

The Expository Times

<http://ext.sagepub.com>

Martin Hengel's Impact on English-speaking Scholarship1

Larry W. Hurtado

The Expository Times 2008; 120; 70

DOI: 10.1177/0014524608097823

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://ext.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/120/2/70>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *The Expository Times* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://ext.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://ext.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav>

Martin Hengel's Impact on English-speaking Scholarship¹

By LARRY W. HURTADO

Head of School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh

Professor Martin Hengel is one of the most widely respected and influential New Testament scholars of the late twentieth century. Though German, he has also been very widely read and influential among English-language scholars, his influence facilitated through the prompt translation of so many of his works. He is also distinguished in having made major contributions to the study of second-temple Judaism as well as the NT and early Christianity.

KEYWORDS

Hengel, Zealots, Judaism, Hellenism, Hellenists, christology, christological hymns, NT chronology

In the final decades of the twentieth century, Martin Hengel was probably the most prominent and influential German NT scholar in English-speaking circles, and he continues to have high visibility into the new century as well. Certainly, the availability of so many of his scholarly writings in English translation was a major practical factor contributing to his work becoming so quickly and so widely known. Dedicated NT scholars focused in particular subjects were well aware of relevant major works by Hengel in their German editions. His large study of Jewish resistance to Rome and his massive analysis of Jewish engagement with Hellenism were both noted and influential from the point of their original appearance in German. But it was the (generally) rapid English-translation of a steady stream of his writings that made them readily accessible to a much wider circle of scholars, and also to students. My own attempt at a list identified twenty-five translated items published between 1971 and 2002, beginning with the booklet, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?*, and on through *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ* (2000) and *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture* (2002). Of these, sixteen were translated by John Bowden, to whom Hengel gratefully dedicated *The Four Gospels*

and the *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Moreover, this Bowden-SCM Press connection, together with North American co-publication (usually by Fortress Press), meant that the books were much more accessibly priced than had they been published by a press more concerned simply with library sales (as, unfortunately, seems to be the policy of too many UK and European prestige publishers).

Of course, the readiness to translate and publish in English so many of his works indicates that there was already a significantly large interest in what he had to say, and that he quickly acquired a wide readership eager to benefit from his erudite studies. In short, there quickly was, and remains, an evident Hengel 'market'! As I have already noted, these readers include many students of NT/Christian Origins, especially those taking up advanced studies at post-graduate level. But also, in the North American setting, where required-purchase books for courses is a regular feature of studies, Hengel's books found a readership of students at various levels, and were even noted by pastors and serious 'lay' readers. In this paper, I focus on the nature of the impact that Hengel has had, with specific reference to some of the major issues and positions that he has addressed.

Hengel's Aims

Obviously, behind the impressive flow of publications, there is a remarkable erudition and commitment to his scholarly work. Every reader of any of Hengel's

¹ This is a slightly revised version of a contribution given at a small day-conference held in Cambridge 3 March 2007, organized by Professor G. N. Stanton and honouring Professor Hengel in connection with his 80th birthday.

works is struck by the depth of familiarity with primary sources of all types, literary and non-literary, the engagement with relevant scholarship, and the vigour and clarity of the argument that Hengel advances. Clearly, part of the secret of Hengel's success is simply that he is an unusually gifted scholar able to focus his considerable abilities and energies toward making contributions to all the subjects that he addresses. That last note merits emphasis. Hengel's works are never simply a learned review of a subject; they always reflect the desire to advance things by offering his own analysis. Although he clearly usually builds upon the work of previous scholars (something that he has always been commendably candid about), he characteristically produces a discussion that becomes thereafter crucial (even if not always persuasive) in the continuing debate.

One is also struck by the sweep of the subjects that he has addressed, and this contributes to the breadth of his impact. It is more typical, and perfectly understandable, that most scholars confine themselves to one or two subjects, often not straying far from the subject of their doctoral thesis. Hengel's major contributions, however, range widely, from early studies of the Jewish religious and historical context of the NT on into early christology, Paul, the Gospels (especially Mark and John), and the Septuagint.² Unless one measures this body of work against some giant of bygone days, such as Harnack, Hengel's scope of scholarly output and competence is difficult to match. Certainly, among his contemporaries it is hard to find such breadth of expertise in publications. Although Hengel occasionally complained that the pressures of contemporary German university teaching make it difficult to carry out in-depth research toward large-scope projects, by any measure he has been remarkably productive.³

It should not be surprising, therefore, that behind this prodigious endeavour is a scholarly vision that is ambitious in scope and almost prophet-like in conviction and fervour.⁴ In prefaces to several

works, Hengel candidly indicates his dissatisfaction with the state of NT scholarship, and points to his own aim of a more substantial and sound type of study that can also serve as a stimulus and model for others.

Also, part of his aim has been to combine, quite deliberately and self-consciously, a profound theological concern with thorough and critical historical inquiry. For example, in the preface to *Son of God* (Eng. trans. 1976, vii), he indicated that in a time 'when historical positivism and hermeneutical interest largely go their own ways in New Testament scholarship, it is vitally important to reunite historical research and the theological search for truth'. Still more candidly and at slightly greater length, in the preface to the 1989 English edition of *The Zealots*, Hengel wrote of the situation in Germany in the mid-1950s in which he formulated his scholarly direction, noting both a neglect of the Jewish environment of early Christianity and also the one-sided emphasis on hermeneutical issues that characterized the heyday of the Bultmann school. Disliking what he called 'this exegetical euphoria with its one-sided orientation towards Marburg University and its speculative tendency to dismiss too lightly the true relationships between the sources', Hengel took up his own direction, pointing to Adolf Schlatter as a better model for his aims (ix). In a still more vexed tone, in the preface to *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch* (1997, ix), Hengel decried in the current scholarly scene 'a radical form of criticism which in the end must be said to be uncritical, because it wants neither really to understand the sources nor to interpret them, but basically destroys them in order to make room for its own fantastic constructions'.

But, in the preface to his *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (1979, vii), Hengel also rejected the misguided stance of those forms of Christian piety that exhibit what he called 'the primitive ostracism of historical – and that always means critical – methods, without which neither historical nor theological understanding of the New Testament is possible'. In short, Hengel's bold vision involved an unfettered and thoroughly critical historical approach that draws its motivation and energy from a passion for the Christian Gospel. That is, the sort of Christian faith-stance that Hengel sought to occupy is confident enough in the essential truth of the Gospel to allow the results of historical investigation to be

² Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer (eds.), *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994).

³ E.g. see his complaint in the preface to *Between Jesus and Paul* (London: SCM, 1983), ix.

⁴ Hengel gave a fuller statement of his orientation and aim in 'Antrittsrede des Herren Martin Hengel', *Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaft Jahrbuch 1978* (1979), 115–19.

determined by rigorous application of principles of thoroughness and critical analysis.

In addition to his contributions to the study of particular matters, in his articulation and exhibition of such a bold scholarly vision, Hengel has also been influential in English-speaking circles and more broadly. On the back cover of the 1988 edition of my book, *One God, One Lord*, Hengel's endorsement included the observation that it drew upon and reflected the work of a number of scholars in various countries who, in a certain sense, form what he memorably called 'a new "*Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*". There is, of course, actually no '*Schule*' in any formal sense, and Professor Hengel has certainly not sought to organize a band of disciples; but there are now a growing number of scholars internationally whose studies often confirm particular features of Hengel's own prodigious work, and who have found in his many contributions both substantial benefit and inspiration for their own.

To speak for myself, at the early stages of my own research on the origins of devotion to Jesus (in the late 1970s), several of Hengel's early studies were crucially formative. As early as my 1979 article in which I highlighted serious problems in Bousset's classic, *Kyrios Christos*, and called for a new and equivalent analysis, I drew heavily upon Hengel, particularly his *Judaism and Hellenism*, and also key early Christological studies.⁵ Among the latter, I particularly acknowledge his little volume, *Son of God*, and also his programmatic essay, 'Christologie und neutestamentliche Chronologie' (1972).⁶ In subsequent years, I found especially stimulating his essays on the importance of 'hymns' and Psalms as modes of earliest christological reflection. The latter studies obviously are congenial with my emphasis on the phenomena of gathered worship as key manifestations of devotion to Jesus, including

⁵ Larry W. Hurtado, 'New Testament Christology: A Critique of Bousset's Influence' *Theological Studies* 40 (1979), 306–17; German: 'Forschungen zur neutestamentlichen Christologie seit Bousset; Forschungsrichtungen und bedeutende Beiträge' *Theologische Beiträge* 11 (1980), 158–71.

⁶ The German original appeared in *Neues Testament und Geschichte: Historisches Geschehen und Deutung im Neuen Testament. Oscar Cullmann zum 70. Geburtstag* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 43–67, and in English later in *Between Jesus and Paul*, 30–47. The original essay also appears now in Martin Hengel, *Studien zur Christologie: Kleine Schriften IV* (WUNT 201; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 27–51.

the singing of hymns/odes about (and even to) Jesus, and it is certain that Hengel's discussions helped me to form this conviction.⁷ Even if, on some matters, I am unable to assent to Hengel's positions (perhaps especially his characterization of the Jerusalem Hellenists and their supposedly crucial role), I freely and gratefully acknowledge his contributions to my own work, both in particular matters and as an inspiring model of committed scholarship.⁸

Moreover, were they given opportunity to do so, I suspect that others as well would salute Hengel's contributions and acknowledge his influence and stimulation for their own work, and among them would be a number of English-speaking scholars. If it is a bit of an exaggeration to speak of a 'new *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*', it is certainly the case that all those who occasionally have been tagged with this sobriquet reflect Hengel's impact.

Major Contributions on Specific Topics

But beyond those, among whom I include myself, who directly acknowledge the contribution of his work to their own studies, Hengel has had a much wider impact. In the remaining portion of this discussion, I focus on a few key topics in which his studies remain crucial.

Zealots

Hengel's first major work, *Die Zeloten* (1961), presented his argument that there was a Jewish freedom movement that comprised various groups and extended across several decades from Herod the Great to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, and for which the religious conviction that God is the only rightful king of Israel was central. An early indication of the impact of the book on English-speaking scholars is the five-page review by William Farmer in the 1962–63 volume of *New Testament Studies*.⁹ Farmer judged the book 'a milestone in New

⁷ Note especially, 'Hymn and Christology' in *Between Jesus and Paul*, 78–96; "'Sit at My Right Hand!'" in *Studies in Early Christology*, 119–226; and 'The Song about Christ in Earliest Worship' in *Studies in Early Christology*, 227–92.

⁸ I have spelled out my own view of the Hellenists elsewhere: L. W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 206–14. I return to the matter later in this essay.

⁹ William R. Farmer, review of *Die Zeloten*, *New Testament Studies* 9 (1962–63), 395–401.

Testament research,' and the extended space given to this review surely signalled that it was both a sizeable and an important study.

It is, I think, also almost certain that *Die Zeloten* stimulated other major studies by English-speaking scholars in the 1970–80s, such as *Israel in Revolution* (1976), by David Rhoads, and, in a more strident tone of disagreement, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs* (1985), by Richard Horsley and John Hanson, and then subsequent publications by Horsley.¹⁰ From yet another viewpoint, we should also probably include Martin Goodman's *The Ruling Class of Judea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome AD 66–70* (1987).¹¹ As is well known, both Rhoads and Horsley in particular took issue with Hengel's view about Jewish resistance groups as heavily motivated by messianic hopes; but, thereby, they show that they were also shaped by Hengel's study. Indeed, whatever position one takes on the issues under dispute about Roman-era Jewish freedom groups, it is clear that Hengel's vigorous and extensive discussion has to be credited as influential in setting the agenda.

Moreover, although some North American scholars prefer to focus on socio-economic causes of Jewish resistance against Rome, and treat religion as a 'meta-phenomenon' of little explanatory power, the appearance of a second edition of the English translation of Hengel's large study of Jewish 'Zealots' in 1997 suggests that matters may remain very much under active disputation, and that there are a good many English-speaking scholars who find persuasive Hengel's insistence on the religious motivations in Jewish resistance to Rome. The current bitter experience of Islamic-motivated resistance to coalition forces in Iraq may well help to illustrate for Western scholars the importance of religion in shaping and motivating the responses of colonized peoples to dominating political regimes.

¹⁰ David M. Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution 6–74 CE* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1976); Richard A. Horsley with John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985); R. A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1987); idem., *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge, VA: Trinity Press International, 1995).

¹¹ Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt Against Rome, AD 66–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Judaism and Hellenism

Hengel's second major work, *Judaism and Hellenism*, made even more of an impact. It is rare for a major work by a NT scholar to receive serious attention by scholars of ancient Judaism; but Hengel's monumental study drew engagement both in NT circles and among Judaism scholars as well. Although the German editions were noted by English-speaking scholars, the appearance of the English translation in 1974 brought substantially wider and sustained attention.

NT scholars such as Howard Clark Kee offered glowing appreciation, both for the in-depth analysis of Jewish life in Palestine in the Hellenistic period, and also for the corrective brought to previously common use of simplistic distinctions between 'Hellenistic' and 'Palestinian' Judaism in NT studies.¹² In particular, Hengel showed persuasively to most scholars that Greek language and other features of Hellenistic culture penetrated Jewish Palestine, and that one could not readily identify the provenance or date of something simply on the basis of whether it was putatively 'Semitic' or Greek, nor could these two categories be as simply distinguished as many NT scholars had assumed. To be sure, as Hengel freely acknowledged, he built upon previous arguments by Bickermann and Lieberman in particular, but the massive documentation and analysis of Hengel's work made a far greater impact and demanded the attention of scholars.

It is also the rare scholarly book that continues to receive sustained attention in journals several years after its publication; and here again Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism* stands out. As illustration of this, I point to an article by Fergus Millar in 1978.¹³ Although Millar asserted that Hengel's thesis (which Millar summarized as claiming a significant positive interaction between Judaism and Hellenism in the Ptolemaic period that was then halted by the nationalistic reaction in the Maccabean period

¹² Note H. C. Kee's review article comparing the revised edition of Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC – AD 135)*, Vol. 1, edited by Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973); and Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism*, in *Religious Studies Review* 2/4 (1976), 4–7. Likewise enthusiastic was the review by R. E. Brown, *Theological Studies* (00), 785–87.

¹³ Fergus Millar, 'The Background to the Maccabean Revolution: Reflections on Martin Hengel's "Judaism and Hellenism"' *Journal of Jewish Studies* 29 (1978), 1–21.

and then ‘resumed and brought to fruition in the preaching of Christianity to Gentiles’) was ‘that of a Christian theologian,’ he granted that Hengel’s survey of Hellenistic political, administrative, economic and cultural influences in Palestine is ‘one of the best studies of any region of the Hellenistic world’.¹⁴ Further, although Millar dissented at some points and preferred to place emphases differently on certain key issues, he acknowledged that these were matters of interpretation, and that Hengel’s arguments could not simply be set aside, but could be refuted only on the basis of the sort of in-depth scholarly expertise that Hengel demonstrated in his study.

One could cite also the retrospective review-article by L. H. Feldman in 1977.¹⁵ Feldman likewise was doubtful that (except for certain elite circles) Palestinian Jews were nearly so positive in embracing Hellenistic culture as Hengel claimed, and in this article he offered a number of specific counter-arguments to Hengel’s wide-ranging analysis. Yet that Feldman felt it necessary to give such extended critical engagement with Hengel’s study some eight years after its original publication, and three years after the appearance of the English translation surely indicates its monumental impact.

Later still, Hengel’s scholarly contributions were the subject of two major articles in *Religious Studies Review* (1989). Two decades after its initial appearance, Hengel’s *Judaism and Hellenism* received a critical but respectful and appreciative analysis by John Collins. As a tribute to Hengel’s impact at that point, Collins acknowledged that Hengel’s emphasis that Palestinian as well as Diaspora Judaism was shaped by the encounter with Hellenism ‘has become the new orthodoxy in the scholarship’.¹⁶ Although Collins granted some validity to the charge that Hengel had ‘exaggerated the degree to which Palestinian Judaism was Hellenized,’ he also acknowledged that Hengel’s study overall

remained ‘invaluable,’ and Collins concluded that Hengel’s status as ‘one of the preeminent scholars of ancient Judaism in this generation is secure and well-deserved’.¹⁷ Moreover, Collins noted gratefully that Hengel ‘has done more than most to remind students that early Christianity must be understood in the context of contemporary Judaism, and both religions in the broader context of the Hellenistic and Roman world’.¹⁸

Further Impact on NT Studies

In addition to Hengel’s studies that have already been mentioned, we can also note briefly his effect upon some other matters directly to do with the NT and early Christianity.¹⁹

I have already noted Hengel’s emphasis on chronology. It is he, perhaps more than any other NT scholar of his time, who has starkly (and in my view persuasively) underscored how little time there was between the death of Jesus and the flowering of a vibrant devotion to him that involved astonishing Christological claims and unprecedented devotional actions, including the phenomena of corporate worship. To cite one of his memorable statements, ‘one is tempted to say that more happened [in terms of this development in Jesus-devotion] in this period of less than two decades [i.e. c 30–50 CE] than in the whole of the next seven centuries’.²⁰ As a supporter of this view, I know that it continues to be necessary to emphasize it to some NT scholars who appear reluctant to face the force of chronological data in understanding earliest Jesus-devotion. But it is clear that Hengel’s emphasis has not been refuted and must now be taken, I believe, as one of the major factors in the debate.

Hengel’s view of the Jerusalem church has also been influential, although not without criticism as well. It is surely Hengel’s claims about the Jerusalem Church Hellenists that formed a major impetus for Craig Hill’s study of the matter.²¹ Elsewhere I have indicated that I find Hill’s case more persuasive than

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1, 2.

¹⁵ Louis H. Feldman, ‘Hengel’s *Judaism and Hellenism* in Retrospect’ *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977), 371–82. See also Feldman’s later and larger article, ‘How Much Hellenism in Jewish Palestine?’ *Hebrew Union College Annual* 57 (1986), 83–111, in which Hengel remained the key discussion partner.

¹⁶ John J. Collins, ‘Judaism as *Praeparatio Evangelica* in the Work of Martin Hengel’, *Religious Studies Review* 15/3 (1989), 227 (226–28).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁹ On this, see also William R. Long, ‘Martin Hengel on Early Christianity’, *Religious Studies Review* 15/3 (1989), 230–34.

²⁰ Hengel, *Son of God*, 2.

²¹ Craig C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992). Cf. Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*, 1–29.

Hengel's, which means specifically doubting Hengel's contention that the Hellenists were the crucial link between Jesus and Paul, and I am not alone in these doubts.²² On the other hand, Hengel's emphasis that Jerusalem was a multi-lingual city, with Greek widely used along with Aramaic, and perhaps Hebrew in some circles, is both soundly based in the data and also of significance in our analysis of earliest Christian developments. In particular, Hengel has rightly shown that we must allow for an early and vibrant Greek-speaking Christianity first in *Jerusalem*, and that this may well have involved the translation of Jesus' sayings and emergent creedal and liturgical formulae within the first years of the Christian movement. This can have profound implications for attempts to date and locate texts and traditions on the basis of their original language. So, e.g. if, as many scholars now contend, Q originated in Greek, it is entirely possible that it could have taken shape initially in Roman Palestine, especially in the multi-lingual Jerusalem of that time.

We can also cite as instructive Hengel's readiness to grant that early Christian teaching about Jesus' atoning death may well have drawn upon ideas that originated in Greek culture but had for a long time been appropriated in Jewish tradition.²³ Here we see a key example of how Hengel's grasp of the complexity of historical interaction between Judaism and Hellenism informs his understanding of the resources available for appropriation and adaptation by earliest Christians in their Jewish tradition.

Conclusion

Additional features of Hengel's impact could be cited, but space does not permit treatment of them, and so I conclude briefly by underscoring a few matters.

First, Hengel has set a high standard of thoroughness of research that continues to instruct and inspire. Second, his frank acknowledgement of his Christian stance and theological concerns is commendable, both in its honesty and in his demonstration that (contrary to the anxieties of some) such a commitment can actually inspire dedicated and critical historical analysis that wins the praise of scholars of various

faith-stances. Third, over against both anti-critical conservatism of a creedalistic or fundamentalist nature, and over against the now-fashionable disdain of the validity of critical historical investigation in some so-called 'post-modernist' circles, and also over against the tendency by some other NT scholars to play off critical historical study and hermeneutical concerns, Hengel's body of work stands as a monumental refutation and inspiration.

In a number of his published works, Hengel has indicated that they are intended as preliminary studies for a comprehensive work on the NT and early Christianity. The first volume of this eagerly awaited work has now appeared, and I am sure that I speak for many in looking forward to its completion.²⁴ Moreover, I also hope also that it will be as rapidly translated as the many other studies that have made him such an influential figure in English-speaking circles.

Appendix: Martin Hengel's Books in English Translation

Was Jesus a Revolutionist? Trans. William Klassen (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1971 [German 1970]).

Victory over Violence: Jesus and the Revolutionists. Trans. David E. Green (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1973 [German 1971]).

Judaism and Hellenism. Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1974 [German, 1961, 1973²]).

Property and Riches in the Early Church. Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1974 [German 1973]).

Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion. Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1976 [German 1975]).

Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross. Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1977 [German 1976]).

Christ and Power. Trans. Everett R. Kalin (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1977).

Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity. Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1979 [German 1979]).

²² Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, esp. 207–10. See also, e.g. Long, 'Martin Hengel on Early Christianity', 233: 'The role that Hengel wants to attribute to the rather amorphous and shadowy Hellenists in Acts remains questionable....'

²³ Hengel, *Atonement*.

²⁴ Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Jesus und das Judentum: Geschichte des frühen Christentums I* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). This is the first volume of a projected four-volume work.

- Jews, Greeks and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1980 [German 1976]).
- The Expiatory Sacrifice of Christ* (Manchester: John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 1980). (Offprint/booklet from BJRL, the T. W. Manson Lecture for 1979).
- The Atonement: The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1981 [German 1980]).
- The Charismatic Leader and His Followers.* Trans. James Greig (Edinburgh: T&T Clark; New York: Crossroad, 1981).
- Between Jesus and Paul.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1983 [German essays 1975–83]).
- Studies in the Gospel of Mark.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1985 [German essays 1982–84]).
- Earliest Christianity.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1986). (Contents = *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity + Property and Riches in the Early Church*).
- The Cross of the Son of God.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1986). (Contents = *Son of God + The Atonement*).
- The Johannine Question.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1989 [German 1989]).
- The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1989 [German 1989]).
- The Zealots.* Trans. David Smith (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989, 1997² [German 1961, 1976²]).
- The Pre-Christian Paul.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1991 [German 1991]).
- Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995).
- Paul between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years.* Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer. Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1997 [German 1997]).
- Conflicts and Challenges in Early Christianity.* Martin Hengel and C. K. Barrett. Edited by D. A. Hagner (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999).
- The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ.* Trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 2000).
- The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of its Canon.* Martin Hengel with Roland Deines. Trans. Mark Biddle (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002).

NEW STUDY ON THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

Enno Edzard Popkes, *Das Menschenbild des Thomasevangeliums* (WUNT 206; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007. €99.00. pp. xviii + 472. ISBN 978-3-16-149265-5).

In this significant new contribution to research on the *Gospel of Thomas* Popkes concentrates on the Coptic version of the text discovered among the Nag Hammadi corpus in 1945. The long established scholarly task of recovering the original text behind the Coptic is set aside. Instead Popkes seeks to understand the Coptic document as a Gnostic text. His radical proposal is that the Coptic text does not just represent a revised earlier tradition that has been infused with later Gnostic ideas at various points, nor that the text is an example of 'early-Gnosticism'. Rather, he argues that the Coptic version of the *Gospel of Thomas* presupposes a thoroughgoing and fully developed Gnostic system.

Popkes theory is likely to provoke much discussion, both from those who see the *Gospel of Thomas* as an early source that allows recovery of authentic Jesus material and also from those who see it as a second-century composition that was congenial to those who read the other texts in the Nag Hammadi corpus which exhibit a more explicit cosmological system replete with a demiurge and various archons and other intermediary beings. This new work will continue to generate debate about the use of the term 'Gnosticism' as well as enliven dialogue about the character of the *Gospel of Thomas*. As such it will be much appreciated by specialists in *Thomas* research.

PAUL FOSTER

School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh