■ González, E., "Temas centrales en las respuestas patrísticas a las críticas de los siglos II y III a la historicidad de Jesús," in *Actas del I congreso internacional de Estudios Patrísticos* (ed. A. Hernández et al.; San Juan 2013) 1–14. ■ Roukema, R., "Jesus Tradition in Early Patristic Writings," in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, vol. 3 (ed. T. Holmén/S. E. Porter; Leiden 2011) 2119–147.

Justin A. Mihoc

##### B. Medieval Times and Reformation Era

Medieval and Reformation views of Jesus demonstrate a kaleidoscopic range of understandings of the second person of the Trinity. The early Middle Ages emphasized the divinity of Christ. Jungmann (44) posited that this was a result of orthodox theologians reacting against Arian beliefs present in northern Europe. For example, the mid-8th-century pseudo-Isidorian treatise, *De ortu et obitu Patriarcharum* underlined the divinity of Christ citing John 10:30: *Ego et Pater unus sumus* ("I and the Father are one"). In German and Anglo-Saxon sources Jesus was often described as lord, king, and eschatological judge (Constable: 158). By the late 11th century, the view of Jesus as judge did persist and would do so throughout the Middle Ages; however, the sternness of Christ in majesty was mitigated by a more accessible, human Jesus. The theology of Peter Damian (1007–1072) captures the two trends of theological discourse of Jesus as divine judge and as approachable man. This Camaldolese monk, papal reformer, and cardinal viewed Christ as the powerful and almighty arbiter of the last judgment. Nevertheless, for Peter Damian, Jesus' suffering on the cross was the point of reconciliation whereby human beings, through self-mortification and identification with Christ's pain, could find salvation (Fulton: 89–106).

In the 12th century some monastic communities became absorbed by the living, breathing his-

torical Jesus. The Cistercian monk Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–1167) wrote a meditation on Luke 2:42–50, entitled *Jesus at the Age of Twelve*. Here he talked to Jesus directly asking him: “O dear boy, where were you? Where were you hiding? Who gave you shelter?” (Aelred of Rievaulx: 5). Engagement with the living Jesus through prayer and meditation was not only a monastic pursuit; this type of affective piety became increasingly widespread with the circulation of works like the *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (*Meditationes vitae Christi*), a 14th-century narrative based on the Gospels. This work, which was translated into several vernaculars, invited the listener/reader to interact emotionally with the life and death of Jesus.

Francis of Assisi (ca. 1181–1226) and Dominic of Osma (1170–1221), the founders of the leading mendicant orders, the Friars Minor (Franciscans) and the Preachers (Dominicans), understood Jesus as the exemplar of their religious life. Both embraced a model of Jesus as preacher and practitioner of voluntary poverty as depicted in the Gospels. The Franciscan minister general, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1217–1274), in his sermon *Christus unus omnium magister* (*Christ the one teacher of all*) articulated a scholastic, Franciscan position whereby Jesus was at once intellectual, moral, and ethical master of the friars. Bonaventure based the sermon’s theme on Matt 23:10, and preached:

It is also clear who our doctor and master is: that it is Christ, who is the director and guide of our intelligence, not just in general as in all works of nature, nor as specifically as in works of grace and meritorious virtue, but in a way that is intermediary between the two. (Bonaventure: 87)

Similarly, Thomas Aquinas presented Christ as saviour and ultimate teacher of the friars: “Christ’s action is our instruction” (*Summa theologiae* 3.40.1 ad 3).

Medieval women such as Marie d’Oignies (d. 1213) and Catherine of Siena (d. 1380) looked to Christ in expressing their sense of self. The groundbreaking studies by Caroline Walker Bynum have demonstrated how elements of female somatic identification with Christ were multifaceted: Christ’s sacrificial body bled and fed as did the women’s body in menstruation and in breast feeding. The association with women’s bodies as emitters of blood and nourishment resembled Christ’s life giving body and it was within this intersection that many devotional women found a likeness to the God-Man.

Reformed theologians were more concerned with how Christians theologically encountered Christ in the Eucharist than with assessing Jesus as a role model or physical body in which the self was recognized. Huldrych Zwingli, who could find no biblical basis for real presence, argued that when Christ ascended to heaven both his divine and human natures ascended, therefore, his human nature was in heaven, rendering real presence in the Eu-

charist an impossibility (Hendrix: 52). Martin Luther, however, answered that by means of the divine nature of Christ, his human nature had taken on attributes such as omnipresence, which enabled real presence in the Eucharist (Pannenberg: 312). But it was Pauline authority to which Luther ultimately referred in his *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) to argue for the Christian’s encounter with Christ in the Eucharist: “And Paul says: ‘The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 11:23)?’” (Luther: 338).

Like reforming theologians, some counter-Reformation figures were equally focused on the Eucharist as a way to encounter Christ. The Jesuit, Jerónimo Nadel (1507–1580), hoped that the reception of the host would enable Christians to have the “the same mind and sentiments of Christ Jesus” (O’Malley: 153; cf. Phil 2:5). Like their late medieval predecessors, Jesuits too looked to the person of Jesus as an accessible role model who could transform souls, so they aimed to imitate him in their thoughts and actions. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), in his *Spiritual Exercises*, invited Christians to meditate on the life and death of Jesus to make spiritual progress (Lindberg: 347). Women of the Catholic Renaissance looked to Jesus as protector and supporter of their faith. The founder of the Ursulines, Angela Merici, in her rule for the Order, represented Jesus as her bridegroom, lover, master, savior, and example (Massonis: 115). Medieval and early modern perceptions of Jesus were multifaceted and continually shifting, revealing the complexity and depth of how premodern Christians understood not only Christ but themselves.

**Bibliography. Primary:** ■ Aelred of Rievaulx, “Jesus at the Age of Twelve,” in id., *Treatises and the Pastoral Prayer* (ed. B. Pennington; Kalamazoo, Mich. 1971) 3–39. ■ Bonaventure, “Christ Our One Teacher,” in *Mind and Knowledge: The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts* (ed. R. Pasnau; Cambridge 2002) 80–92. ■ Luther, M., “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church [1520],” in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 36 (ed. A. R. Wentz; Philadelphia, Pa. 1959) 11–126.

**Secondary:** ■ Bestul, T. H., *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1996).

■ Bynum, C. W., *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, Calif. 1987). ■ Bynum, C. W., *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York 1991). ■ Constable, G., *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge/New York 1995). ■ Fulton, R., *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary 800–1200* (New York 2002). ■ Hendrix, S., “Luther,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology* (ed. D. Bagchi/D. C. Steinmetz; Cambridge 2004) 39–56. ■ Jungmann, J., *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York 1962). ■ Lindberg, C., *The European Reformations* (Oxford 1996). ■ Massonis, Q., *Spirituality, Gender and the Self in Renaissance Italy* (Washington, D.C. 2007). ■ O’Malley, J., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass. 1993). ■ Pannenberg, W., *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1998); trans. of id., *Systematische Theologie*, vol. 3 (Göttingen 1993).

Carolyn Muessig

### C. Modern Europe

The Christian understanding of Jesus in modern Europe was shaped by emerging concepts of religion and historicism.

**1. The Problem of Jesus' Miracles.** The rise in the empirical sciences from the 17th century on saw natural explanations for events reported in the Bible, such as miracles. Hermann S. Reimarus (1694–1768) in a text published by Lessing after death (*Fragmente eines Ungekannten*, see “Fragment Controversy”) denied biblical miracles and considered Jesus to be merely a man who must be understood in the context of Judaism. According to Reimarus, Jesus’ disciples had expected him to be a political ruler and – after Jesus’ failure – they did not want to give up the lifestyle that devout women had financed for them. They then declared Jesus to be the Christ who had brought spiritual salvation (Reimarus: 74). Building on this position in the 20th century, contemporary NT scholar Gerd Lüdemann (b. 1946) understood Jesus to be merely an itinerant preacher, who indeed taught a message that was ethically significant (Luke 6:20–21), but whose resurrection never actually occurred (Lüdemann: 10–11).

David F. Strauß (1808–1874) took Jesus to have actualized the idea of divine humanity (*Gottmenschlichkeit*). For Strauß, Jesus was not a failed apocalyptic prophet, but the God-man, in whom divine and human essences are united (Strauß: 705–6). While Strauß thought that this view did not infringe on Christianity’s truth, he contested the reality of the miracles. Strauß held that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah (Matt 16:16; 26:64; John 4:26; 18:37; Strauß: 469). Jesus did not conceive of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel as a this-worldly military action, but as the eschatological reversal that God would effect at the appropriate time (Mark 13:32).

Heinrich E. G. Paulus (1761–1851) understood Jesus’ miracles not as pious fictions, but sought instead to explain them rationally. According to Paulus, Jesus did not raise the dead, but only those who appeared to be dead (Luke 7:11–14); he healed the sick using oil and a special dietary regimen. Moreover, he did not die on the cross, but suffered a stiffening that progressed inwards (Mark 16:2) and was reversed by the coldness of the tomb. Paulus rescues the meaning of Jesus by interpreting Jesus as the actual miracle (Paulus: 280). Jesus’ exceptional character (“Gemüth”) inspires people to imitate him (ibid.: xi).

**2. The Exceptional Human Being.** Under the pressure of science and historicism, one strand of modern thought took Jesus not as divine but as an exemplar of humanity. Similar to H. Paulus, Ernest Renan (1823–1892) describes the historical Jesus in his *Vie de Jésus* (1863) as a simple, but adorable man with a unique personality. Blessed with great wis-

dom he brings a new spirit all over the world (Renan: 422) and founds “the final religion,” a “perfectly spontaneous movement of souls, freed at its birth from all dogmatic restraint” (ibid.: 423).

This emphasis on Jesus’ personality is typical of this period. Thus Willibald Beyschlag (1823–1900) sees in Luke 2:41–52 historically reliable evidence for Jesus’ intellectual development, and used this story as starting point for Jesus’ self-understanding (Beyschlag: 1:175–76). In Jesus the “fullness of deity” appeared on earth (Col 2:9). Theology’s central task is to depict the life of Jesus in such a way as to manifest the truth of Christian faith. After all, it is ultimately the impression that Jesus’ personality made on his contemporaries that was Christianity’s starting point.

The focus on Jesus’ particular disposition also characterizes J.G. Wilhelm Herrmann’s (1846–1922) treatment. According to Herrmann, Jesus wanted to convert believers to a life with God by means of his exceptional personality (Herrmann: 65). Similarly Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) points in his *Glaubenslehre* to Jesus’ outstanding personality and inquires into the effect of Jesus’ personality on one’s life. From a historical point of view, for Troeltsch, it is sufficient to accept Jesus’ preaching and self-consciousness as historical facts. What is important is that Jesus was not himself the savior, but the one who could lead people to God (Troeltsch: 102–15). Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930) also shared this view in his 1899 lectures *Das Wesen des Christentums*. He saw in Mark 10:45, for example, evidence that Jesus understood himself to be a prophet whose task was to bring people to God (von Harnack: 91). Indeed, Jesus does not belong to the gospel itself, which is why according to Harnack, John 10:36 adds something to the gospel that Jesus did not say. But Jesus is still the personification of the gospel that can encourage and support other people (von Harnack: 91).

After the interlude of dialectical theology, Dorothee Sölle (1929–2003), e.g., again took up the emphasis on Jesus’ humanity, interpreting Jesus as the fulfilled human individual (“der glückliche Mensch”; Sölle: 63). She understands him as acting out of his inherent freedom, and recognizes in him the one who brings God closer to being the liberator of humankind (Luke 4:18). According to this “liberation perspective,” Jesus can on the one hand be conceived of in a Marxist way, much as Camilo Torres (1929–1966) sees it, who perceives Jesus as a revolutionary and thus claims to implement Matt 5:23–24 (Lüning: 9). On the other hand, Jesus can be conceived of in an atheistic way, as does Milan Machovec (1925–2003), who interprets Matt 4:17 as a call to perfect humanity (Machovec: 99).

**3. The Life of Jesus as Dead End.** Other thinkers have considered the scholarly inquiry into the life of Jesus to be a theological dead end (Martin

Kähler). Johannes Weiß (1863–1914) and Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965) declared life-of-Jesus research to have come to an end. They saw Jesus primarily as a figure of ancient Judaism, while Schweitzer criticized the preceding quest for the historical Jesus as constructed in the image of its authors (Schweitzer: 65).

According to Martin Kähler (1835–1912) the life of Jesus is a matter of historical honesty on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of the theological insight that Christianity is not based on the life of Jesus, but on his significance as Christ (considering Rom 10:10). For Kähler the credibility of Jesus should not be burdened by irrelevant historical matters (Kähler: 47–49).

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976) also declared that he had no interest in Jesus' personality (Bultmann 1929: 10). First, one can know nothing of Jesus' personality, and second, according to 2 Cor 5:16, it is theologically irrelevant. It is not the personality of Jesus that is crucial, but that he, as the proclaimer, became the proclaimed, that is, that he actually did preach and thus set forth the call of the kerygma (Bultmann 1933: 204–5). Recently, Klaus Wengst (b. 1942) has energetically agreed with this claim, and emphatically warns against falling anew into the impasses of the quest for the historical Jesus. In his opinion, theologians have no basis for being concerned with the life of Jesus (Wengst: 8).

**4. Jesus as Son of God.** In the 19th century, Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) greatly influenced the perception of Jesus, viewing him primarily as the paradox of faith and as an a-historical person. For Kierkegaard Christ is “the absolute” (Kierkegaard 1964: 67). In Jesus, God took on the form of a servant (Matt 11:28) and thereby enabled humans to experience the moment in which the mind surrenders to the paradox of the divine man. This moment creates a passion for the cause of Christ, which Kierkegaard called “faith” (Kierkegaard 1985: 62–65).

Karl Barth (1886–1968) took up these thoughts and interpreted Rom 1:1–4 to the effect that in Jesus two axes intersect: the familiar axis of the world and the unfamiliar axis of God. Jesus is the intersection of these axes. He, as Christ, brings the unfamiliar scale of God “straight down from above” to humans (Barth: 51). As a human being, one cannot know anything about this plane; Jesus’ human personality plays no role. In reference to 2 Cor 5:16, Barth explains the decisive significance of Jesus in his being the Son of God (Barth: 52). Other than this fact one does not have to know anything more about Jesus than one would know of any other person.

Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI; b. 1927) argues similarly. Primarily with reference to John’s gospel, he identifies the historical Jesus with the real Jesus (Pope Benedict XVI: 20). Thus the histori-

cal and theological perspectives are harmonized with one another. With this, Ratzinger, like Beyschlag in the 19th century, overstrains this historical perspective, because he considers it capable of making the divinity of Jesus historically plausible. In this way Beyschlag and Ratzinger point to the life of Jesus as evidence for faith.

In contrast to this optimistic view of the capability of the historical method, Edward Schillebeeckx (1914–2009) underlines that the gospel’s origin is not Jesus alone, but rather Jesus together with the interpretations of his disciples. As a prophet, the historical Jesus must be considered as a parable of God (Schillebeeckx: 555). This is why his disciples could recognize the historical Jesus as the risen Christ after his death.

Wolhart Pannenberg (1928–2014) attempted to reconcile modern thought with the insights of historical study in a more sophisticated way. With reference to 1 Cor 15:13, 16, and 20, he posits a type of resurrection hope for modern humans, so that one can speak responsibly about Jesus’ resurrection (Pannenberg: 77). Pannenberg translates the apocalyptic horizon of 1 Corinthians into an anthropological one and recognizes the expectation of a general resurrection of the dead as the end of human nature. In this manner, he appropriates Jesus’ resurrection as an historical event and simultaneously as a prolepsis of the eschatological goal of history. He sees Easter faith verified through historical analysis of the Jesus tradition (Pannenberg: 95).

With Jürgen Moltmann (b. 1926), the historical method is not as heavily strained. Moltmann considers Jesus of Nazareth as the messiah in the making, who in the events of the Last Supper comes to self-realization and thus unleashes hope (Moltmann: 160).

Joachim Ringleben (b. 1945) wants to rethink God on the basis of Jesus. He describes Jesus’ self-understanding from the point of view of Jesus’ special relationship with God (Ringleben: 4), and he defines Jesus accordingly with reference to John 1:18: Jesus is the “exegete” of his divine father, who finds his own self-understanding in being the logos-event itself (Ringleben: 230).

**Bibliography:** ■ Barth, K., *Der Römerbrief* (Munich ²1922); ET: id., *Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford 1968). ■ Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus von Nazareth* (Freiburg i.Br. 2008); ET: id., *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York 2008). ■ Beyschlag, W., *Das Leben Jesu*, 2 vols. (Halle ³1893). ■ Bultmann, R., *Jesus* (Tübingen ²1929); ET: id., *Jesus and the Word* (New York/London 1934). ■ Bultmann, R., “Die Bedeutung des geschichtlichen Jesus für die Theologie des Paulus,” in id., *GuV*, vol. 1 (Tübingen 1933) 188–213. ■ Harnack, A., *Das Wesen des Christentums* [1899/1900] (Tübingen 2012); ET: id., *What Is Christianity?* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1957). ■ Herrmann, W., *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott* (Stuttgart ⁴1903). ■ Holmén, T./S. E. Porter (eds.), *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 4 vols. (Leiden 2011). ■ Kähler, M., *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche biblische Christus* (Leipzig ²1928); ET: id., *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic,*

*Biblical Christ* (Minneapolis, Minn. 1964). ■ Kierkegaard, S., *Training in Christianity* (Princeton, N.J. 1964), trans. of id. *Indøvelse i Christendom* (Copenhagen 1848). ■ Kierkegaard, S., *Philosophical Fragments* (Kierkegaard's Writings 7; Princeton, N.J. 1985), trans. of id. [Johannes Climacus], *Philosophische smuler* (Copenhagen 1844). ■ Lüdemann, G., *Der große Betrug: Und was Jesus wirklich sagte und tat* (Lüneburg 1998); ET: id., *The Great Deception: And What Jesus Really Said and Did* (Amherst, N.Y. 1999). ■ Lüning, H., *Camillo Torres, Priester, Guerrillero: Darstellung, Analyse, Dokumentation* (Hamburg 1969). ■ Machovec, M., *Jesus für Atheisten* (Stuttgart 1972). ■ Metzger, P. (ed.), *Die Konfession Jesu* (BensH 112; Göttingen 2012). ■ Moltmann, J., *Der Weg Jesu Christi: Christologie in messianischen Dimensionen* (Gütersloh 1989); ET: id., *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions* (Minneapolis, Minn. 1995). ■ Pannenberg, W., *Grundzüge der Christologie* (Gütersloh 1964); ET: id., *Jesus: God and Man* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1977). ■ Paulus, H.E. G., *Das Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums*, vol. 1 (Heidelberg 1828). ■ Rau, E., *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu: Plädoyer für die Anknüpfung an eine schwierige Forschungstradition* (ed. S. Petersen; BWANT 203; Stuttgart 2013). ■ Renan, E., *Vie de Jésu* (Paris 1863); ET: id., *The Life of Jesus* (Amherst, N.Y. 1991). ■ Reimarus, H. S., *Fragmente des Wolfenbüttelschen Ungenannten* (ed. G. E. Lessing; Berlin 1855). ■ Ringelben, J., *Jesus: Ein Versuch zu begreifen* (Tübingen 2008). ■ Schillebeeckx, E., *Jesus: Die Geschichte von einem Lebenden* (Freiburg i.Br. 1975); ET: id., *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (London 1979). ■ Schröter, J./R. Bruckner (eds.), *Der historische Jesus: Tendenzen und Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Forschung* (BZNW 114; Berlin/New York 2002). ■ Schweitzer, A., *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen 1984); ET: id., *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Mineola, N.Y. 2005). ■ Sölle, D., *Phantasie und Gehorsam* (Stuttgart 1968); ET: *Creative Disobedience* (Cleveland, Ohio 1995). ■ Strauß, D. F., *Das Leben Jesu: Kritisch bearbeitet*, 2 vols. (Tübingen 1840); ET: id., *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* (New York 2010). ■ Troeltsch, E., *The Christian Faith* (Minneapolis, Minn. 1991); trans. of id., *Glaubenslehre* (ed. G. v. Le Fort; Munich 1925). ■ Weiß, J., *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia, Pa. 1971); trans. of id., *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reich Gottes* (Göttingen 1892). ■ Wengst, K., *Der wirkliche Jesus? Eine Streitschrift über die historisch wenig ergiebige und theologisch sinnlose Suche nach dem "historischen" Jesus* (Stuttgart 2013).

Paul Metzger

## D. Modern America

Diverse peoples have embraced Jesus in America, but they have reshaped his life to achieve a multitude of ends. The cumulative result of these reimaginings is that Jesus has become capable of espousing many creeds. Yet, while the historical actors employing Jesus have produced competing portraits, the familiar source material used by divergent groups has created a situation where shifts and continuities can be extracted from the cacophony enveloping the character of Jesus. Indeed, one thing that becomes apparent when surveying the past is that the divine messiah who arrived from Europe has been converted into a more human presence in America.

Jesus was primarily a supernatural being that intervened in the world during the colonial era. As a result, when Isaac Jogues (1607–1646) decided to

tap into the power wielded by the lord of all creation to terrify the Iroquois, the French Jesuit carved Jesus' name on trees. Indians in the Southwest also considered Jesus part of a godhead at odds with their way of life and responded accordingly, accepting the aid of Caudi, Tilini, and Tleume, a trinity of spirits who provided strategic advice during the Pueblo Revolt. Puritans in the Northeast focused on the divine qualities of Jesus as well, since they worshipped him as an abstract power that provided salvation to select sinners as the son of God.

The divinity of Jesus remained a settled question for many as the colonies expanded, but it became a matter of some debate in the pre-Revolutionary period. So when the evangelist George Whitefield (1714–1770) turned his attention to Jesus, he warned audiences to ignore the false prophets who had dethroned the King of kings by turning him into a philosopher no more remarkable than Seneca or Cicero. Whitefield's targets were the clergymen who venerated Roman intellectuals, but his salvo was also a response to the values of the Enlightenment that inspired individuals to note the commonalities between the ethical thought of Jesus and classical moralists.

In America, the rational exploration of the life of Jesus continued in the decades following the Revolutionary War and found its fullest expression in the works of Thomas Paine (1737–1809) and Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826). However, while Jefferson created his own version of the Gospels that eliminated the divine, he only permitted a few friends to read it. Paine was a bolder soul and shared his views with the public, but even George Lippard (1822–1854), a radical novelist who urged his fellow Americans to honor the thinker as a patriot, rejected and refuted Paine's ideas about Jesus.

Although Paine's Christ remained a marginal figure, his rational approach was championed by the feminist Frances Wright and contributed to the human complexity that came to define Jesus during the antebellum era. This was because the responses to the claims Wright made in her lectures were one of the many eruptions of activity that had an impact on conceptions of Jesus in America. On the economic front, the new routes of travel and trade generated by the market revolution enabled the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society to flood the nation with representations of a well-groomed white Jesus. Successive waves of Irish and European Catholic immigrants also made Jesus more visible through their religious iconography and confronted Protestant America with an alternative view of Christ. And as enslaved and free blacks chafed at the restrictions placed on them by white society, the fetter-smashing Jesus intent on overthrowing oppressors grew in stature and standing among abolitionists.

The proliferation of images and interpretations in the period before the Civil War forced numerous

people to engage different constructions of Jesus. During the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, this trend grew in scope and intensity as advancements in industry, transportation, and communications accelerated greatly and the cultural upheavals engendered by urbanization and immigration increased dramatically. One of the major upshots of this explosion of interest in the life and times of Jesus was that the tools and findings of biblical criticism were utilized by a wide variety of individuals. Thus, when professional academics such as Shailer Mathews (1863–1941) and Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918) assigned Jesus a fixed position in religious history, they were countering the more sweeping arguments composed by Robert Ingersoll, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eugene Debs, and other self-educated savants.

The struggle over the identity of Jesus waged by social gospelers, anarchists, feminists, freethinkers, socialists, and liberal theologians made Jesus over into a more human figure who could become directly involved in modern conflicts and controversies. In turn, Jesus became a protean personality who could be a union organizer, a conscientious objector, a black nationalist, a progressive reformer, a homeless man, a social scientist, or an enterprising capitalist. But the more overt religious narratives retained their power in America, since the dominant images of Jesus that emerged from this intellectual and ideological turmoil were the sentimental savior immortalized by Warner Sallman in the 1940 painting *Head of Christ* and the muscular evangelist extolled by Billy Graham (b. 1918) during his Cold War crusades.

In the 1960s, the character of Jesus became a topic of national importance once again when the scholars who pondered the death of God, the Jesus People who ministered to the hippies, and the Christians who became advocates of Black Power placed him at the center of their theologies. These Jesuses were the products of larger social movements that would eventually transform the nation into a conglomeration of interconnected but distinct cultures. Therefore, when the Native American novelist Leslie Marmon Silko grappled with the legacy of Jesus in the late 1990s, she presented him as a multi- and cross-cultural entity who appeared as an Indian to Paiutes wary of white civilization and as a feminist to a student who discovered that Harvard Divinity School was a patriarchal institution.

The growing ethnic and racial diversity of America has had a tremendous impact on contemporary religious life, but the complexity of the nation's makeup has not crowded out more conventional portraits of Jesus. For example, when Ruben Nunez, a born-again graffiti artist who started spray painting Jesus' name on the walls of New York City in the 1990s, reflected on his career, he

drew a connection between ancient and modern forms of religious self-expression by observing that the Jesus of the Gospels doodled in the dirt while convincing a mob to not stone a prostitute. It is therefore impossible to speak of the history of Jesus in the United States without noting that no consensus concerning his identity has been established. Nevertheless, the interplay between the forces of tradition and innovation and the past and the present have compelled Americans to train their focus on his humanity, no matter if they were firm believers defending gospel truths or social scientists seeking objective truths.

**Bibliography:** ■ Allitt, P., "The American Christ," *American Heritage* 39 (November 1988) 128–41. ■ Blum, E. J./P. Harvey, *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America* (Chapel Hill, N.C. 2012). ■ Burns, D., *The Life and Death of the Radical Historical Jesus* (New York/Oxford 2013). ■ Fox, R. W., *Jesus in America: Personal Savior, Cultural Hero, National Obsession* (New York/San Francisco, Calif. 2004). ■ Prothero, S., *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York 2003).

David Burns

#### E. China

Bearing witness to a singular Jesus, the Gospel writers are like landscape artists painting a picture of Jesus in the first-century Mediterranean world from different standpoints. The views of Jesus continue to be profoundly shaped by different cultures, languages, customs, and contexts. From the time Nestorianism (*Jingjiao*) first brought Christianity to China in 635, to the contemporary rigorous study of Chinese Christianity, the Chinese expressions of Jesus have been plural, deeply enmeshed with Chinese religions, languages, and symbols. The Jesus who the Nestorians represented, shown on a tablet found in Xian in 1625, combines the traditional Chinese symbol (two dragons), with Buddhist (a lotus) and Daoist (a cloud) imagery. The tablet mentions Jesus' death, but the references to his crucifixion and resurrection are unclear. Nearly a millennium later, the Italian Jesuit Missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) introduced Jesus to the Chinese social elites as a great teacher of morality that one should follow. The spread of Christianity ended with the famous Rites Controversy (1644–1721).

Christianity did not take its root in China until the Protestant missionaries such as Robert Morrison (1782–1834) and Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) arrived and demonstrated cultural sensitivity and evangelical zeal. Christian mission, however, was perceived to have come in the same package together with the opium trade and foreign imperialist invasion. Jesus was inevitably viewed as a foreign savior with a political agenda to bring about individual and social transformation. The so-called "Taiping Rebellion" is an example of such misunderstanding. Jesus was regarded by the leader, Hong Xiuquan (1813–1864), as his brother who

would help him overthrow the Manchu (Qing) dynasty and establish the Heavenly Kingdom on earth. Later Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the founding father of the Republic of China, imitated the revolutionary Jesus he had perceived, and brought about democracy and socialism to modern China. Thus Chinese views of Jesus were deeply entangled with the state, foreign involvement, and social changes. This continued when the Protestant church was divided into two forms after the Communist Party took over in 1949: the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and the House Church (HC) movement.

The first generation of Chinese theologians was born during this period. Wu Leichuan (1870–1944) viewed Jesus as socialist, whose teaching harmonized with Confucian ideals through self-cultivation. T. C. Chao (1888–1979) took this further and distinguished the Confucian way of self-cultivation and justification by faith alone in Christ. K. H. Ting (1915–2012), or Bishop Ding Guangxun, identified Jesus as the Creator and Cosmic Lover whose love extends to all of creation, including to non-believing Communists. Taking a more anti-intellectual stance mainly within the HC movement, revivalists such as Wang Mingdao (1900–1988), Watchman Nee (1903–1972), and John Sung (1901–1944) focused on spiritual sanctification and the regeneration of individuals and churches. Living through the tormented national upheavals and the catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution, their views of Jesus were shaped by the way that the suffering Christ became their comfort, strength, and source of ultimate trust in God. They inspired millions to follow Jesus despite their seemingly weak hermeneutics and lack of dialogue with traditions.

Contemporary Chinese Christianity began to flourish over the last two decades, even though its relational complex with the socio-political reality of modern China continues to be evident. When interacting with Chinese culture, scholars favor particular biblical texts and topics, for example, the Dao in John's Gospel. Their interactions usually show connections to the three main streams of Chinese tradition. From Buddhist tradition, John P. Keenan develops a Mahāyāna Christology of emptiness (*sunyata*). Jesus is seen as Wisdom who enlightens and awakens mystic knowing. From Daoist tradition, Yongtao Chen articulates the Dao Christology, in which the incarnation is understood as an embodiment of the Dao of God. K. K. Yeo continues to elaborate the linguistic meaning of Dao and apply it to Jesus as the truth, the wisdom, and the rhetorical Dao. From Confucian tradition, Jonathan Tan Yunka constructs a Confucian Christology, where Jesus is presented as the crucified and risen sage (*sheng*). K. K. Yeo uses a Confucian term *renren* (human beings who love) to explain that Jesus is the perfect manifestation of an I-Thou relationship in two dimensions – with God and with human beings.

Missiologists have used some Chinese cultural categories such as shame/honor and “heaven and person becoming one” (*tianrenheyi*) to represent the person of Jesus. Enoch Wan calls Jesus “heaven-human-unite-one-Dao” (*tianrenheyi de dao*), “grace-passion-true-lord” (*renqing zhenzhu*), and “perfect-beauty-revered-honor-lord” (*wanmei zunrong zhu*). Perspectives outside the Chinese theological orbit have also been offered as resources to articulate Chinese views of Jesus. Alexander Chow points to the *Theosis* tradition within Eastern Orthodox tradition, while Kwok Pui-lan provides a feminist ecological perspective. Retrieving a neglected Chinese tradition, Xiaoli Yang creates a poetic lens to engage in a dialogue between the contemporary Chinese search and Jesus in the gospel, thus opening potential multiple views of Jesus as Dao, Host of *Huijia* (homecoming), Harmonizer of yin and yang, and the Great Poetry.

Chinese Christianity continues to live in a creative tension between being faithful to the biblical account and being meaningful to the Chinese mindset, reflecting the glory of god through the particularity of Chinese culture in a globalized and pluralistic world.

**Bibliography:** ■ Chen, Y., “Towards a Tao Christology: Rethinking Christology in Chinese Context,” *CTR* 17 (2003) 25–47. ■ Chow, A., *Theosis, Sino-Christian Theology and the Second Chinese Enlightenment: Heaven and Humanity in Unity* (New York 2013). ■ Keenan, J. P., *The Meaning of Christ: A Mahayana Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y. 1989). ■ Kwok, P.-L., *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Introductions in Feminist Theology; Cleveland, Ohio 2000). ■ Tan, J. Y.-K., “Jesus, the Crucified and Risen Sage: Constructing a Contemporary Confucian Christology,” in *The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ*, vol. 3b (ed. R. Malek; Mser.M 50; Sankt Augustin 2002) 1481–1513. ■ Ting, K. H./J. Wickeri, *Love Never Ends: Papers* (Nanjing 2000). ■ Wan, E., *Banishing the Old and Building the New: An Exploration of Sino-Theology* (Ontario, Ont. 1998). ■ Yang, X., “Homecoming in Haizi: A Dialogue between the Chinese Soul-Search and the Gospel of Luke” (PhD Diss., University of Divinity, Parkville, Vic. 2015). ■ Yeo, K. K., *Chinese Christologies: Images of Christ and Chinese Cultures* (The Oxford Handbook of Christology; ed. F. A. Murphy; Oxford 2015).

Xiaoli Yang

#### F. New Christian Movements

The person and persona of Jesus of Nazareth were fiercely contested in the early centuries of the formation of the Christian churches, and the process of reinterpretation and reinvigoration has never ceased; and Jesus has been understood in radically different ways – historically, politically, and theologically – in newly emergent religious movements of the last 200 years. Four of the larger movements are highlighted here, with reference to further relevant movements for extended study at the end of the article.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints originated in 1823 with the Prophet Joseph Smith's (1805–1844) first vision of the Angel Moroni. The

vision was codified in 1830 with the first publication of the *Book of Mormon*, which contains large sections of text from the Bible, including the book of Malachi and large sections of Isaiah. Where the texts differ significantly is the role of Jesus. The *Book of Mormon* relates a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus on the North-American continent to the Nephites, a people who had previously migrated from Israel, and this message was spread within a religious milieu of expectant millenarianism. The Jesus of Mormonism is clearly prophesied throughout the early sections of the *Book of Mormon*, and his post-resurrection teachings appear in 3 Nephi 11–26 inclusive. Much material shares a common heritage with the canonical NT – Jesus calls twelve disciples, delivers a teaching aligned with the Sermon on the Mount, delivers the Beatitudes, teaches the disciples the Lord's prayer and institutes the Eucharist. This Jesus, who later ascends to heaven for a second time, is described as the Son of God. The title, however, is interpreted in a physical as well as spiritual way that differs from Chalcedonian Christology. In Mormonism, God the Father has a physical body. Jesus' life and resurrection remain central to the Mormon plan of salvation.

Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910) with the 1875 publication of *Science and Health* and the 1879 foundation of the Church of Christ (Scientist), reinterprets the person of Jesus and the concept of Christ in relation to the Bible, which was Eddy's "only authority" (Eddy: 126). Christian Science focuses on Jesus as a human healer endowed with the divine Principle of Christ, which is one with God (Eddy: 18). This Principle empowered Jesus who is seen as human, but divinely appointed. Followers of Jesus may share in this Christ spirit, which represents the all-encompassing love of deity. Christian Science teaches that Jesus' resurrection was the ultimate proof of the power of the Christ spirit – reinterpreting his passion not as a pardon for sins, but as a demonstration of the truth and love of divinity. Christian Science therefore focuses on Jesus' spiritual sacrifice, not his bodily sacrifice. Christian Science's reliance upon spiritual healing and prayer are predicated upon the example of Jesus – Eddy calls for followers of Jesus to "emulate him in all his ways and to imitate his mighty works" (Eddy: 37), which relates in particular to the NT commands of Jesus for his disciples to heal the sick (Matt 10:1–8, Luke 9:1–3). By so emulating Jesus, Christian Science practitioners can experience the Principle of Christ as perfected in Jesus for themselves.

The Jehovah's Witnesses, renamed as such in 1931 after their establishment in 1879 under Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916) as the Bible Student Movement, have a clear and divergent view of Jesus from the Chalcedonian position. Jesus is un-

derstood to be the first creation of Jehovah and therefore as a created being as not equal to God. This necessarily rejects Trinitarian understandings of Jesus, and he is commonly described as Jehovah's only-begotten son (Matt 3:16–17) – a perfect reflection of the father and a conduit for greater knowledge of Jehovah, but not equal to Jehovah. Witnesses believe that Jesus pre-existed his embodied historical life (John 3:13), and this pre-existent spirit Jesus is recognized as synonymous with the Wisdom of the OT (Prov 1:20), the Archangel Michael (Dan 10:13–21; 12:1), and the Word of God in John's Gospel (John 1:1–18). The earthly Jesus was anointed Messiah at the point of his baptism and died on a single spine stake – not a cross, which Witnesses link with non-Christian pagan traditions. In Witness theology, Jesus' death created the possibility for human life on a future paradise earth, although this will be ushered in not by a physical "second coming," but as an invisible "second presence."

The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, originally known as The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, is more commonly referred to as The Unification Church, or even more simply, and often derogatorily, as the Moonies. Founded in Korea in 1954 by Sun Myung Moon (1920–2012), the movement views Jesus as having been representative of God – but not God (Moon: 167) – born without sin, but born to human parents. Jesus' mission as the Messiah was to save the world from the sin of Eve's original Edenic liaison with Satan, but he was unable to accomplish his purpose as he died on the cross before marrying; he had achieved personal perfection, but not social perfection, as he remained single. In Unification theology, marriage is essential as the chosen Messiah cleanses and restores humanity by purifying the bloodlines of their offspring of original sin. Moon is understood by his followers to be the Second Coming of Jesus for, during a religious vision aged fifteen, Moon was tasked by Jesus to complete his life's work. In their subsequent life and ministry, Moon and his wife Hak Ja Han (b. 1943) achieved a greater perfection than Jesus. They embodied the true love of deity through marriage (Rev 19:6–9), thus sealing Moon's status as the Third Adam. In so doing, Moon and Han became the True Parents of the True Family, surpassing the work of Jesus himself. The main text of the Unification Church is the 1996 text *Exposition of the Divine Principle* which uses the Bible as a foundation and reference point for the story of humanity's creation, fall and promised restoration.

Other traditions and movements which reinterpret the person or persona of Jesus in relation to majority Christian views in the last 150 years have included, but are not limited to, Spiritualism, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, the Rastafari, The Urantia

Book Fellowship, The Church Universal Triumphant, The Aetherius Society, The Unarius Academy of Science, and The International Raelian Movement.

**Bibliography:** ■ Barker, E., *The Making of a Moonie: Brainwashing or Choice?* (Oxford 1984). ■ Davies, D. J., *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge 2003). ■ Eddy, M. B., *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Boston, Mass. 2007 [1875]). ■ Hammer, O. (ed.), *Alternative Christs* (Cambridge 2009). ■ King, G., *The Twelve Blessings* (London 2000 [1958]). ■ Moon, S. M., *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York 1996 [1966]). ■ Prophet, E. C., *The Lost Teachings of Jesus*, vols. 1–4 (Gardiner, Mont. 1986). ■ Raël, *The Final Message: Humanity's Origins and Our Future Explained* (London 1998). ■ Smith, J. (trans.), *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ* (Salt Lake City, Utah 1981 [1830]). ■ Smyth, A., *The True Life of Jesus of Nazareth* (Chicago, Ill. 1998 [1899]). ■ Spencer, W. D., *Dread Jesus* (London 1999). ■ Spiritualist Manual: *A Handbook for Spiritualist Churches and Their Members by the General Assembly of Spiritualists* (San Diego, Calif. 2006 [1948]). ■ Steiner, R., *From Jesus to Christ* (Forest Row 2005 [1930]). ■ *The Urantia Book: A Revelation* (New York 2003 [1955]).

Stephen Gregg

## V. Islam

Jesus ('Isā), the son of Mary (*ibn Maryam*), Messiah (*al-Masīḥ*), is one of the five major prophets in Islam (the others being Noah, Abraham, and Moses, cf. S 33:7; 42:13, as well as Muhammad). His and his mother's story is told fragmentarily in the Qur'ān (esp. S 3:33–59; 19:2–34), mainly on the lines of the Gospels. The Qur'ān knows of the immaculate conception and of Jesus being born through the creative Word of God, without a father (S 3:47; 19:16–21). His birth is told in some detail, with the focus on Mary. She withdraws to a faraway place, and the pains of labor drive her to take refuge by a palm tree (S 19:22–3). After Jesus is born the child gives advice to his mother, and water and fresh dates miraculously appear (S 19:24–6).

The Qur'ān tells how Jesus spoke from the cradle when Mary's chastity was doubted (S 3:46; 5:110; 19:29–30), implicitly mentions the flight to Egypt (S 23:50 – later the theme was elaborated), and vaguely refers to the calling of the disciples (S 61:14, they answering "we are the helpers – *anṣār* – of God," with a pun on Nazareth). Jesus' teaching is only given little attention in the Qur'ān and it is not individualized, not greatly differing from the teaching of the other prophets. God taught him the Torah and Gospel (S 3:48; 5:110), the former of which he confirmed (S 3:50; 5:46; 61:6), and He strengthened him with the Holy Spirit (S 2:87, 253; 5:110). He made things lawful that had been prohibited from the children of Israel (S 3:50), settled their disagreements (S 43:63, and he preached God's unity, e.g., S 5:72).

The Qur'ān mentions some miracles by him (cf. S 2:253), viz. creating birds from clay (the story is found in the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*), healing, rais-

ing the dead and telling people what they had been eating and what they had in their houses (S 3:49; 5:110), i.e., knowing their secrets. All these were signs given to him to prove his prophecy. None of the miracles is told in any detail. One of the signs was the sending down of "a table from heaven" (S 5:112–5), which most probably is a reference to the Eucharist.

Jesus' final days on earth receive more attention. The Qur'ān explicitly denies that Jesus was crucified; it only seemed to the Jews (*shubbiha la-hum*) that they had crucified him (S 4:157) whereas, in fact, God raised Jesus to join Him in heaven (S 4:158). This passage has led to the dogma that Jesus rose alive to heaven without having died. Before his death (the reference of the possessive pronoun is unclear: Jesus' or the human being's death), every human being will believe in him (S 4:159). The denial of the crucifixion is the only part of Jesus' life which in the Qur'ān is in direct contradiction to the Gospels. In modern scholarship, Parrinder and Robinson among others have tried to explain away the evidence and claim that the Qur'ān does not, *expressis verbis*, deny the death of Jesus, but their arguments are not convincing and seem to grow from a dialogical wish to show that here there is no unsurpassable difference between Islam and Christianity.

Later tradition explains S 4:157 with reference to a man (one of the disciples; Judas Iscariot or the high priest's man who went in to the room where Jesus was to arrest him) who was miraculously changed into Jesus' likeness (*shibh*), and crucified in his stead, whether voluntarily or not. The Qur'ān leaves it open what happened and why the Jews thought they had crucified Jesus, but as early as the mid-8th century John of Damascus (Sahas 132–33) understands the passage to mean that it was Jesus' "shadow/likeness" (*skia*) that was crucified, evidently translating here the Arabic word *shibh*. In the 20th century, the Ahmadiyya movement has propagated the idea that instead of being raised to heaven Jesus travelled to India, where his tomb can be found in Srinagar.

Theologically, all Islamic images of Jesus fall within the frame set by the Qur'ān: on the one hand, Jesus was human, neither divine nor the Son of God (e.g., S 4:171, 5:72–75), but on the other, he was a prophet sent by God. Believing in his prophetic status, as well as that of other prophets, is mandatory for all Muslims (cf. S 2:136, 285; 3:84; 4:152). Jesus himself forbade worshipping him or his mother (S 5:116).

Jesus brought a new Holy Book, the Gospel (*Injil*, generally thought to be derived from Greek *euαγγέλιον*), in the singular, being a book revealed to Jesus, not a book written about him. The relation of the existing Gospels to the original *Injil* is disputed, some denying that they have anything to do

with it, others claiming that everything that is not incompatible with Islam may be taken – though with caution – as potentially original. The plurality of Gospels in the Bible is, for Muslims, a sign of the corruption (*tahrif*) of this original book. Jesus' divinity and redemption are denied, as is his death, but he and Mary are often seen as *ma'sūm*, protected from sinning and erring, which is the closest the Islamic tradition comes to the concept of freedom from original sin.

The expression “God is the Messiah, the son of Mary,” repeated twice in the Qur’ān (S 5: 17, 72), may open interesting vistas for theological speculation, but it has been seriously over-interpreted in modern discussion. The Qur’ān is not a theological tractate, and there the expression is only a syntactic variant on “the Messiah is god” (cf. S 22:40 “Our Lord is God” = “God is Our Lord”). The Trinity is vehemently denied (S 4: 171, 5: 73) and in one place seen as the deification of Jesus and the Virgin Mary (S 5: 116–18; the Holy Spirit, *Rūh al-quds*, is interpreted as referring to the Angel Gabriel). Here again, it is unnecessary to refer, e.g., to Ethiopian Mariolatry, because even a cursory look at icons, or a free conversation with lay Christians, will undoubtedly have given the idea that Mary is the third sacred character of Christianity. In an unclear passage (S 61: 6), Jesus refers to a prophetic messenger (*rasūl*) who comes after him “and whose name will be highly praised (*ahmad*)”, which has traditionally been understood to refer to Muḥammad, to whom later tradition also ascribed the name Ahmad (cf. John 14: 16).

The name ‘Isā derives through metathesis from Nestorian Syriac *Ishō*. In the early Islamic period it was used rather commonly as a man’s name, although later it became rare. Christian Arabs use the form *Yasū’*. Etymologically, *al-Masīh* is the same as Messiah, but in the Qur’ān, as in later Islamic tradition, it is a personal name and does not imply any Messianic functions (any more than “Christ” reminds an ordinary reader of its Greek etymology). In the Qur’ān, we find the expression *kalima minhu* “a word from Him” (S 3: 45) or *kalimat Allāh* “the Word of God” (S 4: 171) used of Jesus, thus coinciding with Christian usage. Here again, in Islamic dictation the expression only refers to Jesus’ birth by the command, or word, of God, and cannot be equated with the Logos of Christian theology. He is also called “a Spirit from Him” (S 4: 171), as well as a Sign and Mercy “from Us” (S 19: 21). Jesus is not referred to as God’s son, and in later tradition he very rarely uses the expression “my Father” in his speeches as he does in Christian texts. The expression “my Father and your Father” is sometimes used.

Islam was born on the Arabian Peninsula under Christian influence. This influence was intensified when Arabs conquered the surrounding areas after

the prophet Muḥammad’s death. In the new Arab Empire, the majority of the population remained Christian for centuries to come, and Christian traditions flowed in on all levels of Islam, from theology to popular lore. This, understandably, influenced the image of Jesus in Islam.

It seems that Jesus was the original Messiah, whose second coming was awaited also by Muslims as *al-Mahdī* (there is an early Ḥadīth “there is no Mahdi but Jesus”). This may be seen in many Ḥadīths (sayings attributed – often unhistorically – to Muḥammad), where Jesus takes over various functions in the events leading to the end of the world. Later, a new Arab Mahdi, a descendant of Muḥammad, was invented and Jesus became subordinate to him, but he did retain a role in eschatological events and Muslims still await his second coming. Eschatology remained an important area for Jesus, who was taken alive into heaven and returns thence, descending in Damascus, Jerusalem, or Mecca, to take part in the fight led by the Mahdi against the Antichrist (*al-Dajjāl*) whose slaying remains Jesus’ task. It is also Jesus who prays to God to annihilate Gog and the Magog when they threaten to destroy everything. Furthermore, Jesus follows the Mahdi and is a Muslim (as, from the Islamic point of view, he always was, later Christians having corrupted his original, Islamic teaching), he makes a pilgrimage to Mecca, marries and begets children, and destroys crucifixes and churches before dying. He will be buried in Medina and resurrected in the general resurrection at the end of time.

Jesus lore was received into Arab culture on at least two levels. Learned authors had access to Christian texts, either in (oral or written) translation or in the original, and were able to insert material from there into their books. On the popular level, Christian traditions trickled down to Islamic oral lore and from there to literature. The majority of the population in the early Islamic Empire was Christian, and Islam spread through conversion, meaning that the majority of new Muslims were former Christians who brought much of their earlier religious lore with them, especially as most Jesus stories were completely acceptable from an Islamic point of view. On the other hand, there was a need for more stories about Jesus on the Muslim side, as the version of the Qur’ān is fragmentary and leaves many questions open.

In the beginning, Christian lore seems to have flowed freely into Islam. By the end of the 7th century, however, a need grew to distinguish more clearly between Christianity and Islam as two separate religions. The distinction was not quite clear before this time, as Muḥammad seems to have seen himself more as reforming a corrupted message than as establishing a new religion. At around the end of the 7th century, Jesus (and other biblical)

lore was basically divided into two. Much of what was found acceptable was attributed to Muḥammad and canonized as prophetic traditions, Ḥadīths. The ambiguous, or even unacceptable, parts of the traditions were labelled *Isrā'ilīyyāt* “Israelite stories,” which remained popular but lack the authority of the Ḥadīths.

Learned authors, such as the historian and Qur'ān exegete al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), were able to quote or paraphrase the Gospels at length, so that basically anything that is found there will also be found in Islamic literature. In addition to the canonical Gospels, material taken from some other Gospels, especially the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, found favour in Islamic literature.

In historical texts, the events of Jesus' life were inserted into the grid of Persian and Roman history rather accurately, and the story closely follows the Christian version. It only differs in some theologically relevant issues (divinity, crucifixion, redemption), whereas the historical events of Jesus' life are told more or less as they are in Christian sources.

In anecdotal literature, stories about Jesus are numerous. Most of them can be subsumed under half a dozen main headings, including miracles, especially the raising of the dead; Jesus and John the Baptist; Jesus and the devil; Jesus confronts learned men; the kind and mild Jesus; Jesus the ascetic; Jesus on/against property and power; and the prayers, sayings and sermons of Jesus. In these stories he may be depicted among his disciples. Most of the material comes from Christian sources, but also other stories were attributed to him, including several originally Indian stories, where Jesus takes the place of Buddha, who was little known in Islamic literature. Stories about Jesus may be found not only in the *qīṣāṣ al-Anbiyā'*, “stories of the prophets,” genre, but in virtually all genres in Arabic, Persian, and other Islamic languages. Some of the stories are intricate pieces of literature.

Especially when raising the dead, Jesus performs his miracles “by God's permission,” not by his own powers. The miracle story pattern was productive, and new stories about Jesus in his wanderings coming to an abandoned town/graveyard/grave and calling forth its denizens were invented, often with the horrors of dying or of hell in focus. The stories with John the Baptist are used to check Jesus' importance and to avoid his deification by contrasting him with an often superior ascetic. In the devil stories, Jesus usually learns from the devil, who, for some reason, seems quite willing to reveal his tricks to Jesus. In some stories, he tempts Jesus, but always without final success.

In connection with learned scholars, Jesus normally preaches the importance of doing (*'amal*) in preference or addition to knowing (*'ilm*) and blames the learned who are like a barren tree that does not bear fruit. The stories about the kindness of Jesus

admonish against anger and stress the importance of accustoming one's tongue to speaking kind words. The ascetic sayings are directed against the World, often personified as an old hag, and its lures. Jesus' lack of earthly possessions and home, as well as his frugal diet (usually water and barley bread) are common topics. In the ascetic stories, Jesus is often confronted with superior ascetics, which may hint at a polemical origin. God often reveals the superiority of the ascetic to Jesus. The stories about property and wealth form a part of these ascetic stories, but in them Jesus is seen as a master ascetic who admonishes others.

In Islamic literature, Jesus' sayings are usually brief, but the material is extensive. Thus, it would almost be possible to find every sentence of the Sermon on the Mount dispersed within scores of Islamic books, usually in passages no longer than two sentences. The majority of Jesus' sayings in Islamic literature can be traced back to Christian sources, mainly the Gospels, even though explicit quoting is not very common. They do not provide testimonies for any sayings from lost early Christian sources.

Jesus is a favorite figure in Islamic mysticism, where he has a binary role. On the one hand, he is seen as a superior ascetic who owns nothing in this transitory world (except perhaps a brick he uses for a pillow), is always on the move, wandering around, and turns away from sexuality and family (whereas the customary prophetic practice is to marry and beget children, which Jesus, too, will follow but only after his second coming). In these stories, the sternness of Jesus is usually directed towards himself. On the other hand, when speaking of the world around him Jesus is the paragon of loving kindness. When the disciples speak harshly of the stench of a dog's carcass, Jesus is able only to wonder how beautifully white and shining its teeth are: a tongue accustomed to speaking kindly cannot pronounce condemning words. The healing breath of Jesus is a *topos* in Persian poetry especially, where he is often contrasted with, or compared to, Galen. Jesus' breath revives the dead soul and awakens it to yearn for its Creator.

Polemics against Christianity usually center on the figure of Jesus. Among the most common topics are the Trinity, which is seen as illogical from an Aristotelian point of view; Jesus' birth without a father, which is accepted but relativized by reference to Adam, who had neither father nor mother; Jesus' miracles, which are accepted but always seen to have been performed “by God's permission”; and, finally, the plurality of the Gospels and their differences, which are seen as proof of their corruption. Recurrence to the qur'ānic text is common. Even though it was not acceptable to Christians, it worked well in polemical works against Christianity aimed at an inner-Islamic audience. Especially

during the formative period of Islam, a certain antagonism was needed to define the new religion as against the old. This is seen, e.g., in the anti-Chrystological inscriptions of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (on the inner walls, thus aimed at visitors within the Mosque, i.e., [newly-converted] Muslims).

**Bibliography:** ■ Arnaldez, R., *Jésus dans la pensée musulmane* (Paris 1988). ■ Ayoub, M. M., “Towards an Islamic Christology I: An Image of Jesus in Early Shī‘ī Muslim Literature,” *MW* 66 (1976) 163–88. ■ Ayoub, M. M., “Toward an Islamic Christology II,” *MW* 70 (1980) 91–121; repr., in *A Muslim View of Christianity* (ed. I. A. Omar; Maryknoll, N.Y. 2007) 156–83. ■ Chialà, S., *I detti islamicî di Gesù* (Milan 2009). ■ Hämeen-Anttila, J., *Jesus, Allahin profeta: Tutkimus islamilaisen Jeesus-kuvan muotoutumisesta* (SESJ 70; Helsinki 1998). ■ Hämeen-Anttila, J., “Sayings Recontextualized: Jesus’ Teachings in Islamic Tradition,” in *Rewritten Bible Reconsidered* (ed. A. Laato/J. van Ruiten; Studies in Rewritten Bible 1; Turku 2008) 271–87. ■ Khalidi, T., *The Muslim Jesus* (Cambridge, Mass. 2001). ■ McAuliffe, J. D., *Qur’ānic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge 1991). ■ Michaud, H., *Jésus selon le Coran* (Neuchâtel 1960). ■ Parrinder, G., *Jesus in the Qur’ān* (Oxford 1965). ■ Perlmann, M., *The History of al-Tabarī*, vol. 4 (Bibliotheca Persica; Albany, N.Y. 1987). ■ Perlmann, M., *The History of al-Tabarī*, vol. 4: *The Ancient Kingdoms* (Albany, N.Y. 1987); trans. of al-Tabarī, *Tarīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* (Leiden 1879–1901) 597–812. ■ Räisänen, H., *Das koranische Jesus-Bild* (Helsinki 1971). ■ Räisänen, H., “The Portrait of Jesus in the Qur’ān: Reflections of a Biblical scholar,” *MW* 70 (1980) 122–33. ■ Risse, G., *Gott ist Christus, der Sohn der Maria: Eine Studie zum Christusbild im Koran* (Bonn 1989). ■ Robinson, N., *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany, N.Y. 1991). ■ Robinson, N., “Jesus,” *EQ* 3 (Leiden 2003) 7–21. ■ Sahas, D. J., *John of Damascus on Islam: The Heresy of the Ishmaelites* (Leiden 1972). ■ Schedl, C., *Muhammad and Jesus* (Vienna 1978). ■ Schimmel, A., *Jesus und Maria in der islamischen Mystik* (Munich 1996). ■ Thackston, W. M., *Tales of the Prophets* (*Qisāṣ al-anbiyā'*) (Chicago, Ill. 1997). ■ Tottoli, R., *Biblical Prophets in the Qur’ān and Muslim Literature* (London/New York 2002).

Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila

## VI. Other Religions

Among those of the non-Abrahamic faiths, Hindu and Buddhist thinkers have offered the most comprehensive observations regarding Jesus’ life and sayings. Although exposure to the figure of Jesus in these traditions was largely mediated through the presence of missionaries in South Asia, travel experiences in Europe and in America by South Asians as well as exposure to Western spiritual seekers added to it. Both traditions have responded, often unfavorably, to the Christian missionaries’ portrayal of Jesus, but there were also attempts to find affinities between Jesus and particular Hindu and Buddhist figures.

Ram Mohun Roy (1772–1833), who founded the Brahmo Samaj (Society of Brahma), a Hindu reformist organization, produced an anthology of readings from the Christian Gospels, entitled *The Precepts of Jesus*. This collection, although taken di-

rectly from the Bible, caused an outrage, since Roy had exclusively collected Jesus’ teachings while omitting the miracle stories and the passion narrative. Roy’s views of Jesus and Christianity would eventually lead to the splintering of the Brahmo Samaj. Thus, Keshub Chunder Sen (1838–1884), who broke away from the Brahmo Samaj and founded his own society, regarded Jesus as more than simply an ethical teacher, as he emphasized that the deeper import of Christ was unrealized in modern Christianity. Sen opposed the missionaries’ portrayal of Jesus as a white Westerner, pointing out that Jesus and his disciples were Asiatic. Jesus, he believed, was not God himself, but could be described as the Logos (John 1:1), who was also present in many of the world’s major religious traditions. Jesus was to be regarded as God’s son, an example of perfect humanity, unique in knowledge, love, and submission, and experiencing him was not limited to those who called themselves Christians: “I am sure that Christ, if he were to appear among us now, would say that there are many in the heathen world who are real Christians” (Sen/Collet: 323).

Ramakrishna (Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, 1836–1886) adopted a slightly higher Christology than Sen, regarding Jesus as an *avatāra* (divine “descent”). He became interested in the Bible in 1874, subsequently experiencing a powerful vision in which Christ seemed to possess his soul. He came to regard Christ as the Master Yogi, with whom he claimed identity, together with other Indian deities, such as Kāli, Rāma, Krṣṇa, and even Muhammad, whom he also appears to have regarded as divine. Ramakrishna’s disciples perceived similarities between Ramakrishna and Christ; looking for example, at Ramakrishna’s lack of stringency about food and religious observance, and his assertion that his disciples live with joy rather than austerity.

Ramakrishna’s best-known disciple is Vivekananda (1863–1902), who addressed the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Although he spoke there about the Hindu religion rather than Christianity, elsewhere he referred to Christ, even expressing affinity with Thomas à Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ*, part of which he translated into Bengali. Like Sen, Vivekananda portrayed Jesus as “the true son of the Orient,” rather than as a Western white man. Jesus, he believed, was unlike his Christian followers, whose missionaries seemed more concerned with propagating their religion, than relieving poverty. Vivekananda also drew inspiration from the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, regarding both Krṣṇa and Christ as incarnations of the divine (*avatāra*).

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948) was also more impressed by Jesus than by his Christian followers, and held his Sermon on the Mount in high esteem. Gandhi believed that its ideals were more important than historical facts about Jesus, and that

the teachings would remain valid even if the Gospels were figments of their authors' imagination. Gandhi criticized Christians for not upholding Jesus' ideals of peace, non-violence and non-resistance to evil, claiming that Christ would only truly be born when peace prevailed on earth. He believed that Jesus could be described as the Son of God, but not uniquely so, identifying Rāma, Krṣṇa, Muhammad, and Zoroaster as equally divine.

Hindu-Christian syncretism can likewise be found in the writings of Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950), who spent some fourteen years studying in England, where he was baptized as Aurobindo Ackroyd Ghose (the "Ackroyd" was later dropped when he returned to India). His teachings synthesized Hindu and Christian ideas: the Holy Spirit – Christ's abiding and continued presence which descended on Jesus – could be equated with Brahmic or higher consciousness. Aurobindo was impressed by Jesus' ethic, speaking of the kingdom of God as divine life on earth. He therefore regarded Jesus as an *avatāra* – a divine descent – thus synthesizing Hindu and Christian ideas of the relationship between God and humanity. Aurobindo believed that Christ's crucifixion demonstrated divine understanding and identification with sorrow, suffering, and death. Like Gandhi, Aurobindo was more impressed by Jesus than by subsequent Christianity, which valued power and selfishness rather than spirituality.

Based on purported meetings with Buddhist adepts and mystics (often in Tibet), Western writers claimed connections between the Buddha and Jesus; the claims, long since shown to be specious, appear in Dowling's *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* (1911), which depicts Jesus as journeying through India, Tibet, Persia, Assyria, Greece, and Egypt before returning to Galilee; Notovitch's *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ* (1894) which describes the presence of one called Issa (Jesus) in the region of Ladakh; and in Kersten's *Jesus Lived in India* (1983) which tells of Jesus, during his "lost years," studying under Buddhist teachers, and then returning to Galilee as a Buddhist monk.

The earliest proven contacts between Christianity and Buddhism occurred when Nestorian Christianity moved east. The "Jesus Sutras," consisting of eight scrolls dating from the 7th and 8th centuries CE, discovered in Magoa, are believed to be the writings of Nestorian Christians, recounting the life of Jesus using Buddhist and Daoist concepts. For example, Jesus is said to have been born of the Virgin Mary and "cool wind" – the preferred Chinese concept denoting the Holy Spirit. Jesus is said to have sought out people with bad karma, meaning that he associated with disreputable members of society, rather than that he believed in the effects of one's deeds influencing future rebirths. Jesus teaches "no desire" – allegedly congruent with the Buddhist concept of nonattachment – and "no virtue."

Over the centuries, Buddhist teachers tended to react somewhat unfavorably to the person of Jesus. Unlike the Buddha, Jesus' ministry was short, he did not preach in long systematic discourses, and he did not cultivate the rich or the intellectuals of his time. Fabian Fucan (ca. 1565–1621), a Buddhist who converted to Christianity and then reverted to Buddhism, asked why, if atonement for sin were needed, God took so long to send Jesus; and questioned whether virginity was a virtue, as implied in the doctrine of the virgin birth.

Ouyi Zhixu (1599–1655) formulated twelve "incoherences" in Christian doctrine, several of which related to the person of Jesus. Influenced by the Confucian concept of heaven, he could not accept that God could be personal or be born as human. He also claimed that Christian teaching that Jesus had a physical and spiritual body was derived from the Buddhist *trikāya* – "three bodies" (of the Buddha) – doctrine, but not rightly understood.

In the late 18th century a somewhat curious parody of the missionaries' teaching circulated in the form of the Carpenter-Heretic folktale, in which it was alleged that Jesus was a daemon who entered the womb of a low caste woman, and subsequently attracted a band of evil followers who stole and ate meat, and who attempted to trick people into believing he had risen from the dead.

Western scholars have been more conciliatory, however, drawing attention to parallels between the Buddha and Jesus. Arthur Schopenhauer's (1788–1860) observation that both founder-leaders practiced asceticism was elaborated further by scholars such as Émile-Louis Burnouf and Ernest Renan. Burnouf contended that Jesus was an Aryan who worshipped Yahweh, in contrast to the Semites, who were worshippers of Elohim, and Renan described the Buddha as the "atheistic Christ of India." Ernest de Bunsen's *The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes and Christians* (1880) argues that Adam, Abraham, Moses, the Buddha (whom he equates with the "one greater than Solomon"), and Jesus were all manifestations of the angel Metatron, and that Jesus and the Buddha shared numerous common characteristics, including their birthdays. The attempts to draw parallels between Jesus and the Buddha were essentially attempts to separate Jesus from the Jewish tradition, thereby "aryanizing" Jesus. Conversely, from the Buddhist standpoint, it was possible to portray Jesus as the Jew and the Buddha as the Aryan. Thus, Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933) argued that the Buddha being Aryan, was superior to Jesus the Semite.

Not all comparisons have been politically motivated. Paul Carus' (1852–1919) *The Gospel of Buddha* (1894) retells the story of the Buddha, devoting some forty pages to allegedly parallel stories and sayings of Jesus and the Buddha. Representing the Buddha through symbols and images associated

with Jesus reaches an early height in the enormously popular work of Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia* (1879). Arnold's poem begins by referencing the Buddha as the "Savior of the World" who "came to be born again for men," and describes Mara, who tempts the Buddha with fame and worldly possessions as "the Prince of Darkness."

This tradition continues in the works of subsequent writers, such as J. Estlin Carpenter (1844–1927), and more recently Roy C. Amore and Marcus Borg have claimed to find such parallels. Included here are their miraculous births, their prodigious nature as children, and their experience of temptation before their ministries; both were miracle workers and world-renouncers, and both used parables in their teaching. Some of the sayings and parables of Jesus and the Buddha show similarities. For example the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (the "Lotus Sutra of the Fine Dharma") tells of a wayward son who left his family home, squandered his money, and finally returned to be reunited with his father. The identification of such parallels is contentious, however. Some of the links are tenuous, and others become exaggerated due to illicit borrowing of Christian-derived terminology in expounding the Buddhist tradition. Although Carus draws on ancient Buddhist sources and references his claims about parallels, much of the text is in his own words and imports vocabulary that is clearly biblical, for example a Buddhist story bearing the heading "The Widow's Two Mites."

Two prominent Buddhist teachers – Tenzin Gyatso (the 14th Dalai Lama) and Vietnamese Zen Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh – both hold Jesus in high regard, but do not regard Christianity and Buddhism as sharing philosophical or metaphysical systems, and do not press parallels between Buddhist and Christian texts. The Dalai Lama's book *The Good Heart* originated from a meeting of The World Community for Christian Meditation in 1994, where he was invited as a guest speaker and given eight passages from the Bible on which to comment, in dialogue with Father Laurence Freeman, the Community's director. These included the Beatitudes (Matt 5:38–48), Jesus' refusal to see his family (Mark 3:31–35), the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:26–34), the transfiguration (Luke 9:28–36), and the resurrection (John 20:10–18). The Dalai Lama's view of Jesus is that he is a fully enlightened being, who lived previous lives to attain the supreme spiritual goal. The Dalai Lama has been criticized for introducing forced interpretations of the Bible. For example, the Dalai Lama interprets Jesus refusal to see his brothers and sisters (Mark 3:31–35) as an example of detachment (a key Buddhist quality) for the purpose of showing compassion to the wider world.

The Vietnamese Zen Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh has described Jesus and the Buddha as

"brothers." A stained glass window in his movement's headquarters near Bordeaux depicts Jesus and the Buddha arm in arm, and Thich Nhat Hanh encourages Christians to deepen their Christian faith, rather than to convert to Buddhism.

Numerous Christians, particularly in the evangelical Protestant tradition, have been highly critical of these attempts to build bridges between Christianity and Buddhism, claiming that undue credence has been given to figures such as the Dalai Lama who, on his own admission, is relatively unfamiliar with the Bible. The alleged parallels between the Buddha and Jesus have been criticized as exaggerated, ignoring obvious differences. Jesus' teaching is about God, whereas Buddhism looks to deep self-awareness through meditative absorption; Christianity emphasizes sin, while Buddhism is based on *duḥkha* (unsatisfactoriness); Jesus offers an atoning sacrifice, while the Buddha taught the need for self-effort. Jesus preaches about the kingdom of God and an imminent eschaton, and a resurrection, in contrast with the Buddhist teaching on *samsāra*, rebirth, and the goal of *nirvāna*, a state of enlightened attainment.

Not all Buddhist perceptions of Jesus have been positive. Sangharakshita, the founder-leader of Triratna (formerly Friends of the Western Buddhist Order), doubts whether Jesus existed as a historical character, and dislikes his portrayal by the gospel writers, on the grounds that he showed anger, and that he taught about God. The Zen teacher D.T. Suzuki (1870–1966) perceived the Christian concept of God as a barrier between the two religions, and Sheng-Yen (1930–2009) regarded Jesus' teachings as unsystematic and superficial.

**Bibliography:** ■ Amore, R. C., *Two Masters, One Message* (Nashville, Tenn. 1978). ■ Arnold, E. *The Light of Asia; or The Great Renunciation* (Mahabhinishkramana) (London 1879). ■ Barker, G. A./S.E. Gregg (eds.), *Jesus Beyond Christianity: The Classic Texts* (Oxford 2010). ■ Borg, M. J., *Jesus and Buddha: The Parallel Sayings* (London 2002). ■ Bunsen, E. de, *The Angel Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes and Christians* (London 1880). ■ Groothuis, D. R., "Jesus and Buddha: Two Masters or One?" *Christian Research Journal* (June 9, 2009; available at [www.equip.org](http://www.equip.org)). ■ Gyatso, T. (14th Dalai Lama), *The Good Heart* (London 1997). ■ Nhat Hanh, T., *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (New York 1995). ■ Nhat Hanh, T., *Going Home Jesus and the Buddha as Brothers* (New York 1999). ■ Parrinder, G., *Avatar and Incarnation* (New York 1970). ■ Roy, R., *The Precepts of Jesus: The Guide to Peace and Happiness* (London 1824). ■ Sen, K./S. Collet, *Keshub Chunder Sen's English Visit* (ed. S. D. Collet; London 1871). ■ Streeter, R. H., *The Buddha and the Christ* (New York 1932).

George D. Chryssides

## VII. Literature

■ Christian/General ■ Jewish/Hebrew

### A. Christian/General

Bible narratives and biblical characters have been pictorialized and visualized on walls and windows, on canvas and fabric, and first in the 20th century,

in film. But they have also been re-imagined and recreated non-visually, that is in written form. The gospels (canonical especially but also extra-canonical) appear to offer particularly potent fodder to writers who sometimes carefully depict, sometimes merely allude to, and sometimes dramatically transform, adapt, and complement the stories of the gospels and the nature of Jesus. More or less following these categories, such literary treatments can be motivated by deep piety or creative curiosity to imagine scenes the gospels do not (or do not fully) depict. Authors can also be motivated by suspicion about gospel reliability and open anger at Christianity.

Theodore Ziolkowski has generated a four-fold taxonomy of the literary reception and re-creation of the Jesus story: the fictional transfiguration, the *imitatio Christi*, Jesus *redivivus*, and fictionalizing biographies (he also discusses a category called “pseudonyms of Christ,” but discounts it as “virtually meaningless” because of its expansiveness). Though these are fruitful categories with which to think about the literary reception of Jesus, the broad spectrum of literary depictions, meditations, and developments of Jesus cannot actually be made to fit into them equally well. As a result, this article will take a genre approach – poetry, drama, and fiction – although I will return to Ziolkowski’s category of “fictional transfigurations” below, as it is his most significant contribution to the discussion of the literary Jesus. What follows is only a representation of each genre, rather than a full summary.

**1. Poetry.** One of the earliest poems about Jesus was the 9th-century Anglo-Saxon 6000-line epic called *Heliand*. This poem tells the Jesus story, with all the same characters and events, but it imports them into its contemporary cultural location. So, here Jesus is a warrior chieftain named Christ from Fort Nazareth, and the disciples are his noblemen. Christ is captured and treated as a prisoner by “Jewish warriors” and taken before the assembly house (the Anglo-Saxon clan meeting place). The author strives to make Jesus known to an Anglo-Saxon reader, but more importantly he seeks to avoid putting his reader off. Thus, features of the story that might scandalize the reader are altered, explained, or removed. For example, when Chief Christ washes Peter’s feet, the *Heliand* has Peter object, because in Anglo-Saxon culture, it was distasteful for a superior to wash the feet of an inferior. Christ is humiliated and executed, but he handles it from a position of honor and strength, not from a position of humiliation and weakness, again having Jesus reflect Anglo-Saxon notions of masculinity and honor.

The most famous poem of the “Harlem Renaissance” is entitled “Heritage,” written by Countee Cullen and published in 1925. In the first half of the poem, the poet extols Africa’s virtues: the birds

are “barbaric,” its people are “juggernauts of flesh,” everywhere are the sounds of “Great drums throb-bing in the air.” Africa is filled with “nakedness” and is “savage”; it is fertile and filled with wild animals. The tone is romantic and distantly reminiscent, but it also seems that the black poet takes on the voice of the orientalizer and colonizer. Approximately half way through the poem, he reveals that he has left behind Africa’s “heathen gods” and that now “I belong to Christ”; perhaps the orientalist tone is the “high-price” of the conversion he refers to. Then the poet wonders what might have happened if Jesus were black, with “dark despairing features” and “dark rebellious hair.” Jesus and what the poem presents as the American racist state share the same skin color. This places a barrier between the poet and his Lord (see also “Harlem Renaissance” and “Orientalism”).

The Austro-Hungarian poet Rainer Maria Rilke died in 1926. After his death a cycle of poems originally written 1896–98 was published under the title *Christus: Elf Visionen* (*Christ: Eleven Visions*). These poems picture Christ in Rilke’s world: Venice, schoolyards, cemeteries, artists’ dens. This Christ is brooding, moody, and contemplative. But he also feels rejected: this is a world in which his message no longer resonates, and his teachings have been terribly distorted and forgotten. But he is also a figure who abandons responsibility for this world. In “The Orphan,” a child at her recently deceased mother’s grave approaches a stranger – Christ – seeking confirmation that she and her mother will meet in heaven one day, but “The man makes no reply.” She is on her own in this ordeal. In “The Loon,” after much searching, Christ discovers his own daughter, born from Mary Magdalene, in a schoolyard playing with other children. At the sight of Christ, looking terrifying and homeless, they scatter into the lanes, and “poor, blonde” Anna is left behind to be captured by the creepy giant. He gets her to say the word, “Papa,” and then exalts in joy at the sound of the word, lifting her high above his head like any loving father would, and kissing her long on the forehead. Then he sets her down, tells her there is nothing he can do for her, and leaves her there alone.

**2. Drama.** In late-medieval England, dramatic versions of Bible scenes were common and popular. These are known as Mystery plays, so named not from the Greek *mysterion* (for something meant to be hidden away) but from the French *mestier*, since the plays were entirely the work of tradespeople. The mystery plays are deeply informed by the Catholic liturgy, but they are not merely traditional depictions of biblical scenes. Traditional liturgical scenes are mixed up with some farce, popular superstition, and folklore. For example, in the Second Shepherd’s Play (ca. 1500), a comically exaggerated pair of sheep-thieves replace the baby Jesus with a

baby lamb: an exchange that is at once funny and liturgically meaningful. Closely related to mystery plays are passion plays. 13th-century passion plays tended to follow the liturgy and gospels carefully, but still had a flair for the dramatic: placing people at the death scene who were not present, according to the gospels. Surprisingly, the farcical entered the tradition of passion plays too, which would lead to their banishment in some locations and periods (see also "Liturgical Drama and Mystery Plays").

While mystery plays and passion plays were performance versions of parts of Jesus' life, there can also be, as we will see with novels below, more allusive ways of commenting on the cultural significance of Jesus in dramatic form. Jerome K. Jerome was a British writer and humorist who made a turn to the serious with a play entitled *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* (1908, made into a silent film in 1918 and a very popular sounded film in 1935). The play is set in a derelict boarding house and revolves around a group of residents who are nasty, dishonest, manipulative, extortive, and fearful. Everything changes when a foreigner moves in. As the behavior and personalities of the residents change and they become nicer people, their savior remains nameless the entire time. Jerome's Jesus is not only a stranger to British culture; he is an outsider, and an anonymous one at that. But he is needed, and effective.

**3. Fiction.** There are hundreds of fictional works about Jesus which come in many forms. In some, the lead character is set in the modern world made to resemble Jesus (in zeal, in redemptive self-sacrifice, and so on). In others, Jesus of Nazareth is imported into a modern setting (e.g., Los Angeles). Others are set in the 1st century and present themselves as rewritings of the gospel genre. And finally, some transfigure the gospel narrative structure into a modern setting, but have no character named Jesus. The third and fourth categories, works set in the 1st century and representations of the gospel narrative structure in a modern setting, are the most interesting literarily and historically. I have called the third category "Jesus fiction" and the fourth Ziolkowski calls "fictional transfiguration."

Jesus novels are those that offer a full-length (not short story or novella) treatment of the life of Jesus that is set in ancient Judea (not in an alternative period or place) and in which Jesus is a main character (not a minor character that appears only at the fringes of the narrative frame). These novels are a form of historical fiction. A fictional transfiguration, in contrast, is a literary work in which Jesus never appears and which is not set in the ancient world. Yet it is a work deeply reliant on the gospel narratives of Jesus' life, in that "the characters and the action, irrespective of meaning or theme, are prefigured to a noticeable extent by figures and events popularly associated with the life of Jesus as it is known from the Gospels" (Ziolkowski: 6). Nov-

els in this category reflect and echo but also transform and transfigure familiar Jesus narratives: a lead character is threatened as an infant, baptized, tempted, tried and persecuted. Perhaps the character also acts in ways reminiscent of Jesus: healing, preaching, raising the dead, all likely re-imagined metaphorically. The key to this category is that these works presuppose but never reproduce the gospel narrative, both in specific episodes as well as in the structure of the whole. Indeed, their reflection of the gospel narratives can often be very faint and subtle.

First, we consider Jesus novels, or historical fiction. One would expect that retelling the gospel story as gospel story would severely limit the creative potential of writers. And it is true, many novels amount to little more than rote retellings of the gospels, fueled by the presumption that the gospels straightforwardly report on the life and record the teachings of Jesus. Nonetheless, any discerning reader of the gospels has noticed the many narrative gaps therein, and it is in this space that fictionalization is not only possible but also necessary, in order to create a compelling and coherent narrative. What some writers accomplish within these narrative gaps can be subtle and effective.

Norman Mailer's Jesus novel – *The Gospel According to the Son* (1997) – is not among his best writing, and for all that his narrator, Jesus, is explicitly critical of the canonical gospels, Mailer follows the gospels fairly uncritically. It is what Mailer does with the Judas character that is most compelling about this book. Judas is an unreserved champion of the poor, and because of this, Judas is the beloved disciple. Mailer even has Judas warn Jesus that if Jesus' support of the poor ever waned, he would earn an enemy in Judas. So when Jesus carelessly dismisses the poor one day (Matt 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8), it is Jesus who betrays Judas, and the rest of the story unfolds as you would expect it too.

In one of the more surprising literary developments of the 20th century, vampire- and erotic-fiction writer Ann Rice returned to her Catholic upbringing and took to writing novels about Jesus, in the form of a four-part series entitled *Christ the Lord*. Not surprisingly, her prose is artless but her narrative quite compelling. The first part of the series, *Out of Egypt* (2005) combines in unique fashion the Gospel of Matthew and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*. The plot of this novel revolves around family dynamics, as the young boy Jesus discovers there is a family secret his parents are trying to hide from him, as an unruly uncle comes closer and closer to revealing it to him. In so doing, Rice explores the question of what it would have been like to have a village of infants massacred because you were born. Jesus is horrified, and the end result is quite moving. Rice's Jesus is conservatively "divine," but he is human in his emotional fragility, and struggle with the burden of his identity.

Walter Wangerin's novel – *Jesus* (2005) – is proof that even the most conservative evangelical retellings of the story can be creative, if only mildly so. Like other biblically conservative writers, Wangerin attempts to make the Jesus of the gospels even better: here is a Jesus who not only performs the full range of miracles as they are depicted in the gospels – healings, nature miracles, and resurrections – but this Jesus can climb the steepest mountains without breaking a sweat or becoming winded and walks faster than anyone in the land. Perhaps the episode of walking on water suggested to Wangerin that gravity did not affect the Son of God the way it affects everyone else. This Jesus even gets along better with his mother than he does in the gospels, where he is famously aloof and dismissive.

In a genre of fiction where piety often overrules art, Nino Ricci's novel is among the most literary of them all. Ricci's novel – *Testament* (2002) – offers four "testaments," each written by a different witness – Judas Iscariot, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and a Gentile fictional character named Simon. Each testament covers a different portion of the life of Jesus, none of them covering his whole life, and where they overlap, Ricci is able to explore the complexities of perception: with troubling frequency, the testaments reveal that when they witnessed the same events, each person came away with a very different understanding and memory of Jesus. The end result, in keeping with liberal biblical scholarship, is two-fold: the reader's confidence in the reliability of the gospels is undermined, and the reader is made aware of how Gentile the gospels are.

While Ricci's writing was informed deeply by reading he did in works related to the Jesus Seminar scholarship, Gerd Theissen's novel – *In the Shadow of the Galilean* (*Im Schatten des Galiläers*, 1987) – represents the only Jesus novel by an actual biblical scholar. The book is narrated by a fictional Andreas who is blackmailed by Pilate into serving as an informant on potential troublemakers, which comes to include Jesus. In the end, Andreas supports Jesus, and reports selectively to Pilate. In a move that undermines what should be the unapologetic creative license of the fiction-writer, however, footnotes appear throughout the prose, referring the reader to the sources that justify narrative elements. Nonetheless, there is one feature of this novel that is most interesting, and that is the nineteen letters the author writes to an imaginary interlocutor (Dr. Kratzinger, who never writes back). In these, Theissen sometimes struggles with the tension between historical and fictional writing, thereby interweaving scholarly and creative meta-critical observations as only a scholar could.

José Saramago's novel, *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* (*O Evangelho Segundo Jesus Cristo*, 1991), is another literary masterpiece. Saramago's Jesus was

sent to earth by God, and instructed to let himself be killed, because God wanted him to create a religion in which he (God) would feel more loved. When God eventually reveals to Jesus that the cost of establishing this religion will be centuries of violence and bloodshed in the name of this religion, Jesus wants out. Here, it is Satan who sides with Jesus against the power-hungry God who will do anything to be adored. But in the end, Jesus' rebellion is futile: he is killed, and the religious history unfolds inevitably.

Christopher Moore, in his *Lamb* (2002), writes in a genre known as absurdist fiction. His Jesus novel is simultaneously profane and orthodox: the story is narrated by his best friend, "Biff" who is a martial arts expert who cannot save the Son of God from being killed by his enemies. Jesus and Biff both curse the simple disciples, but Jesus is born of a virgin, he is the Son of God and Messiah, he is pure and right and good, and he is resurrected. Despite the rank humor with which the story is told, Jesus is presented quite conservatively. This novel focuses on the lost years of Jesus, in which he and Biff travel in search of the Magi, finding them in Tibet, where Jesus finds his spiritual mission.

Another sort of novels considered here is what Ziolkowski called the "fictional transfiguration." The allusion to Jesus and the gospel narrative in these is, by definition, very subtle and difficult to spot. A classic example of this type of Jesus fiction can be found in the tremendously influential German novel by Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (1924), translated into *The Magic Mountain* in 1927. There is one particular scene involving a dinner that Mynheer Peeperkorn hosts with twelve guests, one of whom is his favorite Hans Castorp (Hans being a German variant of John) and a servant girl who seemingly betrays the illicit event to the sanatorium's chief. That Peeperkorn represents Jesus at this "last supper" during Castorp's visit becomes clear in his manner of pontification during the dinner, which includes biblical sounding language and explicit references to the gospels, and during which Peeperkorn worries about dying. He even has to cajole his people to stay awake. Peeperkorn arrives at the sanatorium early during Advent, Castorp meets him for the first time around Christmas, and Peeperkorn dies around Easter. Some have seen the dionysiac in Peeperkorn, with the bacchic revelry and drinking long into the night, but the astute reader will recall that Jesus was accused of drinking too much wine, and is depicted turning water into wine. Mann's allusion to the Jesus narrative throughout this novel is subtle, but one of the points of the "fictional transfiguration" is that the narrative takes on a much deeper significance when one recognizes the extended Jesus narrative structure.

**4. Graphic Novel.** The final type of literary reception of Jesus considered here is the graphic novel.

*The Action Bible* tells “God’s redemptive story” in richly hued panels, and claims to represent God and Jesus as the original action heroes. The book covers Genesis to Revelation (though barely, in the latter case). *The Action Bible* is much more than merely a graphic depiction of the Bible, of course, and this is most evident in the depiction of the life of Jesus. This part of the graphic novel has been harmonized by fitting select synoptic stories into the Johannine itinerary and theology. Heavy emphasis is placed on miracles and on the treachery of Jews, much less on the parables or on the Kingdom of God.

The Jesus of *The Action Bible* is demonstrably sanitized: he is a peaceful miracle worker who is killed by his own people because they do not believe he is the Messiah. None of the difficult or confusing material about Jesus from the gospels is present here: at the Cana wedding, Jesus does not sharply rebuke his mother; Jesus does not tell a man whose parents have just died to “let the dead bury their dead”; his family do not come out to restrain him, and Jesus does not reject them at the door in Capernaum. Also absent is Mark’s story of the cursing of the fig tree for not producing fruit out of season, and the crypts in Jerusalem are not opened up for the dead to escape. None of Mark’s secrecy motif is here: Jesus never commands people not to tell anyone what he has done, and his Markan rationale for teaching in parables (in order that people do not understand) is missing. So, the Jesus here is clearly the publisher’s own invention, a banal Jesus with none of the quirkiness, anger, or idiosyncrasies one sees in the gospels. Troublingly, there are plenty of hook-nosed Jews in the depictions of those who disagree with Jesus.

**Bibliography. Primary:** ■ Cariello, S., *The Action Bible: God’s Redemptive Story* (ed. D. Mauss; Colorado Springs, Colo. 2010). ■ Mann, T., *The Magic Mountain* (New York 1927). ■ Mailer, N., *The Gospel According to the Son* (New York 1997). ■ Moore, C., *Lamb: the Gospel According to Biff, Christ’s Childhood Pal* (New York 2003). ■ Murphy, G. R. (trans.), *The Heliand: The Saxon Gospel* (New York 1992). ■ Ricci, N., *Testament* (Toronto, Ont. 2002). ■ Rice, A., *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* (New York 2005). ■ Rilke, R. M., *Visions of Christ: A Posthumous Cycle of Poems* (ed. S. Mandel; Poems trans. A. Kramer; Boulder, Col. 1967). ■ Saramago, J., *The Gospel According To Jesus Christ* (London 2013). ■ Theissen, G., *The Shadow of the Galilean* (London 1987); trans. of id., *Der Schatten des Galiläers* (Munich 1986).

**Secondary:** ■ Hamilton, W., *A Quest for the Post-Historical Jesus* (New York 1994). ■ Houlden, L. (ed.), *Jesus in History, Thought, and Culture* (Santa Barbara, Calif. 2003). ■ Ramey, M. E., *The Quest for the Fictional Jesus: Gospel Rewrites, Gospel (Re)Interpretation, and Christological Portraits within Jesus Novels* (Eugene, Oreg. 2013). ■ Stevens, J., *The Historical Jesus and the Literary Imagination: 1860–1920* (Liverpool 2010). ■ Ziolkowski, T., *Fictional Transfigurations of Jesus* (Princeton, NJ. 1972).

Zeba A. Crook

## B. Jewish/Hebrew

Over the course of the first half of the 20th century, modern Jewish writers pursued various methodological and disciplinary avenues in order to soften

the traditional contradiction between Jesus and Judaism and express their ambivalent relationship towards his figure. Jesus functions in these works as a representative of the psychological journey of these writers and the use of his controversial figure corresponds to the modernizing trend that Jewish writers were seeking to encapsulate in their work.

One of the most famous examples of such a trend is the Yiddish and Hebrew poet and publicist Uri Zvi Greenberg’s (1896–1981) life-long dialogue (or monologue) with the figure of Jesus. Like Greenberg, during the 1920s Yiddish poets such as Zalman Shneior (who also wrote in Hebrew), Melech Ravitch, Moshe Leyb Halpern, H. Leyvik, and Itzik Manger used the tormented, agonized Christian image of the figure of Jesus to give voice to their secular, humanistic worldview. In many cases, the comparison between the agonizing Jesus and real human suffering stands at the center of this ironic treatment.

The first historical account of Jesus’ life to be written in modern Hebrew and published in Palestine was Yoseph Klausner’s 1922 *Yeshu ha-Notsri: zemano hayaw ve-torato* (*Jesus of Nazareth: His Time, Life, and Teaching*). Chapters from Klausner’s work first appeared in the Hebrew periodical *ha-‘atid* between 1907 and 1913. Klausner’s representation of Jesus as a Jewish prophet and rebel who sought to bring about political and national redemption proved to be a powerful stimulus for Hebrew writers in the first half of the 20th century.

A year before the publication of Klausner’s book, the first Hebrew play about Jesus appeared in Palestine: Natan Bistritsky’s *Yeshu mi-Natseret – haggadah dramatit* (*Jesus from Nazareth – a Dramatic Tale*). Bistritsky’s play echoes the story of Jesus as it appears in the NT, but this re-telling reveals a critical examination of the Christian text. The play unfolds the story of Jesus only through the unreliable and self-centered stories of his contemporaries, emphasizes the non-historical nature of the NT, and presents it as a collection of stories which are based on mythologies and various traditions narrated by politically motivated authors. The first Hebrew novel on Jesus, Aharon Avraham Kabak’s (1881–1944) *In the Narrow Path* (*Ba-mish’ol ha-tsar*), appeared in 1937. Like Bistritsky, Kabak uses a technique of multiple narratives and counter versions to tell the story of Jesus. At the beginning of Kabak’s novel, Jesus is depicted as a young man who attracts more derision than admiration. But, as the novel develops, the perspective from which the story is told shifts from that of Jesus himself to that of his students, who interpret every single act of his as having a miraculous nature. Two years after the publication of *In the Narrow Path*, Sholem Asch’s novel *The Nazarene* (1939) appeared in English. Though composed in Yiddish, Asch’s text was published in English before it appeared in Yiddish

(1943) because of the Yiddish press' refusal to publish the original work. *The Nazarene* was the first of Asch's Christian trilogy, and was followed by *The Apostle* and *Mary*. While the Hebrew works were warmly received, Asch lost much of his respected status among his Jewish readers following the publication of these novels.

The eighteen chapters of an untitled and unfinished novel on Jesus by Hayyim Hazaz (1898–1973), who would later become the first laureate of the Israel Prize for literature, appeared in *Dayar's* weekly literary magazine in 1947. The novel depicts Jesus as a young Jewish man who wanders from the Galilee to Jerusalem and back while trying to find spiritual and religious meaning, as well as answers to questions of national and collective identity. These physical wanderings symbolize an internal struggle that is also represented by encounters with people and events that disturb and reshape Jesus' worldview.

In works that were written after the Holocaust and the attainment of Israeli statehood – by Israeli writers such as Pinchas Sadeh, Nathan Zach, Yehuda Amichai, Yona Wallach, Meir Wieseltier, Benjamin Shvili, and Yitzhak Laor – Jesus' suffering is a dominant theme, while the traditional antagonism between Jesus and the Jews is strongly suppressed. Moreover, in the works that were written after Israeli statehood, Jesus is not only a figure whom the authors identify with, but he also represents a different, foreign, and therefore attractive world – the world of Western culture. For many Israeli writers the image of Jesus is associated with Western visual art and this is the main source of influence on their perception of Jesus.

In the works of the Israeli post-modernist author Yoel Hoffmann (b. 1937) we find a new and original model for representing Jesus. Hoffmann uses a model of a family triangle that is always missing one angle, leaving only one parent and his/her son. Single parenthood becomes a *via dolorosa* (as the name of the main protagonist of his novel *How do you do, Dolores* suggests), and makes the parent a symbolic Jesus with a divine child. The parent is portrayed as a god-like man but the son remains in his traditional role as Jesus. We find a different and a unique technique used to represent Jesus in Hoffmann's famous 1991 novel *Kristus shel dagim* (*Christ of Fish*). Here Jesus serves as a metaphor, symbolizing a mode of existence. Jesus' presence in *Christ of Fish* represents the sanctity of the mundane. This is why Jesus is called "Christ" in the novel, emphasizing the redeeming aspects of the Jesus metaphor.

Finally, the poetry of the renowned modern Hebrew poet Avot Yeshurun, the pen name of Yehiel Perlmuter (1904–1992), begins and ends with the figure of Jesus. Both Yeshurun's very first poem in Hebrew and the poem that he wrote on his death-

bed deal with Jesus. This biographical anecdote goes beyond its symbolic meaning as it demonstrates the significance of this figure and the way it functioned to connect the poet's personal and poetic life. This connection is most obvious in Yeshurun's longings for his family home, and the guilt he carried throughout his life after abandoning his family in immigrating to Palestine.

**Bibliography:** ■ Hoffman, M., *From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture* (Stanford, Calif. 2007). ■ Roskies, D., "Jews on the Cross," in *Against Apocalypse* (Syracuse, N.Y. 1984) 258–310. ■ Sadan, T., *Bašar mi-bešarenu: Yesha'a mi-Natsrat ba-hagut ha-Tsiyonit* [Of Our Very Own Flesh: Jesus of Nazareth in Zionist Thought] (Jerusalem 2008). ■ Stahl, N., *Other and Brother: The Figure of Jesus in the 20th Century Jewish Literary Landscape* (New York 2013). ■ Waldman, N., "Glimpses of Jesus in Yiddish and Hebrew Literature," in *Jewish Book Annual* 50 (1992–93) 223–39.

Neta Stahl

### VIII. Visual Arts

- Christian and Muslim Art ■ Jewish Art
- Photography

#### A. Christian and Muslim Art

**1. Description of Normative Figure of Jesus Christ in the Visual Arts.** The image of Christ developed in response to different theological themes, changes in piety and liturgy, adaptation to various cultures, and the aesthetic exigencies of multiple genres, forms, and styles. Nevertheless, for most of Christian art history, with the exception of the earliest and the most recent periods, the depiction of Christ has been highly consistent. There are several significant reasons for this (apart from the conservatism and traditionalism of sacred art in general). Because Christian art was conceived as a means of communicating to the illiterate both the content of the scriptural narratives and the theological doctrines derived from them, it was important that the figure of Jesus be immediately recognizable to the viewer as the central actor in the narratives and as the subject of the doctrines. Because images of Christ became established as objects of devotion and veneration, it was crucial that they unmistakably convey the presence of the person represented. Moreover, it was long assumed that the traditional representation of the mature Christ corresponded to Jesus' actual features, which were thought to have been captured in supernatural images "not made by human hands" and accredited by eye-witness accounts (for example, the fraudulent "Letter of Publius Lentulus" that appeared in 14th-cent. Italy). Hence once normative forms of depiction were established, they were copied and repeated in works of art for centuries with little variation, despite differences in style. Naturally these recognizable features also influenced reported visions and "appearances" of Christ, which in turn confirmed and reinforced the images. They have also served in sec-

ular and non-Christian art (with the exception of the comparatively few Muslim images) to produce identifiable representations of Jesus.

Within the Christian artistic tradition, we may loosely distinguish three basic kinds of images of Christ, differentiated by their primary purposes:

1) Narrative or historical images primarily depict the story of Jesus as he appears in the gospels. They present the reported “facts” about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

2) Theological images present doctrinal truths about Jesus through the attributes and symbols with which he is depicted. They present an understanding of the meaning of Christ. The classic rationale of these two types was formulated by Pope Gregory the Great (540–604 CE): “that what readers learn from books, the illiterate may have before them in pictures” (DS 477).

3) Devotional images are portrait-like, intended to evoke the presence of Christ for the sake of remembrance, veneration, and prayer. They appeal to the affects and the will in response to Christ’s person and work. The Second Council of Nicaea (787) established the principle that the veneration given to such images is received by the person whom they re-present. In the classical Eastern theology of the icon, such images are thought to have a quasi-sacramental nature by their participation in the reality of the person represented. (This idea was rejected at the time of Second Nicaea by the theologians of the Carolingian court, and Western theology has in general been reserved about ascribing any sort of efficacy to sacred images except that of art.)

These three categories are somewhat fluid and frequently overlap when applied to particular images. Narrative images occur not only on the walls and portals of churches, where they could be “read” by the illiterate, but also in manuscripts, where they aid the imagination of the educated. Narrative (“historical”) images normally depict scenes of action with direct relation to a text, while theological and devotional images normally present Christ in a more hieratic or affective manner, abstracting from any particular moment and evoking the doctrine of the incarnation of his eternal divine being. Nevertheless, narrative scenes or their parts often serve as devotional and theological images as well. For example, the “majesty” of Christ can be placed iconically in the context of narrative scenes like the transfiguration or ascension or last judgment. The confluence of types can be seen especially in images of the nativity and the crucifixion, the most widespread of all representations of Jesus. In addition, plastic art also had liturgical and theatrical functions, for example as reliquaries and in processions, which aimed at a sense of participation in the events depicted. Moreover, virtually all pre-Renaissance sacred art, even if narrative, was also a means of “being present” to the events represented, while

all theological and devotional representations of Jesus refer in some way to his historical, incarnate reality. Visual art also serves a more specifically aesthetic function: to decorate (i.e., make “decus” or “fitting”) sacred spaces, to “illuminate” sacred texts, and to give visual pleasure.

The NT gives no indication of Jesus’ physical appearance. However, it was presumed that OT prophecies gave accurate information about him. Some early fathers cited Isa 53:2 (“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him”) to argue that Jesus was physically unattractive, or at least that his real beauty was in his inner being and in his saving work. Hence Christians should not ask about his outer appearance or wish to worship an image (like the pagans). Christ’s real image is in living Christians and in the liturgy. Christian gnostic writings describe Christ as a youth with a handsome face. Perhaps influenced by this, as well as in response to the “beautiful” gods of Hellenism, later church fathers favored the idea that Christ’s bodily appearance manifested his inner beauty and his divinity. In support, they quoted Ps 45:2 “You are the most beautiful of men.” (This idea is repeated by Thomas Aquinas, who held that Jesus had corporeal beauty to a supreme degree [*Super Psalmo 44*, n. 2], and it underlies Platonic-influenced Renaissance art that takes physical beauty as the sign of spirit.) The unattractiveness spoken of by Isaiah then would refer to Jesus’ mutilation in the passion.

With the possible exception of certain small incised gems from gnostic sources that appear to portray the crucifixion (but with a figure too small to have any recognizable features), there are no Christian images of Jesus from the 1st century or from most of the 2nd. This may be attributed to an expectation of an imminent return of Christ, to the influence of the OT prohibition of images, and to opposition to pagan use of images. Early Christian art, even when representational, was symbolic. Jesus was portrayed (in catacomb frescos and sarcophagi, for example) as a plausible male figure, but not with consistent features. He could be represented as young and beardless (with short hair in the normal Roman style, or with long hair, like Apollo, as in a 5th-century fresco in the catacomb of SS. Peter and Marcellinus (see fig. 1) or the late 3rd-century sarcophagus fragment, in the Museo Pio Cristiano, Vatican. Inv. 31491), or as mature and bearded (like Zeus/Jupiter), with long hair in the “Syrian” style (as a “Nazirite”: Num 6:21, like Samson; Judg 3:15), as in the late 4th century ceiling fresco of the Cubiculum of Leonis in the Catacombs of Commodilla (see fig. 2).

He may appear in the tunic and toga used on public occasions by Roman magistrates and senators, or in divine/imperial robes, or in a *tribōn* or *pallium* (cloak) alone, bare-chested, in the manner



Fig. 1 “Jesus (like Apollo)” (3rd cent.)

of the Cynic philosophers, as in the Sarcophagus of la Gayole (3rd cent., Brignoles, France), or as a nude long-haired youth (Christ/Apollo) being baptized by John (Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:31–34), as portrayed in an early 4th century sarcophagus frieze in the Museo Pio Cristiano (Vatican. Inv. 31542). Probably the most frequent representation prior to the 4th century was the symbolic figure of the good shepherd (John 10:1–21; cf. Ps 23; Ezek 34:12; Isa 40:11; Matt 18:12–14; Luke 15:3–7) seen in both statuary (e.g., catacombs of Domitilla, 300–350) and frescos (catacombs of Priscilla, 250–300). Bearded (most frequently) or bearded, he wears a short sleeveless tunic (*exomis*), with sandals and straps around his legs (*fasciae cruciales*), holds a crook and sometimes a bucket for milk, and carries a sheep over his shoulders. In catacomb paintings, the setting is generally evocative of paradise, hence of salvation from death. The figure is modeled on pagan images of Orpheus, Apollo/Arteus, or Hermes *krioforos* (sheep-bearer), all representations of divine care for humanity. Other very early images (from the 3rd cent. onward) show Christ as the fisher of men, as on a 4th-century sarcophagus in the Museum of Themae in Rome, the teacher of true philosophy, and the helmsman of a boat. Christ's death and resurrection are symbolized by the story of Jonah (Matt 12:40; Luke 11:30; cf. Jonah 1:5–4:6). The image of the nude Jonah



Fig. 2 “Christ (Syrian style)” (mid 4th-cent.)

recumbent under the vine is modeled on the figure of Endymion, and symbolizes the resurrected life in paradise (among numerous representations, that on the early 3rd-century sarcophagus 119 of the Latan Collection in the Vatican stands out).

Already in the 3rd century some elements of images of the emperor, as identified with the divine Helios or Asklepios, were incorporated into Christian representations of Jesus. Following the liberation of the church by Constantine images of Christ became common. As Christianity developed into the religion of the Roman Empire in the late 4th century, representations of Christ and the apostles adapted features from imperial court dress and ceremonial. Christ does not usually appear dressed in all elements of the imperial regalia; he is generally clothed simply in a tunic with a purple *clamyx* or *pallium*, evoking the divine source of imperial majesty. But he also appears as the *imperator* in military dress, with the cross as his weapon or *tropaion*, crushing the lion and the dragon (Ps 90:13), as we see in the 6th-century mosaic in the Archbishop's Chapel in Ravenna.

From this time onward, the bearded long-haired “Syrian” image of Christ's face begins to prevail. This representation, as developed in Byzantine art, would become normative by the early medieval period (but with notable exceptions, for example in Carolingian art like the illuminations of the Godescalp Gospels [781, Paris, BNF. Lat 1203] and in early Irish art, for example the 7th-century Crucifix of Athlone [ca. 800, Dublin Museum]), and lasts into modern times. It provided the figurative basis for the icons “not made by human hands” (*achiroptetes*) and for purportedly “ancient” descriptions of Christ, which in turn were thought to give warrant for its historical accuracy. The primary example of these “supernatural” images was the Mandylion of King Agbar V of Edessa, an image supposedly made by Christ's pressing a cloth to his face to provide the king with a likeness. (An earlier form of the

legend spoke of an image of Jesus done from life by a painter sent by the king.) An early image of the Mandylion is preserved in the Matilda chapel of the Vatican palace. It is first mentioned in the 6th century. The veil of Veronica (the name appears to be a personification of the Latin for “true image”) was thought to be an imprint of the face of Christ on the way to Calvary. The legend appears in the Middle Ages, and is possibly derived from the Mandylion story. There are several cloths that purport to be this veil, but none have a clear image. Paintings of the veil bear a resemblance to the Mandylion figure and to the standard image of Christ. The Volto Santo (holy face) of Lucca is a 12th-century wooden sculpture of the crucifixion, attributed by legend to Nicodemus. It shows a Byzantine-type Christ clothed in a *colobion*. Several places in Italy claim to have a painting of Mary with Jesus begun by St. Luke and miraculously completed by angels. All date from about the 12th century and are inspired by Byzantine mosaics. The Holy Shroud of Turin portrays the full body of Christ as it lay in the tomb. It is first mentioned in 1353. Various attempts have been made to defend its authenticity, but already in the 14th century it was acknowledged to be a painting.

Following the council of Ephesus in 431, with the proclamation of Mary as “Mother of God,” images of Mary with the child Jesus multiplied.

While the essential features and attributes of Christ were standardized in most of Christian art, many variations on the type are seen. Much of this variety stems from different artistic styles and techniques; but much also derives from the interplay or conflict between certain constant tendencies in visual presentation, as well as the degree of emphasis given to each:

**a. Numenizing.** Christ’s divine status may be indicated visually through the image’s size or position, sometimes including a hieratic ordering of figures; by frontality; by isolation; or by explicit signs of divinity, like a halo or mandorla. Alternatively, the face and figure may be portrayed as illuminated from the heavens, or as shining with an inner light (but without portrayal of an external aura), as in some paintings by El Greco or Rembrandt.

**b. Idealizing.** The human figure of Christ is shown as manifesting ideal physical form as the sign of his spirit. Examples are found in the Herculean or Apollonian Christ of the early Church, the “*beau Dieu*” of the Gothic cathedrals, and the idealized nude of the Renaissance. But a tendency to idealize Christ according to the tastes of different periods (including sometimes romanticizing and sentimentalizing for emotional appeal, as in portrayals of the Christ child like the Infant of Prague or of Jesus with children), is found widely in Christian art.

**c. Projection.** Each age projects onto Jesus some of its own characteristics and portrays him according

to its notion of the ideal. Naturally this leads to anachronisms, de-contextualization, and re-contextualizing in a different cultural situation. Thus Jesus is portrayed in catacomb art wearing the clothing of a Roman senator or of a divine emperor, accompanied by two apostles, as the emperor was accompanied by two senators, as seen on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (359; Treasury of St. Peter’s Basilica). In scenes of Christ’s majesty, derived from the ceremonial acclamation of the emperor, the apostles are shown standing, like the Friends of the Emperor, instead of making *proskynesis*. Jesus is shown as Emperor or King in much medieval art. In the Renaissance, he has a perfectly proportioned body; in the Baroque period, he is a man of interiority; in Romantic painting, a hero or an ineffable presence in the midst of nature. In the Middle Ages, theater encouraged the natural tendency to model the portrayal of the past on contemporary life, costume, and customs. While the pre-medieval Rossano gospel illustrations (6th cent., Cathedral of Rossano, Calabria, Italy, fol. 3r), show the apostles and Jesus reclining on *triclinia* at the Last Supper, medieval and Renaissance representations routinely show Jesus and the disciples seated in chairs around a table, as in the Sistine Chapel fresco of the Last Supper (Cosimo Rosselli and Biagio d’Antonio, 1481–82). Fra Angelico in fresco in San Marco (1452) shows Jesus giving communion to the kneeling apostles and Mary in the form of white wafers. Similarly, settings in architecture and landscape are often taken from local surroundings. Thus in Duccio’s *Maestà* scene of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem (1308–11; Museo del’Opera del Duomo, Siena), the city portrayed is Siena; in Rubens’ painting of the Presentation in the Deposition altarpiece in Onze Lieve Vrouwkerk (1612–14), the temple is reminiscent of St. Peter’s in Rome. To some extent such anachronisms were inevitable: until the historical and archeological discoveries of the modern era, people were largely unaware of ancient conditions and customs (a prime example is ignorance of the Roman methods of crucifixion). At the same time, making the stories relevant to viewers’ situations by putting them in contemporary context could also be purposeful. Medieval preaching and handbooks of prayer encouraged people to use their imaginations freely to place themselves in the presence of God and at the scenes of salvation history. Although those events were historical, they were also thought to be eternally relevant, and in some sense to be present to faith in every age. In Renaissance paintings, Jesus is seen in the midst of people of his own era as well as of the artist’s. Both Rubens and Rembrandt portray themselves at the crucifixion of Jesus. Dürer uses a self-portrait for his pencil drawing of Jesus after the flagellation (1522, Kunsthalle, Bremen). In modern and contemporary art there is sometimes a conscious transferal to Jesus of the

attributes of a particular era or group: thus, a contemporary Jesus in Doug Blanchard's twenty-four paintings in *The Passion of Christ: A Gay Vision* (Berkeley, Calif. 2014); a black Christ Ronald Garrison's 1962 painting of the same name (South African National Gallery, Cape Town); a female Christ in Edwina Sandys's *Christa* sculpture (1975, collection of the artist); etc.

**d. Theological selectivity and expansion.** The ecclesiastical patrons of art generally had in mind a theological program. Artists were instructed to portray persons and events in line with the needs of teaching and preaching. Dogmatic and didactic considerations prevailed over historical or scriptural accuracy or visual "realism." Thus, even after the bearded Christ had become the standard portrayal, he could be shown in majesty as a beardless young man to denote his divinity and his eternal youth and vigor. In pictorial sequences, the portrayal of Christ is frequently determined by parallels from other stories: for example, from the stories of Joseph (Gen 37; 39–46) and John the Baptist in the Baptistry of Florence cathedral (1225), or from the story of Moses in the lateral frescos in the Sistine Chapel (Perugino, Botticelli, Rosselli, Ghirlandaio, Signorelli; 1481–82). Similarly, images of Christ are frequently expanded beyond the contents of the gospels, for example by including Mary (e.g., the *pietà* scene; the inclusion of Mary in images of Christ's Lordship, as his co-ruler or bride).

**e. Realism or historicity.** In contrast to the above, since the Renaissance many artists have sought to imagine what Jesus "really" looked like in his own circumstances. The Council of Trent declared that sacred art should be faithful to the Scriptures and avoid legends. Post-conciliar Roman Catholic art theory favored realistic representation that also excited the affects. The 16th-century humanist art critic Ludovico Dolce protested against anachronism in religious paintings in the name of "decoro." Poussin reintroduced the *triclinium* into his 1649 painting of the *Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist* now in the Scottish National Gallery. Following modern biblical and archeological scholarship, some painters have attempted to portray Jesus with historical realism. In the 19th century James Tissot produced and published as the *Life of Christ* a series of 365 illustrations from the gospels that attempted to recreate the historical context of Jesus. (The original watercolors are now in the Brooklyn Museum.) Other 19th- and 20th-century artists portrayed events like the crucifixion abstracting from dogmatic positions and attempting to present a plausible picture of a real man. 20th-century films generally portrayed Jesus' features in a highly traditional manner, even when they have attempted visual reconstruction of his historical context.

**2. Attribute and/or Symbol.** In early Christian art, a fish (Greek ΙΧΘΥΣ) is used as an acronym for

ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." Christ is also represented by the letters chi-rho (XP; see "Chi-Rho"), which are combined to form a monogram for ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (Christ), often accompanied by the letters Alpha and Omega, and sometimes with a cross. By the Middle Ages, these were often replaced by the trigram of the Greek letters IHΣ, for ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (Jesus). The cross by itself or decorated with laurel can also stand as a symbol of the person. Other symbols used in various periods include the sun, the rock (or cornerstone), the lion (Gen 49:9), the lamb, the griffin (combination of lion and eagle, symbolizing human and divine), and the phoenix (thought to rise from its own ashes); symbols of the eucharistic Christ are the pelican (feeding its young with its own blood), the grape-vine (John 15:5), and wheat sheaves or loaves of bread (John 6:32–35). The last in the catacombs often combined with fish in symbolization of the miracle of the loaves and fish, itself taken as a symbol of the Eucharist (Matt 14:13–21; 15:32–16:10; Mark 6:31–44; 8:1–9; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:5–15) [43].

The symbol of the lamb occupies a special place in the portrayal of Jesus, the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36), often with John the Baptist pointing to him, as in the retable of the Isenheim altar (1512–16, Museum of Colmar). It refers also to the lamb sacrificed in place of Isaac (Gen 22:7), the Passover lamb (Exod 12:1–14) or lamb as sacrificial offering (1 Cor 5:7; Eph 5:2), the lamb of atonement (Isa 53:7; cf. Acts 8:26–40); and the "lamb that was slain" of the book of Revelation (Rev 5:1–7; 12:11; 21:14; 22:1–5), as in Jan van Eyck's *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* in the Ghent altarpiece (1430–32, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York). In ancient art the lamb was sometimes shown on the cross in place of the body of Jesus; but the Quinisext council (*in Trullo*) of 692 decreed that henceforth a human figure should be used in place of the lamb to signify Christ.

The *Hetoimasia*, or prepared throne, occurs from the 5th century as the throne of the invisible Godhead, and from about 1000 on more specifically as a symbol of Christ's second coming. The throne is unoccupied, but frequently bears a book or a cross. (Matt 24:30; Pss 9:7; 89:14; Rev 4 – but in the last, the throne is occupied). Sometimes the female figure of Sofia (Wisdom) is seen under the throne, often with a book.

The mature Jesus is usually portrayed with long wavy hair and a beard (often with two points, especially in Eastern art). In didactic or liturgical depictions (apart from the crucifixion) he is often enthroned, holding a scepter and globe or a book of the gospels, frequently making a gesture of speech or of blessing. He is identified above all by a halo with a cross in it. Very frequently, especially in Eastern art, there is an explicit identification by the in-

clusion of the initial letters of Jesus and Christ, IC XC, or by the divine name, Ο ΩΝ (LXX translation of Exod 3:14) written within his halo. Although his clothing can vary depending on period and context, he is frequently portrayed in a long red tunic and a blue cloak. (The colors are sometimes explained as referring to his humanity – red for blood – and his divinity – blue for the heavens.)

Although in John's gospel it is in the side that Jesus' dead body is speared (John 19:34), the pierced heart of Jesus, sometimes with a crown of thorns and three nails, has been a widespread symbol since the end of the 16th century.

**3. Scriptural References to Christ Illustrated in the Visual Arts.** Virtually the entirety of the four canonical gospels has provided material for the portrayal of Christ. In the catacombs, the most frequent narrative scenes are examples of Jesus' power to save: the healing of the paralytic (Matt 9:1–8; Mark 2:3–12; Luke 5:18–26; cf. John 5:1–15), the curing of the woman with haemorrhage (Matt 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–35; Luke 8:43–48), the miracle of loaves and fishes (Matt 14:13–21; 15:32–16:10; Mark 6:31–44; 8:1–9; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:5–15), and the raising of Lazarus (John 11:38–44). In addition, Jesus is frequently portrayed as a teacher.

Throughout the Middle Ages, narrative remained important. The subjects of fresco and mosaic cycles in churches span the whole mission of Christ, from the annunciation to resurrection and last judgment. The choice of particular scenes depended largely on patronage, theological emphasis, etc. In general there is emphasis on the nativity (often with particular attention to Mary [Luke 2:1–39, Matt 1:18–2:23], sometimes with elements from non-canonical sources), the passion (Matt 26:30–27:66; Mark 14:26–15:47; Luke 22:39–23:56; John 18:1–19:42), and on the Last Judgment (Matt 16:27; 25:31–46 – separation of the sheep and goats; Ezek 1:5; Rev 4:2; 2 Tim 4:1). The descent into hell (and delivery of the just souls awaiting there) was a major theme of medieval art, often associated with (or in Eastern art, replacing) the portrayal of the resurrection. It is complemented in Eastern art by the *anapeson* icon, which shows the dead Christ in the tomb, but in the form of a child or adolescent (signifying the "sleepless," i.e., deathless nature of Christ's divinity). The descent into hell is recounted in apocryphal texts (*Acts of Pilate*), but only hinted at in the canonical NT [Matt 12:40; Acts 2:27; cf. Pss 16:10; 2:31; Eph 4:7–10; 1 Pet 3:19–20; 4:6; Rev 1:8]. From the 8th century onward, the practice of private masses led increasingly to the construction of churches with multiple altars. In place of the single nave with a series of narrative scenes on opposite walls, in such churches one would find multiple altarpieces with different themes. (The crucifix, however, remained a constant on all altars.)

Ancient and medieval Christian exegesis saw the HB/OT as prophecy of Christ. Hence illuminated manuscripts of the HB/OT often contain images of Christ, especially in connection with creation (Gen 1–4), the Song of Songs, and certainly the psalms.

**4. Popular Iconographic Motifs of Jesus Christ in the Visual Arts.** For images related to particular gospel events, see the separate articles on them elsewhere in EBR. This section will treat the many doctrinal and devotional images (other than the crucifixion) that are based on a theological conception of Christ, rather than directly on scriptural texts.

**a. The Logos in the Trinity.** The divine Logos (John 1:1), the image of God (Col 1:15) in the West, is usually pictured with the features and attributes of Christ and is portrayed as active throughout the HB/OT.

He is shown as the creator (Gen 1), as in the 13th-century *Bible Moralisée* in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. He is one of Abraham's three visitors in the guise of angels (Gen 18:1–16; cf. Heb 13:2), as is portrayed in Rublev's celebrated icon of the Trinity in Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery. He speaks to Moses from the burning bush (Exod 3:2–4), for example in a manuscript illumination in the Psalter of Ingeborg of Denmark (now in the Musée Condé in Chantilly), sometimes seated in the lap of Mary, from whom Christ blossoms like a rose from a bush (Rabanus Maurus) and who is like the bush not consumed by the presence of God (Gregory of Nyssa). Christ is also the prototype of Adam. The two are shown in Gothic creation scenes, like that in the porch of the Sainte Chapelle, Paris, or on the façade of Orvieto cathedral. The two have the same facial features, except that Christ is bearded and Adam is not.

Western images of the Trinity sometimes show God the Father holding the crucified Christ, as in Masaccio's fresco of the Trinity in Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

**b. Christ in majesty.** Apart from narrative scenes, especially the crucifixion and the nativity, Christ is most frequently shown as the exalted Lord or King in majesty. (Phil 2:9; John 18:37; Rev 17:14; 19:16 – cf. the titles "Christ" and "Lord" themselves, as well as the acclamation of Jesus at his entry to Jerusalem: Mark 11:1–11; Matt 21:1–11; Luke 19:28–44; John 12:12–19). As noted above, already in catacomb frescos and sarcophagal sculpture he is portrayed with imperial/divine attributes, sometimes seated upon the heavens as his throne, as on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus in Rome. Byzantine art developed the figure of the *Pantocrator* (all powerful, the omnipotent: the Greek LXX translation for the Hebrew titles of God "YHWH Sabaoth" and "El Shaddai"; cf. 2 Cor 6:18). Prime examples are found in the apse mosaics of Monreale (1180s) and of Cefalù Cathedral, Sicily (1145–60).

Here the bust of Christ is portrayed frontally, in hieratic style. He raises one hand in the gesture used to signify blessing/speaking/acting, and in the other holds a book, implying his function as revealer and teacher. In the West the image is expanded to include the full figure, enthroned on the clouds of heaven, sometimes with the cross as his *tropaion* (trophy of victory). Christ sometimes receives the acclamation of angels, and sometimes receives a crown from a disembodied hand above. He often appears with the four beasts of the tetramorph (Isa 66:1, 5; Ezek 1:4; 43:2; Rev 4:2–3), which in the West were associated not only with the evangelists, but also with the four moments of Christ's life: birth (man), death (bull: animal of sacrifice), resurrection (lion), and ascension (eagle). The figure of Christ in majesty is often found either in the apse or on the tympana of Romanesque and Gothic abbey and cathedral churches like Moissac and Autun. It develops in the Gothic period into a self-standing statue of Christ.

In Western Christendom the figure of Christ in majesty is closely related to the portrayal of Jesus as the apocalyptic judge, presiding over the resurrection of the dead and their salvation or damnation. From the thirteenth century onward Christ the judge is portrayed clearly showing the wounds of the passion, and instruments of his suffering are carried by angels, as in the Last Judgment fresco of the Camposanto in Pisa. In some presentations, Mary and John the Evangelist intercede for humanity.

Deriving directly from the book of Revelation is the image of Jesus with a sword in his mouth or coming from it (Rev 1:19–20) or holding a sword, as we see in the tympanum of Amiens Cathedral (1230–40).

**c. The child Jesus.** The manger with the swaddled infant (Luke 2:1–7) and the ox and ass (Isa 1:3) occurs on sarcophagi from the 4th century. The portrayal of the infant Jesus in the arms of Mary probably developed from even earlier images of Mary with child Jesus in her lap receiving gifts from the Magi. It became a genre of Christian art, both East and West, and is one of the most frequent portrayals of Jesus outside narrative scenes. It refers in a general way to the doctrine of the Incarnation, but is usually abstracted from any particular scriptural passage. In the West, the mother and child image frequently formed a diptych with a crucifixion image, and symbolic allusions to the passion are often present, most prominently in counter-Reformation art. In ancient and early medieval images, the Christ child is generally presented in a hieratic and stylized way, almost as a small adult. In 12th- and 13th-century Western art, a more humanizing tendency appears. The child's relation to his mother is more accented, and he is shown more realistically as an infant. With the Renaissance this tendency

reaches a highpoint. Even when Jesus is portrayed realistically as a baby, there are often indications of his consciousness of his divinity and of his mission.

In the Renaissance and Baroque periods, images of the infant and child Christ proliferated, along with pictures of the Holy Family. He is sometimes presented without his mother, as in Lukas Cranach's painting of the nude infant Jesus carrying a cross (1538, Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid), or in majesty. He is also portrayed crushing a serpent, as in Caravaggio's painting of Jesus with his mother and St. Anne (*Madonna dei Palafrenieri*, 1605–6), in the Galleria Borghese, Rome. The image of the infant Jesus crowned carrying a globe surmounted with a cross became highly popular in the seventeenth century. The most famous image of the type is the "Infant of Prague." The infant Jesus is also portrayed being carried by various saints, notably St. Joseph, St. Christopher, and St. Anthony of Padua.

**d. The *imago pietatis* and the Man of Sorrows.** The narrative images of Jesus after the flagellation and his presentation to the people by Pilate (the *Ecce homo* genre; in the East, the "Bridegroom" icon) gave rise to the devotional *imago pietatis* (in the Eastern Church, the icon of "extreme humility"). It differs from the narrative images in that it shows Christ dead, the upper half of his body, marked by the wounds of the passion, rising out of a stylized sarcophagus. He sometimes carries a scepter of reeds and wears the crown of thorns. At other times, his arms are crossed. The genre may derive from an icon offered by Gregory the Great (6th cent.) to the Roman basilica of Santa Croce, but it appears generally in the West only in the 13th century. A classic example is Pietro Lorenzetti's tempera painting (ca. 1340) in the Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg. In later versions other figures (Mary, John, angels, saints) may flank Jesus, and other symbols of the passion may be added.

A variant on this image is the Christ of the "mass of St. Gregory," portraying the *imago pietatis* as a vision occurring during the pope's mass, sometimes within the host, sometimes standing on the altar, as in a 15th-century triptych in the Musée National de l'Age Médiévale, Paris.

"The man of sorrows" image shows Christ standing and manifesting the wounds of the crucifixion, sometimes pointing to the wound in his side or collecting his blood in a chalice. It was disseminated by confraternities of the passion, flagellants, and the Order of St. Brigid of Sweden. The phrase may also be used in a more general sense for depictions of Jesus after the flagellation, but before the crucifixion. A variant on the "man of sorrows," combined with the *pietà* motif, shows God the Father holding the dead body of Jesus.

**e. The Eucharistic Christ.** In the Eastern church, the nude infant Jesus (Christ Emmanuel – Isa 7; 8; Matt

1:22–23) is often shown in a circular medallion held by the Virgin, or lying on an altar, or on a eucharistic patten (*diskos*). The icon of John the Baptist shows him holding a chalice or a *diskos* that originally contained the figure of a lamb, but since the Council of Trullo, this has been replaced by the image of the baby Jesus.

Paintings of the “Mass of St. Gregory” show the appearance of the *imago pietatis*, or sometimes another figure of the suffering Christ. The glorious heavenly Christ may also be shown as the counterpart of the eucharistic species, as in Rafaello’s *Disputa del Sacramento* (1509) in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican.

**f. High Priest.** The priestly act of sacrifice is most generally associated with Jesus’ crucifixion. In the late Middle Ages, he is sometimes shown interceding for humanity with the Father (Heb 4:14; 1 John 1:1–2), showing his wounds. In a painting by Lorenzo Monaco (attrib.; ca. 1400) in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, Mary intercedes with Christ, showing the breast at which she nursed him; Christ in turn shows his wounds to the Father, asking mercy for humanity. There are also images of Jesus exercising a liturgical function: giving communion to the apostles or in the East as high priest (*megas arkhiereus*) celebrating the divine liturgy, with the angels, or enthroned as a bishop, with crown and episcopal vestments.

**g. Spouse.** Medieval manuscripts of the Song of Songs or of commentaries on it sometimes contain illuminations portraying Solomon and the Sulamite as prefigurations of Christ and the church, his spouse (Eph 5:22–33; Rev 19:7–8; John 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2–4). In other illuminations, the identification of the figures as Christ and the church is explicit. Under the influence of the preaching of St. Bernard, the figure of the church was replaced by Mary being enthroned or crowned by Jesus, sometimes with explicit reference to the Song of Songs (Cant 2:6; 8:3) in the artwork, as in the celebrated mosaic in the apse of Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome (1140–43).

**h. Christ-Seraph.** The unusual image of Christ with the wings of a seraph (Isa 6:1–8) is generally restricted to representations of St. Francis, who saw this figure as he received the stigmata (see “Francis of Assisi”).

**i. The Sacred Heart.** Although devotion to the heart of Jesus dates from the Middle Ages, it did not appear in popular religious imagery until the end of the 16th century and flourished after St. John Eudes’ initiation of the cult of the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary, followed by the “revelations” to Marguerite Marie Aloacocque in 1673 and following. The image that has become standard, of Christ showing his heart in or on his chest, with rays or flames emanating from it, originated in the mid-18th century and was widely disseminated in the

19th century in mass-produced statues, prints, and holy cards. The statue of the resurrected Christ by Bertel Thorvaldsen in the Church of Our Lady in Copenhagen (1838), although itself not a representation of the sacred heart, became the model for many statues, with the heart added. Another adaptation of the theme is Christ with arms extended to the side, as in the statue of Cristo Redentor above Rio de Janeiro (1922–31).

**5. Prophet of Islam.** There is a strong aniconic tradition in most of Islam, both Sunni and Shi’ite (see “Aniconism III. Islam”). Nevertheless, painting was permitted and encouraged at some Muslim courts. Such painting was generally secular. But illustrations of religious subjects are found, largely in Persian manuscripts, and these include narrative depictions of Jesus. Many of the illustrations are based on apocryphal stories, some of which are referred to in the Qur’ān, rather than on the gospels. We see an example in a picture of Isaiah’s vision of Jesus riding a donkey and Muhammad riding a camel (Isa 21:7) in the manuscript of al-Bīrūnī’s *al-Āthār al-Bāqiyā ‘an al-Qur’ūn al-Khalīyya* (*Chronology of Ancient Nations*, 1307, Tabriz, Iran; now in the Edinburgh University Library MS Arab 161, fol. 10v, see → plate 1a). Christian images seem clearly to have influenced Muslim portrayals of events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, but not their physical appearance. They also influence depictions of parallels in the life of Muhammad (e.g., his birth). Since the Qur’ān holds that Jesus was not crucified, but was assumed by God into heaven, the most frequent Christian image of Jesus, the crucifixion, is entirely lacking in Islam. Jesus is often shown in a heavenly context. Although the apostles are sometimes shown in “Western” dress of the artist’s period, Jesus’ appearance in Persian art is similar to that of other prophets, including Muhammad. There is no consistent tradition of the portrayal of Jesus, as in Christian art. The adult Jesus is generally shown as a thin figure with a dark beard, often much longer than in Christian depictions; but the style may vary. Behind his head is a “halo” of golden flames. His clothing in Persian manuscripts is usually in the Persian or Central Asian style, similar to that of other figures depicted: a turban (frequently white), a long inner robe, sometimes a sash, a caftan, sometimes trousers visible below the robes, and pointed shoes. However, he is also sometimes shown as an ascetic (he was the only unmarried prophet), bare-headed and seated on the ground, shown after the model of Muslim dervishes.

**6. Jesus in Acculturation to Non-European Contexts.** Both Christians and non-Christians have created images of Jesus adapted to the cultures of traditionally non-Christian societies. Hindus and Buddhists have largely adopted Western images that they became familiar with in the colonial period. The Sacred Heart is especially prominent. Je-

sus is sometimes shown in yoga positions, in meditation. Sometimes he has many arms, like the Hindu gods. At times he is juxtaposed with Krishna or Buddha, as another great teacher or as an *avatar* of the supreme Being. While the crucifixion is portrayed in acculturated images, it is generally avoided in syncretistic art; it is alien to the religious sensibilities of Hindus and Buddhists.

In Chinese culture, Jesus has been portrayed as a Daoist sage (Christ is the “way” = *dao*). The Christian image of the Madonna and child has features reminiscent of the traditional Buddhist representation of Guanyin (see “Guanyin”), the female bodhisattva of compassion, who holds a child representing humanity. This similarity has been exploited in modern Christian imagery. Christians have also shown Mary and Jesus with Chinese features and wearing traditional Chinese clothing, as in John Lu Hung Nien’s *Our Lady of China*, (1914), a popular image, that was copied as a mosaic in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.

**Bibliography:** ■ Arnold, T. W., *Painting in Islam* (New York 1965). ■ Aurenhammer, H., “Christus,” *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie* 1 (Vienna 1967) 464–638. ■ Belting, H., *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, Ill. 1994). ■ Finney, P. C., *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (New York 1994). ■ Frommel, C. L./G. Wolf (eds.), *L’immagine di Cristo: Dall’achoropita alla mano d’artista* (Vatican City 2006). ■ Harries, R., *The Image of Christ in Modern Art* (London 2013). ■ Kollwitz, J. et al., “Christus, Christusbild,” *LCI* 1 (Freiburg i. Br. 1968) 355–454. ■ Leclercq, H., “Jésus-Christ” *DACL* 7 (Paris 1927) 2393–468. ■ Mâle, É., *Religious Art from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, N.J. 1977). ■ Paleotti, G., *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images* (Los Angeles, Calif. 2012). ■ Réau, L., *Iconographie de l’art chrétien*, vol. 2 (Paris 1957). ■ Romaine, J./L. Stratford (eds.), *Revisioning: Critical Methods of Seeing Christianity in the History of Art* (Eugene, Oreg. 2013). ■ Schiller, G., *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, vol. 1 (Göttersloh 1966). ■ Stock, A., *Poetische Dogmatik: Christologie: 4. Figuren* (Paderborn 2001). ■ Viladesau, R., “Jesus Christ, Iconography of,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement* (Washington, D.C. 2011).

Richard R. Viladesau

## B. Jewish Art

While some Jewish artists have avoided Christian themes and symbols, it is remarkable how many modern Jewish artists, observant and otherwise, have felt compelled to create images of Jesus. Although each case comes with its own complexity, two primary reasons repeatedly emerge. On the one hand, the figure of Jesus provides an opportunity for Jewish artists to engage with Christian audiences, whether to call attention to antisemitic persecution or to deliver a message of ecumenical cooperation. On the other hand, the image of Jesus invites a dialogue with art history. We need only think of some of Western art’s most enduring images, from Leonardo da Vinci’s *Last Supper* (1495–98, Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan, see → EBR 2, plate 11) to

Matthias Grünewald’s *Isenheim Altarpiece* (ca. 1515, Musée d’Unterlinden, Colmar), to understand just how deeply the history of Western art has been colored by the history of Christianity. Wrestling with themes such as the crucifixion or the resurrection has provided an opportunity for Jewish artists to establish and understand their place within the canon alongside the great artists of the past. Ultimately, whether for theological, political, or art-historical reasons, the figure of Jesus has been almost as important for modern Jewish artists as it has been for Christian artists.

It is important to emphasize the word “modern.” While some critics have argued for christological connections in works ranging from the mosaics of Beth Alpha Synagogue (6th cent.) to the illustrations of the *Venice Haggadah* (1609), such examples are rarely clear-cut. Moreover, before the Emancipation brought with it greater Jewish integration into Western culture, Jews had very little reason to create images of Jesus, and a strong incentive not to, lest Christian authorities suspect them of denigrating their messiah. When the first generations of modern Jewish artists established themselves in Europe in the late 19th century, however, they quickly began to take up the image of Jesus. In 1873, in a bronze statue entitled *Ecce Homo* (Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow), the Russian sculptor Mark Antokolsky cast Jesus with a *yarmulke* (skullcap) and *payot* (sidecurls worn by Orthodox Jews) in order to emphasize his identity as a Jew; a clear indictment against pogroms perpetrated against Jews in the name of Christ. Later the same decade, the German painter Max Liebermann depicted *The Twelve-Year Old Jesus in the Temple among the Pharisees* (1879, Kunsthalle Hamburg). Almost immediately, Liebermann found himself embroiled in fight with critics, who admonished him for painting a Jesus who struck them as too Jewish. When Liebermann attempted to finesse the issue, repainting Jesus with blonde hair, he only caused more of a stir, this time with Jewish critics, who felt he had surrendered to antisemitic pressure.

In the 20th century, a wide range of Jewish artists treated the theme of the crucifixion, including painters such as Marc Chagall, Adolph Gottlieb, Philip Guston, Emmanuel Levy, Barnett Newman, Abraham Rattner, and Mark Rothko, as well as sculptors including Jacob Epstein, Louise Nevelson, and Ossip Zadkine. Among this company, Chagall stands out for his repeated – at times obsessive – depiction of the crucifixion, which appears in hundreds of works, most famously in *White Crucifixion* (1938, The Art Institute of Chicago, Ill.). While some critics glimpse signs of deliverance in the canvas, what is ultimately illuminated is not so much the promise of redemption as the reality of Nazi persecution. Rather than a Christian Christ whose suffering saves, Chagall’s Jesus – his loins wrapped

with a prayer shawl – is an innocent Jew suffering without cause or purpose. Following the war, Chagall depicted Jesus in stained glass windows for several churches; an ecumenical gesture echoed in Epstein's monumental *Christ in Majesty* (1954–55) at Llandaff Cathedral in Cardiff and Nevelson's wooden cross for her *Chapel of the Good Shepherd* in St. Peter's Church in New York City (1976–77). The late 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed further permutations on the theme of the Jewish Jesus, including works by Israeli artists such as Adi Nes and Leni Diner Dothan. Nes poses young Israeli soldiers in a mess hall according to Leonardo's *Last Supper*, raising questions about the institutionalization of sacrifice in Israeli society (*Untitled [The Last Supper]*, 1999, Israel Museum, Jerusalem). Dothan, meanwhile, casts herself and her son as Madonna and child in *Jesus of the Jeans* (2012, collection of the artist, see → plate 2). While early Jewish artists struggled to convince non-Jewish audiences that Jesus was a Jew, the postmodern artist cheekily declares: of course Jesus is a Jew, it is in his "genes"!

**Bibliography:** ■ Amishai-Maisels, Z., "Origins of the Jewish Jesus," *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art* (ed. M. Baigell/M. Heyd; New Brunswick, N.J. 2001). ■ Bohm-Duchen, M., *Chagall* (London 1998). ■ Chagall, M., *My Life* (trans. D. Williams; London 1965). ■ Chagall, M., *Marc Chagall on Art and Culture* (ed. B. Harshav; Stanford, Calif. 2003). ■ Godfrey, M., *Abstraction and the Holocaust* (New Haven, Conn. 2007). ■ Hoffman, M., *From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture* (Stanford, Calif. 2007). ■ Potok, C., *My Name is Asher Lev* (New York 1972). ■ Rosen, A., *Imagining Jewish Art: Encounters with the Masters in Chagall, Guston, and Kitaj* (London 2009). ■ Roskies, D., *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, Mass. 1984).

Aaron Rosen

### C. Photography

The second Council of Nicaea in 787 encouraged the creation of representations of sacred figures in every possible creative medium. As a result, throughout history and culminating during the Renaissance, Christian religious imagery has had the specific mission of guiding the devotion of the masses toward the objective set forth by the early Catholic Church. As the youngest of the artistic techniques and modes of expression photography, an essentially Christian invention, from the moment of its public use in 1839 and following the lead of traditional art forms engaged in the depiction of Christian religious themes and above all the representation of Jesus.

The problematics of the photographic depiction of Jesus are multiple since there is no written description of him and the photographic maneuver implies to a large extent not only the dismantling of the traditional mechanism of established rules and practices of depiction and representation, but also a different reading of the final work. In interpreting and staging anew the person of Jesus – cre-

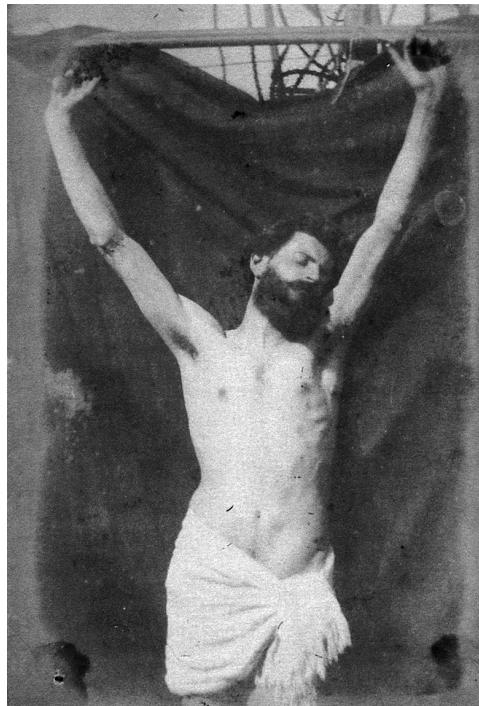


Fig. 3 Durieu, E., *Study of Christ* (ca. 1855)

ating a tangible reality indispensable to the production of a photograph – the camera artists almost claim to have understood better than others the meaning of the Gospels. They seem to have stolen the fire of divine love, passion, and suffering (or mimicking suffering) and bestowed them upon their models, or in the case of self-portraits upon themselves (see, e.g., F. Holland Day's passion series).

For the last two millennia artistic license has enabled artists to imagine and create their own interpretation of Jesus. Thence, from the very beginning photographers realized that images related to biblical and religious themes had to be constructed tableaux. The earliest preserved image in the history of photography carrying explicit Christian references is Hippolyte Bayard's iconic *Self-Portrait as a Drowned Man* (1840) or Eugène Durieu's *Study of Christ* (ca. 1855, see fig. 3).

On the photographic surface, the persona of Jesus reflects a different identity than on the canvas, as the silver image documents and transcribes an accurate reality carrying the trace of a real person with specific features and personality. Therefore the photographic Jesus remains less symbolic, and less representative of an idea. As a result, photographic practice becomes a matter of finding "doubles" to the image and idea of the savior. Nevertheless, Je-

sus' image in photography still often conforms to the consensus and the established artistic canon: fair complexion, long hair and beard, clear eyes. Every other representation (black or dark, bold, female) is considered unacceptable, shocking, and even blasphemous. Furthermore, even a dress code is often respected as a totally naked Jesus is inadmissible. Because photography is an "exact" reproduction of reality and is more explicit than other means of representation, it is capable of generating greater opposition or violent reactions and even outrage at things shown or suggested.

Through their extensive use during the last two centuries the themes of martyrdom and salvation which are central to Christianity have become universally recognized symbols, and not necessarily in a religious context. A photograph is a relic. Like a fossil or an archaeological artifact, it is a shred of evidence, a lasting trace of something that existed but has disappeared. However, when it comes to photographs depicting Jesus – scenes from the passion or reenactments of biblical events related to his life – this principle ceases to exist altogether, and the evidential dimension of the medium is destroyed. In the end the viewer is left with just a product of the artist's imagination.

Over the centuries and generations, different cultures, nations, ethnic groups, and denominations adopted standards for the likeness of Jesus particularly adjusted to specific needs of time and place. However, the variation is such that Jesus' interrogation of his disciples on the shores of Caesarea, "Who do you say I am?" (Matt 16: 15) can and should be directed to all those artists who, for two millennia, imagined, interpreted, and depicted him in a variety of modes and styles. Consequently the image and the concept of Jesus transcend attributes and symbols, dogmas and religious beliefs. It has become a universal motif which not only lies at the core of Western art, culture, and civilization, but also holds a dominant grip on visual literacy that transcends countries and cultures. The representation and uses of images of Jesus is so widespread and varied that all we can say of him is that Jesus is what one makes of him: he is who one says, believes, or imagines he is.

Looking at the image of Jesus through the interpretations of the photographers during the last century and a half almost leads the viewer to discover a new photographic gospel, in which each artist adds something personal, and renders him more human, more real, at eye level with the spectator, even if at times the image on the surface is not to the liking of all. Photography is the medium capable of producing "the perfect likeness," but of whom? On a more earthly plane, in producing such visions of biblical allegories (see "Allegory"), scenes from the passion and "portraits" of Jesus, photography deliberately undermines its own credibility and the per-

manent aura of truthfulness attributed to the medium, disclosing the secret of the artifices behind a seemingly documentary/realistic picture.

The question arises whether in contemporary creation controversial photographs like those by Andres Serrano (see → plate 3), Sam Taylor-Wood, Renée Cox, Gilbert and George could be catalogued under the rubric of sacred art. No matter how one looks at them, and notwithstanding the issues of context and intention, these are still the result of a 2,000-year-old visual tradition, and they are informed by an immense reservoir of imagery assimilated and refined by generations of artists. These are no more the fruit of what Paul Valéry called "the ancient craft of the Beautiful" (Valéry: 225). It is evident that such photographs, even in today's mass production and marketing as modern icons, do not carry Walter Benjamin's cult value anymore. Therefore, in accordance with Freud's principle, the "work of art is regarded not as a simply visible thing to be enjoyed, but as a many-leveled vehicle for hidden meanings" (Spector: 166).

The investigation of the image of Jesus in art as well as its photographic interpretation is bound to continue as long as faith and dogma exist, and at least as long as part of humankind believes in the existence of a Supreme Being. This is an unending pursuit comparable to the eternal quest for the holy grail: a concept and an ideal, and beyond all else, a mythical object of yearning and of lasting belief. The search for the image as such, and as an act of faith, remains more important than the subject itself.

**Bibliography:** ■ Elkins, J., *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (New York/London 2004). ■ Gay, P., *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* (New York/London 2008). ■ Giurescu Heller, E. (ed.), *Reluctant Partners: Art and Religion in Dialogue* (New York 2004). ■ MacGregor, N./E. Langmuir, *Seeing Salvation* (London 2000). ■ Martin, J. A., *Beauty and Holiness: The Dialogue Between Aesthetics and Religion* (Princeton, N.J. 1990). ■ Otto, R., *The Idea of the Holy* (trans. J. W. Harvey; London 1950); trans of id., *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Berlin 1917). ■ Perez, N. N., *Revelation: Representations of Christ in Photography* (London 2003). ■ Phillips, J., *God Is at Eye Level: Photography as a Healing Art* (Wheaton, Ill. 2000). ■ Plate, B. D. (ed.), *Religion, Art, and Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (New York 2002). ■ Spector, J. J., *The Aesthetics of Freud: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York 1972). ■ Steinberg, L., *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion* (Chicago, Ill. 1996). ■ Valéry, P., *Aesthetics* (New York 1964).

Nissan N. Perez

## IX. Music

■ Classical ■ Modern

### A. Classical

The reception of the figure of Jesus in music for liturgical, devotional, and artistic purposes over the centuries is enormous and cannot easily be summarized. This article takes its point of departure in the

mentioned three-part division in which, however, the categories overlap. Much music which historically was composed for liturgical use is today performed in secular concert halls and mainly known from listening practices through electronic media, completely removed from its original context. One of the most famous musical treatments of the figure of Jesus, Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1727 with later revisions; Marissen: 29) was originally written for and performed as part of a church service on Good Friday in Leipzig. It does not seem to have been performed again after Bach's death in 1750 until the twenty-year old Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy in 1829 gave a concert performance of the work in Berlin which started its new life as a masterpiece of classical music. It was given with cuts and revisions (by Mendelssohn) in order for a contemporary audience to be able to appreciate the work and discover the "roots of their own spiritual experiences as German Protestants." The reception was "nothing short of extraordinary" (Todd: 197–98).

Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* has since been a central part of the somewhat loosely defined, yet in its core rather stable musical "canon" of the West at the same time as it has been studied and praised for its musical as well as theological depths. Today, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* is performed everywhere in the Western world, as a concert work in secularized contexts, in churches as devotional music, and in recent years also a ballet has been made by the choreographer John Neumeier (Ballet Master at the Hamburg Ballet). Numerous audio recordings have been made since the mid-20th century, but the *St. Matthew Passion* is rarely if ever performed as part of an ordinary church service in modern times. The image of the figure of Jesus given by Bach, supplementing the passion narrative of Matthew and the lyrical contemplations in arias and duets as well as choruses and choral settings of Lutheran hymns, is musically shaped by the warmth, the straight-forwardness, and the seriousness of Jesus' lines (all from the biblical text), accompanied also by what has been described as a string "halo" (Marshall: 11), different from the accompaniment of other biblical recitatives in the work.

Whereas the history of the revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* is a very special case, the reception of liturgical musical pieces, which no longer fitted in to modern church practices (or were limited to particular denominations, typically Roman Catholic or Lutheran Christianity), or into classical music culture in concerts and other modern listening practices, has not been uncommon. Although none have achieved the canonical status of J.S. Bach's two famous preserved works in this genre, including also his *St. John Passion* (1724 with later revisions; Marissen: 101), other liturgical Passions and also devotional (non-liturgical) passion oratorios have

entered into the modern classical music culture, just as has also been the case with other liturgical passion music from early medieval chant over settings of Jesus seven last words on the cross (see "Passion Music" and "Crucifixion VIII. Music").

Cantatas and spiritual concerts were also part of Catholic and Lutheran liturgies in early modernity. The Lutheran cantata, especially, became a hugely important element in the 18th century. Today it has (to some extent) been received into the classical music culture, not least through J.S. Bach's cantatas, six cantatas for the Christmas season also making up Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* (Stokes: 359–72). Bach's cantatas (as well as those by other composers) reference numerous narratives about Jesus as well as christological notions as was pertinent to the different feast days of the church year to which they belonged.

An important genre of liturgical music, much of which has entered into a modern classical music culture, consists of the settings of the Latin Mass Ordinary (see "Ordinary of the Mass"). The text of the Credo, part of the Ordinary, includes a short summary of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The Credo was sung as a liturgical chant with melodies preserved from the 11th century, and later in polyphony (in early modernity also with orchestra and soloists) mostly as part of settings of the Ordinary (though sometimes also as a separate Credo setting) by composers from the 14th century and up to modern times (see "Credo"). In modern times, such settings are no longer always intended for liturgical use, the Mass Ordinary being often perceived as a musical genre independent from the Roman liturgy. Also other parts of the Ordinary contained numerous references to Jesus as Christ, the Lord (Kyrie, Gloria, and Sanctus), the Lamb of God (Agnus dei), and to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Benedictus), all of these references then taking part in the same huge musical reception history.

Liturgical antiphons, responsories, hymns, tropes, and sequences from medieval Latin liturgy as well as more or less similar genres from Byzantine liturgy include huge amounts of quotations, paraphrases, and references to sayings and actions by Jesus as found in the NT. Most such liturgical elements have been sung over the centuries on liturgical feast days and liturgical ceremonies where the particular texts belonged or were contextually relevant. Some, especially of the Latin chants, were later also set in polyphony and even in grand choral settings with orchestra. In such cases, they became part of traditions that either in principle or in practice brought them into modern classical music practices. An example of such a reception history of a saying by Jesus as told in the NT is the statement "I am the living bread" (*ego sum panis vivus*; John 6:51), which was sung in medieval liturgy, and through the Feast of Corpus Christi (from ca. 1300)

was subjected to liturgical, poetical, and musical appropriations carrying on over many centuries. In the 18th century the text in this way became part of grand sacramental litanies composed by Leopold Mozart, Michael Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and others (see "Bread of Life VI. Music" and "Corpus Christi IV. Music").

Greek and Latin hymns in Byzantine and Roman liturgy included huge amounts of references to Jesus as Christ. The *Te deum* (probably 4th cent.), a hymn central to medieval and later Catholic liturgy and rewritten as a hymn in many vernacular languages (used also in Lutheran churches), contains strong christological phrases as *Tu rex gloriae, Christe, tu Patris sempiternus es Filius* ("You, Christ, are the king of glory, you are the everlasting Son of the Father"; Walsh/Hush: 50–51). Also Ambrosian hymns sing of Jesus, as in his *Grates tibi, Iesu, novas* ("Jesus, to you new thanks I hymn"; Walsh/Hush: 32–33). Similarly Greek hymns by Romanos (see "Romanos the Melodist") and others as well as later Latin medieval hymns (and vernacular religious songs as the Italian *laude*; see "Lauda") and also the hymns of Martin Luther and vernacular hymns in post-Reformation times, unsurprisingly were directed toward, sometimes retelling narratives about, Jesus, referring to episodes from the Gospel narratives, not least, of course, the passion and resurrection of Christ, as well as to Christian doctrines about Jesus (see also "Hymns").

A famous example of a narrative as well as doctrinal hymn is Luther's *Nun freut Euch, lieben Christen gmeyn* ("Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice," probably written in 1523), set to music by Johann Walter and other composers already by 1524 (Leaver: 161–62). This hymn is basically a poetic account of Luther's doctrine of atonement as a mythological narrative, stating from the outset how the poet (writing from his individual, yet general perspective) was stuck in his sins, and how God asked his son to come to the aid of humans and how Jesus accepted this task. Toward the end Jesus speaks directly to the poet (and thus to all) in words not taken from the Bible but reflecting, of course, Luther's biblically informed theological understanding of Jesus as savior: "Ich gib mich selber gantz für dich" ("Your ransom I myself will be"; Leaver: 162).

The so-called "liturgical drama," part of medieval liturgy, but in some cases also seemingly achieving some independence from liturgical practices over the centuries, especially from the 12th century onward, includes presentations of scenes from Jesus' life, passion, and resurrection (see "Drama VI. Music B. Liturgical Drama"). In the earliest of such liturgical sung enactments, part of liturgical resurrection ceremonies, Jesus only appears as a referent. The empty grave is the point, Jesus is not appearing directly, visually nor in song; his resurrection is simply announced and praised. In later among

these biblical enactments (mainly since the 12th cent.), Jesus appears as resurrected and in dialogue with Mary Magdalene (based on John 20:11–18). Also other short episodes among the resurrection narratives were used for such enactments, for instance Luke 24:13–35 (see "Emmaus VI. Music"). Similarly, Luke's biblical nativity narratives as well as the narrative of the three wise men from the East (Matt 2) were also used as the basis for liturgical sung enactments (see also "Epiphany V. Music" and "Fleury Playbook").

In the later Middle Ages, beginning in the 12th century, especially Passion plays (usually partly in Latin and partly in the vernacular, sometimes also containing long spoken passages) include episodes from the Gospels before the actual passion narrative, for instance the calling of disciples, the episode with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10), Jesus at the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36–50), where the woman washing his feet was understood to be Mary Magdalene, and the raising of Lazarus. This is so, for instance, in the *Carmina Burana* greater Passion play (see "Carmina Burana"). The raising of Lazarus was also treated alone in other liturgical enactments (see "Fleury Playbook").

These so-called liturgical dramas have been the focus of much scholarly interest, and attempts have sometimes been made to make modern revivals, including also audio and video recordings. However, in spite of this, such performances can hardly be said to have obtained a secure place in a current classical music culture.

In a broader devotional context, the emerging genre of the oratorio (in the 17th cent.), with roots in the context of the Roman *Congregazione dell'Oratorio* (Smither: vol. 1; see also "Oratorio" and "Congregazione dell'Oratorio") over the centuries brought some of the most spectacular musical representations of biblical narratives, including in some cases narratives about Jesus.

The main topics concerning Jesus for the oratorio, music dramas usually without staging, were the nativity of Jesus as well as the passion and resurrection of Jesus. In the 17th to 18th centuries subgenres also developed, such as the Lutheran *Historia* (see "Historia [Music]") mainly (but not exclusively) based on Christmas and Easter narratives, and in a Catholic context, mainly based in Vienna, the (staged) *Sepolcro* (see "Drama VI. Music A. Music Drama") mainly featuring passion themes.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, oratorios were composed and shaped in much more individual ways than previously. Ludwig van Beethoven's oratorio *Christus am Ölberge* (Christ on the Mount of Olives, 1803) to a libretto by Franz Xaver Huber dramatically elaborates on Matt 26:39 (and parallel verses in the other synoptic gospels). Christ anxiously prays to God to be relieved of the burden of his passion, but an angel announces to him that

this is not possible. Christ accepts his fate; in the following he is dramatically arrested, responds heroically, and is finally praised for his redemptive and heroic deed by an angelic choir. Beethoven's work was received fairly critically, and it was later reported that he himself regretted having depicted Christ in "the modern vocal style" (Smither: 3:519). The focus on Christ's human feelings, much expanded in relation to the brief biblical verse (textually as well as musically), in any case makes this representation of Christ unusual, certainly for its time. The balance between the human and the divine is very much tilted in favor of the human, which, in the last part of the oratorio, makes Jesus more of a hero than a divine figure.

Franz Schubert's unfinished setting of August Hermann Niemeyer's poetic three-act drama *Lazarus* (1778) seems to have been composed in or after 1820, partly in a new free declamatory way. Schubert only seems to have set the first two acts, but even the last part of act 2 has disappeared. In 1994 the music for Schubert's oratorio was completed by the Russian composer Edison Denisov (Romijn). Niemeyer's drama had been set in 1778 by Johann Heinrich Rolle and again later in the 19th century (Black: 82–86). Another Lazarus oratorio had been composed by Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach in 1773 to a libretto by Johann Gottfried Herder, and later Carl Loewe wrote an oratorio to his own text on the same subject in 1863 (Schipperges: 212–13).

For his oratorios, Mendelssohn had taken his point of departure in Bach. He also planned a *Christus* oratorio, of which he only finished a section on the nativity and one on the passion before his early death in 1847 (Todd: 555–56). Hector Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* (finished in 1854, The Childhood of Christ) primarily deals with the holy family and the flight into Egypt (see "Flight into Egypt VII. Music"). Charles Gounod's *La rédemption* (1867–68, The Redemption) to his own libretto in three parts includes the passion, the resurrection, and ascension, and the Pentecost (Smither: 4:584–601).

Franz Liszt finished his monumental Latin *Christus* by 1868. It is in three parts: part 1 is based on the nativity and epiphany, part 2 begins with the beatitudes (Matt 5:3–10), continues with the Lord's Prayer, the foundation of the church (based on a combination of Matt 16:18 and John 21:15–17), the miracle of Jesus stilling the storm (Matt 8:23–26), ending with the entry into Jerusalem (based on all Gospels). Finally part 3 includes the passion and resurrection, partly based on biblical texts, partly on medieval liturgical hymns (Smither: 4:226–48).

Several composers in the 19th century composed Christ cycles, i.e., series of oratorios treating Jesus' life. Felix Draeseke's *Christus: Ein Mysterium in einem Vorspiel und drei Oratorien* (1895–99, Christ: A Mystery in a Prelude and three Oratorios) is such

a monumental cycle of oratorios presenting Jesus' life through selected biblical texts (Smither: 4:88; see also "Draeseke, Felix").

Also in the 20th and 21st centuries, oratorios have treated aspects of Jesus, primarily his passion, often taking traditional liturgical Passions as inspiration; this is so for Krzysztof Penderecki's avant-garde *St Lukas Passion* from 1965. Arvo Pärt's *St. John Passion* (1982) is even more related to the traditional medieval Passion, developed from the liturgical Passion readings in Holy Week, the so-called responsorial Passion, only setting the biblical text with different singers representing the main protagonists and the choir the so-called *turba* (the people and other crowds). In the same tradition but in a very different musical style James Macmillan wrote his mainly English language *St. John Passion* (2008). Also textually based on a mosaic of texts from various times and the passion narrative of John, the very recent *Passion of St. John* has been written by the Swedish composer Sven David Sandström (b. 1942). This work received its first performances in Berlin and Copenhagen in March 2016.

Edward Elgar's *The Apostles* (1903) treats Jesus' life and deeds in a comprehensive way, including the beatitudes, the calling of the disciples, Mary Magdalene's conversion, Jesus miraculous walking on the water, and Peter's being named as the rock on which the church shall be built (Matt 16:13–20) as well as the passion and resurrection, concluding with the ascension (Dowling Long/Sawyer: 18).

Claude Debussy who in his youth had written a cantata based on the parable of the prodigal son, *L'enfant prodigue* (1884, The Prodigal Son) for soloists and orchestra, in his later years composed a "mystère," a dramatic play, *Le martyre de St. Sébastien* (1910–11, The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian) involving biblical statements about the passion of Jesus; St. Sebastian has been understood to symbolize Christ (see "Debussy, Claude").

The prodigal son was made into a ballet by Sergei Diaghilev and Sergei Prokofiev (1928–29; Redepenning; see also "Diaghilev, Sergei"). It had been set as an opera by Daniel-François Esprit Aubert in 1850 (Schipperges: 211) and was set as a "church parable," a church opera, by Benjamin Britten in 1968. In 1963, Britten had also set the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37) as a cantata, the *Cantata misericordium* (Elliott: 109–11, 123–25).

Harrison Birtwistle's opera *The Last Supper* (2000) is based on the institution of the last supper, and thus, altogether, a fairly comprehensive part of the biblical narratives about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus may be said to have been represented in music dramas also since 1800, mainly in oratorios, but also occasionally in theatrical representation.

Finally, one of the most important musical representations of Jesus Christ must be mentioned, al-

though Christ is only explicitly mentioned a few times. Handel's *Messiah* (1741) narrates the fundamental story of Christ's birth, passion, and resurrection and salvation of mankind, mainly through OT texts, typologically pointing to the narratives of the NT (Burrows). The libretto, compiled from biblical texts by Charles Jennens for Handel has also recently been set anew by Sven David Sandström, a commission from the Oregon Bach Festival in Eugene, first performed in 2009 (Bolin).

**Discography:** ■ Bach, J. S., *Matthäus Passion: A Ballet by John Neumeier* (DVD with recording from performance at the Baden-Baden festival 2006; Arthaus Musik GMBH CAT.No. NTSC 101511)

**Bibliography:** ■ Black, L., *Franz Schubert: Music and Belief* (Woodbridge, Va., 2<sup>nd</sup> 2005 [= 1<sup>st</sup> 2003]). ■ Bolin, N., Liner notes for audio recording of Sven David Sandström's *Messiah* to Charles Jennens biblical libretto for G.F. Handel, conducted by Helmuth Rilling (Stuttgart 2010). ■ Burrows, D., *Handel: Messiah* (Cambridge 1991). ■ Dyer, J., "Roman Catholic Church Music," *Grove Music Online* ([www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)). ■ Elliott, G., *Benjamin Britten: The Spiritual Dimension* (Oxford 2006). ■ Hiley, D., *Western Plainchant: A Handbook* (Oxford 1993). ■ Hill, J. W., "Oratory Music in Florence I: 'Recitar Cantando,' 1583–1655," *AML* 51 (1979) 108–36. ■ Hillier, P. D., "Pärt, Arvo," *Grove Music Online* ([www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)). ■ Leaver, R. A., *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 2007). ■ Dowling Long, S./J. F. A. Sawyer, *The Bible in Music* (Lanham, Md. 2015). ■ Marshall, R. L., "Truth and Beauty: J. S. Bach at the Crossroads of Cultural History," *Bach* 21 (1990) 3–14. ■ Marissen, M. (ed.), *Bach's Oratorios: The Parallel German-English Texts with Annotations* (Oxford 2008). ■ Melamed, D. R., *Hearing Bach's Passions* (Oxford 2005). ■ Redepenning, D., "Prokofiev, Sergey (Sergeyevich)," *Grove Music Online* ([www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)). ■ Schippges, T., *Musik und Bibel*, vol. 2: *Neues Testament* (Kassel 2009). ■ Smither, H. E., *A History of the Oratorio*, 4 vols. (Chapel Hill, N.C. 1977–2000). ■ Stokes, R., *J. S. Bach: The Complete Cantatas translated by Richard Stokes* (Toronto, Ont. 2004). ■ Todd, R. L., *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Oxford 2003). ■ Walsh, P. G./C. Husch (eds./trans.), *One Hundred Latin Hymns: Ambrose to Aquinas* (Cambridge, Mass. 2012).

Nils Holger Petersen

## B. Modern

As with other cultural expressions that have come under the general sway of the biblical literary tradition, the figure of Jesus has featured prominently within the history of modern music (see also "Classical Music" above which also includes modern classical music). In order to delimit the vast range of musical works that reference either directly or indirectly the Jesus tradition which originates in the four canonical Gospels of the NT, it may be argued that the majority of songs that refer lyrically to Jesus invoke him as a kind of popular icon who is portrayed variously as a folk hero, spiritual savior, a healer, a harbinger of justice, a rebel, a faithful friend, and even a lover. Although most of such musical expressions often bear only an oblique relationship to scripture, many songwriters draw lyrical

inspiration directly from the Bible and the stories of his life and ministry conveyed in the Gospels.

Within the context of modern American music, the tradition of African American spirituals (see "Gospel Music") may be considered a crucial nexus connecting oral folk traditions of songwriting (see "Folk Music, Folk Song") and the forms of popular music that emerged with the expansion of mass culture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Indeed, spirituals profoundly influenced the church music of the modern era as well as so-called secular genres of music such as blues, jazz, country, rock'n'roll, soul, reggae, and hip-hop (DuPree: 366). In the lyrics of an early spiritual, "Toiling to See King Jesus," the figure of Jesus is portrayed as sovereign over a heavenly realm that is free from suffering and hardship, a place of rest in which slaves are reunited with family and friends.

I am toiling to see the Master, King Jesus  
I am toiling to see my family and friends  
I am toiling to see some kindness and rest  
I am toiling to see the river, over Jordan. (DuPree: 367)

In this brief song, it is possible to observe connections to the Gospel of Matthew, and in particular, Jesus' elaboration of the kingdom of heaven as a place of refuge for the downtrodden and oppressed in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7). The image of reaching the Jordan river, the sight of Jesus' baptism in Matt 3:13, came to represent either escape from slavery through death, or the slave's treacherous escape from slavery to freedom by crossing over the Ohio River (Smith-Christopher). Other spirituals centering upon themes of freedom and redemption feature Jesus as a source of deliverance. Harriet Tubman utilized the song "Steal Away to Jesus" in her work with the underground railroad.

Following the American Civil War, religiously motivated social activists of the temperance movement famously invoked the figure of Jesus in songs that celebrated him as harbinger of divine justice. In the song "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus," written by Rev. George Duffield, the militaristic language of 2 Tim 2:3–4 is drawn upon to portray Jesus as the leader of a righteous and royal army bent upon eradicating sin, in particular the supposed sin of drunkenness from the earth:

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
ye soldiers of the cross;  
lift high his royal banner,  
it must not suffer loss.  
From victory unto victory  
his army shall he lead,  
till every foe is vanquished,  
and Christ is Lord indeed. (Sanders: 80)

Other temperance movement songs such as "New America" and "The Marseilles" also invoked the name of Jesus but with no specific textual connec-

tions to the Bible (Sanders: 36; 53–54). Despite their oblique textual connection to the NT, such songs are representative of an important phase in the reception of the biblical figure of Jesus within mass culture. In African American spirituals, Jesus often appeared as a kind of folk hero whose biblical characteristics were adapted to fit within the socio-cultural circumstances of the time; likewise, with the temperance movement songs, the figure of Jesus was re-inscribed as the leader of a distinctly modern social and political movement whose values bear very little resemblance to the ministry of Jesus as it is conveyed in the Gospels. Consequently, it is possible to observe within the reception history the evolution of the figure of Jesus from religious figure to secular icon.

With the rapid expansion of the music publishing and recording industry in the early to mid 20th century, genres of music such as jazz, blues, gospel, and folk continued to draw upon the African American tradition in the process of crafting popular music marketed to religious as well as secular audiences. For example, in songs such as “Jesus Met the Woman at the Well” and “Two Little Fishes and Five Loaves,” the popular gospel singer Sister Rosetta Tharpe paraphrases John 4:1–26 and the story of Jesus feeding the multitude in Matt 14:13–21, Luke 9:10–17, and John 6:1–14. The biblical narratives in these songs function primarily as vehicles for delivering Tharpe’s distinctive style of guitar playing and soulful vocal performances. Like the religiously motivated social activists of the temperance movement, the popular folksinger and activist Woody Guthrie wrote two songs focused on the figure of Jesus, “Jesus Christ” and “Christ for President.” According to Michael Gilmour, “These songs reflect Guthrie’s concern for social justice as they convey a vision of Jesus as a champion of the poor and a critic of the rich” (18). In the opening verse, Guthrie sings,

Jesus Christ was a man who traveled through  
the land  
A hard-working man and brave  
He said to the rich, “Give your money to the  
poor,”

But they laid Jesus Christ in His grave.

Although Gilmour notes that the song provides more insight about Guthrie’s own political and social values than it does about the Jesus of the NT, he nevertheless argues that the song’s characterization of Jesus as traveler and champion of the poor is supported by the Gospels (20). In particular Guthrie’s representation of Jesus as carpenter is drawn from Mark 6:3, and Jesus’ instruction in the song’s chorus, “Sell all of your jewelry and give it to the poor,” is a paraphrase of Jesus’ instruction to the rich man in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22). In “Christ for President” the distancing from the biblical text which accom-

panies the articulation of Jesus as folk hero and social activist is more apparent. Gilmour argues that Guthrie “makes historical references, but they are in the service of addressing the modern context” (22). In the second verse, Guthrie proclaims

The only way we can ever beat  
These crooked politician men  
Is to run the money changers out of the temple  
Put the Carpenter in.

The reference to Jesus banishing the money changers from the temple is clearly drawn from the Gospels (Matt 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–17; Luke 19:45–46; John 2:13–17). But rather than offering a faithful retelling of the biblical narrative, Gilmour suggests that Guthrie’s intention is to construct an image of Jesus as a working class hero for modern times (22). This re-inscription of the Jesus of the Gospels into a modern cultural imaginary is characteristic of a more widespread practice of appropriating biblical material to suit the exigence of the popular songwriter.

The emergence of the counterculture in the late 1960s and early 1970s gave rise to a number of songs which portray Jesus as a kind of social outlier, or what Stephen Prothero terms “hippie Jesus” (130). This Jesus of the counterculture was a “long-haired rebel who somehow tuned in to God long before the Summer of Love of 1967, their Jesus made love, not war. The love he made, however, was more friendly than sexy, more *philia* than *eros*” (Prothero: 130). In a song called “Jesus Was a Carpenter,” written by Christopher Wren and most famously performed by Johnny Cash, biblical references to Jesus’ status as the son of a carpenter (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3) are drawn upon to represent him as a drifter and social outcast:

But would He stand today upon the sands of  
California  
And walk the sweating blacktop of New York  
and Mississippi?  
Would He be a guest on Sunday, a vagrant on  
a Monday?  
With the doors locked tight against His kind  
you know.

Once again, the emphasis in this song is on characterizing Jesus as a hero of the common working people as opposed to a member of the socio-economic elite, a class which had become the object of increased scrutiny during the protest movements of the late 1960s.

Jesus’ status as an underground pop icon would be transformed through the commercial success of two major Broadway musicals, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice’s rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* and Stephen Schwartz’s musical adaptation of John-Michael Tebelak’s novel *Godspell*, both of which opened in 1971. Although *Jesus Christ Superstar* was criticized by many for the creative license

that it took with the Gospels, the musical is a passion play, and its plot focuses on the mystery surrounding his enigmatic status as the messiah. According to Prothero, the show's theme is borrowed from the Gospel of Mark, in which Jesus' status as the messiah remains unclear until his trial before the Sanhedrin in Mark 14:54–65. "In *Superstar*, 'Who are you?' is the question, and even Jesus seems unsure of the answer" (Prothero: 134). In contrast to the irreverent spirit of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Godspell* offers a more exuberant and nonetheless reverent picture of the life of Jesus. Drawing inspiration from the Gospel of Matthew, "*Godspell* portrays Jesus as a jester and his followers as flower children. Everybody wears psychedelic costumes; Jesus sports a Superman logo on his chest and a red heart on his forehead" (Prothero: 134). The two musicals offer contrasting portrayals of Jesus that are reflective of the political and social uncertainty that prevailed at the time. Prothero argues that "*Superstar* grows out of the sixties' dark side. It ends with the crucifixion, and its Jesus is James Dean. ... *Godspell*, by contrast, is a product of the sixties' bright side" (135).

The commercial success of these musicals firmly established Jesus' status as a pop culture icon. The counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s was quickly exploited by the mainstream culture industry, with cultural products becoming increasingly marketed to teens and young adults. With this growing youth culture, there also emerged a burgeoning Christian music scene (see "Jesus People II. Music"). With the vast tradition of popular as well as religious music to draw upon, numerous modern songwriters have continued to draw artistic inspiration from the figure of Jesus. More recently, the American hip hop artist Kanye West released a single called "Jesus Walks" on his album *The College Dropout*. Jesus is portrayed as a companion who guides the song's narrator through the moral complexities and existential dangers of life on the streets. There is perhaps only an oblique biblical reference to Satan's testing of Jesus in the wilderness (Matt 4:1–11). Drawing loosely upon the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist, and in particular John's baptism of Jesus in Matt 3:13–17, in the song "Every Man Needs a Companion," Father John Misty (Joshua Tillman) offers a portrayal of Jesus that is reminiscent of Webber and Rice's eroticized retelling of the life of Jesus. In the song, Tillman announces,

John the Baptist took Jesus Christ  
Down to the river on a Friday night  
They talked about Mary like a couple of boys  
With nothing to lose, too scared to try.

The implication of a homoerotic relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist is of course not particularly innovative. Reading of the Gospels which interpreted Jesus' relationships with both

men and women as being of a sexual nature date back to at least the Victorian era. Nevertheless, Tillman's song may be considered particularly provocative in light of the sexual politics of contemporary evangelical Christianity in America. As the boundary between religious and secular music in popular culture continues to shift and frequently disappear altogether, the reception of the Jesus tradition emanating from the Gospels continues to expand. Moreover, as mass culture, particularly in America, begins to assume an increasingly post-Christian position in relation to traditional doctrinal and theological outlooks, the variety and range of musical expressions drawing upon the Jesus tradition will continue to grow in complexity.

**Bibliography:** ■ DuPree, S., "Spirituals," *Encyclopedia of American Gospel Music* (New York 2005) 366–69. ■ Gilmour, M., *Call Me The Seeker: Listening to Religion in Popular Music* (New York 2005). ■ Prothero, S., *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York 2003). ■ Sanders, P., *Lyrics And Borrowed Tunes Of The American Temperance Movement* (Columbus, Ohio 2006). ■ Smith-Christopher, D., "River Jordan in Early African American Spirituals," *Bible Odyssey* ([www.bibleodyssey.org](http://www.bibleodyssey.org)).

Brian W. Nail

## X. Film

This entry considers Jesus films in terms of their "religious" forms, cinematic development, and relationship to the Gospels. It concludes with an overview of the diverse scholarly interpretations of the films now available.

Jesus films are products of modern technological culture(s) and consumer commodities, but they are also irredeemably religious. Jesus films mime the forms of Christian worship. The earliest films transformed passion plays into the new medium of film (through the intervening media of illustrated lectures and illustrated Bibles). One of the earliest films re-presented *The Höritz Passion Play* (prod. Marc Klaw/A.L. Erlanger, US) and a competitor quickly claimed to reproduce the even more famous *The Passion Play of Oberammergau* (dir. Henry C. Vincent, prod. Richard Hollaman, 1898, US), although it actually filmed a performance on the roof of New York City's Eden Musée. Dimitri Buchowetzki's 1921 *Der Galiläer* (DE) also claimed to be based on the Oberammergau play. Like the passion play tradition itself, these early films often included scenes from Jesus' life and nativity, and they soon had more inclusive scope and names (e.g., Pathé's 1902–5 *La Vie et Passion de Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ*, dir. Ferdinand Zecca, FR; Gaumont's 1906 *La Naissance, la vie et la mort du Christ*, dir. Alice Guy, FR; and Kalem's 1912 *From the Manger to the Cross*, dir. Sydney Olcott, US).

In contrast, the nativity stands alone in Edwin Thanhouser's 1912 *The Star of Bethlehem* (US) as it does in Catherine Hardwicke's 2006 *The Nativity Story* (US). Both were released in December and Tha-

nhouser's film on Christmas Eve. Jesus films are still often released to coincide with the Christian calendar, and they air invariably on TV during Christian holidays. Italy and the United Kingdom have a long history of TV productions for holiday seasons (e.g., Franco Zeffirelli's 1977 *Jesus of Nazareth*, IT/UK; Roger Young's 1999 *Jesus*, US/IT/DE; Michael Offer's 2008 *The Passion*, UK; and Roma Downey and Mark Burnett's 2013 *The Bible*, US/UK, five of whose ten episodes were devoted to Jesus and later repackaged as the 2014 *Son of God*, dir. Christopher Spencer, 2014, US).

Such marketing strategies indicate the films' "religious" nature as does the fact that many films have been shown and re-shown in churches (as films or in VHS/DVD format). Antedating movie theaters, early silents were often shown in churches. Campus Crusade's *The Life of Jesus* (dir. Peter Sykes/John Krisch, 1979, UK/AU/US) and the various Visual Bible offerings are more recent examples. Further, almost all Jesus films have been marketed as reverent, worshipful, and even evangelistic treatments, have advertised their employment of religious advisors during production, and have offered pre-release materials and viewings for ministers. More than one film has even advertised editing changes made to mollify certain religious audiences (e.g., Cecil B. DeMille's 1927 *The King of Kings*, US) or pitched itself as "fiction" to deal with pre-release religious criticism (e.g., Martin Scorsese's 1988 *The Last Temptation of Christ*, US/CA).

Interest in Jesus' nativity and childhood may reflect film's "religious" nature in yet another way. Film originated in an era when religion itself was often seen as an affair for women and children. Women, like scriptwriters Gene Gauntier and Jeanie MacPherson and director Alice Guy, played significant roles in early film production. In films, women and children are even more prominent than in the Gospels (see, particularly, Guy's *La Vie du Christ*, 1906, FR; cf. the significance of Tamar's point of view in Derek Hayes' 1999 *The Miracle Maker*, UK/RU/US). Films add apocryphal and fictional incidents to Jesus' youth foreshadowing his miracles or passion (e.g., the shadow of the cross). The focus on Jesus' early life frames Jesus as a (psychologically) developing (modern), rather than static (epic), character. In Cyrus Nowrasteh's 2016 *The Young Messiah* (US), the child Jesus discovers his identity in Egypt and in his return to Nazareth. In Mark Dornford-May's 2006 *Son of Man* (ZA), the child Jesus' horror at the sacrificed innocents motivates his subsequent ministry.

Jesus' psychological development functions prominently elsewhere only in *The Last Temptation of Christ* and *Jesus*. Both films, however, deal with the adult Jesus' struggle toward his messianic career, rather than a mere human's psychological development. Generally, the Christ interests film

more than (a modernly understandable) Jesus. The exceptions may be Terry Jones's 1979 *Monty Python's Life of Brian* (UK), although one would have to find the "modern Jesus" in Brian, not Jesus' cameo appearance; Denys Arcand's 1989 *Jésus de Montréal* (CA/FR), although again one would have to find "Jesus" in the modern Daniel, not in the passion play's Jesus; and *Son of Man*, although the film's hagiographic treatment of its protagonist ultimately overwhelms realistic characterization. (A human) Jesus' absence from Jesus films is only one reason that critics claim no historical Jesus film has yet been made.

Given the cross/crucifix's centrality in Western Christianity, it is hardly surprising that passion play films remain popular. Both Norman Jewison's 1973 *Jesus Christ Superstar* (US) and *Jésus de Montréal* present themselves as films of passion play enactments (cf. also Jules Dassin's 1957 *Celui qui doit mourir*, FR, *He Who Must Die*). More innovatively, Peter Bruegel the Elder's painting *The Procession to Calvary* (1564, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) comes to "life" in Lech Majewski's 2011 *Mlyn i krzyż* (PL/SW, *The Mill and the Cross*). Mel Gibson's 2004 *The Passion of the Christ* (US) foregoes this indirect approach for the direct, "historical" representation of Jesus' own passion (cf. *The Passion*) – with the film's marketing even infamously avowing that the film offered what actually happened. The film's structure is, however, more indebted to the Stations of the Cross than to history (the Stations are also prominent in *Jésus de Montréal*). Gibson's "religious" approach differs strikingly from the exploration of the political reasons for Jesus' passion in the 2015 *Killing Jesus* (dir. Christopher Menaul, US).

The focus on the passion differs yet again in *Son of Man's* "resurrection" of its protagonist so that his dead body can be "crucified" on a hill above the film's shanty town. The film's need for this iconic image may be the single best indication of the aura of religion permeating Jesus films. Thus, it is films that do not use mise-en-scène reflecting familiar illustrations from Christian art or illustrated Bibles or that do not tell the "whole" story (e.g., omitting resurrection appearances or eschewing a harmony of the Gospels approach) that surprise and require interpretative comment (and even special marketing).

*Son of Man's* need for the iconic cross also points to Jesus films' spectacular nature. Film historians describe early cinema as a cinema of attractions and demonstrate the gradual development of camera movement and editing as part of an understandable way of telling a filmed story. The static camera of the earliest Jesus films presented the action from a theatrical distance (a long shot). Actors moved into and out of the shot. Scenes simply followed one another as so many disparate, interchangeable tableaux. Pathé was not the only filmmaker to release

its Jesus film several times (*La Vie et Passion de Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ*, 1902–5, 1907) – and with different scenes. Distributors even marketed individual scenes for sale, and exhibitors could themselves decide to show part or all of a film. Even with accompanying lectures or music (and limited intertitles), the effect of such films was iconic. This cinema “revealed” its scenes to its audience.

Long after filmmakers learned to tell cinematic stories, Jesus films evince a stylistic retardation (Pier Paolo Pasolini parodies the continuance of the tableaux style in Jesus epics in his 1962 *La ricotta*, IT). While many historians credit D.W. Griffith with a major role in narrative cinema’s development, his own 1916 *Intolerance* (US) uses its fragments of a Jesus film to reinforce the film’s message about suffering innocents. Jesus’ own story is not told. He is there to be seen. In fact, one might argue that Jesus is no more than icon or talisman throughout the Jesus film tradition.

*The King of Kings* does have more narrative impetus than previous Jesus films. The conversions of a blind girl and Mary Magdalene provide some early continuity. Judas’ designs to use Jesus and Caiaphas’ various attempts to trap Jesus/Judas connect a long middle sequence that climaxes with Jesus rejecting kingship in the temple. The whole film, however, lacks narrative integration. The love story between Judas and Mary Magdalene that might have provided narrative impetus was cut. Consequently, as in Griffith’s film, Jesus is there to be seen, and the audience first sees Jesus, as a devotional portrait, when the blind girl is healed. Otherwise, Jesus is in the film to end or climax mini-narratives of conversion or degradation or to be at the center of miraculous cinematic spectacles eclipsing the more mundane Gospel narratives (e.g., the earthquake crucifixion or the light-show resurrection).

Typically, the Jesus film is someone else’s story. Jesus’ story is paired with a more interesting modern story in films like *Intolerance*, Thomas Ince’s 1916 *Civilization* (US), and Robert Weine’s 1923 *I.N.R.I.* (DE; although its modern story is now lost). When the silent era ended, the biblical epics of the 1930s and 1950s focused on HB/OT stories and on stories “around” (e.g., William Wyler’s 1959 revival of *Ben-Hur*, US, and Henry Koster’s 1956 *The Robe*, US) or after Jesus (e.g., Mervyn LeRoy’s 1951 revival of *Quo Vadis*, US) in which Jesus appeared in cameos and at a distance.

While DeMille deploys the supernatural or miraculous as spectacle, Jesus films also feature the exotic (Orientalism) to this end. Thus, DeMille presents two color sequences in his primarily black-and-white film: the resurrection and the courtesan Mary Magdalene’s exotic salon. The epics portray Roman decadence similarly. Jesus films also offer their Middle Eastern locations as exotic spectacles.

Giulio Antamoro’s 1916 *Christus* (IT) was shot largely in Egypt and Olcott’s *From the Manger to the Cross* was marketed as a travelogue of and to the Holy Land.

The epics also make history an exotic spectacle through lavish recreations of the “look” of Jesus’ time and place. The basic formula for the historical epic is detailed attention to historical mise-en-scène, respect for popularly memorable events/characters, and fictionalized characters/plots. Nicholas Ray’s 1961 *King of Kings* (US) and George Stevens’ 1965 *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (US) are the first such Jesus epics. The former tries to reconcile the messiah of peace with its imperialist audience through Judas’ failure to grasp this messiah and the Roman centurion Lucius’ fascination with Jesus. *Greatest Story* has less narrative continuity and is primarily the story of its (U.S.) Western landscape, multitude of star cameos, and Jesus’ ideas (which are treated more successfully in Roberto Rossellini’s 1975 *Il messia*, IT/FR). Arguably, *The Last Temptation* and *The Passion of the Christ* are late revivals of the Jesus epic.

Historians rightly observe these epics’ many infelicities, inaccuracies, and fictions, but such criticisms fail to take the historical epics’ cinematic formula seriously. Nonetheless, even if no historical Jesus film has yet been made, some Jesus films have focused attention on the question of history. *Life of Brian* does so humorously through accounts of the growth of messianic movements and miracle traditions that differ from traditional tales of Christian origins. *Jésus de Montréal* does so by casting its protagonist Daniel as a historian in search of Jesus whom Daniel reconstructs in his revision of the Oratory’s passion play as a bastard/magician/victim.

Pasolini critiqued the sentimentality and retarded aesthetic style of the Jesus epic in *La ricotta* and abandoned the epic altogether for a neo-realist, documentary style in his 1964 *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (IT/FR). Pasolini used nonprofessional peasants as actors and the villages of his own southern Italy for his film’s location in his black-and-white film. His reliance on one Gospel, as well as the employment of a handheld camera and extradiegetic music featuring the blues and the *Missa Luba*, further separated *Il vangelo* from the Hollywood epic. The greatest difference, however, was Pasolini’s depiction of Jesus as a Gramscian intellectual (see fig. 4) leading a people’s revolt against capitalist consumerism (cf. Daniel’s aesthetic revolt in *Jésus de Montréal*). Part of his late historical period, Rossellini’s *Il messia* also abandons the Hollywood epic style. *Il messia* sets Jesus in the long Jewish discussion of the value of kings (beginning with Saul). The film also focuses on Jesus’ teaching (ideas), which it sometimes presents as a communal affair, as the disciples perform Jesus’ parables and teaching (cf. David Greene’s 1973 *Godspell*, US).



Fig. 4 *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* (1964)

The financial failure of *King of Kings* and *The Greatest Story* effectively ended Jesus epics in the U.S. Scorsese made *The Last Temptation* only by agreeing to halve his budget and by agreeing to make another “commercial” film for Universal Pictures. Gibson used private financing to make *The Passion of the Christ*. Gibson’s success seems largely responsible for returning biblical films to big picture status (although the recent Jesus films like *Son of God*; Kevin Reynolds’ 2016 *Risen*, US; and *The Young Messiah*, US, hardly rise to the epic stature of Darren Aronofsky’s 2014 *Noah*, US, or Ridley Scott’s 2014 *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, US).

Before these recent films, Jesus films appeared as much smaller productions, like the musicals *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Godspell*. Set in modern Israel as a troupe’s reenactment of a passion play, the former is a film version of a successful rock opera (and even more successful LP). Adopting Judas’ (and Mary Magdalene’s) perspective, the film turns gospel affirmations into questions. *Godspell* sets its story in an eerily empty New York City and focuses its attention on Jesus’ (lasting) community’s comic performance of his teaching (and on popular songs like “Day by Day”). Comedy permeates *Life of Brian*, which parodies Jesus epics (compare *La ricotta*), musicals, and messiah-making. Another notoriously inexpensive film genre is horror, and one could argue that religious/biblical cinema belongs primarily to that genre in the last third of the twentieth century. If so, the best examples of Jesus horror are *Last Temptation*’s possession tale, which the film invites the audience to share, and *The Passion of the Christ*’s splatter and gore. “Best” does not seem to apply in any sense to the parodic 2001 *Jesus Christ Vampire Hunter* (dir. Lee Demarbre, CA).

Television has also become a fertile (international) field for Jesus films. Before the recent *The Bible*, the mammoth example was the 1977 miniseries *Jesus of Nazareth*. Aiming at an epic historical realism, it sets its story in a lengthy introductory tour of messianic Judaism, but it then moves on to a se-

ries of apostolic vignettes detailing the rise of apostolic Christianity. For *Jesus of Nazareth*, religion is a private, subjective matter – a matter of the heart, not the mind. Personal faith is also at issue in the emphasis on freedom of religious choice in the 1999 *Jesus* and in a number of niche productions for evangelistic Protestantism (e.g., *The Jesus Film*, the Visual Bible series, and *The Bible*). By contrast, historical or cultural origins are the focus in *The Passion* and *Killing Jesus*.

The Jesus silents and Jesus television series (often produced jointly for more than one national market) indicate the international character of Jesus cinema. Like most big-budget films today, Gibson’s film was produced for an international market. Further, any “best of” list of Jesus films would likely give pride of place to what a Hollywood focus would refer to as “foreign films” (e.g., *Il vangelo* or *Jésus de Montréal*). Finally, recent Jesus cinema underscores Jesus’ place in world cinema. The South African *Son of Man* is one of the more interesting Jesus films in many years. Like the Jesus of *Il vangelo*, the film’s protagonist advocates social justice and dies for his message at the hands of the powers that be. Giovanni Columbu’s 2012 Sardinian *Su re* (IT, “The King”) reprises Jesus’ passion in a Pasolini-like, neo-realist style and presents one of the few “uncomely” (cf. Isa 53:2) Jesuses in cinema history. Abandoning linear editing, the film focuses on images of and around the passion. Finally, the 1978 Indian *Karunamayudu* (dir. A. Bhimsingh) and the 2007 Iranian *The Messiah* (dir. Nader Talebzadeh) are worthy of note. The former portrays Jesus as part of bhakti devotion and the Hindu pantheon. The latter presents Jesus as a Muslim prophet and turns uniquely to the *Gospel of Barnabas* in its crucifixion sequence. Significantly, world cinema potentially liberates Jesus films from US/European domination and ideologies (e.g., Christian, capitalist, and Marxist).

Invariably, audiences compare Jesus films to the Gospels and their own theological/ideological formation of Jesus. Films then present themselves as the “gospel truth” to the extent that they can be vague enough or broad enough to allow diverse audiences to align themselves with “this or that” in a film. Films recreate the gospel by cherry-picking the most memorable Jesus incidents and sayings from the various Gospels. The passion is essential. Miracles (particularly, the resurrection, the nativity, and Lazarus’ resurrection) and dramatic conversions (particularly of Mary Magdalene) and damnations (particularly of Judas and Caiaphas) are of next importance. Jesus’ teaching is less cinematically important, although Jesus film invariably stresses Jesus’ ethic of love and nonviolence (but, contrast *Il vangelo*).

Among the Gospels, John is most important. Even films that confine themselves to one of the

other Gospel contain notorious Johannine intrusions (e.g., *Il vangelo* based on Matthew, *Godspell* based on Matthew, and *The Jesus Film* based on Luke). John dominates cinema because of its conception of Jesus as the (supernatural) light of the world, a notion that coheres nicely with film's own reliance on projected light. Accordingly, Jesus glows (or appears in white against a dark background) in film after film. John's "superhero" Jesus also jibes nicely with the characterizations of adolescent cinema (as well as those of Christian theology). Finally, John's series of dramatic conversions lends itself to modern conceptions of religion as matter of private, personal faith. John then is the gospel of Jesus films.

The Johannine Gospel and the use of Christian art and worship forms allow Jesus films to present themselves as the gospel. Cinema's specific contribution to this gospel-truth effect is spectacle (see above). In narrative Jesus cinema, historical realism is the spectacular truth. One believes what one sees. Jesus films then seem less than this gospel truth when they announce their dependence on fiction (e.g., *I.N.R.I.*, *Ben-Hur*, and *The Last Temptation*), when they transplant the Jesus story to modernity (e.g., *Civilization*, *Greatest Story*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Godspell*, and *Son of Man*), when they create an obviously alternative reality in musicals or animation (for adult audiences), or when they call attention to interpretation through parody (e.g., *La ricotta* and *Life of Brian*) or through juxtaposing various stories or Jesuses (e.g., *Intolerance* and *Jésus de Montréal*). However, only when Jesus films seem less than the gospel truth do they have the possibility to challenge their audience's own unreflective gospel-truths. As products of consumer entertainment, most films do not do aspire to such challenges. They affirm their audiences' status quo (unless they misstep or find the wrong audience). Only aesthetic (or art) films differ. *Jésus de Montréal* makes this very issue its story.

*Jésus de Montréal* is the Jesus film that makes the academic study of Jesus (and film) inescapable (one might also add *The Life of Brian*). Academic interpretations of Jesus films have proliferated in recent years (as this encyclopedia attests). For a general introduction to the most readily available films and a list of their Gospel incidents, see Jeffrey L. Staley/Richard Walsh. For a discussion of particular films as interpretations of specific Gospels and a consideration of the U.S. Jesus in Hollywood films, see Walsh. For special attention to historical Jesus issues in film, see W. Barnes Tatum. For a discussion of the films as biopics, see Adele Reinhartz (2007). For a treatment of the films in terms of biblical epics, see Bruce Babington/Peter W. Evans, and Reinhartz (2013). For discussions of the films in terms of incarnational theology, see Lloyd Baugh and Richard C. Stern et al. For the silent film Jesus, see

David J. Shepherd (2013 and 2016). For Jesus in world cinema, see Dwight H. Friesen, and Walsh et al. (2013).

**Bibliography:** ■ Babington, B./P. W. Evans, *Biblical Epics: Sacred Narrative in the Hollywood Cinema* (Manchester 1993). ■ Baugh, L., *Imaging the Divine: Jesus and Christ-Figures in Film* (Kansas City, Miss. 1997). ■ Friesen, D. H., "Karunamayudu: Seeing Christ Anew in Indian Cinema," in *Images of the Word: Hollywood's Bible and Beyond* (ed. D. J. Shepherd; Atlanta, Ga. 2008) 165–87. ■ Reinhartz, A., *Jesus of Hollywood* (Oxford 2007). ■ Reinhartz, A., *Bible and Cinema: An Introduction* (London 2013). ■ Shepherd, D. J., *The Bible on Silent Film* (Cambridge 2013). ■ Shepherd, D. J. (ed.), *The Silents of Jesus in the Cinema (1897–1927)* (New York/London 2016). ■ Staley, J. L./R. Walsh, *Jesus, The Gospels, and Cinematic Imagination* (Louisville, Ky. 2007). ■ Stern, R. C. et al., *Savior on the Silver Screen* (New York 1999). ■ Tatum, W. B., *Jesus at the Movies: A Guide to the First Hundred Years and Beyond* (Salem, Oreg. 2013). ■ Walsh, R., *Reading the Gospel in the Dark* (Harrisburg, Pa. 2003). ■ Walsh, R. et al. (eds.), *Son of Man: An African Jesus Film* (Sheffield 2013).

Richard Walsh

## XI. Dance

■ Ancient Texts and Rituals ■ General

### A. Ancient Texts and Rituals

In the NT, Jesus mentions dancing in a parable which seems to illustrate a lack of responsiveness: those who reject John the Baptist are compared to children sitting in the marketplace who say to the others (Matt), or to each other (Luke), "We piped to you and you did not dance" (Matt 11:17 par. Luke 7:32). Responsiveness is a key element in Jesus' own dance as portrayed in the 2nd-century apocryphal *Acts of John* (94–96). The episode is now complemented by two later Coptic parallels, the so-called *Dance of the Savior* (known for some time as *Unbekanntes Berliner Evangelium* or Berlin Inv. 22200) and the *Gospel of the Savior [around the Cross]* (a.k.a. the *Stauros-text* from Nubia or the *Kasr el-Wizz Codex*). These texts, which seem to expand on the mention of singing in the canonical Gospels (Matt 26:30 par. Mark 14:26), depict a round dance performed by Jesus and the disciples on the night before the crucifixion. This dance has a cognitive purpose. It unifies the disciples and brings them closer to Jesus, the center of the circle, and to the Father (*ActsJohn* 96). This is achieved via heightened self-awareness. Through imitation of and empathy with the dancing Jesus, the disciples become aware of their own experience. The dance is revelatory, but not of Jesus' nature, only of each disciple's own, human experience (*pathos*, *ActsJohn* 96.4; 101). Given that *pathos* also refers to Jesus' passion (even though according to *ActsJohn* 101, the passion never took place), this experience probably comprises insight into one's own vulnerability and mortality. The dance is called a "mystery" (*ibid.*), and other elements in this text also point to ancient mystery cults. By limiting the immediate object of cognition

to the participant, the dance encapsulates a negative theology which underlies also the motif of the polymorphy of Jesus (*Acts John* 88–93). *Acts of John* embraces asceticism, and the dance too must be seen as an ascetic practice, i.e., a spiritual practice that uses the body as a tool, in stark contrast with the negative view of dance propounded by the Church Fathers. Presumably *Acts of John* 94–96 and the Coptic parallels reflect ritual dancing or circular processions among Christian groups in Syria and Egypt (Piovanelli: 246). *Acts of John* was transmitted along with Manichean writings. Chapters 94–96 were known to Augustine in a Latin translation from a Priscillianist milieu (*Ep.* 237).

The second *Book of Jeû* mentions a circle around Jesus and “mysteries,” implying a similar ritual (Yingling: 270). A prayer in *Acts of Philip* (11.9) addresses Jesus as “he who dances in the middle of the group of the twelve virgins,” perhaps referring to the twelve dancing maidens mentioned in *Herm. Sim. 9.11.5* (Dronke: 40–41). In his *Symposium of Virgins*, Methodius of Olympus (d. ca. 311) has one virgin state: “I dance with Christ as leader, I dance in heaven round him whose reign has no beginning or end” (*Symp.* 6.5). The eschatological perspective on Christ’s dance is developed in Synesius, who depicts Christ as chorus-leader freeing the souls and guiding them like “holy bands of dancers” (*Hymns* 4.18–23; 8.24–27). Hippolytus explains the “leaping” of Song of Songs 2:8 as the movements of the Logos and of Jesus. The motif of Jesus’ leaping and dancing, which Synesius associates in particular with the ascension, pervades medieval mysticism (Dronke: 30–54). The 5th-century Egyptian poet Nonnus mentions a “chorus of disciples” and “rites” (*orgia*) just before narrating the arrest of Christ, echoing the setting of *Acts of John* (*Paraphrase* 17.88–90).

**Bibliography:** ■ Dilley, P., “*Christus saltans* as Dionysos and David: The Dance of the Savior in its Late-Antique Cultural Context,” *Apocrypha* 24 (2013) 237–54. ■ Dronke, P., *Imagination in the Late Pagan and Early Christian World* (Florence 2003). ■ Emmel, S., “The Recently Published *Gospel of the Saviour* (‘Unbekanntes Berliner Evangelium’): Righting the Order of Pages and Events,” *HTR* 95 (2002) 45–72. ■ Hedrick, C. W./P. A. Mirecki (eds.), *Gospel of the Savior: A New Ancient Gospel* (Santa Rosa, Calif. 1999). ■ Hubai, P. (ed.), *Koptische Apokryphen aus Nubien: Der Kasr el-Wizz Kodex* (trans. A. Balog; Berlin/New York 2009). ■ Junod, É./J.-D. Kaestli (eds.), *Acta Iohannis*, 2 vols (Turnhout 1983). ■ Piovanelli, P., “Thursday Night Fever: Dancing and Singing with Jesus in the *Gospel of the Savior* and the *Dance of the Savior around the Cross*,” *Early Christianity* 3 (2012) 229–48. ■ Yingling, E., “Singing with the Savior: Reconstructing the Ritual Ring-Dance in the *Gospel of the Savior*,” *Apocrypha* 24 (2013) 255–79.

Karin Schlapbach

## B. General

The life and sufferings of Jesus have frequently been portrayed in ballet and modern dance. Stories about Jesus in the NT, especially the four Gospels,

have typically been taken as a starting point and inspiration for creating works that address universal themes of love, kindness, betrayal, and so forth.

Choreographers have often concentrated on figures prominent in Jesus’ life, such as the Virgin Mary or Judas. One work that deals with the story of Jesus seen through the eyes of Mary is Martha Graham’s (see “Graham, Martha”) *Primitive Mysteries*, set to music by Louis Horst. *Primitive Mysteries* was choreographed in 1931 as a reenactment of the ritual in honor of the Virgin Mary. It is recognized as one of Graham’s signature pieces, her imagination sparked by ceremonial dances of the native people of New Mexico. The three movements have different themes. The first movement is based around the birth of Jesus. The second, *Crucifixus*, takes its visual cues from the image of the crucified Jesus. The theme of Mary’s ascent to heaven constitutes the third part.

In 1975 choreographer Paul Sansardo created an interesting interpretation of the relationship between Jesus and Judas. This work, in the form of a male modern dance duet, *Abandoned Prayer*, is set to music by Tommaso Albinoni and was originally made for the Bat-Dor Dance Company in Israel (see “Bat-Dor Dance Company”). The work portrays the complex relationship of love and dependence and betrayal between Jesus and Judas. Another work that emphasizes betrayal, but in a more universal way, is José Limón’s *The Traitor*. It is one of Limón’s best-known works, choreographed for his own José Limón Dance Company and premiered at the American Dance Festival at Connecticut College in 1954. The piece, set to Gunther Schuller’s *Symphony for Brasses and Percussion*, depicts the events that unfolded between Judas Iscariot, Jesus and his disciples. Opening in the Garden of Gethsemane, the action moves to the Last Supper, the arrest of Christ, and Judas’ suicide. *The Traitor* features eight men in the more prominent roles: the Leader, the Traitor (danced by José Limón himself), and a cast of six men who represent the disciples. Additionally featured are soldiers and executioners. *The Traitor* has a political agenda and uses the theme of Judas betrayal as a starting point for the McCarthy hearings and the climate of betrayal that haunted the arts and entertainment fields during this period in the U.S. (see “Limón, José Arcadio”).

Several episodes from the passion have served as inspiration for dance works. The Swedish choreographer Ivo Cramer (see “Cramér, Ivo”) staged a series of small ballets in 1946 based on biblical themes. In his *Biblical Pictures (Bibelske bilder)* Cramer used images from Christian history as symbols for universal human behavior. Some of the most touching motifs can be seen in his interpretation of Jesus at Golgatha, involving scenes titled “The Betrayal” and “Peter’s Denial.”

John Neumeier’s monumental ballet *Matthäus-Passion (St. Matthew Passion)* made for the Hamburg

Ballet in 1981 is another example of a work dedicated to the passion. Lasting more than four hours, the ballet is set to Johan Sebastian Bach's *Oratorium* and has become a signature work of the company. The Hamburg Ballet has been performing the *Matthäus-Passion* in the Hamburg St. Michaelis-Kirche during the Easter season continuously since the 1981 premiere. Neumeier, who danced the role of Jesus until he himself reached the age of sixty, has, like José Limón, been interested in the universal messages inherent in the passion. Neumeier has described his *Matthäus-Passion* as a choreographic meditation meant to portray the religious and human aspects of the passion, emphasizing guilt as well as forgiveness.

Musicals typically integrate dancing numbers, and it should be mentioned that the theme of Jesus has found its way into them as well. The best-known example is Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's seminal musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The work has gone through different revisions and staging, but several of the dancing sections was part of the original musical, for instance, the "King Herod's Song (Try it and See)" and "Simon Zealotes" numbers.

The above examples are but a few of the many dance works that speak to the theme of Jesus. If space allowed, numerous other examples of choreographers taking inspiration from the Jesus figure could be mentioned. Suffice it to say in closing that Jesus, together with the biblical stories related to him, has inspired and likely will continue to inspire choreographic works.

**Bibliography:** ■ Adams, D./J. Rock, *Biblical Criteria in Modern Dance* (Austin, Tex. 1979). ■ Jowitt, J., "Graham, Martha," *The International Encyclopedia of Dance* 2 (Oxford 2005) 209–23. ■ Keutchen, M. et al. (eds), *Tanz und Religion: Theologische Perspektiven* (Frankfurt a.M. 2008). ■ Manor, G., *The Gospel According to Dance: Choreography and the Bible from Ballet to Modern* (New York 1980). ■ Vendin, L., "Cramér, Ivo," *The International Encyclopedia of Dance* 2 (ed. S.J. Cohen; Oxford 1998) 263–65.

Anne Margrete Fiskvik

*See also* → Anointing; → Annunciation; → Ascension of Christ; → Baptism of Jesus; → Beatitudes; → Burial of Jesus; → Cleansing of the Temple; → Cradle, Jesus Speaking in the; → Cross; → Crucifixion; → Ecce Homo; → Farewell Speech; → Feeding Miracles; → Flight into Egypt; → Footwashing; → Gethsemane; → Golgotha, Calvary; → Good Shepherd; → Healing Miracles; → Immanuel (Emmanuel); → Incarnation; → INRI; → Jesus, Lost Years of; → Kinship of Jesus; → Lamentation of Jesus; → Last Supper; → Last Words of Jesus; → Mary (Mother of Jesus); → Lord's Supper; → Miracles; → Mocking of Jesus; → Nativity of Jesus; → Noli me tangere; → Parables; → Passion of Jesus; → Pietà; → Presentation of Jesus; → Quest of the Historical Jesus; → Resurrection of Jesus; → Sermon on the

Mount; → Shroud of Jesus; → Son of Mary; → Stations of the Cross; → Testimonium Flavianum; → Three Impostors, The; → Transfiguration of Jesus; → Trial of Jesus; → Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem; → Veronica, Veil of

## Jesus' Brothers and Sisters

- I. New Testament
- II. Christianity
- III. Film

### I. New Testament

That Jesus had brothers is widely attested in the NT (Matt 12:46–48; 13:55; Mark 3:31–33; 6:3; Luke 8:19–20; John 2:12; 7:3–5; Acts 1:14; Gal 1:19; 1 Cor 9:5), and in two or three places sisters are also mentioned (Matt 13:56; Mark 3:32 [according to probably the best textual reading]; 6:3). In the early church the brothers were known as "the brothers of the Lord" (Gal 1:19; 1 Cor 9:5). From Mark and Matthew we learn that there were four, named James, Joses, Judas, and Simon (Mark 6:3). Joses was a common shortened form of Joseph, which is the form Matthew uses (13:55). In English Jesus' brother Judas has traditionally been called Jude (as in the title of the Epistle of Jude).

Since the Greek words for "brother" and "sister" (ἀδελφός, ἀδελφή) do not necessarily refer to a full blood brother or sister, the precise relationship of these persons to Jesus has been much debated, especially in view of the implications for the traditional doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. The three main views are that they were children of Joseph and Mary, that they were children of Joseph by a previous marriage, and that they were first cousins of Jesus. Although the Greek words can refer to relationships more distant than "brother" and "sister" in modern English, the fact that the brothers of Jesus are invariably called "brothers" in early Christian literature (outside as well as inside the NT) makes the third view unlikely. (The 2nd-cent. writer Hegesippus calls James and Jude "brothers of the Lord," but calls Simeon the son of Joseph's brother Clopas the "cousin of the Lord.") The other two views are both consistent with the NT references. (Luke 2:7 means only that Jesus had the status of Mary's firstborn son, not necessarily that she had other children later.)

The Gospels offer a quite variegated picture of Jesus' relationships with his mother and his siblings during the period of his ministry. Mark gives the impression of a complete rift. The passage 3:19b–35 is probably an example of Mark's habit of intercalating episodes. The story of the scribes' criticism (3:22–30) is sandwiched between the story about Jesus relatives (3:19b–21, 31–35), who are at first called "those who were attached to him"