

# 1 Clement and the Ignatiana in Dutch Radical Criticism

(= *Der erste Clemensbrief und die Ignatianen in der Holländischen Radikalkritik*)  
by Hermann Detering, Berlin

*Translated by Frans-Joris Fabri*

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Up to the present day 1 Clement and Ignatius's letters have been considered to be the earliest evidence for the major epistles of St. Paul. Within their hypothesis of spuriousness of the latter, the Dutch Radicals therefore were confronted with the task of explaining the fact that both 1 Clement and Ignatius clearly show knowledge of Paul's letters.

This task however, was by no means as difficult as it may seem to us today, since in the meantime a majority of the researchers has again come to evaluate 1 Clement and the Ignatiana as genuine.

Ignatius's letters, not known up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century but in the *long recension*, had always been rejected by the Protestants as forgeries and even the *mixed collection* was not accepted by the Tübingen School. Moreover, 1 Clement was dated at about the year 125 CE by the leading Tübingen scholars (with the exception of HILGENFELD). As a result, this text did not raise any serious problem for a late dating of the Paulina either. The Dutch just could carry on and appeal to those German authorities for their refusal of 1 Clement and Ignatius as evidence for the early existence of Paul's letters. Yet they didn't leave it to that, but, in their own specific way, they made their position clear about those allegedly earliest witnesses for the genuineness and early existence of Paul's letters. In view of the importance of the question for the genuineness it makes sense in the context of the present state of affairs in criticism to give a more extensive and accurate report. One should not follow ALBERT SCHWEITZER here, who took it all very easy. His reply to LOMAN's and other Radicals' chain of minutely detailed argument consisted of just one apodictically given statement: „To postpone 1 Clement to mid first century is not possible”<sup>1</sup> and, concerning Ignatius, „If, what is now generally conceded, the Ignatiana are genuine, the evidence for the Paulina is much better than it used to be esteemed”<sup>2</sup>.

## a) 1 Clement

LOMAN was the first of the Radicals to deal with the question of the genuineness of 1 Clement. He did so in his *Quaestiones Paulinae*<sup>3</sup>. Against those who place the letter as

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<sup>1</sup> SCHWEITZER; *Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung*, p. 106

<sup>2</sup> SCHWEITZER, loc. cit. p. 106

<sup>3</sup> LOMAN, in: *ThT 17*, 1883, 4e Stuk, 2e Vervolg en Slot van het eerste Hoofdstuk, p. 24-25

early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century, LOMAN draws the attention to VOLKMAR, who already in 1856 had shown that all evidence pointed to a creation in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. VOLKMAR did not accept a date later than 125, on the one hand because of the theological content of the epistle, which seemed to belong to a pre-gnostic period of early Church history, on the other hand because of the testimonial of Dionysus of Corinth and finally, because of some details of chronology. Nevertheless he designates the epistle as spurious in two ways: 1. Clement (3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> successor of Peter in Rom according to tradition) cannot be the author; 2. The letter cannot have been originated by the official governing body of the Community mentioned in the introduction (because this would presuppose that the antagonism between Gentile and Jewish Christians had been resolved at a very early time).

LOMAN agrees with VOLKMAR but asks whether, since spuriousness is assumed, the borderline to the Gnostic period could not have been crossed. A few traits that indicate an earlier period could easily have been inserted by a forger to insinuate a more ancient origin of the letter. Actually in 1862, VOLKMAR had trodden on forbidden Gnostic grounds in his essay „*Eine Neutestamentliche Entdeckung und deren Bestreitung, oder die Geschichts-Vision des Buches Henoch im Zusammenhang*“, where he dated both 1 Clement and Barnabas to circa 125-135, admittedly only –as LOMAN remarks– to withdraw hastily and to return to 125 in „*Ursprung unserer Evangelien*“ (1866, S. 64). VOLKMAR had got suspicious as there is no distinct *occasional* reason for the letter. In fact, one has to ask, together with LOMAN, why the author does not immediately come to the so urgent main problem of the letter: conciliation of the contentions in Corinth. Not until the 44<sup>th</sup> chapter does he tackle the actual purpose. Furthermore one should take into account that the conflict had not been settled at the time the letter was written; those who had chased away the Presbyters still dominated. What kind of „attempt to mediate“ was this, to condemn them unilaterally from Rome as if they had acted solely out of an evil motive! Thus, supposed the letter had in fact been sent to Corinth, it could only have been destined to that part of the community the deposed Presbyters and their supporters belonged to but never to the entire community, as the address pretends. No, in LOMAN's opinion all of this conflict was mere fiction and VOLKMAR had rightly seen that the one and only purpose of the letter was to inculcate the authority of the Church against oppositional tendencies by means of an impressive example. Above all, so LOMAN, the idea of the Apostolic Succession, which shines through in 44, 1f., indicates the time that letter was written: with a high degree of probability in mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

According to LOMAN 1 Cor., 1 Clem., and Dionysus build a trinity of seemingly unsuspected witnesses, a firm line, to which to fix heavy loads the earlier critics thought themselves to be able to. Dionysus gave evidence for the genuineness of 1 Clement; 1 Clement for 1 Corinthians. But what if those three do not complement but contradict each other; if the later one doesn't take notice of what the earlier one explicitly stated; if we find platitudes and empty talk where we expect facts, and bragging instead of the real thing?

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<sup>4</sup> VOLKMAR; *Über Clemens von Rom und die nächste Folgezeit mit besonderer Beziehung auf den Philipper- und Barnabasbrief sowie auf das Buch Judith*, in: ThJb (Theologisches Jahrbuch) 15, 1856, p. 287-369. VOLKMAR there draws attention to the book of Judith, which is mentioned in 1 Clement 55, 4.5 and which, according to VOLKMAR; cannot have been written before the year 118. Consequently he saw the year 118 as *terminus a quo* for 1 Clement.

And who was this Clement? STRAATMAN's attempt to reconstruct a biography of the Roman bishop<sup>5</sup> is seen sceptically by LOMAN. To the latter Clement was nothing but the figure of a typical well-educated Roman, favourably inclined towards Christianity. Sticking, on the one hand, to the opinion that since Dionysus's days 1 Clement had been considered to be ancient-apostolic and originated before the emergence of heretic Gnosticism, and, on the other hand, comparing the latter's naïve dogmatics with the polemics of the Clementina, one should come to the conclusion that those polemics constituted a new element which had been brought together with the Clement Legend at a time when Marcionism was being fought as an heresy. But how did this agree with the opinion that Paul and Peter were already in peaceful harmony in 1 Clement, while we would rather expect this side by side of those two to be the result of a conciliatory process, i.e. not before the opposition against Paul, of which the Clementina have knowledge?

Finally LOMAN draws attention to a contradiction between Dionysus of Corinth and the canonical epistles of Paul: according to Dionysus the Roman and Corinthian communities had been founded by Peter and Paul, yet this is clearly disproved by the evidence in Rom. and 1 Cor.. This contradiction and the fact, that in Corinth a tradition could have come up which contradicted Paul's statement, would be easier to explain if 1 Cor. were supposed to be spurious than it would be if genuine. It wouldn't have been that easy to replace the historical fact by a new tradition. All in all 1 Clem. takes us to the time of upcoming Catholicism, i.e. around the middle of 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. No doubt at this time a letter was circulating, said to be written by Paul, and which was completely or in part identical with our 1 Cor., but this fact, so LOMAN, says nothing about the genuineness of that text, just as 1 Clement is not proven genuine by Dionysus.

Summarizing LOMAN's doubts about the genuineness of 1 Clement, which he expressed with reference to VOLKMAR, and adding some more arguments that were put forward later by VAN MANEN and VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA<sup>6</sup>, we get the following rather impressive list:

1. Its *size* alone already contradicts the supposition of a real letter: „Rather it is a book, in form of a Pauline epistle..“<sup>7</sup>.
2. The fact, that the author does not tackle the actual reason for the letter before chapter 44, is unrealistic and shows the letter form to be nothing but clothing for a pious tract on the subject „Peace and Unity in Communities“. (The author himself names it „an appeal for Peace and Harmony“ 63,2, or a „script“ 62,2; and see Eusebius Hist. Ecc. III 38,5 „an admonition“ and Hist. Eccl. II 25,8

<sup>5</sup> LOMAN here refers to STRAATMAN, *Geschiedenis van de oudste gemeente in Rome*.

<sup>6</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Onderzoek naar de echtheid van Clemens' eersten brief aan de Corinthiers*, 1908; *Inleiding*, p. 139ff.; *Oudste christelijke Geschriften*, p. 171ff. VAN MANEN, *Handleiding*, p. 74ff; *Art. Old-Christian Literature*, column. 3484ff.

<sup>7</sup> VAN MANEN, *Art. Old-Christian Literature*, column 3485

where Dionysus of Corinth tells us the letter was designated to be read out to the Community)<sup>8</sup>.

3. The depicted conflict is bare of any inner probability. How could the ancient, firmly settled community oppose its Presbyters just because of a few ringleaders? Besides, the details of the situation remain quite obscure. See VAN MANEN, „All that is here said about contentions at Corinth belongs to the literary clothing of the document. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians may have suggested it (cp chap.47). Perhaps too, though this is very far from certain, it is connected with disputes that had recently arisen as to the continuance in office, dismissal, and election of persons for a government of the church. It was the author's main purpose to remove difficulties of this kind wherever they might have arisen. He spoke under the mask of the Church at Rome, as a high authority, with growing emphasis, and finally as if he were one with the Holy Spirit himself (63,2; cp Acts 15,22-29)“<sup>9</sup>.

4. The „attempt at mediation“, which the author starts (from Rome!), is unrealistic, and it reveals the fiction character of the whole thing. The motive of the contentious Corinthian community was well known to the author and it probably was the model for the exposition of his exhortative text. Yet he is not always very persistent in using this motive, since (2, 6) he designates contention and revolt as things that had always been an abomination to the Corinthians. Besides, this passage shows that „consequently he ... had not in earnest considered Paul's letter to be a letter“<sup>10</sup>.

5. 1,1, too, is part of fictitious letter-form: „The conventional excuse of every letter writer“<sup>11</sup>. Thusly this sentence does not, as often presumed, indicate a particular (Nero, Domitianus) persecution of the Christians. Because of the then prevalent Roman laws persecutions used to come not unexpectedly<sup>12</sup>.

6. Peter's and Paul's peaceful side by side indicates later times.

7. So does 44, 1f.

8. So do the passages in the letter that show liturgical use, as in 20, 1-12; 38, 1-4 and the prayer at the end. „Who then expects in a letter, and especially in a letter supposedly written in the name of the Roman to the Corinthian Community, to read the words, ‘So let us, in harmony and as best we know, meet in the same place and with one voice emphatically praise the Lord, since we are blessed with his great and magnificent promises.’ Wouldn't the Corinthians hardly have been able to visit a sanctuary together with the Romans? Here the author, sliding into

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<sup>8</sup> VAN MANEN, *Handleiding*, p. 74ff. - VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Inleiding*, p. 140; *Oudste christelijke Geschriften*, p. 171. *Onderzoek*, p. 20ff.

<sup>9</sup> VAN MANEN, *Art. Old-Christian Literature*, column. 3485

<sup>10</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Oudste christelijke Geschriften*, p.172.

<sup>11</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Oudste christelijke Geschriften*, p.172.

<sup>12</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Oudste christelijke Geschriften*, p.172; *Onderzoek* p.13ff.

homiletics, forgets that he is writing a letter, though generally he keeps pretending to be doing so quite well<sup>13</sup>.

9. A later period is indicated as well by all text parts that presuppose an antagonism between priests and laymen (cf. 40, 5: other laws apply to laymen than those for religious office-holders; see 41,1) and in which Roman clericalism announces itself. Roman is the military imagery (21,4; 28,2) as well as the fraternal harmony of Pauline doctrine of justification on the one and justification by works of the law on the other hand (cf. 32,4 compared with 35,5). „Authenticity of the letters assumed, it will appear highly improbable that Rome’s pure Paulinism had been diluted to such a degree in so short a time, like this seems to be the case in our letter”<sup>14</sup>.

10. Indication of a later period also in 55, 4.5, where the Book of Judith is mentioned, which according to VOLKMAR was not written before the year 138<sup>15</sup>. (Gustav VOLKMAR, *Ueber Clemens von Rom und die nächste Folgezeit, mit besonderer Beziehung auf den Philipper- und Barnabas-Brief, so wie auf das Buch Judith*. In: *ThJb(T)* 15,1856, S. 287-369. )

11. A bishop cannot be the author, since before Anicetus (156-166) the Church in Rome did not have uniform leadership (s. Herm.). „The disciple of Peter (and Paul) finds no support either in our present epistle or in Phil 4,3. He disappears into the diverging version of the tradition”<sup>16</sup>. The other possibility, „still firmly maintained by such scholars as HARNACK and LIGHTFOOT, that the writing may have been the work of a certain Clement concerning whom nothing is known except what can be gathered from 'his' epistle, has no real value; and to connect it with the further supposition that this Clement was an influential member of the governing body of the Roman church — the martyr-bishop of legend — is not to be recommended. The epistle provides no support for it, but rather the reverse. The oldest tradition as to its origin knows nothing of any such view... From the work itself, all we can gather is that the author probably belonged to the Church of Rome. He was an educated man, well acquainted with the OT and the Pauline and other NT epistles; a friend of peace and order; a warm advocate of the occasionally, perhaps often, disputed rights of the presbyters and deacons once chosen, who had adequately discharged the duties of their office”<sup>17</sup>.

12. VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA pointed out that the letter (against VOLKMAR’s opinion) clearly shows traces of anti-gnosticism. In 20,11; 33,2; 59,2 the Creator God (Demiurg) is – against dualism – declared to be identical with the „Lord of the universe“, respectively in one passage with the Father of

<sup>13</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Onderzoek* p.31f.

<sup>14</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Onderzoek*, p.48

<sup>15</sup> Gustav VOLKMAR, *Ueber Clemens von Rom und die nächste Folgezeit, mit besonderer Beziehung auf den Philipper- und Barnabas-Brief, so wie auf das Buch Judith*. In: *ThJb(T)* 15,1856, S. 287-369.

<sup>16</sup> VAN MANEN, Art. *Old-Christian Literature*, column 3486

<sup>17</sup> VAN MANEN, loc. cit.

Jesus Christ (59,2). The passage about the Resurrection (24,1-28,4), too, seems to be induced by gnostic denying of the Resurrection<sup>18</sup>. Even if otherwise there are relatively few references to gnostic teachings, this is no indication of an *argumentum e silentio* for an early dating of the letter, since this topic was of no current interest for the author. He was primarily interested in the question of the relationship between the leaders in office and the lay folk<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Onderzoek*, p.49

<sup>19</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, loc. cit. 55; see p. 30: Unterwerfung unter die geistliche Macht ist erste und letzte Forderung dieses Briefes, und WREDE (*Untersuchungen zum Ersten Klemensbriefe*, 1891), der in der Gegenüberstellung zwischen Besitz des Amtes und Besitz des Geistes das Wesen der korinthischen Streitigkeiten sieht, hat im Grunde recht, nur sollten wir lieber sagen: die Tendenz des Verfassers bei der Verfertigung des Briefes ist zu zeigen, daß der partikulare Enthusiasmus in der durchgehenden Kontrolle des kirchlichen Amtes bleiben muß.

**Translation:** Submission to religious government is first and last demand of this letter, and WREDE (*Untersuchungen zum Ersten Klemensbriefe*, 1891), who sees the essential content of the Corinthian disputes in the confrontation between possession of the Office and possession of the Spirit, is basically right, only we should rather say: The intent of the author in producing the letter is to show that individual enthusiasm has to be kept in continuous control by the governing body of the Church

## b. Ignatius of Antioch

Apart from the Ignatian letters, the two letters of Polycarp likewise show knowledge of the Paulina. But since they are directly connected with the Ignatiana in as far as they are obviously intended as a kind of recommendation for the whole collection of the latter, there is no need to go into greater detail with them. Their importance stands or falls with the authenticity of the Ignatian collection. If that can be proven to be spurious, the two letters of Polycarp must be spurious as well<sup>20</sup>.

In contrast with 1 Clement, the Ignatian letters had been disputed quite early. The authenticity of the letters had already been questioned before NT scholarship evolved into a science of higher critique. The protestants of the Reformation — sensitive for everything considered to be catholic — were the first ones to suspect the letters of the martyr bishop of forgery. After all, ‘Ignatius’, on his last way from Syria to Rome, unleashes an active propaganda for the monarchic episcopacy. Later the Tübingen scholars followed, although in the meantime the state of affairs had changed a little in favour for the authenticity of the letters and, since the 17th century, not only the 17 (13) letters of the *Longer Recension*, but also the 7 recently discovered ones of the *Mixed Collection* were available. Their catholicising elements jumped less glaringly in the eye than those of the *Shorter Recension*, the only one formerly known<sup>21</sup>. ZAHN’s and

<sup>20</sup> VAN MANEN, *Handleiding* 82-84; VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Inleiding*, p. 151-52; *Oudste christelijke Geschriften*, p. 183-193; anders VOLKMAR, der die Ignatiusstellen bei Pol für Interpolationen erklärte, durch die die Ignatiusbriefe als echt erscheinen sollten; s. WILDEMANN, *Evangelium als Lehrpoesie*, S. 146. Anders VÖLTER, *Die Lösung*, p. 126: Dass der Brief (des Polykarp) mit den Ignatianen erfunden sei, um sie durch die Autorität des Polykarp gedeckt einzuführen, ist zweifelsohne eine ganz haltlose Behauptung. Ein solcher Brief müsste wahrhaftig ganz anders aussehen als unser Philipperbrief.

**Translation:** . Not so VOLKMAR, who explained the Ignatius passages in Polycarp as interpolations, through which the Ignatian letters should get the appearance of genuineness; s., WILDEMANN, *Evangelium als Lehrpoesie*, p. 146. Differently VOELTER, *Die Lösung*, p. 126: that the letter (by Polycarp) was invented together with the Ignatiana, in order to introduce them with Polycarp’s authority, is without a doubt a completely groundless statement. Indeed, such a letter would have to look completely different from our Letter to the Philippians.

<sup>21</sup> Zum Ganzen J.A.FISCHER, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, p. 111ff. Vgl. VOLKMARs schöne Charakterisierung der Ignatianen in seiner Studie: *Neueres über den Polykarpusbrief und die Ignatiusfrage* aus dem Jahre 1886. Mögen die 7 (griechischen Ignatius-)Briefe an Unnatürlichkeit und Abenteuerlichkeit die erbaulichen 3 (syrischen) noch so weit übertreffen, sie sind es, die in richtiger Textgestalt den Grund zu der so vielgestaltig gewordenen Ignaz-Literatur ausmachen, sie sind das Original der ganzen allerdings geradezu genial excentischen Bemühungen eines italischen Klerikers, das Märtyrerthum der Christenheit, das seit Polycarpus' Scheiterhaufen immer furchtbarer geworden war, in der Einen Gestalt eines den Bestien vorgeworfenen Antiochenischen, todesmuthig gewesenen Blutzeugen personificirt, zum begeisternden Verkünder der in solcher Not doppelt bedurften Festigung der Kirche, d.h. des souveränen Episcopats zu machen; sie sind das Original dieser ersten pia fraus, welche 'in maiorem dei gloriam' sein sollend für das Heil der Kirche, in Wahrheit gegen ihre Freiheit verübt worden ist. Vgl. WILDEMANN, *Evangelium als Lehrpoesie*, p. 146f and 507, note.380.

**Translation:** To all this see J.A.FISCHER, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, p. 111ff. Compare. VOLKMAR’s beautiful characterisation of the Ignatiana in his essay: *Neueres über den Polykarpusbrief und die Ignatiusfrage*, 1886. May the 7 (Greek Ignatius-)Letters by far surpass the edifying 3 (Syrian ones) in unnaturalness and adventurousness, it’s they, that in correct text form constitute the reason for the great variety of literature on Ignatius that later developed. They are the original version of all the almost ingeniously excentric efforts of an italic cleric to make the martyrs of Christendom into enthusiastic heralds of sovereign episcopacy. Since the time when Polycarp was burnt at the stake, martyrdom of Christianity had become more and more terrible. The author of the 7 letters personified it in the figure of an Antiochian martyr, who had been fearless in the face of death, and so tried to strengthen the Church

LIGHTFOOT's extensive and thorough investigations, however, constituted a decisive turning-point. They were the first ones to try and prove the authenticity of the 7 letters of the *Mixed Collection* in a great effort of learned scholarship. In 1878 this verdict was confirmed by HARNACK, and since then the authenticity of the 7 Ignatian letters has been accepted — at least in Germany — as scientifically well-established. After HARNACK's rude remark: „whoever considers the Ignatian letters to be spurious, has not studied them thoroughly“<sup>22</sup>, not many still had the courage to question their genuineness.

In The Netherlands things went somewhat differently. Here VAN LOON and VOELTER — beside DUKER, JUNIUS, STEENMIJER, KIST and VAN MANEN's pupil SCHIM VAN of the LOEFF<sup>23</sup> — did research on the Ignatian problem. Independently both VAN LOON and VOELTER arrived a negative result and so, against ZAHN and LIGHTFOOT, they considered the letters to be spurious. Particularly to VAN LOON it mattered a great deal, „to re-establish the central point of the results of the School of Tuebingen „, and he especially gives praise to VOELTER for having succeeded in doing so, even against LIGHTFOOT<sup>24</sup>. While VOELTER, only with one leg standing in the radical camp, regarded „the question of relationship between Ignatian and Pauline letters as „a relatively subordinate one“<sup>25</sup>, VAN LOON belonged to the supporters of the Loman hypothesis, but his interest was increasingly

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that were badly in need of comfort in a time of hardship. These letters were the original version of the first 'pia fraus', meant to be 'in maiori dei gloriam' an for the welfare of the Church, but in reality an attack against her freedom.” see Vgl. WILDEMANN, *Evangelium als Lehrpoesie*, p. 146f. and 507, note.380

<sup>22</sup> Auf dieses schroffe Urteil HARNACKs könnte es sich beziehen, wenn VAN MANEN 1892 in seiner Besprechung des Buches von REVILLE, *Etudes sur les origines de l'épiscopat. La valeur du témoignage d'Ignace d'Antioche*, 1891, in: ThT 26, 1892, p. 628, in bitterem Ton bemerkt, daß es ganz den Schein habe, als ob nach ZAHN und LIGHTFOOT fast niemand mehr seine Stimme erheben dürfe gegen die Echtheit, wenigstens niemand, dem zu lauschen der Mühe wert wäre. In ähnlichem Sinne VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Onderzoek*, p. 21: BAUR durfte 1848 noch im Hinblick auf den Ursprung des ersten Clemensbriefes zweifeln, SCHWEGLER ihn 1846 noch um 150 datieren und VOLKMAR 1856 seine Echtheit bestreiten: heutzutage wagt kaum einer in Deutschland noch so etwas.

**Translation:** VAN MANEN possibly refers to this rude verdict of HARNACK's in his recension of REVILLE, *Etudes sur les origines de l'épiscopat. La valeur du témoignage d'Ignace d'Antioche*, 1891, in: ThT 26, 1892, p.628. In a bitter tone he makes the remark: It clearly gives the impression that, after ZAHN and LIGHTFOOT, nobody any longer has the right to give voice against the genuineness, at least nobody worth listening to.” Similarly VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Onderzoek*, p. 21: In 1848 BAUR still had the the right to have doubts about the origin of 1 Clement; in 1846 SCHWEGLER still could date it about the year 150, and in 1856 Volkmar could refute its genuineness. Today in Germany hardly anyone dares do anything of the kind.”

<sup>23</sup> Zu den vier erstgenannten holländischen Forschern s. VAN MANENs Besprechung von J.REVILLES: *Etudes sur les origines de l'épiscopat. La valeur du témoignage d'Ignace d'Antioche*, 1891, in: ThT 26, 1892, p. 625ff. - H.P. SCHIM VAN DER LOEFF, *Onderzoek naar de herkomst en de strekking der seven brieven van Ignatius in de korte recensie*, 1906. DUKER/VAN MANEN, OCL 2, S. 5-154.- D. VÖLTER, *Die Lösung der Ignatianischen Frage*, in: ThT 20, 1886, S. 114ff; *Ignatius - Peregrinus*, in: ThT 21, 1887, p. 272; *Die Ignatianischen Briefe auf ihren Ursprung untersucht*, 1892. J. VAN LOON, *Dr. D. Völter's Hypothese ter oplossing van het ignatiaansche vraagstuk*, in: ThT 20, 1886, S. 569ff; *De Kritiek der Ignatiana in onze Dagen*, in: ThT 27, 1893, p. 275ff.- VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *De jongste verdediging van de echtheid der Ignatiana*, in: NTT 1915, S. 253-269; *Zur Echtheitsfrage der ignatianischen Briefe*, in: PrM 1907, p. 258- 268, 301-311.

<sup>24</sup> VAN LOON, *De Kritiek*, p. 277

<sup>25</sup> VÖLTER, *Die Ignatianischen Briefe*, p. 35

focused on the synoptic gospels rather than on the Pauline letters. Thus he understood his contributions in the area of research on Ignatius only as a kind of „support“ for his colleagues in the field of the *Quaestiones Paulinae* who were arguing for spuriousness of the Pauline letters. He says so e.g. in his essay *De kritiek der Ignatiana in onze dagen*<sup>26</sup>. Perhaps this explains, why VAN MANEN never occupied himself for a long time with the Ignatians and, where he comes to speak about them, generally starts from VOELTER's or VAN LOON's standpoints. In his three-volumes *Paulus* he can do generously without taking the Ignatian letters into account. What he has to say about them in his *Handleiding*, in *Oude Christelijke Literatuur* or in his article *Old Christian Literature* is essentially in agreement with VAN LOON's or VOELTER's opinions, whereby however the „Peregrinus hypothesis“<sup>27</sup> of the latter is not accepted.

All in all the arguments of the Radical Critics against the genuineness of the Ignatian Letters can be summarized as follows:

1. The seven letters attributed to Ignatius have only the *outward and artificial form* of true letter writing, and this is particularly clear in the case of the letter of Ignatius to Polycarp. Again and again, where „Ignatius“ could have mentioned a detail concerning his personal relationship with Polycarp, he instead gives instructions in the form of sayings that would be appropriate on any occasion. Instead of appearing to be a letter jotted down hurriedly during a trip to martyrdom (so VAN LOON, *De Kritiek*, P. 302), the letter to Polycarp is carefully designed<sup>28</sup>. HILGENFELD showed that the letter to Polycarp is obviously a companion piece to the Pastoral Epistles<sup>29</sup>. But if this letter is forged, then the authenticity of the rest of the Ignatian corpus, to which it has strong ties, must be put in question.

2. In anticipation of the outcome of the journey to martyrdom the author, 'Ignatius', tends to designate himself as „Theophoros“ or „Christophoros“ It is unlikely that Ignatius used such terminology which at the time would only be used for a martyr after his death. It is more likely that a later person, as was the custom in those times, wrote a number of letters under the name of the legendary martyr bishop and thereby used the title „Theophoros“, which had been given to Ignatius in the aftermath of his martyrdom<sup>30</sup>.

3. Ignatius writes of „Magnesia on the Maeander“, „Tralles in Asia“, „Philadelphia in Asia“, „Smyrna in Asia“, and „Ephesus in Asia“ in the

<sup>26</sup> In: ThT 27, 1893, p. 314-316

<sup>27</sup> *Epistles of Ignatius*. 29. *Authorship*. column 3488-3489. In seiner Untersuchung *Ignatius - Peregrinus* gibt VÖLTER die Hypothese zu bedenken, daß der Verfasser der Ignatiusbriefe und der von LUKIAN in seiner Satire *De morte Peregrini* dargestellte Kyniker und Christ Peregrinus Proteus ein und dieselbe Person seien...(p. 319).

**Translation:** In his essay *Ignatius – Peregrinus*, VÖLTER presents the hypothesis, the author of the Ignatiana and the both Cynic and Christian 'Peregrinus Proteus' in Lucianus' satire *De morte Peregrini* were identical.

<sup>28</sup> VAN LOON, *De Kritiek*, p. 302

<sup>29</sup> A.HILGENFELD, *Die ignat. Briefe und ihr neuester Kritiker* 1848; quoted in VAN LOON, *De Kritiek* p. 302.

<sup>30</sup> VAN LOON, *De Kritiek*, p. 300

introduction of the letters that are written to the Churches. Does Ignatius need to remind people in these churches that these places are to be found in Asia and not in Europe<sup>31</sup>?

4. If the letters of Ignatius were collected only some time after they had been written, we have to ask in what way this collection was undertaken. The answer is that the letters were conceived from the start as a collection, as individual parts of a single whole. „Each letter presupposes the previous letter in the order given by Eusebius. [Eusebius, HE, Book III, Chapter XXXVI. Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnaeans, Polycarp.] In the epistle to the Magnesians, 1,2 the hope is expressed that the churches show a threefold union: union of the flesh and of the spirit of Jesus Christ, union of faith and of love, and union with Jesus and with the Father. This is a short recapitulation of some of the main points in the letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 7:7, 14:1 f., 19:1 f.). Eph. 20,1 says that the author has plans 'to write a second booklet', which is then the letter to the Magnesians, and in chapter 13 the contents of the letters to the Ephesians and Magnesians are summarized. Trall. 7.1, which states that 'Anyone who does anything without the bishop or the presbyters or the deacons does not keep a good conscience', gets new light from the letter to the Magnesians, where in chapter 4, those that appear 'not to keep a good conscience' are the ones that have the bishop's name on their lips, but in everything act apart from him"<sup>32</sup>.

5. The situation that is presupposed in the letters is fictitious, as is apparent when one considers the contradictions. Ignatius the martyr is condemned to death (Eph 12:1 f., Rom. 5:1), but it is still uncertain whether Ignatius is going to die. He is in chains but is still able to visit the churches and write letters to them. The author writes to the Romans from Smyrna, after an overland journey from Antioch: „From Syria even unto Rome I fight with wild beasts, by land and sea..." (Rom. 5,1). Furthermore, „...there is a tradition, which has Ignatius die as a martyr in the winter of 115-116 on the instruction of Trajanus while in Antioch (*Johannes Malalas, Chronographie, ed. Dindorf p. 275*). This tradition must be more ancient than what is assumed in the letters of Ignatius"<sup>33</sup>. The journey of Ignatius to Rome seems to be copied from the Pauline travels narrative.

6. Every now and again, the author accidentally slips out of his role as the alleged letter writer, by writing in a way that sets himself apart from Ignatius, the bishop of Syria (Rom. 2.2) Or again, the author puts himself on the side of the church members: „Let us therefore be careful not to resist the bishop.“ (Eph.

<sup>31</sup> VAN MANEN, *Handleiding*, p. 26

<sup>32</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Inleiding*, p.150f.

<sup>33</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Inleiding*, p. 148. Vgl. auch VOLKMAR und VÖLTER: Was durch ihn (VÖLTER) im Hinblick auf diesen Punkt vorgebracht wird, gehört zum Vortrefflichsten, was sein Buch uns bietet, VAN LOON, *De Kritiek*, p. 296.

**Translation:** What VÖLTER proposes with regard to this point belongs to the best he offers in his book"

5:3; see also 11:1, 15:2, 17:2, Magn 10:1)<sup>34</sup>.

7. Marcion seems to be one of the false teachers that Ignatius fought against<sup>35</sup>. Some places obviously show foreknowledge of Valentinian Gnosticism<sup>36</sup>. Not least, the idea of the monarchical episcopate which is emphatically promoted in the letters, presupposes a later time of origin, probably around 175 (so VAN LOON<sup>37</sup>) or 160 (so VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA<sup>38</sup>). The collection probably developed in Rome.

8. There is a strange inconsistency that we find with the author of the Ignatians: on the one it praises the churches, since in these churches everything clearly is in best order; on the other hand, the author admonishes the churches with regard to false teachers (Eph. 6:2; Trall 8:1; Magn 11:1; in Smyrn 4:1 the author designates his warning as „a measure of precaution”). This fact is best explained on the assumption that the author, though he very well knew they did not exist at the time of the martyr bishop, fought heresies pretending to be Ignatius, and thus, „to avoid anachronism, he had to make Ignatius a prophet”<sup>39</sup>.

From this overview of the reasons that prompted the Dutch radical critics to deny the authenticity of the Ignatian letters, it may have become clear that they did not thoughtlessly abandon the genuineness of the Ignatians but based their verdict on a careful analysis of the letters. Their contradictions, internal tensions, and historical improbabilities were noticed not only by the Dutchmen but also by other researchers before them. Therefore, one can hardly blame the Dutch radicals on the ground that they were simply not satisfied with the results of the investigations of ZAHN, LIGHTFOOT, and HARNACK but kept asking their critical questions.

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<sup>34</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Inleiding*, p. 148

<sup>35</sup> VAN LOON, *De Kritiek*, p. 293: nicht die Tatsache, daß Gnosis vorausgesetzt ist, führt dazu, eine spätere Entwicklungszeit anzunehmen, sondern dass eine späte Form der Gnosis vorausgesetzt wird...  
**Translation:** the fact that Gnosis is presupposed, does not lead to accept a later development time but the fact that a late form of Gnosis is presupposed, does.

<sup>36</sup> and see VAN LOON, *De Kritiek*, p. 305

<sup>37</sup> s. however, VAN LOON, loc.cit., p. 313.

<sup>38</sup> VAN DEN BERGH VAN EYSINGA, *Inleiding*, p. 151

<sup>39</sup> VAN LOON, *De Kritiek*, p. 307