CHAPTER SIX

PAPIAS AND APOLLINARIUS: BISHOPS IN HIERAPOLIS

6.1. Bishop Papias: A Separate Christian Path?

6.1.1. Historical Placement

Eusebius counts Papias among the outstanding church leaders of Asia Minor in the period around and after 100, ranking him alongside Polycarp of Smyrna and Ignatius of Antioch:

At that time [shortly before is mentioned the third year of Trajan’s reign], Polycarp came forward in Asia as a follower of the apostles, having taken over the episcopate in the church of Smyrna from the eyewitnesses and servants of the Lord. During that time, Papias became well known as bishop of the church of Hierapolis, as well as Ignatius, whose fame is still celebrated by many, who had succeeded as bishop of Antioch, second in succession to Peter.

Even though Irenaeus of Lyon, the earliest witness to Papias (writing about 50 years later), knows nothing of an episcopate, the statement about Papias’s episcopal dignity should not be rejected as an anachronism. Papias,

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1 This section is based in large part on the fragments published in Köntner 1998 and 2009, along with Kürzinger 1983. To supplement them, I have drawn on the Loeb edition of Ehrmann 2003 (pp. 92–119) and the extensively annotated edition of Norelli 2005.
2 Eus. He. 3.34.
3 Eus. H.e. 3.36.1 f.: Διεπρεπέν γε μήν κατά τούτος ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀσίας τῶν ἀποστόλων ὀμιλητής Πολύκαρπος, τῆς κατὰ Σμύρναν ἀκολουθίας πρὸς τῶν ἀυτῶν καὶ υπηρετῶν τοῦ κυρίου τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν ἐγκριθέν τόπων ἐνεκτείνεσαν· καθώς δὲ ἐγνωρίζεον Παπίας, τῆς ἐν Ἰεραπόλει παροικίας καὶ κύκλου ἐπίσκοπος, ὥσπερ παρὰ πλείστοις εἰς ἕτοι μὲν διαβόθητος Ἰγνάτιος, τῆς κατὰ Ἀντίοχου Πέτρου διαδοχῆς δεύτερος τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν κεκληρωμένος. Cf. also the entry for the third year of Trajan’s reign in Jerome’s Chronography: Hier. Chron. (R. Helm, GCS Eusebius 7 [1956], 193,23–194,2): Iohannem apostolum ad Traiani tempora Irenaeus episcopus permansisse scribit. Post quem auditores eius insignes fuerunt Papias Hieropolitanus episcopus et Polycarpus Zmyrnaeus et Ignatius Antiochenus.
4 Iren. Haer. 5.33.4 (A. Rousseau / L. Doutrleau / C. Mercer, SC 153 [1969], pp. 416 f.) characterizes Papias as a “… disciple of John and companion of Polycarp, a man of the old school.” Besides the Latin translation, the Greek original of this passage has also survived, quoted by Eusebius H.e. 3.39.1: ... Παπίας δὲ Ἰωάννου μὲν ἀκοιντικῆς Πολυκάρπου δὲ ἐταίρους γεγονός, ἄρρητος ἀνήρ ... —... Papias, Ioannis auditor, Polycarpi autem contubernalis, vetus homo ... . Irenaeus had had personal contact with Polycarp when he was young (Haer. 3.3-4).
whose leading role in the church of Hierapolis is clear, undertook it at the precise moment when the hierarchization of the clergy was moving forward and the monarchic episcopate was becoming standard in western Asia Minor, as Ignatius of Antioch attests for a series of churches, including Philadelphia and Tralleis, only a few days’ journey from Hierapolis. A somewhat earlier spotlight on the development of this hierarchy is cast by 1 Timothy, dating from c. 100, which targets the situation in Ephesus and lays out the moral demands on the episcopate.

The precise chronological dating of Papias’s episcopate has always posed great problems. In the passage quoted, Eusebius dates him in the time of Trajan, placing Papias in a series that includes Ignatius and Polycarp, whose biographical data likewise remain obscure. His personal contact with the daughters of Philip, however, can be plausibly associated with the principate of Trajan, whereas the tradition recorded by Philip Sidetes (5th cent.) that he also lived to see the principate of Hadrian is disputed: Apart from the miracle stories told by the daughters of Philip, Papias also reports that those who had been raised from the dead by Christ lived to see Hadrian’s reign. Quadratus, who composed an apology that he delivered to Hadrian, takes up the same theme when he notes that Jesus’ power is so enduring that some of those healed and raised are still alive. It is reasonable to suspect Philip Sidetes of making an error and confusing Papias with Quadratus, especially since Eusebius’s *Historia ecclesiastica* provides no grounds for associating Papias with the reign of Hadrian; however, the statements by

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8 See pp. 205 f. above.


10 Hadrian is not mentioned explicitly in the text of Quadratus. Eus. *H.e.* 4.3.2 preserves the fragment from Quadratus: … οἱ θεραπευθέντες, οἱ ἀναστάντες ἐκ νεκρῶν, οἱ οὐκ ῥήθησαν μόνον θεραπευμένοι καὶ ἀναστάμενοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ζεὶ παρόντες, οὐδὲ ἐπηδημοῦτος μόνον τοῦ σωτήρος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπαλαγέντος ἦσαν ἐπὶ χρόνον ἰκανόν, ὡστε καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἰμετέρους χρόνους τινές αὐτῶν ἀφίκοντο.—“… so that some of them have lived until our day.” The fragment is also quoted by Ehrman 2003, pp. 118 f.

11 Cf. here the argument of Körtner 1983, pp. 88–94 (with literature survey), which goes