Primitive Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus in the light of Pauline resurrection and appearance terminology

A B du Toit

ABSTRACT
The concise, often formulaic Pauline resurrection and appearance sayings, which are of special importance for an investigation into the origins of Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus, are scrutinised. After investigating the tradition history of these sayings the essay asks in how far we can get behind these most primitive traditions to the origin of resurrection belief itself.

After twenty centuries the life and fate of Jesus of Nazareth still intrigue not only the historically minded but also the man in the street. This is in a special sense true of the accounts of his resurrection. The amount of literature on this theme is simply overwhelming (cf Hoffmann 1988c:53-83 for a select [sic] bibliography). The decisive question which is asked again and again is: what did really happen on that fateful Easter morning? Can it be determined historically or must it remain a matter of faith? And if it cannot be determined historically, how near can historical research bring us to the origin of resurrection belief? New Testament research should not refrain from asking historical questions like these. This forms part and parcel of its task as a scientific discipline. "Wir müssen einfach...die historische Frage stellen; und wir müssen diese Frage dann nach unserer historischen Erkenntnis und Einsicht beantworten" says Marxsen (1967:11). At the same time, however, the New Testament discipline should possess the scientific integrity to recognise its limits, to state where it forms hypotheses and not to present hypotheses as sound historical deductions. This paper focuses on the concise, often formulaic Pauline references (they occur by and large in the Pauline homologoumena) to the resurrection of Jesus and to his resurrection appearances. These deserve our special attention, not only since they belong to the oldest extant documentation of the resurrection belief, but especially since at least some of them reflect traditions originating from the earliest phase of Christianity.

Our investigation develops in three phases: first of all, the relevant Pauline references are identified and semantically categorised. Secondly, wherever applicable, the tradition history of these units up to their most primitive attainable form, as well as their possible Sitz im Leben and/or opinions regarding the kind of religious circle in which they were formulated, are discussed. And in the final instance we ask whether we can go, by historical means, even further back, namely beyond these primitive forms.
1 THE RELEVANT PAULINE FORMULATIONS
As already intimated the more lengthy Pauline references are not in immediate focus here. The relevant formulations (they are not all formulae in the strict sense of the word) are the following:

1. ἐγείρω-formulations
2. ἀνίστημι-formulations
3. ζω-formulations
4. ὑπάρχω-formulations
5. ἀποκαλύπτω-formulations

Of these the first three refer to a physiological process (sub-category "living and dying") (Louw & Nida 1988:261-263). Although ὑπάρχω and ἀποκαλύπτω belong to different semantic domains, the former to "sensory events" and the latter to "know", subcategory "well known, clearly shown, revealed" (Louw & Nida 1988:279,339), they can, for the purpose of this paper, be grouped together since both refer to or imply an act of perception with regard to the resurrected Jesus. We have therefore two groups of formulations, the first referring to the resurrection event itself (1-3 above), the second (4-5) to the Easter experience of the Jesus followers.

2 DIACHRONICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELEVANT FORMULATIONS

2.1 Formulations referring to the resurrection event

2.1.1 The ἐγείρω-formulation
Because of its stereotyped usage we may here probably speak of a formula (German: *Fonnel* – cf Hoffmann 1979:478f et infra). As the following list shows, the instances where ἐγείρω occurs as a finite verb balance those where it occurs in participial phrases, while the same holds true of its active and passive form.
**έγειρα-STATEMENTS REFERRING TO JESUS’ RESURRECTION**

(1) Statements with a finite verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Active (with God as subject)</th>
<th>Passive (medium) (with Jesus as subject)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rm 4:25</td>
<td>οδι ραρωδόν διά τά</td>
<td>ἡμῶν καὶ ἤγέρθη διὰ τὴν δυκάωσιν ἡμῶν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:4</td>
<td>ὥσπερ ἤγέρθη Χριστὸς ἕκ</td>
<td>νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρός</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:9</td>
<td>ἃτι ἐὰν...πιστεύσης ἐν τῇ</td>
<td>καρδίᾳ σου ὧτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 6:14</td>
<td>ὃ δὲ θεὸς καὶ τοῦ κυρίου</td>
<td>ἤγειρεν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:3-4</td>
<td></td>
<td>ὃτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς καὶ ὃτι ἐτάφη καὶ ὃτι ἤγηγεται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:12</td>
<td></td>
<td>ei δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὃτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἤγηγεται</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:13</td>
<td></td>
<td>ei δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστω, οὔδε Χριστὸς ἤγηγεται</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:14</td>
<td></td>
<td>ei δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἤγηγεται</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15</td>
<td>ὃτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τὸν θεὸν ὃτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν ὃν οὐκ ἤγειρεν</td>
<td>ei γὰρ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἔγειρονται, οὔδε Χριστὸς ἤγηγεται</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:16</td>
<td></td>
<td>ei δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἤγηγεται</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:17</td>
<td></td>
<td>οὐσί δὲ Χριστὸς ἤγηγεται ἐκ νεκρῶν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Th 1:10</td>
<td>καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν οὐδῶν αὐτὸν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν ὧν ἤγειρεν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) Participial phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Active (with God as subject)</th>
<th>Passive (medium) (with Jesus as subject)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rm 4:24</td>
<td>τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμᾶς ἐκ νεκρῶν</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:9</td>
<td></td>
<td>εἰδότες ὅτι Χριστὸς ἐγερθεῖς ἐκ νεκρῶν οὐκεὶ ἁπαθηθηκεί</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:4</td>
<td></td>
<td>εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἐτέρῳ τῷ ἑκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:11</td>
<td>εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οὐκεὶ ἐν ύμῖν</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:11</td>
<td>ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θυτὰ σώματα ὑμῶν</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:34</td>
<td></td>
<td>Χριστὸς (Ἰησοῦς) ὁ ἀποθανὼν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγερθεῖς, διὸ καὶ ἔστω ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Cor 4:14</td>
<td>εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15</td>
<td></td>
<td>ἵνα οἱ ζωντες μηκεῖ έαυτοῖς ζων ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gl 1:1</td>
<td>καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eph 1:20</td>
<td>ἥν ἐνήγαγεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐγείρας αὐτοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ καθίσας ἐν δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Col 2:12</td>
<td>διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tim 2:8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Μνημόνευμε Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγνηρεμένου ἐκ νεκρῶν</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A glance at the preceding list will show that ἐγέρσω is used over and over in specific stereotyped combinations. Some elements may be lacking or substituted in specific instances, but the basic constituents remain the same. If we add to this the solemn character of the statement introduced by what is most probably a hoi recitativum in Romans 10:9b, as well as Paul's direct indication in 1 Corinthians 15:1ff that he is citing a tradition (cf especially the two verbs παραδόθημεν and παραλαμβάνω), there should be little doubt that the ἐγέρσω-formulation is indeed a traditional formula which Paul used in different contexts and which he had delivered to the Corinthians at the founding of this church. Neither is this formula restricted to Paul (cf Ac 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30,37; 1 Pt 1:21).

We can now proceed with our traditio-historical venture to trace the development of the ἐγέρσω-formula. Although the reverse order would not affect our argument, it seems logical that the finite usage of the ἐγέρσω-formula historically preceded the - consistently embedded - participial one (cf also Kegel 1970:14f,22-25; contra Becker 1975:121 and Hoffmann 1979:479ff). We can further accept that the simplest common denominator of the various ἐγέρσω-formulations (cf the list above) would be the oldest one and that Christological descriptions, the reference to the location from which Jesus returned (ἐκ νεκρῶν), to his death as such (ἀπέθανεν etc), to the three-day period (τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ), the ὑπὲρ-formula as well as references to the fulfilment of the Scriptures (κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς) are all later additions due to various theological and ecclesiastical considerations. Christological development is a well-known trend in tradition history. The addition of ἐκ νεκρῶν was to specify the exact location of Jesus' ἐγέρσω. The phrase "on the third day", apart from fulfilling a chronological function, may also have been a reminder of the tradition built around Hosea 6:2 (cf McArthur 1988). The addition of references to Jesus' death, burial and eventual exaltation forms part of the development of the simple formula into bipartite, tripartite and even more complex statements. The ὑπὲρ-formula gives soteriological meaning to Jesus' death (cf also διὰ with regard to his resurrection in Rm 4:25). And the scriptural proof wishes to designate the events of the Easter week-end as divinely ordained already in the Old Testament.

All things considered we can accept that the basic form of the ἐγέρσω-formula would have been: δὸ θεὸς (τῶν) Ἰησοῦν ἐγέρσω (Kegel 1970; cf also Hoffmann 1979, although he considers the participial formulation as primary). The corresponding passive form would have been: Ἰησοῦς ἡγέρθη/ἐγέρσαται (= Jesus was raised by God).

Both of these last two basic formulations are, however, already theological interpretations, denoting or implying God as the agent of the Easter event. We can therefore suspect that behind them lies a more naive, still theologically unreflected statement. In Greek this statement or narration would have been: Ἰησοῦς ἡγέρθη/ἐγέρσαται, which would have been a naive, still theologically unreflected statement using ἐγέρσω as a deponent as
happened so often in the Septuagint and also in the New Testament and which would mean: Jesus has risen (cf the excursus at the end of this paper). The Aramaic original for this would have been: דָּוִד יִשְׂרָאֵל or יִשְׂרָאֵל. But if our conjecture (see under heading 3) is correct, these words would have been part of a larger, bipartite statement including an appearance saying.

Conscious of the gross over-simplification it entails and of the fact that the real life development of this formula, due to a host of historical, theological and geographical factors, would have been much less rectilinear, we may nevertheless conjecture that the ἐγείρω-formula (excluding the older, theologically unreflected narration) developed more or less along the following lines (the participial form developing along parallel lines, but, due to its embedded usage, staying more concise):

Possible development of creedal formula

1. ὁ θεός (τὸν) Ἰσσοῦν ἤγειρεν 
   (ὁ) Ἰσσοῦς ἡγέρθη/ἐγήγερται 
   (passivum divinum) 
   First theological interpretation

2. ὁ θεός (τὸν) Ἰσσοῦν ἤγειρεν 
   ἐκ νεκρῶν 
   (ὁ) Ἰσσοῦς ἡγέρθη/ἐγήγερται ἐκ 
   νεκρῶν 
   Specifying addition. Figures only when Jesus’ death is not mentioned

3. ὁ θεός (τὸν) (Ἰσσοῦν) (Χριστὸν) 
   (τὸν) κύριον ἡμῶν ἤγειρεν 
   (ὁ) (Ἰσσοῦς) (Χριστός) (ὁ κύριος 
   ἡμῶν) ἡγέρθη/ἐγήγερται 
   Various Christological expansions and substitutions

4. Χριστὸς (Ἰσσοῦς) ἀπέθανεν καὶ 
   ἡγέρθη/ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ 
   (καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ) 
   (the longer formulations are only 
   in the intransitive/passive) 
   Development into bipartite and tripartite statements. 
   Chronological specification 
   (on the third day)

5. Soteriological interpretations by 
   means of ὑπέρ (cf 1 Cor 15:3f) or 
   διὰ (cf Rm 4:25) are added. (They may, however, have already been 
   attached to Jesus’ death earlier)

6. Addition of scriptural proof (κατὰ 
   τῶν γραφῶν)

7. Contextualisation in documents 
   like the Pauline letters (Christological titles often substituted by 
   a pronomen)
Formulae need not of necessity have a specific, clearly identifiable Sitz im Leben, but they do have a Sitz im Leben at least in the sense that they fulfill certain functions and reflect regular usage in the church. In trying to identify a Sitz im Leben for the ἐγέρσω-formula we must differentiate between the use of the finite statement and the participial phrase.

The finite statement has variously been identified as a catechetical unit (Delling 1970:351ff), as a πίστες-formula which was situated in the preaching and baptismal celebration of the Hellenistic congregation (Kramer 1963:15-60) or as a proclamational formula (Deichgräber 1967:112: "eine Urformel christlicher Verkündigung"; cf also Klappert 1974:80). According to Wengst (1972:27-48) it was a resurrection-formula ("Auferstehungsformel") which had its Sitz in the services of the congregation, especially in their prayers. It gave expression to their faith and had in the Aramaic-speaking church an eschatological slant. In the Hellenistic church, however, it was influenced by the thought pattern of the mystery religions and its accent shifted towards the present life experience of Christians.

There seems to be an element of truth in more than one of the above positions. They also overlap to a large extent. In the light of the collocation of the πίστεως word group (Rm 4:24f; 10:9ff; 1 Cor 15:3ff; cf Col 2:12) and terms like εὐαγγέλιον, εὐαγγελίζομαι, κηρύσσω and μαρτυρέω in 1 Corinthians 15:1-18 in contexts where this formel occurs (cf Kramer 1963:41-60), we can accept that Paul saw the latter as a concise formulation which expressed a most essential element of the authentic gospel which he had received and which he proclaimed. Since we have no reason to suspect that the Pauline presentation differed from the actual pre-Pauline situation, we can characterise the ἐγέρσω-formulation as an ancient credal formula, the antecedents of which can go back to the Aramaic-speaking first Christian community and which expressed a crucial element of and to a certain extent also a norm for — correct belief. It would be questionable, however, to limit it to one Sitz im Leben only, since it would have functioned in missionary preaching, in catechesis, in congregational preaching, at baptism, et cetera.

The participial formulation shifts the focus from an event to a person: the active form characterises God and the passive qualifies Jesus. This is inclined to give it a solemn, doxological character. The active form echoes eulogies of God in the Old Testament and Jewish liturgical tradition (cf e.g the doxology in the second benediction of the ἡ ρήματα τοῦ Ἱαβεθ: "Praised are you, Jahwe, who raises the dead"). It would therefore have served as a eulogy which had its Sitz im Leben in the liturgy of the church (Becker 1975:120f; Hoffmann 1979:486; cf especially the seminal article of Delling 1963).

2.1.2 'Ἀνίστημι-formulations

In contrast to the ample use of ἐγέρσω in the Pauline corpus (forty-one times), the verb ἀνίστημι occurs only five times. Whereas the former so often refers to Jesus' resurrection there is only one isolated example of the
latter used likewise: 1 Thessalonians 4:14a (Rm 15:12 is not a case in point; cf Cranfield 1979:747 n4). Once, namely in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, ἀνάστασις refers to the general resurrection of believers, perhaps suggested by its use in verse 14. Ἀνάστασις appears more frequently: of its eight occurrences it refers, however, only three times to Jesus' resurrection (Rm 1:4; 6:5; Phlp 3:10). To this could be added ἔσωστος in Philippians 3:11.

We give attention firstly to 1 Thessalonians 4:14a. The terse formulation ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀνέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη could suggest that Paul formulated ad hoc in order to strengthen his argument by means of the cross-resurrection salvation historical sequence. But in that case the use of the name Ἰησοῦς instead of Χριστὸς or some christological combination would be somewhat difficult to explain. The same applies to the verb ἀνέστη which Paul uses nowhere else with reference to Easter. He consistently uses ἔβειρο. (It is meaningful that we find the identical phenomenon in Matthew.) This rather un-Pauline choice of words, the introductory πιστεύουμεν (cf e.g Rm 10:9f), the form and content of the saying, which is quite analogous to the bipartite indicative statement underlying 2 Corinthians 5:15 and the somewhat uneasy way in which it fits logically into the context, indicate that Paul cites or at least reflects a pre-Pauline credal formula (Best 1972:187; Kramer 1963:25; Wengst 1972:45) containing ἀνάστασις instead of ἔβειρο and which probably belonged to the same tradition as the more developed passion summaries in the Gospels (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33f; Lk 18:33) (cf Kramer 1963:25). Being a credal formula its Sitz im Leben would have the same broad spectrum as that of the finite ἔβειρο-formula.

It is obvious that 1 Thessalonians 4:14a contains a quite primitive form of the ἀνάστασις-formula. Although already bipartite, it nevertheless shows no Christological development, no soteriological interpretation, indeed none of the other developments already mentioned with regard to the growth of the ἔβειρο-formula. On the other hand, it would hardly be as primitive as the latter, firstly because we have no evidence that its intransitive form was ever used separately (i.e outside a bipartite statement) as a formula like the latter, and secondly because the use of ἀνάστασις portrays Hellenistic influence. Although Greek writers occasionally used ἔβειρο in connection with resurrection, they clearly preferred ἀνάστασις (cf Oepke 1933:368-370; 1935:332-334; Fascher 1941:182-187). We find that the more Jewish writers like Matthew and Paul usually avoid ἀνάστασις in this sense (although the same does not apply to ἀνάστασις in Paul), while a Hellenistic writer like Luke uses it without hesitation. It is also important to note that ἀνάστασις is already used with reference to the resurrection of the dead already in the Septuagint (e.g Job 14:12; Is 26:14,19; Dn 12:2,13) as well as in the intertestamental writings (cf 2 Macc 7:14; 12:44). We may therefore surmise that this formula, which we can call a "rising-formula" in contrast to ἔβειρο which is a "resurrection-formula" in the strict sense of the word, originated in a Graeco-Semitic
church like Antioch or, due to its primitiveness, perhaps even among Greek-speaking Christians in Jerusalem.

The reason for the preference given to ἐγείρω in the more Jewish circles may have been that it was better suited to portray God’s initiative (cf Oepke 1935:334) while in the case of ἀνάστασις the quickened person was the subject of the action. (In the abstract noun ἀνάστασις this was less obvious.) There may, however, have been a less theological reason: already in the Old Testament (e.g Gn 47:30; Dt 31:16; 2 Sm 7:12; 1 Ki 1:21; 2:10 etc; Job 14:12; Is 14:9), but especially in apocalyptic contexts (e.g Is 26:19; Dn 12:2; 1 En 91:10; 92:3; 100:5; 2 Bar 30:1; 4 Ezr 7:32; TJud 25:4) death is depicted as a condition of sleep (see Hoffmann 1978:186ff and, for the general idea of death and resurrection, Schubert 1962, especially 190-208). Also in the New Testament death is depicted as a condition of sleep: Matthew 27:52; Mark 5:39 par; John 11:11f; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15; 2 Peter 3:4. The primary meaning of ἐγείρω being “to waken from sleep”, this verb could have been preferred to ἀνάστωμα which does not necessarily have this connotation. Coenen (1976ff:1231) may be at least partially correct in stating that the idea of death as a condition of sleep as developed especially in Jewish apocalyptic, forms the background of the New Testament references to death and resurrection (Auferweckung).

As far as ἀνάστασις is concerned, we have a pre-Pauline tradition in Romans 1:3b-4a. Since this is generally accepted, we need not prove it in detail (cf e.g Michel 1978:72-75; Kramer 1963:105-108; Wengst 1972:112-117; Kasemann 1974:8-11; Cranfield 1975:57-64). It must suffice to refer to the two extended participial phrases, the non-Pauline wording (ὅρισεν, πνεῦμα ἀγωνίας), the detailed parallel structuring and the somewhat artificial cohesion with the surrounding context (after elimination of the traditional unit the Christological description τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ could link up smoothly with the further Christological amplification in verse 4b). Although some writers postulate certain Pauline additions (e.g Wengst 1972:112-114), there can be no doubt that ἀνάστασις belonged to the very core of the original tradition. We can accept that it was originally introduced by πιστεύουμεν or ὄμωλογούμεν (Wengst 1972:116) and consider it a credal formula. The importance attached to Jesus’ Davidic descent, the primitive articulation of his designation as Son and the archaic phrase πνεῦμα ἀγωνίας point to Jewish influence, indicating that this credo must be quite early. On the other hand the extended parallelistic form shows that it does not belong to the earliest period. We can therefore safely assign it to the Graeco-Jewish church. This would concur with our contention regarding 1 Thessalonians 4:14b, although the latter formulation, in the light of its less developed character, would be older. This would be corroborated by the linguistic consideration that the application of an abstract noun like ἀνάστασις would usually be younger than its corresponding verb, portraying a certain degree of reflection.
2.1.3 *Zων-formulations*

Only three *ζων*-occurrences require our attention: Romans 6:10; 14:9a and 2 Corinthians 13:4 (cf also Rv 1:18; 2:8). Certain Pauline uses of *ζωή* certainly include the resurrection in its sphere of reference, but do not focus on it. Hoffmann (1979:483-485) is of the opinion that we have in these passages evidence of a bipartite formula patterned on formulations referring to conversion and the new existence of Christians in terms of dying and returning to life (e.g. Lk 15:24,32). But this argumentation is not really persuasive. The obvious form and similarities can also be explained by reversing the process. It is indeed more convincing that, within the Christian context, Jesus' death and new life would be the basic pattern on which the new existence of Christians would be modelled. This is clear in Romans 6:10f. And the same probably was the case in other references to Christian existence (Rm 8:13; Gl 2:19; Eph 2:5; 5:14; Col 2:13,20) as well as to the apostolic ministry (2 Cor 6:9).

It is indeed doubtful whether the utterance *Χριστός ἀνέθανεν καὶ ἐζησεν* (Rm 14:9a) really reflects an independent tradition (contra Wengst 1972:46; Hoffmann 1979:483 who relate Rm 14:9a to 1 Th 4:14a). The shift to *Χριστός* within a context dealing with Jesus as the *Κύριος* is not a conclusive argument since Paul seldomly associates the *Κύριος* title directly with Christ's death. And, in addition, the *Χριστός* title is typically Pauline. Romans 14:9a would therefore be an ad hoc Pauline formulation within a context depicting Christian existence as belonging to Christ in life and death.

Whether the bipartite stage of the resurrection formula or of the rising formula (1 Th 4:14a) played a background role (Kramer 1963:26) here is impossible to determine. The other instances where Christ's death and new life are contrasted are probably also nothing more than ad hoc formulations applying the contrast pair "life—death", which is one of the universals in human thought and language and which is so common in religious systems that we need not narrow it down to the influence of the mystery religions (contra Wengst 1972:46).

2.2 Formulations referring to the Easter experience

2.2.1 *Ὀπων-formulations*

The verb *ὀπως* refers to the resurrection experience in 1 Corinthians 9:1 and 15:5-8 (*ζωή* 4x).

There are differences of opinion about the exact demarcation of the tradition Paul is quoting in 1 Corinthians 15:3bff. For our purpose such a delimitation is not necessary. Most scientists consider verses 3b-5 as belonging to an older stage than verses 6-8 (e.g. Kramer 1963:15; Deichgräber 1967:108; Wengst 1972:92-95; Hoffmann 1979:passim). What is important here is that a tradition is quoted in which a tripartite combination of the sal-
vivid events (Jesus' death, burial and resurrection) is followed by an enumeration of appearance scenes verbalised by ὠφθην. In view of its significant repetition in a traditional statement we can even speak of an ὠφθην-formula.

Grammatically, the use of ὠφθην with the dative (Κατωκαί and others) could indicate either a passive (Jesus was seen by Cephas and others) or a deponent (Jesus appeared to Cephas and others). Although the former should not be dismissed offhandedly, the latter interpretation is slightly more suitable to the context. In this case Jesus is the direct subject of the action, not Peter, and we should indeed speak of an appearance formulation, whereas in 1 Corinthians 9:1 we have an observance formulation.

Opinions differ also about the age of the kernel tradition (vv3b-5). On account of the large number of Semiticisms, Jeremias (1960:95-97), followed by Kramer (1963:15) and Deichgräber (1967:108), assigns verses 3b-5 to the first Aramaic-speaking Christian community (cf also Hahn 1963:197-199; Klappert 1974:69-71), whereas Schweizer (1962:89), Conzelmann (1965:5f) and Wengst (1972:98-101) assign it to the Greek-speaking Jewish Christianity. Conzelmann (1965:8) concedes, however, that the tradition could have been formulated already in the Jerusalem Hellenistic Christian community. With the present evidence at our disposal a certain decision seems impossible. It is clear that the tradition has undergone a significant development already. But this could certainly have taken place in the Christian community at Jerusalem and it is not to be excluded that Paul had received it during his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. There seems indeed to be no convincing reason to doubt that, apart from the ἔγγυω-formula, at least the ὠφθην-formula would derive from the first Christian community and would be as primitive as the former.

Due to the stereotyped employment of ὠφθηνυαν followed by the dative for divine manifestations in the Septuagint (cf Michaelis 1954:331-333,359), Hoffmann (1979:493f; 1988a:7f) has argued that ὠφθην in 1 Corinthians 15:5ff is a secondary formulation (cf also Vögtle in Vögtle & Pesch 1975:58). But the crucial question is whether it could be proven that there existed in Greek (or Aramaic) a more obvious alternative word choice or construction to verbalise that ὃν appeared to ὃν. This not being the case, Hoffmann's argument falls away and also the conclusion that this phrase as such characterises the appearances as taking place "vom Himmel her" (Michaelis 1954:360).

Wilkens (1988:139-175) has interpreted the ὠφθην-phrases as legitimisation formulae. They served to motivate the leadership position of those referred to in the dative. As the most original form of this formula he presupposes a wording like that in Luke 24:34: "The Lord has risen and appeared to Simon." In this primitive legitimisation formula the emphasis was not on the fact that Peter gave evidence for the reality of the resurrection, but that Jesus' appearance sanctioned him as leader of the church (1988:167). There is an element of truth in Wilkens' theory in the sense that in 1 Corinthians 9:1 Paul's having seen the Lord indeed functions as a legitimisation of his apostleship.
But that would hardly have been the case in a pronouncement such as "the Lord has risen and appeared to Simon" and certainly would not have been the case with the more extended statement in 1 Corinthians 15 (which Wilckens 1988:166-167 readily admits, but sees as a secondary development in a missionary situation). The narrational character of Wilckens' postulated primitive formula (the wording of which comes close to my own position but with a different motivation - vide infra), rather characterises it as a proclamational statement. This will also apply to ὑπόθεσε in 1 Corinthians 15. This is underscored by Paul's collocation of terms like εὐαγγέλιον, εὐαγγελίζω and κηρύσσω.

At this stage it must suffice to make two concluding observations with regard to the ὑπόθεσα-formula. Firstly, it seems clear that a statement about Jesus' (death and) resurrection coupled with an ὑπόθεσα-statement could, exactly because of the inclusion of the latter, hardly have functioned in a credal formula. As already stated it would rather have served in the context of the preaching of the gospel. Secondly, it makes sense that the ὑπόθεσα-phrase would not have functioned as an independent unit. It naturally serves as verification of an antecedent statement. Thirdly, it is clear that the ὑπόθεσα-string in 1 Corinthians 15:5ff is the result of some longer development.

2.2.2 ἀποκαλύπτω-formulations
Although the infinitive ἀποκαλύπτω in Galatians 1:16 (cf also ἀποκαλύψεις in 1:12) is usually not considered as an appearance formulation in the strict sense of the word, Paul's statement ὅτε δὲ εὐθύκειας ὁ θεὸς... ἀποκαλύπτω τὸν νιῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί (Gl 1:15f) has often been understood as the genuine Pauline description of his resurrection experience (cf Hoffmann 1979: 494). But following Wilckens (1988:178-193) and Vögtle (Vögtle & Pesch 1975:61-68) Hoffmann (1979:494) goes even further and states: "Es kann ... in dem Terminus sogar die genuine Bezeichnung der Ostererfahrung der ersten Zeugen noch erhalten sein [Sperrung von mir]." This last remark is vitally important since it forms the cornerstone of the latest version of the visionary theory with regard to the nature of Jesus' resurrection. We shall discuss this important new approach further in our final section. At this stage it is only necessary to gain clarity on one specific question, namely whether, and if so, in what sense ἀποκαλύπτω in Galatians 1:16 (cf also ἀποκαλύψεις in Gl 1:12) contained a reference to the resurrection. First of all it should be stressed that the real issue in Galatians was not, as is so often repeated, the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship, but the legitimacy of his gospel (Lategan 1988:411-430). This is quite clear from the crucially important opening verses of this letter. After castigating the Galatians for turning to "another gospel", and especially the proponents of that gospel, categorically stating that there is no other gospel (vv6-8), Paul declares emphatically in verses 11-12 that his gospel is not κατὰ ἐνθρωπον. He received it not through human intermediaries but by
divine revelation (δι' ἀποκάλυψις). Then he sets out to prove the legitimacy of his gospel in the following chapters. In chapters 1-2 he repeatedly underlines his statement that he had received his gospel not from men but from God (1:15-16,17,18-20,21-24; 2:1-2). Within this argument the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship understandably plays an important role (cf 1:1; 2:2-10; also Kertelge 1974:266f). But this role is a supporting one. The real point at issue is neither Paul's apostleship nor his appointment to the apostleship, but the correctness of his insight into the nature and implications of the gospel. In 1:12 he claims that this insight was given to him by an ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Kertelge (1974:272-278) correctly points out that the word ἀποκάλυψις was chosen by Paul to indicate this event as a moment of revelation that opened his eyes to grasp the eschatological significance of Jesus Christ. Against this macro-contextual background we can now return to Galatians 1:15-16.

We must be careful not to interpret the prepositional phrase ἐν ἐμοί as an indication of an inner experience, since in the Koine ἐν plus the dative often replaced an ordinary dative (Bauer 1963 s v IV 4a; Blass, Debrunner & Rehkopf 1975: par 220; Louw & Nida 1988:90.56).

Within the context we can identify the following characteristics of the ἀποκάλυψις Paul received:

1. It was an event marking God's sovereign and graceful intervention in his life (cf especially εὐδόκησεν and διὰ τῆς χάριτος).
2. It took place at a specific point in time (ὅτε) which introduced a radical change in Paul's religious loyalty (cf the contrast between v13-14 and 15ff).
3. At this occasion the eschatological significance of Jesus as the Son of God was revealed to Paul in such a way that he could afterwards claim that his insight into the truth of the gospel was not conveyed to him by apostolic or indeed human intermediaries but by God himself.
4. This ἀποκάλυψις included his call and authorisation to be God's apostle to the heathen.

It is important to realise that neither the word ἀποκάλυψις nor the context in itself indicates that Paul is referring to a resurrection appearance. We only know this by means of a set of logical deductions, namely that in the light of points 2 and 4 above this must be the same event as that referred to in Acts 9:3-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18 and 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8. In the light of this intertextual evidence we can deduce that the term ἀποκάλυψις in Galatians 1:16 (as well as ἀποκάλυψις in Gl 1:12f) does indeed refer to Paul's Easter experience. The focus, however, is not on the description of the event as such, but on the revelational aspect in the sense that Paul's mind was enlightened to understand who Christ really was, namely the Son of God and
what the gospel really was about. This is to be kept in mind in the discussion under the next heading.

3 CAN WE GET BEHIND THE MOST PRIMITIVE EASTER FORMULAE?
As we have seen in the previous discussion the two most primitive Easter formulae were probably the ἔγειρω-formula and the ὅθημα-formula. Two insights may give us a clue to move still further back as far as the Easter tradition is concerned: firstly the observation (vide supra) that the ὅθημα-formula needed an antecedent for which it should serve as a motivation. And secondly the religio-historical fact that credal formulae do not belong to the very initial stage of the formation of a new religious movement. Only after the new belief has begun to take shape the need arises to formulate its essentials in credal statements. For the same reason we can expect that proclamational utterances will precede credal formulac. Such an original proclamational utterance could have been one in which a resurrection statement with ἔγειρω and a motivating appearance formulation with ὅθημα belonged together: Ἰησοῦς ἦγερθη/ἔγειρεν καὶ ὅθημα κηθε (cf Lk 24:34!).
If this is the case, we can visualise the historical development as follows (see next page):
Primitive unreflected narration

Of this the Greek equivalent would be:

(δ) Ἰησοῦς ἡγέρθη/ἐγήγερται καὶ ὄψθη Κηφᾶ

Proclamational formula

Further developments around the two poles ἡγέρθη/ἐγήγερται and ὄψθη (cf 1 Cor 15:3ff as a developed stage)

Credal formula

If we dare to move still further backwards it seems logical to assume that the historical development of the resurrection faith, reduced to its absolute minimum, would have been more or less as follows:

**Historical development of the resurrection faith**

1. Factor x takes place.
2. Followers of Jesus claim they have experienced appearances of Jesus.
3. The conclusion is drawn that Jesus rose from the dead.
4. Resurrection faith takes shape in the form of primitive statements/narrations.
5. The resurrection faith is reflected in the ministry and life of the church, amongst other things in proclamational and credal formulae (both with a growing tendency reflecting ecclesiastical and theological needs) as well as in more developed narrations.

Historically speaking, the crucial question concerns the nature of factor x and consequently of the reported appearances. With regard to the nature of factor x, three positions (apart from combinations of them) can basically be adopted:
The resurrection did take place.

2. The resurrection belief was due to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

3. The resurrection story was due to fiction or wilful deception.

The New Testament documents unequivocally adopt position 1. According to them the eyewitnesses understood and proclaimed factor x as the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Consequently the appearances were also of such a nature that they could be discerned by the physical eye. So, no doubt, Paul also understood the resurrection and the resurrection appearances. Otherwise he could not have used Jesus' resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 as an argument for the bodily resurrection of the dead.

This conviction has been challenged time and time again. Several alternative hypotheses have been advanced (cf Mt 28:11-15). One of the oldest and most persistent attempts to explain the resurrection faith, from Celsus over Strauss, Holsten and others (cf the overview of Hoffmann 1988b:15-67) up to the present, is the visionary theory in its different variations (subjective, objective). Recently this theory has been revived through the work of German scholars like Grass, Wilckens, Vögtle, Pesch and Hoffmann. Since Hoffmann is at present the most active scholar in this field, and to a great extent representative of the newest version of the visionary theory, we limit our discussion to his presentation (cf Hoffmann 1979:496f and especially 1989a:9-14). Quite correctly Hoffmann proceeds from the premise: "Gegenstand historischer Untersuchung kann nur der urchristliche Glaube an die Auferstehung Jesus sein, nicht diese selbst" (1988:2). He therefore realises that the visionary approach also cannot claim any other status than that of an hypothesis (cf also Hoffmann 1979:496). He proceeds from the surmise that Galatians 1:15f may contain the cue to the genuine Easter experience of the first witnesses (1978:140f; 1979:494; 1988:8). The terms ἀποκάλυψις and ἀποκαλύπτω (v 12,16) hold the key, characterising the original Easter experience of the disciples as a phenomenon which belonged to the visionary world of apocalyptic. The ἀποθεωμ-Traditions of 1 Corinthians 15 should also be understood within this framework. The disciples lived in a world full of apocalyptic hopes and with a disposition towards visionary experiences. These expectations, especially that of the imminent coming of the Son of man as judge, were still more intensified by John the Baptist and Jesus Himself and helped them to bridge the crisis caused by Jesus' untimely death, especially since they now were convinced that the expected Son of man and Jesus were identical. In this atmosphere visionary experiences were to be expected and they were later "hardened" in terms of the eschatological expectation of the resurrection of the dead to become resurrection appearances. What happened with Jesus was now seen as an anticipation of the eschatological resurrection.
It should be noted that Hoffmann's point of departure (cf also Vögtle in Vögtle & Pesch 1975:68 and Wilckens 1988:177-181) is due to a specific understanding of the reference of the ἀποκάλυπτω word group in Galatians 1:12,16 (cf also Wilckens 1988:175-177 for the use of ἔφθη in 1 Cor 15). He understands these terms within the context not only as an indication of the revelation of a specific Christological content, but also as a specification of the form of the original Easter experience. Accordingly, the original Easter experience of Paul and of the first witnesses was in fact heavenly visions of the Son of man. Unlike Wilckens, who describes these visions as objective, Hoffmann refrains from making a choice between objective and subjective.

There is little doubt that this interpretation is reading too much into the two texts in Galatians 1. We hope to have shown convincingly, from the macro-context as well as from these verses themselves, that Paul chose the words ἀποκάλυψις and ἀποκάλυπτω, not in order to specify the form of his Easter experience, but to accentuate the eschatological enlightenment which he experienced through God's revelation of his Son. What makes Hoffmann's line of argument even more questionable is that - in contrast to ἔγειρω and ἔφθη - he can bring no New Testament textual evidence to prove that ἀποκάλυπτω was indeed elsewhere in the New Testament used as an Easter formula, let alone that it belonged to a tradition which could be traced back to the early Christian community. For this reason it seems strange that ἔφθη is interpreted in the light of the ἀποκάλυπτω-formulation and not vice versa. (But even if the ἔφθη-formula is taken as point of departure, it cannot be used as a stepping-stone for the visionary theory - cf supra.)

All in all, it must be stated that the visionary theory has not succeeded in bringing convincing textual evidence to serve as its point of departure. Of course this observation does not disprove this theory as such. What it does prove is its purely conjectural character. In favour of position 1 (cf supra) it must be noted that the origin of the ἔγειρω-formula as well as that of the ἔφθη-formula most probably goes back to the first Christian community in Jerusalem. In addition, the solemn declaration by Paul that he had received the resurrection as part of the gospel tradition also brings us relatively close to the very beginnings of Christianity. And finally, the various resurrection narratives in the Gospels and Acts, however they diverge, all witness basically to the conviction of the bodily resurrection. Of course all this is not conclusive evidence, but historically speaking it provides at least a definite point of departure in the New Testament text itself.

If we would grant the resurrection belief, for the sake of argument, the scientific status of a hypothesis, it may be said that this hypothesis still remains the most satisfactory explanation of the various phenomena we can detect in the shaping of New Testament faith. But that would make it too tantalisingly simple and easy. We should rather say that the bodily resurrection of Jesus is at the same time the most simple and the most daring and impossible explanation of the Easter event that could be imagined: simple in
the sense that it most readily explains the coming into being of the eye­
witness traditions, of the Easter formulae as we have traced them above, of
the conviction that God has ratified Jesus through the Easter event, as well as
the radical changes marking Easter as the turning point where the Proclaim­
er became the Proclaimed, where a timid, terrified disciple group became
jubilant messengers of the good tidings, where the church came into being,
and so forth. But it is daring and impossible in the sense that it entails the
acceptance of a metaphysical intervention, which flouts the codes of historical
enquiry and verification as formulated, for example, by Troeltsch. This is
exactly the reason why, despite those positive indications which may be
advanced, the New Testament conviction of Jesus' resurrection cannot, in the
last resort, be verified scientifically. In the end it remains a matter of faith.
It remains a challenge to trust the testimony of the eyewitnesses. But those
who accept this challenge - and with which group I gladly and gratefully asso­
ciate myself - do not experience it as an obstacle, since this is exactly what the
Bible is all about: that we believe in a transcendent living God who made
heaven and earth, who revealed Himself in the history of Israel, who acted in
and through Jesus of Nazareth, as well as in the history of the church and in
our own personal history. He is indeed the God who makes the impossible
possible, the One who raises the dead and who calls. Tα μὴ θανατάω ὡς θανάτον
(Rm 4:17). He is, as Blaise Pascal put it, the "God of Abraham, the God of
Isaac, the God of Jacob, not the God of the philosophers or the learned." He
reveals Himself to those, learned and unlearned, who dare to become anew
children in the kingdom of God (Mt 11:25; 18:3).

EXCURSUS ON THE MEANING OF THE AORIST AND PERFECT
PASSIVE OF ἔγειρομαι IN REFERENCE TO JESUS' RESURRECTION

It is rather surprising to note how uncritically it is generally accepted that
these passive forms, in reference to the Easter event, must be understood in a
passive sense (=Jesus was raised by God) while their possible deponential
usage (=Jesus rose) is ignored. This is the more intriguing since ὁφθη, used
in the same kind of context in 1 Corinthians 15:5ff, is as readily understood as
a deponens (=Jesus appeared) and not as a passive (=Jesus was
seen), while the latter would be quite acceptable in the context. Although we cannot go
into detail here, it is quite enlightening to consult the Septuagint in this
regard, since in this instance we have the Hebrew equivalents to help us. It is
remarkable that ἔγειρομαι probably functions in 26 out of 27 occurrences as
an intransitive active, that is as a deponens. Only in one instance is it
definitely passive in sense, being marked as such in the context, namely 1
Esdras 2:6 (cf v5). As a rule of thumb we can say that ἔγειρομαι has a
deponential meaning in the Septuagint except when contextually marked as
passive in meaning. Of special importance is the use of this verb in connec-
ation with the resurrection of dead people. In the well-known resurrection passage in the Isaiah apocalypse (Is 26:19) ἀναστήσουται οἱ νεκροὶ, καὶ ἐγερθήσονται οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις, the verb ἐγερθήσονται is not only used parallel to ἀναστήσουται, but also as translational equivalent for the kal imperfect of ὑηρί and therefore certainly has an active meaning (=those in the tombs shall rise). In LXX 4 Kings 4:31 (οὐκ ἁγέρθη τὸ παιδόρον) the Hebrew equivalent for ἁγέρθη is the hiphil of ὑπίρθη which certainly is active in sense (=the child has not risen). In Daniel 12:2a (καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν καθευδοντῶν ἐν γῆς χώματι ἐγερθήσονται) the latter verb is the translational equivalent of the hiphil imperfect of ὑπίρθη and therefore also used deponentially (=many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall rise/awake). (For the Hebrew terms for resurrection from the dead, Sawyer 1973, can be consulted.) In the New Testament outside the Pauline corpus we find many instances where ἐγερθήματα in connection with revival from death should rather or can as easily be interpreted in a deponential sense, for example Matthew 9:25; 12:42; 14:2; 16:21; 17:9,23; 20:19; 26:32; 27:63f; 28:6f; Mk 6:14,16,28; 16:6(,14); Lk 9:7,22; 11:31; 24:34 etc). With regard to the New Testament usage of ἐγερθήματα Blass, Debrunner & Rehkopf (1975:280f) declare bluntly: "er ist auferstanden heisst fast immer ἐγερθήματα" and then accept this meaning for seven occurrences in 1 Corinthians 15. This certainly goes too far, but it cannot be ruled out that ἐγερθήματα in quite a number of Pauline passages should be translated in an intransitive active sense, for example Romans 6:9; 7:4; 8:34; 2 Corinthians 5:15 and possibly even in some instances in 1 Corinthians 15 (vv4,12,13,14) (contra Fascher 1941:197). The fact that God is indicated as an active agent in no less than ten instances (Rm 4:24; 8:11bis; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:15; Gl 1:1; 1 Th 1:10; Eph 1:20; Col 2:12 cf Rm 6:4) does, however, indicate that in the Pauline corpus ἐγερθήματα should usually be understood as a passivum divinum.

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