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A table of contents for *Irish Biblical Studies* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_ibs-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_ibs-01.php)

## PREACHING IN THE EARLY CHURCH

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### Abstract

The Gospels provide many of the stories that lay at the heart of the faith of the Early Church. Acts gives a very limited indication of the content of preaching material used by the early missionaries. The epistles suggest a wider range of doctrinal and ethical material. Only by understanding the significance of the scalometric data can evidence be drawn from the collaboration of Paul and Silvanus in developing material for sermons, which is reflected in the epistles.

The Gospels agree that when Mary came to the tomb on the third day she was given the message, 'The Lord is risen'. She, in turn, passed that message on to the disciples. The Gospels were compiled some decades after the death of Jesus, but they all point to this central feature in the preaching and belief of the Early Church – 'Jesus is risen!' Life and faith were simple in those early days, unencumbered by theological complexities. Acceptance of the truth of Jesus' resurrection was accompanied by repentance, which led to baptism and membership of the Church. But who was Jesus, and what were the implications of following his way?

Converts to the new faith felt an immediate need to know more about Jesus, a need that was met by circulating stories about him. In the earliest days, the house churches lived on stories rather than on preaching. Stories about Jesus' life and actions were precious. It would be a great day when one of the disciples visited a house church and told the people what he could remember about Jesus' life and works. Some of these stories were written down and shared with members of the family and with friends who belonged to other house groups. Many house churches built up their own collections of stories about Jesus – little "Qs". As the Church spread and as the contents of those small collections were shared, there was a tendency for the collections to develop a common form. When Matthew and Luke came to write their gospels, they may have had several collections at their disposal. I remain rather sceptical about the modern theories that over-systematise "Q", especially those that

detect a number of layers, attributing to Jesus only the most elementary material, and imagining that authors unknown added the upper layers. Jesus' thinking was probably far more profound than that of his modern critics, and he employed many traditional concepts that were familiar to his hearers. In all probability, Matthew and Luke not only had Mark's Gospel before them as they compiled their own gospels, they may also have had several collections of sayings, and each had access to other Birth and Passion narratives.

While knowing stories about Jesus was important, it was also necessary to relate Jesus' life and work to the traditions of his people, and so very quickly preachers turned to the prophecies of the Old Testament to show their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. These two strands are present in the records of the earliest days of the Christian faith – the use of stories about the Lord and the quotation of Old Testament prophecies showing the meaning of his coming.

From that early position, preaching developed to cover a wide range of ethical issues. It is the purpose of this paper to attempt to trace the appearance of a variety of themes that were employed as the Church's missions developed. To do this various scalometric methods are used.

### *Scalometric methods*

Scalometric methods throw some light on the different ways in which the Gospel writers handled the stories that constituted their source material<sup>1</sup>. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke produce quite different patterns from those found in the Gospels of Mark and John. As noted below, these features may be related to some ancient traditions that have been handed down concerning Mark and John.

The existence of scaling effects in literature must be recognised if the rewarding partnership between Paul and Silvanus is to be explored. In previous papers, I have shown the scale-related patterns

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<sup>1</sup> See my previous article, 'Significant Scale Changes in the Gospels and Acts', *IBS* 20 (1998), pp. 75-91.

that occur in all thirteen Pauline epistles<sup>2</sup>. A search through a million and a quarter words of texts ancient and modern has failed to discover any similar patterns that are tied to identifiable textual units. The combination of Paul's rhythmic style with dramatic scale changes may be unique. On that basis, I accept that these texts came from Paul's hand with the exception of some second century interpolations in 1 Timothy (3.1-16) and Titus (1.7-9) concerning qualities required in church leaders, and a few angry verses about Cretans that may have been added spontaneously during dictation (Titus 1.12-16). Graphs show that these verses clearly do not belong to the original pattern.

In another paper,<sup>3</sup> I have described the scale-related patterns found in Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter. These patterns show high-scale features that are in proportion (despite differences in the lengths of these works), and that relate to inclusions. Again, such a combination of features has not been found anywhere else in the test material and so these three works are taken to come from the hand of Silvanus (1 Peter 5.12), but to have been composed under very different circumstances. These conclusions may be related to the stylometric work of D.L. Mealand<sup>4</sup> and G.R. Ledger<sup>5</sup> whose figures show that 1 and 2 Peter and Hebrews cluster closely. It must be said that the purpose of these authors was to determine the extent of the Pauline corpus, and so neither commented on the clustering of these particular epistles. The clustering, however, ties in with the scale-related patterns which scalometric analysis reveals.

I have examined the differences between the first four Paulines and the group comprising the Pastorals and the Petrine by making use

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<sup>2</sup> See 'Scale and the Pauline Epistles', *IBS* 17 (1995), pp. 22-41 and 'A Computer Model for the Pauline Epistles', *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2001), pp. 233-50.

<sup>3</sup> See 'The Structure of Hebrews and of 1 and 2 Peter', *IBS* 19 (1997), pp. 17-31.

<sup>4</sup> D.L. Mealand, 'The Extent of the Pauline Corpus: A Multivariate Approach', *JSNT* 59 (1995), pp. 61-92.

<sup>5</sup> G.R. Ledger, 'An Exploration of Differences in the Pauline Epistles using Multivariate Analysis', *LLC*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (1995), pp. 85-97.

of the kind of data employed by Anthony Kenny<sup>6</sup> in his statistical study of the New Testament texts. Table 1 shows the rates of occurrence of some small words and parts of speech which act as discriminators between the first four Paulines and the group comprising the Pastorals and the Petrines. This Table will be referred to later in the article. The differences are found to refer, not to authorship, but to style.<sup>7</sup> Paul employed a formal style when his attention was focused on the content of the epistle he was dictating, and he reverted to an informal style when his attention was focused on the recipients of the epistle, or when he was incorporating sermon material. The informal style was also used generally in preaching.

These scaling patterns in the Pastorals, the Petrines and Hebrews give a new insight that would not otherwise be available. The Pastorals and the Petrines may be seen to reflect the missionary work of Paul and Silvanus during a critical period lasting almost three years. The points of contact between 1 Peter and the Paulines, and between Hebrews and the Paulines, reflect the themes employed in preaching to unlearned people. The unusual vocabulary found in the Pastorals, and in the Petrines and Hebrews also reflects the more informal style used in social intercourse and in preaching to the common folk. Scholars who treat all texts as if they were homogeneous with regard to scale cannot make these links. Texts may no longer be treated in this way as it is clear that dramatic differences in scale exist both between texts and within individual texts. Differences that traditionally have been thought to be differences in authorship are now seen to be differences in style. With these tools, the development of preaching material may be examined.

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<sup>6</sup> A. Kenny, *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament* (Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> See my article 'Two Styles in the New Testament Epistles', *LLC*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2003).

### *Scalometry and the Gospel stories*

Scalometric analysis of the Gospels shows that the compilers handled their source material in different ways<sup>8</sup>. Matthew and Luke arranged their material in batches and wrote out each batch at a different scale level; each batch therefore has a consistent running mean sentence length and this produces 'scale planes' in these graphs. Mark and John wrote out each pericope at a different scale level; there are therefore no scale planes in the graphs of these gospels. This is consistent with the tradition that Mark noted down what Peter preached. He may have reproduced these notes with little alteration and so each appears at its original scale level. In John's case, it is consistent with the tradition that John drew from his memory bank stories about Jesus. These he reproduced at the scale level at which he had become accustomed to telling each story. Neither of these authors rearranged their source material in batches as Matthew and Luke did.

The astonishing feature, however, is that in all the Gospels, the Passion narratives and the stories of Jesus' risen appearances have the lowest mean sentence lengths, that is, they are written at a low-scale level with no hint of the monumentality that goes with mythological development. In this they are unlike the Birth narratives and the record of Pentecost in Acts; these all show marked signs of development and a high scale-level. This means, I believe, that the Passion narratives and the stories of the risen Jesus were written down and fixed in form very soon after the event, even before the writers were aware of the significance of the events they describe. Oral tradition allows scope for mythological development; the written word does not. The Passion narratives may represent the most primitive written sources to be found in the New Testament.

### *Preaching to the Jews in Acts*

The Book of Acts shows that early preaching was based on the resurrection of Jesus. It was aimed at Jewish people and did not

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<sup>8</sup> See my article, 'Significant Scale Changes in the Gospels and Acts', *IBS*, 20 (1998), pp. 75-91.

come to grips in any substantial way with the special needs of Gentile converts. The author of Acts looked back over several decades to Peter's preaching at Pentecost, which saw in Jesus' resurrection the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and called for repentance. In Stephen's speech of defence, salvation history is recounted. This is seen as being fulfilled in Jesus death and resurrection. These speeches of Peter's and Stephen's in Acts are, of course, reconstructions by the author, but they point to the early preaching tradition as it was addressed to the Jewish community. This pattern of preaching is consistent throughout the Book of Acts; it is found in Philip preaching to the Ethiopian, and Paul preaching to Jews.

### *Preaching to the Gentiles in Acts*

When Peter took the good news to Gentile people, it made no significant difference to the gospel that was preached (Acts 10 and 11). The Gentiles received the same gift and were granted repentance unto life. The debate as to whether Gentiles should be circumcised had little effect on preaching. The general pattern was a review of history, leading to belief in Jesus crucified and risen, leading to repentance and baptism into the Church. Paul met with opposition from Jewish traditionalists throughout his missionary journeys, but descriptions of preaching remain much the same throughout Acts. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household' (Acts 16.31). Sometimes it is expressed as 'proclaiming the word of God' (Acts 13.5), or preaching 'Jesus the Saviour' (Acts 13.23), or preaching that 'the Christ was Jesus' (Acts 18.5), or preaching 'Jesus and the Resurrection' (Acts 17.18), or 'pleading about the Kingdom of God' (Acts 19.8)

Paul's speeches of defence before the people (Acts 22), before the Council (Acts 23), before Felix (Acts 23), before Festus (Acts 25) and before Agrippa (Acts 26) add little to the pattern. He recounts his own personal history, his conversion, and his belief in the risen Lord. This pattern persists to the end of the record in Acts. In Rome, he 'testified to the Kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the prophets' (Acts 28.23). There can be no doubt that this outline of preaching is

a true reflection of some of the preaching that took place in these early days, but does it give an adequate picture, or is it severely limited by the author's understanding? This record covers the whole period of Paul's ministry, yet there is no evidence of preaching on ethical matters, and no indication that the author knew about and understood the questions that assume great importance in Paul's epistles and that clearly must have exercised his mind.

### *The Epistles*

Table 1 shows the rates of occurrence of several features that discriminate between the first four Paulines and the Pastorals/Petrines. The formal texts are shown at the top of the Table in white cells, and the informal texts are shown at the bottom in black cells (the only aberration being a low count of kai in 1 Peter). In between lie epistles with mixed styles. When the formal epistles are broken down section by section, however, it is found that they are not uniformly formal; some passages have the informal characteristics that are found in the Pastorals and Petrines. Notable is Romans 1.18–2.29, which some scholars have taken to be an interpolation. This it cannot be, because the passage comprises exactly two rhythmic cycles that are essential to the Pauline pattern. Romans takes its overall formal character mainly from the characteristics of 3.1–11.36, the rest of the epistle being mixed in style. Galatians takes its formal style from 3.23–5.12, the remainder showing a greater degree of informality. The difference is one of style, and where passages of sermon material like Romans 1.18–29 have been incorporated in the epistle their characteristics are closer to those of the Pastorals than they are to those of their immediate context.

In 1 Corinthians, chapter 15 begins, 'Now, I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel...' It is surely not simplistic to assume that the remainder of chapter 15 in fact includes selections from Paul's sermon notes. This is confirmed by the less formal style of the material.



<b>FORMAL – WHITE</b>										
	Morphology	GNM	GNM	GNM	GNM	GNM	GNM	BNM	BNM	BNM
Words	Part of speech	καί	ἀλλ', ἀλλά	γάρ	ὁ, οὐκ οὐχ	particles qs,qt,qv	article nom.	nouns all	adj. normal	adverb
7111	<b>Rom.</b>	3.81	0.97	2.03	1.88	0.66	4.18	23.58	4.22	4.67
6829	<b>1 Cor.</b>	4.09	1.05	1.54	2.42	1.05	4.35	20.11	4.93	5.65
4477	<b>2 Cor.</b>	4.42	1.54	1.71	2.23	0.80	3.37	20.13	3.31	6.16
2230	<b>Gal.</b>	3.23	1.03	1.61	1.79	0.58	3.09	23.63	2.69	5.78
NOTE: GNM = GNM AGNT2 Friberg GNT Morphology. BNM = BNM Bible Works NTB morphology.										
<b>MIXED</b>										
Figures give rates of occurrence as a percentage of the whole text.										
2422	<b>Eph.</b>	5.66	0.54	0.45	0.62	0.12	2.52	25.68	3.76	3.10
1629	<b>Phil.</b>	6.57	0.92	0.80	0.56	0.43	2.46	22.41	3.99	5.65
1582	<b>Col.</b>	6.38	0.19	0.38	0.82	0.25	2.65	24.59	3.29	3.03
1481	<b>1 Thess.</b>	6.89	0.88	1.55	0.22	0.20	2.77	21.40	2.97	5.81
823	<b>2 Thess.</b>	6.08	0.61	0.61	1.09	0.12	3.65	24.42	1.94	3.65
335	<b>Philemon</b>	5.37	0.60	0.90	0	0.30	2.09	24.18	4.48	4.48
<b>INFORMAL - BLACK</b>										
1387	<b>1 Tim. ex. 3:1-16</b>	6.2	0.79	0.87	0.58	0.25	2.60	25.67	9.01	3.24
1238	<b>2 Tim.</b>	5.49	0.97	1.13	0.97	0.16	2.59	25.04	6.54	4.12
535	<b>Tit. ex 1:7-9,12-16</b>	5.42	0.37	0.91	0	0	2.43	24.18	12.90	2.58
1684	<b>1 Pet.</b>	4.22	0.95	0.60	0.83	0.24	2.85	25.48	7.84	4.04
1099	<b>2 Pet.</b>	5.73	0.55	1.36	1.18	0.09	2.09	27.30	6.92	4.28

TABLE 1

The style of Ephesians has informal characteristics that are markedly similar to the Pastorals and the Petrines, and this may be due to the fact that Paul was not writing in his formal mode, but was giving the Ephesian elders material to be used with new and inexperienced members. Paul does not know these members personally, but is thinking his way into their needs. In Colossians Paul is again thinking his way into the needs of new members whom he does not know, as he helps them to face up to false teaching. Philemon and Philippians are friendly letters that are largely informal in style.

Hebrews, which I take to be the work of Silvanus, has two substantial passages that show the informal characteristics of sermon material. These are 4.14-7.28 concerning Melchizedek and 11.1-12.2 which is a straightforward sermon concerning heroes of the faith, geared to ordinary people. Hebrews gives us a unique insight into apostolic preaching and is not to be regarded as an oddity of unknown provenance. This insight, of course, depends upon the recognition of Hebrews and the Petrines as being the work of Silvanus.

The sermon material that has been incorporated into these epistles greatly enlarges the scope of early preaching, but it is extended further when consideration is given to points of contact between the Paulines, the Pastorals, the Petrines and Hebrews, and to the unusual vocabulary found in the Pastorals, the Petrines and Hebrews.

#### *Points of contact between 1 Peter and Romans*

These points of contact have been listed in another article<sup>9</sup>. Favourite texts appear in both 1 Peter and Romans. These are from Isaiah (1 Pet. 2.6-8 and Rom. 9.32-33) and from Hosea (1 Pet. 2.10 and Rom. 9.25). Other points of contact are as follows:

‘Do not be conformed...’ occurs at 1 Peter 1.14 and Romans 12.2.

‘Love one another...’ occurs at 1 Peter 1.22 and Romans 12.9f.

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<sup>9</sup> See Table 1 in ‘The Preaching of Paul and Silvanus’, *IBS* 21 (1999), pp. 101-118.

‘A living (or spiritual) sacrifice acceptable to God’ occurs at 1 Peter 2.5 and Romans 12.1.

‘Passions of the flesh’ in 1 Peter 2.11 may echo ‘the law of sin in my members’ in Romans 7.23.

‘Be subject.....to every human institution’ (‘governing authorities’) occurs at 1 Peter 2. 13f and Romans 13.1-4.

‘Do not return evil for evil’ occurs at 1 Peter 3.9 and Romans 12.17.

‘Be sober’ (‘think with sober judgement’) occurs at 1 Peter 4.7-11 and Romans 12.3,6. In the same passages are found references to ‘employing the gifts we have received’.

These points of contact indicate a wider selection of preaching themes than those found in Acts. Paul and Silvanus heard each other preach repeatedly and references to this material appear in their epistles. My impression is that the passages referred to in 1 Peter form part of a more consistent scheme than do the occurrences in Romans; the latter seem to be more random. Does this mean that 1 Peter is in fact the earlier epistle? Received wisdom would say that was most unlikely to be the case. Romans is generally reckoned to have been written in Corinth during Paul’s last three-month stay there, possibly in 55 or 56 CE. 1 Peter is dated with reference to persecutions under Nero (64-65 CE), Domitian (90-95 CE) or even Trajan (early in the second century). But is it necessary to relate the content of the epistle to widespread persecutions by the authorities? Jesus was put to death by direction of a Roman official; James, John’s brother, was slain by Herod (Acts 12.2); at Lystra Paul was stoned and left for dead (Acts 14.19). Paul was imprisoned at Philippi (Acts 16); he was examined by scourging (Acts 22.24); he was saved from being torn in pieces by the crowd (Acts 23.10); the Jews bound themselves by an oath to kill him (Acts 23.12). Being a Christian during the time of Paul’s missionary activity was very risky. We who have experienced sectarian violence in the twenty-first century should appreciate the risks of belonging to a small sect in the first century, and 1 Peter may simply be a letter of encouragement to Christians in dangerous times.

On balance, I think that 1 Peter was probably dictated not long after Silvanus left Paul’s mission to join Peter’s mission to the northern parts of Asia Minor, and that in both 1 Peter and Romans we find reflections of sermon material that had been much used by Paul and

Silvanus. Occasional parallels occur between 1 Peter and 1 Corinthians, Colossians and Galatians, but these are isolated instances. A more consistent series is found in Titus.

*Points of contact between 1 Peter and Titus*

These are as follows:

- ‘Ransomed with the precious blood ‘ (‘gave himself to redeem us’) occurs in 1 Peter 1.18-19 and Titus 2.14.
- ‘Put away all malice...envy’ (‘passing our days in malice and envy’) occurs in 1 Peter 2.1 and Titus 3.3.
- ‘God’s own people’ (‘a people of his own’) occurs in 1 Peter 2.9 and Titus 2.14.
- ‘Abstain from passions of the flesh’ (‘renounce worldly passions’) occurs in 1 Peter 2.11 and Titus 2.12.
- ‘Be subject to every human institution’ (‘submissive to rulers and authorities’) occurs in 1 Peter 2.13 and Titus 3.1.
- ‘Born anew...through...Jesus’ (‘regeneration...through Jesus’) occurs in 1 Peter 1.3, 3.21 and Titus 3.5.

These also may reflect familiar sermon material.

*Points of contact between 1 Peter and Ephesians*

I have listed elsewhere<sup>10</sup> twenty points of contact between 1 Peter and Ephesians. Again, it is my impression that they follow a more consistent plan in 1 Peter, while in Ephesians these references to familiar sermon material are attached in a more random way while the author follows another theme. Notably, the Household Code occurs in both works, but in Ephesians the comparison between marriage and Christ’s relationship with the Church is greatly extended to form the climax to the material contained in the prime pattern. There is in these epistles both a more mature theology and a more developed ethical content than is found in Acts.

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<sup>10</sup> See Table 2 in ‘The Preaching of Paul and Silvanus’.

*Preaching themes relating to the points of contact*

In these epistles, a literary dependence is out of the question. One cannot imagine the author of 1 Peter sitting down with copies of six Pauline epistles before him and selecting fragments from each to set into his own epistle. These points of contact between 1 Peter and the Paulines represent a considerable development in subject matter, when compared with the preaching in Acts. They cover:

Passions of the flesh  
Clean, honest, sober living  
Brotherly love versus evil attitudes  
Christian civic and social responsibility  
Commitment in faith  
Salvation history  
The gospel, baptism, resurrection  
Freedom in Christ  
The Household Code  
Stewardship,

This represents the expansion in preaching themes that took place during Paul's missionary journeys.

It is interesting that the parallels occur between 1 Peter and both Romans and Ephesians. By any reckoning, there is some distance between the writing of Romans and Ephesians. Perhaps the memory of sermon material is not enough to account for these parallels. When Paul was in Rome, he was very anxious to have 'the books and above all the parchments' (2 Tim. 4.13). It seems likely that Paul and Silvanus used *membranae* to record at least the outline of some sermon material. Paul may have had a phenomenal memory, but it is more likely that a fourteen chapter prime pattern in Romans was achieved through the use of *membranae* notes. To achieve the contrasts in scale that actually exist in Romans 1–14, it would be necessary to dictate these chapters virtually in one operation, which would be something of a *tour de force*.

### *Points of contact between Hebrews and the Paulines*

Nineteen parallels<sup>11</sup> are found between Hebrews and five different Pauline epistles. Again, it is difficult to imagine the author of Hebrews selecting fragments from such a collection of Pauline epistles and incorporating them in his own work. It is much more likely that the parallels reflect common preaching material.

In these points of contact shared by Hebrews and the Paulines, favourite texts appear. These are from Deuteronomy, Psalms and Habakkuk. God's promise to Abraham in Genesis is featured, and Mount Sinai is likened to the heavenly Jerusalem in both Hebrews and Galatians.

The purpose of Hebrews is rather different from that of the Petrites and the Paulines (including the Pastorals). It is not related to a specific pastoral situation, but is an attempt to show the significance of Jesus as the fulfilment of Jewish religion. Nevertheless, some of the vocabulary and illustrations from the common store of preaching material have found their way into the epistle.

### *Unusual vocabulary used by Paul and Silvanus*

In a nother paper,<sup>12</sup> I have listed sixty-two unusual words that are shared by the Pastorals, and by 1 and 2 Peter and Hebrews. P.N. Harrison concluded that these were second century words as they are again found in the works of the Fathers. However, none of them reflects second century developments in theology; they are all very ordinary words that might be understood by people in the mid-first century. I have already pointed out that some of these words seem to reflect colloquial use, and the subject matter associated with them is an indication that they were used in preaching to the common people.

Amongst other topics these words refer to:

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<sup>11</sup> See Table 3 in 'The Preaching of Paul and Silvanus'.

<sup>12</sup> See Table 4 in 'The Preaching of Paul and Silvanus'.

Obedience  
Living a life worthy of Christians  
Proper speech  
A healthy attitude to wealth  
The use of God's gifts  
Honesty  
Living peaceably  
Laying on of hands  
Humility  
Remembering their faith  
Not submitting to lusts  
Giving hospitality

The list also reflects the false teaching that troubled the Early Church. It was not a fully developed heresy, but a rag-bag of half-believed and half-understood philosophical and religious maxims that constituted folklore, categorised as 'old wives' tales' and 'fables' involving corruption and temptation.

### *Conclusion*

There are three strands to be followed in tracing the development of preaching in the Early Church. The first is the transmission of stories about Jesus' life and work. Through oral tradition, many small collections of sayings about Jesus were gathered in house churches. As these collections were shared between groups, they gradually grew towards a common form. The gospel writers may have had access to several collections. Other collections of stories were also available to the Gospel writers such as the Birth and Passion narratives. Of these, the Passion narratives are notable in showing no trace of the monumentality that is associated with mythological development, indicating that the texts were fixed at a very early stage. The Birth narratives, like those relating to Pentecost, do show signs of such development.

Stories were also passed on through the preaching of some of the disciples. Biblical evidence and the evidence of tradition must not be needlessly jettisoned at this point. The evidence of 1 Peter does point towards a mission led by Peter in the northern parts of Asia Minor. That may provide the setting for the tradition in which Mark

noted down what Peter preached. It is interesting that the pericopes in Mark's gospel are recorded at different scale levels, as if he compiled his gospel from notes without recasting the material as he did so. John also used stories in his preaching, and through time added a very distinctive theological input. However, he remained essentially a storyteller, and the fact that each story in his gospel is set at its own scale level is in keeping with the tradition that as an old man he drew from his memory bank stories that he was accustomed to using in his preaching about Jesus.

The second strand is the elementary systematisation that is found in Acts. The same pattern persists throughout the book. The resurrection of Jesus is preached; he is accepted as Lord; this leads to repentance, baptism and membership of the Church. No distinction is made between preaching to Jews and preaching to Gentiles. This undoubtedly reflects a genuine element in the history of the Early Church but it appears to be systematised and limited by the author's understanding.

The third strand is found in the rewarding but uneasy partnership of Paul and Silvanus. The points of contact between the works which I attribute to Silvanus (1 and 2 Peter and Hebrews) and those attributed to Paul (all thirteen Paulines, with the exception of interpolations in 1 Timothy and Titus) and the unusual vocabulary found in 1 and 2 Peter and Hebrews, point to a considerable development of theological and ethical themes. Silvanus maintained his own point of view throughout the period of collaboration with Paul. Reference to 'the holy priesthood' in 1 Peter 2.4-6 is an indication of his particular interest, which is elaborated in Hebrews. Eventually, the strain of conflicting viewpoints may have proved to be too great, and Silvanus left Paul to join Peter's mission.

The three-year period which Paul and Silvanus spent in mission together saw the development of a considerable theological and ethical dimension in their preaching. They worked out their material together, heard each other preach the same material time after time, and echoes of that material found their way into their writings. To this day we may detect well worn sermon material in Romans 1.18-2.29 (Man's sinfulness before God), 1 Corinthians 15 (Resurrection), Hebrews 4.14-7.28 (a priest after the order of



Melchizedek), some elements in Hebrews 9 and 10 (the first and the new covenant, 'let us draw near...in full assurance of faith'), and in Hebrews 11.1-12.2 (Heroes of the faith).

George K. Barr.