CALLED BY THE NAME OF THE LORD: EARLY USES OF THE NAMES AND TITLES OF JESUS IN IDENTIFYING HIS FOLLOWERS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Notre Dame in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Eric Rowe

David Aune, Director

Graduate Program in Theology Notre Dame, Indiana

July 2012
Recent scholarship on early Christianity has witnessed a great deal of interest in the identity of that movement, particularly with respect to the diverse forms of Christianity and their relationships to Judaism. One conclusion many scholars involved in studying these questions have reached is that there was an early period in the history of the Jesus movement in which it would be anachronistic to call it Christianity, which then leads to the problem of what to call this movement that would become Christianity. However, little attention has been given to the question of what vocabulary was used in identifying those who would later be called Christianoi.

This dissertation attempts to fill part of that gap with a discussion of a particular subset within the early vocabulary of identification for the Jesus movement, namely the use of Jesus’s names and titles in identifying his followers. The method is historical critical and includes a general discussion of the ancient use of individuals
names in identifying various sorts of groups that were appurtenant to those individuals, followed by several chapters treating specific examples of this phenomenon in designations of the early Jesus movement, including periphrastic expressions, the label *Christians*, and the labels *Nazarenes* and *Galileans*. Finally, inquiry is made into what might have been the vocabulary of identification for this movement in its earliest period, prior to the writing of any of its extant literature. This is done by consideration of the uses of Jesus’s names and titles in baptism and persecution.
Richard Talmage Rowe

“And his name shall be on their foreheads.”

- Revelation 22:4
# CONTENTS

Preface .................................................................................................................. vi

Acknowledgements ............................................................................................... vii

Abbreviations ......................................................................................................... viii

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................ 1
  1.1. Plan of the Work ......................................................................................... 3
  1.2. Status Quaestionis .................................................................................... 7
    1.2.1. Current Avoidance of the Label Christian ......................................... 7
    1.2.2. Previous Works on Early Designations for the Jesus Movement ....... 12
  1.3. Identity and Identification ......................................................................... 20
    1.3.1. Social Identity ..................................................................................... 20
    1.3.2. The Difference Determined by Who Does the Designating ............. 23

Chapter 2: Use of Personal Names in Identifying Groups in Antiquity ............. 30
  2.1. Social Categories ....................................................................................... 31
  2.2. Families and Nations Named for their Patriarchs .................................... 32
    2.2.1. Family Membership Indicated Using the Father’s Name ................. 33
    2.2.2. Ethnic Labels Drawn from Patriarchs’ Names .................................. 34
  2.3. Political Factions Identified by the Names of Their Leaders .................. 38
  2.4. Students Identified Using the Names of Their Teachers ....................... 42
  2.5. Voluntary Associations and Cultic Groups Identified Using the Names of Patrons ......................................................................................................... 52
  2.6. Factions of the Jesus Movement Identified Using the Names of Their Founders ............................................................................................................. 56
  2.7. Conclusion ................................................................................................. 58

Chapter 3: Periphrastic Uses of the Names and Titles of Jesus in Designating His Followers .............................................................................................................. 60
  3.1. Implicit Mentions of Jesus in Insider Labels ........................................... 61
3.1.1. Disciples of Jesus ................................................................. 63
3.1.2. Churches of God in Christ .................................................. 67
3.1.3. Believers in Jesus and the Faith of Christ ............................. 70
3.1.4. Other Abbreviated Designations ......................................... 76
3.2. Names and Titles of Jesus Used to Label the Movement Metonymously 79
3.3. Those of Christ ..................................................................... 81
3.4. In Christ and Similar Prepositional Phrases ......................... 86
3.5. Conclusions ......................................................................... 91

Chapter 4: Nazarenes and Galileans ........................................... 93
4.1. Occurrences of Ναζωραίος and Similar Words ....................... 93
4.2. Jesus and the Naming of the Sect of the Nazarenes .............. 98
4.3. Galileans ............................................................................. 107
   4.3.1. Julian the Apostate ....................................................... 108
   4.3.2. Epictetus ...................................................................... 109
   4.3.3. Justin Martyr and Hegesippus ..................................... 111
   4.3.4. The Mishnah and Bar Kokhba ..................................... 112
        4.3.5 Conclusions about the Label Galileans ...................... 114
4.4. Conclusions ....................................................................... 116

Chapter 5: Christian and Christianity .......................................... 119
5.1. Survey of Usage from Acts through Tertullian .................... 119
5.2. The Date of the Label’s Origin ............................................. 122
   5.2.1. The Pompeii Graffito .................................................. 123
   5.2.2. Josephus ..................................................................... 124
   5.2.3. Tacitus ........................................................................ 125
   5.2.4. Acts ......................................................................... 127
5.3. Outsider Usage of Χριστιανός ............................................. 130
   5.3.1. Usage by Government Officials .................................... 131
   5.3.2. First Peter .................................................................. 135
   5.3.3. Continued Use of Χριστιανός in Persecution ................. 139
5.4. The Insider’s Perspective ....................................................... 143
   5.4.1. An Outsider Label that Insiders Accepted .................... 143
   5.4.2. Conscious Connection of Christian to Christ ............... 145
5.5. Χριστιανισμός / Christianismus ........................................ 146
5.6. Conclusions ....................................................................... 156

Chapter 6: Looking Back Further: The Use of Jesus’s Name in Baptism and Persecution .................................................... 158
6.1. Baptism ............................................................................. 161
6.1.1. Use of Jesus’s Name In Baptism .......................................................... 163
6.1.2. Baptism In Jesus’s Name as a Pre-Pauline Institution .................. 168
6.2. Persecution and Martyrdom ..................................................................... 170
   6.2.1. Persecution Without the Label Χριστιανός ................................ 173
6.3. Conclusions.............................................................................................. 181

Chapter 7: Conclusion ...................................................................................... 184
    7.1. Summary .............................................................................................. 184
    7.2. Implications ......................................................................................... 188
       7.2.1. The Importance of Language ....................................................... 189
       7.2.2. What to Call the Movement ......................................................... 190

Bibliography .................................................................................................... 194
PREFACE

The path to this dissertation took many turns. After I had spent some time on two other topics that did not work out, my adviser mentioned to me that he was surprised at the fact that there did not seem to exist a recent monograph on the early designations of the Jesus movement, which was especially surprising given the heightened concern over the label *Christian* in the present generation of scholarship on the origins of Christianity. So I took that up as the topic of my dissertation. While I was still researching that topic my adviser learned of a forthcoming monograph on the same topic, Paul Trebilco’s excellent book, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*, which I was able to read prior to its publication. Because of the similarity between Trebilco’s work and what I initially had in mind for my own, I decided to focus my treatment on the use of Jesus’s names and titles in identifying his followers, a phenomenon which is most obvious in the label *Christian*, but which my research convinced me could be seen in other designations as well. I believe that this refinement has allowed me to produce a work that is complementary to Trebilco’s.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give much thanks to the University of Notre Dame’s Theology Department for the funding it provided me during my doctoral coursework, exams, and dissertation writing, without which this work would not have been possible. The moral support of the faculty, staff, and students of the department has also been tremendously important to me throughout my tenure at Notre Dame. I am especially grateful to my director, David Aune for setting an example of excellence in scholarship, for holding me to high standards, for consistently providing helpful feedback, for patiently bearing with me, and for his encouragement and friendship. I would also like to thank Brian Daley and John Meier for serving as readers in the midst of various other trials and responsibilities. Many other doctoral students have been very beneficial to me in both my attitude and my academics. I especially thank Matt Bates, Daniel Smith, Christina Brinks Rea, Josh Yoder, Josephine Dru, Brandon Bruning, Michael Francis, and Luma Kudher.
ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations other than those listed below follow *The SBL Handbook of Style.*

**ASE**  *Annali di Storia Dell’esegesi.*

**FD III**  *Fouilles de Delphes,* III. Épigraphie. Paris 1929-.


CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

A problem that partially incited this dissertation is a recent trend among scholars to eschew the labels Christian and Christianity with respect to those who believed in Jesus Christ in the earliest years of their movement during which some or all of the books we now call the New Testament were written. Although the scope of this dissertation is not limited to that problem, it will be a recurring theme throughout our study. As will be discussed below, one fact that gave rise to this trend is that the label Christian itself, or rather its cognate in Greek, does not appear in the earliest books of the NT and is only sparsely attested in the later ones. This fact prompts the question of what other labels filled the void that Christian would come to fill in designating the Jesus movement.

This question is complicated by the fact that the most frequently attested early self-designations of the Jesus movement are more like terms of endearment or insider jargon, like brothers and sisters, or believers, than labels like Christian that could be used in communication between insiders and outsiders. In the early stages of research for this project, surveying early Christian literature for labels that would be usable in communication between insiders and outsiders, the examples that stood out as most
nearly equivalent to Christian in this respect were those that were also like the word Christian in another respect, namely that they were labels that contained within themselves names or titles of Jesus Christ. These include various periphrastic expressions, such as disciples of Christ and those in Christ, the toponyms Nazarenes and Galileans, which were essentially surnames of Jesus before becoming labels for those who believed in him, and the Greek and Latin cognates of our English word Christian (Χριστιανός / Christianus), along with their derivative which is equivalent to our Christianity (Χριστιανισμός / Christianismus).

Thus, this dissertation is a study of the early uses of names and titles of Jesus in identifying his followers. This study will show that labels of this sort were already in use as early as the earliest extant literature of the Jesus movement, Paul’s epistles, and probably much earlier. Although this dissertation will not directly engage in the ongoing scholarly conversations about the identity of the early Jesus movement, particularly conversations about the development of a distinction between Christianity and Judaism and the extent of unity and diversity in the early Jesus movement, it is hoped that it will help to advance those discussions indirectly, as it is in their context that the question of what to call the Jesus movement is most important.

The primary scope of evidence considered in this dissertation will be all literature that refers to the Jesus movement up through the time of Tertullian (early third century). Two factors influenced the selection of this stopping point. First, it is
in Tertullian that we first see a member of the Jesus movement using the label *Christian* with great frequency as his main self-designation. Second, it will be necessary to discuss the connotations of the Greek suffix –ισμος, and Tertullian’s borrowing of that suffix in Latin in the words *Judaismus* and *Christianismus*. Occasionally, later writings will be consulted, especially in chapter four, where data from the first two centuries about the labels *Nazarene* and *Galilean* is sparse and evidence from later sources will be helpful in reconstructing the usage of these labels in that period. However, evidence later than Tertullian will not be considered exhaustively or systematically.

1.1. Plan of the Work

The plan of the work will be as follows. In the introductory chapter we will take note of the recent trend of the perception of problems in the use of the label *Christian* and survey past works on the designations of the early Jesus movement, some of which were written before the rise of that trend, and one of which was written after it and in conscious interaction with it. The present study should be seen as the next logical extension of those works with a narrowing of focus to those designations that function most nearly as equivalents of the label *Christian*. The introduction will also discuss the relevance of social identity theory, emic/etic distinctions, and orders of discourse to the topic of this dissertation.
Chapter two will summarize the variety of ways that individuals’ names were used in labels for groups appurtenant to those individuals in the Greco-Roman world and Palestinian Judaism. An example of this is the formation of the label Pythagorean from the name Pythagoras. Other examples can be found in the designations of families, nations, political factions, schools, voluntary associations, and factions within the Jesus movement itself. While some of these labels were made by adding a suffix to the person’s name, like the –ean in Pythagorean, we will see that other labels that were functionally equivalent to those were formed in a variety of ways, including prepositional phrases, genitives of relationship, and various periphrastic expressions.

Chapters three through five will investigate several ways the general phenomena described in chapter two are exemplified in specific designations applied to members of the Jesus movement, their groups, and the movement as a whole. This will begin in chapter three with a survey of periphrastic labels for the Jesus movement that include names or titles of Jesus. These are divided into four categories. The first category is labels that usually appear without any mention of Jesus, but which are abbreviations of longer expressions that do include mentions of Jesus, such as the very common label believers, which is short for believers in Jesus. The second category is the metonymous use of names or titles of Jesus to represent his followers, their groups, or their movement as a whole. The third category is the use of the genitive of relationship to refer to members of the Jesus movement as those
of Christ. The fourth is the use of a prepositional phrase to label them as *those in Christ*.

Chapter four will discuss the labels *Nazarenes* and *Galileans*, both of which appear occasionally in early sources of various provenance as labels for members of the Jesus movement. The most likely explanation for these designations is that they were originally toponyms attached as surnames to the name of Jesus, as in *Jesus of Nazareth* or *Jesus the Galilean*, and that they came to be applied to his followers, not as toponyms in their case, but as examples of the members of a movement being labeled with the name of its founder.

Chapter five will discuss the Latin and Greek cognates of the words *Christian* (*Christianus* / Χριστιανός) and *Christianity* (*Christianismus* / Χριστιανισμός). It will be argued that the designation *Christianus*, meaning *partisan of Christ*, was first coined in Latin by Roman government officials in the 40’s or 50’s and that it was used as a criminal charge at least as early as the 60’s. It will be shown that when this label occurs in Christian literature from the late first century to the mid-second century it is often used in a way that suggests it is the label outsiders use, while insiders accept it and even celebrate it as an accurate label for themselves without adopting it as their own designation of choice. While the label enjoys greater use among insiders in the latter half of the second century, it is only in Tertullian that we see *Christianus* become the main label that he as an insider uses to describe himself and his coreligionists. While it is possible that this fact reflects an explosion in use of
the label around A.D. 200, it is also possible that it reflects a situation that had already obtained for some number of decades among Latin speakers and that Tertullian provides our first evidence of it, not because of when he writes, but because he is the first Latin Christian author we encounter.¹

One conclusion chapters three through five will all support is that the Jesus movement was “called by the name of the Lord” in a variety of different ways at least as early as the writing of Paul’s epistles. This is most clearly demonstrable in the periphrastic expressions found in Paul’s own writings. But chapters four and five will argue that the labels *Nazarene* and *Christian* were also in use by roughly that same time. Chapter six will argue that the date range in which such expressions first came to be used can be pushed back into the 30’s. Since we lack writings from that period, the identification of precise vocabulary will not be possible, and the evidence will be circumstantial, based on what we can discover about the use of Jesus’s name in the early baptisms and persecutions of the Jesus movement.

¹ This is leaving aside the problem of the dating of Minucius Felix, than which, according to Harnack, no more hopeless problem appears in the history of early Christian literature. Given that some literary dependence between Tertullian and Minucius Felix in one direction or the other must have existed, a specific treatment of Minucius Felix apart from Tertullian would not likely contribute anything of substance to the present study. See Adolf Harnack, *Die Chronologie der Altcristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius* (2 vols.; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904), 2.324–30.
1.2. Status Quaestionis

Several recent trends in the study of early Christianity have sparked a heightened awareness of the need to develop a more well-defined understanding of the group identity of that movement. This awareness has led to doubt that modern scholars should use the label *Christian* in application to believers in Jesus from the time period in which the earliest books of the NT were written. In what follows I summarize some of these recent trends in scholarship as well as previous studies on the labels of the movement.

1.2.1. Current Avoidance of the Label *Christian*

As mentioned above, one factor that prompted this dissertation was a growing trend among recent scholars to avoid applying the label *Christian* to the earliest generations of believers in Jesus. This sentiment is put bluntly, but without hyperbole, in the title of Pamela Eisenbaum’s recent book, *Paul Was Not a Christian.*² For various reasons, many now consider it an anachronism to apply that label to anyone prior to some critical point in history. There is less agreement on what those reasons are, and at what point in history the label is no longer anachronistic.

---

² Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2009). Although the book is really more about how Paul was a Jew than how he was not a Christian, some of the claims discussed below about both the term and the concept of *Christianity* do appear (e.g. 6-7, 31).
One reason not to apply the label Christian to anyone before at least the third generation or so of the movement, is that it is not until sources from that period that the Greek Χριστιανός, from Christianus, originally coined in Latin, first appears.\(^3\) This reason pertains only to the Greek and Latin words from which the modern cognates of Christian derive, and really has nothing to do with the connotations of that modern word. A similar argument is sometimes made for the use of the word Christianity, which is closely related to Χριστιανισμός, which first appears in the letters of Ignatius in the early second century.\(^4\)

However, if Χριστιανός always meant the same thing as Christian, as the arguments used by these scholars imply, it is not perfectly clear if any other ancient vocabulary also meant that. This becomes important, for example, when Megan Hale Williams writes:

> Even the words ‘Jew’ and ‘Christian’ can be ambiguous, and we need to be clear about what we mean by them. Only those who self-identify as Jews or Christians in our evidence—whether through the explicit use of those terms or


\(^4\) Daniel Boyarin, “Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to which is Appended a Correction of my Border Lines),” JQR 99 (2009): 17.
their equivalents, or by other means, for example the use of symbols like the Christian chi-rho—can responsibly be referred to as ‘Jews’ or ‘Christians.’

Application of this rule requires first identifying what vocabulary and symbols were equivalent to *Christian*. Was *in Christ* an equivalent term? Was baptism in the name of Jesus an equivalent symbol?

For other scholars the meaning of the modern word *Christian* is the determinative factor of when the label can be used, rather than the ancient use of *Christianus* and its cognates. Among these scholars, three options exist for that crucial moment in history before which a person could not be a Christian in the modern sense of the word, and after which they could: the separation of members of the Jesus movement from the Israelite matrix in which the movement began, which may be anywhere from the second to the fourth centuries; the creedal formulations of orthodoxy in the fourth century; or the modern emergence of the concept of *religion* as a category of identity, which might be located anywhere from the fourth to the seventeenth centuries. Some of these scholars combine their conceptual

---


reasons for avoiding the label *Christian* with the above mentioned argument about
the coining of the word Χριστιανός without attempting to explain how these two
seemingly incompatible arguments can support one another.⁹ Only Runesson
explicitly rejects the etymological argument in favor of one based purely on the
modern connotations of *Christian*. He suggests “that the modern English term
‘Christianity’ be restricted to *modern* uses, i.e. post-late antique phenomena (with
some precursors before this period).”¹⁰

Perhaps one reason the etymological basis for claiming that application of the
label *Christian* to early believers in Jesus is combined with a more conceptual basis is
that many scholars, excepting Runesson, exhibit a tendency to allow the ancients to
dictate their own categories to modern researchers. This tendency might sometimes
be inadvertent, yet it might also be appropriate, particularly in the case of the modern
use of the label *Christian*. This weighs against Runesson’s restriction of the word
*Christian* to modern phenomena. For, while it is true that the connotations of this
label, and its cognates in various languages, have changed throughout history, these
changes, like most historic developments were always gradual and never final. There
were no moments in the fourth, seventeenth, or any other centuries, before which

---

⁹ Elliott, “Jesus the Israelite,” 120, 147, 154; Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 5; Boyarin, “Rethinking
Jewish Christianity,” 17.

Christianus always only meant one thing and after which it always only meant something else. Though tracing the use of this label through those centuries is beyond the scope of this study, it seems most likely that those employing the label Christianus ever since the coining of the word always understood their use of the word to fit into the range of usage it already had before them, such that changes in its meaning only happened gradually. Scholars today are not able to divorce their own use of this label from the centuries-long tradition of usage that provided it to them.

However, this is not to say that the coining of the label Christianus / Χριστιανός was necessarily the moment in history at which scholars may first appropriately call believers in Jesus Christians, since the conceptual meaning of the modern label Christian is still relevant. It is not necessarily the case that those who first coined the Latin and Greek labels believed themselves to be creating something new; they were merely giving a name to what already existed. And whenever that label did arise, it was only at first applied by certain Latin and Greek speakers to certain believers in Jesus in limited settings.11 In order for the label Christian to be appropriate for particular believers in Jesus, at a time when they were not being called Χριστιανοί, even though at that same time others were called that, then it must be for some purely conceptual reason, and not merely the ancient use of that word itself.

11 See chap. 5.
All of this suggests the need for scholars to address the vocabulary that was used to designate believers in Jesus in the earliest generations of their movement, with special attention to that vocabulary that functioned most like the label Χριστιανός, up through a time when that label itself was used more than just sporadically. Hopefully, this can be done with an awareness of both the ancient nomenclature from which modern nomenclature developed, and any conceptual trappings that may be indispensable to the modern label Christian.

1.2.2. Previous Works on Early Designations for the Jesus Movement

The chapters of this dissertation on specific designations for the Jesus movement, including periphrastic expressions, and the labels Christian, Nazarene, and Galilean, will each discuss works of previous scholarship on those labels. This section of the introduction will be devoted more generally to scholarship on the designations of the Jesus movement that preceded this dissertation. While there are several older studies that were published prior to the surge of scholarly interest in the Jesus movement’s group identity from the 1990’s until now, only one recent work, Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament, by Paul Trebilco, has attempted such a study of early Christian labels with an eye to their relevance to the
current debates concerning that topic. First, those older works will be mentioned, and then Trebilco’s.

1.2.2.1. Studies on Labels for the Jesus Movement before Trebilco

The most noteworthy general treatments of the labels for the early Jesus movement prior to Trebilco include two encyclopedia articles, two chapters in monographs on Christian origins, and two articles on the labels that appear in the Book of Acts. Beyond these, naturally there are numerous treatments of each individual label, occasional brief overviews of the topic, and works that

---


systematize phenomena that are closely related to group labels, such as metaphors for the group.\textsuperscript{18}

Writing in 1989, Joseph Fitzmyer adumbrates what we have seen would become a more pressing concern in the years to follow when he writes:

Acts depicts the early Christians, despite their faith in Jesus Christ as ‘Lord and Messiah’ (2:36), as still frequenting the Temple and sharing in its Jewish cult at the stated hours of prayer (2:46; 3:1). Their separation from Judaism comes only in the course of time, and this implies a difference and an isolation that was not experienced from the outset.\textsuperscript{19}

For Fitzmyer this explains why early vocabulary of identification for the Jesus movement seems variegated and informal.\textsuperscript{20} Spicq similarly claims that the movement


lacked a title in the early years, seemingly implying that this indicates a lack of clear group identity.21

Another observation made by several of these authors is that there seems to be a distinction between formal names for the group and less formal descriptive terms. Karpp classifies labels as either *eigentliche Namen* or *uneigentliche Namen*.22 Similarly, Fitzmyer categorizes labels as either “word or phrase designations” or “names.”23 And Spicq opines that the labels favored by early Christians differ from the cognates of *Christian* in that the latter was too formal for use in fraternal relations, whereas the former usually describe relationships people have with God and one another.24 Perhaps unavoidably, all of these distinctions seem somewhat subjective.

Related to the distinction between formal and informal names is the distinction between names coined by those within the movement and names given to it by those outside it. For example, Cadbury writes:

> New religions or sects often arise without any intention of separateness. The members find themselves isolated or set apart by unpredicated circumstances. Their opponents often become aware of their difference before


they do themselves, or find reason to name them. Thus nicknames sometimes precede names.\(^{25}\)

This distinction is also implicitly significant in Karpp’s article, of which three major divisions are *Namen christlichen Ursprungs*, *Namen jüdischen Ursprungs*, and *Namen heidnichen Ursprungs*.\(^{26}\)

1.2.2.2. Paul Trebilco’s *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*

Like this dissertation, Trebilco’s monograph appears to be at least partly motivated by the question of whether or not modern scholars should call the early Jesus movement *Christianity*. Although Trebilco opts to use the label *Christian* as the default label for the Jesus movement throughout his book, he shows an awareness of the possibility of his being charged with anachronism in so doing. He devotes a section of his introduction to defending this practice, and returns to the question again in the final paragraph of his conclusion.\(^{27}\)

Trebilco also makes an effort to integrate his work with the whole complex of questions surrounding the early Jesus movement’s group identity. This is most apparent in the section of his introduction, “Insights and perspectives from other


\(^{27}\) Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 9-10, 261.
areas of study.” The four subsections of this section each describe insights from the social sciences that relate the existence of a group’s labels to that group’s having a distinct identity.²⁸

Trebilco also went beyond previous studies in clarifying the differences between labels used for a group by those within it and labels used by those outside it. He further refines these distinctions as follows. Labels used by members of a group for themselves, or *autoethnonymy*, may be either in-facing, that is the the labels group members use for each other when talking to each other, or out-facing, that is the labels they use for their group when talking to those outside it. Similarly, outsider-coined labels, or *heteroethnonymy*, may either be labels that group members would accept or reject.²⁹

On the one hand, Trebilco writes that in his study “it is more relevant to look for language that is *used by outsiders* for the in-group, and as a subsidiary point to note that this could come from two sources—outsider coined language, or insider-coined language which is then adopted by outsiders.”³⁰ On the other hand the content of his book overall does not reflect this stated emphasis. The labels he covers

---

²⁸ Ibid., 10–15.
²⁹ Ibid., 13–14.
³⁰ Ibid., 14, emphasis his.
in detail include *brothers and sisters, believers, saints, the assembly, disciples, The Way,* and *Christians.* He concludes:

When it comes to outsider-facing self-designations, that is, terms used to designate the group when addressing outsiders, or which represented the group to the outside world, our insider-facing texts do not seem to reveal what term (or terms) was being used. As we have often noted, it is clear, for example, that saying ‘I am a brother or sister’ would have meant little to a ‘pagan’ (to use another label!). We have no evidence from the NT period that ἀδελφοί or οἱ πιστεύοντες or οἱ ἁγίοι, for example, were being used to outsiders. However, I have argued that, at least for some considerable time before Ignatius, Χριστιανός is the most likely term that would have been used in this way as an outsider-facing self-designation. Further, it is hard to see that any other designation for which we have evidence would have been appropriate.\(^{31}\)

Thus, of the labels Trebilco covers, the only one that qualifies as “more relevant,” as indicated by its use by outsiders, is Χριστιανός.

One way the present study promises to be complementary to Trebilco’s is by restricting its focus to labels that were useful in communication between insiders and outsiders, a restriction which is facilitated by the focus on labels that use names and titles of Jesus. Thus, the subject of this dissertation is the vocabulary of identification that functioned similarly to the word Χριστιανός, especially when that label itself was not yet predominant. This will require two differences between the criteria Trebilco used in selecting his labels, and the criteria used in selecting the vocabulary of identification of this study.

---

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 254.
Firstly, as indicated by his title, Trebilco focused on the labels found in the NT. However, since the process of Χριστιανός gaining wide acceptance was one that extended well into the second century, and since its use by outsiders is of particular interest, this dissertation will cover both Christian and nonchristian sources up through the earliest attestation of Christianismus in Latin, which occurs in Tertullian at the beginning of the third century.

Secondly, Trebilco limits his study to those labels that were used in the NT “most frequently” or, in the cases of The Way and Christians, had strong arguments for being labels of significance.\(^{32}\) However, as Trebilco points out, “Our NT documents are all internal-facing and simply do not tell us what designations authors or readers were using to outsiders.”\(^{33}\) Thus, in order to find any evidence for a vocabulary of identification useful for outsiders in the NT or other internal-facing Christian literature, attention must be given to terms that may occur less frequently, or that may be less obviously marked as significant labels. Lieu has recognized the possibility of such quasi-labels in her distinction between “identifying labels” and “explicit group designators.”\(^{34}\) So, whereas Trebilco does not treat the phrase in Christ, since it is not used as a self-designation in the same way as the other labels he

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 8.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 244.

\(^{34}\) Lieu, Christian Identity, 239.
treats, the present study will include that phrase along with other similar uses of the names and titles of Jesus in designating his followers.

1.3. Identity and Identification

The term *identity* is now commonplace in studies of early Christianity and Judaism, as well as their modern counterparts, and various related fields within the social sciences. Questions of the relationship between early Christianity and Judaism, the diversity of early Christianity, and whether or not any particular form of early Christianity could claim the mantle of orthodoxy, are all questions of *identity*. This dissertation impinges on this variegated conversation about identity not in addressing any of those broad questions, but in addressing how early Christians were verbally *identified*.

Thus, two introductory matters about identity and identification must be addressed. These are the concept of *social identity* and the distinctions between different kinds of identifications depending on who is speaking.

1.3.1. Social Identity

In many recent works, scholars who have analyzed the identity of the early Jesus movement have integrated insights from the social sciences, especially an
approach called *social identity theory*.\(^{35}\) According to two of the pioneers of this approach, Michal A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams:

The central tenet of this [social identity] approach is that belonging to a group (of whatever size and distribution) is largely a *psychological* state which is quite distinct from that of being a unique and separate individual, and that it confers *social identity*, or a shared/collective representation of who one is and how one should behave. It follows that the psychological processes associated with social identity are also responsible for generating distinctly ‘groupy’ behaviours, such as solidarity within one’s group, conformity to group norms, and discrimination against outgroups.\(^{36}\)

The importance of a person’s group membership to their self-conception depends on their situation. When a situation brings a particular social identification to the forefront, that social identification is said to be *salient*.\(^{37}\) It stands to reason that those moments when certain group labels are used are moments when that group identity becomes especially salient. Indeed, some of the important laboratory research behind social identity theory involves assigning subjects to groups wherein


\(^{37}\) Ibid., 25-26.
belonging to a group means nothing more than being labeled as a member of that group.  

It also stands to reason that there may be a relationship between the labels applied to a group and important features of that group’s social identity, such as its norms and inter- and intra-group relationships. Brian Mullen, Rachel Calogero, and Tirza Leader have marshaled evidence from three studies of ethnic groups that “intergroup hostility did vary as an independent function of ethnonym complexity, such that intergroup hostility was greater among cultures characterized by less complex ethnonyms,” where the complexity of ethnonyms is based on the number of different labels group members use for themselves.  

They did not establish a relationship between the kind of label used for a group (such as a label based on an individual’s name) and any group properties, but they suggest that as an area for future research. We might hypothesize that people who applied labels to themselves, or had labels applied to them by others, that included names and titles of Jesus Christ, belonged to groups for which their appurtenance to Jesus was an essential aspect.


40 Ibid., 627.
1.3.2. The Difference Determined by Who Does the Designating

It has already been mentioned above that studies on the use of labels often give attention to who is doing the labeling. This subject also proves to be important for the current study.

One way some scholars distinguish different kinds of labels by way of who uses them is with the terms *emic* and *etic*. The terms *emic* and *etic* are borrowed from anthropology, where they are defined as follows:

Emic constructs are accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories that are regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the members of the culture under study.

Etic constructs are accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories that are regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the community of scientific observers.⁴¹

Lett laments, however, that “controversy continues to surround even the definitions of emics and etics,” and “the situation is even more obscure outside anthropology, where the concepts have been widely diffused and widely reinterpreted. The terms ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ are current in a growing number of fields…but they are generally used in ways that have little or nothing to do with their original anthropological context.”⁴²

---


⁴² Ibid., 382.
According to Esler, *etic* refers to “the systematic set of concepts used by one culture to understand others,” and *emic* refers to “the insider or indigenous point of view.”\(^\text{43}\) By these definitions it is not clear whether the classification used for the early Jesus movement by an ancient outside observer of that movement would be *etic*, on the grounds of that person being an outsider, or *emic*, on the grounds that their usage of that classification would count as a usage on the part of one of the ancient people that modern scholars look back on in their systematizing of the subject. Elliott defines these terms in a way that clears up that ambiguity. He writes, “‘Emic’ is the designation for information as it is supplied by the language, thought categories, perspectives and worldviews of the ancient native informers and their culture. ‘Etic’ categories and terminology, on the other hand, are those of the modern investigating social scientist.”\(^\text{44}\) He then goes on to describe the need to distinguish insider and outsider language within the emic data.\(^\text{45}\)

It should be noted, however, that an attempt to employ these terms in the present study would require a shift away from their anthropological meanings. The historian of the early Jesus movement studies data that comes from people of a variety of cultures spread over a range of time and places, both inside and outside that

\(^{43}\) Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 8.

\(^{44}\) Elliott, “Jesus the Israelite,” 121.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 122.
movement. Moreover, there is likely to be some measure of continuity with change
over time between one or more of those ancient worldviews and the one in which
the historian has been enculturated.

Scholars may, for example, distinguish between their own “etic” use of the
label *Christian* and some ancient’s use of the Latin *Christianus*. However, they will
not be able to point to any watershed moment in history separating those ancients
using the word in their emic understanding from modern scholars using it in their
etic understanding. The modern European cognates of the word *Christian* all
evolved through continuous usage, spanning multiple languages, over centuries
reaching back to the time of the early Jesus movement. Thus, when historians study
the ancient insiders’ and outsiders’ use of the label *Christianus*, they cannot avoid the
fact that they are on some level studying the history of their own word *Christian*.

To be sure, there will be occasions when scholars who use the label *Christian*
will have to distinguish between what they mean by that label and what a given
ancient author means when they use its cognate in some ancient language. A scholar
may wish to employ the label *Christian* in a broad way, such as, “one who gives
attention to Jesus whose achievement is contextualized by God,” thus including as
Christians people whom a given patristic author may insist are not *Christiani*.
However, that patristic author’s meaning will not be one that represents a consensus

---

of all ancients along the lines of the sort of insider’s consensus anthropologists seek when they wish to determine some emic description. Rather that patristic author will often use the label *Christian* tendentiously, within a contest with rivals about which ones are the real Christians. The modern scholar’s adoption of a very generic meaning for *Christian* is a way of avoiding such contests without avoiding the word.

Another way of describing different classifications that does not necessarily distinguish insider and outsider usage, but that does separate modern scholars and the labels they use from ancients and their labels, is by orders of discourse. David Aune has employed this method of classifying data in an article on the word *magic*, a label that invites confusion when ancient and modern usages are intermingled, similar to the confusion some scholars fear with the label *Christian*.47 His description of the levels of discourse works well for the present study: “First-order discourse consists primarily of what can be learned from ancient Greco-Roman literature, papyri, inscriptions, iconography and archaeology about ancient religious traditions, institutions, practices and beliefs including prayers, hymns, oracles, festivals, rituals and myths.”48 “Second-order discourse consists of the gathering and arrangement of first-order data through description, definition and classification, and is concerned


48 Aune, “Magic,” 231.
with what those who are involved in cultic practices say about what they are doing and what they say about what others are doing.\textsuperscript{49} “Third-order discourse, in the case of Greco-roman religion, includes the forms of reasoning about first- and second-order discourse used by modern scholars and involves analyzing the data of first- and second-order discourse on Greco-Roman religions.”\textsuperscript{50}

Thus, examples of first-order discourse relevant to this study would include the act of baptism in the name of Jesus on the part of ancient Christians as well as the majority of uses of labels for believers in Jesus when included incidentally within ancient texts. An example of second-order discourse by an insider would be Paul’s words in 1 Cor 1:11-13, where Paul reflects on the meaning of the Corinthian’s first-order discourse, to which moderns are only privy indirectly through Paul:

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

An example of second-order discourse by an outsider would be Pliny’s description of how some people on trial before him for being Christians proved their innocence:

They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and incense before your statue (which for that purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods), and even reviled the

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 233.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 233.
name of Christ: whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians into any of these compliances: I thought it proper, therefore, to discharge them.\textsuperscript{51}

The present study, along with all modern works cited in it, is third-order discourse.

Finally, within the first- and second-order discourse, Trebilco’s distinctions between two types of insider labeling and two types of outsider labeling are helpful. These again were: 1) the labels ancient believers in Jesus used for themselves when addressing other believers, 2) the labels they used for themselves when addressing outsiders, 3) the labels outsiders used that believers in Jesus accepted, and 4) the labels outsiders used that believers in Jesus did not accept.\textsuperscript{52} As mentioned above, due to the limitations of his data, most of the designations Trebilco studied fall into the first category, such as ἀδελφός. These kinds of labels are essentially jargon, where an agreement about the significance of belief in Jesus is a prerequisite for the audience to understand the speaker. An example of a label in the fourth category would be the opposite situation, where a label presupposes the rejection of belief in Jesus, such as Pliny’s labeling Christianity as a \textit{superstitio}.\textsuperscript{53}

Trebilco’s second and third categories, however, may both be considered neutral, in the sense that they represent labels insiders and outsiders could use when

\begin{footnotes}
\item[51] Ep. 10.96.
\item[53] Ep. 10.96.9.
\end{footnotes}
speaking to one another with a reasonable expectation that they both mean the same thing by those labels. The vocabulary of identification addressed in this dissertation falls in these neutral categories. We will begin this investigation in the next chapter with a look at the various kinds of groups in the world surrounding the early Jesus movement that were designated by labels that made mention of some individual to whom those groups were appurtenant, such as a leader, founder, or ancestor.
CHAPTER 2:
USE OF PERSONAL NAMES IN IDENTIFYING GROUPS IN ANTIQUITY

No extensive survey of the names of groups in antiquity exists, and it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to produce such a work. Nevertheless, it will be helpful to survey the wide variety of groups and social categories that were identified using words or phrases built from the names of leaders, real or imagined group founders, or patron deities. The following overview of this phenomenon begins with an introduction to the concept of social categories, as something that includes categories people are born into as well as groups they join. This is followed by a survey of the nomenclature of the Greco-Roman social categories of ethnic and family groups, political factions, philosophical schools, and voluntary associations, especially when given groups were named after some individual. Each section surveys examples from the broader Greco-Roman world and the more local Palestinian Jewish matrix in which the Jesus movement began. Each section also shows ways that the early Jesus movement was sometimes mentioned as a type of that social category. Finally, additional examples of subgroups from within the Jesus movement that were named for individuals are adduced.
2.1. Social Categories

The labeling of groups is a form of the more general phenomenon called *social categorization*, which refers to all the various ways people categorize themselves and others.⁵⁴ Categories can be created simply by superimposing arbitrary labels on people and things, rather than extracting them from reality in a meaningful way (i.e. the twelve months of the calendar do not coincide with twelve actual divisions of the year except for the fact that they are simply defined as such). Even such so-called “thin categories” can shape people’s prejudices.⁵⁵ This includes a tendency to show in-group favoritism, in which people seek the benefit of a group to which they belong over that of outsiders, even when such groups are formed from seemingly arbitrary categorizations and when there exists no utilitarian advantage for ingroup favoritism.⁵⁶

Because individuals’ identities are shaped by all of the social categories to which they belong, the following survey covers a wide variety of kinds of groups and

---


⁵⁵ For example, subjects in a psychological experiment showed a tendency to predict a difference in temperature between two days in different months that was larger than reality and a difference in temperature between two days in the same month that was smaller than reality. This bias results from the arbitrary boundaries between months imposed by the calendar. See Joakim Krueger and W. Clement Russell, “Memory Based Judgments About Multiple Categories: A Revision and Extension of Tajfel’s Accentuation Theory,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67 (1994), 35–47.

social categories that were given labels made from the names and titles of individuals. Some of these categories, such as voluntary associations, may seem more obviously similar to the early Jesus movement than others, such as nations. However, all of these kinds of groups are relevant to the more general phenomenon of naming groups after individuals, and the early Jesus movement bears certain similarities to each of them, depending on the perspective from which it is viewed.

2.2. Families and Nations Named for their Patriarchs

One window into some important social categories of the Greco–Roman world is the typical menu of *topoi* included in an encomium or vituperation, the rhetoricians’ formulaic paradigms of praising or castigating people. These included a person’s family background, birth, upbringing, physical attributes, deeds, and virtues. Pernot writes, “the commonplaces of the encomium are important for the history of *mentalités,*” and, “their detailed study offers a very interesting insight into the mental universe of the ancients.” Of the social categories normally included in an encomium, the most relevant one for this study is that of the person’s family


58 Pernot, *Rhetoric,* 177.
background, which could be further broken up into ethnicity, ancestry, homeland or city-state, and parents.\textsuperscript{59} These same items frequently served as ways of identifying people when they appeared as toponym and patronymic surnames. Furthermore, these traits are often expressed in words made from the name of some individual.

2.2.1. Family Membership Indicated Using the Father’s Name

The use of another individual’s name is, of course, required any time a person is identified according to parentage, as with a Greek genitive of relationship.\textsuperscript{60} Of course, the early Jesus movement was not a literal family of the type that would normally occupy this place in an encomium. However, in some cases local Christian communities were modeled after the pattern of the household.\textsuperscript{61} In some literature, even the translocal Jesus movement is spoken of figuratively as a household.\textsuperscript{62} Although God the Father is usually presented as the patriarch of this household, if one were to stretch the metaphor far enough to apply a patronym to this family, the most likely person of this world from whom to take that patronym would have to be

\textsuperscript{59} Malina and Neyrey, \textit{Portraits}, 219–24.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{BDF} § 162.


\textsuperscript{62} E.g. Gal 6:10; Eph 2:19; Heb 3:6.
Jesus. The fact that early Christians were more apt to call each other brothers and sisters than members of other comparable movements were may also reflect a conceptualizing of their movement or its groups in a familial paradigm.

2.2.2. Ethnic Labels Drawn from Patriarchs’ Names

Perhaps by extension of the use of a patronym in a household, larger ethnic groups were also often labeled using the name of some person believed to be an ancestor of the group. This can be seen in the Jewish background of the early Jesus movement with the names of Israel, each of the twelve tribes, the nations/individuals in Genesis 10, royal dynasties, the priestly divisions, and even the name *Adam*, which belongs both to the human race and its progenitor. Similarly, Greco-Roman legends pointed to heroic founders behind the names of the Romans, the Latins, and the Hellenes. Although the historical accuracy of all such etymologies can be questioned, it is the prevalence of this concept, not its accuracy, that provides background for the naming of groups after founders and leaders in the world of the early Jesus movement.

---


64 See especially Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 63-81. However, as Harland cautions, the preponderance of brotherly language in Christian personal letters in comparison to epigraphic remains from voluntary associations may be due more to the difference in the natures of those sources rather than the groups that produced them.

65 Plut., *Rom.* 1.1-2, 19; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.60; Thuc., *Hist.* 1.1.3.
The similarity of the Jesus movement to an ethnic group was greater than it might seem to modern westerners. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who preceded Jesus by a generation, the name *Latines* was originally adopted as a group label by an ethnically diverse coalition of families who chose to conform to a unified set of customs, laws, and religious ceremonies, and to name themselves after one of their nations’ kings, *Latinus*. According to this etymology, the Latin *ethnos* attained its name before it really was an *ethnos*, in the sense of people having a supposed common ancestry.

This legend about the origin of both the nation and the name of the *Latines* has parallels to the way certain early Christian authors conceived of their movement. For example, in *The Book of the Laws of the Countries*, Bardaiṣan first describes the social mores of numerous nationalities, such as Chaldeans, Indians, and Persians, in leading up to his description of the Jews, and then finally the Christians, who are named after the Messiah, and who follow their own set of laws despite their living among all the aforementioned people groups. *The Epistle to Diognetus* and *The Apology of Aristides* also classify Christians alongside other national groups,

---

66 Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.60.

distinguishing them by the laws they follow and the name they take from their founder. Melito calls Christianity a γένος, as does the Martyrdom of Polycarp.

This conception of the Jesus movement in ethnic terms had been foreshadowed within the movement’s first century (e.g. 1 Cor 10:32; Eph 2:15; 1 Pet 2:9). In fact, if the author of Ephesians means the same thing by καινὸς ἀνθρώπος in 4:24 as in 2:15 (i.e. a new humanity, rather than a new self), then even in that first-century work the parallel to Dionysius’s legend of the origin of the Latines is rather strong. For this new humanity is distinguished from both gentiles (2:11) and Israel (2:12), and this distinction includes its members having exchanged their old manner of life (4:22), which they had as gentiles (4:17), for a new set of rules (4:25ff.), brought about by their identification with Jesus (4:20–21).

Outsiders also occasionally referred to Jesus’s early followers using ethnic categories. For example, in the famous Testimonium Flavium Josephus calls

---


69 Melito, Frag. 1.5; Mart. Poly. 3.2. Justin Martyr may also call Christianity a γένος in Dial. 48, depending on a textual variant there.

Christians a φῦλον,⁷¹ and in a letter purportedly copied by emperor Hadrian’s freedman, Phlogon of Tralles, the emperor is quoted calling Christians a gens.⁷²

Indeed, attempts to define ethnic identity, whether ancient or modern, run into the same sorts of problems as attempts to define Christian identity, including fuzzy and ever-changing boundaries, the ability of people to move in and out of such identities, the difficulty in applying labels consistently, and the sense that it is sometimes the label itself that defines the identity more than anything else.⁷³

---

⁷¹ Josephus, *Ant.* 18.3.3. Although the genuineness of the *Testimonium* is disputed, most scholars accept that Josephus wrote at least a shorter form of it. If this is the case, then it is likely that the use of the word φῦλον belongs to the original text, since it is unlikely that a later Christian interpolator would use that word. See Robert E. Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 81-104.

⁷² “Their [Egyptians’] only god is money, and this the Christians, the Jews, and in fact, all nations adore [hunc Christiani, hunc Iudaei, hunc omnes venerantur et gentes].” (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Saturninus 8.6–7. See Stephen Benko, “Pagan Criticism of Christianity During the First Two Centuries A.D.” *ANRW* 23.3, 1080–81.

Beyond the social categories one was usually born into, the names of important individuals were also often used in identifying groups that one might join. One example of this phenomenon is that of political factions.

Ancient Greek and Latin literature employs proper names to identify political factions and their members in a wide variety of ways. Regarding the Greek literature, Calhoun writes:

A tendency is noted in the authors of the classic period, and particularly in the orators, to associate particular [political] clubs with individual members, men of predominant influence or closely concerned with the matter under discussion, whose names afforded a convenient and sufficient mode of reference. He specifically refers to expressions utilizing the prepositions περί, μετά, and ἀμφί, especially οἱ περί τινα ἔταξοι. This is similar to the use of στάσις or μερίς with the genitive of a proper name (e.g. “the party of Pompey”), for which Welborn provides numerous examples. Mitchell has also adduced several examples of the

---

74 George Miller Calhoun, *Athenian Clubs in Politics and Litigation* (Austin: University of Texas, 1913), 7. Also see p. 33, esp. n. 5.

75 *LSJ*, s. v. περί C.2. “of persons who are about one.” Cf. L. L. Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles* (Macon: Mercer, 1997), 9. This book includes an updated version of his earlier article, “On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Ancient Politics,” *JBL* 106 (1987), 85–111. Welborn cites the following examples: Thucydides 2.2.2; Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 14.3; *Hellenica Oxyrhynchae* 6.2; 7.2; 17.1; 18.1; Xenophon *Hell.* 3.5.4; 5.2.31; 5.3.13; 5.4.5; Demosthenes 37.39; 21.20; Plutarch *Per.* 16; *Nic.* 11; *Pelop.* 6.2; Josephus *Ant.* 20.6.2 §131; *B. J.* 2.12.5 §§236; 2.17.9 §§443, 445, 453; 2.19.5 §§534.

76 Welborn, *Politics*, 9. He cites the following: Plutarch, *Ser.* 4.3–4; 7.1; *Pompey* 65.1; Xenophon *Hell.* 5.2.25; *Hellenica Oxyrhynchae* 17.1–2; Sulla 20.1; 23.6; 28.8; 32. 2.
genitive indicating “belonging to the party of” in third-person descriptions in which she thinks a noun may usually be understood by ellipsis.\(^{77}\)

This parallels the Latin usage of *factio* and *pars* with the genitive.\(^{78}\) Taylor observes that this usage of *pars* is especially common in Cicero.\(^{79}\) Also common in Latin is the use of the suffix –*ianus* appended to a proper name to refer to partisans of that person.\(^{80}\) The corresponding Greek suffix, –*ιανος/οι*, appears with the same function in the forms Καισαριανοί,\(^{81}\) and Ηρωδιανοί.\(^{82}\)

In his study on the Herodians, Rowley convincingly showed that, in addition to –*ιανοι*, the Greek suffix –*ειοι also corresponds to the Latin –*iani*.\(^{83}\) Accordingly, he concludes that the Herodians are not only mentioned in the Gospels, but also in

---

\(^{77}\) Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 84. She cites examples from the following: Dem. *Or.* 9.56; Jos. *B.J.* 1.140, 142,326, 358; 2.648; Plut. *Pomp.* 6.4; 7.3; 61.1; 66.1; 71.5; *Oth.* 12.3; *Cic.* 4.1; *App. B.Civ.* 3.5.34; 3.12.86; 5.6.56, 59; 5.9.86; 5.12.111.

\(^{78}\) Ibid., 9. For *factio* Welborn cites Ps.–Sallust *Ep.* 2, 2.4; 4.2; 8.6; 9.4; 10.8; 11.6. For *pars* he cites Cicero *Quinct.* 69; *Rosc.* 16, 137; *Verr.* 2.1.35; *Catil.* 4.13; *Manil.* 10; *Phil.* 5.32; 13.39; *Fam.* 10.33.1; *M. Brut.* 2.4.5.


\(^{82}\) Mark 3:6; 12:13; Matt 22:16.

the works of Josephus, who calls them Ἡρῴδειοι.\(^{84}\) Josephus also calls them οἱ τὰ Ἡρώδου φρονοῦντες.\(^{85}\) Mark 8:15 might provide another informative example regarding this group, where Jesus says, “Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod [Ἡρώδου],” and there is a well-attested variant reading of Herodians (τῶν Ἡρῳδιανῶν).\(^{86}\) It may be that the two readings mean the same thing, such that in the former reading the name Herod is a proxy for all of Herod’s influences in society.\(^{87}\)

A final possible reference to the Herodians is a Roman inscription that might read [ΣΥΝΑ]ΓΩΓΗΣ ἸΡΩΔΙΩΝ.\(^{88}\) If this is a reference to the Herodians, then its –ιων is an alternate spelling of –ειων. While this identification is speculative, other Roman inscriptions bear witness to synagogues named for important political figures, including Agrippesians (Ἀγριππησίων) and Augustesians (Αὐγυστησίων).

\(^{84}\) Wars, 1.16.6.

\(^{85}\) Ant. 14.15.10.

\(^{86}\) P45, W, f.13.

\(^{87}\) So Harold Hoehner, Herod Antipas: A Contemporary of Jesus Christ (SNTSMS 17; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1972), 203.

According to Moulton, the ending –ησιος sometimes renders the Latin –ensis, which has the same functions in Latin as –ianus.

Several lines of evidence suggest that some early believers in Jesus either categorized their movement in political terms or were categorized that way by outsiders. Before the term ἐκκλησία was appropriated by Christians in labeling their assemblies, it referred to “the assembly of the δῆμος in Athens and in most Greek πόλεις.” Christians occasionally called their belonging to the movement a citizenship. Both Christian and secular sources attest to the fact that the movement was often suspected of sedition.

---


93 Phil 3:20; Diog. 5.9.

2.4. Students Identified Using the Names of Their Teachers

In trying to classify the early Jesus movement and other social groups to which it might be compared in a chapter such as this one, one must allow a great deal of overlapping of categories. This is exemplified in the case of Pythagoreanism, which could be considered a cultic group, a political society, or a philosophical school. Ancient sources refer to its societies as ἑταιρεῖαι, its students as μαθηταί, and the whole school of Pythagoreanism as a σύστημα, a σχολή, a φιλοσοφία, and an αἱρεσις. Marrou writes:

[I]t was a real school, taking charge of the whole man and forcing him to adopt a particular way of life. It was an organized institution, with its own buildings and laws and regular meetings—a kind of religious brotherhood devoted to the cult of the Muses and, after the death of its founder, to the cult of the apotheosized Pythagoras. And it set the type: modeled on it later were Plato’s Academy, Aristotle’s Lyceum, and the school of Epicurus, and it was always to remain the standard pattern of the Greek school of philosophy.

Ancient authors incorporated the name of Pythagoras into a variety of labels for the adherents of his philosophy. The act of following Pythagoreanism is expressed

95 Plutarch, *De Genio Socratis* 583a
96 Diogenes Laertius, 8.3
97 Diogenes Laertius, 8.45; Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorica* 266
98 Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorica* 265
99 Plutarch, *De Genio Socratis* 580c
100 Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorica* 191

42
with the verb πυθαγορίζω. Different ways of labeling adherents can be formed from this verb, including participles, such as οἱ Πυθαγορίζοντες,\(^{102}\) and nouns, such as Πυθαγοριστής.\(^{103}\) Two different adjectives, Πυθαγόρειος and Πυθαγορίκος, also appear as labels, either on their own as substantive adjectives or in modifying nouns, which is also done with the genitive Πυθαγόρου, as in τῆς Πυθαγόρου φιλοσοφίας ("the Pythagorean philosophy"). Occasionally ancient authors make distinctions between the various labels, usually giving -ιστής a negative connotation, but this is not always the case.\(^{104}\)

There was no Greek word for the abstract system now called Pythagoreanism. The hapax πυθαγορισμόι (pl.), glossed as “Pythagorean doctrines” in LSJ, is probably better explained by Arnott as “Pythagorean/-rist quiddities of expression.”\(^{105}\) The fact that no single ancient Greek word meant “Pythagoreanism” does not imply that such a category did not exist in the ancient mind, or that it is anachronistic for moderns to call the philosophy of Pythagoras Pythagoreanism. It is simply that, in this matter, ancient Greeks used circumlocutions to mean what modern English speakers express using a single word. Iamblichus illustrates this well

---

\(^{102}\) Alexis, *Frag.* 220; cf. *Frag.* 196

\(^{103}\) S.v. Πυθαγόρας, LSJ.

\(^{104}\) See the discussion of this phenomenon in W. Geoffrey Arnott, *Alexis: The Fragments, A Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996), 581–82.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 637. Arnott’s judgment is supported by the context, in which Πυθαγορισμόι is parallel to λόγοι λεπτοί and διεσμιλευμέναι φροντίδες.
in the way he opens *On the Pythagorean Life*: “All right-minded people, embarking on any study of philosophy invoke a god. This is especially fitting for the philosophy which takes its name [*ἐπωνύμῳ νομίζομεν*] from the divine Pythagoras.” In the context, the only name to which Iamblichus could be referring is the one he uses in the title for this section of his work: τῆς Πυθαγόρου φιλοσοφίας. Likewise, Plato contrasts Homer with Pythagoras in that only the latter had an enduring way of life named (ἐπονομάζοντες) for him. Yet the only name Plato uses is the adjective Πυθαγόρειον modifying the phrase τρόπον τοῦ βίου.

The situation is the same in Latin. The only words formed from the name *Pythagoras* listed in the major lexicons are transliterations of the Greek word group, with no word for the abstraction of *Pythagoreanism*. Cicero, like Plato and Iamblichus, also remarks on the endurance of the name Pythagoras through its use in reference to his philosophy. But again, he only refers to the labels applied to the adherents of the system, *Pythagoreorum nomen*, or the adjective used in phrases,

---


such as *Pythagorae doctrina*, with no single word being the equivalent of
*Pythagoreanism*.

Another educational phenomenon that influenced the major Greek philosophical schools was Sophistry. Marrou writes that it was the Sophists more than Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, or Epicurus, who “produced the great revolution in teaching which was to put Greek education on the road to maturity.”

According to Marrou, the earliest Sophists must have been born in about 485 B.C., shortly after Pythagoras’s death. However, Sophistry experienced a revival in the second century B.C., and continued to be a significant movement throughout the period of early Christianity. The Sophists were itinerant educators for profit. Each one worked independently, gathering small groups of young students whose parents would pay him to train them for a period of several years. They would attract these students by winning over a following through public speeches.

Though the role of the Sophists was more to train students for public life and less cult-like than Pythaorgas’s school, their success depended on developing somewhat of a cult of personality around themselves. In the first century A.D., a Sophist’s student was often called his μαθητής or his ζηλωτής, because the student

---

111 Ibid., 48.
was to imitate his teacher and be totally loyal to him against all rival Sophists.\textsuperscript{113} Aelius Aristides, a well-known Sophist of the second century A.D., describes one of his experiences as follows: “Before I even entered the city, people came to meet me…and the most distinguished young men offered themselves to me as students.”\textsuperscript{114} Naturally, the way a student would identify himself as belonging to a given Sophist’s school was to use some expression that included that teacher’s name. This was primarily expressed with either μαθητής or ζηλωτής along with the Sophist’s name in the genitive.\textsuperscript{115} Occasionally disciples would be labeled with new words formed from their teachers’ names, such as the Apollodorei and Theodorei.\textsuperscript{116}

Unlike the Sophists, some philosophers established schools that permanently remained in the same location. In these cases, the name of the school was generally derived from the place where it met. In the fifth century B.C. some of the so-called lesser Socratics established the schools of Megara and Eretria, named for the cities in which they were located.\textsuperscript{117} In Athens, over the course of the fourth and early third

\textsuperscript{113} Winter, Paul and Philo, 125–26; After Paul Left Corinth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 32–33.

\textsuperscript{114} Or. 51.29; Translation from C. A Behr, Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1968), 284.

\textsuperscript{115} Philostratus, Lives of the Sophists, 504; Dio Chrysostom, Or. 55.3–5. See Winter, Paul and Philo, 126, 172.

\textsuperscript{116} Quintillian 3.1.18; cf. 2.11.1–2. See L. L. Welborn, Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles (Atlanta: Mercer, 1997), 14; this chapter is a slightly revised version of his earlier article, “On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Ancient Politics,” JBL 106 (1987): 85–111.

\textsuperscript{117} Marrou, History of Education, 62.
centuries B.C., several important philosophers either founded schools or cultivated circles of scholars that would later formally become schools that each got their name from a particular place in Athens in which they met. These are the Academy, informally begun by Plato; the Lyceum or Peripatos, informally begun by Aristotle; the Garden, founded by Epicurus; and the Stoa, founded by Zeno. Each of these schools remained in the same place for several generations and was led by a succession of scholarchs.\footnote{Diog. Laert. 4.1, 32, 60; 5.62; 10.17.}

The existence of schools named for places proves that such groups did not have to take their names from people. However, two considerations help to explain why those different conventions of labeling were each preferable in certain contexts.

Firstly, the names of Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus each did get applied as labels to the adherents of their respective philosophies. If the English term “school” is separated into two distinct senses of an institution occupying a place, such as might be conveyed by the Greek σχολή, and an abstract school of thought, such as might be conveyed by the Greek αἱρεσις, then it is only in the former sense that the schools of Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus were ever called the Academy, the Lyceum (or Peripatos), or the Garden. In the latter sense, their philosophies and followers are always labeled after patterns similar to those described above for Pythagoras.\footnote{Under Πλάτων LSJ lists the forms Πλάτωνείος and Πλάτωνικός. Under Αριστοτελίζω it lists Αριστοτέλειος and Αριστοτελικός. It lists Ἐπικούρειος individually.}
Secondly, the physical institutions of the Academy and the Lyceum were not the creations of Plato and Aristotle to the same degree that the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies were. According to Culpepper, “Plato did not attempt to establish an ‘orthodoxy of opinion’ at the Academy.” Aristotle, during his lifetime, merely had a circle of students and collaborators, but the formation of this group into a school of any name did not happen until after he died. And when that did happen, the institution of the Lyceum owed more to the influence of Theophrastus than it did to Aristotle.

A similar point applies to Stoicism, which is the only one of the four major Athenian schools where not only a σχολή, but also a αἵρεσις, is named for a place, the Stoa of Athens, rather than a person. Although Zeno was the originator of both the local institution of the Stoa and the school of thought of Stoicism, in the case of the latter, Zeno’s influence was not as great as that of Chrysippus. In fact, polemic against Stoicism was more often directed against Chrysippus than Zeno. To be

121 Culpepper cites multiple authorities who agree on this point. Johannine School, 89.
sure, Zeno’s teachings and their adherents are occasionally labeled ζηνώνειος\textsuperscript{125} or ζηνωνικός,\textsuperscript{126} but as a rule no single person was recognized as the fount from which Stoicism flowed such that his own name would often be employed in labeling it.

The phenomenon of ancient Greeks using labels formed from the name of some philosopher to designate those who purportedly followed his thinking was not limited to the above schools of thought nor to the above adduced suffixes. For example, LSJ includes entries of both Ὑρακλεῖτειος and Ὑρακλείτιστης for those who followed Heraclitus. However, it also provides the example of Plato quoting Socrates calling them οἱ περί Ὑράκλειτον (Crat. 440c).\textsuperscript{127} This example demonstrates that περί was used to label someone’s followers even when that person was long dead, as Heraclitus was at the time of Socrates.

Several examples of philosophical schools that were local to Palestine in the earliest decades of the Jesus movement deserve special mention. Josephus referred to the φιλοσοφίαι of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, which he also called αἱρέσεις (Ant. 18.1.1-2). He distinguishes them according to their views on fate and free will (Ant. 13.171). He also likens the αἱρέσεις of the Pharisees to that of the Stoics (Vita 12.3). In light of these facts, Josephus’s use of αἱρέσεις is probably better

\begin{footnotes}
\item[125] Diogenes Laertius, Lives 1.19; 7.5.
\item[126] Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 4.51.41
\item[127] LSJ, s. v. περί C.1.2.
\end{footnotes}
translated as “school of thought” than “sect.”¹²⁸ The etymologies of these three labels are not known with certainty.¹²⁹ However, the name Sadducee stands a very good possibility of being derived from the name Zadok.¹³⁰ Like the Greek philosophical schools, these Palestinian schools were characterized not only by the doctrines they taught, but also by the relationship they had with the larger community through their involvement in politics.¹³¹

Rabbinic literature employs Hebrew cognates of the names Pharisee and Sadducee (פָּרִיסִים and וּקִים).¹³² However, it also bears witness to other schools that were more obviously named for their founding teachers, the schools of Hillel and Shammai (בֵּית הִלֶּל and בֵּית שַׁמַּאי).¹³³ Like the Greek philosophical schools, these masters were believed to have passed their teachings on to their disciples, who,


¹³² E.g. m. Yad. 4.6.

¹³³ E.g. m. Git. 4.5.
in turn, traduced them to the next generation via disciples of their own.\textsuperscript{134} Rabbinic traditions about one of the most important of their disciples, Johanan ben Zakkai, depict him employing rhetoric that resembles that of some Stoic teachers in the instruction of his students, and approaching the discipline of learning with the presumption that correct knowledge brings about moral action, similar to the presumption of many Greek philosophers.\textsuperscript{135} Johanan ben Zakkai was one of the founders of the rabbinic academy at Javneh after the destruction of Jerusalem. Interestingly, this academy was sometimes called “the Vineyard,” possibly after the specific site where it met,\textsuperscript{136} similar to the Athenian academies of the Stoa and the Garden.

Early believers in Jesus resembled adherents of a philosophical or Sophistic school in a variety of ways. Its adherents were often called μαθηταί. Paul’s ministry can be compared to that of an itinerant philosopher or sophist.\textsuperscript{137} Christians

\textsuperscript{134} See esp. \textit{m. Aboth}.


\textsuperscript{136} \textit{M. Ket.} 4.6; \textit{m. Ed.} 2.4; Emil Schürer, \textit{A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ} (5 vols.; reprint; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), II.1.326.

established literal schools for their instruction at least by the early second century. Christian apologists sometimes spoke of their faith as a variety of philosophical school. Their detractors also sometimes spoke of them in such terms. The concept of a philosophical school, or perhaps more generically a school of thought probably comes closer than sect to capturing the original connotations of the term ἀἵρεσις in Acts, applied to the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Nazarenes (24:5). Under these circumstances it would not be unexpected to conceive of Jesus as the originator of his “school” in a way similar to Pythagoras being recognized as the originator of the Pythagoreans, and to label Jesus’s followers accordingly.

2.5. Voluntary Associations and Cultic Groups Identified Using the Names of Patrons

Some of the above examples of groups, such as synagogues and political clubs, could be classified as types of voluntary associations, a widespread phenomenon in the Greco-Roman world of widely diverse groups that combined cultic, political, and social welfare functions. In addition to those examples, occupational guilds and

---

138 E.g. Justin Martyr; See Stowers, “Social Status, Public Speaking, and Private Teaching,” 72. Although the evidence is not decisive, the Johannine literature may also have come from a school; see Culpepper, The Johannine School.

139 E.g. Justin Martyr, Dial. 8; Melito, Frag. 1.7; Clement Strom. 7.15.92.

140 E.g. Galen, De pulsuum differentiis 2.4; 3.3.

141 Harland; Dynamics, 25–46.
some mystery cults were voluntary associations.\textsuperscript{142} However, labels such as

cult, political club, occupational guild, and mystery cult might be misleading, since rarely, if ever, would any voluntary association have as narrow a purpose as those labels suggest.\textsuperscript{143} Indeed, the category of “cult groups,” itself may be a modern misnomer, since, as Judge points out, “in antiquity all types of association, social or burial, trade or professional, family or state, placed themselves under divine protection, and made the necessary sacrifices, it may not be easy to tell which, if any existed for maintaining the cult itself.”\textsuperscript{144} Thus, despite its overlap with other categories, the naming of voluntary associations deserves special attention.

Two examples that illustrate this overlap are voluntary associations with names reminiscent of the synagogue of the Ἀγριππήων mentioned above. One is a guild mentioned in a Greek and Latin inscription named the Agrippiastae or Ἀγριππιασταί.\textsuperscript{145} The other is a first century inscription honoring members of a group called οἱ πιλαγρίτται συμβιωταῖ.\textsuperscript{146} A similarly named guild was the Καισαριασταῖ.\textsuperscript{147} In addition to these guilds named for emperors, one from


\textsuperscript{143} Harland, \textit{Dynamics}, 31-35.


\textsuperscript{145} LSJ, s. v. Ἀγριππιασταῖ; IG 5 (1).374.

\textsuperscript{146} ISmyrna 331.

\textsuperscript{147} IGR 1348.
Thyatira, in an inscription from the early first century, calls its members Ιουλιασταί, named for a local hero, C. Julius Xenon.  

A much more common way of labeling the members of a voluntary association was after their patron deity, often employing the suffix -ιασταί. Aside from substantives formed from a deity’s name, some groups identified themselves with their patron deities using expressions with the deity’s name in the genitive or after a preposition, such as περί.  

There were also other ways that associations expressed their identities by way of a relationship with some important individual, aside from actual group names. Inscriptions from voluntary associations often give special place to a particular leader within the group or an outside political figure or patron. Some associations were formed in ways that made the preeminence of one individual within the group

---


149 Eg. Ποσειδωνιασταί (ID 1751, 1755, 1757, 1758), Διονυσιασταί (Teos 36; SEG 32:488; IG II2 1325), Απολλωνιασταί (ID 1730, 1753, 1754, 1755, 1758), Ἀσκληπιασταί (SEG 18:33; IG II2 1293, 2353), Ηρακλειασταί (SEG 30:796; IsCm 157), Ἀφροδισιασταί (IK Kyine 32).


151 Eg. σύνοδος τῶν περὶ τῶν Ἡρακλέα ἄθλητῶν (IGUR 235, 236, 237, 243, 244), and οἱ περὶ τῶν Διόνυσον τεχνίται (FD III 2:48, 49, 68).
inevitable. For example, some associations drew their membership primarily from a single household, such that the head of that household was also the head of the association, and his employees and slaves would attain certain privileges, such as the right to burial in the family tomb, in exchange for the responsibilities they took on as club members, such as offering required gifts to the patron deity, from which the head of the household would reap a profit.¹⁵² Other associations were established as cultic groups for a local shrine, which may have been erected by a private individual who would be the priest of that shrine and, again, profit from the offerings made to the deity.¹⁵³ Sometimes such relationships were important enough to a group’s identity that they would identify themselves with the name of their priest following περί, similar to what was described above for patron deities.¹⁵⁴

The local congregations of the Jesus movement were often regarded as voluntary associations in antiquity. Pliny classifies them as *hetaerias* (*Ep. 10.96.7*), a label he uses elsewhere for voluntary associations (*Ep. 10.34*). Lucian of Samosata refers to a leader within the movement as a θιασάρχης, a leader of a θιασός or voluntary association (*Perigrinus* 11). Celsus refers to Christian groups as κοινωνιαί, another word for associations (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8.17). Tertullian says, “We are

¹⁵² IG II² 1369; see Judge, “Did the Churches Compete with Cult Groups?” 602–603.

¹⁵³ IG II² 1366; see Judge, “Did the Churches Compete with Cult Groups?” 602.

¹⁵⁴ E.g. ὁ ι περί πατέρα Ἀχιλλέα Ἀχιλλᾶ (IScM I 99); Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 90.
an association [corpus]” (1 Apol. 39). The late second-century Martyrs of Lyons employs a play on words likening Christianity to a guild by calling it an ἀδελφότης centered on τῆς τέχνης Χριστοῦ. Modern scholars, as well, have noted important similarities between early churches and voluntary associations. The degree of similarity continues to be a matter of debate.

2.6. Factions of the Jesus Movement Identified Using the Names of Their Founders

Finally, early Christian literature attests to examples of subgroups within the Jesus movement being identified with labels that employed the names of their leaders. Paul portrays factionalism in 1 Corinthians as people identifying themselves by their relationships to Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ, saying ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor 1:12). Paul often labels local

155 Mart. Lyons 1.32.


158 See chap. 4.
congregations by the name of the patron in whose house they met. 159 The
Apocalypse castigates a group called οἱ Νικολαϊται, presumably named after
someone named Νικόλαος (Rev 2:5, 15). Justin Martyr refers to similar usage of the
names of the founders of sects that he considered counterfeits of the Christian faith,
such as Marcians, Valentinians, and some Basilidians, and some Saturnilians, which
he notes were named after the pattern of philosophers (Dial. 35). Clement of
Alexandria makes the same observation and adds to it that some other sects that he
considers counterfeit were named after their places, nations, actions, and dogmas
(Strom. 7.17).

In contrast, Celsus, in his critique of Christianity, On True Doctrine, written
some time between Justin and Clement, asserts that all the Christian schisms have in
common the ὄνομα (Or., Cels. 3.12). Origen apparently understands Celsus to mean
the name Χριστιανισμός. Most of his response rests on the assumption that the
factions Celsus meant were, indeed, within the movement Origen himself considered
genuine Christianity. However, at the end of the section he acknowledges the
possibility that Celsus had in mind groups like the Cainites and Ophites, which
Origen refused to concede were Christian at all. From the words of Celsus quoted it
is impossible to tell if the groups he meant belonged to what Origen would have
considered Christianity. However, despite Celsus’s belief that all such schisms had a

159 E.g. Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκα σὺν τῇ κατ’ οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ (1 Cor 16:9); cf. Rom 16:5;
Col 4:15; Phm 1:2.

57
common name, he also points out that each of them owes its existence to someone who “wants to have his own party.” This observation resembles observations made by Paul of the factions he criticized that he considered within his movement (1 Cor 1:12–13) and observations made by Clement of the heresies he considered outside his movement (Strom. 7.16).

One feature that is common to Justin, Clement, Celsus, and Origen, is that, whomever they mean when they mention various sects and parties, and whatever they call those groups, they specifically mention whether or not they are Christians. Moreover, each of these four authors deliberately employs or alludes to the name Χριστιανός in describing that relationship in such a way as to indicate that the use of that name is an essential feature of the translocal community of followers of Jesus.  

2.7. Conclusion

Suffice it to say that the phenomenon of identifying groups or social categories to which people belonged by employing the names of their founders, fathers, financers, or figureheads, was widespread in the world in which the Jesus movement began. It was common throughout the Greco-Roman world, including Jewish Palestine. Such labels were used for a wide variety of different kinds of groups

---

160 Henry Chadwick, trans., Contra Celsum (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1953), 135.

161 See chap. 5 for more on the labels Χριστιανός and Χριστιανισμός.
and social categories, each of which the early Jesus movement or groups within it more or less resembled, including families, nations, political groups, philosophical schools, and voluntary associations. Members of the early Jesus movement deliberately employed such labels when they spoke of what they considered heretical counterfeits of Christianity.

It has already been suggested that some people both inside and outside the Jesus movement employed names or titles of Jesus in labeling his followers, and did so deliberately to reflect their understanding that the identity of that movement, and the characteristic a person had to have to earn that label, was first and foremost a relationship with Jesus. The chapters that follow will expound more on the specific ways this happened.
In the foregoing summary of the uses of individuals’ names to designate groups oriented around those individuals some of the examples of such labels were words formed by adding special suffixes to a person’s name, such as Ἡρωδιανοὶ ("Herodians"). In other examples the founder or figurehead’s name was used in a prepositional phrase or in an oblique case modifying some other noun. These include references to individuals, such as “those about Heraclitus” (οἱ περί Ἡράκλειτον), groups, such as the “house of Hillel” (בֵּי הִלֶּל), and abstractions that define such groups, such as “the philosophy of Pythagoras” (τῆς Πυθαγόρου φιλοσοφίας). In similar ways the label Χριστιανός was foreshadowed by uses of Jesus’s names and titles in various words and phrases to identify his followers, the group or groups to which they belonged, and the abstract qualities that defined those groups.
3.1. Implicit Mentions of Jesus in Insider Labels

Since most of the early evidence for the Jesus movement is literature that was written by insiders for insiders, the language found therein is not necessarily representative of what insiders would have used when communicating to outsiders about their movement or what outsiders would have used. Indeed, the most commonly attested early designations for the Jesus movement and its members, such as the majority of those summarized by Trebilco, would have been unintelligible when used by themselves as labels among outsiders. The terms ἀδελφοί, πιστεύοντες, ἁγίοι, μαθηταί, and ἐκκλησία all had a range of meanings already attached to them in koine Greek. In early Christian literature they are often used absolutely as labels that the audience was presumed to understand. Yet for followers of Jesus to identify themselves to outsiders using the same labels without modifiers would surely have evoked such questions as, “Disciples of whom?” and, “Believers in what?”.

Trebilco has shown that labels of this sort are examples of the vocabulary of a sociolect, that is the special jargon of a “community of practice.” The existence of such jargon is informative about the identity of the movement that used it, since it

---

163 Ibid., 11–13.
demonstrates, at the very least, that the movement enjoyed enough cohesiveness to function as such a community of practice.

Mitchell has described the same phenomenon as “rhetorical shorthand.”\textsuperscript{164} It is not important to this study to adjudicate between a rhetorical explanation of such jargon and a sociological one. Indeed, they may be two equally valid ways of describing the phenomenon.\textsuperscript{165} What is important here is that the unabbreviated versions of these labels that would have been able to function as labels outside the community of practice often include names and titles of Jesus. For example \textit{disciple} is rhetorical shorthand for \textit{disciple of Jesus}, which is what would have been used in communication with outsiders. The insider labels for which this rule applies most clearly include one that designates individuals within the movement (\textit{μαθηταί}), one that designates groups of them (\textit{ἐκκλησίαι}), and one word-group that designates an abstract quality or creed that defined the movement along with the people characterized by that quality (\textit{πίστις} and \textit{πιστο}/\textit{πιστεύοντες}).\textsuperscript{166}


\textsuperscript{165} Contra Graham Stanton, \textit{Jesus and Gospel} (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004), 49–52.

\textsuperscript{166} Distinguishing group labels in these three ways is somewhat of an oversimplification, since they all overlap one another. For example, the phrase \textit{τινας των ἀπό τῆς ἐκκλησίας} (Acts 12:1) functions the same way that \textit{μαθηταί} does elsewhere, and in Gal 1:13–24 Paul refers to that which he formerly persecuted as individuals (\textit{ἡμεῖς}), a collective group (\textit{ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ}), and an abstraction (\textit{ἡ πίστις}).
3.1.1. Disciples of Jesus

Following the patterns of Greco-Roman philosophical schools and their rabbinic counterparts, one might expect that variations of *disciple of Jesus* would be one of the more common ways to use a name or title of Jesus in designating his followers. This turns out not to be the case.

To be sure, μαθητής is the most common way of designating those who physically followed Jesus during his earthly life throughout early Christian literature. And it is true that in these cases the μαθηταί are obviously understood to be disciples of Jesus, often indicated with a pronoun, and occasionally more explicitly κυρίου or Ἰησοῦ. In the Gospels this usage is paralleled by others who are designated as disciples of John the Baptist or disciples of the Pharisees. In the church fathers it is paralleled by others who are designated not as disciples of Jesus himself, but as disciples of other named disciples of his.

However, with the exceptions of Acts, Ignatius, a few possibilities in Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, and once in an inscription, the term is never explicitly used in the first two centuries for post-Easter believers in Jesus. The historical likelihood that Jesus did have a company of disciples who followed him during his earthly ministry,

---


169 *Diog.* 11.1; Iren., *Haer.* 1.10, 23; 3.12; 4.36; 5.5.
and who were designated by an Aramaic equivalent of μαθητής, such as תלמיד, is very high. However, whether this label was also used later for those who had never seen Jesus is more questionable.

In some instances, when patristic sources label contemporary Christians as disciples of Jesus, it appears to be a deliberate imitation of the Greco-Roman usage designed to depict Christianity as a philosophical school. Other times they apply the label specifically to martyrs, seemingly to elevate them to a status higher than other contemporary believers in Jesus. No Christian author of the first two centuries uses μαθητής in quite the same way as Acts, as a label for believers in Jesus that can be used without a modifier.

The book of Acts certainly makes it appear that μαθητής, at least for a certain period of time and among certain members of the Jesus movement, served as a label to designate members of the movement. However, only one of Luke’s 28 uses of the word in Acts appears in a quotation (15:10), all the rest are in the voice of the narrator. This distribution has led some scholars to think that Luke used μαθητής as a


171 So Harnack, Mission, 400, fn. 3. Ignatius’s uses of μαθητής for people other than martyrs may also reflect this tendency (e.g. Eph. 3.1); William R. Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 43, fn. 16.

172 Ignatius, Magn. 9; Rom. 4.2; Mart. Poly. 17.3; Origen, Cels. 2.44.

173 But see the similar expressions in Clement of Alexandria, Paed. 1.6.30; Strom. 4.15; 7.9.
way of highlighting continuity between the followers of Jesus described in his Gospel and those described in Acts, such that the word is his own literary addition to the narrative and not reflective of any popularity of the label outside of that context.\textsuperscript{174}

This suggestion is not without merit. However, several points weigh against it. First, there is just enough difference between the way μαθητής is used in Luke, where it occurs 36 times, and the way it is used in Acts, where it occurs 28 times, that if Luke’s point were to highlight the continuity of the μαθηταί, one might expect him either to continue more of a consistent style in his usage or to indicate the transition from one usage to the other more clearly. In his Gospel, many of the occurrences are modified with a genitive, while in Acts, they are almost always unmodified. The sole exception is τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου (Acts 9:1), a phrase unattested in Luke’s Gospel. In Luke the μαθηταί were only those who physically followed Jesus in his earthly life without any instances of the word foreshadowing an application to post-Easter followers of Jesus, such as occurs in Matthew and John (see below), while in Acts the label is extended to include others without any explanation.

Second, the distribution of μαθητής in Acts is quite uneven. It first appears in Acts 6:1, a verse which introduces several new terms and appears to mark the

beginning of a source.\textsuperscript{175} All 28 occurrences appear between 6:1 and 21:16. It only appears twice in the \textit{we} passages, and as Rengstorff points out, both of these apply the label to believers in Palestine.\textsuperscript{176} One of these occurrences calls Mnason of Cyprus a “disciple of old” (ἀρχαῖος μαθητής), which supports the contention that Luke recognized the label as one that was confined to an early period and was not widespread at the time of his writing.\textsuperscript{177}

Finally, the Gospels of Matthew and John, in addition to Luke in Acts, include the idea of members of the audiences of those books being disciples.\textsuperscript{178} It is not as likely that each of those authors independently decided to expand the meaning of μαθητής in similar ways as it is that the word already was used as a self-designation in certain segments of the Jesus movement.

Thus, on balance, it is more likely than not that μαθητής was used as a label for followers of Jesus for some decades after Easter and perhaps longer, apparently among a limited swath of the movement that did not include Paul. It was often used without any modifier. As Dunn points out, “Since talk of someone’s ‘disciples’ was

\textsuperscript{175} Although there exists little agreement on precisely where the divisions between sources in Acts can be seen, Acts 6:1 is one point where such a seam seems somewhat certain. Jacques Dupont, \textit{The Sources of Acts} (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964), 62-72; K. H. Rengstorff, “μαθητής,” \textit{TDNT} 4:457.

\textsuperscript{176} Rengstorff, \textit{TDNT} 4:458.

\textsuperscript{177} Harnack, \textit{Mission}, 400.

familiar in the ancient world…to speak simply of ‘the disciples’ indicates an insider’s perspective.”

This insider label was an abbreviation of a more specific label that could be used with outsiders. Significantly for this study, the addition that would make this insider label intelligible to outsiders would have to be some name or title of Jesus added in the genitive. Some examples even include just such a modifier.

Interestingly, the two sources that employ the label μαθητής the most, Acts and Ignatius, both equate a μαθητής with a Χριστιανός.

3.1.2. Churches of God in Christ

A term that is much more ubiquitous as a group designation in early Christianity than μαθητής is ἐκκλησία. Ἐκκλησία normally appears without any modification in early Christian literature. However, like μαθητής, such usage can only be intelligible in a context where a specifically Christian assembly is assumed. As Schmidt writes:

That ἐκκλησία is also used in secular Gk., and denotes a popular assembly, is clear from the NT itself, Ac. 19:32,39f. The biblical sense in the OT and NT is furnished by the addition τοῦ θεοῦ, and the specific NT sense by the further

---

179 Dunn, Beginning, 9, fn. 25.

180 Acts 9:1; Ignatius, Magn. 9.1; Rom. 4.2; Mart. Poly. 17.3; Justin 1 Apo. 15, Dial. 35; Orig., Cels. 2.44; 3.7; Clem. Alex., To the Heathen 11.

181 Acts 11:26; Ign., Magn. 10.1; cf. the parallel uses of the two labels in Magn. 9.1; Eph. 11.2; Rom. 3.2.
addition of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, irrespective of whether the addition is present in a given case, or present in whole or in part.¹⁸²

If Schmidt’s judgment is correct, then the insider label ἐκκλησία was always an abbreviation of a more outsider-intelligible label that included a name or title of Jesus. Schmidt’s claim at least appears valid for Paul, who usually uses the term without modification, but who often appends τοῦ θεοῦ, and sometimes either adds a mention of Jesus to that (either with ἐν or καί) or, rarely, mentions Jesus alone.¹⁸³

On the one hand, Schmidt overstates the uniformity of the NT in referring to “the specific NT sense,” especially since the addition that he claims is always implicit, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, is so distinctly Pauline. On the other hand, the evidence suggests that Paul was not unique in implying a modifier that somehow connected the church to Jesus. The only other NT books that provide an explicit modifier (other than one specifying a locality) are Matthew and Acts. In Matthew the reference to Jesus is clear, since he calls the church “my church” (μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, Matt 16:18).

Depending on a textual variant, Acts 20:28 refers to either “the church of God” (τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ) or “the church of the lord” (τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ κυρίου), “which he purchased with his own blood.” In the face of very evenly divided evidence, the UBS committee opted for the reading θεοῦ as original, partly


¹⁸³ Only God mentioned (1 Cor 1:12; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13; 2 Thes 1:4), only Christ mentioned (Rom 16:16; Gal 1:22), both God and Christ mentioned (1 Thes 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thes 1:1).
because “a copyist might raise the question, Does God have blood?”

Metzger goes on to admit the possibility that the author could have intended διὰ τοῦ αἷματος τοῦ ἰδίου to mean “with the blood of his Own.”

If the reading θεοῦ is accepted along with the explanation that it is intended as a reference to God the father, the resulting sense ends up very close to a Pauline “church of God in Christ Jesus,” where it is God’s church via the agency of Jesus. On the other hand, if the author intended θεοῦ as a reference to Jesus himself, or if he used κυρίου, then he regarded the church as simply the church of Jesus. Thus Paul, Matthew, and Acts each treat ἐκκλησία as an abbreviation of a more descriptive title that includes a mention of Jesus.

The remaining evidence up until Tertullian is divided. First Clement, Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, the Didache, Shepherd of Hermas, and Irenaeus all modify ἐκκλησία with references to God, but never expand it with a reference to Jesus.

Ignatius, Second Clement, Justin, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian all modify ἐκκλησία with references to Jesus, and sometimes to God or both God and Jesus. One passage in Justin’s Dialogue with Trypho is especially illustrative of the


185 Ibid.


187 2 Clem. 14:2; Ign. Eph. 5:1; 17:1; Trall. 2:3; 12:1; Phil. 1:1; Smyrn. 1:1; Just. Dial. 63:5; Tert. Marc. 3:7; 3:25; 5:17–18; Clem. Alex. Strom. 6:6; 7:14.
phenomenon described in this dissertation: “as to a daughter [the word of God] 
speaks to the church having come from his name and partaking of his name (for we 
are called Christians).” (63.5).

3.1.3. Believers in Jesus and the Faith of Christ

Words formed from the πιστ- root are even more common in early Christian 
literature than ἐκκλησία is with one common function of them being to label 
believers in Jesus and their faith. Because of the variety of forms these labels take, no 
single πιστ- word came quite as close to being a proper name as ἐκκλησία was. 
Cadbury and Fitzmyer both raise doubts as to whether πιστ- words were “fixed 
terms” for believers in Jesus.\textsuperscript{188} However, the frequency of the words and the ability 
of authors to use them without explanation confirms that Harnack is surely right that 
πιστοί was a technical term.\textsuperscript{189}

Like both ἐκκλησία and μαθητής, πίστις was already a common Greek word 
when it attained the special status it had for believers in Jesus. As Trebilco points out, 
substantival participles of πιστεύω that are formally similar to some usages in the NT 
can be found, albeit rarely, in the LXX and Jewish pseudepigrapha.\textsuperscript{190} More 
importantly, even if the kind of labeling function Christians gave these words was

\textsuperscript{188} Fitzmyer, “Designations,” 225; Cadbury, “Names,” 382.

\textsuperscript{189} Harnack, \textit{Mission}, 403–404.

\textsuperscript{190} Trebilco, \textit{Self-Designations}, 63–65.
not common, Bultmann writes, “πίστις became a catchword in those religions which engaged in propaganda. This did not apply to Christianity alone. All missionary preaching demanded faith in the deity proclaimed by it,” which he supports with examples from Hermetic literature, magical papyri, and Pythagorean writings.¹⁹¹ Thus, this word group was not suitable for use in absolute construction as labels for the Jesus movement among outsiders. As Trebilco writes about Paul’s usage:

[S]imply using the participle from πιστεύω was sufficient as a self-designation for members of the Christian group when speaking within the group. For example, in 1 Thess 2:10 Paul simply says: “You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers/the believing ones (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν).” Within this setting it is clearly understood that the readers are being referred to, and the object of πιστεύω does not need to be elaborated on. This absolute usage, found in the majority of cases, underlines that this is “insider language for self-designation” for use within the group, rather than primarily an “outward-facing self-designation” meant for the benefit of outsiders so that they could understand the group. If it was used in discussion with outsiders, it would have been confusing without further discussion defining in whom (or what) the person “believed”.¹⁹²

But did early Christians ever use more elaborate constructions of πιστεύω and its cognates as outward-facing self-designations? And if they did, how did they modify the label to answer the question of in whom or what they believed? Two lines of evidence suggest that they did so use the label, and that the way they modified it was

¹⁹² Trebilco, Self-Designations, 71. Italics his.
normally with a mention of Jesus as the object of faith: one from general insider usage, and the other from Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*.

3.1.3.1. Modifiers Added to Πιστ- Roots in Insider Usage

First, there are some examples of modified constructions of πιστός and participles of πιστεύω even in early Christian writings that were written by insiders for insiders. When used as a label, πιστός is usually not modified. However, occasionally in the Pauline and disputed Pauline epistles, it is modified by ἐν Χριστῷ or ἐν κυρίῳ.\(^\text{193}\) Substantival participles based on πιστεύω used as labels appear with modifiers much more frequently. These are almost always with εἰς prepositional phrases,\(^\text{194}\) though occasionally with ἐν,\(^\text{195}\) ἐπί,\(^\text{196}\) a simple dative,\(^\text{197}\) or a ὅτι clause.\(^\text{198}\) When datives or prepositions are used, the object of faith is always Jesus, except in a few instances where it is God the Father who is mentioned with respect to something about Jesus, such as “anyone who… believes him who sent me” (John

\(^{193}\) 1 Cor 4:17; Eph 1:1; 6:21; Col 1:2, 7; 4:7.


\(^{195}\) John 3:15.


\(^{197}\) John 5:24.

\(^{198}\) John 20:31; 1 John 5:1, 5.
Likewise, when the modifier is a ὧτι clause it is always something about Jesus, such as “everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ” (1 John 5:1; cf. John 11:27; 14:10; 16:27; 20:31; 1 John 5:5).

Bultmann observes that πιστεύειν εἰς is a construction distinctive to the NT. He writes:

The fact that πιστεύειν εἰς is equivalent to πιστεύειν ὧτι shows rather that πιστεύειν εἰς arises out of the use of πιστεύειν for ‘to regard as credible, as true.’ Πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς αὐτόν and εἰς ἐμὲ (often in Jn.) etc. simply means πιστεύειν ὧτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη... (1 Th. 4:14; cf. R. 10:9) or ὧτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς (Jn. 20:31) etc.

His three lines of evidence for this claim are that πιστεύειν εἰς and πιστεύειν ὧτι are used interchangeably in John, that the passive ἐπιστεύθη is used with Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς in 1 Tim 3:16, and that πιστεύειν εἰς is equivalent to πίστις with the objective genitive, rather than the dative. From this he concludes, “Πιστεύειν εἰς is thus to be regarded as an abbreviation which was formulated in the language of mission and which is the more understandable in that the word πίστις played a role in both pagan and Hell.-Jewish propaganda.”

---

199 Cf. Rom 4:24; Ign. Trall. 9:2. Unless otherwise indicated, English translations of biblical texts will be NRSV.

200 Bultmann, TDNT 6:203.

201 Ibid. As examples of the objective genitive used in place of prepositions, he cites Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; 19:20; Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16; 3:22; Phil 1:27; 3:9; Col 2:12; Eph 3:12; 2 Thes 2:13; Rev 14:12; 1 Clem. 3:4; 27:3; Ign. Eph. 16:2; 20:1; Barn 6:17; Herm. Mand. 11:9.

202 Ibid., 203–204.
Mitchell describes a similar abbreviation in the word εὐαγγέλιον. She writes, “One supreme compaction of the narrative [of Jesus’s death and resurrection] is accomplished by the very phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, which serves as a ‘superabbreviation’ of the whole, functioning as a title which both characterizes its full contents and interprets its meaning for the hearer.” In discussing that same abbreviating feature of εὐαγγέλιον, Stanton observes that certain other words also sometimes encapsulate that same narrative, one of which is ἡ πίστις, citing Gal 1:23. Numerous other examples could be mentioned. Thus, the same message was encapsulated either as an evangel that evangelists announced or as a belief that believers believed.

Often when reference is made to this πίστις, the word is used absolutely. However, when some modifier is attached to it, it usually makes reference to Jesus.

The same can be said for cases when those who believe are labeled as πιστεύοντες.

203 Margaret Mitchell, “Rhetorical Shorthand,” 64.

204 Graham Stanton, Jesus and Gospel, 51.


206 Acts 20:21; 24:24; 26:18; Rom 3:22, 25; 10:17; Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph 1:15; 3:12; 4:5; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thes 1:3; 1 Tim 1:14; 1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 3:15; Philm 1:5; Jas 2:1; 2 Pet 1:1; Rev 14:12; 1 Clem. 21:1; Ign. Eph. 1:1; 20:2; Ign. Phil. 8:2; Barn. 4:8; 11:8; Diogn. 11:6; Poly. Phil. 4:3; Did. 10:2; Justin Dial. 52; Iren. Haer. 4:33:14; Clement Alex. Paed. 1.6, 8; Strom. 4.22; 6.6, 14.

Thus, the evidence available from works written by insiders of the early Jesus movement for other insiders suggests that when they spoke of their movement as a faith and its members as believers, the way they would express those ideas to neophytes or outsiders would usually have been as faith in Jesus and believers in Jesus.

3.1.3.2. Modifiers Added to the Πιστο- Root in Dialogue with Trypho

One early Christian writing does provide illustrations of how insiders used the label πιστεύοντες for themselves when speaking to outsiders. That is Justin’s Dialogue with Trypho, a work that portrays Justin’s dialogue with a non-Christian Jew. The way Justin uses πιστεύοντες in this work arguably reproduces the kind of language an insider of the early Jesus movement would have used with an outsider.

Participles of πιστεύω occur 42 times in Dialogue with Trypho. Of these, 39 are substantival. All 39 of these occurrences explicitly mention the object of belief. In only one of these cases is it unclear whether it is faith in God or in Jesus.

---


209 7:2; 16:4; 26:1; 30:2; 33:2; 35:7, 8; 40:1, 4; 42:2; 43:4; 45:4; 46:7; 47:3, 4 (x2); 52:1; 54:1; 63:5; 70:4; 76:6; 81:4; 87:5; 91:4; 92:4; 94:2; 95:4; 100:6; 101:2; 106:1; 107:2; 108:3; 110:4; 111:3; 116:1, 3; 119:6; 122:2 (x2); 131:5; 133:6; 139:5.

210 The three that are not substantives are in 7:2; 46:7; and 107:2.

211 100:6.
In four cases it is faith in God through Jesus. In four cases it is the faith of OT saints who believed on some sign that foretold Jesus. In all 31 remaining cases, Jesus himself is explicitly mentioned as the object of faith, either by name, or by a pronoun that obviously refers to him. In one of these cases Justin even paraphrases outsiders’ words, claiming that Jews dare to curse “all those believing on him” (τῶν πιστεύόντων εἰς αὐτὸν πάντων). Thus, Justin Martyr provides strong evidence that when early Christians labeled themselves πιστεύοντες, they were using an abbreviation for a label suitable for outsiders that included a name or title of Jesus, such as οἱ πιστεύοντες ἐπὶ τὸν Χριστὸν.

3.1.4. Other Abbreviated Designations

Examples of early Christians labeling themselves with some generic term made more specific by appending a mention of Jesus in an oblique case or prepositional phrase are not limited to the three important labels described above. Two other insider labels that occasionally exhibit this feature are ἁγιοί and ἡ ὁδός. On several occasions, ἁγιοί is specified with ἐν Χριστῷ. And the label ἡ ὁδός,

---

212 33:2; 116:3; 119:6; 133:6.
213 40:1; 91:4; 94:2; 111:3.
214 108:3.
215 Phil 1:1; 4:21; Col 1:12. Cf. ἡγιασμένοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1 Cor 1:2; 1 Clem. 1:1).
which is presented in Acts as an outsider-facing designation, seems to be an abbreviation of ἡ ὅδος τοῦ κυρίου.\textsuperscript{216}

Additionally, early Christian writers used Jesus’s names or titles in a number of less regular labels for individual members of their movement, groups of them, and the abstract essence of the movement as a whole in all of the following ways.

Individuals:

All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus (Rom 6:3)
All those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:2; cf. \textit{1 Clem.} 64:1)
Members of Christ (1 Cor 6:15; \textit{1 Clem.} 46:7; Clement Alex. \textit{Paed.} 1:5)
We, who were the first to set our hope on Christ (Eph 1:12; cf. Apelles in Eus. \textit{Hist. Eccl.} \textit{5.13.6})
Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord (2 Tim 2:19)
Those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ (Jude 1:1)
Christ bearers (Ignatius, \textit{Eph.} 9:2)
You who were loved in the Beloved (Odes of Solomon 8:21)
Those confessing Christ (Justin \textit{1 Apol.} 49)
Those who lived like Christ (Justin \textit{2 Apol.} 1)
Friends of Christ (Justin \textit{Dial.} 8)
We who have followed Christ (Clement Alex. \textit{Paed.} 1.7)
The man who has devoted himself to Christ (Clement Alex. \textit{Paed.} 1.12)
Those who are consecrated to Christ (Clement Alex. \textit{Paed.} 3.11)

Groups:

Body of Christ (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 10:17; 12:12-27; Eph 3:6; 5:30; \textit{1 Clem.} 38:1; 46:7; Iren \textit{Haer.} 4.33.8; Clement Alex. \textit{Paed.} 1.5, 6)
Flock of Christ (\textit{1 Clem.} 16:1; 44:3; 54:2; 57:2; cf. Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet 5:2-3)

Abstraction:

The faith of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16; 3:22; Phil 3:9; Rev 14:12)
The gospel of Christ (Rom 15:19; cf. Iren. *Haer.* 5.12.4)
The preaching of Jesus Christ (Rom 16:25)
The testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4)
The confession of Christ and God (Justin *Dial.* 47)
The following of Christ (Clement Alex. *Paed.* 1.6)
The training of Christ (Clement Alex. *Paed.* 1.12)
The teaching which is agreeable to Christ (Clement Alex. *Strom.* 1.11; cf. *Strom.* 6.15; *Did.* 1:1; Justin 2 *Apol.* 2, 13)
The mystery of Christ (Eph 3:4; Col 2:2; 4:3)

Outsiders also used this method to label members of the Jesus movement. Celsus refers to the movement collectively as “such a conviction about Jesus” (τὴν περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοιάνδε συγκατάθεσιν; Orig. *Cels.* 3.39). Galen refers to it as “the school of Christ” (Χριστοῦ διατριβήν; *De pulsuum differentiis*, ii.4). On the other hand, descriptive self-designations that utilize names or titles of Jesus seem not to have been as popular among the literary remains of the early variations of the movement that might be considered heterodox, being absent from *Gospel of Thomas*, Ptolemy’s *Epistle to Flora*, and extant fragments of Basilides, Isidore son of Basilides, Valentinus, and Heracleon.217 The only possible exception to this is Apelles using the phrase “those who have put their hope on the one who was crucified” (οἱ

---

ἐπὶ τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ἠλπικότες), which we only know via an indirect quotation of Apelles by Rhodo reported in Eusebius.218

3.2. Names and Titles of Jesus Used to Label the Movement Metonymously

Another way early Christian literature employs titles of Jesus in designating his followers is through metonymy. Metonymy is a figure of speech that refers to one thing by the mention of something closely related to it, such as when a king is called the crown. Early Christians often referred to their movement metonymously when they labeled it not as something of Christ, nor with an epithet like Christianity, but simply Christ.

The most common form of this was to refer to preaching a message about Christ simply as preaching Christ. This metonym is especially common in Paul, the disputed Pauline epistles, and Acts.219 A similar metonym refers to evangelism from the audience’s perspective as learning,220 hearing,221 or receiving222 Christ. These metonyms appear in writings that were written by insiders for insiders. However,

---

218 Hist. Eccl. 5.13.5.

219 Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:2; 15:12; 2 Cor 1:19; 4:5; Eph 3:8; Col 1:28; Acts 5:42; 8:35; 11:20; 15:35; 17:3, 18.

220 Eph 4:20; Justin Dial. 8.2.

221 Eph 4:21.

222 Col 2:6.
they always refer to evangelism with outsiders. Thus, while they do not present the actual language used with those outsiders, they do provide a window into the way insiders conceptualized what they were doing when they were proselytizing. The feature that distinguished the system of beliefs they proclaimed characteristically enough to provide a metonymical label for it was its centeredness on Jesus Christ.

A similar metonym was to label the supposed correct system of beliefs to which believers in Jesus were to cling as Christ, in contrast with all competing systems to which believers might be drawn away. Justin and the author of Colossians contrast heresies and philosophies not with something called Χριστιανισμός, but simply with Χριστός.223

Christ was not only a label for a system of beliefs, but also for the people who believed in that system. The church is not just metaphorically the body of Christ, it is Christ. We see this, for example, when Paul asks the schismatic Corinthians, “Is Christ divided?” (1 Cor 1:13).224 The relationship outsiders have with those in the movement is the relationship they have with Christ, such as when Paul enjoins separation by asking, “What agreement does Christ have with Beliar?” (2 Cor

223 Col 2:8; 1 Apol. 58; 2 Apol. 10.

224 Cf. Gal 5:4; Col 3:11; Clement Alex. Protr. 11; Strom. 6.14.
And, according to Justin, to persecute people who believe in Christ is to persecute Christ.\(^{226}\)

Finally, the simple term Χριστός sometimes refers to something abstract, such as the quality that makes believers what they are, as when Paul says “to live is Christ,”\(^{227}\) or the goal toward which believers strive, such as when he expresses his desire to “gain Christ,”\(^{228}\) or the manner in which they were to live, as when widows were enjoined not to disregard Christ.\(^{229}\)

### 3.3. Those of Christ

Another kind of expression that uses simply the title Χριστός to identify his followers that does not qualify as metonymy is the use of Χριστοῦ as a genitive of relationship. Just as the genitive can indicate sonship in phrases like Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδείου (Mat 4:21), it can also indicate other types of relationships, such as wives to their husbands (John 19:25) and slaves to their masters (Rom 16:10). One relationship it sometimes represents in early Christian literature is the relationship of

---

\(^{225}\) Cf. 2 Cor 2:15.

\(^{226}\) Justin *Dial. 26*, 47.

\(^{227}\) Phil 1:21; cf. Gal 5:2.

\(^{228}\) Phil 3:8.

followers of Jesus to Jesus in phrases like οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor 15:23). This use of the genitive is most frequent in the writings of Paul, but is also used by Mark, Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria.

An example of this that requires special attention is Paul's words in 1 Cor 1:12:

“What I mean is that each of you says, ‘I belong to Paul,’ or ‘I belong to Apollos,’ or ‘I belong to Cephas,’ or ‘I belong to Christ.’” (λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἐκαστὸς ὑμῶν λέγει· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ). Two points about the interpretation of this verse are particularly relevant to this dissertation: 1) the first three slogans refer to three factions within the church at Corinth, each of which based its sense of group identity on some real or supposed connection to Paul, Apollos, or Cephas; and 2) the fourth slogan refers to Paul's view of what the entire church ought to say, which is that its identity is defined by its connection to Christ. Presently we will consider several challenges that might be raised against these two claims.

Within the wide variety of interpretations of 1 Cor 1:12 in the history of scholarship two patterns prevail. Either the slogans represent variant theological

---

230 BDF § 162.
232 Mark 9:41.
233 1 Apol. 53.
234 Strom. 4.14; 6.6.
camps, including one in particular that is to be understood as Paul’s rivals throughout the Corinthian correspondence, or his concern is simply about a general spirit of divisiveness among his allies in the Corinthian church that is unrelated to the opponents who occupy his attention especially in 2 Corinthians.

C. W. Strüder exemplifies an extreme form of the latter pattern in arguing that 1 Cor 1:12 does not refer to any parties at all and that the slogans are best translated as, “I am for Paul,” etc.\textsuperscript{235} Strüder claims that other scholars before him have shared the same interpretation, especially under the influence of Munck’s work on the issue. However, none of the scholars Strüder cites seem to go as far as he does. Munck, for example, though demurring from calling the groups he sees in 1 Cor 1:12 parties or factions, does still refer to them repeatedly as cliques.\textsuperscript{236} Indeed, whatever the precise nature of the parties, the problem that Paul calls ἔριδες in 1 Cor 1:12 seems not to be merely strife between individuals. The word σχίσματα in v. 10 suggests some kind of groups in dissent with one another,\textsuperscript{237} as does the verb μερίζειν in 1:13.\textsuperscript{238} And Paul’s repeated references to just three names, Paul, Apollos, and

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{235} C. W. Strüder, “Preferences not Parties: The Background of 1 Cor 1,12,” \textit{ETL} \textit{79} (2003): 431-55.


\textsuperscript{237} Cf. John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19.

\textsuperscript{238} Mitchell, \textit{Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation}, 87.
\end{footnotesize}
Cephas demand the existence of groups of people within the church who agree together in favoring one of those leaders over the others.\(^{239}\)

For the purposes of this dissertation it is only necessary to determine that there did exist groups of some kind that identified themselves by their connections to those individuals. It is not necessary to determine whether these groups were theologically oriented sects or rather just cliques. While it is true that sects might easily have named themselves after certain teachers, along the lines of philosophical schools, it is also the case that divisions that had no ideological basis could have identified themselves by their connections to figureheads, whether after the pattern of political alliances,\(^{240}\) sophists and their students,\(^{241}\) or relationships of patronship.\(^{242}\)

A second important issue is the nature of the slogan ἐγὼ Χριστοῦ. For if this slogan, like the others, is merely that of one faction within the church, then it would not qualify as an example of a name or title of Jesus being used to identify his followers in distinction to everyone else, but rather just one subset of his followers in distinction to the rest. Those who identify Paul’s theological opponents in the parties

\(^{239}\) 1 Cor 1:12; 3:4–5, 22; 4:6.


of 1 Cor 1:12 are especially prone to read ἐγὼ Χριστοῦ as the claim of those opponents, since Paul seems to be replying to such a claim in 2 Cor 10:7: “If you are confident that you belong to Christ, remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to Christ, so also do we.”

However, 2 Cor 10:7 makes as much sense if the claim to be Χριστοῦ was widespread among both Paul’s allies and his opponents as it does if his opponents tried to claim that label exclusively. In fact, several factors demand that it was widespread. First, the use of Χριστοῦ as a label in early Christian literature is not limited to the Corinthian correspondence, or even to Paul. Second, in 1 Cor 3:23, Paul directs the words ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ not to a subset of the church, but to everyone as his answer to all of the other slogans. Third, the rhetorical questions Paul asks in 1 Cor 1:13 only make sense as arguments for all members of the church finding their identity in Christ alone, as opposed to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas: “Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

(μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παῦλου ἐβαπτίσθητε). Therefore, Paul means for the slogan ἐγὼ Χριστοῦ to be that of the church without schisms. His complaint is not against those who are claiming to

---

243 NRSV.

244 Mark 9:41; Rom 8:9; Gal 3:29; 5:24; Justin *1 Apol.* 53; Clement Alex. *Strom.* 4:14; 6:6.

be Χριστοῦ, but against those who are claiming to be Παύλου, Ἀπολλῶ, and Κηφᾶ, since they imply that they are something other than Χριστοῦ.

This reading of 1 Cor 1:12 has special ramifications for this dissertation, namely that it suggests that the epithet Χριστοῦ was not one like ἀδελφός that insiders would only use among other insiders, but rather one that members of the movement would have used of themselves even among outsiders. The reason for this conclusion is that, since Paul charged that members of the Paul, Apollos, and Cephas parties used those names to identify themselves with those outside the respective parties, he must have understood Χριστοῦ as a label to use outside the party of Christ, which for him was the entire church.

3.4. *In Christ* and Similar Prepositional Phrases

David G. Horrell makes a point similar to that being argued in this dissertation when he says the following:

By insisting that both Jewish and gentile believers find their basis for belonging in Christ and not the Jewish law, and by insisting that gentile believers must not adopt the marks of Jewish identity and legal observance (circumcision, etc.), Paul and other like-minded Christ-followers began the process of clearly demarcating this (Christian) group as something different, distinct from Judaism, a ‘third race,’ as some later writers would express it (see Horrell 2000c: 341 with note 65). Gentile converts do not become Jewish, and even Jewish believers may on occasion abandon aspects of their former practice. *Their common group identity is fundamentally defined by Christ*
and their faith in him. Indeed, the group may be defined in Pauline terms as those ‘in Christ’ (en Christō).\textsuperscript{246}

Later in the same essay he writes that, though Paul never uses the term \textit{Christian}, “his label ‘in Christ,’ applied both to individuals and to the group, is functionally equivalent.”\textsuperscript{247} Bengt Holmberg has also claimed, “it is hard to see any material difference between this label [\textit{Christianoi}] and some uses of ‘in Christ.’”\textsuperscript{248} Philip Esler, in arguing that the label \textit{Christian} is anachronistic when applied to people in the time of Paul, suggests that \textit{Christ}-follower, \textit{Christ}-believer, \textit{in}-\textit{Christ}, and the \textit{Christ}-movement, can all be used in its place.\textsuperscript{249}

Studies of Paul’s use of the phrase \textit{in Christ} and other similar phrases have rightly emphasized the variety of senses they have.\textsuperscript{250} Most examples of the phrase seem to have an instrumental or some other adverbial function, such as 2 Cor 5:19: “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.” These adverbial examples are not candidates for being functional equivalents of \textit{Christian}. After setting that

\begin{footnotesize}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 321.
\item Philip Esler, \textit{Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter} (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 13.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
majority aside, what remain are 19 examples of in Christ or in the Lord in the undisputed Pauline epistles,\(^{251}\) plus one example in Colossians,\(^{252}\) and 8 examples in other early Christian writings\(^{253}\) that seem to function very much like the word Christian.

The best examples are two that make the phrase substantival by adding the article, thus, οἱ ἐν Χριστῷ.\(^{254}\) Very similar to these are two examples where ἐν Χριστῷ modifies a pronoun, such as “Andronicus and Junia…who were in Christ”,\(^{255}\) and “if anyone is in Christ.”\(^{256}\) Also similar is the phrase “those being in the Lord.”\(^{257}\) In all of the other examples the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ modifies some noun adjectivally in the attributive position, thus functioning similarly to the adjectival use of the word Christian. Usually these phrases indicate a person who is in Christ.

However, they occasionally, especially in 1 Clement, describe something else, such as in-Christ ὁδοὶ, ἀναστροφὴ, εὐσέβεια, παιδεία, πίστις, ἀγωγή, and ἀγάπη.\(^{258}\)

---

\(^{251}\) Rom 8:1; 16:3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13; 1 Cor 3:1; 4:15, 17 (x2); 15:18; 2 Cor 5:17; 12:2; Phil 1:1; 1 Thes 4:16; Phmn 1:23.

\(^{252}\) Col 1:2.


\(^{254}\) Rom 8:1; 1 Pet 5:14.

\(^{255}\) Ὑι…γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ (Rom 16:7).

\(^{256}\) Τις ἐν Χριστῷ (2 Cor 5:17).

\(^{257}\) Τοὺς ὅντας ἐν κυρίῳ (Rom 16:11).

Some of these nouns are such general abstractions that the result is something quite close in meaning to the word *Christianity*.

However, one important factor that distinguishes the phrase *in Christ* for Paul and others from the word *Christian* is that *in Christ* is a strictly insider label. It does not have the perspectively neutral sense that *Christian* does. This is especially true if Nigel Turner is correct that the use of ἐν in ἐν Χριστῷ is unique to that Christian expression, that only theology and biblical syntax can shed light on the phrase, and that “to compare non-Biblical parallels is largely irrelevant.”

However, even if Turner is wrong and ἐν Χριστῷ is properly understood as an example of a more broadly attested function of ἐν, it was still probably, like the label ἀδελφός, only meant to be intelligible to insiders, and not useful for communication across the ideological divide with those thought not to be in Christ. The non-Christian parallels that have been presented either express mystical communion with a god or dependence on someone. For ἐν Χριστῷ to express either of these ideas it must presuppose an exalted view of Christ. For Paul to refer to people as οἱ ἐν Χριστῷ is not simply to imply that they (rightly or wrongly) believe

---


in Christ, such as might be expressed with the phrase oĩ ἐν Χριστῷ, it is to make a theologically loaded claim about the state they are in on account of Christ.

That oĩ ἐν Χριστῷ is an insider-only label is supported by the way it is occasionally used interchangeably with other insider-only labels. In Col 1:2 it is combined with all three of ἁγιος, πιστος, and ἀδελφος: τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 7, where Paul extensively discusses what ought to change or stay the same when someone joins the Jesus movement, and the relationships believers have with outsiders, particularly in marriage, he calls insiders ἀδελφος, -η (vv. 12, 14, 15, 24, 29), κυρίου (v. 22), Χριστοῦ (v. 22), and ἐν κυρίῳ (v. 39), while calling outsiders ἁπιστος (vv. 12, 13, 14, 15).

On the other hand, the examples we have of non-Christian sources designating the Jesus movement with a prepositional phrase incorporating his name do not use ἐν. Celsus refers to the movement as ἡ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοιάνδε συγκατάθεσιν.262 Galen refers to Christians as oĩ ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ.263 A rabbinic parallel

262 Origen, Cels. 3.39.

263 De pulsuum differentiis 3.3.
to Galen’s ἀπό is the - in הדר מילך בר פנדרא (~“one of those of the son of Pandera”).

3.5. Conclusions

When the phenomenon of the Jesus movement was in its infancy, the labels applied to it had to be formed from the already existing vocabulary of the Greco-Roman world. Since no single word meaning “believer in Jesus” yet existed, a phrase like “believer in Jesus” would have to suffice. Frequent use of such expressions resulted in the abbreviation of them by eliding Jesus’s names and titles from them, thus the simple label “believer.” There were a wide variety of ways of forming such periphrastic labels, including phrases that use titles of Jesus in modifying other nouns, genitives of relationship, uses of titles of Jesus as metonyms, and prepositional phrases. All of these are exhibited in the literature from the early period.

Another way such phrases could be abbreviated that we have not yet covered would be through the coining of a new word. For example, the phrase “partisans of Herod” could be abbreviated to Ἡρωδιανοι, using the –ιανοι suffix, meaning “partisan of.” Thus, when one is investigating the history of the Herodians, one would need to give attention not only to occurrences of the word Herodian in the

264 Qoheleth Rabba 10:5. Though Qoheleth Rabba is a later work, the tradition in which this expression appears is about the third century rabbi, Joshua b. Levi. Of course the name בר פנדרא is not perspectively neutral, but the use of -ד is.
literature, as though the group came into being when that word was coined, but also to any periphrastic expressions for partisan of Herod that they may find, some of which may come from a time before there was a word for these partisans.

When the ancients did come up with single words to use in place of the periphrastic expressions we have covered in this chapter, they used three that were formed out of previously existing titles of Jesus: Nazarenes, Galileans, and Christians (or rather, the cognates of these words in ancient languages). We turn to study the labels Nazarenes and Galileans in chapter 4 and will discuss the label Christians in chapter 5.
CHAPTER 4:

NAZARENES AND GALILEANS

Early Christian writings sometimes designate Jesus as “Jesus the Nazarene” or “Jesus the Galilean.” Such designations would not have been unusual for a Palestinian Jew from his time, since toponyms often served as de facto surnames. There is some, admittedly slight, evidence that these titles for Jesus were also sometimes used as labels for his followers, not as toponyms in their cases, but as examples of the group being named after its founder. This chapter surveys that evidence, first for the label Nazarenes, and then for Galileans.

4.1. Occurrences of Ναζωραίος and Similar Words

An inquiry into the Greek words that are translated in English as Nazarene along with the Semitic words from which those Greek words may derive proves to be less simple than one might assume. In addition to these words, other Greek and Latin labels that closely resembled them existed alongside them and presented the opportunity for confusion of terms in antiquity as they do today. Not all of these labels were used as appellations either of Jesus or his followers. Of those that were,
many of their occurrences are in Patristic and Rabbinic literature later than Tertullian. Nevertheless, a survey of terms that exceeds the stated boundaries of this study is needed, if only to discern which are important to it, and to untangle them from the rest.

The Greek words Ναζωραίος and Ναζαρηνός both appear as titles of Jesus. He is also occasionally called Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ Ναζαρέθ. In addition to these, Irenaeus quotes a group he considers heretical calling Jesus Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρία. The Latin version of this text reads Ieseus Nazarene. In another chapter that is preserved only in Latin, Irenaeus’s text contains the following appellations for Jesus: Iesum Nazareum, Iesu Christi Nazareni, Iesu Christi Nazarei, Iesum a Nazareth. Tertullian also recognizes Nazareaus as one of Jesus’s titles. The Gospel of Philip calls Jesus both Ναζαρηνός and Ναζωραῖος. The same title is probably the basis for Yesseus Mazareus, the name of a divine being in three Nag Hammadi texts. In

---


266 Mat 21:11; Mark 1:9; Acts 10:38. Cf. Ἰησοῦν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ (John 1:45).

267 Adv. 1.14.2 (Gk.).

268 Adv. 1.21.3 (Lat.).

269 Adv. 3.12.2, 3, 4, 7.

270 Adv. Marc. 4.8.1.

271 Gos. Phil. 56.12; 62.8, 9, 11, 14, 16.
Hebrew the name ישו הנוצרי is found in uncensored manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud.\(^{273}\)

The Book of Acts attests to Ναζωραῖος also being used as a label for Jesus’s early followers, when Tertullus, the prosecuting attorney on behalf of the Sanhedrin accuses Paul of being, “a pestilent fellow, an agitator among the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes [ἡ τῶν Ναζωραίων αἵρεσις]” (24:5). According to Tertullian, Jews still used the label Nazareus for Christians in his day.\(^{274}\) Eusebius says something similar in the description of Nazareth in his Onomasticon: “Nazareth [Ναζαρέθ], whence Christ was called a Nazarene [Ναζωραῖος], and we, who are now called Christians, were of old called Nazarens [Ναζαρηνοί].”\(^{275}\)

Nonchristian sources also attest the use of the label. A version of the Birkhat Haminim, the rabbinic cursing of the heretics, found in the Cairo Geniza includes the label נוצרי among those castigated. This reading could be part of the original prayer, composed before A. D. 100 and censored out of later versions, or it could

---

\(^{272}\) Apoc. Adam 85.30; Zost. (VIII,1) 47.5–6; Gos. Eg. (III,2) 65.10–11.

\(^{273}\) B. Sanh. 103a/b, Ber. 17b; b. Sanh. 107b/b. Sot. 47a; b. Az. 17a; b. Sanh. 43a–b; b. Git. 57a. For the textual witnesses for these uncensored readings see Peter Schäfer, Jesus in the Talmud (Princeton: Princeton University, 2007), 131–44.

\(^{274}\) “The Christ of the creator had to be called a Nazarene according to prophecy, whence the Jews also designate us, on that very account, Nazarenes.” (Marc. 4.8.1).

have been added later, but no later than about A. D. 325. The *Babylonian Talmud* uses the same label. The Syriac account of Mar Pethion’s martyrdom, which occurred in the middle of the fifth century, describes his Persian prosecutor charging him as a *nṣryː*. In the early third century, the grammarian Aelius Herodianus lists Ṯαζωραῖος among other (for him) foreign words ending in -αῖος. The Qur’an refers to Christians as *al-naṣārā*. According to Griffith, the prevailing scholarly opinion is that this term “is derived from the name of Jesus’ home town of Nazareth” and “preserves the original Aramaic form from which the Greek name was transcribed.”

In the late fourth century, Epiphanius applies the label Ḯαζωραῖος to a Jewish-Christian sect (*Pan. 29*). Jerome uses a similar Latin label for what appears to be the same group, although textual variants make it difficult to know what precise

---


279 *Partitiones* 164.8. That the use of the word he knew about was in reference to Jewish believers in Jesus is supported by the fact that the other words he lists next to it are: Ἰουδαῖος, Ἑβραῖος, Σαδδουκαῖος, Φαρισαῖος, and Ναζιραῖος.

spelling he used. According to Epiphanius, these Ναζωραίοι are to be distinguished from Ναζιραίοι, or persons who had taken the Nazirite vow described in Numbers 6 (Pan. 29.5.7). He also describes another sect of the Jews that was apparently not Christian in any sense, called the Νασαραίοι (Pan. 18). These may or may not be related to a group only mentioned in passing by Pliny the Elder, living in a tetrarchy in southern Syria in the first century, called the Nazerini (Nat. Hist. 5).

Finally, the name naṣuraia is used centuries later in Mandaean literature, sometimes for all Mandaeans, other times for the wisest among them, and once to their Christian antagonists. Although the precise origins of this Mandaean term are obscure, it probably derives from early application of the label Ναζωραίος to Christians.

Of the above examples of labels for believers in Jesus, only the occurrences from Acts and Tertullian fall within the chronological scope of this study. However, some of the later and less clear-cut examples must bear some historic connection to that early usage. Thus, where clear and early evidence paints only a partial picture, some of the later or less clear evidence may help to sharpen that picture. Nevertheless,

---


it cannot be assumed that every piece of data must be relevant. As one scholar put it, “If to the Nazerini and Nusairi and Nazoraioi/Nazareni we add the Nasaraioi of Epiphanius and the Nazorei of Filaster, we have all the ingredients for a scholastic freeforall.”

4.2. Jesus and the Naming of the Sect of the Nazarenes

In light of the above data, the simplest explanation for the label ἡ τῶν Ναζωραίων αἱρέσις mentioned in Acts 24:5 is probably that Ναζωραῖος was commonly applied to Jesus as a surname solely because of his being from Nazareth, and that this name of Jesus became a label for his followers along lines similar to those discussed for many other group labels above in chapter 2. Indeed, this explanation commands the support of the majority of commentators and will be defended again here. However, the superficial simplicity of this explanation disguises significant challenges that reside in the details. These challenges have been great enough to


convince some scholars that the name of the sect of the Nazarenes originally had nothing to do with any town called Nazareth.\(^{286}\)

Three etymological items lessen the likelihood of a link between the Hebrew name of the town, נצרה,\(^{287}\) and the Greek label Ναζωραῖος: the lack of any representation of the נ, the use of ζ rather than σ to represent the צ, and the presence of the ω in place of a simple shewa.\(^{288}\) The first of these points can be explained by the fact that the נ is not an essential part of the name of the town, but one of two alternate endings. This is evidenced in the NT where the names Ναζαρά, Ναζαρέθ and Ναζαρέτ are used interchangeably.\(^{289}\)

The second point also carries little weight in this case. While it is true that Greek normally employs σ in place of צ, there are some examples of the use of ζ instead. Additionally, as Moore observes, “in the Old Syriac version as well as in the Peshitto Ναζωραῖος is uniformly rendered nāsrāyā, and Ναζαρέθ is nāsrat, and


\(^{288}\) For a more detailed overview of these points, see Moore, “Nazarene and Nazareth,” 426-32; and Soares-Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations*, 194-97.

\(^{289}\) S. v. Ναζαρά, *BDAG*. On the linguistics behind this phenomenon see Moore, “Nazarene and Nazareth,” 428.
there would seem to be as much reason why the Greek \textit{zeta} should not be represented by the Syriac \textit{sade} as why \textit{sade} should not be represented by \textit{zeta.}^{290}

Furthermore, it is a fact that the name of the town is spelled with a ζ in Greek, so the toponym naturally would be as well.

Finally, the third etymological point also proves to be well within attested conventions for Semitic words. As Moore describes the situation, “the vowels of \textit{Ναζωραῖος}…point to an Aramaic \textit{nəsarai}, with the Aramaic ending \textit{–ai} (determined \textit{–aïya, –a’ä}), and with the vowel \textit{o} shifted to the second syllable \textit{(nosrī, nəsorai).}^{291}

He explains this situation, saying, “The metathesis of vowels, especially, \textit{o} and \textit{u}, is, however, very common,” giving several examples of Semitic words undergoing similar metathesis.^{292}

Kennard admits, “The possibility that Nazorean \textit{may} be derived from Nazareth is not to be excluded, but possibility and probability are not the same.”^{293}

This objection seems to give no place to the evidence in the NT connecting the group name to the place name. Matthew explicitly attributes the label \textit{Ναζωραῖος} to Jesus’s tenure in Nazareth in 2:23. In Matt 21:11 and 26:71, Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀπὸ Ναζαρέθ and Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος appear to be used synonymously. The latter verse is

\begin{footnotes}
292 Ibid., 428–29.
293 Kennard, “Nazorean and Nazareth,” 79.
\end{footnotes}
parallel to Mark 14:67, which calls Jesus Ναζαρηνός, the label Mark uses consistently and, though not as explicitly as Matthew, implicitly derives from Nazareth by first calling Jesus ἀπο Ναζαρετ in Mark 1:9, prior to use of that label. Luke uses both Ναζαρηνός294 and Ναζωραῖος,295 including one instance of replacing Mark’s Ναζαρηνός with Ναζωραῖος.296 The first connection of Jesus with Nazareth in John’s Gospel is Phillip calling him Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπο Ναζαρέτ. Only after that is he called Ναζωραῖος.297 Given that the etymological connection between the group name, Ναζωραῖος, and the place name, Ναζαρέτ, is possible, the consistent explicit witness of the earliest writings to employ either term that they were connected, should suffice to establish the probability of that connection.

However, another consideration also suggests that the label Ναζωραῖος might have had a different origin, which is the possibility that it was the name of a pre-existing Jewish party to which John the Baptist, Jesus, and their disciples belonged. As mentioned above, Epiphanius describes a Jewish sect called Νασαραῖοι that was “before Christ and did not know Christ.”298 Pliny’s Nazerini in southern

297 John 18:5, 7; 19:19.
298 Pan. 29.6.1. For several coincidences between Epiphanius’s description of this sect and the views of certain early believers in Jesus, see Marcel Simon, St. Stephen and the Hellenists (New York: Longmans, 1958), 91-94.
Syria, which he would have known about from records that came from before the
time of Jesus, could easily have included many Jews.\textsuperscript{299} In the thinking of some, the
Jesus-believing Ναζωραῖοι are to be connected to the Mandaeans via a pre-christian
forerunner of both groups.\textsuperscript{300} Moreover, the -αῖος ending is said to resemble that of a
party name, such as Σαδδουκαῖος, and Φαρισαῖος, more than a toponym.\textsuperscript{301} This
name would probably have been based on the Hebrew verb, \textit{נָצַר}, meaning \textit{to guard},
which would be a fitting label for a group committed to keeping a particular way of
life.\textsuperscript{302}

The likely existence of a similarly named pre-Christian Jewish party is a
noteworthy coincidence. However, the existence of such a party is not at all
incompatible with the evidence already mentioned that the label Ναζωραῖος, when
applied to Jesus, was originally a toponym. Indeed, one might hypothesize that
Ναζαρηνός was the original form of the toponym, and that the -αῖος ending only
began to be used when this particular name of Jesus became a label for his followers,
in assimilation to other group names. In this case, the non-Markan evangelists’


\textsuperscript{300} This Mandaean term is too far outside the scope of this study to cover in detail. For a good
overview and refutation of the alleged connection between the Mandaeans and the Ναζωραῖοι, see
Schraeder, \textit{TDNT} 4:875-79.

\textsuperscript{301} Davies and Allison, \textit{Matthew}, 1.281. But cf. Ἑβράιος and Ἰουδαῖος.

\textsuperscript{302} Cf. W. F. Albright’s interpretation of Mat 2:23 in \textit{Matthew} (AB 26; New York:
application of the label to Jesus would merely be a reflection of a linguistic
development that had occurred prior to their writing.

The early evidence for the label Ναζωραίος fits well with the possibility that
two similarly named groups existed. For example, the name Yesseus Mazareus in the
Nag Hammadi texts may indicate that not everybody who heard the name Ἱησοῦς ὁ
Ναζωραῖος knew about its origin, no matter which theory is preferred.303 Also,
Epiphanius distinguishes the Ναζωραίοι from the Νασαραίοι, and claims that the
Ναζωραίοι derived their name from that of Jesus, who was called that because of
being from Nazareth, and that at the time this name developed it was used for all
Christians, whereas Νασαραίοι had no connection to Jesus.304 Tertullian and
Eusebius also both state explicitly that Christians were called Nazarenes after Jesus the
Nazarene, who was so called on account of his being from Nazareth.305

Matthew 2:23 is also more easily understood on the supposition that Matthew
was aware of confusion about the label Ναζωραίος and felt the need to clarify it.
This verse reads, “There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what
had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, ‘He will be called a
Nazorean.’” (καὶ ἐλθὼν κατῴκησεν εἰς πόλιν λεγομένην Ναζαρέτ· ὅπως πληρωθῇ

---

303 Apoc. Adam 85.30; Zost. (VIII,1) 47.5-6; Gos. Eg. (III,2) 65.10-11.
304 Pan. 29.1.2; 29.5.6; 29.6.1.
305 Tert., Marc. 4.8.1; Eus., Onom. 138.24-25.
τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθῆσεται. Rather than a specific prophecy that he claimed was fulfilled by Jesus being called Ναζωραῖος on the basis of some subtle play on words,306 what Matthew meant was that Jesus’s coming to live in Nazareth was the result of the fulfillment of a series of prophecies that determined the path his life took as a child, prophecies which he had already quoted in Matthew 1–2.307

Several details of the verse support this interpretation of Matt 2:23. Given its claim of prophetic fulfillment, the differences between this verse and other similar claims throughout Matthew are striking.308 First of all, the brief clause ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθῆσεται is completely unlike the quotations in Matthew’s clear fulfillment citations. It is far shorter, and bears far less resemblance to any known


texts. All of Matthew’s clear fulfillment citations attribute their quotes either to a named prophet or as διὰ τοῦ προφήτου, in the singluar. But Matthew 2:23 claims that what it says was διὰ τῶν προφητῶν, in the plural. Likewise, all of Matthew’s clear fulfillment citations introduce their quotations with the participle λέγοντος. In contrast, Matt 2:23 introduces its clause with either ὅτι or, if ὅτι is part of the quotation, nothing at all.

Actually, Matthew 2:23 more closely resembles Matt 26:54–56 than it does any of Matthew’s clear fulfillment citations. Those verses speak of fulfilling αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν, with the clause ὅτι οὔτος δεῖ γενέσθαι. In this light, Matt 2:23 should be taken, not as a quote, but as a summary of the way God’s purpose, as proven through multiple fulfillments of prophecies in Matthew 1–2, included the fact that Jesus would be from Nazareth. In this way of reading the passage Matthew bases the label Ναζωραῖος solely on the name of the town Ναζαρέθ, without any play on words with some other Hebrew term in the background. He also makes this

309 Even if the ὅτι is included within a direct quote, rather than read as introducing an indirect quote, it would still be only three words long, with only the ὅτι being identical to a supposed source (such as Jdgs 13:5). The shortest of Matthew’s clear fulfillment quotations is in Matt 2:15. That quotation is six words long, and although the only two words in it that agree exactly with the Old Greek of Hos 11:1 are ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, the other four words, ἐκάλεσα τὸν ὦν μου, actually make Matthew’s words a more exact translation of the Masoretic text. The other fulfillment citations are considerably longer than that, and they also agree closely with a Greek translation of the Masoretic text, with the exception of Matt 27:9–10, where there are multiple clear agreements with both Zech 11:12 and Jer 32:9.

point in a way that suggests the label had some importance in reference to Jesus about which confusion should be carefully avoided.

The only remaining loose end in this disentanglement of nomenclature is the fact that by around A. D. 400 Jerome and Epiphanius both write of the Ναζωραῖοι as a rather small Jewish sect within (or dangling on the edge of) the larger body of Christianity, rather than the movement as a whole. Given the date of these authors, our understanding of the use of the label in an earlier period must be based primarily on Acts and Tertullian, both of whom seem not to use the label in such a restrictive way. However, even as late as Jerome and Epiphanius, the difference between Ναζωραῖοι and Χριστιανοί may be more of a reflection of language than of conscious determination of a distinct group identity, even if Jerome and Epiphanius themselves did not see it this way.\(^\text{311}\) Whereas Χριστιανοί was naturally meaningful to anyone who knew Greek or Latin, Ναζωραῖοι needed to be explained to most people, as Matthew 2:23 illustrates. In the context of native Aramaic speaking followers of Jesus, the opposite situation would have obtained, the semitic label would have been the most natural. However, too little has been preserved from early Aramaic-speaking believers in Jesus to know much about the labels that they used or that others used about them. It is possible that Palestinian believers in Jesus called themselves נזרעי without intending to distinguish themselves from the broader

movement of $\chi_\text{ριστιανοί}$. However when the non-Aramaic speaking fathers encountered the label נְּוָרי they recognized it not as the Aramaic word for $\chi_\text{ριστιανοί}$, but as something different.\(^{312}\) This is only a hypothesis. However, if it is correct it serves to highlight how, in the world of our texts, there is a close connection between a name of something and its essence.

Furthermore, the one extant source that does originate from certain Jesus believing Jews called Nazarenes, at least by Jerome, is their commentary on Isaiah preserved in some fragments in Jerome's commentary on the same book. And as Luoamen has shown, the theology of these fragments agrees remarkably with what can be found in many documents from Greek speaking Christians, including being positively opposed to enjoining on people the entire Law of Moses, contrary to the picture painted of them by Epiphanius in his efforts to make them a heresy.\(^{313}\)

4.3. Galileans

Another label, closely related to Nazarenes, that early followers of Jesus might have been called in the first two centuries is Galileans. The evidence for this label is slight. Indeed, there are no occurrences prior to the fourth century that indisputably

---

\(^{312}\) Cf. the way many westerners would define $\textit{Allah}$ as the god of the Muslims, without reflecting on what name Arab-speaking Christians might use for God.

refer to believers in Jesus. However, the cumulative weight of the evidence suggests that the label *Galileans* was probably occasionally used for them during that period.

4.3.1. Julian the Apostate

The first author to apply the label *Galilean* incontrovertibly to believers in Jesus was Emperor Julian in various writings from roughly A.D. 355–363. The foremost of these is his lengthy attack on Christianity, Κατὰ Γαλιλαίων, in which he consistently labels Christians as Γαλιλαίοι. He also uses this label when referring to Christians in his other works.

One likely motivation Julian had for using this label was that it portrayed Christianity as a localized cult from an insignificant region, so as to compare it with other ethnocentric cults, which was one of his major themes in, Κατὰ Γαλιλαίων. However, his choice of Galilee as the toponym for this group could not have been arbitrary, nor was it likely rooted in any distinct connection between Christians and the region of Galilee in Julian’s own day. By then it was a popular movement throughout the empire, and Julian himself had been raised as a Christian and

---


315 Cf. Gregory Nazianzus, *First Invective Against Julian* 76.

316 Ep. 46.2; 54.2; 61c.52; 79.3, 57; 83.1, 4; 84.17, 33; 88.13; 89a.65; 89b.344; 98.72; 106.3; 107.9; 110.6; 11.12, 30; 114.1, 64; 115.1; 163.2; 164.10.

317 E.g. *Gal. 42E–43A; 116A–B; 143A; 178A–B; 354B.*
surrounded by Christians in Constantinople, Antioch, and elsewhere.\footnote{Wright, \textit{Julian}, 1.vii-xxx.}

Clearly, Julian drew this appellation from the founder of the movement, Jesus, whom he calls in one letter, “that new-fangled Galilean god,” (\textit{illum novum eius deum Galileum}).\footnote{Ep. 55, which is only extant in a Latin translation. In the context immediately before this, he also calls Jesus \textit{Nazarei}. Julian also uses the name Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος in \textit{Gal.} 99E; and 335C.}

It is possible that Julian chose the label \textit{Galilean} without precedent. However, this seems unlikely. He consistently uses the label, not only in \textit{Against the Galileans}, but also in many of his letters, often mentioning Christians incidentally and in contexts which do not suggest any rhetorical reason for the use of that label over any other.\footnote{See fn. 168.}

Moreover, in his extant writings he never offers an explanation for the label, nor any suggestion that he is being innovative in his use of it, he merely assumes his audiences know whom he intends. Therefore, despite its rarity among other authors, it is likely that others had already called Christians “Galileans” for some time before Julian did.

4.3.2. Epictetus

The only known Greek author whom Julian likely read and who used the label \textit{Galileans} in reference to a group that might have been disciples of Jesus is Epictetus. Some time probably not much later than A. D. 100 Epictetus mentions
Galileans along with children and mad men as groups who do not fear death at the hands of the emperor.\textsuperscript{321} Oldfather declares that this is “obviously referring to the Christians.”\textsuperscript{322} Oldfather also sees disciples of Jesus in another passage of Epictetus, where he speaks of people who pretend to be Ἰουδαῖοι, but lack “the attitude of mind of the man who has been baptized.” He then labels such pretenders as παραβαπτισταί. Oldfather opines, “It would appear…that Epictetus is here speaking really of the Christians, who were in his time not infrequently confused with the Jews.”\textsuperscript{323}

Although Oldfather’s might be accused of overconfidence in his hypotheses about these two passages, the descriptions they provide, especially if both descriptions are combined together, do match the Jesus movement of that time. Contemporaries of Epictetus both inside and outside the Jesus movement indicate that willingness to be put to death was a characteristic of some members of that movement.\textsuperscript{324} Baptism as a means of initiation into the movement and an indication of a change in one’s mind was also widely acknowledged at that time.\textsuperscript{325} Epictetus was also an influential

\begin{footnotes}
\item[321] Disc. 4.7.6.
\item[323] Ibid., 1.272, fn. 1.
\item[324] Ignatius, Romans 4–5; Tacitus, Annals 15.44; Lucian, Per. 13; Marc. Aur., Med. 11.3.
\item[325] Matt 28:18–20; Ign., Poly. 6.2; Did. 7.1; cf. Lucian, who calls the Jesus movement an “initiation” (τελετή) Per. 11.
\end{footnotes}
rhetorician, and was adored by Marcus Aurelius, whom Julian admired, and respected by Gregory of Nazianzus, whom Julian knew directly as a fellow-student of Libanius. Thus, it seems more likely than not that a bridge of influence should be posited between Epictetus and Julian, perhaps with other intermediary influences not extant in the literature.

In light of this conjecture, four other second-century references to Galileans may also refer to Christians, two in Greek sources (Justin Martyr and Hegesippus via Eusebius), and two in Hebrew (Mishnah Yaddaim and a letter of Bar Kokhba).

4.3.3. Justin Martyr and Hegesippus

The second-century references to Galileans that are most difficult to interpret as followers of Jesus are those by Justin and Hegesippus. Both of these authors include Γαλιλαῖοι in their lists of αἱρέσεις of the Jews. If it was the case that the sect they called Γαλιλαῖοι had some sort of allegiance to Jesus the Galilean, then this sect must have had enough in common with non-Christian Jews and little enough in common with the people Justin and Hegesippus considered Christians, that these authors would consider them only a sect of the former and not the latter.


This hypothesis, however, is reasonable, given that such people probably did exist at that time and Justin and Hegesippus did not apparently have much direct knowledge about the sects they listed. Hegesippus lists Μασβθεοι both as one of the seven αἱρεσεῖς that corrupted the message of Jesus and one of the seven αἱρεσεῖς of the Jews. And, while Justin made room for some people to be both Jews and Christians, he certainly knew of some people who considered themselves disciples of Jesus, but whom he considered only Jews and not Christians. The place where such people would have been most likely to be found in the early second-century was Galilee, where some communities of Jews who believed in Jesus would have existed in towns that were almost entirely Jewish in their ethnic makeup. As Skarsaune observes of Galilee, “The practical compromises necessary in mixed communities, like the one at Antioch, were not required here.”

4.3.4. The Mishnah and Bar Kokhba

Finally, there are two second-century sources by Jews who did not believe in Jesus that refer to a group called Galileans. One, a story in m. Yadayim refers to a

328 Eus., Hist. Eccl. 4.22.5, 7.
329 Dial. 47.
certain גלילי.\(^{331}\) The other, one of Simon bar Kokhba’s letters, refers to a group of גליליים that some of his men had encountered.\(^{332}\)

Bar Kokhba’s letter contributes almost nothing to our knowledge about the appellation he uses. He instructs his men to keep away (either רפסים or יפסק) from גליליים (either “the Galileans they rescued” or “the Galileans they captured”). Although the line may be read in various ways, each interpretation suggests either that bar Kokhba or his men had a negative view of the Galileans. Thus, it is unlikely that the label is to be taken simply as a toponym referring to Galileans who had either come to Judea to fight alongside bar Kokhba or chosen an inopportune moment in history to settle there. Furthermore, Justin refers to bar Kokhba persecuting people who believed in Jesus.\(^{333}\) Beyond that, little can be said about them.\(^{334}\)

The Mishnah is slightly more helpful. First of all, the description of the גלילי as a מין agrees with Justin’s and Hegisippus’s description of the גαλιλαῖοι as a σιρέσις of the Jews. Second of all, it portrays the מין גלילי as disputing with Pharisees about the fact that they write the names of both the ruler and Moses on

\(^{331}\) M. Yad. 4.8.

\(^{332}\) DJD 2, no. 43.

\(^{333}\) Apol. 31.5–6.

their writs of divorce. Rubinstein asserts without explanation that it is “against all probability that the min gelili mentioned in the Mishna refers to a Judeo-Christian.”

However, Rubinstein’s judgment is too hasty. In fact, in light of Jesus’s teaching on divorce, and the way early Christians saw that teaching as one that depreciated the value of Moses’s law, a Judeo-Christian would seem especially likely to engage in a halakhic dispute precisely like that one. Another source that hints at halakhic debates centered on Jesus’s seeming abrogation of Moses’s command to give a bill of divorce is a medieval Hebrew version of Matthew’s Gospel that some scholars believe transmits much older Hebrew gospel traditions. In that version of Matt 5:31–32, Jesus says, “I say to you that everyone who leaves his wife is to give her a bill of divorce. But concerning adultery, he is the one who commits adultery.”

4.3.5. Conclusions about the Label Galileans

Taken together, Justin, Hegesippus, the Mishnah, and bar Kokhba paint a picture of a Palestinian group with some connection to Galilee that was considered a

---

335 Ibid., 27.


of the Jews by the Christian authors Justin and Hegesippus, that was considered *minim* by the Tannaim, that disputed with Pharisees concerning the writ of divorce, and that Bar Kokhba considered something that he and his men were not. This much in itself does not prove that the Galileans were believers in Jesus. There may well have been other Palestinian groups that had all of those characteristics.

However, since Epictetus was roughly contemporary with those sources, his characterization of Galileans as people who fearlessly faced death by imperial order ought to be placed next to them. In this light the hypothesis that the Galileans were a Jesus-believing sect becomes rather attractive. It has occasionally been suggested that the label *Galileans* is even used to designate the Jesus movement in Acts 1:11 and 2:7. While the term can be understood as nothing more than a geographic designation in these verses, the likelihood that it was a name for the Jesus movement in the second-century makes it at least plausible that it was used that way in Acts as well.

Once this cumulative case is admitted, then the case of Julian two centuries later can be read in its light. For he not only calls Christians “Galileans,” but he also classifies them as a *αἵρεσις*, just as Justin and Hegesippus did, and similarly with the labeling them as *minim* in the Mishnah. A group of believers in Jesus would have

---

338 E. g. Elliott, “Jesus the Israelite,” 140.
been especially susceptible to being called *Galileans*, since *Galilean*, like *Nazarene*, was a title sometimes applied to Jesus.\textsuperscript{339}

Finally, if *Galileans* was a label applied to a Jesus believing group of Jews in the second century, then the body of evidence for its use comes from a diverse group of people outside that group. This includes both Jews (like Hegesippus) and Gentiles (like Justin) who believed in Jesus, and both Jews (like bar Kokhba and the Tannaim) and Gentiles (like Epictetus) who did not believe in Jesus. The only thing all of these authors had in common was that they did not consider themselves Galileans.

4.4. Conclusions

In one of his objections to deriving the label Ναζωραῖος from Ναζαρέως, Kennard remarks, “Religious movements do not as a rule take their names from the birthplace of their founder, least of all when the place continued to reject his teaching.”\textsuperscript{340} One might wonder what rules about the naming of groups Kennard means here, as he cites no source which purports to have induced such rules from the available ancient evidence. As has already been shown above, some groups did get their names from the names of the places they originated. Stoics, for example, were still Stoics when they were not in the Stoa. It is not only the connection of a group as

\textsuperscript{339} Mat 21:11; 26:69; John 7:41, 52; Justin, *Dial.* 108.2; *Acts of Paul* 8.27; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.57; 6.11; Julian, *Ep.* 55.

\textsuperscript{340} Kennard, “Nazorean and Nazareth,” 79.
a whole to a place that could produce such a name. According to Diogenes Laertius, the Cynics were so called after Antisthenes who earned the nickname Ἀπλοκύων teaching in the Cynosarges gymnasium in Athens.\(^{341}\)

Perhaps most relevant here are the Cyrenaics (κυρηναῖκοι), named for Aristippus of Cyrene (Ἀρίστιππος ὁ Κυρηναῖος).\(^{342}\) Here we have a man who had a toponym functioning as his surname who founded a philosophical school, and the label applied to that school and its members was formed from that toponym that was originally applied to him for purely geographic reasons, but was later applied to them not because of their connection to the place, but because of their connection to the man named for the place. Similarly, Jesus was called both *Jesus the Nazarene* and *Jesus the Galilean* and the sect that followed him was named *Nazarenes* and *Galileans* after him.

What little evidence we have for these labels suggests that the setting in which they flourished was among Aramaic speakers in Palestine, such that we only know of them indirectly through Greek and Latin witnesses. The rarity of the labels *Nazarene* and *Galilean* in our texts may be due to our lack of texts written in the language in which those labels were primarily used, and not due to rarity of their usage.

\(^{341}\) Dio. Laert. 6.13.

\(^{342}\) Dio. Laert. 1.18–19; 2.85–86; Strabo 17.3.22.
The most informative of these available Greek and Latin texts is Acts 24:5 which quotes Tertullus, an attorney working with the high priest, calling Paul “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” to Festus, some time in the range of A.D. 58–60. However, the places in Acts where Jesus himself is called Jesus the Nazarene are all in early chapters recounting events that seem to date to the 30’s, and two later verses in which Paul refers in retrospect to use of the label at the time of his conversion.\textsuperscript{343} This picture has verisimilitude, since we would expect that the label Jesus the Nazarene took root either during the life of the historical Jesus, or early in the ensuing years, when his connection to Nazareth would be fresh in people’s memories. Given that the popularity of that particular title for Jesus seems to have waned after those early years, we would also expect that those years would be the time period in which the label Nazarene would also come to be applied to his followers. The same would seem to be the case for the label Galileans, especially in light of Acts 1:11 and 2:7, even if that label is purely geographic in those passages.

Thus, we have a plausible case that Jesus’s earliest followers were labeled with names taken from two of his titles some time in the earliest decade of the movement’s existence. This brings us to the remaining example of this phenomenon, the label Christian.

CHAPTER 5:

CHRISTIAN AND CHRISTIANITY

The English word *Christian* derives from the Greek Χριστιανός and its Latin cognate *Christianus*. This is not the earliest word or phrase that included a form of the title Χριστός and was used to label Jesus’s followers. It would, however, go on to become the main one.

5.1. Survey of Usage from Acts through Tertullian

The Greek word Χριστιανός and its Latin cognate *Christianus* occur only sporadically in literature prior to about the middle of the second century. Χριστιανός occurs four times in Christian writings potentially from the late first-century (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16; *Did.* 12:4). Then, in the early second century, Ignatius uses Χριστιανός five times (*Eph.* 11:2; *Magn.* 4:1; *Trall.* 6:1; *Rom.* 3:2; *Poly.* 7:3) and Χριστιανισμός five times (*Magn.* 10:1, 3 [x2], *Rom.* 3:3; *Phil.* 6:1).³⁴⁴ Nonchristian writings from the late first and early second centuries also occasionally use the Greek

---

³⁴⁴ Hermas *Sim.* 9.17.4 may also allude to the use of Χριστιανός in referring to those who are “called by the name of the Son of God.”
Χριστιανός or the Latin Christianus. A graffito from Pompeii, thus no later than A.D. 79, also most likely contains the Latin Christianos.

Beginning around A.D. 150 Χριστιανός and its cognates appear much more often. Hegesippus, Aristides, Martyrdom of Polycarp, and Epistle to Diognetus all use the word with greater frequency than most earlier works. Justin Martyr uses it especially often. Χριστιανός or its Latin equivalent continues to appear, though never as frequently as in Justin, throughout the Christian writings between Justin and Tertullian, especially in Clement of Alexandria. Among mid- to late-second

345 Josephus Ant. Jud. 18.64.5; Pliny Ep. 10.96 [7x], 97 [2x]; Suet. Nero 16.2; Tacitus Ann. 15.44.

346 CIL 4.679.

347 Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 3.32.3; Aristides 2.2; 15.1, 2; 16.1 [x2]; Mart. Poly. 3.2; 10.1; 12.1, 2; Diog. 1.1; 2.6, 10; 4.6; 5.1; 6.1-9 [x9].

348 Apol. 4.5, 7; 7.3, 4 [x2]; 11.1; 12.9; 16.8, 14; 26.6; 31.6; 46.3, 4; 53.3; 68.8; 2 Apol. 1.2; 2.7-16 [x8]; 3.1; 6.6; 7.1; 11.8; 12.1; 13.1, 2, 4; Dial. 17.1; 35.1, 2, 6; 44.1; 47.2; 63.5; 64.1; 78.10; 80.2-5 [x5]; 93.5; 96.2 [x2]; 102.2, 5 [x2]; 117.1, 3 [x2].

349 Tatian To the Greeks 27.1; Theophilus Autolycus 1.1, 12; 2.33; 3.4, 15; Athenagoras Leg. 1.3; 2.1, 4; 4.5-7 [x3]; Irenaeus Adv. Haer. 1.24.6; 3.10.6; 3.12.7, 14; 3.21.3; 4.26.1; Acts of Peter 33.13; Acts of Paul and Thecla 14, 16; Martyrdom of Paul 2.23; 3.18-22; Clement Alex.; Martyrdom of Saints Cupus, Papylus, and Agathonice [x6]; Martyrdom of Saints Ptolemaeus and Lucius [x8]; Martyrs of Lyons [x10]; Acts of Justin and Companions [x16 in short recension]; Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs [x5]; Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas [x3].

350 Protr. 12.122.4; Paed. 1.10.95.2; 1.13.102.4; 2.1.1.1; 2.1.10.2; 2.1.14.3; 2.3.38.3; 2.7.60.5; 3.6.36.1; 3.8.41.3; Strom. 2.4.18.4; 4.11.79.3; 4.12.81.2; 5.14.98.4-5 [x2]; 6.5.41.7; 6.15.115.2; 6.17.149.5; 7.1.1.1, 3; 7.9.54.2, 3; 7.11.65.5.
century nonchristians, Hadrian, Lucian, Celsus, and Marcus Aurelius, all use the word.\textsuperscript{351}

Finally, in Tertullian, \textit{Christianus} appears about 400 times, decisively supplanting all other labels as Tertullian’s main way of designating individual believers in Jesus. Also with Tertullian the word \textit{Christianismus} shows signs of gaining currency with 5 occurrences.\textsuperscript{352} As mentioned above, Ignatius used \textit{Χριστιανισμός}, perhaps even coining the word. However, no other authors did over the next century, with one possible exception in \textit{Martyrdom of Polycarp} (depending on the date of this work), one in Clement of Alexandria, and a possible, though dubious, exception in Celsus \textit{On True Doctrine}, where the word is more likely Origen’s than Celsus’s.\textsuperscript{353} After Tertullian \textit{Χριστιανισμός} occurs over 100 times in Origen, and both \textit{Χριστιανισμός} and \textit{Christianismus} are common among fourth-century authors.

The early attestation of \textit{Χριστιανός} among nonchristian authors, the relative scarcity of it among the earliest Christian writings, its gradual growth in popularity among Christians, and the fact that it is most noticeable in those Christian writings

\textsuperscript{351}Eusebius \textit{Hist. Eccl.} 4.9.2; Lucian \textit{Perigrinus} 11; Origen \textit{Cels.} 1.3, 26; 3.1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 4.2, 22, 23, 48; 5.2, 14, 53, 64; 6.19; 8.69; Marcus Aurelius 11.3. On the possibility that Galen used the word, and the likelihood that he did not, see Stephen Gero, “Galen on the Christians: A reappraisal of the Arabic Evidence,” \textit{Orientalia Christiana Periodica} 56 (1990): 403.

\textsuperscript{352}\textit{Praescr.} 7.36; \textit{Marc.} 4.433.3; 4.532.2; 5.581.13; 5.591.6.

\textsuperscript{353}\textit{Mart. Poly.} 10.1; Clement Alex. \textit{Strom.} 7.1; Origen \textit{Celsus} 3.75.
that showcase the rhetoric that was used with outsiders, all support the hypothesis
that Χριστιανός was originally used primarily by outsiders and was, perhaps
reluctantly, adopted by insiders. This is a common interpretation of the data,\textsuperscript{354} and
one that much of the following discussion will bear out.

5.2. The Date of the Label’s Origin

If one were to embrace a second-century date for 1 Peter, Acts, and \textit{Didache},
reject as a Christian interpolation the entirety of the \textit{Testimonium Flavianum}, which
is the only passage where the word occurs in Josephus, and dismiss the Pompeii
graffito as something other than some form of \textit{Christianus}, then one would only have
to insist on a date for the coining of the label Χριστιανός early enough to account
for its sudden widespread use among a diverse range of people in the early second
century.\textsuperscript{355} However, several factors, including the tenuousness of the combination of
suppositions just listed, indicate that a date closer to the middle of the first century is
likely.

\textsuperscript{354} E.g. Heinrich Karpp, “Christennamen;” Tim Hegedus, “Naming Christians in Antiquity,”

\textsuperscript{355} This is essentially the approach of Paul W. Schmiedel, “Christian, Name of,” in
\textit{Encyclopaedia Biblica} (4 vols.; eds. T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black; London: Adam and Charles
Black, 1899), 1.752-63.
5.2.1. The Pompeii Graffito

The most easily datable chronological benchmark we have is the aforementioned graffito from Pompeii. This charcoal writing was discovered by Alfred Kiessling in 1862 on a recently unearthed wall of a building that had been buried in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Although several archeologists produced drawings of this inscription based on firsthand investigation, by the beginning of the 20th century, scholars already lamented that it was no longer legible. Although there were detractors, most scholars agreed that the graffito contained at least the letters *HRISTIAN* and was part of some form of the word *Christianus*. The question was whether enough confidence could be placed on this reading to allow it to provide the basis for conclusions about the early use of the word *Christianus*.

However, in 1995 Paul Berry, whose expertise was in surveying historic American buildings, rediscovered the graffito and produced a new trace of it by viewing it under high intensity light at 100x magnification. His tracing of the letters discernable from microscopic fragments of carbon on the wall shows the word

---

356 *CIL* 4.679.


CHRISTIANOS unmistakably.\textsuperscript{359} Thus, we may conclude with Lightfoot that by A.D. 79, “the name was sufficiently common to be scratched on the wall of an edifice in a small provincial town by some passerby.”\textsuperscript{360}

5.2.2. Josephus

Second, the final sentence of the famous Testimonium Flavianum (Josephus \textit{Ant.} 18.3.3) reads, εἰς ἐτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ὁπο τοῦτο ὀνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον (“And until now the tribe of Christians named after this one has not disappeared.”).\textsuperscript{361} Given a date of about A.D. 90 for \textit{Antiquities of the Jews}, the value of this passage for our discussion is only as great as the likelihood of its being genuine. While some scholars reject the entire Testimonium Flavianum, most accept at least portions of it.\textsuperscript{362} If one is to accept any of it at all, one must accept its final sentence. The peculiar use of φῦλον is one of the easiest elements to attribute to Josephus and one of the most difficult to attribute to a Christian interpolator.

\textsuperscript{359} Paul Berry, \textit{The Christian Inscription at Pompeii} (Leiston: Edwin Mellen, 1995).

\textsuperscript{360} J. B. Lightfoot, \textit{The Apostolic Fathers}, 2.1.416.

\textsuperscript{361} The entire Testimonium reads: “About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, ha still to this day not disappeared.” (Josephus, \textit{Ant.} 18.3.3, Feldman).

Moreover, there seems to be a subtle implication that the perseverance of the tribe of the Christians is something that really should not be.

5.2.3. Tacitus

Third, Tacitus relates events that took place in response to the fire of Rome in A.D. 64 as follows:

[N]either human help, nor imperial munificence, nor all the modes of placating Heaven, could stifle the scandal or dispel the belief that the fire had taken place by order. Therefore, to scotch the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians.\(^\text{365}\) Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself, where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and find a vogue. First, then, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on their disclosures, vast numbers were convicted, not so much on the count of arson as for hatred of the human race. (Tacitus, \textit{Annals} 15.44 [Jackson, LCL])\(^\text{364}\)

\(^{363}\) Or \textit{Chrestians}, on which see below.

\(^{364}\) \textit{Sed non ope humana, non largitionibus principis aut deum placamentis decedebat infamia, quin iussum incendium crederetur. Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit etos et quaestitissimus poenis adfectit, quos per flafitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat, repressaque in praesens exitiabilis superstitionis rursum erumpet, non modo per Iudaeam, originem eius mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique arrecta aut pudenda confluent celebranturque. Igitur primum correpri qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudine ingens haud perinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti sunt.}
The phrase translated, “whom the crowd styled Christians,” is *vulgus Christianos appellabat*, indicating explicitly that the appellation was not just one Tacitus knew from his own day, but one that he had reason to believe was used at the time of the fire. This is corroborated by Suetonius whose only use of *Christianus* occurs when he recounts the same events, saying, “Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition” (Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2, Rolfe). Schmiedel suggests that “Tacitus and Suetonius have, unhistorically, carried back the name *Christiani* from their own time into that of Nero.” But Lighfoot asks in reply to such suggestions, “Whence came this agreement in using a term first coined many years after the events recorded, when both writers had grown up or were growing up to manhood?” Moreover, why would Tacitus not merely use the word, as Suetonius does, rather than positively assert that it was in use in Nero’s day unless he had some good reason?

Finally, a textual variant provides a good reason why Tacitus would make such a point about what appellation the crowd used. One manuscript actually reads *Chrestianos*, rather than *Christianos*. Several recent critical editions opt for this

---

365 Or *vulgus Chrestianos appellabat*, on which see below.


367 *Apostolic Fathers*, 2.1.416.
reading.\textsuperscript{368} Since the very next phrase refers to the founder of the name as \textit{Christus}, and not \textit{Chrestus}, it gives the appearance that Tacitus wants his readers to know both the pronunciation that was used by the crowd and the true etymology that an educated person like himself would know.

5.2.4. Acts

Fourth, Acts narrates the use of \textit{Χριστιανός} in an event datable to early in Festus’s tenure as procurator of Judea, thus probably around A.D. 59 (Acts 26:28).\textsuperscript{369} Agrippa II agreed to hear the case against Paul, as it pertained to matters of Jewish law unfamiliar to Festus. After hearing Paul’s defense Agrippa engages in a brief exchange with Paul in which he says to Paul, “Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?” (Ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιήσαι). The historicity of these words is, of course, subject to question. However, it is at least clear that Luke considered Agrippa’s use of \textit{Χριστιανός} realistic for that time and place. It is not one of Luke’s own favorite designations for believers, occurring only here and at Acts 11:26. Additionally, Sherwin-White has forcefully argued that the Acts account of


Paul’s trial before Festus and Felix is “sufficiently accurate in all its details,” including certain points that line up precisely with the state of things at the end of Claudius’s reign or beginning of Nero’s. Thus, Luke apparently exercised care not to commit anachronism, and the fact that he put the word Χριστιανός on the lips of a Roman procurator around A.D. 59 is a helpful data point for analyzing the history of that word’s usage.

The remaining occurrence of Χριστιανός in Acts could indicate that it was coined as early as A.D. 44, but this would demand a chronological link in the narrative that Luke does not explicitly make. Acts 11:26 says, “and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called ‘Christians’.” (ἐγένετο...χρηματίσαι τε πρώτως ἐν Ἄντιοχείᾳ τοὺς μαθητὰς Χριστιανοῦς). Thus, Luke claims to provide the place, though not necessarily the time, the disciples were first called Christians, or, if we choose to press the technical meaning of χρηματίσαι, the place where they were first officially named Christians. To be sure, manuscript D claims it was both the place and the time with its reading, “and then the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch,” (καὶ τότε πρῶτον ἔχρημάτισαν ἐν Ἄντιοχείᾳ οἱ μαθηταὶ Χρειστιανοῖ), but neither any other early manuscripts nor the Byzantine text contain τότε, and it is

---

371 Ibid., 51, 57.
easier to explain its inclusion as the work of a scribe trying to answer the question of timing than it is to explain why, if original, it would have been removed.

However, Acts 11:26 makes its own contribution to this investigation. Luke’s claim that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch seems superfluous to the narrative. There appears to be little reason for him to add this detail unless he were dependent on a tradition saying as much. Furthermore, as commentators often point out, Antioch was apparently one of the earliest places where people could be identified as believers in Jesus while not being identified as Jews. Thus, it is likely that a group label for such people was needed at some point not long after that situation became noticeable. We should, therefore, accept as probable Luke’s claim that Antioch was the place where the name was first used.

Even allowing for the chronological flexibility of Acts 11:26, this provides us with the earliest date at which the label could have come about, since it must have been some time after the ministry of the Hellenists in Antioch began. Acts does not allow us to date this precisely. The famine mentioned in Acts 11:29 could have been almost any time during Claudius’s tenure. The episodic nature of chapters 11–12 do not allow us to demand that the events narrated within them all fall in chronological order, although it does appear that scattering of 11:19 would have to have been before the events of chap. 12, and thus before the death of Herod Agrippa

---

I in A.D. 44. Therefore, the name Χριστιανός most likely began to be used in Antioch in the range of A.D. 44-59.

5.3. Outsider Usage of Χριστιανός

Acts 11:26 is also a crux for the question of who first started using the word Χριστιανός, especially because of its use of the word χρηματίζω. According to LSJ, “in later writers, from Polybius downwards,” one of the meanings χρηματίζω can take in the active voice, and that which best fits Acts 11:26, is with the passive sense of “to take and bear a title or name.” New Testament lexicons concur with this and list Acts 11:26 as an example of that sense. Bickerman has argued against this, claiming that χρηματίζω in the active voice always has an active sense, such that Acts 11:26 means “that at Antioch the disciples started to take on the style of Christians.” However, Taylor has shown that a passive sense still best fits some examples of χρηματίζω in the active voice.

373 Ibid., 165–66.
374 LSJ, s.v. χρηματίζω III.1.
375 S.v. χρηματίζω in BDAG and MM.
What Bickerman’s examples really prove is not that χρηματίζω, when meaning “to bear a name,” must have an active sense, but only that this usage does not exclude the subjects from being the ones who call themselves that name. In this sense χρηματίζω might be comparable to the German *heissen*. Cadbury states the case with appropriate reserve: “At Acts xi. 26, while the author definitely calls our attention to the use of the name—first at Antioch—he does not say by whom it was coined, and the verb he uses gives no indication of the spirit in which it was applied.”\(^{378}\) Thus, Acts 11:26 allows for either outsiders or insiders to have first used the word Χριστιανός.

5.3.1. Usage by Government Officials

However, Acts 11:26 may still give us at least a clue about who that was when one further point about χρηματίζω is considered along with some other facts. As Peterson has shown, when χρηματίζω refers to bearing a name, it refers to an official or even legal designation.\(^{379}\) On the one hand, this point fits well with Bickerman’s suggestion that Χριστιανός was the official name the members of a voluntary association or synagogue in Antioch gave themselves.\(^{380}\) But if that were the case,

---

\(^{378}\) Cadbury, “Names,” 385.

\(^{379}\) Eric Peterson “Christianus,” in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, vol. 1 (Studi e Testi 121; Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946), 356–58.

\(^{380}\) Bickerman, “Name,” 115–16.
then how would this appellation, which would only be an official name in that particular local context, come to refer to all believers in Jesus everywhere?

The other hypothesis that best fits the use of χρηστιζω for official titles is that it was government officials who coined the word.\(^{381}\) This hypothesis also explains why a word coined in Antioch would have the Latin suffix –ιανος, since Roman officials would likely have coined the word in Latin. As shown above, this suffix usually carries the connotation of a political alliance. And it stands to reason that Roman authorities would take an interest in a group that they saw as political that claimed to be the followers of a certain Christos who had recently been crucified for sedition. That the Jesus movement consisted of troublemakers in the eyes of the government is seen several times in Acts.\(^{382}\) Furthermore, the only other occurrence of Χριστιανος in Acts is on the lips of a government official. Thus, the hypothesis that local Roman authorities in Antioch first used the Latin designation Christianus fits the data from Acts well. To be sure, the historian could go awry by trying to paint too specific of a picture of exactly what happened in Antioch to provoke the coining of this name.\(^{383}\) However, the unlikelihood of any particular theory does not mitigate against the likelihood of the basic case.

\(^{381}\) So Peterson, “Christianus,” 355-72; and Taylor, “Why Were the Disciples First Called ‘Christians,’” 82-94.

\(^{382}\) E.g. 16:16-24; 17:5-9; 19:21-41.

Venturing out from Acts, we find that the data from our other early sources also fit the hypothesis that Χριστιανός was first a designation given to believers by the Roman government. It is rather astounding that, as little space as Josephus, Pliny, Trajan, Tacitus, and Suetonius, all give to discussing Christians, they each have occasion to use the term Χριστιανός or Christianus. But for most of these authors, official government records may well have been their primary source for information about Christians. It is true that Tacitus specifically says it was the common people who called them Christianos. But again, there is a strong case that what he really wrote was that the common people called them Chrestianos, with an e, which hints that he meant to distinguish the name the crowd used from the official name that came from Christus with an i.

This variant in Tacitus also illustrates a fact about why the title Χριστός might have come to receive the suffix -ιανος, which, when used for political partisans, was normally attached to a proper name, rather than a title. Mattingly infers from this that Christiani must have been coined in the late 50’s as a deliberate riff on Augustiani, which applies the -ianus suffix to the title Augustus. It is true that those who understood the Jewish background of the title Χριστός could have drawn comparisons between it and Augustus. However, most Greek speaking gentiles

would not have that understanding. In fact, they might have simply thought Χριστός was a proper name.385

The likelihood of this is supported by the occasional variant Chrestus for Christus and Chrestianus for Christianus. Lactantius writes about Christus, “But the meaning of this name must be set forth, on account of the error of the ignorant, who by the change of a letter are accustomed to call Him Chrestus.”386 Similarly, Tertullian writes about Christianus, “Even when it is wrongly pronounced by you Chrestianus (for you do not even know accurately the name you hate), it comes from sweetness and benignity,”387 apparently referring to the Greek word χρηστός, which earlier Greek fathers had also likened to the appellation Χριστιανός.388 The spelling Χρηστιανός also occurs in Codex Sinaiticus (Acts 11:26; 26:28; and 1 Pet 4:16), and commonly occurs as an alternate spelling of Χριστιανός in inscriptions.389 Thus, even if those who originally coined the label Christianus did not think they were adding the –ianus suffix to a proper name, it was prone to being taken that way. To have created such a label as a deliberate parallel to Augustianus seems overly subtle.


387 Apol. 3.5.

388 Justin 1 Apol. 4.5-7; Theophilus Auto. 1.1, 12.

389 Greg Horsley, New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, 3 (North Ryde, N.S.W., Australia: 1983), 129.
5.3.2. First Peter

First Peter also indicates that Χριστιανός was a label used by outsiders in a passage that demands special treatment. First Peter 4:12-16 reads as follows:

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. 16 Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name.

This, the only occurrence of Χριστιανός in the NT outside of the two previously mentioned passages in Acts, refers to suffering “as a Christian” (ὡς Χριστιανός). Thus, though 1 Peter does not explicitly refer to anyone else using the designation Χριστιανός, the context suggests that it was an outsider label. However, it is less clear what kind of suffering was involved and how the name might have been used.

John Elliott claims, “there are no valid grounds for assuming that any suffering resulting from all of these activities would be the result of an official prosecution of Christians as criminals undertaken by Rome.” Instead, to suffer as a Christian meant to suffer through being called Χριστιανός, which Elliott argues “had a derogatory overtone...so that it meant, not simply ‘partisans of Christ,’ but

---


135
something like ‘Christ-lackeys.’ 391 In defense of this he makes several points. First, if Χριστιανός were synonymous with a crime, then Paul would have stood condemned of it before Festus and Agrippa. 392 Second, “a Roman view of Christians as political subversives is impossible to reconcile with Acts’ portrayal of the favorable treatment of Christians at the hands of Roman authorities.” 393 Third, “Rather than citing formal denunciations of Christians, our author speaks only of verbal ‘reproach’ (4:14) aimed at publicly shaming the believers in the court of public opinion.” 394 Fourth, of the four other kinds of opprobrium that are contrasted with suffering as a Christian in v. 15 (“as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker”), only the first two refer to crimes. 395

However, Paul’s trial before Festus and Agrippa did result in his being tried in Rome, where it remains an open possibility that he was found guilty of something and suffered the death penalty, presumably not merely for points of disagreement with other Jews (cf. Acts 25:19). And, in any case, the presence or absence of criminal connotations in the label Χριστιανός would have differed between different provinces and different times, with its prosecution being left up to provincial

391 Ibid., 791.
392 Ibid., 791.
393 Ibid., 791.
394 Ibid., 793.
395 Ibid., 793.
governors’ discretion under their power of *coercitio*. The prospect of an empire-wide law against Christianity is really not at issue, and the absence of an empire-wide law does not mitigate against the usefulness of the label Χριστιανός as a legal term, or even the name of a crime, in certain local settings. 396 Second, that the Romans viewed Christians as political subversives may fit their portrayal in Acts better than Elliott admits. 397 Third, though reproach (ὀνειδίζω) is mentioned (1 Pet 4:14), so is “sharing Christ’s sufferings,” with his execution by the government being specifically highlighted (1 Pet 2:21-24; 3:18; 4:1, 12). 398

Fourth, as Elliott’s own commentary shows, of the four kinds of suffering in 1 Pet 4:15 (ὡς φονεύς ἢ κλέπτης ἢ κακοποιὸς ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος), the only two that are quite clear as to their meaning are the first two, φονεύς and κλέπτης, which are unmistakably crimes. The third and fourth vices are sufficiently vague that they do not exclude activities for which a person could be incriminated legally. There were imperial mandates for governors to rid their provinces of “evil-disposed


397 Defense of this claim would require a more detailed exposition of multiple passages in Acts than can be done here. See especially, Christopher Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (New York: Oxford, 2010).

persons” (mali homines), a term which seems to mean the same as κακοποιός. And this power was associated with their duty to keep their provinces “settled and orderly” (pacata atque quieta), which someone found to be an ἄλλοτριεπίσκοπος might be thought to disrupt. Again, determination of who were “evil-disposed men” and how they threatened the peace and quiet of a province was not a matter of empire-wide law, but up to governors’ discretion. For example, it would not misrepresent the text of Acts 16:16-24 to say that, at least from the perspective of the slave-girl's owners, Paul and Silas in their imprisonment were suffering as mischief makers (ὡς ἄλλοτριεπίσκοποι).

Occasionally, arguments about the suffering mentioned in 1 Peter are brought to bear on the date of the epistle. Parallels with persecutions known from elsewhere may be highlighted, such as comparing 1 Peter’s fiery ordeal with Nero’s burning of Christians, or 1 Peter’s suffering for the name with Pliny’s prosecution of the nomen ipsum. However, these parallels are only superficial. Given that people were found guilty of crimes merely on the grounds that they were Christians as far back as A.D. 64, if not earlier, there is nothing to exclude the possibility of that happening any time in the decades after that. The majority of scholars today place the date of 1 Peter

399 Paulus (early 3rd cent.) in Justinian Dig. 1.18.3.

400 Ulpian (early third cent.) in Justinian Dig. 1.18.13.

in the 80’s.\textsuperscript{402} The suffering 1 Peter describes and its use of the label \textit{Χριστιανός} could well fit that period, as well as a date as early as Nero (54–68) or as late as Trajan (98–117).

5.3.3. Continued Use of \textit{Χριστιανός} in Persecution

Granting that questions remain about whether the suffering of Christians in 1 Peter was at the hands of the government, other evidence strongly supports the view that the label \textit{Χριστιανός} was used in criminal prosecution throughout our period, beginning at least by A.D. 112 and quite possibly much earlier.

The earliest probable evidence for such prosecution is again the passage from Tacitus about the Roman fire of A.D. 64. Tacitus writes that those who were first arrested were \textit{qui fatebantur}, which Jackson translates, “the confessed members of the sect.” G. E. M. de Ste Croix concurs, writing, “The imperfect tense, ‘qui fatebantur,’ shows that the confession was one of Christianity and not of incendiaryism.”\textsuperscript{403} Note again that the label used in that passage for those prosecuted is \textit{Christiani}. This reading of Tacitus is corroborated by the claim of Melito and Tertullian that Nero

\textsuperscript{402} Elliott, \textit{1 Peter}, 134–38.

was the first emperor to set a precedent of prosecuting Christians solely for the crime of being Christians.\footnote{Eus. \textit{Hist. Eccl.} 4.26.9; Tert. \textit{Apol.} 5; \textit{Ad Nat.} 1; 5.}

In his letter to Trajan in A.D. 112, Pliny asks, “whether it is the mere name of Christian which is punishable, even if innocent of crime, or rather the crimes associated with the name.” (\textit{Letters} 10.96.2 [Radice, LCL]). He goes on to describe the line he has taken prior to this letter, which is to execute anyone who admits to being a Christian, and persists to admit it upon being asked three times (10.96.3–4). As more people were charged, he required that those claiming not to be Christians prove it by invoking the gods, making offerings to Trajan’s statue, and reviling the name of Christ, as he says, “none of which things, I understand, any genuine Christian can be induced to do.” (10.96.5). Trajan’s reply commends Pliny for following the right course (10.97.1). Both the course Pliny had followed and that which Trajan enjoined are to punish people for the charge of being Christians, thus, in Pliny’s words, for “the mere name of Christian” (\textit{nomen ipsum}). The introduction of Pliny’s letter implies that such trials of Christians had gone on for some time and that his need for guidance results from his never previously having been present at one (10.96.1). Thus, the exchange between Pliny and Trajan reflects a precedent of trying Christians that had already existed in parts of the Roman Empire for an unknown amount of time.
This procedure of prosecuting Christians as criminals on the charge of being Christians, which was proven solely by their acceptance of the label itself, is illustrated again and again in acts of martyrs. Instead of swearing by the emperor’s genius, Polycarp simply says, “I am a Christian.” (Χριστιανός εἰμι; *Mart. Poly.* 10), and upon presenting him for his execution the herald announces, “Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian.” (Πολύκαρπος ὁμολόγησεν ἑαυτὸν Χριστιανὸν εἶναι; *Mart. Poly.* 12). Indeed, throughout the martyr acts the words Χριστιανός εἰμι and *Christianus sum* are a common motif, always functioning as a guilty plea in the eyes of the court.405 For the Christians themselves, these words were much more than their guilty pleas, they articulated the very essence of their identities, and these identities were never theirs more saliently than they were at that crucial moment when they applied the label *Christian* to themselves. Perpetua illustrates this in an exchange with her father:

While we were still under arrest (she said) my father out of love for me was trying to persuade me and shake my resolution. “Father,” said I, “do you see this vase here, for example, or waterpot or whatever?” “Yes, I do,” said he. And I told him: “Could it be called by any other name than what it is?” “No.” “Well, so too I cannot be called anything other than what I am, a Christian.” (§3; Musurillo)

---

405 E.g. *Martyrdom of Apollonius* 2; *Acts of Scillitan Martyrs* 9, 10, 13; *Martyrdom of Justin and Companions* 4; *Martyrs of Lyons* 1.10, 19, 20, 26; *Martyrdom of Ptolemaeus and Lucius* 11, 16; *Martyrdom of Carpus Papylius and Agathonice* 3, 5, 23, 34; *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* 6.4.
A common theme in the apologists of the second and third centuries is a plea made to someone in the government to stop following the procedure, described by Pliny and illustrated in the acts of martyrs, of prosecuting Christians solely for the name *Christian*, and not for any crime they are proven to have committed.

Athenagoras, writing in A.D. 177, is typical:

What, therefore, is conceded as the common right of all, we claim for ourselves, that we should not be hated and punished because we are called Christians [ὅτι Χριστιανοὶ λέγομεθα] (for what has the name to do with our being bad men?), but being tried on charges which may be brought against us, and either released on our disproving them, or punished if convicted of a crime—not for the name (for no Christian is a bad man unless he falsely profess our doctrines), but for the wrong he has done. (*Leg.* 2.4; *ANF* 2:130)

Athenagoras is not alone. Justin Martyr, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and even Basilides all make some variation of that same argument.

---

406 Cf. *Leg.* 1.3; 2.1.

407 *Apol.* 4.5-7; 7.3-4; 11.1; 2 *Apol.* 2.7-16.

408 *To the Greeks* 27.1.

409 *Strom.* 4.11.79.3.

410 *Apology* 1-5; *Ad Nationes* 1-6.

5.4. The Insider’s Perspective

First Peter is also a prototype for how insiders appropriated the label Χριστιανός in Christian literature over the ensuing century or more in two ways. First, 1 Peter shows a balance between acknowledging that Χριστιανός is a label used by outsiders on the one hand and embracing it as an appropriate one for insiders on the other hand. Second, it explicitly associates the label Χριστιανός with the title Χριστός.

5.4.1. An Outsider Label that Insiders Accepted

In 1 Pet 4:16, though the label Χριστιανός is associated with suffering, and we may infer from v. 14 that it is a label used in reviling people, it is also one the author wants his audience to wear with pride, saying “do not consider it a disgrace” (μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω). This sentiment is illustrated most clearly by the use of the label in the martyr acts described above. However, it appears in more subtle ways throughout our literature. It is true that Χριστιανός soon becomes a word that insiders can use of themselves quite matter-of-factly. Probably the earliest such instance is Did. 12:4, which enjoins that an itinerant preacher should live “as a Christian with you, not idle” (πῶς μὴ ἀργὸς μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν ζήσεται Χριστιανός). Yet it is also true that insiders, when using the word Χριστιανός, often give indications that they still see it as the word that “they” call us.
To put this in terms used in this dissertation’s introduction, a very noticeable number of the early occurrences of Χριστιανός in Christian literature are second-order, as opposed to first-order, discourse. Athenagoras does not write, “for us who are Christians you have not cared,” but rather, “for us who are called Christians [ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ λεγόμενοι Χριστιανοί] you have not cared” (Leg. 1.3). Similarly, Clement of Alexandria writes not, “we must now describe what a Christian ought to be,” but rather, “we must now describe what the one who is called a Christian [τὸν Χριστιανὸν καλούμενον] ought to be” (Paed. 2.1.1.1). In addition to these examples and those in acts of martyrs there are 25 more occurrences in the second century of Χριστιανός combined with λέγω, καλέω, or something similar.

Despite this tendency of early Christian authors to separate themselves from the label Χριστιανός through second-order discourse, there is never a hint that they dispute the appropriateness of the label. On the contrary, like 1 Peter, they often treat it as a badge of honor. Theophilus writes, “You call me a Christian as if this were a damning name to bear, I, for my part avow that I am a Christian.” (Auto. 1.1). Ignatius wants not only to be called a Christian, but to prove himself truly to be one (Magn. 4.1; Rom. 3.2). For Aristides, to be a Christian is to be righteous (15.2). For

---

412 Ign. Rom. 3.2; Athenagoras Leg. 2.4; Justin 1 Apol. 16.4; 26.6; Dial. 35.1, 6; 80.3.

413 Ign. Magn. 4.1; Aristides 15.2; Justin 1 Apol. 26.6; Dial. 63.5; 64.1; Theophilus Auto. 1.12 [x2]; 3.4.

414 Justin 1 Apol. 4.5; 7.3; 11.1; 12.9; 2 Apol. 2.16; Dial. 80.2; 96.2 [x2]; Iren. 3.12.14; Theophilus Auto. 1.1
Athenagoras, the only Christians who are bad men are the false ones (Leg. 2.4). Justin similarly proclaims that those who do not follow Christ’s teachings are Christians in name only (1 Apol. 16.14), and that the heretical sects are gratuitous in calling themselves Christians (Dial. 35.1–2, 6; 1 Apol. 26.6). Ignatius and Irenaeus also withhold the title of Christian from those they consider heretics (Ign. Trall. 6.1; Iren. 1.24.6). Clement of Alexandria’s compendious description of “the one who is called a Christian” is a picture of a human being who attains the highest ideals in all aspects of life (Paed. 2.1.1.1).

5.4.2. Conscious Connection of Christian to Christ

What factor caused these early Christians to receive as a compliment this word used by outsiders as an opprobrium? One possible explanation is a sociological one. Horrell writes about an aspect of social identity theory that Tajfel and Turner call social creativity: “Most relevant to our consideration of the term Χριστιανός in 1 Peter 4 is the strategy of ‘changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group, so that comparisons which were previously negative are now perceived as positive.’ The classic example Tajfel and Turner note is ‘Black is beautiful.’

But early Christian literature itself provides another reason. Given that Χριστιανός means partisan of Christ, early Christians accepted the label as an

---

accurate description of exactly what they considered themselves. The label indicated that they had an identity defined by Jesus Christ that they, as insiders, wanted to highlight. First Peter points to this relationship between the label Χριστιανός and Christ-based identity by equating suffering ὡς Χριστιανός (4:16) with being reproached ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ (4:14).

Christian authors equate the label Christians with “his disciples” (Ign. Magn. 10.1), “soldiers of Christ” (Acts of Paul 11.2.23), “those who say that they confess Jesus” (Justin Dial. 35.1), and those who “are Christ’s” (Clement Alex. Strom. 2.4.18.4). For Ignatius, to listen to Christian doctrine is to listen to someone speaking about Jesus Christ (Phil. 6.1). Aristides and Justin acknowledge that it is appropriate for Christians to be called by a label that traces its origin to the name of Christ, since Christians trace their own origins to him in an essential way (Aristides 15.1; Justin Dial. 63.5). For Justin, as Christ is the λόγος, so those who live μετὰ λόγου are Christians (Justin 1 Apol. 46.3). Tertullian writes, “He who confesses that he is a Christian bears witness that he is Christ’s, he who is Christ’s must be in Christ.” (Scorp. 9.8–9).

5.5. Χριστιανισμός / Christianismus

The challenge of knowing when in history the label Christian applies becomes more difficult with the label Christianity, which might be thought
equivalent to the Greek Χριστιανισμός or the Latin Christianismus. As Williams points out, unlike Christian, Christianity does not designate the kind of thing that can identify itself, but rather serves to construct a conceptual system, not a concrete reality.⁴¹⁶ Boyarin writes, “the lack of an appellation for Christianity before at least the invention of the term in Antioch in the early second century, and even after that in most of the world until much later, is not a mere gap in the lexicon but an essential cultural fact.”⁴¹⁷

This overstates the case, since, though no single word for Christianity existed, formally equivalent circumlocutions did. As we have seen, rather than using a single word for Pythagoreanism, the ancient Greeks instead spoke of things such as the philosophy of the Pythagoreans. Similarly, for Tertullian, there is no clear difference between the word Christianismus and the phrase fiunt Christiani (Apol. 1). Reaching back further in time we find other formally equivalent circumlocutions that do not even use the word Χριστιανός, such as ἐν Χριστῷ εὐσεβεία (I Clem. 1:2) and εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 15:19). Nevertheless, the rise of the word Χριστιανισμός from being a neologism in Ignatius to being a common word by the time of Origen requires comment.

⁴¹⁶ Megan Hale Williams, “No More Clever Titles,” 41.

⁴¹⁷ Daniel Boyarin, “Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to which is Appended a Correction of my Border Lines),” JQR 99 (2009): 17.
The claim that Χριστιανισμός is the equivalent of *Christianity* is, in fact, disputable. As mentioned, the first author to use the word is Ignatius, who uses it five times in three passages.\(^{418}\) In two of those passages he contrasts Χριστιανισμός with Ἰουδαϊσμός,\(^{419}\) which is a word known from 2 and 4 Maccabees. Thus, it seems likely that he intended the meaning of –ισμός in Χριστιανισμός to carry the same connotation as it did in Ἰουδαϊσμός. However, Mason has argued that Ἰουδαϊσμός, at least in its earliest usage, is a false friend to the modern English *Judaism*. He explains the problem as follows:

Modern European languages distinguish perhaps five senses of –ism words, namely: (1) an action or its result (criticism, plagiarism, embolism, exorcism, synergism); (2) a system, principle, or ideological movement (Anglicanism, Marxism, Liberalism, Communism, Hinduism, McCarthyism; more generically, imperialism, feminism, theism); (3) a peculiar idiom in language (an Americanism, Britishism, Latinism; archaism, barbarism, solecism); a pathological condition or disease (alcoholism, rheumatism); and (5) a criterion of prejudicial discrimination (racism, sexism, ageism). Of these five, only (1) and (3) have parallels in ancient Greek. The modern category (2), in which “Judaism” is generally understood to fall, as a term denoting a system of thought and practice, has no counterpart in Greek or Latin before the third century C.E.\(^{420}\)

He goes on to say, “The Greek –ισμός noun represents in nominal form the ongoing action of the cognate verb in –ιζω.”\(^{421}\) Ἰουδαϊσμός belongs to a class of

\(^{418}\) *Magn.* 10.1, 3 [x2]; *Rom.* 3.3; *Phil.* 6.1.

\(^{419}\) *Magn.* 10.3; *Phil.* 6.1.


\(^{421}\) Ibid., 461.
such words based on ethnic roots, such as Μηδισμός. Mason argues, “Μηδισμός forms are best rendered either by the gerund ‘(the) Medizing,’ or with the hybrid suffix –ization (‘Medization’).” Mason shows that in 2 and 4 Maccabees ὸιουδαϊσμός is the opposite of Ἑλληνισμός, where “Ἑλληνισμός…cannot indicate a culture or system; it labels a defection that threatens the heart and soul of Judean tradition.” Meanwhile, in 2 Maccabees, “Judas’ antidote to this Hellenizing (Ἑλληνισμός) was a counter-movement, a bringing back of those who had gone over to foreign ways: a ‘Judaizing’ or Judaization, which the author of 2 Maccabees programatically labels ὸιουδαϊσμός.” The only occurrences of ὸιουδαϊσμός outside of Christian literature occur in 2 and 4 Maccabees, and Mason shows that they all fit that sense well.

The next two historical occurrences of the word are in Paul’s letter to the Galatians (1:13–14), which Mason again interprets as “judaizing activity,” rather than a belief system of Judaism, only here the judaization is in contradistinction to Paul’s εὐαγγέλιον, rather than Ἑλληνισμός. Already, even if Mason’s interpretation of ὸιουδαϊσμός makes good sense of Gal 1:13–14, the fact that it is contrasted with εὐαγγέλιον, a word referring to a set of cognitive truths, rather than another

---

422 Ibid., 463.
423 Ibid., 466.
424 Ibid., 467.
425 Ibid., 469.
substantive formed from an –ιζω verb like Ἑλληνισμός might foreshadow the shift in sense that Mason places later.

The next occurrences of Ἰουδαϊσμός occur in Ignatius and are more relevant to the present study since the new word Ignatius uses to denote that thing which stands opposed to Ἰουδαϊσμός is Χριστιανισμός. Mason continues to translate Ἰουδαϊσμός as the gerund Judaizing in these passages, and also translates Χριστιανισμός as Christianizing.426 His interpretation of Ignatius is not impossible, and we must grant that it is not likely that Ignatius would introduce a new meaning to the existing word Ἰουδαϊσμός.

However, in Ignatius, Mason’s interpretation becomes more forced. It is perhaps significant that Ignatius does not use the verb Χριστιανίζω—nor does anyone else until Origen—but bypasses it for direct contrast of the nouns Χριστιανισμός and Ἰουδαϊσμός. It is also perhaps significant that Ignatius uses the word Χριστιανισμός in his Romans without contrasting it with Ἰουδαϊσμός there. We must ask how the audience of that epistle would have understood the word Χριστιανισμός without being able to connect it to an existing –ιζω verb or a contextual contrast with Ἰουδαϊσμός. The verse in question reads: “The work is not a matter of persuasive rhetoric; rather Christianity is greatest when it is hated by the world.” (Ign. Rom. 3.3, Holmes). The parallelism requires that Christianity be the

426 Ibid., 470.
same as the work, which, in the context appears to refer to Ignatius proving himself to be a true Christian through martyrdom (v. 2). This does support interpreting Χριστιανισμός as an activity, rather than a static system of doctrinal tenets. However, it does not seem to allow for defining that activity as the opposite of judaizing. Χριστιανισμός here seems to mean something more like “properly behaving as a Christian.”

The passages where Ignatius does contrast Χριστιανισμός with Ἰουδαϊσμός also seem problematic for Mason’s reading. Magnesians 10.1 reads, “Therefore, having become his disciples, let us learn to live in accordance with Christianity,” thus, again, supporting an understanding of it as something active. But again, it cannot be simply the activity of going over to the ways of Christians, as opposed to the ways of Jews. It must encompass all of what being disciples of Jesus is thought to include. Two sentences later Ignatius writes, “It is utterly absurd to profess Jesus Christ and to practice Judaism. For Christianity did not believe in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity.” (Magn. 10.3). Mason translates these occurrences of Χριστιανισμός and Ἰουδαϊσμός as Christianizing and Judaizing, which is awkward, but not unreasonable. However, even read as gerunds, it is impossible to understand them in a way that parallels the contrast of Ἰουδαϊσμός and Ἐλληνισμός

\[151\]

\[427\] Ibid., 470.
in 2 and 4 Maccabees. For here, Ignatius does not describe Judaizing as something that necessarily opposes Christianizing, but rather as something that leads into it.

The passage in Ignatius that seems most difficult for Mason’s view is Phil. 6.1, which reads: “But if anyone expounds Judaism to you, do not listen to him. For it is better to hear about Christianity from a man who is circumcised than about Judaism from one who is not.” Here Χριστιανισμός and Ἰουδαϊσμός are things that can be expounded and heard. They cannot simply mean the activity of eschewing Jewish ways of doing things in favor of Christian ones, or vice versa. Taking all three Ignatius passages together, it seems best to interpret Χριστιανισμός as the equivalent of being Christian. At least in some contexts, this is an activity, but it must be a very broadly defined one that includes both doing and believing all of the things that make Christians what they are.

This believing aspect of Χριστιανισμός takes center stage in what may be the next historical occurrence of the word. In Mart. Poly. 10.1 Polycarp is quoted saying, “If you vainly suppose that I will swear by the genius of Caesar, as you request, and pretend not to know who I am, listen carefully: I am a Christian. Now if you want to learn the doctrine of Christianity [τὸν τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ μαθεῖν λόγον], name a day and give me a hearing.” Two important observations can be made here: Polycarp’s Χριστιανισμός is equated with his being a Christian; and Christianity is something propositional, a λόγος, that can be learned. Both of these observations reflect the likely influence of Ignatius on Polycarp or on the writer who put these
words on his lips. And both of them would seem to support a shift in the meaning of
-ισμος toward Mason’s second sense of modern European -isms, “a system,
principle, or ideological movement.”\textsuperscript{428}

The inclusion of this datum presupposes an early date for Martyrdom of
Polycarp in the range of A.D. 155–175. Though this seems to be the majority
opinion, based on the belief that it is an eyewitness account of the event of Polycarp’s
martyrdom, which probably happened within that date range, it is far from certain.
Candida Moss argues forcefully for an early third-century date of the work.\textsuperscript{429} If her
argument is accepted, then this reduces the number of occurrences of Χριστιανισμός
between Ignatius and Tertullian to a single occurrence in Clement of Alexandria
discussed below.

It might appear from a line in Origen’s Contra Celsum (ca. A.D. 245) that
Celsus, a nonchristian philosopher, used the word Χριστιανισμός in his work, On
True Doctrine (ca. 177).\textsuperscript{430} Referring to Celsus Origen writes, “After this he also says
that the man who teaches the doctrines of Christianity is like a man who promises to
restore bodies to health, but turns his patients away from attending to expert
physicians because his lack of training would be shown up by them.” (Cels. 3.75;
\textsuperscript{428} Ibid., 461.

\textsuperscript{429} Candida Moss, “On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of

\textsuperscript{430} On the dates see Henry Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum (Cambridge: University Press,
Chadwick). However, Origen writes this using an infinitive of indirect discourse (φησι ποιεῖν τὸν τὰ χριστιανισμοῦ διδάσκοντα…). Nowhere else does Celsus use the word Χριστιανισμός, although Origen does 60 times in Contra Celsum, including seven other instances of the phrase τὰ χριστιανισμοῦ. Thus, it seems unlikely that the word Χριστιανισμός in Cels. 8.75 is directly quoted from Celsus.

The last appearance of Χριστιανισμός in Greek prior to, or at least contemporary with, the first appearances of the Latin Christianismus in the writings of Tertullian is by Clement of Alexandria, who writes:

> The prophetic sayings we shall not at present advert to, as we are to avail ourselves of the Scriptures subsequently at the proper places. But we shall point out summarily the points indicated by them, in our delineation of Christianity [τὰ δ’ ἔξ ἀυτῶν δηλούμενα σημανοῦμεν κεφαλαιωδῶς τὸν Χριστιανισμὸν ύπογράφοντες], so that by taking the Scriptures at once (especially as they do not yet comprehend their utterances), we may not interrupt the continuity of the discourse. But after pointing out the things indicated, proofs shall be shown in abundance to those who have believed. (Strom. 7.1.1.3; ANF 2:523)

Here again, Χριστιανισμός is something comprised of points indicated in scriptures that can be delineated. It is a system, rather than an activity.

Finally, we come to Tertullian, who uses the word Christianismus five times. The first of these to which we will turn is in his Prescription against Heretics, where he writes:

---

431 Cels. 1.8; 3.12, 79; 5.63, 64; 6.77; 8.1.
What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from “the porch of Solomon,” who had himself taught that “the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart.” Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition! (Praescr. 7.36; ANF 3:246)

It would be an injustice to Tertullian to claim that he describes Christianismus as a philosophical school here, since he means instead to contrast it with the philosophical schools. Nevertheless, he does treat Christianismus as belonging to a class of things that allows for such a contrast. It is an –ism in the sense of being an ideological system.

The remaining four occurrences of Christianismus in Tertullian are all in his Against Marcion, all of them appearing in explicit contrast with Iudaismus. In these contrasts Iudaismus is equated with the law, and Christianismus with the gospel (Marc. 4.6). Iudaismus is the old dispensation, and Christianismus the new (Marc. 4.33). Christianismus is that which was allegorically born of the free woman, Sarah, and Iudaismus that which was born of the slave woman, Hagar (Marc. 5.4). Iudaismus has been taken away, with Christianismus erected in its place (Marc. 5.6).

Mason’s interpretation of this data is that Tertullian’s use of Iudaismus is the first time we encounter a true equivalent of the modern term, Judaism. He attributes this to the fact that the –ismus ending was not native to Latin, and, therefore, the
connection to –izo verbs no longer obtained. However, he can only reach this conclusion by restricting his Greek data to uses of the word Ἰουδαϊσμός without giving due attention to other uses of Χριστιανισμός that do not involve a contrast with Ἰουδαϊσμός. When these data are accounted for, it seems more likely that the Greek suffix -ισμός had already acquired the connotation of a belief system with its use in the word Χριστιανισμός, as evidenced by Ignatius, *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, and Clement of Alexandria.

5.6. Conclusions

The label Χριστιανός is the Greek transliteration of a word that was probably originally coined in Latin as *Christianus*, literally meaning *partisan of Christ*. It was most likely Roman officials who came up with this label in Antioch between A.D. 44 and 59 as a useful label for people there who belonged to a movement that was somehow appurtenant to someone they called *Christus*. These people, though similar to Jews, were distinguishable from them, and probably gained the notice of the government as what seemed like a suspicious, if not outright seditious, political movement. Over the ensuing decades Roman officials in various parts of the Empire found it necessary to punish members of this movement, and the label Χριστιανός became the official title for such people. In some circumstances

---

merely being a Χριστιανός was grounds enough to execute someone. In the face of such persecution, early Christians accepted the label Χριστιανός as an appropriate name for what they were, eventually coming to bear the name not reluctantly, but even with pride for the way it connected them to Jesus Christ.

Although the first usage of the word *Christianus* was probably close in time to the writing of the earliest extant writings that mention Jesus, Paul’s epistles, it is intrinsically likely that phrases meaning *partisan of Christ* would have been used before anyone found a need to coin a new word meaning *partisan of Christ*. Thus, the periphrastic expressions we covered in chapter 3, which are known from Paul’s writings and elsewhere probably reflect a terminology that is more primitive than the label *Christianus*. Similarly, before there was a need for such a label among Roman officials, the Aramaic-speaking authorities of Jerusalem would have needed their own term. Thus, as we have seen, it may well have been within the Jesus movement’s first decade that its members were called נצרים by Jewish outsiders.

In the next chapter we will look at some additional evidence that in the earliest years of the Jesus movement its members were identified using vocabulary that incorporated names and titles of Jesus. This is evidence concerning early baptism in Jesus’s name and persecution for the use of his name.
CHAPTER 6:
LOOKING BACK FURTHER: THE USE OF JESUS’S NAME IN BAPTISM
AND PERSECUTION

It is outside of the scope of this dissertation to locate the essence of Christianity or the point in time at which the thing that is Christianity began. However, we may still address the more modest question of when people began to use Jesus’s names and titles to designate members of a movement that was appurtenant to him. The prototypical label, *Christianus*, expresses this appurtenance with the Latin suffix –*ianus*, which it attaches to the Greek title *Christos*. The label *Christianus* had probably recently come in existence, or would soon come into existence, when Paul wrote his epistles. It is not found in those epistles, probably because it is not the sort of label that suits their insider-to-insider nature. However, he also employs the name and titles of Jesus to designate members of a movement that was appurtenant to him via a variety of expressions, such as “those of Christ” (οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ), “those in Christ” (οί ἐν Χριστῷ), or “believers” (οἱ πιστεύόντες), as an abbreviation for “believers in Christ” (οἱ πιστεύόντες εἰς Χριστόν) or something similar. Thus, from the foregoing chapters, we can at least trace the pattern of using
Jesus’s titles in a vocabulary of identification back to the earliest extant literature that refers to Jesus.

Perhaps the reason Paul’s epistles are our earliest evidence for the use of Jesus’s titles in labeling his followers is that the very existence of a movement so centered on Jesus that his name would be employed in labeling its members is the result of Paul’s work. Indeed, Paul was, as Esler calls him, an “entrepreneur of identity.” Runesson summarizes Paul’s role in shaping “Christian” identity as follows:

Paul always affirmed a basic characteristic shared by Mediterranean cultures, namely that the gods run in the blood, as Paula Fredriksen has aptly described it. What changed for Paul as a Christ-believer in this regard was his view on the status of the category of ethnos: from an active openness to non-Jews joining the Jewish ethnos, to a rejection of this possibility based on an eschatological conviction. It is this very fact – the closed ethnic stance combined with a) the belief that non-Jews still need to worship the God of Israel and, no less important, b) they must not pay homage to the gods of their own ethnos, or any other gods related to family, city, or empire – it is this fact that eventually leads to a situation in which identity and belonging can be reinterpreted as unrelated to the category of ethnos.

Similarly, Horrell writes:

By insisting that both Jewish and gentile believers find their basis for belonging in Christ and not the Jewish law, and by insisting that gentile believers must not adopt the marks of Jewish identity and legal observance (circumcision, etc.), Paul and other like-minded Christ-followers began the

---

433 Esler, Conflict and Identity, 36-39.

process of clearly demarcating this (Christian) group as something different, distinct from Judaism, a ‘third race’ as some later writers would express it.\textsuperscript{435}

The degree to which Esler, Runesson, and Horrell are correct, and, alternatively, the degree to which Paul did not create a new group identity, but rather reinforced the boundaries of an existing one, is up for debate.\textsuperscript{436} That is a question far too broad to entertain here. But one aspect of that question is within our purview: whether or not Paul was innovative in his use of names and titles of Jesus in demarcating members of the group of which he, Paul, was ostensibly a leader.

Can we look back prior to Paul and find evidence that such labeling was done even then? If we restrict our data set to the use of such labels in the first- and second-order discourse contained in ancient literature we cannot. However, if we account for situations in which we know such vocabulary of identification must have been used, even if we do not have access to the words themselves, then we have recourse to data about two phenomena: baptism, and persecution of the Jesus movement. Both of these phenomena can be shown to predate Paul’s epistles. Both necessarily involved the identification of members of the Jesus movement. And both, as we shall see, made use of an invocation of Jesus by name for that identification.

\textsuperscript{435} Horrell, “Solidifying Christian Identity,” 319.

\textsuperscript{436} For a work that emphasizes continuity between Paul and his Predecessors see Archibald M. Hunter, \textit{Paul and His Predecessors} (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961).
6.1. Baptism

In explaining why modern scholars should not apply the word *Christian* to certain ancient believers in Jesus, Williams insists, “Only those who self-identify as Jews or Christians in our evidence—whether through the explicit use of those terms or their equivalents, or by other means, for example the use of symbols like the Christian chi-rho—can responsibly be referred to as ‘Jews’ or ‘Christians.’” In attempting to follow such a rule, one might be inclined to ask just how broad a range of symbols might warrant the use of the label *Christian*. Baptism in Jesus’s name, in particular, serves to symbolize, or even to establish, one’s membership in a group oriented around Jesus. Does Williams’s dictum allow us to call everyone who was baptized in Jesus’s name a *Christian*?

We do not know precisely what label the earliest people who were baptized in Jesus’s name would have used to identify themselves. Perhaps they were content with circumlocutions like, “all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord” (1 Cor 1:2). We must, however, insist that they recognized themselves as having a particular identity, and must have employed some vocabulary of identification to express that. It is likely that such vocabulary somehow communicated their appurtenance to Jesus, as, for example, the above phrase from 1 Cor 1:2 does.

---

437 Williams, “No More Clever Titles,” 41.
Thus, even though a discussion of baptism does not provide us with labels that include within them names or titles of Jesus, it still points us to the likelihood that, from the very earliest stages of the Jesus movement, there were people so labeled, both in the discourse that occurred at their baptism, and, we must presume, in the vocabulary of identification used to designate them after that time. This paradox of finding uses of the names and titles of Jesus to identify his followers without finding the actual words themselves is illustrated by the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Several times throughout the *Similitudes* the word ὄνομα (always specified as the *name of the Son of God*, or some other title of Jesus) is used in identifying Jesus’s followers. At the time of salvation they *receive his name* (Sim. 9.12.4; 9.12.8; 9.13.7). After that point they are *those who bear his name* (Sim. 8.10.3; 9.13.3; 9.14.5–6; 9.16.3). That this bearing of his name manifests itself literally in labels applied to them is implied when twice it refers to them being *called by his name* (Sim. 8.1.1; 8.6.4). What precisely they are called is never specified. We might be justified in thinking the label Χριστιανός is in mind in these passages, but this is never made explicit, nor does the language of the *Shepherd* indicate that the precise label by which the servants of God are called is important.

In one of these passages, Hermas asks the shepherd why the stones in his vision from which the tower was built had to come up from the deep (Sim. 9.16.1). The shepherd responds, “It was necessary for them to come up through water in order to be made alive” (9.16.2). He then equates this passage through water with
receiving a seal, after which time one “bears the name of the Son of God” (9.16.3-4). This passage is a clear reference to baptism.\textsuperscript{438} And, though it was written at a time when the label Χριστιανός was used by some as a self-designation, the following section will argue that it reflects what had long been the case: those who were baptized bore the name of Jesus.

6.1.1. Use of Jesus’s Name In Baptism

Early Christian literature exhibits a tendency by Christians to speak of baptism in a way that modifies the verb βάπτιζω with some variation of a prepositional phrase that might be generically translated, “in the name of Jesus.” The following are the attested variants:

- εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (Matt 28:19; Did. 7:1)\textsuperscript{439}
- ἐπὶ τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Acts 2:38)
- ἐν τῷ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Acts 10:48)
- εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ (Acts 8:16; 19:5)
- εἰς ὄνομα κυρίου (Did. 9:5)
- εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου (Herm. Vis. 3:7:3)

That Paul was aware of some variation of this formula is proven by 1 Cor 1:13-15: “Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you

\textsuperscript{438} So Carolyn Osiek, \textit{Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary} (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 238.

\textsuperscript{439} Baptism in the triune name is also referenced by Justin Martyr (\textit{1 Apol.} 61) and Tertullian (\textit{Bapt.} 6), though these instances are too late to contribute anything to our investigation in this chapter.
baptized in the name of Paul [εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου]? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say you were baptized in my name [εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα]." Paul also probably alludes to baptism in the name of Jesus in 1 Cor 6:11, saying, “But you were washed [ἀπελούσασθε], you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ [ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] and in the Spirit of our God.” Paul also uses similar phrases, referring to baptism “into Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:3), “into Christ” (Gal 3:27), and “into Moses” (1 Cor 10:2).

It is likely that these formulae were verbalized in the act of baptism. That would explain why references to baptism in Jesus’s name are so common in the literature. Acts also implies that some invocation of Jesus’s name occurred at baptism when it depicts Phillip baptizing people immediately after “proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ” (8:12), and Paul being baptized “calling on his name” (22:16).

The prepositional phrases ἐπὶ τὸ ὄνομα440 and ἐν τῷ ὄνομα441 both have biblical precedent. Their only appearances in baptismal formulae are Luke’s reporting of Peter’s speech in Acts 2:38 and 10:48. Lars Hartman may be correct that these cases reflect Luke’s tendency to make the apostles speak with a biblical style, especially in

---

440 1 Sam 25:9; 2 Sam 22:50; Pss 32:21; 43:6, 9; 53:3; 62:5; 88:13, 17, 25; Jer 36:23; Zech 10:12; Dan 9:6 (Theodotion); Sir 45:15.

441 Gen 4:17; 12:8; 48:6; Exod 28:11; 33:9; Deut 3:14; 10:8; 17:12; 18:5, 19, 20, 22; 21:5; 1 Sam 25:5; 1 Kgs 16:24; 20:8; 1 Chr 23:13; 2 Chr 14:10; Ezr 2:61; Isa 26:8; 42:4; 44:5; 50:10; Jer 11:21; 14:14, 15; 20:9; 23:25; 33:16; 36:9; Ezek 16:15; Dan 9:6; 1 Esd 5:38; 6:1; 1 Macc 14:43.
the early chapters of Acts.\textsuperscript{442} All of the other baptismal formulae use εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, which has no biblical precedent.

Scholars have sought to explain the εἰς τὸ ὄνομα formula by parallels to it found in koine Greek and rabbinic Hebrew. In Greek, the only other occurrences of that exact formula are in papyri recording business transactions, where it refers to transferring something into the account of the person named.\textsuperscript{443} If this is the controlling idiom in the baptismal formulae, then it would indicate that at baptism a person is transferred into the ownership of Jesus.\textsuperscript{444} Hartman charges that baptism and business transactions are too different from one another for us to expect the same phrase to have the same meaning in both settings.\textsuperscript{445} This is reasonable. However, the same parallel may be explained in a more circuitous way by noting that the preposition εἰς lends itself to expressions of transference, and that because of this baptism and business are two settings in which the phrase εἰς τὸ ὄνομα came to be used in similar ways.

\textsuperscript{442} Lars Hartman, ‘Into the Name of the Lord Jesus: Baptism In the Early Church’ (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 38–39.

\textsuperscript{443} Adolf Deissmann, Light From the Ancient East (trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan; New York: George H. Doran Co., 1927), 121; Oepke, “βάπτισμα,” TDNT 1.539.

\textsuperscript{444} So Wilhelm Heitmüller, In Namen Jesu, Eine Sprach—und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchen zum Neuen Testament, speziell zur altchristliche Tautê (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903).

\textsuperscript{445} Ibid., 40.
If the a baptismal formula containing εἰς τὸ ὄνομα is a translation of an Aramaic expression used by the early Palestinian Jesus movement, then it is usually thought to translate the Aramaic ש וֹם, which, along with its Hebrew equivalent, לְּשָׁם, is found in rabbinic literature. One tannaitic tradition, which pertains to a time when sacrificial worship was still going on in Jerusalem, states:

For the sake of לְּשָׁם six things is the animal offering sacrificed:
(1) for the sake of לְּשָׁם the animal offering,
(2) for the sake of לְּשָׁם the one who sacrifices it,
(3) for the sake of לְּשָׁם the Lord,
(4) for the sake of לְּשָׁם the altar fires,
(5) for the sake of לְּשָׁם the odor,
(6) for the sake of לְּשָׁם the pleasing smell. (m. Zeb. 4:6, Neusner)

Hartman points out that the range of items listed in whose names the sacrifice is to be made does not allow for לְּשָׁם to have too specific a meaning, rather it must mean something close to “with regard to.” He also observes that the bulk of rabbinic occurrences of לְּשָׁם/ש וֹם are modifying religious rites, such as sacrifices and circumcisions, and seem to modify them in such a way as to distinguish the rite in question from some other alternative, such as a sacrifice in the name of Zeus, or a circumcision in the name of Mt. Gerizim. Thus, for Hartman, baptism εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ refers to baptism that is performed with regard to Jesus, as opposed to the baptism of John the Baptist. His filling out of the “with regard to” in

---

446 Hartman, ‘Into the Name’, 41-42.
447 Ibid., 42.

166
this case comes out meaning something like, “baptism for the sake of joining a community characterized by certain beliefs about Jesus as Lord.”

Despite Hartman’s efforts to distinguish an interpretation of “into the name of the Lord Jesus” (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ) that emphasizes its rabbinic parallels from one that emphasizes its Greek parallels, his interpretation seems rather close to “baptism into the domain of Jesus,” which is what emphasis on the Greek parallels also produces, provided one presupposes that Jesus’s domain is manifested in a community of people. Moreover, Hartman neglects to mention another rabbinic parallel that, though centuries later than the NT, may shed more light on this particular expression, inasmuch as it deals with baptisms. The Talmud refers to a slave acquiring emancipation by receiving ritual ablution לשם בן חורין, literally, “in the name of a son of freedom” (b. Yebam. 45b). Thus baptism into the name of something, means baptism in order to attain that status. In light of this A. J. M. Wedderburn interprets “baptism into the name of Christ” to be a baptism in order to attain the status of bearing Christ’s name as his follower. Once again, the sense differs little from that taken when the parallels in Greek business transactions are emphasized.

---

448 Ibid., 44–50. The quotation marks represent a paraphrase of his position.

6.1.2. Baptism In Jesus’s Name as a Pre-Pauline Institution

The Book of Acts presents baptism in the name of Jesus as occurring as far back as the day of Pentecost (2:38-41). The question of the historicity of this particular incident need not detain us here. It is, however, important to show that the practice was primitive enough to have preceded the ministry of Paul. And on that point, Paul’s own epistles corroborate the testimony of Acts.

At least by the time he wrote his epistles, Paul could assume that baptism was universally practiced in the churches. For all whom he recognizes as in Christ he takes for granted that they were baptized (Gal 3:27-28). Even those whom Paul did not baptize, he still presumes to have been baptized in Jesus’s name (1 Cor 1:13-17). From this fact we can infer that Paul regarded baptism as an initiatory rite, and that it had been such for himself. If we may take the word we literally in Rom 6:3-4 and 1 Cor 12:13, then this is more than an inference, it is Paul’s explicit claim. Thus, baptism of some kind must have been practiced very early on in the churches.

But how much can be said about pre-Pauline baptism? Might it have originally been merely a symbol of cleansing and repentance, along the lines of John the Baptist’s practice, without signifying any special appurtenance to Jesus on the part of the baptizee? Again Paul’s epistles show that he was no innovator in this respect either. As mentioned above, Paul only ever implies that baptism was in Jesus’s name. He never explicitly instructs that baptism be in Jesus name, as opposed to anything else, as might be expected if he himself established that aspect of the
practice. In fact, the more distinctively Pauline turn of phrase seems to be when he refers to being baptized “into Christ” without including the word name (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27).

The evidence of Romans is especially important here. Paul writes to a group of believers in Jesus to whom he personally had never previously ministered, “Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” (6:3). As Hunter writes, “If he speaks to Christians, whom he had never seen, of baptism as a sacrament in which the initiate dies with Christ, and rises with him to new life, must we not infer that this doctrine was not peculiar to him, but familiar to Christians generally?”\(^{450}\) He hedges this conclusion by conceding that “ἵ ἀγνοεῖτε may be only a trait of style (cf. Rom. 7.1).”\(^{451}\) However, Paul implies that his confidence about what the Romans were to know was based in reality, when he writes, “you…have become obedient to that form of teaching to which you were entrusted [ὦν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς]” (6:17). He presumes to know what they know in this section of Romans (Rom 6:3, 6, 8, 9, 16; 7:1) because he is aware that this knowledge comes from a pattern of instruction (τύπος διδαχῆς) that was being traduced (παραδίδομι). Thus, not only did the practice of baptism precede Paul, but

\(^{450}\) Hunter, *Paul*, 70.

\(^{451}\) Ibid., fn. 1.
so did the doctrine that it signified that someone had attained an identity defined by a relationship to Jesus.452

This argument does not require that every detail of what Paul says the Romans ought to have known was part of a pre-Pauline tradition, in which case, as Wedderburn points out, one would have to conclude that “they were fairly fully acquainted with the essential features of Paul’s view of baptism, including his distinctive σὺν Χριστῷ concept.”453 For as Wedderburn continues, the things that Paul expects the Romans to know could all be things he took as implications of the one genuinely traditional point raised in v. 3, “the belief that Christians have been baptized into Christ’s death.”454 However, this detail is enough to make primitive Christian baptism into an occasion where Jesus’s names and titles were used to identify his followers.

6.2. Persecution and Martyrdom

As we saw in chapter 5, the use of the label Χριστιανός was closely associated with early persecution of Christians, so closely, in fact, that in the eyes of the Christians it was on account of the name Χριστιανός itself that they were


453 Wedderburn, Baptism, 47.

454 Ibid., 47.
persecuted. This fact leads Horrell to classify the label Χριστιανός as a form of stigma, a mark that defines someone as deviant.455 He further explains that a stigma “is, or is felt to be, an identity-defining mark, one that the processes of social interaction and labeling make central to the designation of who or what someone is.”456

It would seem logically necessary, however, that the stigma of the label Χριστιανός could not have belonged only to the label, as though those to whom the label was applied could avoid the stigma merely by using a different label in its place. The stigma in the label must have had something to do with what the label connoted. And in order for persecuted Christians to recognize that they were being persecuted as Christians, and not as innocent victims mistakenly labeled Christians, there must have been a basic level of agreement between those persecuted and those doing the persecuting about what a Χριστιανός was.

Multiple early Christian authors writing about the persecution of Christians indicate that the crucial element of the label Χριστιανός that compels the persecution is its root Χριστός.457 The persecution of the name Χριστιανός is really persecution of the name Χριστός, whereas denial of the name Χριστιανός is denial of the person

455 Horrell, “The Label Χριστιανός,” 376.
456 Ibid., 377.
457 E.g. 1 Pet 4:14, 16; Justin Dial. 35.1; 63.5; 96.2; Aristides 15.1.
Χριστός. A person is called a Χριστιανός because of their belonging to a group oriented around Jesus, or because of their belief in, devotion to, or appurtenance to Jesus. So when they were persecuted merely for the name Χριστιανός, they were persecuted for that relationship they had toward Jesus Christ.

Because of this, we can occasionally see the use of the label Χριστιανός in the background when it does not appear in a text. For example, when Justin writes, “for the name of Jesus you may see men of every nation who have endured and do endure all sufferings, rather than deny him” (Dial. 121.2), or when Clement of Alexandria writes of people being “reproached in the name of Christ” (Strom. 4.8), these persecutions are the same as being persecuted because of the label Χριστιανός.

We might even infer that certain authors who never once use the word Χριστιανός have it in mind when they use similar expressions of suffering for Christ’s name. The Shepherd of Hermas, for example, speaks of people suffering “for the name of the Lord,”⁴⁵⁸ or of apostates as those who “were ashamed to bear his name.”⁴⁵⁹ Once this is admitted for Shepherd of Hermas, one might wonder if it applies in any earlier cases. For example, in Revelation, shortly after warning the church of Smyrna that some of them would be tried and imprisoned, Jesus commends them saying, “yet you are holding fast to my name and you did not deny

---

⁴⁵⁸ Vis. 3.5.2; Sim. 9.28.2–6.
⁴⁵⁹ Sim. 9.14.6; cf. Sim. 8.6.4; 9.21.3.
your faith in me.” (Rev 2:10, 13). Silva New opines that Mark probably has the label Χριστιανός in mind when he has Jesus say, “You will be hated by all because of my name” (Mark 13:13), and that James does when he writes, “Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?” (James 2:7, NASB).460

It is possible that all of these authors have the label Χριστιανός in mind whenever they write about suffering for Jesus’s name. But is that conclusion necessary? Must we not accept that even before the word Χριστιανός was coined there was persecution against people who belonged to groups oriented around Jesus, or who were identifiable by their belief in, devotion to, or appurtenance to Jesus? On the other hand, how could such persecution happen without the existence of some vocabulary of identification? If it did happen, then in the absence of the label Χριστιανός, there must have been some other vocabulary that served to mediate the stigma that was the basis for persecution.

6.2.1. Persecution Without the Label Χριστιανός

Although we cannot say with certainty that any early Christian works were written before the label Χριστιανός first came to be used of believers in Jesus, the rarity of that word in first-century Christian sources suggests that being called that

name was not a common enough experience to warrant its mention beyond the three cases we have seen in Acts and 1 Peter. References to persecution of believers in Jesus by outsiders, on the other hand, is spread lavishly throughout early Christian writings. Paul refers to it frequently, including the fact that he had formerly been such a persecutor.\textsuperscript{461} Sayings of Jesus predicting that his followers would be persecuted are found in Mark, Q, and John.\textsuperscript{462} The Book of Acts is rife with stories of persecution, including in the early chapters before the label Χριστιανός could possibly have been used.\textsuperscript{463} First Peter, Revelation, and possibly James all speak of persecution.\textsuperscript{464} First Clement looks back on persecutions of decades prior.\textsuperscript{465} And the Two Ways source common to the Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas mentions “persecutors of the good.”\textsuperscript{466}

Though the label Χριστιανός was undoubtedly used in some of the incidents of persecution that were familiar to these authors, it is difficult to believe that it was in all of them. This is particularly the case when the persecution was at the hands of

---

\textsuperscript{461} Gal 1:23; Phil 3:6; Rom 8:35; 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4-5; 11:23-29; 12:10; 1 Thes 2:14-16.


\textsuperscript{464} Jas 1:2; 2:7; 1 Pet 3:13-4:19; Rev 2:10, 13.

\textsuperscript{465} 1 Clement 5-6.

\textsuperscript{466} Did. 5.2; Barn. 20.2.
Aramaic-speaking Judeans, which is known to have occurred in Jerusalem from Paul, Acts, Josephus, and Hegesippus.\footnote{Rom 15:31; 1 Thes 2:14-16; Jos. \emph{Ant}. 20.9.1; Eus. \emph{Hist. Eccl}. 2.23.9-17.}

We must ask, in these cases, when one’s identity as a Χριστιανός was not the stigma for which they were persecuted, what else was? And what vocabulary was used to mediate this stigma? The evidence available to answer these questions is slim. However, what evidence there is suggests that the use of Jesus’s name was a major stigmatizing feature.

The most important evidence for this is found in Acts, where the theme of conflict over the use of Jesus’s name between Judean authorities and the apostles runs throughout the book, especially in its early chapters. In Peter’s sermon at Pentecost he quotes Joel 2:32, saying, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21). Peter seems to mean more than just calling on the name of YHWH here, but specifically calling on Jesus of Nazareth, whom he mentions by name in the next verse. He ends his sermon saying, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.” (2:38). In the next story in Acts, a lame man is healed when Peter says to him, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, stand up and walk.” (3:6). Peter explains this to the crowd saying, “And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong.” (3:16).
Following this preaching, some priests, Sadducees, and the captain of the Temple arrest Peter and John and inquire, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” (4:7), which Peter answers, “by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” (4:10). He goes on to say, “there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” In their deliberations about the matter, the priests said, “to keep it from spreading further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name,” at which point “they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.” (4:17-18). The prayer of the apostles’ friends indicates their intent not to follow this command, asking God to “grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” (4:29-30). This leads to a second arrest of the apostles, and the high priest saying to them, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.” (5:28). The priests have the apostles flogged and once again “ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus.” (5:40). Luke then writes, “as they left the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.” (5:41).

In the following chapters, Stephen is killed with the approval of Saul, and Philip “was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.” (8:37). Then, at the time of Saul’s vision on the road to Damascus, we
learn the nature of his persecutions, as Ananaias says to the Lord, “he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” (9:14). The Lord responds, saying, “he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before the Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” (9:15-16). Next, Saul “began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues” (9:20), and his audience recognized him as “the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name” (9:21). This activity of Saul’s continues and is described as “speaking boldly in the name of the Lord” (9:27-28).

Though the conflict between the apostles and the priests occupies less of the book from this point on, they continue to preach about the name of Jesus (10:43), perform miracles in the name of Jesus (16:18; 19:13), and baptize in the name of Jesus (10:48; 19:5). James describes Gentiles who believe in Jesus as “a people for his name” and quotes Amos 9:11-12 referring to “Gentiles over whom my name has been called.” (15:14, 17). The apostles’ letter commending Paul and Barnabas describes them as having “risked their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” (15:26; NASB). When some Judeans accuse Paul before Gallio, he refuses to hear the case, saying, “it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law.” (18:15). The positive response to Paul’s miracles in Ephesus is that “the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.” (19:17). Later, when Agabus prophesies that Paul will be arrested in Jerusalem, Paul replies, “I am ready not only to be bound but even
to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” (21:13). When Paul testifies before Agrippa, he describes his former persecution of believers in Jesus as doing “many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” (26:9).

Readers of Luke and Acts are probably expected to see all of these incidents as fulfillments of Jesus words in Luke 21:12 and 17: “they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name;” and “you will be hated because of my name.”

Luke’s two uses of the word Χριστιανός in Acts prove that it was known to him and that it was supposed to be familiar to his audience. Thus, it is possible to read all these instances in Acts of persecution for Jesus’s name as Luke’s retrojection of the experience of people being persecuted as Χριστιανοί.468 It is easy to see a parallel between Jesus’s prediction in Acts that Saul would suffer “for the sake of my name” (ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου, Acts 9:16; cf. 15:26; 21:13) and 1 Peter’s reference to suffering “for the name of Christ” (ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, 1 Pet 4:14), the latter of which is equated with suffering “as a Christian” (ὡς Χριστιανός, 1 Pet 4:16). Silva New does not make this claim about Acts, but given that she sees the label

468 A similar situation occurs when, according to Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria reported that the martyrdom of James the apostle involved a trial where he, along with his newly converted accuser, confessed himself to be a Christian (Hist. Eccl. 2.9.2).
Χριστιανός in Mark 13:13, it is a small jump to see it in the parallel to that verse in Luke 21:17, and thus to all of Acts.⁴⁶⁹

However, this hypothesis seems unlikely. Luke himself says that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch (11:26). It is unreasonable to think that he means for his references to Jesus’s name in the conflict between the apostles and the priests in the early chapters of Acts to serve as some kind of proxy for the anachronistic use of a word he informs his readers did not exist yet. Luke must refer to the literal speaking of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the distinguishing feature, or stigma, of those whom the priests persecuted. Mark’s reference to being hated for Jesus name in Mark 13:13, with Luke following Mark in Luke 21:17, is the same type of septuagintal use of ὄνομα as that found in Mark 9:37 (“whoever welcomes such a child in my name…”), Mark 9:41 (“whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ…”), and Matt 10:51 (“whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet…”). There is no need to see the label Χριστιανός in the background.

Paul says little that either strengthens or weakens the case for the use of Jesus’s name being a major point of contention in the persecution of early Judean believers in him. However, the terms he uses in Galatians in reporting about his own former persecution of the church are instructive. First he says that he “was violently

⁴⁶⁹ New, “The Name,” 126.
persecuting the church of God” (Gal 1:13). Later he refers to “the churches of Judea that are in Christ” saying, “the one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy.” (1:22-23). His choice of vocabulary in these verses is not what he used when he was a persecutor of the church, but what he used after more than 14 years of reflection on those events. Nevertheless, his words indicate that, at least after that reflection, he recognized the victims of his persecution as having the same group identity as those he would later lead. They were “the church of God” and “churches in Christ.” Their movement was the same “faith” he later proclaimed (is this faith anything other than what he calls in Gal 2:16 the πίστις Χριστοῦ?). We can only expect that he would freely apply all of the same vocabulary of identification that he used for the churches in his ministry as an apostle when looking back on those primitive Judean Jesus people, vocabulary which we have seen to include frequent references to the names and titles of Jesus. We can further expect that there was some continuity between the way he identified them when he violently persecuted them and the way he would come to identify them when he considered himself one of their number.

Josephus also offers us only a little help here, but it is worth noticing that when he reports the death of James the Just, he introduces him as “a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ.” (Ant. 20.9.1). He does not indicate explicitly that any connection to Jesus was the basis for the stoning that ensued, saying only that the high priest “accused them of having transgressed the
law.” Nor does he indicate what labels the high priest used of James and his cohorts in this episode. However, it is at least true that, in his own reporting of the episode, Josephus identifies James, as a victim of persecution, with an expression that employs the name *Jesus* and the title *Christ*.

It is difficult to know how much we can make of this evidence. Even one with a high degree of confidence about the historicity of the events Luke records of the early Jerusalem church would have to allow for his use of the word ὄνομα to be his own way of describing the stigma that that church bore in the eyes of those who persecuted them. However, a logical consideration of the evidence does not allow us to dismiss it so easily. We know that there was this early community of Judeans that had some significant belief about, devotion to, or appurtenance to the recently crucified Jesus of Nazareth. We know that they had some distinguishable group identity, and that they were persecuted by certain others, including Paul. Thus, there must have existed ways to describe verbally that which distinguished them. What could better fill this role than the references they made by name to the person of Jesus?

6.3. Conclusions

It should be clear by now that the two halves of this chapter are closely connected with one another, as well as with the topic of this dissertation. What
Hermas means by “bearing the name of the son of God” as something that one comes to do when one is baptized (Herm. Sim. 9.16.3–4) must be the same as what he means by bearing his name under persecution, which some are ashamed to do (Sim. 9.14.6). And in both of these cases, though Hermas does not say so, it is probable that to bear his name is to bear the label Χριστιανός, or, if not Χριστιανός, then some other label employing a name or title of Jesus within it.

In Acts too, those baptized in Jesus’s name and those persecuted for his name are to be understood as the same group. The objects of Saul’s persecution were “those who invoked his name” (Acts 9:21), one of whom Saul became at the moment he was baptized “calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). In Acts, however, those calling on his name cannot be equated with those called Χριστιανοί, at least prior to the coining of the term in Antioch. In their case, some other expression employing a name or title of Jesus had to be in use, even if we do not know what that was.

Baptism and persecution are also both moments when a person’s identity as being somehow appurtenant to Jesus Christ becomes especially salient. Both events, at least ideally, involve a person affirming publicly that that identity is what they are. They also both involve another party with some kind of power or authority over the person being identified applying that identification to them, in baptism a friend, and in persecution a foe. They are, thus, both moments when the internal question of,

---

470 Both expressions use the verb ἐπικαλέω.
“Am I really one of Christ’s people?” becomes most crucial to the person, and their answer in the affirmative takes on a nuance that is not just declarative but performative.\footnote{Cf. what Lieu writes about martyrdom, \textit{Neither Jew Nor Greek}, 213. But if the martyr’s \textit{Christianus sum} is performative, it would seem to be true as well of affirmations made under other persecutions that came short of death.} If this paragraph seems awkward in its avoidance of a label for this Jesus-appurtenant-identity, that only highlights the impossibility of there not being a label for it when the baptisms and persecutions we have in mind were going on. All that we have seen so far points to the conclusion that, when these people who were baptized in Jesus’s name and persecuted for Jesus’s name were labeled they had to be labeled by some expression that employed a name or title of Jesus.

Finally, baptism and persecution highlight the fact that the concept of a \textit{Christian} (or a person in Christ, or a disciple of Christ, or someone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or a member of the Jesus movement, etc.) is not simply an abstract idea whereby people compare individuals to a mental prototype that exists in their mind and nowhere else and classify them as either belonging to or not belonging to the group that prototype represents. The early Jesus movement was a social institution, and membership within it manifested itself in certain visible, collectively agreed upon, social realities. These social realities existed both before and after the label \textit{Χριστιανός} was applied to them.
CHAPTER 7:
CONCLUSION

This brings us to the end of our study on the early uses of Jesus’s names and titles in identifying his followers. Here we will summarize our findings in chapters 2-6 and draw some implications from them.

7.1. Summary

In chapter 2 we saw that a variety of types of social categories and groups in the Greco-Roman world commonly had appellations applied to them that included within them some form of a name of a person or deity who was especially significant to that group. Any person could be identified by their familial relationship to another person, often their father. Similarly, nations were often thought to have taken their names from primordial ancestors. Political factions were often oriented around a central leader, and those factions and their members were identified using labels that included that leader’s name, such as the party of Pompey. The names of teachers were used to identify their students, and influential thinkers’ names were used to identify those who held to their schools of thought. Voluntary associations often took their
names from patron deities, but also sometimes from influential human patrons or political figures. Finally, divisions of the Jesus movement were often named for individuals, as in local congregations labeled by the household in which they met, or larger sects named after their founders.

The number of ways those individuals’ names could be used in the labeling of groups that were somehow appurtenant to them was also quite variegated. One person’s name could modify another person’s name in a genitive of relationship. Genitives of the central figure’s name could also be added to classification words, as in *disciples of Pythagoras* or *party of Caesar*. The name could appear in a prepositional phrase, such as *those about Heraclitus*. Or it could have any of a number of suffixes added to it to make a specialized label, such as *Pythagoreans*.

Thus, whatever aspect of the Jesus movement’s identity was in view, whether it be in local congregations or a translocal movement, whether as a belief system or a set of customs, it would conform to the pattern of other similarly defined groups if it and its members were given labels that incorporated a name or title of Jesus in some word or phrase. Chapters 3 through 5 explored various examples of this phenomenon.

In chapter 3 we surveyed a variety of ways that names and titles of Jesus are used in periphrastic expressions to label his individual followers, the groups to which they belonged, and their movement as an abstraction. We saw that the insider labels that appear most frequently in early Christian literature are often abbreviations of
expressions that would be intelligible to outsiders if a name or title of Jesus is included in them, such as *disciples of Jesus, church of God in Christ,* and *the faith of Christ.* We also saw that mentions of Jesus were used to refer to the movement metonymically. For example, whereas a modern might refer to someone preaching Christianity, Paul referred to someone preaching Christ, and whereas a modern might contrast philosophical schools of thought with Christianity, Justin contrasts them with Christ. Two other ways names and titles of Jesus were used to label people were with the genitive of relationship and similar prepositional phrases, such as *those of Christ* and *those in Christ.*

Chapters 4 and 5 both dealt with single words that were used to label the Jesus movement and its members. In chapter 4 these were the labels *Nazarenes* and *Galileans,* both of which originated as toponyms used for Jesus and then went on to be applied to his followers as examples of a group being designated by the name of its founder. These cases are similar to the philosophical school of the Cyreniacs, which was named after Aristippus of Cyrene. The labels *Nazarenes* and *Galileans* are both sparsely attested in extant Greek and Latin literature, though Hebrew or Aramaic cognates of both also appear in certain Jewish sources. The most likely explanation for both of these facts is that, if *Nazarenes* and *Galileans* were labels of choice anywhere, it was probably among Aramaic speakers in Palestine. Quite possibly, the Nazarenes that Jerome and Epiphanius describe as a Christian heresy could alternatively be described simply as Aramaic speaking Christians who called
themselves by their Aramaic name, and from that different name some like Jerome and Epiphanius, perhaps erroneously, inferred a different essence.

The subject of chapter 5 was the Greek and Latin cognates of what is still the main label in use today, *Christian*. This label was probably first coined by Latin speaking Roman officials, probably in Antioch, probably before A.D. 59, but not before A.D. 44. This label, at least sporadically, bore the stigma of being guilty as a criminal, and at least as early as A.D. 64 those found guilty of being Christians were put to death in various localized persecutions throughout the Roman Empire. The name on its own, however, simply means *partisan of Christ*, and, though it might have often been spoken with a sneer by outsiders, there is nothing insulting in the word itself. Everywhere the term appears in the literature of the Jesus movement it is embraced as a label that accurately proclaims what those who believe in Jesus are or aspire to be. Indeed, to be associated with Christ through such a label is taken by them as a compliment.

We might reasonably suppose that the phrase *partisan of Christ*, or some equivalent, would have been used before anyone saw need for a new word meaning *partisan of Christ*. If we are correct in our dating of the coining of the word *Christian*, it is entirely possible that it was already in use in some quarters at the time that Paul wrote his epistles, where we find a variety of phrases that could be taken as meaning something close to *partisan of Christ*, as covered in chapter 3. The goal of chapter 6 was to argue inferentially that we can look back to the period prior to
Paul’s epistles and discover that similar labels must have been in use even then, though we do not have access to the words themselves.

This was argued on the basis of certain facts about baptism and persecution. We found that it is most reasonable to conclude that, as early as Paul’s conversion, there existed the institution of baptism in the name of Jesus, and that one result of this institution was that people who underwent it attained a social identity that was associated with the name of Jesus. We also found that even prior to Paul’s conversion certain Jewish leaders, including Paul himself, persecuted those who believed in Jesus. The evidence available in the book of Acts suggests that the way these leaders identified whom they were persecuting was through their use of the name of Jesus. Thus, we find a social identity, agreed upon by insiders and outsiders, that associated group members with Jesus’s name.

7.2. Implications

We can safely conclude from these chapters that there existed a movement, beginning in the early to mid-first century A.D. and enduring long after that was spoken of by both its members and outsiders using labels that indicated it was a movement about the historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus Christ. We have not attempted to find the essence of this movement. However, from the way it was
labeled we must conclude that its appurtenance to Jesus was, if not its whole essence, then at least an essential aspect of it.

7.2.1. The Importance of Language

Our study has revealed that the choices ancients made of one way of using names and titles of Jesus to label his followers versus another may have had more to do with language than is sometimes acknowledged. A classic way of describing the distribution of the word *Christian* in our sources is that it was an outsider label that was reluctantly accepted by insiders, primarily in the second century. However, an alternative explanation is that it was a Latin word that never was the label of choice among Greek speakers the way it was among Latin speakers. Thus, when Tertullian uses the word 400 times, far more than any earlier writers, rather than say that Tertullian was the first author we encounter after the word enjoyed an explosion of popularity, we should say that Tertullian is the first Latin Christian believer in Jesus we encounter, and his partiality for the label *Christian* may well reflect what had been the case for some time among Latin speakers, where the –*ianus* suffix was native. We might expect that there was a similar partiality for the word *Nazarene* among Aramaic speaking believers in Jesus that is not reflected in our extant Greek and Latin literature.

On the other hand, the way Greek speakers employed names and titles of Jesus in identifying his followers was primarily with periphrastic expressions. In light
of our investigation of ancient groups using labels made from individuals’ names in chapter 2, this phenomenon seems normal. We might be left to wonder why a native Greek suffix, such as –ειος never came to be used for the Jesus movement. However, given the diversity of ways personal names were employed in phrases meaning “appurtenant to that person,” such a lacuna hardly needs explanation.

7.2.2. What to Call the Movement

A problem that instigated this dissertation was the problem of what to call this movement and its members. Our attempt to resolve that problem must include the caveat that this dissertation has been primarily descriptive and not prescriptive. It is not necessarily the case that any conclusions about what we ought to call this movement must follow from our data about what it was called in history by its contemporaries. Nevertheless, we might at least expect that the descriptive should aid us in the prescriptive. And to the extent that this is the case it is probably fair to say that our labels for this movement ought to be ones that, like its ancient appellations, explicitly indicate its appurtenance to Jesus. Thus, labels such as Jesus-believers, Jesus-followers, and the Jesus movement are all reasonable options.

Another label that employs one of Jesus’s titles to indicate appurtenance to him is the word Christian. One argument against using this label is based on where we find its cognates in the ancient sources. It is sometimes pointed out that our earliest insider-to-insider writings of the movement do not use the ancient cognates
of our word *Christian* as self-designations. While this is true, it is equally true that they employ names and titles of Jesus in a variety of periphrastic expressions that were essentially synonyms of the Latin *Christianus*. Furthermore, when the writings of the Jesus movement do employ cognates of the word *Christian*, although they may treat the label itself as a novelty, what they mean by it is plainly identical to what they elsewhere call by other names, such as saints, disciples, and believers.

Admittedly, the reticence many scholars have of applying the label *Christian* to the earliest members of the Jesus movement does not solely derive from points made about historic usage of the cognates of the word *Christian*. Three other points that have more to do with the meaning of the modern word *Christian* are also made: 1) that *Christian* implies a clear separation between Christianity and Judaism and should only be used of people who had undergone that separation, 2) that *Christian* implies adherence to some defined orthodoxy and should only be used of people held to doctrines like the trinity after they had come to more mature expressions than they had in some vaguely defined early period, and 3) that *Christian* implies adherence to a religion in the sense of a category that the ancients did not have. These arguments are not about the etymology of the word *Christian*, but rather the essence of Christianity. This dissertation does not speak as directly to these sorts of arguments. However, a few words about them are in order.

Granting that the separation of Christianity from Judaism, the development of creedal Christian orthodoxy, and the rise of the category of religion, are all important
historical developments that affect the meaning of the word *Christian*, do they really affect it in any essential definitional ways? The historian could use a definition, such as Sykes’s, of a Christian as “one who gives attention to Jesus whose achievement is contextualized by God,” and subsume within that individuals both before and after such watershed moments as the separation of Christianity from Judaism, the development of creedal orthodoxy, and the rise of the category of religion.

Moreover, the only way those three things could be used to mark off the time before which it would be improper to call someone a Christian would be by imagining them as singular identifiable moments in time, which of course they were not.

Sykes’s definition makes the defining characteristic of Christians their orientation toward Jesus Christ. This is precisely the same essential feature that we would infer from the early uses of names and titles of Jesus in labeling the Jesus movement. Boyarin is unsatisfied with the banality of such a definition, saying, “there is one (analytic) feature that could be said to be common to all groups that we might want to call (anachronistically) ‘Christian,’ namely some form of discipleship to Jesus, this feature hardly captures enough richness and depth to produce an interesting category.” However, as Sykes argued, that banality is necessary for terms that are

---


contested. Thus, historians can use the word *Christian*, while reporting on differing positions within ancient literature about just who qualifies as a *true Christian*, without taking part in those contests. Thus, at the end of the day, it may still be warranted to refer to the earliest followers of Jesus as Christians and their movement as Christianity.

Finally, the relevance of this dissertation to these broader questions of Christianity’s essence may be viewed from the other direction. Given that there existed before the middle of the first century a movement that was centered on Jesus Christ and that was designated by its members and their contemporaries using labels that indicate that focus, then, whether we call this movement *Christianity* or the *Jesus movement*, it was cohesive enough and distinct enough to warrant its labeling. Though the labels *in Christ* and *Judean* had overlapping memberships, they clearly meant two different things. And though the earliest Jesus movement was not circumscribed by an official creed, we can still identify the centrality of Jesus Christ to the movement as a sort of orthodoxy in the sense of a defining concept that unifies the movement and separates insiders from outsiders. Thus, without explicitly addressing the parting of the ways between Christianity and Judaism or the diversity of early Christianity, this dissertation calls attention to data that should enlighten those discussions.


———. “Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to which is Appended a Correction of my *Border Lines*).” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 99(2009): 7-36.


206


209


211


