

studies.<sup>103</sup> In the last twenty years, it has also burst onto the scene of New Testament studies. Kirk and Thatcher's co-edited *Semeia* volume gave a proper introduction of the theory to English-speaking scholarship in 2005,<sup>104</sup> but had antecedents. Keightley's 1987 article on 1 Thessalonians appears to be the first full appearance of social memory theory in New Testament scholarship,<sup>105</sup> although Wilken cited social memory founder Halbwachs (see below) in 1971.<sup>106</sup> Schröter was applying the insights of cultural memory to the sayings tradition in a German monograph in 1997, whose main methodological insights appeared just previously in an English article in 1996.<sup>107</sup> Aguilar employed social memory in a study in 2000 (and 2005); Kirk did in 2001; and Esler did in 2003.<sup>108</sup> Since these

103. According to Barbie Zelizer, "Reading the Past against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Media* 12 (1995): 216, "The study of collective memory has virtually erased interdisciplinary boundaries." In addition to those studies cited below and inter alia, see Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997); James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (NPP; Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, eds., *Oral History and Public Memories* (CPP; Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008); Frigga Haug, ed., *Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory* (trans. Erica Carter; London: Verso, 1987); Jeffrey K. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman: The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943–1949* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Bruce James Smith, *Politics and Remembrance: Republican Themes in Machiavelli, Burke, and Tocqueville* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (New York: Schocken, 1989); Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Cf. also Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

104. Kirk and Thatcher, eds., *Memory*.

105. Georgia Masters Keightley, "The Church's Memory of Jesus: A Social Science Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," *BTB* 17 (1987): 149–56. Cf. Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 13 n. 48. Dennis C. Duling, "Social Memory and Biblical Studies: Theory, Method, and Application," *BTB* 36, no. 1 (2006): 2, fails to mention Keightley.

106. Robert Wilken, *The Myth of Christian Beginnings* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), 207 n. 7.

107. Jens Schröter, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas* (WMANT 76; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen Verlag, 1997); Jens Schröter, "The Historical Jesus and the Sayings Tradition: Comments on Current Research," *Neot* 30, no. 1 (1996): 151–68, respectively. See further the essays in Schröter, *Von Jesus*.

108. Mario I. Aguilar, "Rethinking the Judean Past: Questions of History and a Social Archaeology of Memory in the First Book of the Maccabees," *BTB* 30 (2000):

### 3. The Jesus-Memory Approach

Social memory theory (also known as cultural or collective memory theory)<sup>102</sup> has emerged from the social sciences and marked out its own territory prominently, giving rise to a plethora of interdisciplinary

99. *Ibid.*, 4.

100. *Ibid.*, 505.

101. *Ibid.*, 8.

102. "Social memory" or "collective memory" often refers to the work of Maurice Halbwachs while "cultural memory" refers to the work of Jan and Aleida Assmann (see Alan Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, eds., *Memory*, 2–6). J. Assmann distinguishes their work from Halbwachs in Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory* (trans. Rodney Livingstone; CMP; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 8–9, with the essential factor being the Assmanns' focus on the transmission of group memories beyond interpersonal interaction or a single generation that writing enables (20–21). The emphasis on the social construction of memory is mutual, however, and thus I will use the terms interchangeably, though generally refer to "social memory."

studies, a host of articles, chapters, essay collections, journal volumes, and books have stressed the significance of social memory for issues in New Testament studies.<sup>109</sup> One may also cite in this context Dunn's tome

58–67; Mario I. Aguilar, "The Archaeology of Memory and the Issue of Colonialism: Mimesis and the Controversial Tribute to Caesar in Mark 12:13–17," *BTB* 35 (2005): 60–66; Alan Kirk, "The Johannine Jesus in the Gospel of Peter: A Social Memory Approach," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 313–21; Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 174–75, respectively.

109. Inter alia, see Allison, *Constructing*, 1–30 (esp. 5 n. 30); Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study* (STI; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 176–77; Byrskog, "Early Church as Narrative Fellowship," 211; Samuel Byrskog, "A New Quest for the *Sitz im Leben*: Social Memory, the Jesus Tradition and the Gospel of Matthew," *NTS* 52 (2006): 319–36; Duling, "Social Memory," 2–3; Philip F. Esler, "Paul's Contestation of Israel's (Ethnic) Memory of Abraham in Galatians 3," *BTB* 36, no. 1 (2006): 23–34; Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, and Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 14–16, 109–68; Horsley, Draper, and Foley, eds., *Performing the Gospel*; Chris Keith, "The Claim of John 7.15 and the Memory of Jesus' Literacy," *NTS* 56, no. 1 (2010): 55–63; Chris Keith, "A Performance of the Text: The Adulteress's Entrance into John's Gospel," in *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture* (ed. Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher; ESCO/LNTS 426; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 49–69; Werner H. Kelber, "The Generative Force of Memory: Early Christian Traditions as Processes of Remembering," *BTB* 36, no. 1 (2006): 15–22; Kelber and Byrskog, eds., *Jesus in Memory*; Jens Schröter, "Geschichte im Licht von Tod und Auferweckung Jesu Christi: Anmerkungen zum Diskurs über Erinnerung und Geschichte aus frühchristlicher Perspektive," in *Von Jesus*, 55–77; repr. from *BTZ* 23 (2006): 3–25; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Stephen C. Barton, and Benjamin G. Wold, eds., *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity* (WUNT 212; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Tom Thatcher, "Cain and Abel in Early Christian Memory: A Case Study in 'The Use of the Old Testament in the New,'" *CBQ* 72 (2010): 732–51; Tom Thatcher, *Greater than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 36–41, 88–92; Thatcher, *Jesus*; Tom Thatcher, *Why John Wrote a Gospel: Jesus—Memory—History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006); Catrin H. Williams, "Abraham as a Figure of Memory in John 8.31–59," in Le Donne and Thatcher, eds., *Fourth Gospel*, 205–22; Ritva H. Williams, "Social Memory and the DIDACHE," *BTB* 36, no. 1 (2006): 35–45; Ruben Zimmermann, "Memory and Form Criticism: The Typicality of Memory as a Bridge between Orality and Literality in the Early Christian Remembering Process," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres* (ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote; WUNT 1/260; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 130–43. My own initial work in social memory theory was Chris Keith, "The Saliency of a Psalm: The Markan Crucifixion as Social Memory" (M.A. thesis, Cincinnati Christian University, 2005), supervised by Tom Thatcher. Some of its main conclusions were

*Jesus Remembered* (2003). Although not an application of social memory theory (he bases his arguments primarily upon oral hermeneutics),<sup>110</sup> he nevertheless foregrounds the role of memory and arrives at similar conclusions to many of these studies, and in later work has engaged social memory theory.<sup>111</sup> Dunn's final Ph.D. student at the University of Durham, Le Donne, wrote one of two published doctoral theses based on social memory theory, the other being that of Rodríguez.<sup>112</sup> Clearly, Davies is not alone in claiming, "Cultural memory provides a better conceptual tool than history, myth, or tradition for classifying the biblical narratives about the past because it better reflects the ways in which the past was understood and utilized by ancient societies."<sup>113</sup>

As with form criticism and the criteria of authenticity, excellent introductions to social memory theory are readily accessible and so it is not necessary to give a full description of the method here.<sup>114</sup> Rather,

later published as Chris Keith, "The Role of the Cross in the Composition of the Markan Crucifixion Narrative," *SCJ* 9, no. 1 (2006): 61–75; cf. Chris Keith and Tom Thatcher, "The Scar of the Cross: The Violence Ratio and the Earliest Christian Memories of Jesus," in Thatcher, ed., *Jesus*, 197–214. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy, "The Quest for the Historical Jesus: An Introduction," in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (ed. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), 44, refer to "social/collective memory studies" alongside orality studies as "one of the most fertile areas of Jesus/Gospels research currently under investigation."

110. For a similar emphasis on memory from the perspective of oral hermeneutics, see Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, *Jesus' Death in Early Christian Memory: The Poetics of the Passion* (NTOA/SUNT 53; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 14–26.

111. Dunn, "On History," 481–82; Dunn, "Social Memory and the Oral Jesus Tradition," in Stuckenbruck, Barton, and Wold, eds., *Memory in the Bible*, 179–94.

112. Le Donne, *Historiographical*; Rafael Rodríguez, *Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance and Text* (ESCO/LNTS 407; London: T&T Clark, 2009).

113. Philip R. Davies, *Memories of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Biblical History—Ancient and Modern* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 122. Cf. also Jens Schröter, "Konstruktion von Geschichte und die Anfänge des Christentums: Reflexionen zur christlichen Geschichtsdeutung aus neutestamentlicher Perspektive," in *Von Jesus*, 40 n. 17; repr. from *Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit: Beiträge aus geschichtstheoretischer, philosophischer und theologischer Perspektive* (ed. Jens Schröter with Antje Edelbüttel; TBT 127; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 202–19: "Assmann hat in diesem Sinn die fundierende Funktion von Geschichte als Erinnerung und Gedächtnis herausgearbeitet.... Für das Christentum, namentlich die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas, ließe sich dies in analoger Weise fruchtbar machen."

114. For general introductions, see Assmann, *Religion*, 1–30; Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (ThS; Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003);

what follows will highlight social memory theory's central insights as they relate to the question of historicity. Whereas some scholars view criteria of authenticity as "the wrong tool,"<sup>115</sup> this perspective insists that the Gospels are not the type of ground that can be dug. Therefore, not only do these insights render the criteria approach untenable (buttressing some of the aforementioned dissatisfactions), they require a definition for the Jesus historian's task that differs substantially from the criteria approach.

### 3.1. Social Memory Theory—The Present and the Past in Commemorative Activity

While Dibelius and Bultmann were in Germany emphasizing the role of the Christian *Sitz im Leben* in transmitting the past of Jesus, sociologist Maurice Halbwachs was in France emphasizing the role of the present in all remembrance of the past. Beginning with Halbwachs, the foundational argument of social memory theory is that memory is not a simple act of recall, but rather a complex process whereby the past is reconstructed in light of the needs of the present.<sup>116</sup> In contrast to psychological views of memory as a store-and-retrieve function, he asserts, "No memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections."<sup>117</sup> Halbwachs posits that all

Jeffrey K. Olick, "Products, Processes, and Practices: A Non-Reificatory Approach to Collective Memory," *BTB* 36, no. 1 (2006): 5–14; Zelizer, "Reading the Past," 214–39. Related to Biblical Studies, still the best introduction is Kirk, "Social," 1–24. See also Le Donne, *Historiographical*, 41–64. With reference to the Jesus tradition in particular, see Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, "Jesus Tradition as Social Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, eds., *Memory*, 25–42; Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, 109–45.

115. Hooker, "On Using," in reference to the criterion of dissimilarity.

116. Lewis A. Coser, "Introduction," in *On Collective Memory*, by Maurice Halbwachs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 34: "Halbwachs was without doubt the first sociologist who stressed that our conceptions of the past are affected by the mental images we employ to solve present problems, so that collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present." On Halbwachs's indebtedness to Henri Bergson and Emile Durkheim, see Coser, "Introduction," 7–13; Mary Douglas, "Introduction," in *The Collective Memory*, by Maurice Halbwachs (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980), 1–19; Olick, "Products," 10–11; cf. also Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, "Introduction: Building Partnerships between Oral History and Memory Studies," in Hamilton and Shopes, eds., *Oral History*, x.

117. Maurice Halbwachs, "The Social Frameworks of Memory," in *On Collective Memory*, 43.

memory is indeed social because the vehicles that enable memory—language and the categories that inform thought—are socially formed: "Individual memory could not function without words and ideas, instruments the individual has not himself invented but appropriated from his milieu."<sup>118</sup> At the rudimentary level, the accuracy of Halbwachs's observations can be demonstrated by recognizing that when one remembers statements or phrases, one does so in languages with which one has some familiarity through cultural experiences; that is, the linguistic shape of one's memories reveals an inherent debt to social structures. Although there are certainly individuals, "It is individuals as group members who remember."<sup>119</sup> In this way, memory is a thoroughly social phenomenon rather than an individual one.

Stemming from Halbwachs's initial insights, therefore, social memory theory is essentially concerned with communal commemoration of the past, whether that be through ritual (festivals, worship, holidays, dances, etc.), oral tradition (storytelling, songs, etc.), texts (genealogies, written narratives, textbooks, etc.), monuments (statues, buildings, sacred space, etc.), or other means. From this perspective, "tradition" refers to any of these cultural objects that navigate the relationship between the past and the present,<sup>120</sup> and thus the Assmanns describe "tradition" as *kulturelle Texte*.<sup>121</sup>

Since he was arguing against the idea that memory functioned like a file folder into which one placed past experiences, only to recall them in their original condition when needed, Halbwachs stressed that memory was not primarily a past-oriented activity. Rather, it was the present that

118. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 51. Similarly, Halbwachs, "Social Frameworks," 168: "There are no perceptions that can be called purely exterior, since when a member of the group perceives an object, he gives it a name and arranges it into a specific category. In other words, he conforms to the group's conventions which supply his thought as they supply the thought of others." See also Kirk, "Social," 2; Olick, "Products," 11.

119. Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, 48.

120. Similarly, Kirk and Thatcher, "Jesus Tradition," 33.

121. Aleida Assmann, "Was sind kulturelle Texte?" in *Literaturkanon—Medienereignis—Kultureller Text: Formen interkultureller Kommunikation und Übersetzung* (ed. Andreas Poltermann; GBIU 10; Berlin: Eric Schmidt, 1995), 232–44; Jan Assmann, "Cultural Texts Suspended between Writing and Speech," in *Religion*, 101–21; repr. and trans. from "Kulturelle Texte im Spannungsfeld von Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit," in Poltermann, ed., *Literaturkanon*, 270–92. Also, J. Assmann, *Religion*, ix: "Being that can be remembered is text." Likewise, Alan Kirk, "Memory," in Kelber and Byrskog, eds., *Jesus in Memory*, 170: "Tradition is the artifact of memory."

governed memory: "It is one framework that counts—that which is constituted by the commandments of our present society and which necessarily excludes all the others."<sup>122</sup> By focusing upon the *social* formation of memory in the present, whether that means autobiographical memory that is socially formed or cultural memory that is autobiographically appropriated,<sup>123</sup> the primary task of social memory theory is to conceptualize and explain the various manners in which cultures (and individuals as culture-members) appropriate the past in light of, in terms of, and on behalf of the present.

Although Halbwachs emphasizes the role of the present in the present/past interplay, he does not altogether deny the existence of the past. In a footnote, he states:

Clearly, I do not in any way dispute that our impressions perdure for some time, in some cases for a long time, after they have been produced. But this 'resonance' of impressions is not to be confused at all with the preservation of memories. This resonance varies from individual to individual, just as it undoubtedly does from type to type, completely aside from social influence. It relates to psycho-physiology, which has its domain, just as social psychology has its own.<sup>124</sup>

This "*resonance*" *des impressions* ("resonance" of impressions"), a product of what Halbwachs elsewhere calls the *passé réel* ("actual past"),<sup>125</sup> is thus acknowledged, but located outside the domain of memory proper. It is "not to be confused at all with the preservation of memories" and

122. Halbwachs, "Social Frameworks," 50.

123. See Halbwachs's distinction between autobiographical/individual memory and historical/social memory in *Collective Memory*, 50–55. "Historical memory" is the major focus of much of the Assmann's work, though they term it "cultural memory" in contrast to the "communicative memory" of individuals (see J. Assmann, "Introduction," 3, 24–30). The relationship between individual and collective memory is one of the most debated issues in the discipline. See, for example, Ricoeur, *Memory*, 120–24, who insists that individuals' ability to place themselves in different remembering communities, and thus different social memories, preserves the distinction of the individual that Halbwachs argues against.

124. Halbwachs, "Social Frameworks," 40 n. 3. For the French, see Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (ES; New York: Arno, 1975), viii n. 1.

125. Discussing the appropriation of Christian history by both dogmatics and mystics in the Catholic Church, Halbwachs, "Social Frameworks," 108, says, "But nothing proves that [the mystics'] points of view more accurately approached the actual past [*passé réel*] than did the traditions of the Church." For the French, see Halbwachs, *Les cadres*, 209. Further on the Gospels and Christian history, see Maurice Halbwachs, "The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land," in *On Collective Memory*, 191–235.

"completely aside from social influence," which, for Halbwachs, is the governing force of memory. The actual past simply has little, perhaps nothing, to do with memory, as Halbwachs even places it outside his academic discipline.

3.1.1. *The Present in the Past (The Presentist Perspective)*. With regard to the respective roles of the present and the past in commemoration, two different trajectories have emerged from Halbwachs's initial insights: the presentist perspective; and the continuity perspective. The presentist perspective, also known as revisionism or constructionism, follows Halbwachs's prioritization of the present in acts of remembrance and is thus highly skeptical about the ability of memory to present historical events in a trustworthy manner. Thus, Bodnar claims regarding public memory: "The *major focus* of this communicative and cognitive process is not the past...but serious matters in the present such as the nature of power and the question of loyalty to both official and vernacular cultures."<sup>126</sup> In fact, the present is so powerful that public memory is not a product of past events; rather "public memory remains a product of elite manipulation, symbolic interaction, and contested discourse."<sup>127</sup> Similarly, according to Gillis, "We are constantly revising our memories to suit our current identities."<sup>128</sup> Not only is the present determinative for "memory work," it is so determinative that the past can be rewritten "constantly" and the socio-cultural matrix of the present is solely responsible for "what is remembered (or forgotten), by whom, and for what end."<sup>129</sup>

3.1.2. *The Past in the Present (The Continuity Perspective)*. Scholars who advocate "the continuity perspective" heavily, and rightly, criticize the presentist perspective.<sup>130</sup> For, "When pushed to the extreme...presentism undermines all historical continuity."<sup>131</sup> Those who express the

126. John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 15 (emphasis added).

127. *Ibid.*, 20.

128. John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (ed. John R. Gillis; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

129. *Ibid.*, 3.

130. Cf. Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 22, on the two models of collective memory. This study employs the term "continuity perspective" in reference to the mediating position of Schwartz (discussed below).

131. Zelizer, "Reading the Past," 227.

continuity perspective therefore agree with Halbwachs that memory is always formed in, and thus ultimately conditioned by, the present. They disagree, however, with presentism's near complete dismissal of the past from the present's shaping of memory. To the contrary, according to the continuity perspective, it is memory's inherently *social* nature that enables it to preserve the past to an extent by transcending individual existence.<sup>132</sup> Thus, for these scholars, memory is a much more complex social process of mutual influence. The present does not simply run roughshod over the past; the present acts on the past while the past simultaneously acts on the present.

Foremost among social memory theorists who argue for the presence of the past are Schwartz and Schudson. Both argue that the past is malleable in light of the construction of present identity, but only to an extent, and this is precisely why the past is such a contested battleground. Criticizing presentists, Schwartz claims, "To focus solely on memory's contested side is to deny the past's significance as a model for coming to terms with the present."<sup>133</sup> Following Shils,<sup>134</sup> Schwartz insists rather that no society floats in historical midair, detached from that which came before: "The present is constituted by the past, but the past's retention, as well as its reconstruction, must be anchored in the present."<sup>135</sup> Schwartz thus carefully avoids the extremes of presentism and literalism: "In most cases...we find the past to be neither totally precarious nor immutable, but a stable image upon which new elements are intermittently superimposed."<sup>136</sup>

132. Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 35: "The past does appear in the present and it does so against the obstacles of death and birth."

133. Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), ix. See also his *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era: History and Memory in Late Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

134. Shils, *Tradition*, 39: "Even if we accept that each generation modifies the beliefs and changes the patterns of action from those which have been presented to it by its predecessors, there is bound always to be a plurality of previously and still espoused beliefs and previously and still enacted patterns of action coexisting with and in particular patterns which are of more recent origin."

135. Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*, 302; see also p. 7.

136. *Ibid.*, 303. Although Schwartz's primary work is with nineteenth- and twentieth-century figures, his insights maintain relevance for biblical scholars. From a general perspective, the numerous applications of social memory theory to Jewish culture demonstrate its fruitfulness (Ben-Yehuda, *Masada*; Esler, *Conflict*; Kirk and Thatcher, eds., *Memory*; Le Donne, *Historiographical*; Rodríguez, *Structuring*; Zerubavel, *Recovered*, Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*). More specifically, though, Schwartz's

Likewise shifting social memory discussions away from the utter dominance of the present and into considerations of how the present and past mutually inform each other, Schudson emphasizes that the "powers that be" in the present can control the past, but only insofar as society in general accepts that version of the past.<sup>137</sup> Since it is, in the words of Fentress and Wickham, "the remembering community which decides which version is acceptable and which is not," the community itself functions in a role of hermeneutical control.<sup>138</sup> Schudson thus employs the metaphor of sculpting: "The sculptor, and the historian, are at once free and constrained."<sup>139</sup>

Further, in contrast to the presentist perspective, Schudson insists, "The recollection of the past does not always serve present interests. The past is in some respects, and under some conditions, highly resistant to efforts to make it over."<sup>140</sup> To recall the language of Halbwachs, if it is possible for the actual past to leave "impressions" upon collective memory, Schudson points to the fact that some past events leave stronger impressions than others. To this end, Schudson cites several manners in which the past can place constraints on present hermeneutical activity, such as living memory and the existence of multiple versions of the past that create a memory market.<sup>141</sup> These two conditions mean that memory producers must compete against one another for public approval, and in a context where individuals who experienced a past event can function as control mechanisms (thus, for example, the problem that Holocaust survivors present to Holocaust deniers). Schudson also introduces the concept of "the past as scar," which helps explain "the structure of individual choice."<sup>142</sup> In rejecting the notion that rememberers are free to choose any version of the past they desire, Schudson observes that

further research shows that the role of the past is only heightened in more traditional cultures (Tong Zhang and Barry Schwartz, "Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Study in Collective Memory," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 11, no. 2 [1992]: 189–212). Schwartz addresses Christian origins directly in Barry Schwartz, "Christian Origins: Historical Truth and Social Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, eds., *Memory*, 43–56.

137. Michael Schudson, "The Present in the Past versus the Past in the Present," *Communication* 11 (1989): 105–13.

138. Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, 74.

139. Michael Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 219.

140. Schudson, "Present," 107.

141. Schudson, "Present," 112; Schudson, *Watergate*, 207–10. See further Rodríguez, *Structuring*, 59–64.

142. Schudson, "Present," 109–12; Schudson, *Watergate*, 218–19.

traumatic, violent experiences “scar” a culture and thus limit the malleability of that experience: “Not only must Americans confront slavery, not only must Germans face the Holocaust, but they must do so repeatedly, obsessively, necessarily, whether they like it or not.”<sup>143</sup> In these cases, the actual past not only generates commemoration in the present, it also places constraints upon the present’s reconstitution of it, as present existence can be defined only in terms of the event that threatened group identity. Other scholars have similarly pursued the relationship between violence, group identity, and the role of the past in present commemoration, confirming that, although violence does not always scar social memory, it certainly can.<sup>144</sup>

Schwartz and Schudson are by no means the only representatives of the continuity perspective on social memory theory.<sup>145</sup> Further, one does not have to accept every aspect of their approach to social memory in order to recognize the essential correctness of their main point—the social construction of memory is not a one-way street with the present being the only contributor to commemorative activity. The present does provide frameworks for understanding the past, but “the past, itself constellated by the work of social memory, provides the framework for cognition, organization, and interpretation of the experiences of the present.”<sup>146</sup>

143. Schudson, “Present,” 110. As with Schwartz, although New Testament and Jesus scholarship is not Schudson’s primary field, his theories’ relevance remains given common concerns. In response to form criticism, Gerhardsson viewed the apostles’ living memory (in their capacity as eyewitnesses) as crucial for the transmission of the gospel tradition (Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 280–88, 329–35; his reference to memory is on p. 333). More recently, the role of the living memory of the first generation of Jesus’ followers in the shaping of the gospel tradition is foundational for Bauckham’s *Jesus*, esp. 93 (Bauckham discusses Gerhardsson on pp. 249–52). Further, several New Testament scholars, including the present author, have demonstrated the importance of the cross as a violent event in affecting its own interpretation in early Christianity (Keith, “Role”; Keith and Thatcher, “Scar”; Alan Kirk, “The Memory of Violence and the Death of Jesus in Q,” in Kirk and Thatcher, eds., *Memory*, 191–206).

144. In particular, see Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998).

145. See also Ben-Yehuda, *Masada*, 22–23; Olick, “Products,” 13.

146. Kirk, “Social,” 15. Similarly, Keith, “Claim,” 55: “Any act of commemoration...is a complex interworking of the past putting pressure on the present’s interpretation of it while the present simultaneously provides the only lens(es) through which the past can be viewed.”

In viewing the written Gospels as Jesus-memory, the present study adopts the continuity perspective and is therefore interested in how early Christians preserved, commemorated, and interpreted the past of Jesus in light of that past and their present. On this account, it is important to underscore that I am not advocating a conservative retreat to a literalist approach to the Gospels as pure images of “what really happened.” Rather, I am simply taking seriously that the past is not, in every way, rewriteable and can even, in some cases, set the course for its own commemoration.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, as a research paradigm, the Jesus-memory approach insists that a proper consideration of the transmission of Jesus tradition as the appropriation of collective memory must account not only for the role of the present in shaping the past, but also the role of the past, and past interpretations of the past, in shaping the present.

### 3.2. The Jesus-Memory Approach and the Gospel Tradition

The overall departure from the criteria approach is observable also by contrasting (and comparing) the Jesus-memory approach’s assumptions about the nature of the gospel tradition to the aforementioned assumptions of the criteria approach.<sup>148</sup> First, from the perspective of social memory theory, scholars in search of authentic Jesus traditions might as well be in search of unicorns, the lost city of Atlantis, and the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Not only are there no longer Jesus traditions that reflect solely the actual past, there never were. In other words, there is no memory, no preserved past, and no access to it, without interpretation. The Jesus-memory approach therefore agrees with the criteria approach that the written Gospels reflect an interpreted past of Jesus; it disagrees, however, with whether there are, in the midst of those interpretations, un-interpreted Jesus traditions that one can separate from the interpretations. The Jesus-memory approach therefore rejects the criteria approach’s primary assumption about the gospel tradition: scholars cannot separate Jesus traditions into authentic and inauthentic bodies of tradition because all Jesus tradition (in one form or another) belongs to both categories.

The criteria approach’s second assumption about the gospel tradition is that authentic traditions absorbed inauthentic traditions in the process of transmission. In tandem with this assumption, its third assumption is that the interpretations of Jesus in the Gospels are due primarily to those inauthentic traditions and the context that produced them. Whereas the

147. See also Kirk, “Social,” 14.

148. See above, p. 40.

Jesus-memory approach outright denies the criteria approach's first assumption, its difference with the second and third assumptions is not with their essential thrust but their simplicity. The idea that the transmitters of the tradition left their imprint upon the Jesus tradition, which the criteria approach received from form criticism's emphasis on the *Sitz im Leben*, is correct. How could it be otherwise? Early Christians could think about Jesus and remember him only from their own contexts and with thought categories from that context. If not for those categories in their present, Jesus would not have been remembered at all.<sup>149</sup>

By taking a presentist perspective,<sup>150</sup> however, the question the criteria approach and form criticism fail to answer is—"From where did the present categories for thinking about Jesus derive?" If they appeal in response to social reality vaguely, the *Sitz im Leben*, they simply push the question one step further—"From where did that social reality, and the structures that form it, derive?" In considering the *historical* development of Christianity and the Jesus tradition, however, this is *the* crucial question. In failing to answer it, proponents of the criteria approach and form criticism fail to account for two important factors. First, the broader social memory of first-century Jews provided categories for their initial reception/remembering of Jesus.<sup>151</sup> Thus, the commemorated past was already impacting the first, original interpretations of Jesus by his contemporary audience. Second, initial and subsequent receptions of Jesus' life informed the interpretive categories that gave shape to the narratives of the Gospels. In other words, the development of the Jesus tradition into the written Gospels was not a process whereby inauthentic interpretations were added to an authentic core of historically pristine material until the final product was a mix of both wherein each is identifiable.

149. Anthony Le Donne, "Theological Distortion in the Jesus Tradition: A Study in Social Memory Theory," in Stuckenbruck, Barton, and Wold, eds., *Memory in the Bible*, 166: "Does the localization process have the capacity to distort one's memory? The answer to this is not only yes, but always."

150. Thus, Schwartz, "Christian Origins," 48–49. He indicts Wilken for claiming that Luke "interpreted the material he had inherited to fit into his scheme" (Wilken, *Myth*, 34) as follows: "Perhaps so, but since no one knows who wrote Luke, Wilken can present no evidence on the author's motives, let alone refute an alternate hypothesis: that the material Luke's author inherited *changed* his scheme" (emphasis original).

151. For a specific instance of this phenomenon regarding Jesus as "Son of David," see Le Donne, *Historiographical*, 65–189. See also Horsley, *Jesus in Context*, 140–45, and, more generally, Kirk, "Memory," 168–9. Clearly, the socially constructed past of Israel impacted Jesus himself as well. See Kelber, "Work," 204; Mournet, "Jesus Tradition," 58.

Rather, it was a process whereby there were only ever interpretations/memories of the past to begin with, to which other interpretations—that *grew from, approved of, disagreed with, contradicted, but, in the least, were in dialogue with and thus to some degree constrained by, the earlier interpretations*—were added until the final product was a result of that interpretive activity.<sup>152</sup> Parsing out the respective influences of the present and the past in this process is much more complex than the criteria approach allows. A significant problem with the criteria approach in this respect is that it detaches supposed later, purportedly inauthentic, traditions from the earlier stages of the traditioning process *entirely*, as if those alleged inauthentic traditions appeared out of thin air in the course of history.<sup>153</sup> Showing its form-critical roots, it detaches later Christologies from the historical progression that produced those Christologies, making early Christian communities into beautiful Christologizing castles in the sky. Alleged inauthentic traditions *exist* as historical artifacts, however, and, on that account if no other, demand a historical explanation. Confirming the presence of the present is not equivalent to disconfirming the presence of the past.<sup>154</sup>

Based on the continuity perspective, the Jesus-memory approach instead assumes a connection between earlier and later stages of the traditioning process, a connection between the actual past and how it was remembered, and thus a connection between the historical Jesus and later Christologies. "Portrayals of Jesus, like other historical portrayals, are based on a link between the present and the past, and it is precisely here that they contribute to an understanding of the present as something that has taken shape."<sup>155</sup> Whatever happened in Jesus' life and death, events to

152. This statement does not imply that the interpretive activity of the present ceased once the traditions were textualized. See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Keith, "Performance," 49–69; Alan Kirk, "Manuscript Tradition as a *Tertium Quid*: Orality and Memory in Scribal Practice," in Thatcher, ed., *Jesus*, 215–34. Also, Zimmermann, "Typicality," 140: "The written texts... did not finalize a memory culture so much as set it in motion."

153. Schwartz, "Christian Origins," 49, in critique of thorough presentists: "Bultmann's and Halbwachs's common failure is their refusal even to ask how pericopae, texts, physical sites reflected what ordinary people of the first century believed." He refers to Halbwachs, "Legendary."

154. Similarly, Loveday Alexander, "Memory and Tradition in the Hellenistic Schools," in Kelber and Byrskog, eds., *Jesus in Memory*, 152: "The fact that stories are shaped for present needs does not mean they are no use to the historian: the historicity of the material itself has to be assessed on other grounds."

155. Schröter, "Jesus of Galilee," 38.

which we have no direct access but nevertheless happened, those historical realities set into motion interpretations/memories of him by those who encountered him. The present contexts of the interpreters/remembers, including inherited typologies and categories from the Jewish past, undoubtedly shaped those initial impressions, even for eyewitnesses.<sup>156</sup> The actual past, however, placed some parameters upon those interpretations/memories. At a simplistic level it is safe to say that no one remembered Jesus as a sailor, or as Caesar, or as an astronaut because his actual life did not permit those interpretations; it did not set those interpretations into motion. Equally, it is safe to say that many people remembered Jesus as a first-century Jew who lived in Palestine, taught, healed, and got into trouble with Jewish and Roman authorities because his actual life did permit those interpretations of him; it did set those interpretations into motion.

Importantly, this approach denies neither the inherently hermeneutical production of memories of Jesus' life nor that there are competing memories, or interpretations, of him. Indeed the focus of this book is on two competing, contradictory memories of Jesus that cannot both be true.<sup>157</sup> Early Christians undoubtedly did remember him incorrectly at times. But, as a first level of investigation, one must admit that the *historical* or *earthly* Jesus was a person capable of producing those memories, even the possibly inaccurate ones. Dunn is correct that we are only able to access the remembered Jesus, but *how* Jesus was remembered allows informed speculation about the historical Jesus who produced those memories.<sup>158</sup> In other words, even if a scholar a priori considers a tradition about Jesus to be false, the proper *historical* approach to that tradition is not to ask "Did early Christians misremember Jesus?" and dismiss it based on the assumed affirmative answer, but rather to ask "How did early Christians misremember Jesus?" and proceed to explain what socio-historical conditions led to the production of that memory.

As should be clear by now, the Jesus-memory approach, as it has been articulated here,<sup>159</sup> also thoroughly rejects the fourth assumption of the

156. Cf. Bauckham, *Jesus*, 9, who follows Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History—History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (WUNT 123; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 28, 165–66, in asserting that eyewitnesses give inherently better testimony to the past.

157. See Chapter 4's presentation of early Christian memories of Jesus as both a scribal-literate teacher and a scribal-illiterate teacher.

158. Dunn, *New*, 30–31.

159. Not all scholars who appeal to social memory theory dismiss the criteria of authenticity entirely. For example, Le Donne, *Historiographical*, appeals consistently

criteria approach—that scholars can separate the Jesus tradition into authentic and inauthentic bodies of tradition. This claim is not, however, the same as claiming that scholars cannot make judgments about which traditions are likely historically accurate and which are not. The point is that such historical judgments cannot proceed under the illusion that scholars can extract un-interpreted material from the Gospels.

### 3.3. *The Jesus-Memory Approach and the Written Tradition*

In viewing the Gospels as early Christian social memory, the Jesus-memory approach to the historical Jesus differs from the criteria approach's fragmentation of the written tradition in at least two important interrelated respects. First, since the idea that scholars can get "behind" the text to an objective past reality is a façade,<sup>160</sup> the Jesus-memory approach does not remove Jesus traditions from their narrative framework in the written tradition.<sup>161</sup> Second, and strongly related, the Jesus-memory approach does not attempt to neutralize the interpretations of Jesus in that written tradition. More succinctly, scholars affirming the Jesus-memory approach would not *want* to minimize the interpretations of the Gospels even if they could.<sup>162</sup> For, *the interpretations of the past themselves are what preserve any connection to the actual past*. As Kirk observes, "It is only through the transmutation of formative events into transmissible tradition artifacts that the past is preserved at all."<sup>163</sup> Worth repeating once more is that this position is not a denial that scholars can discuss what may have happened in the actual past of Jesus. Rather, it is a denial that one can get closer to that reality by dismissing the interpretations of Jesus in the written tradition.<sup>164</sup>

to the criteria (87–88; 176, 195, 252 n. 107, 265, 267), although he redefines their task since, as he acknowledges, they cannot "verify what 'actually happened'" (87; also 91).

160. Similarly, Allison, *Historical*, 66; Bauckham, *Jesus*, 4; Schröter, "Von der Historizität," 205–6.

161. Also, Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 8: "Rather than purposely isolating Jesus-sayings from the only contexts of meaning to which we still have access, that is, the Gospels, we must start from those literary sources"; similarly, Horsley, "Prominent," 62–63.

162. Schwartz, "Christian Origins," 49: "It is not just that localizations distort history; the more they distort the better they work."

163. Kirk, "Memory," 169.

164. Schröter, "Von der Historizität," 205: "Kann... eine gegenwärtigen Jesus-darstellung die narrative Repräsentationen der Person Jesu in den Evangelien nicht einfach beiseite stellen."

### 3.4. *The Historian's Task according to the Jesus-Memory Approach*

To bring the previous threads of discussion together, according to this approach, the Jesus historian's proper task is to explain the existence of the Jesus-memories in the Gospels. That is, one must quest for the historical Jesus by accounting for the interpretations of the Gospels, not by dismissing them and certainly not by fragmenting them. In the words of Schröter, "Every approach to the historical Jesus behind the Gospels has to explain how these writings could have come into being as the earliest descriptions of this person."<sup>165</sup>

The processes of explaining the existence of Jesus-memory reveal further the Jesus-memory approach's departure with the criteria approach. First, because memory is shaped in the present of the remembering community, the Jesus historian must account for factors within the contexts of remembrance, both earlier and later, that could have affected the shape of the Jesus-memory. Instead of distancing the historical Jesus from first-century Judaism and the early Church, then, as does the criterion of dissimilarity, Jesus historians must place Jesus-memories precisely in these contexts.

Second, in order to explain Jesus-memory, scholars must be astute interpreters in order to know the claims about Jesus that the texts make. The need for proper interpretation of the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospels is another reason for understanding those Jesus-memories in their own historical contexts.<sup>166</sup>

Third, when positing a historical Jesus who produced early Christian Jesus-memories, scholars must temper their claims about their apprehension of the actual past. Scholars must acknowledge that, as I have said elsewhere, "What one may draw from the text with regards to the 'actual past' are indeed *inferences*."<sup>167</sup> On the one hand, the reason we are capable of speculating on the historical Jesus at all is the same reason we do not receive the type of empirical confirmations or disconfirmations we often seek—there is no objective apprehension of past reality. Thus, scholars can speak of what is more or less plausible given the mnemonic evidence and the socio-historical contexts of the historical Jesus and those who remembered him, but not what is definite.<sup>168</sup> On the other

165. Schröter, "Historical Jesus," 153. Similarly, Le Donne, "Theological Distortion," 165.

166. See also Schröter, "Jesus of Galilee," 37–38.

167. Keith, "Claim," 56 (emphasis original).

168. I borrow the term "mnemonic evidence" from Le Donne, *Historiographical*, 86.

hand, admitting one cannot grasp the historical Jesus in full is not the same as saying one cannot approach him with a degree of confidence; lack of complete access to the past is not the same as a complete lack of access to the past. Jesus historians are warranted in asking "What really happened?" because the actual past *happened* and some of it was preserved through social memory; Jesus historians are warranted in being cautious with their claims because the actual past happened and some of it was preserved *through social memory*.

Cumulatively, then, the Jesus historian must, in light of the various claims about Jesus preserved in early Christian commemoration, posit an actual past that best explains the existence of the Jesus-memories in light of the contexts of remembrance in early Christianity. Le Donne refers to this process as "triangulation," whereby he establishes various interpretive trajectories of an event in Jesus' life: "Triangulation does not pinpoint an exact historical reality; rather it describes the mnemonic sphere that best accounts for the mnemonic evidence. The purpose of triangulation is to establish the most plausible intersection between the established trajectories."<sup>169</sup> Although the term "triangulation" risks simplifying the traditioning process by implying three points and linear relationships between them (a simplification Le Donne's fuller discussion discourages), and I disagree with Le Donne's surprising appeals to criteria of authenticity,<sup>170</sup> he helpfully describes the general historical task of considering what *could* have happened in the past to produce the different interpretive trajectories that exist.

Another analogy may be more helpful. In many respects, the Jesus-memory approach to the historical Jesus provides a means for Jesus historians to approach the actual past in the manner that text critics approach variant readings, by positing as original the reading that best explains the others.<sup>171</sup> After coming to this conclusion some time ago, I discovered that my own *Doktorvater*, Hurtado, had advocated a similar approach already:

169. Ibid. Worth note, however, is that Le Donne is much more interested in the earliest perceptions than the possibilities of the actual past. I return to this difference between his proposal and my method in Chapter 5.

170. See above n. 159.

171. Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (4th ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 300, describe this principle as "perhaps the most basic criterion for the evaluation of variant readings."

In short, I propose that, instead of merely playing off one 'variant' in the Jesus tradition against another, we take all these variants as valuable evidence in the reconstruction effort, and attempt a reconstruction that can explain the variants in light of what we know about the transmission process, thus producing a proposed reconstruction.<sup>172</sup>

Shortly after Hurtado, Becker made a similar plea (although in conjunction with criteria of authenticity).<sup>173</sup> It does not appear that scholars have taken up these suggestions with any concentrated effort. This chapter should provide a fuller methodological basis for approaching the historical Jesus in such a manner.

#### 4. Conclusions

This chapter has argued for the Jesus-memory approach to the historical Jesus, in contrast to the dominant criteria approach. As the previous discussion demonstrated, rejecting the criteria approach is nothing new; neither is emphasizing continuity with first-century Judaism and the early Church; neither is emphasizing the impact of Jesus; neither is focusing on the finished form of the text in searching for Jesus rather than fragmenting it; neither is arguing that any historical Jesus must *plausibly* explain the mnemonic evidence we have. Appealing to memory is not completely new in Biblical Studies either, despite social memory theory's relatively recent arrival on the scene.<sup>174</sup> The strength of the Jesus-memory approach to the historical Jesus, therefore, is not its innovation.

172. Hurtado, "Taxonomy," 295. Boring, *Continuing*, 193, makes a similar proposal with his criterion of hermeneutical potential, but as part of the criteria approach that ultimately seeks authentic tradition; likewise the criterion of traditional continuity proposed by I. Howard Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 207–11. I thank Max Aplin for alerting me to Marshall's and Becker's (see below) proposals.

173. Jürgen Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. James E. Crouch; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 14–15. Cf. also Kelber, "Work," 204.

174. Aitken, *Jesus' Death*; Walter Brueggemann, *Abiding Astonishment: Psalms, Modernity, and History Making* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991); Walter Brueggemann, *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Crossan, *Birth*, esp. 47–93; Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), esp. 11–29; Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Hans-Ruedi Weber, *The Cross: Tradition and Interpretation* (trans. Elke Jessett; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), esp. 16–29; Wilken, *Myth*, 4–5; Robert L. Wilken, *Remembering the Christian Past* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

One could even argue that it is not necessary to appeal to social memory theory in order to arrive at the conclusions this chapter offers.

Importantly, however, the previous discussion also argued that much prior dissatisfaction with the criteria approach is, more accurately, dissatisfaction with the criteria approach's conception of the Jesus tradition, which it uncritically inherited from form criticism.<sup>175</sup> The strength of the Jesus-memory approach is clearest in this light; for it is a historiographical method based upon a conceptual framework for the nature and development of the Jesus tradition that more accurately reflects the manners in which ancient people appropriated and preserved the past.<sup>176</sup> As a practical advantage, the Jesus-memory approach locates scholarly discussion on the written texts that scholars have instead of hypothetical reconstructed tradition-histories they do not.<sup>177</sup> As a methodological advantage, the Jesus-memory approach avoids the extremes of both Modernity and Postmodernity. It insists that historical portrayals, whether those of the ancients or those of historiographical consciousness, are not the past but *representations* of it.<sup>178</sup> It insists equally, however, in my conception,<sup>179</sup> that scholars nevertheless are warranted to theorize about the actual past based on the commemorations it produced. In this sense, the Jesus-memory approach affirms the best aspect of form criticism and the criteria approach (recognition of early Christian interpretive activity) and addresses their worst aspect (exclusion of the impact of Jesus upon the interpretations of him).

The overall implications of the Jesus-memory approach are significant. They challenge nothing less than the distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. The challenge is not so much at the heuristic level, for it is not being denied that there was a Jesus who existed in space and time, whom scholars cannot equate simplistically with the Jesus of the canonical or, for that matter, noncanonical, tradition. The challenge is rather aimed at the cradle of the dichotomy between the two Jesuses, as the Jesus-memory approach denies scholars' abilities to separate cleanly

175. Thus, one implication of the present argument is that, in response to Tuckett's observation, "In general terms, the critique of the older form critics' model is probably fully justified, though it is not quite so clear which model might or should replace this" ("Form Criticism," 37), the Jesus-memory approach can stake a claim as a better model for the Jesus tradition.

176. Similarly, Davies, *Memories*, 122.

177. See also Allison, *Jesus*, 27–31.

178. Schröter, "Von der Historizität," 205. See also Ricoeur, *Memory*, 235–38. Cf. McKnight, *Jesus*, 45–46, in reference to modern Jesus scholarship.

179. That is, I do not here claim to speak on behalf of all scholars who employ social memory theory.

the historical Jesus from the Christ of faith and properly returns historical investigation to why early Christians remembered Jesus in the manners they did. This book will therefore be bold enough to propose an answer to "What really happened?" with regards to Jesus' literate status (Chapter 5), but only once the early Christian claims about Jesus' literate status are appreciated (Chapter 4) in light of the literate landscape of first-century Judaism (Chapter 3). To that landscape this book now turns.