

## ST. JOHN AT EPHESUS<sup>1</sup>

F. F. BRUCE, M.A., D.D., F.B.A.

RYLANDS PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND EXEGESIS  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

THE New Testament student who visits the site of Roman Ephesus is irresistibly reminded of Paul's residence in this city. The great theatre, which formed the setting for the riotous anti-Pauline demonstration stirred up by Demetrius and his fellow-silversmiths,<sup>2</sup> is one of the main landmarks: the spectator who takes a seat there has his eye caught by a ruined fort on a spur of Mount Coressus, to the left of the harbour area, which is traditionally called St. Paul's Prison—a completely unauthentic designation, no doubt, but a witness to the impression which Paul made on Ephesus. If the visitor walks about a mile and a half to the north or north-east and views the fragments of the temple of Artemis, worshipped by "all Asia and the world" in the heyday of her magnificence,<sup>3</sup> he is reminded again of Luke's narrative of Paul's Ephesian ministry. But if he lifts his eyes from the temple site to the hill of Ayasoluk, his attention is diverted from Paul to another Christian leader of the apostolic age: there on the hill stand the very substantial and impressive remains of the basilica erected by Justinian in honour of St. John the divine, whose name survives, in a corrupt form, in the name of the place, for Ayasoluk goes back to the Greek *ἅγιος θεολόγος*, the "holy divine". Ayasoluk was indeed the name of the town standing at the foot of the hill until the expulsion of Greeks from Anatolia in 1923, when it was replaced by the Turkish name Selçuk (which had the advantage of rhyming with Ayasoluk and containing several of its phonemes).

In Christian Ephesus the basilica of St. John enjoyed for centuries the renown which the temple of Artemis had enjoyed

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered in the John Rylands University Library on Wednesday, 26th October 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xix. 29 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xix. 27; cf. A. F. Pauly-G. Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ii, cols. 1385 f.; British Museum Inscriptions, iii. 482 B.

in pagan Ephesus. Procopius, who tells of Justinian's building it, says that "it resembles and is in all respects a rival to the church which he dedicated to all the apostles in the imperial city" (Constantinople) and describes it as "the most sacred shrine in Ephesus and one held in special honour".<sup>1</sup>

The basilica was severely damaged in the invasion of the Seljuk Turks in 1090. The site on which its ruins stood was excavated in 1927 and the following years by Austrian archaeologists, who discovered that Justinian's building was erected around an earlier square chapel, the cross-vault of which rested on four slender columns. This earlier church was built probably in the fourth century—by Theodosius I or even by Constantine the Great. If the analogy of the well-known Constantinian foundations in Rome and Jerusalem is relevant, the site on the hill of Ayasoluk would have been chosen because of a belief or tradition that St. John was buried there. And in truth beneath the fourth-century church there was found a system of subterranean vaults, one of which lay directly under the altar. At one time these catacombs (if we may call them so) could be entered by a steep and narrow stepped passage, which was later blocked up, except for an air-shaft the exit of which was close by the altar.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not it had been blocked up before the Council of Ephesus in 431, it was for more serious reasons than this that the Syrian bishops who were present there complained that, after travelling such distances, they were unable to worship at the tomb of "the thrice-blessed John, divine and evangelist, who was granted such close access to our Saviour".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Procopius, *Buildings*, v. 1.6; *Secret History*, iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> R. Egger and J. Keil, *Jahreshefte des österreichischen archäologischen Instituts*, xxiv (1928); xxv (1929), with *Beiblätter*, *passim* (cf. Procopius, *Buildings*, v. 1.4); see also "Die Wiederauffindung des Johannesgrabes in Ephesus", *Biblica*, xiii (1932), pp. 121 ff.

<sup>3</sup> E. Schwartz (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, I. v (Berlin/Leipzig, 1927), p. 128. R. Eisler (*The Enigma of the Fourth Gospel* [London, 1938], p. 124) suggests that it was the blocking up of the tomb that was the obstacle, but their letter implies that they were deliberately prevented from worshipping not only there but at other Ephesian martyr-tombs. The council was held in the great church of St. Mary (actually twin churches)—appropriately, when one considers that this council gave official confirmation to the Virgin's designation *Theotokos*. By the time of the council popular Christian belief in Ephesus, identifying the

Some years before the Council of Ephesus, Augustine of Hippo reported a rumour that the earth above John's tomb at Ephesus visibly moved up and down, as though someone were breathing there below.<sup>1</sup> If the Syrians who attended the Council knew of this rumour, they may have been all the more disappointed at not being able to verify it for themselves.

It is long since there was a Christian community in that area to worship at the tomb of John, but the basilica enjoyed a moment of latter-day glory in 1967 when Pope Paul VI paid it a visit and, as an inscription in Turkish and Latin records, prayed (*preces effudit*) at the sacred spot.

## II

Who is John the divine—the *theologos*—who gave his designation to the hill and the neighbouring village?

To readers of the English Bible the designation "John the divine" is associated with the last book of the New Testament, entitled in the Authorized and Revised Versions "The Revelation of St. John the Divine"—following the precedent of a number of medieval manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> But when the designation "the divine" was attached to St. John in particular, not earlier (so far as one can tell) than the third century, it was attached to the Evangelist, the author of the Logos-prologue, rather than to the seer of Patmos. If the Evangelist was identical with the seer of Patmos, good and well: we should simply say then that the

John who had resided there with the beloved disciple who took the Virgin "to his own home" after Jesus from the cross entrusted her to his care (John xix. 26 f.), held that she accompanied the disciple to Ephesus and spent her closing years there. In a public announcement of the condemnation of Nestorius the council described itself as meeting "in the [city] of the Ephesians, where John the divine and the holy Virgin Mary, the *Theotokos*, [had been]" (Schwartz, *ACO*, I. ii [Berlin/Leipzig, 1927], p. 70). Since 1891 a building in Panaya Kapulü, about a mile distant from the city, has been venerated as the house of Mary as seen in vision and described in detail by the stigmatic Westphalian nun Katharina von Emmerick (1774-1824). This place of modern pilgrimage, staffed by Capuchins, has never received official ecclesiastical recognition, although it was visited by Pope Paul VI in 1967.

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 124.

<sup>2</sup> See B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London/New York, 1971), p. 731.

designation was given to him rather as the Evangelist than as the seer of Patmos.<sup>1</sup> This question of identity is not our primary concern in this paper, but we must observe that, of the five "Johannine" documents in the New Testament, the Revelation is the only one which expressly claims to have been written by a man named John (the other four are anonymous). In the early Christian centuries, however, John the seer of Patmos was generally identified with John the apostle, the son of Zebedee, with the Fourth Evangelist and with "the disciple whom Jesus loved" mentioned repeatedly in the closing chapters of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>2</sup> Those who were unable to identify the seer of Patmos with the Fourth Evangelist, whether on literary grounds (like Dionysius of Alexandria) or on theological grounds (like Eusebius of Caesarea), were exceptions.<sup>3</sup>

### III

In the debate about the proper observance of Easter towards the end of the second century in which the protagonists were Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, and Victor, bishop of Rome (c. 189-199), Polycrates defends the antiquity of the quaterdeciman practice—the practice of observing Easter on the fourteenth day of the appropriate lunar month,<sup>4</sup> after the Jewish tradition, regardless of the day of the week on which it fell. He invokes the authority of the great *stoicheia*—by which he means perhaps Christians of the first generation<sup>5</sup>—who died and were buried in the province of Asia. Among these he mentions "John, who leaned on the Lord's breast, who was a priest wearing the mitre, and a witness and teacher: he sleeps at

<sup>1</sup> The oldest attested occurrences of *ὁ θεολόγος* applied specifically or *par excellence* to the Fourth Evangelist appear in fragments of Origen's commentary on the Gospel of John (GCS, iv, pp. 483, 484, 485).

<sup>2</sup> John xiii. 23; xix. 25-27; xx. 2-10; xxi. 20-24. At the end of the last of these passages he is described further as "the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things".

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 349, 351, below.

<sup>4</sup> The Jewish month of Nisan, the Macedonian month of Artemisios (corresponding to March/April in the Julian calendar).

<sup>5</sup> Or *στοιχεῖα* (which primarily means "letters of the alphabet" and then "elements") may here be understood as "luminaries" (from its use in the sense of sun, moon, etc.), i.e. "people of distinction".

Ephesus".<sup>1</sup> Here the John who settled in Asia is identified with the beloved disciple who, in the fourth evangelist's account of the Last Supper, reclined next to Jesus on that occasion and asked who his betrayer was (John xiii. 23-25). The statement that he was "a priest wearing the mitre" gives one pause. The *petalon* (for that is the Greek word here), as used in the Septuagint, is not the high-priestly mitre itself but the plate of gold attached to it, which bore the inscription "Holy to Yahweh".<sup>2</sup> This was worn by the high priest only, not by any of the ordinary priests. What Polycrates understood by it is uncertain. It might be a simple error, arising possibly from a confusion of John the disciple with that John who, according to Acts iv. 6, was "of the high-priestly family". (This high-priestly John is otherwise unknown, unless we follow the Western text and read "Jonathan"; if so, he is presumably to be identified with Jonathan son of Annas, who occupied the high-priesthood for a few months in A.D. 36-37 in succession to Caiaphas.)<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the language might be (and more probably is) figurative, in which case we are reminded of Hegesippus's statement that James the Just "alone was permitted to enter the sanctuary, for indeed he did not wear wool but linen".<sup>4</sup> This seems to ascribe to James priestly, if not high-priestly, privileges which certainly did not belong to him by birth and which therefore are more probably to be interpreted metaphorically, with reference to the unique intercessory ministry which he exercised on behalf of the people. The *petalon* which, according to Polycrates, John wore might have a similar metaphorical significance.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 31.3; v. 24.2.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus xxviii. 32 (36).

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Ant.*, xviii. 95, 123; xix. 313 ff.; xx. 162 ff. R. Eisler identified the high-priestly John of Acts iv. 6 with Theophilus, son of Annas, who succeeded his brother Jonathan as high priest in A.D. 37 and was removed by Herod Agrippa I four years later (Josephus, *Ant.*, xviii. 123, xix. 297); he identified this John further with Polycrates's wearer of the *πέταλον* and with the disciple of John xviii. 15 f. who was "known to the high priest" (*The Enigma of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 39-45, 52 f.).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 23.6; cf. A. A. T. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession* (London, 1953), pp. 64 f.

## IV

Other writers more or less contemporary with Polycrates assume rather than assert John's Ephesian connection. Clement of Alexandria, for example, says that after Domitian's death (A.D. 96) "John the apostle" moved from the island of Patmos to Ephesus—a statement which may go back to Hegesippus.<sup>1</sup> About the same time Irenaeus, in his treatise *Against Heresies*, calls the church of Ephesus "a true witness to the tradition of the apostles" since not only was it founded by Paul but it also provided a home for John, who remained there until the time of Trajan.<sup>2</sup>

By the time Irenaeus wrote this treatise he was bishop of Lyons in Gaul, but he was a native of the province of Asia and spent the first part of his life there. In his younger days he had known Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who died a martyr-death at an advanced age in 156.<sup>3</sup> Polycarp, he says, "was not only taught by apostles and enjoyed the company of many who had seen Christ, but was also appointed by apostles in Asia bishop of the church in Smyrna".<sup>4</sup> The generalizing plural "apostles" is used here in an extended sense (meaning perhaps those who had seen the Lord), but Irenaeus makes it plain that the apostle whom he has particularly in mind is John.

Irenaeus's most circumstantial reference to Polycarp's acquaintance with John comes in his letter to Florinus, a friend of earlier days who (in Irenaeus's eyes) had deviated from the true faith. He reminds Florinus how in their youth they had both frequented Polycarp's house.

I remember the events of those days more clearly than those of more recent date, . . . so that I can speak of the very place where the blessed Polycarp sat and held discourse. I can tell how he went forth and came in, the manner of his life and his bodily appearance, the discourses which he addressed to the people. I

<sup>1</sup> Clement, *Quis diues saluetur*, 42 (quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.6). The case for seeing the authority of Hegesippus behind this statement is presented by H. J. Lawlor, *Eusebiana* (Oxford, 1912), pp. 51 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.*, iii. 3.4.

<sup>3</sup> The date (22 February 156) preferred by C. H. Turner, "The Day and Year of St. Polycarp's Martyrdom", *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica*, ii (Oxford, 1890), pp. 105 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.*, iii. 3.4.

can recall how he reported his companionship with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, how he recorded their words and what things he heard from them about the Lord, concerning his miracles and teaching. Polycarp received these things from those who were eyewitnesses of the word of life<sup>1</sup> and reported them all in conformity with the scriptures.<sup>2</sup>

Irenaeus's birth, on various grounds, cannot well be dated after A.D. 140; he would have been in his teens when he sat at Polycarp's feet and, as he himself says, impressions formed at that age remain tenaciously and vividly in the memory even (or indeed especially) when more recent recollections begin to fade.

Irenaeus, like Polycrates, wrote to Pope Victor about the Easter controversy and affirmed that Polycarp had always followed the quartodeciman reckoning "in company with John the disciple of the Lord and the other apostles with whom he associated".<sup>3</sup>

It has been held against Irenaeus's account of Polycarp that Pionius's *Life of Polycarp*, composed about A.D. 250, has nothing to say of Polycarp's association with John.<sup>4</sup> But even if the Pionian *Life* is not so completely fictitious as J. B. Lightfoot supposed it to be,<sup>5</sup> it cannot be compared for evidential value with the testimony of Irenaeus, and Pionius's strong anti-quartodeciman convictions would be sufficient to make him keep silent about John, who was invoked as the highest authority for quartodeciman practice.<sup>6</sup>

## V

Another witness from the last decades of the second century is the anti-Marcionite prologue to the Fourth Gospel.<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luke i. 2; 1 John i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 20. 4 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 24.16.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. B. H. Streeter, *The Primitive Church* (London, 1929), pp. 94 f., 111 f., 265 ff.

<sup>5</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *Ignatius and Polycarp*, iii (London, 1883), pp. 433 ff., 488 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. C. J. Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 305 ff., 374 ff.

<sup>7</sup> The anti-Marcionite origin and character of this and companion prologues was first established by D. de Bruyne, "Les plus anciens prologues latins des Évangiles", *Revue Bénédictine*, xl (1928), pp. 193 ff.; conveniently accessible in A. Huck-H. Lietzmann-F. L. Cross, *A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels* (Tübingen, 1936), p. viii.

original Greek of this prologue has disappeared : its text survives in a corrupt form in a Latin version which may be rendered thus :

The Gospel of John was published and given to the churches by John while he was still in the body, as a man of Hierapolis, Papias by name, John's dear disciple, has related in his five *exegetical* books.<sup>1</sup> He indeed copied the Gospel accurately at John's dictation. But the heretic Marcion was thrust out by John, after being repudiated by him for his contrary views. He had carried writings or letters to him from brethren who were in Pontus.

The reference to Marcion is corrupt : it was probably to Papias, but certainly not to John, that he came from Pontus, and Papias evidently disowned him as forthrightly as Polycarp did.<sup>2</sup> As for the statement that Papias was "John's dear disciple" and served him as amanuensis, this is chronologically possible and nothing that we know for certain rules it out of court. However, the author of the prologue was dependent on Papias for his information and it is possible, as Lightfoot suggested, that he misread Papias's "they copied" (meaning members of John's school) as "I copied".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lat. in *exotericis* (*id est in extremis*) *quinque libris*. It is assumed here that the Greek text ran *ἐν τοῖς πέντε ἐξηγητικοῖς βιβλίοις*, that *ἐξηγητικοῖς* was corrupted to *ἐξωτερικοῖς*, which was duly translated into Latin as *externis*, and that in the Latin transmission *externis* was further corrupted to *extremis* (cf. J. B. Lightfoot, *Essays on the Work Entitled "Supernatural Religion"* [London, 1889], p. 213).

<sup>2</sup> Polycarp, who had known him earlier in Asia Minor, recognized him in Rome in A.D. 154 as "the first-born of Satan" (Irenæus, *Haer.*, iii. 3.4).

<sup>3</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *Essays on the Work Entitled "Supernatural Religion"*, p. 214. The forms of the first person singular and the third person plural would be identical in the imperfect (*ἀπέγραφεον*) and very similar in the aorist (*ἀπέγραψα, ἀπέγραψαν*), especially if the final *ν* was represented at the end of a line by a stroke above the preceding vowel (*ΑΠΕΓΡΑΨΑ*). (Lightfoot knew the Latin text of the prologue, though not its anti-Marcionite provenance, from a Vatican manuscript of the ninth century.)

In the course of a discussion of this prologue in the correspondence columns of *The Times*, F. L. Cross wrote (13 February 1936): "My own reading of the prologue, if I may set it down dogmatically, is that in its original form it asserted that the fourth gospel was written by John the elder at the dictation of John the apostle when the latter had reached a very great age" (cf. A. Harnack, *Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, i [Leipzig, 1897], p. 677). With Dr. Cross's suggestion we may compare the imaginary title-page composed for the Gospel by Dorothy L. Sayers: "Memoirs of Jesus Christ. By John Bar-Zebedee; edited by the Rev. John Elder, Vicar of St. Faith's, Ephesus" (*Unpopular Opinions* [London, 1946], p. 26).

As for Papias's own words about John, they survive in one famous fragment quoted by Eusebius—a fragment to be dated half a century earlier than any of the testimonies quoted thus far.

Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in the Lycus valley in the first half of the second century, was contemporary with Polycarp. According to Irenæus, he was a companion of Polycarp and, like him, "a hearer of John"; but Eusebius, after quoting Irenæus to this effect, says that Papias himself makes no claim to have been a hearer and eyewitness of the sacred apostles but rather indicates that he knew of their teaching at second hand.<sup>2</sup>

Papias compiled in five volumes *An Exegesis of the Dominical Logia*,<sup>3</sup> long since lost, except in so far as quotations from it are preserved in such writers as Irenæus and Eusebius. It is probable, though not certain, that the *logia* of the title are oracles or sayings of Jesus. If the utterances of the ancient prophets could be regarded as divine oracles,<sup>4</sup> the sayings of the Lord of the prophets were *a fortiori* entitled to be so described. Papias evidently preferred to make his compilation on the basis of oral tradition rather than by consulting written records, for in the introduction to his work he gives this account of his procedure :

I will not hesitate to compile for you along with the interpretations all the things that I ever learned well from the elders and have kept well in mind, for I am convinced of their truth. Unlike most people, I did not find pleasure in those who have most to say but in those who teach the truth—in those who record, not other men's commandments, but the commandments given by the Lord to faith and proceeding from the truth itself. If ever any one came my way who had been in the company of the elders, I would enquire about the words of those elders. "What", I would ask, "did Andrew or Peter say, or Philip or Thomas or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples? And what do Aristion and John the elder, the Lord's disciples, say?" I did not think that what could be got from books helped me so much as what could be got from a living and abiding voice.<sup>5</sup>

This extract is preserved by Eusebius. If in places it is ambiguous, this may be due partly to our ignorance of its context (which has disappeared) and partly to a lack of precision in

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, *Haer.*, v. 33.4 (quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.1).

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.2.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.1.

<sup>4</sup> For this use of *λόγια* cf. Acts vii. 38; Romans iii. 2; Heb. v. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39. 3 f.

Papias's Greek style.<sup>1</sup> By "elders" (πρεσβύτεροι) Papias probably meant, as Irenaeus did later,<sup>2</sup> those early Christian leaders who had known the immediate followers of Jesus—leaders of the second Christian generation. This usage may owe something to the Old Testament statement that the Israelites, after their settlement in Canaan, "served Yahweh all the days of Joshua [the first post-settlement generation], and all the days of the elders [LXX πρεσβύτεροι] who outlived Joshua [the second generation]" (Joshua xxiv. 31; Judges ii. 7).

We must not be side-tracked by other interpretative problems in this passage but concentrate on the twofold reference to John. When Papias met one of the elders (or someone who had been in the company of the elders) who had known the disciples of the Lord he would ask what they heard from those disciples. One of the disciples in question was John, mentioned along with Andrew, Peter, Philip,<sup>3</sup> Thomas and Matthew, all of whom we know to have been members of the Twelve; but there is a further reference to John who is not only reckoned among the Lord's disciples but is designated "the elder". Are these two references to one and the same John, or are they references to two distinct Johns? We cannot be sure. If "elder" as applied to him has the sense which it appears to have elsewhere in the passage, then the second reference would be to a John of the post-apostolic generation. Whereas Papias asked concerning one John, "What did he say?" he asked concerning the other John, "What does he say?" And yet the second John, like the former, is called one of "the Lord's disciples". Was he the Nestor of the original disciples, surviving the others by a generation, and called "the elder" *par excellence* on that

<sup>1</sup> Here is one instance of ambiguity. From the words quoted Eusebius infers that, while Papias was not "a hearer and eyewitness of the holy apostles", he did actually hear Aristion and "the elder John" (*Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39. 2, 7). Eusebius knew the context of the words he quoted, but we, without that knowledge, might readily infer that Papias had only a hearsay acquaintance with what was said by Aristion and "the elder John".

<sup>2</sup> *Haer.*, v. 5.1, etc.

<sup>3</sup> It is a noteworthy coincidence that the sequence "Andrew, Peter, Philip" is that in which the first disciples of Jesus are named in John i. 40-44. In this company Papias presumably refers to Philip the apostle, of Bethsaida, not to Philip the evangelist, of Caesarea (even if the latter did end his days in Hierapolis).

account? We do not overlook Aristion, who is mentioned in the second reference along with John as one of "the Lord's disciples"; but nothing more can be said of him as he appears to figure only in Papias who, according to Eusebius's interpretation of his words, "actually heard Aristion and the elder John . . . and gives their traditions in his writings".<sup>1</sup>

The earlier reference implies no association with the province of Asia for John any more than for the other members of the Twelve whom it mentions; but such an association may be implied in the second reference: "What do Aristion and John the elder, the Lord's disciples, say?" The people whom Papias questioned were presumably some whom he met in his own province of Asia, and they would have more opportunity of knowing what Aristion and "John the elder" were currently saying if those two men were likewise accessible in the same province.

Eusebius understood Papias to refer to two distinct Johns, and in this he may well have been right. But he had a special interest in distinguishing two Johns, since he did not appreciate the chiliasm of the Apocalypse and thought it inappropriate that so unacceptable a doctrine should be cloaked with the authority of the fourth evangelist, whom he identified unquestioningly with John the apostle. And yet the Apocalypse explicitly claims to have been written by a man named John. Here in Papias, as Eusebius read him, was plain evidence of another, inferior, John, who might well be identified with the seer of Patmos, leaving the greater John untainted with chiliastic fantasy.

While the majority of recent and modern scholars, including some so conservative as S. P. Tregelles<sup>2</sup> and J. B. Lightfoot,<sup>3</sup> would agree with Eusebius in understanding Papias as referring

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.7. B. H. Streeter made several suggestions about Aristion's contribution to early tradition (cf. *The Four Gospels* [London, 1924], pp. 344 ff.), the most venturesome being his "scientific" guess (as he hoped it might be called) that he was the author of 1 Peter (*The Primitive Church*, pp. 130 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> S. P. Tregelles, *The Historic Evidence of the Authorship and Transmission of the Books of the New Testament* (London, 1881), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *Essays on the Work Entitled "Supernatural Religion"*, p. 144 ("I cannot myself doubt that Eusebius was right in his interpretation").

to two men called John, others have held that Papias made two references (albeit expressing himself clumsily) to one and the same John: among these may be mentioned F. W. Farrar,<sup>1</sup> George Salmon,<sup>2</sup> Theodor Zahn,<sup>3</sup> John Chapman<sup>4</sup> and C. J. Cadoux.<sup>5</sup> The question cannot be regarded as closed.

One further matter calls for attention before we leave Papias. One manuscript of the *Chronicle* of Georgios Hamartolos (who wrote about the year 840) states that Papias of Hierapolis, writing as an eyewitness, recorded in his second book that John was "killed by Jews", thus fulfilling, along with his brother, Christ's prediction concerning them"<sup>6</sup>—a reference to Jesus' assurance to the two sons of Zebedee in Mark x. 38 that they would drink his cup and share his baptism. How Papias could be an eyewitness of something that took place before A.D. 44 passes comprehension. But this peculiar reading of one manuscript of Georgios's work may have been interpolated from a statement in an epitome of the fifth-century *Chronicle* of Philip of Sidé: "Papias in his second book says that John the divine and James his brother were killed by Jews".<sup>7</sup>

When the passage from the epitome of Philip's *Chronicle* was first published in 1888, it was inferred by some scholars that Papias must indubitably have said something to this effect.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Farrar, *The Early Days of Christianity* (London, 1882), pp. 618 ff.

<sup>2</sup> G. Salmon, *Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament* (London, 1889), pp. 287 ff.

<sup>3</sup> T. Zahn, *Apostel und Apostelschüler in der Provinz Asien* (Leipzig, 1900), pp. 112 ff.; *Introduction to the New Testament*, E. T. (Edinburgh, 1909), ii, pp. 451 ff.

<sup>4</sup> J. Chapman, *John the Presbyter and the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford, 1911), pp. 8 ff. <sup>5</sup> C. J. Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 316 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Chronicle*, iii. 134.1. The manuscript is Codex Coislinianus 305, discovered in 1862.

<sup>7</sup> Published by C. de Boor from the Bodleian MS. Baroccianus 142 in "Neue Fragmente des Papias, Hegesippus und Pierius", *Texte und Untersuchungen*, v. 2 (1888), pp. 165 ff., especially p. 170. See J. A. Robinson, *Historical Character of St. John's Gospel* (London, 1908), p. 66; J. Chapman, *John the Presbyter and the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 77 ff., 95 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. E. Schwartz, "Über den Tod der Söhne Zebedaei", *Abhandlungen der kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, phil.-hist. Kl., vii. 5 (1907), pp. 266 ff.; "Noch einmal der Tod der Söhne Zebedaei", *ZNW*, xi (1910), pp. 89 ff.; J. Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (Edinburgh, 1918), pp. 603 ff.

But if he did, it is strange that Eusebius should have said nothing about it. If he had known of it, he might well have quoted it as conclusive evidence that Papias, as he put it, was a man of very small intelligence.<sup>1</sup> A critical examination of the statement attributed to Philip leads to the conclusion that it is a corruption of a passage which originally related the death of James the Just (not James the son of Zebedee), the brother of the Lord (not the brother of John).<sup>2</sup> The evidence on which the "critical myth" of John the apostle's early death rests is so flimsy that, as A. S. Peake sagely put it, it "would have provoked derision if it had been adduced in favour of a conservative conclusion"<sup>3</sup> (which implies, no doubt rightly, that some people known to Peake were attracted by it because of its marked deviation from the preponderant voice of tradition).

## VI

Fifty years before Eusebius wrote, a more closely reasoned case for distinguishing the authors of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse had been made by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria. Dionysius presented stylistic and other critical arguments against the tradition that the John who names himself in the Apocalypse as its author was identical with the Fourth Evangelist, whom he believed to be John the apostle. He regarded the author of the Apocalypse as a "holy and divinely-inspired man" but thought that he was "a certain other [John] among those that were in Asia", adding that according to report there were "two tombs at Ephesus, each of which was said to be John's".<sup>4</sup> He does not mention Papias's twofold reference to John; perhaps he did not know it or perhaps he did not consider it to be relevant. Eusebius, however, found in the report of two tombs of John at

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.13; for the possibility that Eusebius might be quoting a self-depreciatory remark by Papias himself see J. R. Harris, *Testimonies*, i (Cambridge, 1916), pp. 119 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. H. Bernard, *Studia Sacra* (London, 1917), pp. 260 ff., and *The Gospel according to St. John*, I.C.C. (Edinburgh, 1928), i, pp. xxxvii-xlv.

<sup>3</sup> A. S. Peake, *Holborn Review*, xix (1928), p. 394, quoted by W. F. Howard, *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation* (London, 1955), p. 232; cf. Peake, *Critical Introduction to the New Testament* (London, 1909), pp. 142 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 25.

Ephesus confirmation of the inference which he drew from Papias.

Of course the fact that two sites are pointed out as the tomb of a historical personage does not in itself imply that he or she must have been duplicated. We know that for a time in the third and fourth centuries two sites were venerated at Rome as the tomb of Peter and two as the tomb of Paul,<sup>1</sup> but no one has inferred from this that there were two Peters or two Pauls. The visitor to Jerusalem today may be shown two sites each claimed to be the place where Stephen the proto-martyr was stoned; but there was only one such Stephen. More importantly, he may be shown two rival sites for the crucifixion and burial of Jesus—one reflecting a tradition going back to the fourth (if not to the second) century, the other a tradition going back to the mid-nineteenth century—but no bizarre conclusions about dual identity have been drawn in this regard.

The two funerary traditions which Dionysius records appear to have survived at Ephesus into the present century. At least we are assured that at one time the former Greek inhabitants of Ayasoluk “used to worship, to decorate with wreaths and to light lamps before a simple arcosol-tomb cut into the rock, a little to the east of the ancient stadium [of Ephesus], as being the grave of St. John”.<sup>2</sup> Robert Eisler, whom I have just quoted, provides a photograph of the rock-tomb in question;<sup>3</sup> lest it be thought that he is a dubious authority I should add that he is not the only writer of modern times to attest this tradition.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Eisler thought there was a reference to this rock-tomb in one eleventh-century Greek manuscript of the *Acts of John*, which tells how, when John's friends came to remove his body

<sup>1</sup> See BULLETIN, I (1967-8), 273-7.

<sup>2</sup> R. Eisler, *The Enigma of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Plate X, opposite p. 126 (reproduction of photograph by K. Lampakis in the photographic archives of the National Museum, Athens, No. 5982).

<sup>4</sup> Eisler (*Enigma*, p. 127) expresses his indebtedness to Josef Keil, the excavator of Ephesus (see p. 340, n. 2 above), for drawing his attention to the photograph just mentioned and for expressing the view that the piety of local Christians attached itself to this rock-tomb in default of any other place to resort to. The tomb is marked GR (i.e. *Grab*, “tomb”) on A. Schindler and O. Benndorf's map of Ephesus (Abb. 2) in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie*, v, s.v. “Ephesos” (cols. 2773 ff.), immediately east of the stadium.

from the grave (*ὄρυγμα*) where it had been temporarily laid in order to deposit it “in the great church”, they could not find it.<sup>1</sup> The reference to “the great church” implies that Justinian's basilica was now in existence, so that this passage forms no part of the original *Acts of John* (historically worthless as these *Acts* are). It may reflect the same local tradition as that which Dionysius mentions centuries before, but we have no means of knowing—any more than we have means of knowing if the burial-place venerated more recently in the vicinity of the stadium attests the continuity of that tradition.

## VII

From the time of Dionysius of Alexandria, then, there have been students who, on stylistic or other grounds, have distinguished the John who wrote the Apocalypse from the Fourth Evangelist.<sup>2</sup> They have not all, like Dionysius himself and Eusebius, identified the Evangelist with John the son of Zebedee and the seer of Patmos with some other John. Justin Martyr, writing about the middle of the second century, identified the seer of Patmos with the apostle,<sup>3</sup> and some scholars of more recent time have found it more probable that the apostle was the author of the Apocalypse than that he composed the Fourth Gospel. One who was so little a traditionalist as C. J. Cadoux found the evidence leading “to the conclusion that the Apostle John did survive to a great age in Ephesus, and was himself the writer of the ‘Apocalypse’”.<sup>4</sup> He was, on the other

<sup>1</sup> Eisler, *Enigma*, pp. 125 f. The manuscript (Paris gr. 1468) is listed as Q in E. Hennecke-W. Schneemelcher-R. McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, ii (London, 1965), pp. 195 ff.

<sup>2</sup> In earlier days they were in the minority. Towards the end of the second century the anti-Marcionite prologue to Luke ends with the words: “And later John the apostle, one of the twelve, wrote the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos and after that the Gospel”. C. H. Dodd dismisses the idea that the same person could have been responsible for both works with the Horatian tag: *credat Iudaeus Apella, non ego!* (*The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge, 1953], p. 215, n. 3).

<sup>3</sup> *Dialogue with Trypho*, 81.4. Justin seems to have known the Fourth Gospel, but gives no hint of its authorship.

<sup>4</sup> *Ancient Smyrna*, p. 317.

hand, far from admitting the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

But it was generally accepted that the three Epistles of John (and especially the first) came from the same author as the Fourth Gospel. When in 1911 Dom John Chapman wrote that "no sane critic will deny that the Gospel and the first Epistle are from the same pen",<sup>1</sup> he would have commanded the assent of the great majority of British scholars. Presumably he excluded from the category of "sane scholar" some writers (mainly German) who had discerned diverse authors for the two documents. But in 1936 one whom none would refuse to call a sane scholar, C. H. Dodd, delivered a lecture in this place on "The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel", and argued on linguistic and theological grounds that the author of the epistle was not the Evangelist himself but one of his disciples.<sup>2</sup> He amplified his argument in his Moffatt Commentary on the Epistles of John, which was published in 1946.<sup>3</sup> In the following year another eminent Johannine scholar of the same generation, W. F. Howard, subjected Dodd's argument to a careful examination and concluded that "there is so much that is common to Gospel and Epistle, both in language and in thought, that presumptive evidence favours the substantial unity of authorship".<sup>4</sup>

It is not the purpose of this lecture to investigate the literary

<sup>1</sup> *John the Presbyter and the Fourth Gospel*, p. 72. A list of earlier writers who had denied identity of authorship for the two documents will be found in Moffatt, *Introduction*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 589 f.

<sup>2</sup> "The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel", *BULLETIN*, xxi (1937), 129 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *The Johannine Epistles* (London, 1946), pp. xlvii ff.

<sup>4</sup> "The Common Authorship of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles", *JTS*, xlviii (1947), 12 ff., reprinted in *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*<sup>4</sup>, pp. 282 ff. Dr. Howard thought that the Epistles were written by the evangelist towards the end of his life, while the Fourth Gospel "represents his meditations and teaching over a number of years and was published after his death" (*Christianity according to St. John* [London, 1943], p. 18, n. 2). Cf. T. W. Manson's argument that, if we are to "examine the Johannine theology [i.e. the theology of the Fourth Evangelist] in its relatively pure state", then "the proper method is to begin with the [first] Epistle and there find what are the leading theological ideas of the author" (*On Paul and John* [London, 1963], pp. 87 f.).

relationships of the Johannine documents of the New Testament. But these documents themselves point to the existence of what may be called a "Johannine circle". We may think of the anonymous authors of the note at the end of the Fourth Gospel who ascribe its authorship to the beloved disciple and add "we know that his witness is true" (John xxi. 24). We may think of the recipients of 1 John, whom the writer calls his "little children", of the elect ladies and their children mentioned in 2 John, and of Gaius, Demetrius and other friends who receive honourable mention in 3 John. The author of 2 and 3 John calls himself "the elder"—the designation by which he was presumably known to those friends of his. The author of 1 John gives himself no designation at all, but since he calls his readers his "little children" they too may well have called him "the elder", meaning simply (and affectionately) "the old man". The coincidence between this designation in the Johannine letters and Papias's mention of "the elder John" may be a mere coincidence, but it may be more.

Quite recently Professor Oscar Cullmann has devoted a monograph to "the origin, character and setting of the 'Johannine circle', which stands behind the [Fourth] Gospel and continues its theological concern. The existence of this circle can hardly be challenged", he adds.<sup>1</sup>

The Johannine circle had its leaders, among whom we may discern the authors of the Johannine documents. One attractive conjecture regarding their identity is put forward tentatively by

<sup>1</sup> O. Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, E.T. (London, 1976), p. ix. W. F. Howard (*Christianity according to St. John*, p. 15) quotes with approval a "significant remark" of J. Weiss to the effect that all five Johannine writings "came from the same circle, in the same region of the Church, about the same time" (*Die Offenbarung des Johannes* [Göttingen, 1904], pp. 162 ff.). J. B. Lightfoot had earlier spoken of "the school of St. John" (i.e. the apostle) in proconsular Asia, which in the first generation included John the elder, in the second Papias and Polycarp, in the third Melito of Sardis and Apollinaris of Hierapolis, and in the fourth Polycrates of Ephesus; he discerned this ongoing "school" in the repeated references by Irenaeus (*Haer.*, ii. 22.5; iii. 3.4, etc.) to "the elders who in Asia associated with John the disciple of the Lord", "the church in Ephesus . . . the true witness of the apostolic tradition" and so forth (*Essays on the Work Entitled "Supernatural Religion"*, pp. 217 ff.; cf. his *Biblical Essays* [London, 1893], pp. 51 ff.).

C. K. Barrett: "that the evangelist, the author of the epistles, and the final editor of Revelation were all pupils of the original apocalypticist. They developed his work on similar lines, but it was the evangelist who saw most clearly how eschatological Christian theology could be re-expressed in the language of Hellenistic thought, and indeed saw this so clearly as to be far ahead of his time."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Barrett recognizes a relationship between the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel; indeed, in spite of their obvious differences, the two documents share an impressive number of common features and certainly come from the same circle. If the apocalypticist was John the son of Zebedee (which is not at all improbable), he could be regarded as the founder of the circle, which would then be most fittingly called the Johannine circle. If Papias's "John the elder" is a distinct person from the son of Zebedee, then he may be regarded as a distinguished member of the circle, and possibly as the one who succeeded to its leadership when the apostle died.<sup>2</sup>

In an article published in the BULLETIN in 1930,<sup>3</sup> Dr. Alphonse Mingana mentioned that some Peshitta manuscripts contain a treatise ascribed to Eusebius, which gives a short account of each of the twelve apostles and seventy disciples (though Eusebius says that "no list of the Seventy is anywhere extant").<sup>4</sup> The section on John, translated from Mingana's Syriac quotation, is as follows:

John the Evangelist was also from Bethsaida. He was of the tribe of Zebulun. He preached in Asia at first, and afterwards was banished by Tiberius Caesar to the isle of Patmos. Then he went to Ephesus and built up the church in it.

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel according to St. John* (London, 1960), p. 52; cf. pp. 113 f. Forty years earlier R. H. Charles had expressed the view that "the Evangelist was apparently at one time a disciple of the Seer, or they were members of the same religious circle in Ephesus" (*The Revelation of St. John*, I.C.C. [Edinburgh, 1920], i, p. xxxiii).

<sup>2</sup> In the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions* a list of bishops allegedly appointed in various churches by apostles includes "in Ephesus, . . . John appointed by me, John" (vii. 46). The historical value of the list is *nil*, except that the names are not inventions (but the second John probably represents an inference from Eusebius).

<sup>3</sup> "The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel", BULLETIN, xiv (1930), pp. 333 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 12.1.

Three of his disciples went thither with him, and there he died and was buried. [These three were] Ignatius, who was afterwards bishop in Antioch and was thrown to the beasts at Rome; Polycarp, who was afterwards bishop in Smyrna and was crowned [as a martyr] in the fire; John, to whom he committed the priesthood and the episcopal see after him. He then [the Evangelist], having lived a long time, died and was buried in Ephesus, in which he had been bishop. He was buried by his disciple John, who was bishop in Ephesus [after him]; and their two graves are in Ephesus—one concealed, namely the Evangelist's; the other being that of John his disciple, who wrote the Revelations, for he said that he heard all that he wrote from the mouth of the Evangelist.

Though not the work of Eusebius, this section is certainly based on him and on his report of Dionysius of Alexandria's views of the Apocalypse. But, unlike Dionysius and Eusebius, it does not make the second John the author of the Apocalypse, but simply the amanuensis of the apostle, who was the real author—unless indeed, as some think, the plural "Revelations" (Syr. *gelyane*) refers not to the Apocalypse but to the Gospel, in which case an early precedent would be provided for those writers of our day who, believing in a second John at Ephesus, regard him as the apostle's amanuensis (or more than amanuensis) in the writing of the Gospel. (As for the statement that John was banished to Patmos by *Tiberius*, that may be set down as a sheer blunder.)

This Syriac treatise hardly provides *independent* evidence for the Ephesian residence and episcopate of a second John. But Mingana gave further interesting information. Peshitta manuscripts regularly have this colophon after the Fourth Gospel: "Here ends the Gospel of John who spoke in Greek at Ephesus." But one manuscript (Mingana Syriac 540) has the unique colophon: "Here ends the writing of the holy Gospel—the preaching of John who spoke in Greek in *Bithynia*"; and also the unique prefatory note: "The holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—the preaching of John the younger" (*Yuhanan na'arā*). The manuscript is dated 1749, but was copied from one dated by Mingana a thousand years earlier. Mingana very cautiously suggested the inference that this "younger John" was the disciple of the apostle mentioned in the treatise just referred to; but if so, the apostle must have been the *elder* John. Another

possibility is that he who is here called "the younger" is the same as Papias's "elder". But as we do not know on what authority the unique colophon and prefatory note rest, we can regard them only as interesting curiosities.<sup>1</sup>

The identity of John the apocalypticist with the son of Zebedee, I said, is not at all improbable. But this would not be universally conceded. For one thing, the apocalypticist claims to be a prophet, not an apostle<sup>2</sup>; for another, if Tertullian is using accurate legal terminology when he describes John as *in insulam relegatus*,<sup>3</sup> then, it is argued, John must have belonged to the *honestiores*, the more reputable classes of society, whether Roman or Jewish.<sup>4</sup> (There is a widespread, but unfounded, tradition to the effect that he was sentenced to penal servitude in the mines or quarries of Patmos, but there is no evidence that there were such installations on Patmos or that criminals were sent there for hard labour.)<sup>5</sup> J. N. Sanders, who inferred from Tertullian's reference that John of Patmos belonged to the upper classes of Jewish society, argued further that if John's *relegatio* was imposed for his Christian activity—"for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus", as he says himself (Rev. i. 9)—it must have been before such activity became a capital offence, that is, before A.D. 64/65; and that he may have been the "other disciple" of John xviii. 15 f. who was "known", and possibly related, to the

<sup>1</sup> The reference to Bithynia in the colophon may simply be a mistake arising out of ignorance. W. F. Howard summed up Mingana's discovery with wise caution: "Interesting as this is, we can hardly treat it as other than a bit of irresponsible guesswork by some scribe of a late date in the history of the transcription of the Gospel" ("St. John: The Story of the Book", in *The Story of the Bible* [Amalgamated Press, 1938], p. 1233). It belongs to the same category as the notes on author, amanuensis, place of writing, etc. appended to various New Testament epistles, which AV has taken over from the *Textus Receptus*.

<sup>2</sup> "He never makes any claim to apostleship: . . . he distinctly claims to be a prophet" (R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John*, I.C.C., i, p. xliii).

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 36.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. N. Sanders, "St. John on Patmos", *NTS*, ix (1962-3), 76.

<sup>5</sup> G. B. Caird (*The Revelation of St. John the Divine* [London, 1966], p. 21 with n. 2) shows how this idea, first put out as a conjecture, has been taken over by one writer from another "as though it were a well attested fact"; he adds that Pliny the elder, who is repeatedly invoked as an authority for this alleged fact, says nothing more about Patmos than that it is thirty miles round (*Nat. Hist.*, iv. 69). It first appears in Victorinus of Pettau (on Rev x. 11).

high priest.<sup>1</sup> Sanders went farther along the road of speculation than this, but unless speculation is held on a tight rein it very quickly loses all credibility; so we may leave it at that.

An apostle, let it be said, is not debarred from exercising the gift of prophecy by the fact of his being an apostle, and since the Apocalypse is expressly presented as a prophecy the author would naturally introduce himself as a prophet rather than as an apostle. And, even if Tertullian meant *relegatio* in its precise legal sense, we do not know if he had any firm evidence that this was in fact the nature of John's banishment to Patmos.

Whoever the seer of Patmos was, he was deemed to be a suitable go-between to convey the apocalyptic message to the churches of Ephesus and other Asian cities, and the contents of the seven letters addressed to those churches indicate that he was fairly well acquainted with their circumstances.

The Ephesian contacts of the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine epistles are not so explicit. Some scholars in more recent times have tried to link these documents rather with Syrian Antioch,<sup>2</sup> or even with Egyptian Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> Their internal evidence has little to say in this regard. The main argument for a link with Syrian Antioch is based on the affinities with Johannine thought discerned in the letters of Ignatius, who was bishop of the church in that city. Professor Cullmann mentions also the links between the Fourth Gospel and the *Odes of Solomon*, which he believes "come from this area". Syria, then, is one of two areas to which he assigns "a great degree of probability" as the place of origin of the Fourth Gospel and the related documents, adding (remarkably enough) Transjordan as "the other possibility which can be supported with strong (perhaps even stronger) arguments".<sup>4</sup> (This inclination

<sup>1</sup> *NTS*, ix (1962-3), 75 ff.: "John of Ephesus, the seer and exile of Patmos, was a Sadducean aristocrat, a Jerusalem disciple of Jesus, the last survivor of the eye-witnesses of the incarnate Logos, but not the son of Zebedee" (p. 85).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. C. F. Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford, 1922), pp. 129 ff., 171.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. N. Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge, 1943), pp. 85 ff. (Sanders later changed his mind and accepted Ephesus as the place where the Gospel was written; see J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin, *The Gospel according to St. John* [London, 1968], p. 51.)

<sup>4</sup> O. Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, pp. 98 f.

towards Transjordan is bound up with his long-standing interest in the Pseudo-Clementines and the origins of Jewish Christianity.)<sup>1</sup> The Ephesian provenance he finds "much less well founded", although he agrees that even apart from the voice of tradition there are points which tell in its favour. He notes among these "the presence in Asia Minor of the heresies attacked in the Gospel of John, and in particular of a group of disciples of John [the Baptist]"<sup>2</sup>

Neither in Syria nor anywhere else, however, do we find the weight of tradition and external testimony that links the Johannine literature and its author or authors with Ephesus. In the absence of any tradition or substantial evidence to the contrary, the Ephesian link holds the field.

The traditional figure of St. John the divine, the "holy theologian" whose name is commemorated by the hill and basilica of Ayasuluk, may be a composite figure, in whom John the apostle and John the elder have been fused. But they would not have been fused so long as people remained alive who remembered them both. The idea that any one who remembered them both would have confounded the one with the other is improbable in the extreme. "No phenomenon", said I. T. Beckwith, "is better attested than trustworthy recollections of the identity of persons seen and heard half a century before"<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, he adds, nowhere undertakes to *prove* that John the apostle lived in Asia: he refers to his residence incidentally, as something which was common knowledge. Those who knew John the apostle and John the elder would have no difficulty in distinguishing them, especially if (as is probable) the elder

<sup>1</sup> Cf. O. Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-clémentin* (Paris, 1930); "Die neuentdeckten Qumran-Texte und das Judentum der Pseudoklementinen" in *Neutestamentliche Studien für R. Bullmann*, ed. W. Eltester (*BZNW*, 21, 1954, pp. 35 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> *The Johannine Circle*, p. 99. If the "group of disciples of John" is identified with the twelve disciples of Acts xix. 1-7, the identification is precarious; see F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1952), p. 353; A. A. T. Ehrhardt, *The Framework of the New Testament Stories* (Manchester, 1964), pp. 159 ff.; *The Acts of the Apostles* (Manchester, 1969), pp. 101 f.

<sup>3</sup> I. T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (London, 1919), p. 376. Beckwith's discussion of "The Two Johns of the Asian Church" (pp. 362-93) is a model of sober and lucid inquiry.

survived the apostle. Which of the two (if either) was the author of this or that part of the Johannine literature is another question, which is not the subject proposed in the present lecture.

To conclude: the basilica of St. John commemorates a Christian tradition going back, as surely as do the Roman basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, to the mid-second century, and probably earlier still. Even in its ruined state it bears silent witness to those "great luminaries" who fell asleep in pro-consular Asia, among whom "John the disciple of the Lord" (with his school or circle) occupies a pre-eminent place.