

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The *Hypomnemata* of Hegesippus

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Abstract

This article deals with the lost work of the early Christian writer Hegesippus, whose *Hypomnemata* is only known through quotations in Eusebius. Faulty preconceptions regarding the dating and provenance of Hegesippus' work are criticised, and it is argued that the *Hypomnemata* is a loose collection of bishop traditions from the late 170s or 180s. The purpose of the work is to connect orthodoxy with correct episcopal succession.

Keywords: Hegesippus; Irenaeus of Lyon; monarchical episcopacy; apostolic succession

Only a small portion of the Christian writings produced in the second century have been preserved to our day. Whereas some writings have been totally lost, others have survived in quotations by later Christian authors. One such writing is the *Hypomnemata* of Hegesippus, which is quoted multiple times by Eusebius in his *Church History*.¹ Hegesippus is Eusebius' primary source for Palestinian Christianity in the first and early second centuries and has often been described as a Jewish or at least Palestinian Christian. In this essay, I wish to reconsider Hegesippus and his work and suggest that the work to which Eusebius is referring is better understood as a scrapbook collecting early Christian bishop lists and the notes concerning the preservation of orthodoxy than as a worked-through historical account. Apart from discussing the work as a whole, I will also take a closer look at four significant themes that emerge in the preserved fragments: James the Just, heresies, bishops and imperial persecution.

The identity of Hegesippus

Let us begin by discussing the identity of Hegesippus. Eusebius considers him to be a Jew from Palestine whose mother tongue is Hebrew or Aramaic (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.8). This portrait was further developed by the Tübingen school, who used Hegesippus as

¹Only two monographs have been devoted to this significant early Christian writer, and both are rather dated: Henri Dannreuther, *Du témoignage d'Hégésippe sur l'église chrétienne aux deux premiers siècles* (Nancy: Berger-Levrault, 1878); and Charles Martial Allemand Lavigiere, *De Hegesippo* (Paris: Librairie Catholique de Perisse Frères, 1950). Other significant early works on Hegesippus are Theodor Jeß, 'Hegesippus nach seiner kirchengeschichtlicher Bedeutung', *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie* (1865), pp. 1–95; Adolf Hilgenfeld, 'Hegesippus', *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie* 19 (1876), pp. 177–229; Hilgenfeld, 'Hegesippus und die Apostelgeschichte', *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie* 21 (1878), pp. 298–330; K. F. Nösgen, 'Die kirchliche Standpunkt Hegesipps', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 2 (1878), pp. 193–233.

evidence for their construction of Christian origins. Albert Schwegler portrayed Hegesippus as an Ebionite,² and Ferdinand Christian Baur argued that he was an anti-Paulinist.³ However, there are a number of problems with this view. As pointed out by Hans Joachim Schoeps, the evidence that Hegesippus knew Hebrew and/or Aramaic is slim, and he suggests that Hegesippus was probably a Greek-speaking Palestinian Jew.⁴ This view gained further popularity when W. Telfer pointed out that Hegesippus uses the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew Bible.⁵

In fact, nothing in the preserved fragments indicates that Hegesippus should be identified as a Jew. Although it is sometimes claimed that Hegesippus is a Graecized form of the Hebrew name Joseph,⁶ it appears to have been a fairly common Greek name.⁷ Furthermore, when Hegesippus writes concerning the siege of Jerusalem, he says that Vespasian besieged *them* (Οὐεσπασιανὸς πολιορκεῖ αὐτούς; *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.18) and thus does not count himself among the Jews. Also, the reference to the Jews as 'the circumcision' (τῆ περιτομῆ; *Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.7) indicates an outsider's stance. Niels Hyldahl goes so far as to claim that Hegesippus is in fact anti-Jewish, since he derives the beginning of heresy from the Jews.⁸ Already Theodor Zahn noted that Hegesippus' understanding of the temple service in Jerusalem is rather confused, but he believed that this could be explained by him living long after the destruction of the temple and with no pretensions of being a learned rabbi.⁹ Still, this confusion would be somewhat unexpected for one of Jewish descent. Wilhelm Pratscher finds it hard to prove that Hegesippus was a Jew and rather styles him as an 'aus den Osten stammender, großkirchlich ausgerichteter Christ mit großen Interesse für judenchristliche Tradition, insbesondere die Frühzeit betreffend'.¹⁰ All in all, there is no good reason to style Hegesippus as a representative of Jewish Christianity¹¹ or hold him to be of Jewish descent at all.¹²

²Albert Schwegler, *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter in den Hauptmomenten seiner Entwicklung*, 2 vols (Tübingen: Fies, 1846), vol. 1, p. 426.

³Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Das Christentum und die Christliche Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte*, 2nd edn (Tübingen: Fies, 1860), p. 84.

⁴Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Aus frühchristlicher Zeit: Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1950), pp. 120–1.

⁵W. Telfer, 'Was Hegesippus a Jew?', *Harvard Theological Review* 53 (1960), p. 146. For a critique of Telfer, see Oskar Skarsaune, 'Fragments of Jewish Christian Literature Quoted in Some Greek and Latin Fathers', in Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (eds), *Jewish Believers in Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), pp. 339–40.

⁶Edward Byron Nicholson, *The Gospel According to the Hebrews* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1879), p. 65.

⁷Cf. F. Stanley Jones, 'Hegesippus as a Source for the History of Jewish Christianity', in *Le Judéo-Christianisme dans tous ses états: Actes du colloque de Jérusalem 6–10 juillet 1998* (Paris: Cerf, 2001), p. 204.

⁸Niels Hyldahl, 'Hegesippus Hypomnemata', *Studia Theologica* 14 (1960), pp. 70–113.

⁹Theodor Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der neutestamentlichen Kanons und altkirchlichen Literatur 6.1: Aposteln und Apostelschüler in der Provinz Asien* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1900), pp. 228–50.

¹⁰Wilhelm Pratscher, *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), pp. 105–6, n. 11. English trans.: 'An Eastern Christian of orthodox orientation with great interest for Jewish-Christian tradition, in particular concerning the beginning.'

¹¹The dichotomy between Jewish and Gentile Christianity is problematic; cf. Judith M. Lieu, 'The Parting of the Ways: Theological Construct or Historical Reality?', *Journal of the Study of the New Testament* 56 (1994), pp. 101–19.

¹²See discussion in Hans von Campenhausen, *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, BHT 14 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1953), 183–4, n. 4.

Let us now turn to the question of Hegesippus' geographical origin. Regardless of his ethnicity, Zahn considers it beyond doubt that Hegesippus was from Palestine, since Eusebius only uses Palestinian material from Hegesippus.¹³ In response, it must be noted that Eusebius indicates that Hegesippus' work discussed the affairs not only of Jerusalem, but also of Rome, Corinth and other unspecified vicinities (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.1). Eusebius clearly found material concerning early Palestinian Christianity in Hegesippus that he considered useful, but he does not base his conclusion regarding Hegesippus' Jewish descent on any claim by Hegesippus himself, but rather on the fact that he quotes from the *Gospel of the Hebrews* in Hebrew and Syriac and is acquainted with oral Jewish tradition (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.8).¹⁴ Hegesippus himself reportedly underlines the doctrinal unity of Jerusalem, Corinth and Rome (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.1) and shows no traces of a specific 'Jewish-Christian' theology. Zahn explains this by suggesting that Hegesippus experienced the repression of Hadrian in his youth and the repression of Jewish life that it implied, later left to visit Hellenistic churches and was therefore not Jewish-Christian in his theology.¹⁵ However, since there is no indication that Hegesippus was either Jewish or even of Palestinian origin, there is no reason to maintain such a presupposition. If Hegesippus really experienced the bar Kokhba revolt, it is remarkable that none of his thoughts on this event were picked up by Eusebius.

The temporal location of Hegesippus and his work is also rather ambiguous. Eusebius is self-contradictory on this issue. He first claims that Hegesippus belongs to the first generation after the apostles (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.3) and then places him in the last years of Hadrian (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.8.2). Both these datings serve to underline Hegesippus' credibility as a source of knowledge concerning the early history of the Jerusalem church. Eusebius claims that Hegesippus discloses the time of his writing through claiming to be a contemporary of Hadrian's famous slave and lover Antinous (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.8.2), who died in 130. Eusebius gives a further reference to this time period by referring to it as the period when Justin Martyr was still practising the learning of the Greeks (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.8.3). However, Hegesippus' formulation that cenotaphs and shrines were made *ὡς μέχρι νῦν* (until now; *Hist. Eccl.* 4.8.2), mentioning Antinous as an example, does not necessarily imply that Hegesippus wrote in the early 130s. The games in honour of Antinous continued for centuries, as did his cult, and Antinous would thus be just as relevant an example in the 180s as in the 130s or even more so, as his cult had by then spread and grown. Hegesippus does indeed claim to be a contemporary of Antinous (*ὁ ἐφ' ἡμῶν γενόμενος*; *Hist. Eccl.* 4.8.2), but this does not mean that he wrote in the 130s.¹⁶ I contend that Hegesippus' work cannot be dated to the 130s since Hegesippus sojourned in Rome until the episcopacy of Eleutherus (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.3) in 174–89. It is therefore more plausible that his work should be dated to the late 170s or 180s.¹⁷ In fact, Eusebius himself presents Hegesippus as a contemporary of several other Christian leaders from the latter decades of the second century (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.19–21). Eusebius rhetorically pushes back Hegesippus to the early second century in order to underline the credibility of his

¹³Zahn, *Forschungen*, p. 254.

¹⁴It is hard to examine more in detail how Eusebius made this deduction since none of these aspects of Hegesippus' work have been preserved.

¹⁵Zahn, *Forschungen*, p. 254.

¹⁶If Hegesippus and Antinous were the same age, they would have been born around 110, and Hegesippus could certainly have written in the 170s or 180s.

¹⁷See discussion in Jones, 'Hegesippus as a Source', p. 204.

sources, but when discussing the dating of Hegesippus *per se* he seems aware that he belongs to the latter half of the second century.

All in all, we must conclude that we know much less concerning Hegesippus than is often claimed. He was probably not a Jew and not even from Palestine. What we can know is that he is a Christian in the latter half of the second century who travelled to significant churches in the Christian world, examined the bishop lists and viewed them as a tool for maintaining the orthodox faith.

The text

Hegesippus is known through quotations and summaries in the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea. Eusebius refers to Hegesippus' work as πέντε τοῖς εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐλθούσιν ὑπομνήμασιν ('five notes which have come down to us'; *Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.1). As pointed out already by Franz Overbeck, ὑπομνήματα is not the title of the work, but rather a description of the type of literature.¹⁸ The preserved fragments are too sparse to make a detailed assessment of the work, but the fragments that are preserved deal mainly with the early Jerusalem church, its bishops and martyrs, and its role in the emergence of heresy. Since Eusebius is our only direct witness to Hegesippus (see below), it is uncertain whether this focus is representative of Hegesippus' work as a whole or simply the theme in the work that Eusebius found most useful and unique. It is also worth noting that the works of both Papias and Hegesippus, both of whom are known only through quotations in Eusebius, are described as consisting of πέντε συγγράμματα (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39; 4.8.2).¹⁹

It is disputed to what degree Eusebius paraphrases and summarises and to what degree he quotes directly from Hegesippus.²⁰ In the early twentieth century, Hugh Jackson Lawlor attempted to make an extensive reconstruction of Hegesippus' work.²¹ However, Lawlor's reconstruction is rather speculative and maximalist. I shall take my departure from the texts explicitly ascribed to Hegesippus by Eusebius and will avoid guessing where Eusebius used him as source in other instances also.²² Although Eusebius claims that Hegesippus and his work was famous in his day (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.8.1), we are entirely indebted to Eusebius for our knowledge of Hegesippus. As evident from the discussion on dating, Eusebius' statements concerning Hegesippus should not be accepted without discussion, since Eusebius feels free to use his sources in the way that is most advantageous for his own purpose.

¹⁸Franz Overbeck, *Über die Anfänge der Kirchengeschichtsschreibung* (Basel: Reinhardt, 1892), p. 21. Michael Durst, 'Hegesippus Hypomnemata: Titel oder Gattungsbezeichnung?', *Römische Quartalschrift* 84 (1989), pp. 299–330, points out that ὑπομνήματα cannot be viewed as a genre as such, whereas Nadine Quenouille, 'Hypomnema und seine verschiedenen Bedeutungen', in Alberto Nodar and Sofia Torallas Tovar (eds), *Proceedings of the 28th Congress of Papyrology, Barcelona 1–6 August 2016* (Barcelona, 2019), pp. 674–82, points out that there are in fact a number of technical uses of the term.

¹⁹As noted by T. Halton, 'Hegesippus in Eusebius', in Elizabeth A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica XVII*, 3 vols (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 688–93. A recent attempt at reconstructing Papias' work can be found in Dennis R. MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels: The Logoi of Jesus and Papias's Exposition of the Logia about the Lord* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012).

²⁰An influential collection of the fragments of Hegesippus is found in Zahn, *Forschungen*, pp. 228–50.

²¹Hugh Jackson Lawlor, *Evsebian: Essays on the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912).

²²An apt summary of Eusebius' use of Hegesippus can be found in Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), p. 68.

It is often suggested that Epiphanius knew Hegesippus' work, and Lawlor argues that Epiphanius' version differed significantly from that of Eusebius.²³ Epiphanius certainly knows many of the traditions that Eusebius attributes to Hegesippus, but he never discloses direct knowledge of Hegesippus himself, and may simply have used Eusebius as a source.²⁴ The differences between his and Eusebius' versions of the traditions could be the result of Epiphanius' conflation of various sources rather than his possession of another edition of Hegesippus. Jerome makes explicit mention of Hegesippus (*Vir. Ill.* 22), but all his knowledge of Hegesippus also appears to be based on Eusebius of Caesarea. Eusebius claims that 'Clement' (probably Clement of Alexandria) has an account of James' death that corresponds to that of Hegesippus (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.3; 2.23.19); but no such account is part of any of the preserved texts of Clement of Alexandria. Since this claim is followed by an alleged quotation from Josephus concerning the death of James (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.20) that cannot be found in Josephus (see below), it is probable that Eusebius either intentionally invents these quotations to support his account or simply quotes from faulty memory. Regardless of Hegesippus' alleged fame in Eusebius' day, the latter's *Church History* remains the only reliable source for Hegesippus and his work.

Despite the fact that Hegesippus' work remains only in fragments that primarily deal with early Palestinian Christianity,²⁵ Eusebius claims that the work was in fact rather extensive and contained everything that Hegesippus knew (τῆς ἰδίας γνώτης πληρεστάτην μνήμη; *Hist. Eccl.* 24.22.1). Yet Hegesippus' ὑπομνήματα does not appear to be a carefully edited volume, but rather a collection of narratives. Eusebius quotes different texts from Hegesippus that deal with the same events. Although the most detailed information quoted in Eusebius pertains to early Palestinian Christianity, there are several indications that Hegesippus' work in fact dealt with issues outside Palestine. Not only does he mention the orthodoxy of the churches he visited (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.2–3), but also contrasts his faith with Greek religion (cf. *Hist. Eccl.* 4.8.2). Yet, this is not sufficient evidence to conclude that the ὑπομνήματα is in fact an apology.²⁶ Rather, it speaks to its nature of containing narratives and treatises on various themes without being edited into a structured piece of literature. This is potentially the reason why it did not survive other than through those of its traditions that were picked up by other early Christian authors.

James the Just

Hegesippus is most well-known for his account of the martyrdom of James the Just. He presents James as the first in the line of bishops of Jerusalem (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.4) who was also the brother of the Lord (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.4). Hegesippus argues that he was called 'the Just' in order to distinguish him from other bearers of this common name (2.23.4). The description of James' origins has some parallels to that of John the Baptist. He is chosen and anointed already in the womb (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.5)||Luke 1:14–15) and wears special clothes (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.6)||Mark 1:6). However, whereas

²³Lawlor, *Evsebian*, p. 5.

²⁴James the Just was called Oblias which means 'wall' (*Pan.* 58.7.1)||*Hist. Eccl.* 3.23.7); vegetarianism and James bearing a linen garment (*Pan.* 58.13.1)||*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.5–7); James never wore wool (*Pan.* 58.14.1)||*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.6); martyrdom of James (*Pan.* 58.14.4)||*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.16–18).

²⁵Andrew James Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 264–5, claims that Eusebius certainly made more extensive use of Hegesippus than is indicated in the direct quotations, not least concerning the early Palestinian church.

²⁶That Hegesippus' writing is an apology is maintained by Lawlor, *Evsebian*, pp. 2–4; see also Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark, 1990), p. 75.

John's clothing resembles that of Elijah (cf. 2 Kings 1:8), the linen ascribed to James indicates that he has priestly status (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔρεοῦν ἐφόρει, ἀλλὰ σινδόνας; *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.6). Furthermore, he is presented as the only one who is allowed into the sanctuary (τὰ ἅγια) and is thus in effect declared high priest. Hegesippus continues that James was not only called 'the Just' but also ὀβλίιας, which he translates as περιοχῆ τοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ δικαιοσύνη ('rampart and righteousness of the people'; *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.7).²⁷

Just as in the case of Jesus (Luke 20:21), the people consider James impartial and present him with a significant question. Many are convinced that Jesus is the Messiah (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.10–14). However, a number of the Scribes and Pharisees turn against James, and Hegesippus views this as a fulfilment of the prophecy in Wisdom 2:12 (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.15). After accounting for the martyrdom of James, Hegesippus concludes that James was a true witness that Jesus was the Christ and connects James' death to the siege of Jerusalem (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.18). In the eyes of Eusebius, Hegesippus points out the clear connection between the martyrdom of James and the siege of Jerusalem and presents the destruction of Jerusalem as a punishment for this deed. Eusebius claims that Josephus also makes such a connection and provides us with an alleged quotation, but he does not (as he usually does) state where Josephus made this statement, and it is not part of any of the Josephan works that have survived to this day. A similar claim is found already in Origen (*Comm. Matt.* 10.17), who derives it from *Antiquities*.

It is worth noting that Eusebius does not accept all details of Hegesippus' story of the martyrdom of James. In *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.1–3, he connects the martyrdom of James to the aftermath of Festus' dealings with Paul (Acts 25). He says that the Jews were disappointed when Festus sent Paul to Rome and instead persecuted James. In Eusebius' own account (which he does not attribute to a specific source), the Jews demanded that James deny faith in Christ before all the people, but he instead confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, with the result that he was killed. Yet Eusebius indicates that this did not happen immediately after Paul was sent to Rome, since Eusebius states that James was executed after Festus died but before he had been replaced (namely, in 62 CE). Here Eusebius is probably using Josephus as his source.²⁸ The details concerning how James was killed are not supplied by Josephus, but this is specified with reference to an otherwise unknown writing by a certain Clement (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.3). In Hegesippus' account, James is presented as a well-respected high priest partaking in a theological discussion rather than a victim of blackmail. Furthermore, the reference to the imminent siege of Jerusalem (εὐθύς Οὐεσπασιανὸς πολιορκεῖ; *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.18) places Hegesippus' account close to 70, whereas Eusebius seems to agree with the Josephan dating around 62. Yet Eusebius harmonises the information found in his sources and agrees that there is a connection between the death of James the Just and the siege of Jerusalem (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.19), although he does not accept the time frame set by Hegesippus.

Heresies

A significant issue in the preserved fragments of Hegesippus is his discussion of heresy.²⁹ Following the death of James the Just, Symeon is appointed bishop of Jerusalem. Although

²⁷The term 'Oblias' is rather ambiguous; see Jonathan Bourgel, 'Jacques le Juste, un Oblias parmi d'autres', *New Testament Studies* 59 (2013), pp. 222–46.

²⁸Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 20.9.

²⁹It is significant to keep in mind that the terms 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' do not necessarily designate historically disparate groups as previously supposed, see discussion in John-Christian Eurell, *Peter's*

this succession of bishops is presented as flawless, it is in connection to it that we find the origin of heresy. Symeon was not the only candidate for bishop, and Theboutis, who was also pursuing the office of bishop of Jerusalem, turns out to be the first heretic (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.5). The idea that a presumptive bishop who was not elected became a heretic out of revenge is by no means unique to Hegesippus. Tertullian makes the very same claim concerning Valentinus, who was not elected bishop of Rome (*Val.* 4.1). Considering that Hegesippus sojourned for many years in Rome and worked with the bishop lists there, it is not impossible that he came across this tradition concerning Valentinus there and simply applied it to what he regarded to be a more appropriate place in the history of the early church.³⁰ However, Hegesippus does not connect the origin of heresy to Theboutis alone, but rather to the sects of Jewish society. He explains that there existed seven Jewish sects (αἰρέσεις; *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.8; 4.22.7), and that Theboutis belonged to one of these, which he considers to be the source of heresy (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.5).³¹ Yet it is hard to see a direct ideological connection between the seven sects of Judaism and the heresies he mentions, and the main contribution of the sects is probably best understood as the cultural acceptance of different parties. This is supported by Eusebius quoting Hegesippus' list of Jewish sects in direct conjunction with this account (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.7). Hegesippus' main critique of the heresies is that they destroy the unity of the church (ἐμέρισαν τὴν ἔνωσιν τῆς ἐκκλησιαίας; *Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.6).

It is not the origin of heresy as such that interests Hegesippus, but the impropriety that such division exists in the church that is his main concern. Hegesippus connects a large selection of heretical groups to the seven parties of Jewish society, with which they certainly have no doctrinal connection. Eusebius, influenced by Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*, is also of the opinion that many of these groups were related to one another (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.26; 4.7), but we do not find a genealogy of heresy in Hegesippus in the same way as we do in Irenaeus.

A further indication that it is not the origin of heresy that concerns Hegesippus, but rather the phenomenon of Christian division *per se*, is his contradictory chronology of the origin of heresy. Although Hegesippus speaks of the development of heresy connected to Theboutis in the episcopacy of Symeon of Jerusalem (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.4–6), in another passage he argues that the church was a pure and uncorrupted virgin, free from heresy, until the martyrdom of Symeon in the reign of Trajan (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.32.5–7). It is well worth noting that, in connection to this claim, Eusebius adds his own opinion that heresy began once the apostles were no longer alive, thus moving the dating of the origin of heresy back into the first century (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.32.8) and closer to the narrative of Theboutis. In connection to this, Eusebius presents the preaching of truth as an antithesis to the τὴν ψευδώνυμον γνώσιν ('the knowledge falsely so-called'; *Hist. Eccl.* 3.32.8), thereby making a clear allusion to the famous work of Irenaeus of Lyons. It appears as if Eusebius primarily builds on Irenaeus' account of

Legacy in Early Christianity: The Appropriation and Use of Peter's Authority in the First Three Centuries (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming), pp. 12–14.

³⁰Telfer, 'Was Hegesippus a Jew?', p. 153, points out that Hegesippus may have lived at the same time as Irenaeus, and thus they might have exchanged information. Telfer suggests that Hegesippus provided Irenaeus with information regarding Palestinian Christianity. Although possible, I find it more likely that their major shared interest was how to preserve what they considered to be orthodoxy.

³¹Although Hegesippus normally uses αἰρέσις about the Jewish sects, Kirsopp Lake suggests that it may here refer to Palestinian Christians (Kirsopp Lake, *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), pp. 376–7). However, the heresies accounted for thereafter are more than seven in number, and the most natural reading is to understand it as referring to the seven sects of Judaism.

the origin of heresy but also seeks to harmonise it with what he finds in Hegesippus, whose account contains chronological contradictions.

In sum, the purpose of Hegesippus' work is not to account for the origin of heresy, but rather to plead for the doctrinal unity of the church. Although most of the preserved material deals with the situation of early Palestinian Christianity, Hegesippus' emphasis on the doctrinal orthodoxy in the other churches he visited (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.1–3) suggests that it is orthodoxy and unity as such that are his main objective. Eusebius also includes a short note that Hegesippus claims that some of the works called apocryphal were in fact fabricated by heretics in his own time (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.9). The overall impression of Hegesippus' work is thus that it deals with the negative consequences of what he considers to be heresy and division in the church.

Bishops

If heresy and ecclesial division can be regarded as central problems addressed in the surviving fragments of Hegesippus, the office of bishop is clearly Hegesippus' proposed solution to these problems. In Jerusalem, bishop James the Just has a significant role in keeping the church united.³² It is not until the martyrdom of James that the Jerusalem church experiences its first heretics.³³ Furthermore, Eusebius tells us that Hegesippus accounts for meeting numerous bishops on a trip to Rome, including the bishop of Corinth, and claims that they all adhered to the same teaching (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.1–3). Hegesippus says that he was 'refreshed by the true word' (συνανεπάγημεν τῷ ὀρθῷ λόγῳ³⁴) in Corinth under bishop Primus after allegedly discussing *1 Clement*, which notes the significance of a legitimate bishop to maintaining ecclesial unity. In Rome Hegesippus emphasises that he examined the succession of bishops. He ends by indicating that he examined the bishop lists in each city that he visited. It is not far-fetched to imagine that he shared the concern of *1 Clement* for the legitimate succession of bishops and connected it to doctrinal orthodoxy. Furthermore, Hegesippus claims to have produced a list of succession (διαδοχὴν ἐποησόμεν; *Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.3) in Rome up to Anicetus, who was bishop at his arrival, and names Soter and Eleutherus as his legitimate successors. This examination of the legitimacy of the bishops is not unique to Rome. Rather, he claims that he has ensured that 'in each list and in each city, things are as the law, the prophets, and the Lord preach'.³⁵ It is no coincidence that Hegesippus connects the emergence of heresy to an unsuccessful candidate for bishop. He claims that Theboutis became the first heretic when he was not elected bishop of Jerusalem after James the Just. If the church would only support the legitimate bishops and abandon those not found to be legitimate heirs of the ministry, the problem of division would be solved. The significance of the bishops is comparable to what can be found in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, which are dated to the third quarter of the second century by an increasing number of scholars,³⁶ and thus appears to be part of a larger trend during this time period.

³²Already Acts 15 suggests that James was a uniting figure who mediates between different fractions in the church in order to maintain unity.

³³Here we might suspect that Hegesippus is of the same opinion as Clement of Alexandria, that James the Just was appointed bishop by the apostles; cf. *Hyp.* 6–7 in *Hist. Eccl.* 2.1.3–4.

³⁴It is worth noting that Hegesippus uses ὀρθός rather than ἀληθής here, thus underlining his distinction between orthodoxy and heresy.

³⁵Quotation from the translation of Kirsopp Lake, *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History*, p. 375.

³⁶The state of research is well described in Jonathon Lookadoo, 'The Date and Authenticity of the Ignatian Letters: An Outline of Recent Discussions', *Currents in Biblical Research* 19 (2020), pp. 88–114.

Roman persecution of Christians

A great portion of the Hegesippian fragments deal with the relationship between the leadership of the early church and the Roman authorities. As we have already concluded above, Hegesippus views the destruction of Jerusalem as divine punishment for the martyrdom of James the Just and presents the intercession of James as the reason why it did not occur earlier. Having presented Rome as executioners of divine judgment, he must now deal with the Roman handling of the early church. For this purpose, he presents the bishop line of Jerusalem as more or less a family affair. The successor of James is Symeon, the son of Clopas, who was the cousin of Jesus (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.4). This also means that Mary, the wife of Clopas, who was present at the crucifixion according to John 19:25 and Matthew 27:56 and at the grave according to Mark 15:40, would have been Symeon's mother. The successor of James is thus not only a relative of Jesus, but also the son of a significant follower of the earthly Jesus.

This portrait of the see of Jerusalem as a family affair gets practical consequences in Hegesippus' account of the Roman struggle for political stability in the region. Hegesippus claims that Vespasian sought out all who were of Davidic ancestry (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.12) in order to prevent rebellion. In another instance, this persecution of Davidic descendants is instead ascribed to Domitian (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.19–20), and relatives of Jesus are brought before the authorities. Domitian asked these relatives of Jesus about the kingdom of Christ and their own financial situation and concluded that they were no threat to the state. Hegesippus states that Domitian hereby ended the persecution of Christians until the time of Trajan. Yet Hegesippus comments in another instance that it is exactly on the grounds that he is of Davidic descent and a Christian that Symeon is martyred at the age of 120 years (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.32). It is worth noting that Symeon's accusers were themselves also found to be of Davidic descent; that is, they, too, were Jews, and the persecution against bishop Symeon of Jerusalem was instigated by Jews.

A pattern emerges in the Hegesippian account of Roman persecution of Christians. Vespasian announces the persecution of those of Davidic descent for political reasons, but already Domitian concludes that this persecution should not include Christians, with the result that Christians could live in peace until the time of Trajan. Under Trajan, bishop Symeon was martyred on the grounds of being of Davidic descent and Christian, but Hegesippus makes clear that this is the result of accusations from other Jews rather than persecution on Roman initiative. The purpose is most likely to underline that the Roman Empire had never in effect sought to persecute the Palestinian Christians, and in the cases where this still did happen, it was essentially the Jews' fault. The Romans are presented as dealing with the more legitimate task of getting rid of political opponents that only unintentionally causes persecution of the Palestinian church.³⁷

The purpose and character of Hegesippus' work

Let us now turn to a broader discussion of the form and purpose of Hegesippus' *ὑπομνήματα*. Although I have made the claim that the work is anecdotal, in that it collects parallel traditions without harmonising them, this does not mean that the collection as such lacks a thematic border or purpose. A number of potential purposes and contentions of the work have been suggested above. Placing the blame for the

³⁷This corresponds fairly well to the thesis of Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2013).

destruction of Jerusalem and the persecution of the Palestinian church on the Jews (despite the fact that the Romans inflicted all this carnage) is typical apology for a Roman audience. At the same time, the reference to the cult of Antinous suggests that Hegesippus was not hesitant to criticise gentile religion. Yet, the main concern in the fragments preserved by Eusebius is the unity of the church. Although Hegesippus does not connect the origin of heresy to Simon Magus, he agrees with Irenaeus that heresy comes from the Jews.³⁸ To Hegesippus, it is the religious division present already in Judaism that is exported to the Jerusalem church and beyond. His solution is to consolidate the position of the bishops as legitimate heirs of apostolic teaching.

I have already stated that the *ὑπομνήματα* should not be understood as an apology. I am also hesitant to designate the work as heresiology, as suggested by F. Stanley Jones.³⁹ The work is definitely both apologetic and heresiological, but neither of these genres fits the description of the work as a whole. I think that *ὑπομνήματα* is a rather accurate term to describe the work. Hegesippus travelled around to the leading bishops of his day, examined their succession and collected material. His description – that he produced a *διαδοχή* (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.3) – in fact indicates that he did not simply compose a list of names but also included biographical anecdotes concerning the bishops in the list, of which we find examples in the preserved fragments.⁴⁰ One such section certainly contained traditions concerning James the Just and the other bishops of Jerusalem. It is possible that the five books of the *Hypomnemata* treated one early Christian centre each (namely, Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, Antioch and Alexandria), but this cannot be proven.

It is uncertain where Hegesippus acquired the material concerning the early Palestinian church, but it is possible that he received it from one of the gentile bishops of his day in the region.⁴¹ F. Stanley Jones argues that Hegesippus' information concerning the affairs of early Palestinian Christianity was based on an oral report from a non-Jewish Palestinian bishop who used the martyrologies of the early bishops to strengthen his own status as bishop.⁴² It is probable that Hegesippus had collected narratives and martyrologies in the other churches he visited. Since the story of the Jerusalem church is not recounted in one sequence, but rather in several overlapping accounts,⁴³ it is probable that the *ὑπομνήματα* was a collection of loosely connected narratives. In contrast to Eusebius, who sought to harmonise his sources,⁴⁴ Hegesippus produced an anthology of traditions that he considered significant.

³⁸Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.23.

³⁹Jones, 'Hegesippus as a Source', p. 206.

⁴⁰Cf. Allen Brent, 'Diogenes Laertius and the Apostolic Succession', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993), pp. 367–89.

⁴¹Cf. *Hist. Eccl.* 5.12.

⁴²Jones, 'Hegesippus as a Source'. On the traditions accounted for by Hegesippus as martyrdom accounts, see David J. DeVore, 'Opening the Canon of Martyr Narratives: Pre-Decian Martyrdom Discourse and the *Hypomnemata* of Hegesippus', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 27 (2019), pp. 579–609.

⁴³Cf. Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, p. 81.

⁴⁴Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, pp. 66–72.