

You Invent a Trypho for Yourselves: Addressing Radical Reinterpretations of Trypho and Canonical and Non-Canonical Scriptures

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Abstract

In this article, the mythicist (those who deny Jesus' historicity) claim that there were earliest mythicists is contended with. The arguments put forth that Trypho from Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* was a mythicist when he claimed "You invent a Christ" is shown to be faulty and based on cherry-picked evidence which denies the greater context of Trypho's statements. It is shown that Trypho's claim was that Jesus was not the "Messiah" but was being contorted into one falsely. Appendices further address misinterpretations of canonical and non-canonical passages misinterpreted by mythicists.

Keywords: Mythicism, Trypho, Jesus' Historicity, Justin Martyr

Introduction

The historicity of Jesus has become a rather hot button issue among a number of academics and also in lay circles. Historians have regularly been asked to weigh in, and the answer has almost exclusively been the same thing at every turn: Jesus existed as a historical figure. The current status of the question is still firmly in the positive (in favor of Jesus) as far as modern scholarship is concerned.¹ Despite this, Barna Group indicates that nearly 40%

¹ In North American and European countries, the debate has been largely over since the early 1900s. See Antonio Piñero (ed.), *¿Existió Jesús realmente? El Jesús de la historia a debate* (Madrid, Editorial Raices, 2008); Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, "Het geding om de historiciteit van Jezus: Edward van der Kaaij in perspectief," *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 69, no. 2 (2015): 87-101; Andreas Dettwiler, "Jésus a-t-il bel et bien existé? La question des sources," in Andreas Dettwiler (ed.), *Jésus de Nazareth. Etudes contemporaines* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2017), 13-44; see Steve Mason's articles in Jens Schröter, Christine Jacobi, and Lena Nogosseck (eds.), *Jesus-Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 159-170; Antonio Piñero, *Aproximación*

of the United Kingdom doubts Jesus' existence, and nearly 8% of the United States does.²

For the (as of now growing) school of thought that holds that Jesus most likely did not exist (or that we cannot know if he did or not),³

al Jesús histórico, Third Edition (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2019); Leopold Scholtz, "Jesus se kruisiging en opwekking: 'n Akademieshistoriese waardering van die bronne," *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe* 61, no. 1 (2021): 282-306, etc. Other sources cited below throughout. For resolutions elsewhere, see M. M. Kublanov, *Voznikoveniye khristianstva. Epokha. Idei. Iskaniya* (Mosca: Izdatel'stvo Nauka); Hu Yutang, "Lishi shang de Yeshu," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 1 (1981): 84-100; Yung Han Kim, "The Historical Reality and Meaning of Jesus," *Korean Reformed Studies* 14 (2003): 11-35; Wong Kun Chun Eric, "Xin yue zhong de yesu jidū xingxiang," *Shengjing wenxue yanjiu* 7 (2013): 333-353; Hyekyoung Song, "The Historicity of Jesus and the Potential Resource of the Apocryphal Gospel," *Catholic Theology and Thought* 82 (2019): 107-50; Yu Ke, "Yesu shengping chutan," in Long Xiuqing (ed.), *Yu Ke Xiansheng wenji* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2020).

² Barna Group, "Perceptions of Jesus, Christians & Evangelism in the UK," *Barna* (2016), www.barna.com/research/perceptions-of-jesus-christians-evangelism-in-the-uk/. See also, Barna Group, "What Do Americans Believe About Jesus? 5 Popular Beliefs," *Barna* (2015), www.barna.com/research/what-do-americans-believe-about-jesus-5-popular-beliefs/.

³ For the most recent support by qualified academics, see Jean Magne, *From Christianity to gnosis and from gnosis to Christianity: An Itinerary Through the Texts to and from the Tree of Paradise*, *Brown Judaic Studies* 286 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); Robert M. Price, *Deconstructing Jesus* (Amherst: Prometheus, 2000); Tom Harpur, *The Pagan Christ: Recovering the Lost Light* (Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers, 2004); Thomas L. Thompson, *The Messiah Myth: The Near Eastern Roots of Jesus and David* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Arthur Droge, "Jesus and Ned Ludd: What's in a Name?" *Caesar: A Journal for the Critical Study of Religion and Human Values* 3, no. 1 (2009): 23-5; Thomas L. Brodie, *Beyond the Quest for the Historical Jesus: Memoir of a Discovery* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012); Richard Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus: Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014); Llogari Pujol Boix, *Érase una vez... Jesús, el egipcio. Las fuentes egipcias del Nuevo Testamento Setme II* (Barcelona: Ediciones de La Tempestad, 2015); Norman Simms, "Jesus the Jew: Who Says So?" in Zev Garber (ed.), *Teaching the Historical Jesus* (London: Routledge, 2015), 121-32; Tina Rae Collins, *The Judaeo-Christian Myth* (New York: M. F. Sohn Publications, 2015); Hermann Detering, *Buddha, Josua, Jesus und der Weg Zum Anderen Ufer: Die Gnostische Interpretation des Exodus und die Anfänge des Josua-Jesus-Kultes* (Self Published on Amazon, 2018); Raphael Lataster, *Questioning*

a notable problem has persisted against their thesis for some centuries now. Whenever these early “mythicists” would argue that Jesus of Nazareth was an ahistorical figure, theologians and biblical critics would often respond quite notably with the claim that no early writers had ever doubted that Jesus existed, and, in fact, all of the enemies of Christianity did hold that he was a real, flesh and blood personality of the human world, even if they denied his divinity.⁴ This claim, for numerous decades, was never met by mythicists, as there just did not seem to be the any evidence to refute these them. Thus, early mythicists simply did not address the issue in any particular depth and had to suffer the fact that there were no early figures who had the same hypothesis.

This changed in the last century, or so, with closer readings of the early Church Fathers, especially around the time that mythicism reached its height in the early 1900s. With this debate, as well as growing access to various resources, came many keen critics who peered through various sources and, in particular, a few mythicists managed to come away with some names, a few of which have persisted to this day. Trypho’s statements found in Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho* 8 were particularly noteworthy. Trypho writes:

But the Christ, if he has indeed been born, and exists anywhere, is unknown, and doesn't even yet know himself, and has no power until Elijah comes to anoint him, and

the Historicity of Jesus: Why a Philosophical Analysis Elucidates the Historical Discourse (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

⁴ For some of the earliest, see Hugo Grotius, *De veritate religionis Christianae*, Liber Secundus (Jakobus Rurt, 1627), 39–40; Henry More, *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness: Or, A True and Faithfull Representation of the Everlasting Gospel of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Onely Begotten Son of God and Sovereign Over Men and Angels* (London: J. Fleisher, 1660), 315–20; John Owen, *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Also Concerning the Messiah* (London: Printed for Various Persons, 1668), 209–210; Edward Stillingfleet, *A Letter to a Deist, in Answer to Several Objections against the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures* (London: W. G., 1677), 43–54; Robert Jenkin, *The Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 1 (London: Peter Buck, 1698), 257; Caroli Daubuz, *Pro Testimonio Flavii Josephi de Jesu Christi*, Book 1 (London: 1706), 12–13 and 38–39; John Browne, *The Truth of Christianity, Prov'd in a Plain and Easy Manner, Suitable to the Capacities of All* (London: J. Robert, 1734), 13.

make him appear to all. But you, on the basis of groundless hearsay, invent a Christ for yourselves, and for his sake you are now irresponsibly doomed⁵

Now this passage was latched onto by mythicist scholars and laymen involved in the debate over a century ago. One of the earliest examples of this was a person who went under the pseudonym of “Antichrist” writing in 1875, who argued that the absence of evidence of Paul and also the statement “invent a ‘Christ’ for yourselves” was enough to declare that Jesus had not existed as a historical figure (among other similar arguments).⁶ C. H. Arthur Drews (1865-1935) was another such author. An idealist monist philosopher and scholar, Drews is best known in biblical scholarship for his role in initiating one of the widest international debates over Jesus in history, even leading to debating Hermann von Soden at the Berlin Zoological Gardens.⁷ In 1911, he published *Die Christusmythe II*, a sequel to his infamous *Die Christusmythe* (1909), and in this work he quickly claimed that the statements by Trypho were those of the earliest denial of Jesus’ historicity.⁸ Trypho was not the only figure to get latched onto. In addition, figures such as W. B. Smith pointed to sources like PGM IV.3020, where it states “I conjure you by the god of the Hebrews, Jesus,”⁹ which until recently also had a large degree of popularity among

⁵ I use here (so that mythicists cannot levy accusations of mistranslation) Carrier’s translation, see Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 350.

⁶ Antichrist [pseud.], *The Jesus Christ of John Stuart Mill* (London: Edward Truelove, 1875), 4–5.

⁷ For a detailed account of the intense debates, see Alfred Dieterich, *Hat Jesus gelebt? Reden gehalten auf dem Berliner Religionsgespräch des Deutschen Monistenbundes am 31. Januar und 1. Februar 1910 im Zoologischen Garten über Die Christusmythe von Arthur Drews* (Berlin: Verlag des Deutschen Monistenbundes, 1910). See also George S. Williamson, “The Christ Myth Debate: Radical Theology and German Public Life, 1909-1913,” *Church History* 86 (2017): 728–764 for a notable summary.

⁸ I use here the English translation, see Arthur Drews, *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, trans. Joseph McCabe (London: Watts & Co., 1912), 16–17.

⁹ W. B. Smith, “The Pre-Christian Jesus,” *American Journal of Theology* 15 (1912): 259–265 specifically 264.

mythicists as well.¹⁰ Another piece of evidence cited was a forged letter from Hadrian in the *Historia Augusta*, which reported an apparent syncretism between the god Serapis and Jesus.¹¹ Archibald Robertson also noted that some had used the *Fifth Sibylline Oracle* in support of their positions as well.¹²

However, by and large all of these were discounted in time. PGM IV was found to date far too late to be of any use for mythicists. Recently, Price outright declared it is not useful for their purposes.¹³ The letter from Hadrian likely also dates far too late.¹⁴ The possible references in the *Fifth Sibylline Oracle* which mythicists used has subsequently also been challenged on its authenticity.¹⁵ In recent years, a common appeal to Philo of

¹⁰ For a few examples, see Georges Ory, *Analyse des origines chrétiennes* (Cercle Ernest-Renan La Ferté-Macé, impr. Leroy, 1963); Acharya S, *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled* (Kempton: Adventures Unlimited, 2004), 485-486; Dan Barker, *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher became One of America's Leading Atheists* (Berkeley: Ulysses, 2008), 272.

¹¹ *Historia Augusta* 8 'From Hadrian Augustus to Servianus' 1-7.

¹² Archibald Robertson, *The Origins of Christianity*, Revised Edition (New York: International Publishers, 1962), 73. Robertson is likely referring to L. Gordon Rylands (see *Did Jesus Ever Live?* [London: Watts & Co., 1935], 42 and *The Beginnings of Gnostic Christianity* [London: Watts & Co., 1940], 156). One modern mythicist who has used them is Frank R. Zindler. Zindler (*The Jesus the Jews Never Knew*, 313-314) makes the inexplicable case that Jesus and the "cross" in the fifth oracle are somehow evidence of a zodiac connection, in line with his astrotheologist approach to mythicism. This theory is exceptionally strained for multiple reasons, the most notable being that the reference to the sun in this passage is quite literal, as it is a Christian interpolation connecting Joshua and Jesus, based on Joshua, the prophet, having caused the sun to stand still (Joshua 10:1-15), akin to how Jesus is equated with Moses in the Gospel of Matthew.

¹³ For the date, see Hans Dieter Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), xxiii, 62, 96. For Price's comments, see Robert M. Price, *The Christ Myth Theory and its Problems* (Cranford: American Atheist, 2013), 413.

¹⁴ Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 743-746.

¹⁵ Stephen Felder, "What is 'The Fifth Sibylline Oracle'?" *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 33 (2002): 363-385 argues that the sections in question were the result of a redactor writing some decades after the destruction of the Second Temple. Meanwhile John J. Collins remarks that at least one of the

Alexandria has also been made by mythicists. These are found lacking by academics as well.¹⁶ Additionally, Price's attempts to claim Celsus as a cohort in mythicism are also entirely without basis.¹⁷ As a result of all this research that has been done on these

verses in the section (V.257) is Christian in origin, see John J. Collins, "The Sibylline Oracles," in James Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments*, Vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 399. J. C. O'Neill, "The Man from Heaven: Sib Or 5.256-59," *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 5, no. 9 (1991): 87-102 argues that there was no interpolation, however this argumentation is strained and has failed to convince scholars, see John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 148. The present author suggests that the text reflects a Christian working with Old Testament material and showing Jesus to be like Joshua, akin to the Jesus-Moses parallelism in the Gospel of Matthew, see Zev Farber, *Images of Joshua in the Bible and Their Reception* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 309-310 and Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013 [reprint]).

¹⁶ Simon Gathercole, "The Historical and Human Existence of Jesus in Paul's Letters," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 16 (2018): 183-212 (specifically 192-193n35) and Daniel N. Gullotta, "On Richard Carrier's Doubts: A Response to Richard Carrier's *On the Historicity of Jesus: Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt*," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 15 (2017): 326-328. The primary issues are that Philo never assigns his Logos the name "Jesus," and the LXX Zech. 6:12 passage cited where ἀνατολή occurs has more context. Not one verse later (LXX Zech. 6:13) it is stated that the "branch" and the "priest" (i.e. the figure Joshua the High Priest in this passage) are different figures, thus, mythicist attempts to identify Philo's Logos (which he identifies with ἀνατολή "the branch") is without any basis. It is entirely conjectural. Furthermore, divine angels are never named "Jesus" or "Joshua," but usually names ending in the divine suffix *-el* (i.e. Michael, Samael, Uriel, etc.). Other supporters of Carrier's thesis including Derreck Bennett, "Was the New Testament Influenced by Pagan Religions? A Refutation of Dr. Ronald Nash," *Journal of Higher Criticism* 13, no. 1 (2018): 123-138 (131-132) and Lataster, *Questioning the Historicity of Jesus*, 378-379. Leading scholarship does not see Philo as a direct influence on the New Testament authors, see David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen: Uitgeverij Van Gorcum, 1993), 63-86; Larry Hurtado, "Does Philo Help Explain Christianity?" in Roland Deines and Karl Wilhelm-Niebuhr (eds.), *Philo und Das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 73-92; Folker Siegert, "Philo and the New Testament," in Adam Kamesar (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 175-209; Jean Daniélou, *Philo of Alexandria*, trans. James G. Colbert (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 163-177.

¹⁷ Robert M. Price, *Bart Ehrman Interpreted: How One Radical New Testament Scholar Understands Another* (Durham: Pitchstone, 2018), 67. He claims

various figures, the vast majority of the claimed “evidence” has been primarily abandoned by mythicist scholars in the last few decades,¹⁸ save by laymen who continue to be ignorant or ignore recent developments.

However, the debate over Trypho has remained. The name of Trypho became ubiquitous in later mythicist scholarship from this time onward, and has continued to have a lasting place in mythicist work to this very day.¹⁹ In addition, even non-mythicist scholars such as Louis H. Feldman, also concluded that this statement was indeed indicative of Jesus’ nonexistence.²⁰ Thus, the question must be asked: *was Trypho an ancient mythicist?* In two addendums, I will lastly address the *Ascension of Isaiah* which

that Celsus does not necessarily grant a historical Jesus, yet he consistently does so (e.g. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 1.28, where Celsus accuses Jesus as having been a swindler who faked his own virgin birth). There is simply no reason to consider Price’s argument even salient (see Bart Ehrman, *Did Jesus Exist? The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth* [New York: HarperOne, 2012], 95–96). For a specific analysis of Celsus in regard to Jesus’ historicity, see David Neal Greenwood, “The *Alethes Logos* of Celsus and the Historicity of Christ,” *Anglican Theological Review* 96, no. 4 (2014): 705-713.

¹⁸ More intriguing mythic attempts have instead been made at reinterpreting Christian history as indicating that Jesus never existed, and that Christianity began as a gnostic religion. Jean Magne (*From Christianity to Gnosis*, 203) goes as far as to argue that Jesus and John the Baptist were both mythical and later historicized. Refutations have been briefly offered elsewhere, see Christopher A. Graham, *The Church as Paradise and the Way Therein: Early Christian Appropriation of Genesis 3:22-24* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 84-85. A more substantial response was made in Bruce Chilton, “The Trial of Jesus Reconsidered,” in Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 481-500.

¹⁹ Paul-Louis Couchoud, *The Enigma of Jesus*, trans. Winifred Whale (London: Watts & Co., 1924), 30; Iosif Kryvelev, *Christ: Myth or Reality?* (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1987), 166; Frank R. Zindler, *The Jesus the Jews Never Knew: Sepher Toldoth Yeshu and the Quest of the Historical Jesus in Jewish Sources* (Cranford: American Atheist, 2003), 71–72; Earl Doherty, *Jesus: Neither God nor Man* (Ottawa: Age of Reason, 2009), 696–698; Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 350; Raphael Lataster, *Jesus Did Not Exist: A Debate Among Atheists* (CreateSpace, 2015), 343; Price, *Bart Ehrman Interpreted*, 66–67.

²⁰ Louis H. Feldman, “The Testimonium Flavianum: The State of the Question,” in E. Berkeley and Sarah A. Edwards (ed.), *Christological Perspectives: Essays in Honor of Harvey K. McArthur* (New York: Pilgrim, 1982), 179–99 specifically 182.

has been, falsely, used to support mythicist positions as well, and finally several scripture passages which have been cited in support of ancient mythicists as well.

The “Trypho Mythicist” Thesis

The proponents of the “Trypho mythicist” thesis have raised a number of arguments (of varying quality) to defend their position that Trypho says what they claim he does. Paul-Louis Couchoud, for example, took to arguing that Justin Martyr went on to try and prove that Jesus had really existed in history, and as a result, this meant that Justin himself was interpreting Trypho as denying the reality of Jesus.²¹ However, Couchoud’s argumentation can be shown to be intensely problematic from the standpoint that this is not what Justin does at all. In the following sections of the *Dialogue* after Trypho’s claim, Justin actually goes on to claim that Trypho’s understanding was based on those who do not know the scriptures.²² In the following passages, Justin continues to argue that scripture actually aligns with the Christian conception of Jesus as the prophesied messiah. As such, Couchoud’s understanding of the *Dialogue* seems to be incorrect.

The more detailed attempts to construe Trypho as a mythicist have come from Earl Doherty in recent years. Doherty’s take is particularly nuanced in that he does not specifically argue that the mythicist interpretation is conclusive, primarily because the language used is both ambiguous and also because Trypho (being Justin’s invention according to Doherty) elsewhere assumes the historicity of Jesus.²³ Doherty writes, “The issue, of course, cannot be resolved conclusively. It is indeed a cryptic statement on Trypho's part, as Eddy and Boyd concede.”²⁴ We will step back from Doherty’s argumentation here for a bit, but it shall be returned to below.

²¹ Couchoud, *The Enigma of Jesus*, 30.

²² Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 9.

²³ Doherty, *Jesus*, 696–8.

²⁴ Doherty, *Jesus*, 698.

Next to Doherty comes Robert M. Price. Price's own position is to make the case that Trypho is most concretely interpreted as being, essentially, an ancient mythicist who is then being forced to entertain that Jesus existed elsewhere. Price states:

It seems less contrived to take Trypho as charging that the Christian Savior was a figment of pious imagination. Bart [Ehrman] points out that throughout the *Dialogue*, Trypho acknowledges that Jesus did exist but declines to accept him as the Messiah. Is that so clear? To me it sounds as if Trypho is being made to grant the reality of the crucified Jesus purely for the sake of argument: could such an individual as you describe have qualified as Christ?²⁵

Price holds that the (what he calls "apologist"²⁶) interpretation of the passage as indicating that Trypho denies the that Jesus was the *messiah* is a strained and convoluted argument, and instead posits that the assumption that Trypho is talking of Jesus as a whole is the less strained reading of the statement. In addition, Price seems to be attributing to Trypho an intriguing degree of individuality and autonomy in this passage, while elsewhere it seems that Justin as "strong armed" (for lack of a better term) Trypho into taking up the historical Jesus, basically for the sake of entertaining a hypothetical.

Zindler on the other hand, however, does not take these views of Trypho's autonomy as even mattering, since Trypho may be a creation of Justin. Zindler states:

Whether or not Trypho was a real person or merely a rhetorical device, the survival of such an argument through all the centuries of Christian censorship comes close to being a true miracle. [...] In the face of so blunt and frontal attack, what does Justin do? Does he point out that his 'Christ' is none other than a certain Jesus who used to live in Nazareth? Of course not. [Zindler rejects the existence of

²⁵ Price, *Bart Ehrman Interpreted*, 66–7.

²⁶ Price, *Bart Ehrman Interpreted*, 66.

*Nazareth for a long passage*²⁷] Justin makes no attempt to answer Trypho's charges by means of historical or physical evidence of any kind. Instead he uses the "evidence" of scripture. He triumphantly 'proves' that Isaiah, Hosea, and Daniel had predicted the Christ for whom he offered his philosophical defense.²⁸

Zindler's argumentation is curious since it argues closer to along the lines that Doherty does, though he comes to a far more conclusive position. In this case, Trypho's historicity is largely irrelevant to him, it is more the fact that the argument which is placed in Trypho's mouth by Justin exists in the first place, which Zindler takes to be a declaration that Jesus was ahistorical, a myth. Likewise, he also acknowledges that Justin makes no attempt to actually prove that Jesus existed, but instead offers the prophetic evidence that Jesus was the messiah, thus directly counteracting the claims of Couchoud.

Others have been far less apt to giving argumentation and merely stating this issue as though it were a settled fact. Carrier writes,

A hint of the existence of doubters of Jesus' historicity appears in the character of the Jewish opponent created by Justin Martyr in his fictional *Dialogue with Trypho* in the mid-second century.²⁹

Carrier offers no defense of this interpretation, however, it is merely stated as though it were a resolved issue in favor of mythicism, though Carrier does note that Justin is portrayed as

²⁷ For rebuttals demonstrating that Nazareth did exist in the time of Jesus, see Ken Dark, *The Sisters of Nazareth Covenant* (New York: Routledge, 2020); Rainer Reisner, "The Nazareth of Jesus," in Aaron W. White, Craig A. Evans, and David Wenham (eds.), *The Earliest Perceptions of Jesus in Context: Essays in Honour of John Nolland on His 70th Birthday* (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 1–19; Anna Oracz, Review of Salm *The Myth of Nazareth*, in *The Polish Journal of Biblical Research* 14 (2015): 211–214; Stephen J. Pfann and Yehudah Rapuano, "On the Nazareth Village Farm Report: A Reply to Salm," *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 26 (2008): 105–111.

²⁸ Zindler, *The Jesus the Jews Never Knew*, 72–3.

²⁹ Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 350.

not giving Trypho any evidence that Jesus actually existed.³⁰ Raphael Lataster likewise does similar stating (without defense):

[T]here are actually hints that some may have questioned Jesus' historicity, such as Trypho's 'the Christ, if he has indeed been born,' with Justin Martyr's reply focusing on God's revelations and not historical facts.³¹

With the current literature on the matter now roughly known, the question becomes if any of these arguments, in fact, hold up under scrutiny. Unfortunately, most scholars have offhandedly thrown out this passage on Trypho without any notable counterargument to what most mythicists have claimed about the statements, and a result, there is very little in the way of current scholarship which has specifically analyzed this issue which I am aware of currently.³² As such, a more detailed analysis is needed of this thesis. In what follows, I shall evaluate the weaknesses of the "Trypho mythicist" hypothesis and make the case that the best interpretation is the historicist one.

Problems with the Thesis

While the arguments from Couchoud can be more readily discredited (as other mythicists have even pointed out, though without intending to, Couchoud's errors) those of Price, Zindler, and Doherty in particular deserve careful consideration. In what follows, I will give a number of points that should serve to demonstrate the most notable problems with the "Trypho

³⁰ Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 350–1.

³¹ Lataster, *Jesus Did Not Exist*, 343.

³² Robert Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 15n35; Ehrman, *Did Jesus Exist?* 96–97; Justin J. Meggitt, "More Ingenious than Learned? Examining the Quest for the Non-Historical Jesus," *New Testament Studies* 65 (2019): 443–460, specifically 446. The most detailed rebuttal has been Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, *The Legend of Jesus: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 169–170. A brief rebuttal was also offered in Christopher Hansen, "Jesus' Historicity and Sources: The Misuse of Extrabiblical Sources for Jesus and a Suggestion," *American Journal of Biblical Theology* [Digital journal] 22 (2021): 1–21, specifically 14–15.

mythicist' thesis and why it is likely a poor interpretation of Trypho's words in the work of Justin.

Firstly, there is the problem of the character independence of Trypho. Price's argumentation relies on the notion that Justin is somehow forcing or strongarming Trypho into going along with a hypothetical. But is this view tenable? Doherty quite aptly notes in his analysis of this passage:

It needs to be made very clear about what we are dealing with here. Trypho is Justin's own character. Even if based on someone real, or on a "typical" (for Justin) Jew, he is fictional. He serves a purpose in Justin's dialogue. He will say and reflect what Justin wants him to; like an obedient puppet, he will respond to Justin's remarks in order to facilitate the progress of Justin's argument.³³

This point actually does a lot to mitigate many mythicist positions. We cannot assign Trypho any agency or autonomy in the *Dialogue*, because the *Dialogue* is Justin's construction. Even if based on true events, Justin is still shaping it according to his desires, and so we cannot make the case that Trypho is intrinsically separate of Justin's mind and intentions. As a character in Justin's work, Trypho acts and behaves accordingly, even if Trypho had been a historical figure (though I doubt this).³⁴ Arnos B. Hulén made a similar point in 1932, stating:

It has been demonstrated that both the Jew and his opponent know many of the rabbinic teachings of the time, that knowledge, of course, being Justin's own, if the *Dialogue* be of his own creation. But Trypho does not know Hebrew; he urges his antagonist to study the philosophers not the Scriptures; and in his doctrine of the Messiah, if not in his Logos doctrine, he makes amazing concessions. Throughout the debate he is often but a tool in the Christian's hands, assisting at every point in the unfolding

³³ Doherty, *Jessus*, 696–7.

³⁴ On Trypho's historicity, see Claudia Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians: History and Polemics, 30-150 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 215.

of the Christian interpretation, and he is also extremely deferential and timid. [...] For a faithful representation of the Judaism of the Second Century we can therefore hardly look to figures like Trypho.³⁵

Simply put, it is the case that the historicity of Trypho is largely irrelevant, because what we have here are not Trypho's words, most likely, but we have a construction by Justin.³⁶ This means that the idea that Trypho is being forced to endorse a hypothetical of Jesus' existence in the *Dialogue* (as proposed by Price) seems to be untenable. Trypho is not forced to do anything, because Trypho's speeches, ideas, and knowledge all stem from one person: Justin. As such, anything Trypho says will have a consistency with what Justin wants him to say. The question then is: would Justin ever choose to invent a mythicist claim, and then never even bother to refute it (as Justin does not)?

Secondly, is the issue of Justin's rebuttal. As Zindler was all too keen to point out, Justin does not actually respond to an accusation that Jesus did not exist. Instead, Justin actually goes on to argue (as Archibald Robertson noted) that Jesus was the prophesied messiah according to scripture.³⁷ In conjunction with the first point, above, this calls into question whether or not Justin (not Trypho, who has no separate autonomy) himself wanted to pose such an accusation that Jesus did not exist. And from elsewhere, we can gather that his portrait of the figure of Trypho, along with his own responses, indicate that he did not. Justin's response (*Dialogue* 9ff.), along with the various times that Trypho takes up a historical Jesus (*Dialogue* 32, 39, 48 etc.) indicate that Justin was not rebutting to a claim that Jesus never existed. Zindler, of course, does argue that Justin is retaining an argument that was uttered at the time, but since he has not established that this is, in fact, an argument that Jesus never existed and he merely assumes that this is a tradition (and not simply words invented by

³⁵ Arnos B. Hulén, "The 'Dialogues with the Jews' as Sources for the Early Jewish Argument against Christianity," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 51 (1932): 58–70 specifically 63.

³⁶ Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians*, 129.

³⁷ Archibald Robertson, *Jesus: Myth or History?* (London: Watts & Co., 1946), 25–6.

Justin that he thinks a Jewish speaker like Trypho would say) his case largely shows itself to be conjectural. There is simply no reason to suppose that this is an older tradition and not Justin's invention, and even if it were, Zindler provided no evidence this is a claim of mythicism. The immediate context of Justin's response indicates it is about the Messianic qualities of Jesus.

Thirdly, mythicists have often neglected to point out that the whole passage actually has a parallel twin spoken by Trypho later in the *Dialogue*. To reiterate the passage in *Dialogue* 8 according to Carrier's translation:

But the Christ, if he has indeed been born, and exists anywhere, is unknown, and doesn't even yet know himself, and has no power until Elijah comes to anoint him, and make him appear to all. But you, on the basis of groundless hearsay, invent a Christ for yourselves, and for his sake you are now irresponsibly doomed.³⁸

Now, Robertson, along with Eddy and Boyd, would contend that this passage is specifically about the fact that Jesus is not the messiah, and Christians have construed him to be so.³⁹ This is based on the fact that Elijah being mentioned here specifically has to do with the messiah then being anointed. Without Elijah anointing him, the messiah would not even know that he was such. Thus, Christians invent a *messiah* for themselves, not a Jesus. This interpretation is vindicated by a passage later on in the *Dialogue* where the same accusations are levied:

"It appears to me," said Trypho, "that they who assert that He was of human origin, and was anointed as the Christ only by choice, propose a doctrine much more credible than yours. We Jews all expect that Christ will be a man of merely human origin, and that Elias⁴⁰ will come to anoint Him. If this man appears to be the Christ, He must be considered to be a man of solely human birth, yet, from the

³⁸ Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 350.

³⁹ Robertson, *Jesus*, 26; Eddy and Boyd, *The Jesus Legend*, 169–70.

⁴⁰ That being Elijah.

fact that Elias has not yet come, I must declare that this man is not the Christ.”⁴¹

This is directly paralleled by the first accusations in *Dialogue 8*, and Justin responds to this by arguing that Elijah was not to come until the second advent of Christ, which also directly responds to the accusations that would have occurred in *Dialogue 8*. If there were then two comings of Christ, and only in the second one would Elijah come, then it follows that Christians did not follow a blind rumor, because Justin talks of Jesus' arrival as the *first* coming of the Christ. We can again also reference the fact that this construction of the debate between Justin and Trypho is one which Justin completely controls as the writer, and, as a result, there does not seem to be any reason that Justin would put in arguments he had no intention on answering and just letting stand on their own. That Justin would include such a problematic claim as “Jesus did not exist” and not respond, seems to be quite a stretch, especially when *Dialogue 8* is compared with 49. Justin appears to be addressing claims that Jesus had been construed into being the messiah, not that he did not exist at all.

Lastly, one can point out the fact that Trypho's use of “Christ” (Χριστὸν in the passage) is actually not clearly talking of the Christian Jesus of Nazareth at all, arguably. There are a few reasons for suspecting this: (1) Trypho never accuses Jesus of never existing elsewhere, (2) the passage is mirrored by *Dialogue 49* where he again uses ‘Christ’ as the title *messiah* in connection to Elijah, and (3) Trypho does not have an issue with using Jesus' name elsewhere (as Trypho has him does this, see *Dialogue 35, 46, 57, 89*), so why would he not do so here, instead of leaving this passage ambiguous? The language itself is paralleled with Trypho's claims about *messianism* but not with his claims about Jesus in particular. Trypho refers to Jesus as a “so-called” Christ (*Dialogue 32*), as a “Christ of yours” (*Dialogue 77*), as a ‘crucified man’ (*Dialogue 38*), by his name “Jesus” (as noted above), and other

⁴¹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 49. Translation from Thomas B. Falls, *The Fathers of the Church: Writings of Saint Justin Martyr* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008 repri.), 221.

identifiers. But he makes no specific identifiers here, but instead has language paralleled with when he talks about the *messiah* in general. As such, we have linguistic reason to consider him talking about Jesus specifically but the concept of the messiah coming and not being anointed by Elijah.

Conclusions

Given the above caveats, it appears that the “Trypho mythicist” hypothesis which has been submitted by a number of academics (mythicists and historicists even) seems to be a misinterpretation of the evidence at hand. Trypho’s wording, while potentially shocking if one reads “invent a Christ” as indicating Jesus in this passage, the evidence at hand seems to indicate the contrary position, that this has specifically to do with Jesus not being the messiah, but not do with Jesus not existing. Trypho does not use any specific identifying language to say that Jesus does not exist in the passage, and when paralleled with *Dialogue* 49 the evidence points in favor of this being about messianism, not do with the historical existence of Jesus.

Alice Whealey, responding briefly to Louis H. Feldman, summarizes the issues at hand quite aptly:

The language attributed to Trypho “you [Christians] have invented a Christ for yourselves” does not necessarily mean Trypho doubted Jesus’ historical existence. The context of the comment suggests rather that Trypho, like most of his Jewish contemporaries, did not agree with Christians that Jesus was the Messiah.⁴²

In the view of the present author, there is no reason to consider Trypho to have been an ancient mythicist or doubter of Jesus’ historicity in general. Instead, the more appropriate interpretation appears to be that this passage is simply more typical of what one would find of the time: accusations that Jesus was not the messiah

⁴² Alice Whealey, “Josephus on Jesus: Historical Criticism and the Testimonium Flavianum Controversy from Late Antiquity to Modern Times,” PhD Diss. (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, 1998), 171–2n61.

and that Christians had in some fashion twisted Jesus into being one. There is simply no evidence of ancient mythicism, and, in fact, it has been determined that the earliest references to mythicism did not start until the mid-16th century CE.⁴³

Jesus' historicity is well established, and early sources do not attest to any kind of mythicism. The extrabiblical sources, while not entirely helpful for establishing Jesus existed, do establish that there were not early mythicists declaring that he never existed.⁴⁴ The Pauline epistles remain the best evidence of the historical Jesus, and establish that he existed.⁴⁵ When all evidence is considered, it is simpler more parsimonious and historically evident to conclude that Jesus existed, was born of a woman, was said to be of the line of David, had disciples, a brother named James, and died in Judea by crucifixion, and then was believed to be resurrected.

If one is to make the case for mythicism, it will not be done through the errant hunt for ancient defenders of their theory.

Addendum 1: The Ascension of Isaiah

A brief comment should be made about the apocryphal text known as the *Ascension of Isaiah*. Mythicists have been using this text, in one way or another, since the early-mid 20th century, one of the earliest of them being Paul-Louis Couchoud.⁴⁶ Since then, Doherty, Carrier, and Lataster have also all made use of the *Ascension*, arguing that it possibly is a reflex of an earlier view of

⁴³ Christopher Hansen, *The Earliest Mythicist References*, Second Edition (Amazon KDP, 2020).

⁴⁴ See Hansen, "Jesus' Historicity and Sources."

⁴⁵ See Gathercole, "Historical and Human Existence of Jesus in Paul's Letters"; Christopher Hansen, "An Evaluation of the Neo-Dutch Radical School of New Testament Criticism," *The Journal of Biblical Theology* 4, no. 2 (2021): 240-264.

⁴⁶ Couchoud, *The Enigma of Jesus*, 18-19. See also references in the two-volume set Paul-Louis Couchoud, *The Creation of Christ: An Outline of the Beginnings of Christianity*, Trans. C. Bradlaugh Bonner, Two Volumes (London: Watts & Co., 1939).

a celestial Jesus.⁴⁷ The argument only functions, however, because their views of the *Ascension* are outdated and uninformed by recent studies on the *Ascension's* cosmology and textual history. Instead, they rely on conjectural emendations to the text, and then a misinterpretation of the cosmology.

The first issue is that most recent studies, including the leading authoritative text criticism on the subject, has led virtually all scholars to accept that the Long Ending in Chapter 11, which has a record of Jesus' life, is authentic.⁴⁸ There are multiple reasons for this, but the main ones are that the L2 and S recensions of the text, the Latin and Slavonic, have a tendency to commonly paraphrase and abbreviate instead of actually copy the text accurately.⁴⁹ Notably, Carrier also ignores the existence of a Coptic fragment which contains 11:14-16.⁵⁰

Lastly, Carrier and company ignore the cosmological elements which specifically predict that Jesus would appear as a human on earth within the text. These occur several times, referencing how Jesus would go into the world, and then cosmologically to the land of the dead, i.e. Sheol in a sense. All of this predicts that Jesus would therefore go to earth not just the firmament as Carrier claims.⁵¹ Carrier makes similar cosmological errors with the

⁴⁷ Doherty, *Jesus*, 119-126; Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 36-48; Lataster, *Questioning the Historicity of Jesus*, 291-297.

⁴⁸ Enrico Norelli (ed.), *Ascensio Isaiae: Commentarius* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 535-538 (citation courtesy of Litwa); Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 363-390; Darrell Hannah, "The Ascension of Isaiah and Docetic Christology," *Vigiliae Christianae* 53, no. 2 (1999): 165-196; Jonathan M. Knight, "The Origin and Significance of the Anglemorphic Christology in the Ascension of Isaiah," *Journal of Theological Studies* 63, no. 1 (2012): 66-105; Maurice Casey, *Jesus: Evidence and Argument or Mythicist Myth?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 195-201.

⁴⁹ Hannah, "The Ascension of Isaiah," 165n4. See also Michael A. Knibb, *Essays on the Book of Enoch and Other Early Jewish Texts and Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 292-293.

⁵⁰ Hannah, "The Ascension of Isaiah," 165n4.

⁵¹ M. David Litwa, *How the Gospels Became History: Jesus and Mediterranean Myths* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 37-39. See also, Jonathan M. Knight, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 73-76, 88-89; L. R. Lanzillotta, "The Cosmology of the Ascension of Isaiah: Analysis and Re-Assessment of

Apocalypse of Moses (or *Life of Adam and Eve*), where he claims Adam is buried in the heavens.⁵² This is simply incorrect and leading scholars on this do not agree with his misreading. Adam's body is buried on earth and his spirit is taken up into the heavens, as there are two Paradises in the narrative.⁵³ Lastly, Carrier's claim that Paul may be citing the *Ascension of Isaiah* in 1 Cor. 2:9 (or an earlier redaction of it)⁵⁴ is undermined by recent studies showing he is likely referencing LXX Isaiah 64:3-4 and 65:17.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Carrier's final attempt to parallel the *Ascension* with the *Descent of Inanna* is without merit or basis, since the *Ascension* appears to be informed by Paul's cosmology and also by Platonist cosmology.⁵⁶

the Text's Cosmological Framework," in Jan N. Bremmer, Thomas R. Karmann, and Tobias Nicklas (eds.), *The Ascension of Isaiah* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 235-258; Jan Dochhorn, "World' (ʿለግ) in the Ascension of Isaiah," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 94 (2018): 241-256.

⁵² Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 195-197. Carrier repeats this errant claim in *Jesus From Outer Space: What the Earliest Christians Really Believed about Christ* (Durham: Pitchstone, 2020), 176-177.

⁵³ Marius de Jonge and Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 20. Notably, the Armenian version omits Adam's assumption (de Jonge and Tromp, *The Life*, 21). See also Rivka Nir, "The Aromatic Fragrances of Paradise in the 'Greek Life of Adam and Eve' and the Christian Origin of the Composition," *Novum Testamentum* 46, no. 1 (2004): 20-45, specifically 31n35. Even those who think Adam's body was buried in the third heaven in the *Life of Adam and Eve* think there are two Paradises, and his body is taken up, see John R. Levison, "Terrestrial Paradise in the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*," *Journal of Pseudepigrapha* 28, no. 1 (2018): 25-44. For a critical edition of the text, see Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2005).

⁵⁴ Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 48.

⁵⁵ Likewise, other studies have shown the *Ascension of Isaiah* is reliant likely both on Paul and possibly on Matthew, see Dochhorn, "World' (ʿለግ) in the Ascension of Isaiah"; and Warren C. Campbell, "The Residue of Matthean Polemics in the Ascension of Isaiah," *New Testament Studies* 66, no. 3 (2019): 454-470.

⁵⁶ Lanzillotta, "The Cosmology of the Ascension of Isaiah," 287-288; and Dochhorn, "World' (ʿለግ) in the Ascension of Isaiah." For the descent of Inanna (or Ishtar) see Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once... Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 205-232 and Pirjo Lapinkivi, *The Neo-Assyrian Myth of Istar's Descent and Resurrection* (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2010).

As such, even these later texts fail to defend the mythicist theses. There is simply no convincing reason to suppose that there ever was a cult of Christians who worshiped a purely celestial Jesus. Suppositions such as those made by Carrier and company have failed to stand up to scrutiny.

Addendum 2: Scriptural Evidence

Carrier and Price both have cited a number of passages from scripture in order to validate their position that there were ancient mythicists. Price cites 2 Peter 2:16-18 where it states that “we did not believe cleverly devised myths” (translation mine).⁵⁷ Carrier has added to this list, arguing that 1 Timothy 1:3-4, 4:6-7, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, 1 John 1:1-3, 4:1-3, 2 John 7-11, and 2 Peter 3:15-17 as all supporting either early mythicists or a possible celestial Jesus.⁵⁸

In all, none of this is able to be supported. 2 Peter 2:16-18 is, in immediate context, about the author’s own credibility.⁵⁹ Neyrey points out that this likely is referencing the existence of “false teachers” who would create false stories of Jesus.⁶⁰ This is backed up by 2 Peter 2:3 where he states these people had concocted stories. As such, this is not evidence that the whole biography of Jesus was believed to be a myth or fable by anyone, but that false teachers invented stories of Jesus and polemics were shared between these teachers about their stories being faked. There is no need to project mythicism on the text, since it in no way lends itself to such a reading, unless it is taken out of context. This similarly applies to 2 Peter 3:15-17, which nowhere has a celestial Jesus referenced, but merely notes that people were misinterpreting Paul on a number of points:

Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom

⁵⁷ Price, *Bart Ehrman Interpreted*, 67.

⁵⁸ Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 351.

⁵⁹ Jerome H. Neyrey, “The Apologetic Use of the Transfiguration in 2 Peter 2:16-21,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (1980): 504-519.

⁶⁰ Neyrey, “Apologetic Use of the Transfiguration,” 506-507.

that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. (NIV)

As such, 2 Peter provides no evidence for ancient mythicism. Carrier and Price have simply stripped passages of context, and Carrier outright just invented ideas about 3:15-17 which the text never says at all. 2 Peter is saying that the tales told by these Christians are myths, not that they believed Jesus to not exist as a historical person.

Similarly, 1 Timothy 1:3-4 only references false teachers concocting their own stories, not ancient mythicism. 4:6-7 never references anyone believing Jesus was entirely a myth either. These are conjectures on Carrier's part. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 is a warning and prophetic statement that people would eventually turn away from doctrine and believe in myths, not that anyone believed Jesus was a myth. 1 John 1:1-3 has no reference either, but merely affirms the incarnation of Christ. Martinus C. de Boer has noted that 1 John uses terminology like "in flesh" and "in blood" not to refute claims of mythicism, but to note the manner of Christ's death, the soteriological and ethical implications of it, specifically.⁶¹ At best, the references Carrier cites are against Docetists, who claimed that Jesus did not come *physically*, but did not deny that Jesus came to earth.⁶² Lastly, 2 John 7-11 does not even reference false teachers, but notes "Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God" (NIV). It calls out Diotrephes (verses 9-10) as "spreading malicious nonsense" but specifically "about us." This is referencing how

⁶¹ Martinus C. de Boer, "The Death of Jesus Christ and His Coming in the Flesh (1 John 4:2)," *Novum Testamentum* 33, no. 4 (1991): 326-346.

⁶² Harold Attridge, "Jesus in the General Epistles," in Delbert Burkett (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Jesus* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 111-118. For Docetism, see Bart Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15.

Diotrephes lies about the author of John and then will not welcome other Christians to his church. There is no hint of mythicism.

It is simply the case that mythicists have no evidence for early figures doubting the existence of Jesus. They only have decontextualized passages, which they misread and torturously misinterpret, often without even citing any leading scholarship on these areas.⁶³

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⁶³ Neither Price nor Carrier cites any peer-reviewed academic material on 2 Peter, 1 and 2 Timothy, or 1 and 2 John, or on Trypho for that matter, when they make claims that early mythicism or celestial Jesus concepts can be found in those texts (Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 351 only cites his self-published book *Not the Impossible Faith*; Price, *Bart Ehrman Interpreted*, 67 only cites a translation of the text he is using).

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