

VIATORUM

Contents

Jan N. Bremmer: Scholar, Teacher, and Friend (Editorial)	3
Tobias Nicklas and David Cielontko	
 The Concepts of Death and Life in the <i>Acts of John</i> : A Comparison with Philo of Alexandria.	6
Thomas Tops	
 Die Erforschung apokrypher Apostelerzählungen: Entscheidende Ergebnisse und Wege in die Zukunft	36
Tobias Nicklas	
 A. Siouville's <i>Pseudo-Clémentines</i> and Critical French Scholarship on Early Christianity in the Modernist Crisis: Notes on an Unpublished Letter.	58
Benjamin M. J. De Vos	
 The Martyrdom of Luke the Evangelist: A Syriac Translation of a Coptic Apocryphon?	99
Jacob A. Lollar and Samuel P. Cook	
 The Hymn of the Pearl: Apocryphal Acts, Women and Later Greek Conceptions of the Soul	145
Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta	
 Fixing the Name, Shaping the Saint: The Mother of the Maccabees in Jewish and Christian Reception	160
Osnat Rance and Stephanie Hallinger	

Editorial

Jan N. Bremmer: Scholar, Teacher, and Friend

This special issue of *Communio Viatorum* is dedicated, with gratitude and affection, to Jan N. Bremmer on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. It goes back to a small symposium held in his honour in Regensburg in December 2023, at which most of the papers published here were presented. The symposium was organized as a surprise celebration for his 79th birthday. This issue brings together contributions from his friends, colleagues, and former students, and it reflects the remarkably broad range of subjects that have occupied Jan throughout his distinguished scholarly career.

Jan Bremmer has been one of the most influential and prolific scholars in the study of the ancient world for more than five decades. His work has profoundly shaped our understanding of various aspects of Greek religion and mythology, including ancient concepts of the soul and afterlife, mystery cults, ritual and initiation, and magic. He has also made significant contributions to the study of early Christianity, especially martyrdom traditions, and Christian apocryphal literature with a special focus on Apostle narratives. By combining philological precision with historical insight and an openness to anthropological and comparative approaches, he has consistently shed light on fundamental questions concerning religious beliefs, practices and identities in antiquity.

Jan was born in Groningen in 1944 to Rolf Hendrik Bremmer, a Calvinist minister and church historian, and Lucy Lindeboom. He received his education at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of Bristol. His academic career began at Utrecht University, after which he served as Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Groningen from 1990 until his retirement in 2009, where he also held the position of dean from 1996 to 2005. He has received international recognition for his scholarship through numerous visiting lectureships, fellowships and honours, including the Order of Orange-Nassau and his election as Corresponding Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

One could not imagine Jan without his wife. Since 1969, Jan has been married to Christine (née Bartlett), whom he met during his student years. Throughout his long academic career, Christine has been a constant source of support and companionship, accompanying him to countless conferences, lectures, and scholarly gatherings. Together, Jan and Christine have raised four children – Benjamin, Melissa, Rebecca, and Daisy. Furthermore, throughout his illustrious career, Jan successfully supervised numerous undergraduate and postgraduate students, and he also became a teacher and mentor to many others, including the two of us, as well as those contributing to this issue.

One of Jan's most remarkable qualities as a scholar is his ability to combine an extremely broad overview of source material and encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of scholarship with a constant engagement with most recent approaches and discoveries. His work reminds us that genuine innovation does not arise from neglecting the achievements of previous generations, but from building upon them critically and creatively. Equally characteristic is his keen historical judgment and his capacity to distinguish the plausible from the merely fashionable, the well-founded argument from the attractive speculation. In an academic world often tempted by novelty for its own sake, Jan has consistently demonstrated that rigorous scholarship requires both intellectual curiosity and critical discipline.

Although Jan has never been a scholar primarily concerned with producing a large number of monographs, the books he has written, such as *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (1983), *Greek Religion* (1994, ²2021), and *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (2001), have become standard reference points in the study of ancient religion.¹ Yet his scholarly achievement is more fully reflected in the hundreds of articles, essays, encyclopaedia entries, and studies that he has contributed to journals and collective volumes over the course of five decades. These publications have repeatedly opened new avenues of inquiry and provided authoritative assessments of longstanding problems. A representative selection of this immense body of scholarly work is now available in three volumes of collected studies, published by Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen. These volumes vividly demonstrate the breadth of his

¹ Jan N. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion*, New Surveys in the Classics 24 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Second revised edition as *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). Jan N. Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

research interests and expertise.² Together, they offer a fitting testimony to a career distinguished not only by erudition and productivity, but also by an exceptional capacity to ask important questions and to illuminate them with clarity, balance, and critical insight.

As previously mentioned, Jan has also made a significant contribution to the study of early Christian apocryphal literature, particularly with regard to apocryphal acts, martyrdoms and related traditions. His influence on the field extends beyond his own publications, as he became the founding editor of the *Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha* (SECA) series with Peeters Publishers, Leuven. This series has become a major platform for world-leading scholarship in the field.

However, this is by no means exhaustive. Jan is a humorous, open-minded, lifelong learner and a wonderful partner in dialogue. He always has an open ear for the needs of early career scholars. In other words: Jan is young! We hope he always will be.

We are grateful to the editors of *Communio Viatorum* for hosting this collection of essays, despite it not being their usual practice. We appreciate their help and flexibility. It allows us to celebrate a great scholar and wonderful friend with this little volume. *Ad multos annos!*

Regensburg and Prague, May 2026

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- 2 Jan N. Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity. Collected Essays I* (WUNT 379; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017); Jan N. Bremmer, *The World of Greek Religion and Mythology. Collected Essays II* (WUNT 433; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019); Jan N. Bremmer, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire Collected Essays III* (WUNT 547; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2025).

The Concepts of Death and Life in the *Acts of John*: A Comparison with Philo of Alexandria

Thomas Tops

Abstract: The article argues that the categories of ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ in the *Acts of John* are less ambiguous than some scholars assume, but that they often univocally refer to the death and the life of the soul. The second scholarly assumption I criticise is that these categories have a metaphorical meaning. Instead of metaphorically expressing the state of conversion of people, they denote the ontological status of the soul. ‘Dying’ refers to an ontological transformation of human beings into irrational beasts; the human soul changes into a beast’s soul. Finally, through a comparison with the writings of Philo of Alexandria, I explain particular characteristics of the concepts of death and life in the *Acts of John*. The author of the *Acts of John* is either directly dependent on Philo or stands in the same Alexandrian platonic tradition.

Keywords: Acts of John; Philo of Alexandria; Death; Life; The Death of the Soul

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Introduction

The present article provides a historical-contextual study of the concepts of death and life in the *Acts of John* (abbr. *AJ*). The first section will briefly present the observations of previous scholars concerning the categories of ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ in the *AJ*. The second section will provide an analysis of the narratives in the *AJ* where the categories of ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ play an important role. The aim of this section is to elucidate the underlying concepts of death and life. As we will see, the categories of ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ are not so much ambiguous nor do they have a metaphorical meaning, as is commonly thought, but rather are often univocally used to refer to the ontological reality of the death and the life of the soul. Subsequently, the third section will look into the historical background of the concepts of the death and the life of the soul to explain the characteristics of these concepts in the *AJ*. Philo of Alexandria will be our main dialogue partner. The conclusion will summarise the main results of this study and formulate its implications for understanding the philosophical background of the *AJ*.

1. State of the Art

In a recent article, Janet Spittler argues that the *AJ* is ambiguous about whether Lykomedes, Kleopatra, the Ephesians at the Temple of Artemis, the father of the parricide, Drusiana, and Kallimachos are dead or alive before their resurrection.¹ Spittler considers this to be a consistent narrative strategy through which the *AJ* redefines the categories of living and dead. She thereby criticises scholars and translators who assume either that these characters are only euphemistically presented as alive but are actually dead or that their deaths must have taken place but are not narrated as such.² Simultaneously, she confirms the observations of previous scholars. Eugene Gallagher, for example, notes with reference to the story of Kleopatra and Lykomedes that “the lines between death and sickness blur” and that Kallimachos is wavering between dead and “merely temporarily out of commission”.³ Similarly, János Bolyki sees Kleopatra and Lykomedes as “two (semi?-dead) persons” and Kallimachos as “semi-dead”.⁴ Pieter Lalleman writes: “In the resurrections [...], it is often unclear whether those helped were only ill, apparently dead or really deceased”.⁵ Judith Perkins observes the same for Kallimachos: “Although Callimachus is referred to at one point as a corpse (75.1), it is never clear whether he was actually dead.”⁶ Given that Kleopatra, Lykomedes, and Kallimachos were not really dead, according to these scholars, they draw

- 1 The exception is the priest of Artemis, who according to Janet Spittler, “Νῦν ἀναστὰς οὐ ζῆς ὁντως: Resurrection in the Acts of John,” *Early Christianity* 14 (2023), 143–68, at 155, is “quite unambiguously dead”.
- 2 See Spittler, “Νῦν,” 148 with reference to Jan N. Bremmer, “Women in the Acts of John,” in *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays I*, WUNT 379 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 99–114, at 102 n. 18. Another example would be Montague R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, repr. 1972; 1st ed. 1924), 230 n. 1: “It is evident from what follows that Lycomedes died: but the text does not say so; some words may have fallen out.”
- 3 Eugene V. Gallagher, “Conversion and Salvation in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,” *SecCent* 8/1 (1991), 13–29, at 19–20.
- 4 See János Bolyki, “Miracle Stories in the Acts of John,” in Jan N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of John*, Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles 1 (Pharos: Kampen, 1995), 15–35, at 18, 29.
- 5 Pieter J. Lalleman, *The Acts of John: A Two-Stage Initiation into Johannine Gnosticism*, Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles 4 (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 163.
- 6 Judith Perkins, “Resurrection and Social Perspectives in the Apocryphal Acts of Peter and Acts of John,” in Jo-Ann A. Brant, Charles W. Hedrick, and Chris Shea (eds.), *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative*, SBL SymS 32 (Atlanta GA: SBL, 2005), 217–37, at 226.

the conclusion that the purpose of the resurrection stories in the *AJ* is not primarily a literal restoration to life, but a metaphorical conversion to the Christian faith of the resurrected person. The resurrections are primarily spiritual, meaning non-literal here, in terms of a conversion to the Christian faith.⁷ Gallagher speaks of “an ideology of conversion whose dominant metaphor is death and resurrection”.⁸ Perkins remarks that death in the *AJ* “is never more than a figure”. She adds that “physical death functions primarily as a symbol of the life before conversion”.⁹ This has become the consensus among scholars as to the meaning of life and death in the *AJ*.

Spittler’s insight that the *AJ* attempts to redefine the meaning of the categories of living and dead provides the starting point of my analysis. Yet, the third section of this article will take an approach different from Spittler’s by viewing these categories through the lens of the ancient concept of the death of the soul. But first the next section will show that the language of death and life in the *AJ* is both less ambiguous and more meaningful than has been recognised.

2. The Concepts of Death and Life in the *Acts of John*

The *AJ* are part of the larger group of literary writings known as the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, which also contain the *Acts of Andrew*, the *Acts of Peter*, the *Acts of Paul*, and the *Acts of Thomas*. Each of them was written by a separate author whose identity is unknown. The *AJ* are usually considered to be the oldest because the *Acts of Andrew* were most likely literary dependent on them.¹⁰ The place of origin and the date of the *AJ* are highly debated:

7 See Paul G. Schneider, “‘A Perfect Fit’: The Major Interpolation in the Acts of John,” in E. H. Lovering (ed.), *Society of Biblical Literature 1991 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta GA: SBL Press, 1991), 518–32, at 521, 527; Paul G. Schneider, *The Mystery of the Acts of John: An Interpretation of the Hymn and the Dance in Light of the Acts’ Theology* (San Francisco, Mellen Research University Press, 1991), 24–5; Bolyki, “Miracle Stories,” 23, 25, 32; Lalleman, *The Acts of John*, 164; Perkins, “Resurrection,” 224–26; Spittler, “Nūv,” 143–44, 149.

8 Gallagher, “Conversion,” 21.

9 Perkins, “Resurrection,” 226.

10 See Jean-Marc Prieur (ed.), *Acta Andreae: Textus*, CCSA 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989), 394–400; Pieter J. Lalleman, “The Acts of Andrew and the Acts of John,” in Jan N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew*, Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles 5 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 140–48; Jan N. Bremmer, “The Acts of John, the Acts of Andrew and the Greek Novel,” *Ancient Narrative* 17 (2021), 125–43.

Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor (possibly Nicomedia) are possible candidates.¹¹ The proposed dates range from the early second century to the early third century CE.¹² My analysis of the *AJ* will focus on the narratives of (i) Lykomedes and Kleopatra (2.1), (ii) the picture of John (2.2), (iii) the Ephesians (2.3), (iv) the parricide and his father (2.4), (v) Kallimachos, Drusiana, and Fortunatus (2.5), and (vi) John's final speech (2.6).¹³

2.1 Lykomedes and Kleopatra (cc. 18–25)

The story pertains to a certain Lykomedes, a magistrate of Ephesus, who implores the apostle John to heal his wife Kleopatra since she “has been stricken down (παρὰ πλῆγῳ)¹⁴ and lay uncured (ἀθερθεύτου) for seven days now” (19.5–6).¹⁵ Although still alive, it is clear from Lykomedes' distress and the depiction of Kleopatra as “the woman having one breath” (τὴν πνοὴν μόνην ἔχουσιν γυναῖκα; 19.14) that she will soon be dead. Her death draws nearer in the next chapter, where Lykomedes calls her “the celebrated flower that is my suffering wife” (τὸ διαβόητον ἄνθος τῆς ταλαιπώρου μου γυναίκας; 20.3–4), a clear indication of her declining condition. In the next chapter, John speaks of Kleopatra as a “corpse” (πτῶμα; 21.23)—she is dead. Given that Kleopatra was breathing her last breath two chapters earlier, it is plausible

11 See Hans-Josef Klauck, *Apokryphe Apostelakten: Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 31–2. See also Harold W. Attridge, “Acts of John,” in J. Christopher Edwards (ed.), *Early New Testament Apocrypha*, Ancient Literature for New Testament Studies 9 (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2022), 216–33, at 216, and Tobias Nicklas, “Second Century Apocryphal Acts,” in M. Bird and S. Harrower (eds.), *Second Century Christianity: A Sourcebook* (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2025), 387–416. For Nicomedia, see Bremmer, “Women,” 112–14.

12 For a short overview, see Attridge, “Acts of John”. The most extensive attempt to date the text is definitely Jan Bremmer, “Women,” 111–12, who argues for around 160–70. See also his “The Apocryphal Acts: Authors, Place, Time and Readership,” in *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity*, 219–34.

13 My study focuses on the earliest reconstructable form of the *AJ* and is based on the text-critical edition by Éric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli (eds.), *Acta Iohannis: Praefatio – Textus*, CCSA 1 (Turnhout, Brepols, 1983). The English translations are taken from Joey McCollum and Brent Niedergall (trans.), *Acts of John*, Brepols Library of Christian Sources 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022) with some adjustments. For my critical evaluation of this translation, see Thomas Tops, “J. McCollum and B. Niedergall (trans), Acts of John (Turnhout, 2022),” *RHE* 119 (2024), 295–96.

14 This is the only occurrence of παρὰ πλῆγῳ found in the TLG. It is either translated as “paralysée” (Junod – Kaestli) or “stricken down” (McCollum – Niedergall).

15 The term στρατιγός probably refers to a magistrate or “a member of the executive council of Ephesus”: see Bremmer, “Women,” 101 and Bremmer, “The Acts of John,” 129.

that she must have died by the end of c. 21. This is confirmed by John's later statement that she has breathed out her life (cf. τοὺς ἀποψύξαντες; 22.18). In this reading, there is no ambiguity in the use of the categories 'dead' and 'alive'. On the other hand, one cannot exclude that she was still alive in the biological sense. If this is the case, then John is speaking of her death in some other way.

That John probably speaks of Kleopatra being dead in a non-biological sense can be derived from what he says when he raises Kleopatra from the dead shortly after in cc. 22–23. In John's view, not her body but her soul was dead and in need of resurrection. He calls on Christ as a physician who restores her soul (22.14). The emphasis after her resurrection is not on her physical characteristics, but on the stability of her soul (cf. ἀκίνητον [...] τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἀμετάτρεπτον; 23.13–14), her emotional self-control (cf. μὴ ταρασση μὴδὲ κινῇ ἐπὶ τῷ γεγονότι; 23.15–16), and her faith in God (cf. πιστεύσασα ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ μου; 23.16).¹⁶ John and Lykomedes describe Kleopatra differently. While Kleopatra was dying, Lykomedes draws attention to her "faded beauty", her "youth", and her popularity among the Ephesians as "the celebrated flower" (20.3–5). After her resurrection, John puts the lens on her "self-control" (τὸ συνέχον), her "anguish" (τὴν ἀνάγκην), and "her crying out in the soul through the silence" after her resurrection (24.8–10).¹⁷ This contrast in depiction emphasises that the concepts of life and death in the text do not so much pertain to the body, but rather to the soul. John further praises Kleopatra's emotional self-control and her faith that God will give her husband to her alive, despite her "intolerable anguish" (ἀφόρτην μανίαν; 24.10) caused by seeing her husband dead. The concept of life underlying this resurrection story is that life is dependent on the virtuous character of the soul. If the soul is not an unchanging and stable entity, that is, if one is not in control of one's emotions, one is considered 'dead'.¹⁸ Faith in God is articulated as

16 Her emotional self-control is illustrated by her reaction when she saw her husband dead: "[...] she began to falter in her voice and grind her teeth and bite her tongue, and she closed her eyes, and her tears began to fall out in drops. And quietly, she turned to the apostle." (24.3–5)

17 As noted by McCollum and Niedergall, *Acts of John*, 27 n. 15, the threefold ὁρᾷς in 24.8–10 parallels the threefold ἴδε in 20.3–5. As a result, Lykomedes' depiction of Kleopatra is contrasted with John's.

18 Here and below, I use the term 'emotions' to refer to feelings as anger, fear, and shame. I will also sometimes use the term 'desires', when I refer to bodily appetites as for instance hunger, thirst, sexual desire. I derive this terminological distinction from Emma

an essential ingredient for retaining this stability of the soul. The concepts of life and death underlying the resurrection story imply that Kleopatra was dead all along, before her resurrection, despite the fact that she might not always have been dead in the biological sense.

Let us now turn to Lykomedes. As we have seen above, Lykomedes is the means by which the author of the *AJ* seems to relate physical aspects of Kleopatra, such that her illness leads to his desperation and contemplation of suicide (19.8–10). Although he is presented as having the reputation of being pious (εὐσεβής), he complains that he suffers more than the impious (δυσσεβοῦς; 20.9–11).¹⁹ He thinks that he is unjustly treated by personified Δίκη, a deity of justice. To escape this injustice, Lykomedes contemplates suicide and hopes that by doing so he will set himself free from life (cf. ἀπολύων ἑαυτὸν τοῦ βίου; 20.13), become “a phantom of life” (εἶδωλον βίου; 20.16) and have his revenge on Δίκη. It is in this phantom life that Lykomedes anticipates he will be able to make a pronouncement to Δίκη, as follows: “You forced out the light by snatching away Kleopatra; you made me become dead (νεκρόν) by rendering this to me; you have forced me to rage against providence and have cut off my παρρησία” (20.17–19).²⁰ The crux of my discussion is whether “dead” refers here to the physical death of Lykomedes as the result of his suicide. This is plausible because he is contemplating suicide. Another possibility would be that “dead” refers to his moral-psychological state as a result of his rage against providence. Having been mastered by his emotions, Lykomedes loses his rational capacities. His ability to speak without constraint, his παρρησία, is literally “cut off” (ἐκκόψασα). The association of losing one’s παρρησία with “dead” might not be coincidental, since the association of gaining παρρησία and obtaining eternal life is present in the *Acts of Thomas*.²¹ Παρρησία is obviously a characteristic of human life, as it refers

Wasserman, *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Sin, Death, and the Law in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology*, WUNT II/256 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 21.

19 The *AJ* depicts the virtue of piety as an ideal for Christ followers: see θεοσέβεια in 63.6 and 64.7 and θεοσεβής in 63.7 and 76.39.

20 The term παρρησία is difficult to translate here. It has both the connotations of ‘confidence’ and ‘free/unconstrained speech’ in this context.

21 *Acts of Thomas* 103: εἰσάξει δέ σε εἰς τὴν αἰωνίαν ζωὴν, παρέχων σοι τὴν παρρησίαν τὴν μὴ παρερχομένην μήτε ἀλλασσομένην. My translation: “He [Christ] will lead you into eternal life by providing you with the unrestrained and free speech that does not perish nor change.”

to unrestrained free speech.²² The text seems to assume that without it, one cannot adequately be considered a human being anymore, but is actually “dead”. This second possible interpretation does not exclude the first. It is Lykomedes’ state of being mastered by his emotions that is responsible for his contemplation of suicide.

The second interpretation of Lykomedes’ death as depicting a moral-psychological state is favoured by what follows. Approaching Kleopatra in her bed, Lykomedes is crying and begins to wail. While exhorting him, John depicts Lykomedes as sleeping: “Wake yourself up and open your soul! Cast away this heavy sleep from you!” (διυπνίσθητι καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ ἀνοιξόν σου τὴν ψυχὴν. ἀπόβαλε τὸν πολὺν ὕπνον ἀπὸ σοῦ; 21.8–9). Sleep is a common euphemism for death elsewhere,²³ as it is here. John encourages Lykomedes to control his emotions and thereby come to life. To gain this control, Lykomedes has to obey Christ. John tears Lykomedes away from the bed and reproaches him: “It is not proper for you to disobey the one who appeared to you, for know that you are regaining your partner” (οὐ προσήκει ἀπειθῆσαι τῷ θεωμένῳ σοι. ἴσθι γὰρ ἀπολαμβάνων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σύμβιον; 21.4–5). John is referring here to the person, probably Christ, who appears to Lykomedes (19.7–10) and tells him to “stop this oppressive thought battling against you”, by which he presumably means suicide. Lykomedes, however, continues to be overcome by his emotions: “But he, falling upon the floor, was wailing with all his soul (ὀλοψυχῶν)” (21.10–11).²⁴ In this respect and for our purposes, Lykomedes’ failure to obey the exhortations of John and his seemingly lifeless submission to wave after wave of emotions shows us that Lykomedes remains dead and is completely mastered by his emotions. This reading is confirmed by John’s depiction of Lykomedes as “lifeless/without breath” (ἄπνους; 21.18), one of “the two corpses” (cf. πτώματα δύο; 21.23), and one of “those who have

22 On *παρρησία* as a feature characteristic of free human existence, see the history of the word in Hartmut Leppin, *Paradoxe der Parrhesie: Eine antike Wortgeschichte*, Tria Corda 14 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022).

23 See e.g. John 11:11–14. θάνατος and ὕπνος are brothers in Greek mythology: see Hesiod, *Theog.* 758–760.

24 Although the verb ὀλοψυχέω is rare (cf. LSJ, s.v.), this reading offered by the manuscripts R and Z makes sense in the literary context and does not require emendation. James’ emendation to ὀλιγοψυχῶν is problematic because it assumes that Lykomedes was fainting while he was wailing (cf. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 230: “But he fell upon the floor and lamented, fainting”). The durative aspect of ἐθρήνει (“he was wailing”) suggests that Lykomedes was not fainting. Wailing requires consciousness.

breathed out their life” (τοὺς ἀποψύξαντες; 22.18). Not only John, but also the Ephesians consider Lykomedes as “having died” (τετελευτηκότος; 22.2). There is thus no ambiguity about whether Lykomedes is dead or alive. He has certainly died. The only ambiguity in the text is how to understand his death. For the Ephesians, Lykomedes seems to have died in the biological sense. For John, on the other hand, Lykomedes, like Kleopatra, is dead not in a physical sense, but in a moral-psychological sense, and he needs faith in God to master his emotions and bring him back to life.

We can conclude that the categories ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ are not so much ambiguous in the story about Lykomedes and Kleopatra, but that different concepts of death and life are at play in our text. For Lykomedes, Kleopatra is at the point of dying in a biological sense, whereas John is occupied with the state of her soul. Similarly, Lykomedes is certainly presented as dead, but this means different things for the Ephesians and John. The Ephesians consider Lykomedes to have died in a biological sense. John, on the other hand, univocally presents Lykomedes and Kleopatra as dead in a moral-psychological sense and therefore in need of resurrection in a similar sense. Since they are mastered by their emotions, Lykomedes and Kleopatra are considered dead. Only through faith in God will they be able to become alive and master their emotions. As illustrated by what John says about Kleopatra, being alive correlates with stability in the soul. The fact that Lykomedes suffers more than the impious further indicates that the virtue of piety plays an important role in obtaining life. Obedience to God, piety, and emotional self-control are essential to the concept of life underlying this presentation of Lykomedes and Kleopatra.

2.2 The Picture of John (cc. 26–29)

A similar conceptuality of life and death can also be found in the subsequent story of the picture of John. After being raised by John, Lykomedes and Kleopatra convince John of staying with them (25). Lykomedes orders a talented friend to make a portrait of John without John’s knowledge (26.2–5). The text particularly emphasises the material aspects of the painting: the “essential tools and paints” (26.6–7), the drawing of the outline, and the blending of the outline with the paints (27.1–3, 9–10). Lykomedes secretly worships the painting in his bedroom, encircling it with garlands and candles, and puts altars in front of it (27.3–4). When John finds out, he reproves him that he is “still living as a pagan” (ἔτι ἐθνικῶς ζῶντα; 27.12–13). Lykomedes, in his

defence, claims that his only God is the one who raised him and his wife from death (ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου), presumably physical death. Yet, he sees no problem in additionally honouring (σέβομαι) the people who are his benefactors as gods (27.14–18).²⁵ In this episode Lykomedes is portrayed as a pagan lacking authentic piety. When John sees the painting, he does not recognise himself in it but calls it similar to his fleshly form (cf. τῷ σαρκικῷ μου εἰδῶλω; 28.6–7), implying he sees in his physical image only a faint recognition of his carnal self. Later in the text, he calls it “childish and imperfect” and “a dead image of death” (νεκροῦ νεκρὰν εἰκόνα; 29.18–19). Thereby, he identifies his fleshly form with death, and the painting with a dead image of this fleshly form. John exhorts Lykomedes to “become a good portraitist” to him and paint with the colours that he has received from Jesus through him (29.1–4). “Colours” is used as a metaphor for the ideals and virtues of the soul, being “faith in God [...] chastity, calmness (ἀταραξία), fearlessness, peace [...]”, which allow Lykomedes’ soul to be raised from death (29.5–10).²⁶ Thanks to the practice of these virtues and the pursuit of these ideals, Lykomedes is able to control his emotions and desires, so that he can produce a good image of John’s soul.²⁷ If the painting of John’s fleshly form is a dead image of death, this new image of John’s soul that Lykomedes is to paint is implied to be a living image of life. This chorus of colours, John continues, or the practice of the above-mentioned virtues, purifies “the innards” (τὰ σπλάγχνα), hollows out “the belly” (τὴν γαστέρα), and cuts off “the base desires” (τὰ ὑπογάστρια) of Lykomedes (29.13–14). In short, it will render his soul “indelible and well-polished and of solid form in our Lord Jesus Christ” (29.15–17).

By way of summary, we see in this account of John’s painting a depiction of the concepts of death and life similar to those found in the story of Lykomedes and Kleopatra. Lykomedes continues thinking of death and life in the biological sense. John, on the other hand, associates life with the practice of virtue, faith in God, the control of emotions and desires, and a stable constitution of the soul. He views death as a description of the body and its emotions and desires that cause chaos and disorder in the constitution

25 On the underlying concept of patronage in this scene, see Travis W. Proctor, “Hospitality, not Honors: Portraits and Patronage in the *Acts of John*,” *HTR* 115/1 (2022), 69–89.

26 This use of “colours” (χρώματα) as a metaphor for virtues and ideals is to my knowledge unparalleled in Greco-Roman literature.

27 Cf. Éric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli (eds.), *Acta Iohannis: Textus Alii – Commentarius Indices*, CCSA 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983), 454: “[...] l’action conjuguée de ces vertus a pour effet de permettre à l’âme d’assurer sa domination sur le corps”.

of the soul. Thus, the categories of ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ are not metaphors for conversion or symbols of any other kind but describe concrete constitutions of the soul. There is also no ambiguity in the use of these categories. As we have seen, Lykomedes has made “a dead image of death” by producing and worshipping the painting of John, whereas the practice of the virtues and qualities of his soul would result in the production of a living image of life.

2.3 The Ephesians (cc. 32–47)

The meaning of John’s concept of death is also beautifully illustrated by his depiction of the Ephesians, who play a major role in two different stories: John’s healing of the old women (cc. 32–36) and the destruction of the temple of Artemis (cc. 37–47).

In the first story, John depicts the Ephesians as being “ruled/conquered by faithlessness and sold to shameful lusts” (ἀπιστία κεκρατημένους καὶ ἐπιθυμίαις αἰσχαῖς πεπραμένους; 33.7–8). His main message to them is “the caretaking of souls” (τὸ τῶν ψυχῶν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι; 34.1–3). To take care of their souls, the Ephesians have to free themselves from their uncontrolled desire for wealth, which only causes them to feel grief and fear: grief, because they have to let go of their possessions sooner or later; fear, because when possessions are at hand, someone can steal them (34.3–12). Those who do not take care of their souls, but “are exalted on account of bodily beauty [...] gaze upon the tomb (ἐπὶ τοῦ μνήματος θέασαι)” for the certain end of their promise (35.1–3). The example of adultery that follows shows that John is not only concerned with the Ephesians’ desire for wealth, but also their sexual desires (35.3–5).²⁸ Although the Ephesians are not depicted as dead, John warns them that their destination is death if they do not control their desires. Death is their inevitable τέλος. The fact that John calls the “short-tempered and enraged” among the Ephesians “irrational animals” (cf. τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις; 35.9) suggests that the depiction of the Ephesians as destined for death is not a metaphorical expression, but has ontological status since it corresponds to their being reduced to beasts.²⁹ Due to their uncontrolled desires, they literally die as

28 On the ethical views of wealth management in the *AJ*, see further Thomas Tops, “Wealth and *Oikonomia* in the *Acts of John*: A Historical-Contextual Study,” in Peter Altmann, Frank Ueberschaer, and Nadine Ueberschaer (eds.), *Is It Good to Be Rich? Answers from Antiquity and the Bible*, WUNT 532 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2025), 475–96.

29 The depiction of the Ephesians as irrational animals is highly contrasted with the depiction of the bed bugs in 60.10–13. John and his followers are troubled by bed bugs during the night. John exhorts them “to be reasonable” (εὐγνωμονέω) and “to keep

human beings and behave like irrational animals. In the textual world of the *AJ*, they are unambiguously destined for death.

The second story provides a similar image of the Ephesians. John warns the Ephesians that they “have been obstinate to this day concerning true piety (τὴν ὄντως εὐσέβειαν)”, being ruined by their “ancient religious practices” (cf. τοῖς παλαιοῖς ὑμῶν θρησκευμασι; 39.4–6).³⁰ Although they have seen John perform many miracles and healings, they have blinded their hearts and are unable to see again (39.6–8). John has come to the temple of Artemis to prove that they are “being most godless and dead concerning human reasoning” (ἄθεωτάτους ὄντας καὶ νεκροὺς τὸν ἀνθρώπινον λογισμόν; 39.10–11). The manuscripts R and Z read τῶν ἀνθρώπων λογισμῶν, which is non-sensical in this context. Junod and Kaestli propose to emend it to τὸν ἀνθρώπινον λογισμόν. In this reading, the phrase is an accusative of respect and an attribute to νεκροὺς (Interpretation One).³¹ Another possibility, as proposed by Bonnet, is to read τῷ ἀνθρώπινῳ λογισμῷ. Then, the dative can be either interpreted as causal and an attribute to νεκροὺς (“dead because of their human reasoning”; Interpretation Two) or as instrumental and a prepositional phrase construed with διελέγξω (“I will prove through human reasoning”; Interpretation Three). Taking into consideration all three possible interpretations, the Ephesians are either presented as dead in general or dead concerning human reasoning. In Interpretation One and Two, the death of the Ephesians is associated with their lack of reasoning. Given the earlier characterisation of the Ephesians as lacking emotional self-control and as animals without reason (35.8–11), either one of these two interpretations is probable. Due to their lack of reasoning, they are unable to see John’s miracles and healings and are obstinate concerning true piety. Thus, the concept of death implied by this text assumes that being dead is a matter

quiet (ἡσυχάζειν) in one place”. The fact that the bed bugs obey John shows that they have *logos*. They are characterised as human. The distinction between irrational animals and humans is fluid in the textual world of the *AJ*. Humans can be transformed into irrational animals, and *vice versa*. On animals in the *Apocryphal Acts*, see further Janet E. Spittler, *Animals in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: The Wild Kingdom of Early Christian Literature*, WUNT II/247 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

³⁰ The Christian neologism θρησκεῦμα (“religious practice”) only occurs in *AJ* 39–40 and *Acts of Andrew* 7. According to Bremmer (“The Acts of John,” 135 n. 38), it does not re-appear before Synesius, *Aegyptii sive de providentia* 1.18.

³¹ For their arguments for this emendation, see Junod and Kaestli (eds.), *Acta Iohannis: Praefatio – Textus*, 218–19, n. 39.2.

of lacking virtue (*viz.*, piety) and human reasoning. The category of ‘dead’ is not a metaphor or a symbol, but denotes the ontological status of not being human, but an animal without reason.

The second story also mentions the death of the priest of Artemis, who “was killed with a single blow” (μονόπληγα ἀναιρεθῆναι) after John brought down the temple (42.6). He is depicted as “the dead priest of Artemis” (τὸν τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερέα [...] νεκρόν; 46.3–4), “a dead relative” (cf. τοῦ νεκροῦ μου συγγενοῦς [46.13]; τῷ νεκρῷ σου συγγενεῖ [46.22]), and “the dead man” (τὸν τεθνεῶτα; 47.5–6). At this point in the narrative, he is unambiguously dead in the biological sense. After his resurrection, the narrator depicts him as “alive” (ζῶντα; 47.9).³² Yet, when John sees him, he clarifies that he does “not really live” nor is he “a partaker and heir of true life” (cf. οὐ ζῆς ὄντως οὐδὲ τῆς ἀληθινῆς ζωῆς κοινωνὸς καὶ κληρονόμος; 47.10–11). He lacks faith in God to have life (cf. καὶ νῦν πιστευσον, καὶ ζήσεις εἰς ἅπαντας αἰῶνας; 47.12–13). Although the priest appears alive, he is dead by virtue of his lack of faith in God which, according to the author of the *AJ*, is the only means by which one can have ‘life’.

We can conclude that John consistently presents the Ephesians as ‘dead’. They are dead because they are mastered by their desires and lack human reasoning, the virtue of piety, and faith in God. The category of ‘dead’ is not a metaphor for the life before conversion but depicts the ontological status of the Ephesians as irrational animals. Although they may have animation and the physical capacities one equates with biological existence, they are not ‘alive’ as the author of the *AJ* would have it. The latter is also the case for the priest of Artemis. Unlike the Ephesians, the priest did actually die in the biological sense and was raised afterwards. However, through John the author of the text attempts to persuade the reader that the priest never really lived because he lacked faith in God.

2.4 The Parricide and His Father (cc. 48–54)

Another story in the *AJ* makes this point about the true nature of ‘life’ and ‘death’. A young man is exhorted by his father to “not take his co-worker’s wife for himself” (48.3–5). The exhortation is motivated not only by

32 On his resurrection, see further Almuth Peiper, “Bekehrung praktisch: Verwandtschaft mit Jesus (Totenaufweckung des Artemispriesters) – ActJoh 46f,” in Ruben Zimmermann (ed.), *Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen*, vol. 2, *Die Wunder der Apostel* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2017), 351–58.

moral concerns of the father, but also for his son's very life: the co-worker "was threatening to kill him" (48.5). The son, however, spurns his father's guidance with violence. "[N]ot bearing his father's admonition," the text reports, the son kicks him and renders him "speechless" (ἄφωνον; 48.5–7). Although initially it is unclear about whether the father is actually dead, a few verses later the narrator states that the son "was seeing the swiftness of death (τὸ ὀξύ τοῦ θανάτου)" (49.1).³³ He had murdered his father and, seemingly in desperation, attempts to kill himself, the co-worker, and the co-worker's wife. In doing so, the son explains to John that he killed his father by kicking him (cf. λακτίσας αὐτὸν ἀπέκτεινα) and that he has become "a father-killer" (πατὴρὸς [...] φονεύς) on behalf of the woman (49.6–15). The narrator later confirms that the father is dead (cf. ὁ πρεσβύτερος νεκρός; 51.2). The author has thus left no room for uncertainty or ambiguity about the condition of the father; he is dead. The only uncertainty appeared earlier, when the father was rendered "speechless", leaving it open that he perhaps might not have died immediately. But this question is subsequently and unambiguously resolved.

John raises the father from the dead (52.1–4). Yet the reader may be surprised to see the father preferred death to suffering his son's abuse, and so complains to John for raising him from the dead (52.5–7). John explains that if he were indeed raised to "these same things", the father would be correct; death would be preferable. Instead, though, John exhorts the father to "arise for something better" (52.9–10). In this process, the narrative makes clear, John proclaims "as good news the grace of God", and the father obtains faith (52.11–12). The story shows us that true life is dependent on faith in God. In his dreadful state of being insulted and unloved by his son, it is better for the father to die. Only the grace of God can enable him to obtain a life worth living. The text corroborates certain features of life and death encountered in previous passages. As we have seen before, a person, in this case the father, is completely overwhelmed by his emotions. He prefers death over a most dreadful life in which he is insulted and hated by his son. Only the grace of God can provide him with a peaceful life freed from the tyranny of his emotions. Similarly, the son, after repenting of his crime, learns that God can help him with all the needs of his soul (54.11–12). He devotes himself "to living calmly" (cf. ἡσυχάζων; 54.12). A worthwhile life is depicted as a state in

33 Other possible translation: "the sharpness of death" in the sense of painfulness.

which the emotions and desires are under control through the help of God. When they are ungovernable, it is better to be dead.

Like in our previous examples, the categories of ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ are not ambiguous but contextually defined. The father is dead, and for him, being subdued by his emotions, it is better to be dead. Only through faith in God can both he and his son obtain a life worth living, mastering their emotions and desires rather than being mastered by them, and in peaceful dedication to God.

2.5 Kallimachos, Drusiana, and Fortunatus (cc. 63–86)

The *AJ* narrate the resurrection of three additional people: Kallimachos, Drusiana, and Fortunatus. Kallimachos is introduced as “a messenger of Satan” (ἐπίπεμπτος τοῦ Σατανᾶ) who coveted Drusiana (63.2–3). His friends advise him to distance himself from “the insanity” (μανίας), which does not have rest in him (63.13–14). Unpersuaded by his friends, he sends Drusiana a message informing her about his desire (64.1–3). The message was assumably unanswered or rejected, since he gives up hope “so that he might not suffer more insults”. As a result, he lives his life “disheartened” (ἐν ἄθυμιά; 64.3–4). As a reaction to his despondency, Drusiana falls sick with a fever and wishes that she had not become an offence to “a man uninitiated in piety (θεοσέβειαν)” (64.7). By that she means that Kallimachos is not “stricken by words” (ὑπὸ λόγων πεπληγώς), presumably God’s words.³⁴ If he had been pious and stricken by God’s words, she reasons, “he would not have entered into such laxness (ῥαθυμίας)” (64.7–8).³⁵ She grieves over the destruction of his soul (cf. ἐκείνου ψυχικὴν θραύσιν; 64.13). Although the vocabulary of death is not used in this context, the destruction of the soul of Kallimachos is associated with characteristics of death that we have found in previous scenes. The madness, disheartened state, and laxness of Kallimachos indicate that he, too, is mastered by his emotions and desires. Since he is not stricken by God’s words, he lacks the virtue of piety needed to break free of the control of his emotions and desires. The destruction of his soul indicates that he is dead and needs resurrection. But his ‘death’ is neither metaphorical nor

³⁴ Like Junod and Kaestli (*Acta Iohannis: Praefatio – Textus*, 254 n. 64.3), I follow the reading offered by *M* πεπληγώς because of the parallels with the *Acts of Andrew*.

³⁵ Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis: Textus Alii – Commentarius Indices*, 541 paraphrase ῥαθυμία in the *AJ* as “cette tendance de l’homme à se laisser aller”.

symbolical, but ontological, corresponding to the status of his soul in which the emotions and the desires rule over reason.

Kallimachos' uncontrolled desire for Drusiana does not end with her death, as he attempts to have sex with her corpse. "[T]erribly kindled by lust and by the inner working of Satan", he buys of Fortunatus, the steward of Andronicus, the husband of Drusiana, to open up the tomb (70.3–7). He rushes in and prepares in his mind "the impious act" (ἀσέβειαν; 70.11–12). When about to commit the act, a snake kills (cf. ἀνείλεν) Fortunatus and wraps around the feet of Kallimachos. After Kallimachos falls, the snake sits upon him (71.1–5).³⁶ It is not clear whether Kallimachos is actually dead at this point. The narrator states that, on the next day, Andronicus sees that the two men are dead (cf. νεκρούς; 74.1) and that "they have died" (τεθνήκασιν) because they wanted to defile the corpse of Drusiana (74.11–12). Perhaps the moment of death is left unarticulated to suggest to the reader that Kallimachos has been dead all along due to the destruction of his soul. In any case, there is no ambiguity about whether Kallimachos is dead or alive.

When John draws his attention "to the corpse" (τῷ πτώματι) of Kallimachos, he scares away the snake "from the one about to be a slave (δουλεύειν) of Jesus Christ" (75.1–3).³⁷ After his resurrection, Kallimachos "was silent (ἡσύχαζεν) the whole hour" (75.9). When he regains his reasoning power or consciousness (cf. ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λογισμῷ ἐγένετο; 76.1), Kallimachos speaks first of his previous μανία (76.9–10) and then about what destroyed him even more and rendered him dead (cf. τὸ μᾶλλον με ἀνελὸν καὶ νεκρὸν θέμενον; 76.12). The text seems to distinguish between different degrees of destruction and death suffered by Kallimachos. As explained above, his μανία caused the destruction of his soul. Now, Kallimachos is talking about an event that destroyed him even more and killed him:

When spiritual folly (ἡ ψυχικὴ [...] ἄνοια) was beside me and the unchecked sickness (ἡ ἀκατάσχετος νόσος) was vexing me, as I was tearing off the burial sheets in which she was wrapped, and then, as I was stepping away from the grave and putting them down, as you can clearly see, I went back again to the despicable deed, and I saw a handsome

36 On the ancient literary motif of a snake protecting the virginity of a young woman, see Vincent Giraudet, "Virginity at Stake: Greek Novels, Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, and the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus Panopolitanus," in Marília P. Futre Pinheiro et al. (ed.), *The Ancient Novel and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: Fictional Intersections* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 49–64, at 50–4.

37 For this 'slavery', see Jan N. Bremmer, "Slaves of God/Christ: Narrated Total Devotion in the Apocryphal Acts of Peter," *Religion* 53 (2023), 87–115.

young man covering her with his own cloak, from whose face brilliant rays of light leapt into her face, and who shouted to me, saying, ‘Kallimachos, die, that you may live! (ἀπόθανε ἵνα ζήσης)’ (76.13–20).

Kallimachos is convinced that this handsome young man is “a messenger of God” (76.21). The messenger tells Kallimachos that he must die (*sc.*, ἀπόθανε ἵνα ζήσης) to control his desires, and so live. He asks John for help to become good (καλόν), and this way become one of God’s own (θεοῦ; 76.31–32). From this point he is no longer mastered by his desire for Drusiana, but can think of nothing else than having παρρησία before God as “a true and legitimate son” (76.34–35). Putting his “hope upon Christ” (76.35–36), he declares that “the faithless, the disordered, and the godless one has died (ἀπέθανε [...] ὁ ἄπιστος, ὁ ἄτακτος, ὁ ἄθεος)” and that he has risen as “one who will be faithful (πιστός), who will be pious (θεοσεβής), and who knows truth” (76.38–40). According to John, God has put to shame Kallimachos’ “lack of self-control (ἀκрасίαν)” and has not “allowed it to lead him to its end” (77.9–10). God pitied “the deranged/counterfeit person” (τὸν παρακόψαντα ἄνθρωπον; 77.11–12). He has mercy on Kallimachos and sets him free from his “madness (μανίας) and drunkenness (μέθης)” (78.5) to call him to God’s “rest and renewal of life” (ἀνάπαυσιν καὶ ἀνακαίνωσιν βίου; 78.6).

In this resurrection story of Kallimachos, life is characterised by faith in Christ, the virtue of piety, and knowledge of truth. His desires are under control and he acquires παρρησία, the freedom to speak his mind instead of being enslaved by his desires. Death, on the other hand, is characterised by faithlessness, impiety, disorder, and godlessness. Being completely enslaved by desires, the soul is disordered and destroyed. The categories of ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ are not ambiguous nor are they metaphors or symbols for conversion. Instead, as we have seen before, they correspond to the ontological status of the soul, which is either dead, when completely dominated by desires, or alive, when desires are under control.

Let us now turn to Drusiana, the second person in our story who will be resurrected. Drusiana was previously the wife of the magistrate Andronicus, “a first of the Ephesians” (πρῶτος [...] τῶν Ἐφεσίων; 31.5–7).³⁸ She has separated herself for a long time, “even from her husband”, “for the sake of piety

³⁸ On the phrase “first of the city” (πρῶτος τῆς πόλεως), see Jan N. Bremmer, “Magic, Martyrdom and Women’s Liberation in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*,” in *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity*, 149–65, at 153, 163–64.

(θεοσέβειαν)” (63.5–6). As the friends of Kallimachos predict, she does not agree with Kallimachos’ proposal to have sex with him. As a consequence of the “faintheartedness” (ἀθυμία) of Kallimachos, Drusiana lay down with a fever (64.4–5). As she considers herself to have become “the intercessor of a blow to an ignorant soul”, she asks the Lord to release her from “these bonds” and to transfer her to him quickly (64.9–11). Her requests reflect her will to commit suicide. While John was unaware of her suicidal intents, “Drusiana was released from life, not at all pleased, but rather, grieving (λυπούμενη) because of the destruction” of the soul of Kallimachos (64.12–13). As Andronicus is mourning, John silences him, claiming that “Drusiana went after a better hope, leaving behind this unrighteous life” (65.1–4). Andronicus agrees that “she departed this life in purity” (65.7–8). It is only after John saw her that he realises the cause (αἰτία) of her death and “mourned more than Andronicus”, “being at a loss over the abuses of the Adversary” (66.1–3). While John first thinks that Drusiana left this life in all purity, going after a better hope, he realises now that she actually committed suicide out of grief.

In the speech that follows, John addresses Drusiana in metaphors, clarifying that Drusiana did not maintain her faith “until just outside of life” (68.3).³⁹ John explains that it is so difficult to keep faith because “many obstacles creep in and make a commotion (θόρυβον) in human reasoning (τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ λογισμῷ)” (68.3–4): “worry, children, parents, glory, poverty, flattery, flourishing, beauty, arrogance, lust, wealth, anger, elation, laxness (ράθυμία), ill will, jealousy, indifference, insolence, sexual passion, deceit, possessions, pretence, and others which are like these obstacles” (68.5–8). Faith depends on emotional self-control. In the case of Drusiana, the grief over the destruction of the soul of Kallimachos triggered a commotion in her human reasoning, causing her to lose faith and take her own life. John continues that “what is needed before all else is for the faithful person to foresee his departure (ἐξοδον) and to consider it, how it will come upon him – whether vigorous and level-headed and having no obstacle, or thrown into commotion (τεθορυβημένη) and flattering the things here and tied down by desires” (69.1–5). Applied to Drusiana, it is clear that she is among those who were thrown into commotion at the time of their death. That is, like others we have seen before, she is mastered by her emotions.

39 E.g., “The one attempting to run in a race may be honoured only when he has won the prize. The one registering to spar may boast only when he has received the crowns” (67.7–9).

As we have also seen before, the categories of ‘dead’ and ‘alive’ recur in this story: the narrator speaks of her “dead body” (νεκρὸν σῶμα; 70.7) and her “body after death” (cf. μετὰ θάνατον τῷ σώματι; 70.8) and depicts her as a corpse (cf. τοῦ πτώματος; 70.13). Kallimachos addresses her as “being dead after death” (μετὰ θάνατον νεκράν [...] οὖσαν; 70.9–10). John speaks of Drusiana’s body as “the dead house” (τὸν νεκρὸν οἶκον; 77.8). All these sayings affirm that Drusiana is unambiguously dead. After the resurrection of Kallimachos, Andronicus begs John to raise Drusiana, too. He argues that, now Kallimachos has converted (cf. ἐπιστρέψαντος), Drusiana may find rest (79.18–20). After John resurrected Drusiana, she saw Kallimachos and rejoices exceedingly and glorifies God (80.1–7). Drusiana praises God for relieving her of her “hidden madness” (τῆς ἀποκρύφου μανίας; 82.13).

In the resurrection story of Drusiana, the meaning of death depends on how this ἔξοδος takes place. If one’s rationality is not disturbed, one leaves for a better place and there is no cause for grieving this departure. But if one’s rationality is disturbed by emotions and desires, one is truly dead and so requires resurrection. Drusiana’s departure from life is caused by her grief; her rationality is overcome by emotion and she cannot maintain her faith. She is depicted unambiguously as dead. Her death is not a metaphor for her unconverted state, but denotes a condition of her very rationality, which is overcome by her emotions. In this condition her body is depicted as merely a dead house for her soul. After she is raised from her death in resurrection and sees the converted Kallimachos, she is alive again because she is in a state of rest in which her reasoning is no longer disturbed by grief.

The resurrections of Kallimachos and Drusiana are highly contrasted with the resurrection of Fortunatus, which is unsuccessful. Fortunatus, “the steward of Andronicus, who was fond of money” (ὄντα φιλάργυρον), is paid by Kallimachos to open the grave of Drusiana (70.4–5). Though Fortunatus makes the “impious act” (ἀσέβειαν) possible, the idea is conceived in the mind of Kallimachos (70.11–12). When he enters the tomb, Fortunatus is immediately killed by a snake bite (71.2–3). He is unambiguously dead. Andronicus sees him and Kallimachos as “dead” (νεκρούς; 74.1) and as having died (τεθνήκασιν; 74.12), both terms we have seen before. Andronicus considers Fortunatus “unworthy of salvation” and so advises John not to raise him from the dead (74.18). But Drusiana, after her own resurrection, sees the dead Fortunatus, and asks John to raise him too (81.2–3). Kallimachos speaks against it because the voice that he heard of the previously mentioned messenger of God did

not mention Fortunatus (81.5–6). He presumes that Fortunatus was not raised by God (through John) because he, Fortunatus, was not good. And so, Fortunatus was allowed “to die a bad death” (κακῶς τεθνάναι; 81.7–9). John does not contest Kallimachos’ assessment of Fortunatus but does take issue with his theology: for God does “not exact retribution” nor push people away but suggests “repentance and abstaining from vices (κακῶν)” (81.15–18). But John still does not raise Fortunatus but instead proposes that Drusiana does so. When Fortunatus is raised, his appearance is completely different from the emotional self-control shown by Kallimachos and Drusiana after their resurrections. When he sees John and the other converted believers, he is completely filled with hate for them. He declares his preference for death over resurrection (and life), when resurrection entails life where the powers of “these terrible people” have reached so far (83.4–9). He flees from the tomb (83.10). The narrator states that the soul of Fortunatus is “unaltered towards good” (84.1–2). John bursts into a series of exclamations: “O nature unnatural to improvement! O fountain of the soul remaining in filth! [...] O death (θάνατε) dancing among your own! [...] O stump having a demon for reasoning (τὸν λόγον)! [...] O matter, cohabitant of materialism and neighbour of unbelief!” (84.2–7) Although resurrected, Fortunatus is identified with death. He cannot abstain from his vices and is unaltered towards good. He has a demon for reasoning and therefore cannot control his emotions and desires. As a result, his soul is polluted and he does not have faith in God, so John commands him to be set apart from those who do (84.10–20). Fortunatus cannot be reconciled with their “self-control” (ἐγκρατείας; 84.17). John predicts that Fortunatus will die from the venom of the snake’s bite, which happens almost immediately (86.5–9). When John hears this, he says with an open address: “You are receiving your child, Devil.” (86.10)

The story of Fortunatus illustrates that death is caused by a lack of emotional self-control. Unable to control his hate for those who believe in God, Fortunatus shows that his rationality is mastered by his emotions. He is unable to cultivate virtue and come to faith. As a result, he cannot be properly resurrected and instead dies a bad death.

2.6 John’s Final Speech (cc. 106–115)

In his final speech, John speaks explicitly about death. He calls the Lord “the root of immortality” (ἡ ρίζα τῆς ἀθανασίας; 109.12–13). He praises God as “the one who has made the wild and savage soul gentle and quiet (ὁ τὴν ἔρημον καὶ

ἀγρωθεῖσαν ψυχὴν ἡμερον καὶ ἡρεμον ποιήσας); [...] who appeared quickly to the one who was dying (νεκρουμένη; 112.5–8)". Thus, John depicts the soul as dying when it is wild and savage. Christ, as the root of immortality, has made the soul gentle and quiet. Later, John narrates how this applies to him. Christ kept him pure in the sense that, when John in his youth desired to marry a woman, he did not let him, prohibiting him from having intercourse. Christ separated him "from that filthy madness (μανίας) in the flesh", meaning sexuality, and took him away "from bitter death" (τοῦ πικροῦ θανάτου; 113.12–13). The Lord shut away "the secret sickness" (τὴν ἀπόκρυφον νόσον) of his soul "and cut off its outward practice" (113.14–16). The medical terms used express that Christ saves John from death by not allowing him to have sex with a woman. In control of his desire for women, his soul is gentle and quiet. As a result of his purity, John does not die in anguish or pain but is depicted as laying himself down in a trench in which he gives up the spirit rejoicing (cf. παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα χαίρων; 115.4).

The concepts of death and life in this text apply to the soul. Whereas death is articulated as being overwhelmed by the desire for sex and corresponds to a wild and savage state of the soul, life is the control of this desire and denotes a corresponding peaceful state of the soul.

In conclusion of this section, let us summarise our findings: (1) The motif of *Scheintod* ("apparent death"), as we know it for instance from ancient Greek novels, plays no role at all in the *AJ*.⁴⁰ Characters are never depicted as having died only in appearance; (2) the categories of 'dead' and 'alive' in the *AJ* are less ambiguous than some scholars have previously assumed. On the contrary, the univocal use of these categories signals a conceptual clarity in the text regarding the concepts of death and life; (3) unlike some scholars assume, 'living' and 'dead' are not symbols or metaphors for the converted and non-converted state of a person, respectively. Instead, they have an ontological status corresponding to the ordered and disordered state of the soul of a person, respectively. A person is truly dead if his or her soul is disordered. In the anthropological mindset of the author of the *AJ*, this person is dead as

40 In connection with the scenes of the Greek novels, the term "Scheintod" was introduced by Erwin Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, 3rd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960, 1st ed. 1876), 287 n. 1. It was later also applied to early Christian literature: see Judith Perkins, "Fictive *Scheintod* and Christian Resurrection," *R&T* 13 (2006), 396–418, and Daniel B. Glover, "Left for Dead: *Scheintod* in the Greek Novels and Acts of the Apostles," *PRSt* 46 (2019), 285–305.

a human being and is transformed into an animal without rational capacities. A person is alive, on the other hand, if the soul is stable and steadfast; the emotions and desires are ruled by reason; and (4) the concepts of death and life underlying these narratives can be explained with reference to the death and life of the soul. When a person is mastered by emotions and desires, the soul is dead and entombed by these affections. Only by means of the help of Christ or God can the soul be saved from the rule of the emotions and desires, and be resurrected.⁴¹ The apostle John mediates this saving activity of Christ.⁴² The life of the soul is characterised by the virtue of the soul and its corresponding orderly state. Obedience to God, piety, and mastery of the emotions and desires are essential to the life of the soul.

To further explain the concepts of the life and death of the soul in the *AJ*, the next section will look at the history of these concepts in the Greco-Roman world in which the *AJ* was written.

3. The Death and Life of the Soul in Philo's Writings

The earliest author who developed the concepts of the death and life of the soul is Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE – c. 50 CE).⁴³ The concepts later occur

41 On the identity of Jesus Christ and God in the *AJ*, see Lalleman, *The Acts of John*, 167–69; Boris Paschke, “Christomonism? A Narrative-Critical Analysis of Two Prayers to God the Father in the Apocryphal Acts of John,” *BN* 163 (2014), 121–34; Jonathan M. Potter, “Naked Divinity: The Transfiguration Transformed in the Acts of John,” in Vernon K. Robbins and Jonathan M. Potter (eds.), *Jesus and Mary Reimagined in Early Christian Literature*, SBL WGRWSup 6 (Atlanta GA: SBL Press, 2015), 181–222; Boris Paschke, “Speaking Names in the Apocryphal Acts of John,” *Apocrypha* 26 (2015), 119–49; Julia A. Snyder, “Acts of John, Acts of Peter, Acts of Thekla, Third Corinthians, and Martyrdom of Paul,” in Jens Schröter and Christine Jacobi (eds.), *The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries*, vol. 2, *From Thomas to Tertullian: Christian Literary Receptions of Jesus in the Second and Third Centuries CE* (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 363–85, at 364–65. More in general, see Jan N. Bremmer, “God and Christ in the Early Martyr Acts”, in Matthew Novenson (ed.), *Monotheism and Christology in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, NovTSup 180 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 222–48.

42 On the depiction of the apostles as mediators of Christ in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, see further Tobias Nicklas, *Spätantike Apostelerzählungen*, Tria Corda 17 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2025), 13–52.

43 As we will see, Philo predominantly develops these concepts in his allegorical exegetical writings, which he probably wrote in Alexandria. For Philo's biography, see Maren R. Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

in Plotinus (ca. 204/5–270 CE)⁴⁴ and Porphyry (c. 234 – c. 305 CE).⁴⁵ As the latter two authors are too late for the study of the *AJ*, my analysis will be limited to Philo.⁴⁶ It will focus on four aspects of Philo's thoughts on the death and the life of the soul: (i) the role of virtue and emotional self-control (3.1); (ii) the role of the divine *Logos* and the virtue of piety (3.2); (iii) Philo's idea that the death of the soul is self-inflicted (3.3); and (iv) Philo's understanding of the death of the soul as an ontological transformation (3.4). At the end of each subsection I will compare Philo to the *AJ*.

3.1 Virtue and Emotional Self-Control

As argued by Emma Wasserman, Philo's presentation of soul-death fits with other presentations of extreme immorality in the writings of Plato, Plutarch, and Galen. The latter authors predominantly depict the defeat of reason by the irrational parts of the soul in terms of slavery and mastery or political power and rule. They never used the image of the death of the soul because they probably were reluctant to suggest that the soul is mortal. Philo does not share their reluctance and is the first known author to use the language of dying or death to describe the rule of emotions and desires over reason. He considers 'death' to be the outcome of the perpetual battle in the soul between reason, on the one hand, and emotions and desires, on the other.⁴⁷

Philo defines "the death of the soul" as "the decay of virtue and the bringing in of wickedness". This "special death" is "that of the soul becoming entombed in passions and wickedness of all kinds".⁴⁸ It is the antithesis of

⁴⁴ Plotinus 1.8.13.

⁴⁵ The passage by Porphyry is transmitted by Proclus, *In Tim.* 22D.

⁴⁶ Much more widespread was the concept of the 'living dead'. This concept can be found in the popular philosophy of ancient culture. Living people are depicted as dead for multiple reasons. Dieter Zeller distinguishes between "death through lack of education and knowledge", "death through lack of virtue", and the "Cynic-Stoic polemics against debauchery". In the latter, the living are depicted as dead because they are obsessed with their pleasures and passions. See Dieter Zeller, "The Life and Death of the Soul in Philo of Alexandria: The Use and Origin of a Metaphor," *SPhA* 7 (1995), 19–55, at 50–4. Yet, all the sources mentioned by Zeller do not talk about the death or life of the soul and are therefore unable to explain the conceptuality of the death and life of the soul in the *AJ*.

⁴⁷ See Wasserman, *The Death*, 60–76.

⁴⁸ Note that Philo claims here that not the body but the passions and vices are said to bury the soul. Later in *Leg.* 1.108, Philo however does use the image of the body as the tomb of the soul. This image is famously transmitted in Plato, *Crat.* 400C; *Gorg.* 493A.

the death that awaits us all: “the separation of the soul from the body”.⁴⁹ Whereas the general death is “a separation of combatants that had been pitted against one another”, the special death is “the unification (σύνωδος) of both, the worse, the body, overcoming the better, the soul”.⁵⁰ Thus, Philo articulates virtue as the practice of reason, allowing us to control our emotions and avoid wickedness. As Wasserman observes, “death” and “dying” refer to “the radical disempowerment of reason rather than its destruction”.⁵¹ Without the practice of reason, the emotions and desires reign, resulting in the death of the soul: “For verily nothing so surely brings death upon a soul as immoderate indulgence in pleasures.”⁵²

The opposite is also true for Philo. Virtuous people, who can control their emotions and desires live forever, even if they die in the biological sense of the word: “[...] good people, even if cut off from their partnership with the body, live forever, and are granted immortality.”⁵³ The life of the soul goes beyond the body: “[...] no good man is dead, but will live for ever, proof against old age, with a soul immortal in its nature no longer fettered by the restraints of the body”.⁵⁴ For Philo, the death of pious (or virtuous) people results in “undying life” (ἡ ἀθάνατος [...] ζωῇ), whereas those who live the life of the impious will know “eternal death” (ὁ αἰδῖος θάνατος).⁵⁵ The latter, as exemplified by Cain, “live for ever in a state of dying and so to speak suffer a death that is deathless and unending”.⁵⁶ This eternal death should be understood in the following way. Philo thinks that there are four passions in the soul; two that are concerned with the good: pleasure and desire; two that are concerned with the bad: grief and fear. God removes the first two so that impious people can never experience something pleasant. People who suffer an eternal death can only “groan and tremble” and experience anguish

49 The traditional definition of death as the separation of the soul from the body goes back to Plato, *Phaed.* 67D.

50 Philo, *Leg.* 1.105–106. For the Greek text of Philo and its English translation, I use the LCL editions with some adjustments to the translation. My translation of σύνωδος is taken from Zeller, “The Life,” 23 n. 13.

51 Emma Wasserman, “The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Revisiting Paul’s Anthropology in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology,” *JBL* 126 (2007), 793–816, at 808.

52 Philo, *Leg.* 2.78.

53 Philo, *Fug.* 55.

54 Philo, *Ios.* 264

55 Philo, *Post.* 39.

56 Philo, *Praem.* 70.

and distress. They do not know the hope that someone will comfort them and relieve them from their distress.⁵⁷

The similarities of Philo's concepts of the death and the life of the soul with the *AJ* are numerous. As argued in the previous section, the life of the soul in the *AJ* is conditioned by virtue, the practice of reason, and emotional self-control. The soul is depicted as dead or dying if a person is unable to control one's emotions or desires through the practice of reason. Those who lack emotional self-control and virtue "gaze upon the tomb" as their certain τέλος and are in the process of dying.⁵⁸

The analysis of Philo above suggests that we are further confronted with the question whether the *AJ* also conceives of the death of the soul as being eternal in the sense of exceeding natural death. In John's exhortation to the Ephesians, he says that those who lack emotional self-control "gaze upon the tomb" as the certain end of their promise. When these people are set free from their body and in need of mercy while they burn in fire, they will not have Christ to show them mercy (*AJ* 35.1–8).⁵⁹ Instead, they will descend into "unquenchable fire and great darkness and the torture pit and eternal threats" (36.8–10). This is exemplified in Fortunatus, who does not receive God's mercy and dies a bad death (81.7–9). In other words, these people are not only dead (in the moral-psychological sense) while still alive, they also remain dead after their natural death and suffer the consequences of their vices. They are eternally dead, and as the example of Fortunatus illustrates, cannot be properly resurrected. Their τέλος is the tomb. Thanks to their immoral behaviour during their lifetime, their souls are constantly dying and heading in the direction of death.

Mutatis mutandis we can ask whether the *AJ* conceptualise the life of the soul as eternal in the sense of going beyond natural death. The perfect example of virtue – Christ – remains alive after his natural death on the cross. In reality, he never truly dies. Christ was not really crucified on the cross, but can be seen above the cross, although he does not have an outward form. He can only speak to us through an unfamiliar truly divine voice (98.3–6). Those who hear him will no longer be what they are now (in their bodily state), but will become above themselves, as Christ is (100.8–10). They will have an "indestructible soul" (ἀκαθαίρετον [...] ψυχήν; 104.6–7). Similarly, John does

⁵⁷ Philo, *Praem.* 71–73.

⁵⁸ See *supra* 2.3.

⁵⁹ Cf. Luke 16:19–31.

not really die but willingly lies down in a trench and joyfully gives his spirit (115.3–4). He is united with Christ: darkness is conquered, chaos exhausted, the furnace quenched, Gehenna extinguished (cf. 114.1–3). As in Philo, the life of the soul does not end with natural death.

3.2 The Divine Logos and the Virtue of Piety

Philo emphasises the importance of living according to the will of God to avoid the death of the soul: “What issue awaits him who does not live according to the will of God, save death of the soul? [...] yea soul-death, which is the change of soul under the impetus of irrational passion.”⁶⁰ He considers obedience to God to be a necessary condition for the life of the soul: “So then the true life is the life of him who walks in the judgements and ordinances of God, so that the practices of the godless must be death. And what the practices of the godless are we have been told. They are the practices of passions and vices [...]”⁶¹ Obedience and disobedience to God are the necessary conditions of the life and the death of the soul, respectively. The most admirable definition of deathless life according to Philo is “to be possessed by a love of God and a friendship for God with which flesh and body have no concern”.⁶²

As argued by Dieter Zeller, Philo considers the divine *Logos* to be responsible for people’s ability to obtain emotional self-control and live according to the will of God. From the λογισμός of the soul to the *Logos* “there is only a short step”.⁶³ The soul cannot die if the *Logos* is still in it: “Death of soul is a life in the company of vice, so that what is meant is that he [the *Logos*] is never to come in contact with any polluting object [...]”⁶⁴ The *Logos* will not enter into any dead soul (cf. Lev 21:11).⁶⁵ The basic point of Zeller’s argument can be found in *Fug.* 117: “For so long as this holiest Word is alive and is still present in the soul, it is out of question that an unintentional offence should come back into it [...] But if the Word die, not by being itself destroyed, but by being withdrawn out of our soul, the way is at once open for the return

60 Philo, *Post.* 73. Cf. Philo, *Leg.* 2.78–81.

61 Philo, *Congr.* 86.

62 Philo, *Fug.* 58. Cf. Philo, *Spec.* 1.345: “For in very truth the godless are dead in soul, but those who have taken service in the ranks of the God who only is, are alive, and that life can never die.”

63 Zeller, “The Life,” 21–22 with reference to Philo, *Fug.* 106–118.

64 Philo, *Fug.* 113.

65 For Philo, the high priest of Lev 21:11 allegorically represents the divine *Logos*.

of unintentional errors.” God’s *Logos* and the soul’s λογισμός are, functionally speaking, identical. Without them, emotions and desires cannot be controlled and unintentional errors (or sins) will be committed, resulting in a ‘life’ in the company of vice or the death of the soul.

The importance of God for the life of the soul is not only emphasised by the essential role of the divine *Logos*, but also by the importance of the virtue of piety in Philo’s writings: “[...] worthy and excellent men say that the tree of life is the best of the virtues in man, namely piety (εὐσέβεια), through which pre-eminently the mind becomes immortal.”⁶⁶ And: “[...] the tree of life [...] signifies piety towards God (θεοσέβειαν), the greatest of the virtues, by means of which the soul attains to immortality [...]”⁶⁷ Given that piety is the so-called leading virtue or “the queen of the virtues” for Philo, “piety” is the unquestioned condition for the immortality of the soul.⁶⁸ Philo even calls piety (εὐσέβειαν) “unquestioned and true immortality”.⁶⁹

As we have seen in the previous section, a similar role is given to the virtue of piety in the *AJ*. Without this virtue, the soul is dead. The textual world of the *AJ* lives under the assumption that either one has a demon as one’s *logos* (84.5) or one obeys to Christ or God. For instance, if Kallimachos would have been pious and struck by God’s words, he would never have proposed Drusiana to have sex with him (64.7–8). At that point in the story, Kallimachos is counted as having a demon in his *logos*. He was not yet resurrected as a pious one, who was struck by God’s words.

3.3 The Death of the Soul as Self-Inflicted

In some passages, Philo articulates the death of the soul as a form of suicide. For instance, in his exegesis of Gen 4:8 Cain does not kill Abel but himself: “It must be read in this way, ‘Cain rose up and slew himself’, not someone else. And this is just what we should expect to befall him. For the soul that has extirpated from itself the principle of the love of virtue and the love of God,

⁶⁶ Philo, *QG* 1.10.

⁶⁷ Philo, *Opif.* 154. According to Nélida Naveros Córdova, *Philo of Alexandria’s Ethical Discourse: Living in the Power of Piety* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2018), 101 n. 42, the terms εὐσέβεια and θεοσέβεια refer to the same virtue of giving service to God in Philo’s writings. They are interchangeably used in e.g. *Opif.* 155 and *Abr.* 144.

⁶⁸ See Gregory E. Sterling, “The Queen of the Virtues: Piety in Philo of Alexandria,” *SPhA* 18 (2006), 103–123.

⁶⁹ Philo, *QG* 1.55.

has died to the life of virtue.”⁷⁰ Forsaking the love of virtue and the love of God is articulated as an act of suicide. Cain is himself responsible for the death of his soul. Whoever commits voluntary sin is actually killing his own soul.⁷¹

A similar idea is probably at play in the *AJ*. Figures like Lykomedes, Drusiana, and the parricide contemplate suicide. Lykomedes and Drusiana can be said to have actually committed it. As argued in the previous section, all three figures are presented as dead before their resurrection. Their death can accurately be understood as a death of the soul. Is the literary motif of suicide used to convey to the reader the idea that this death of the soul is self-inflicted? I believe so. The *AJ* takes a negative stance towards suicide by depicting it as an irrational act, resulting from a troubled soul in which reason is overcome by emotions.⁷² In all three stories, the persons who contemplate suicide are depicted as being already dead because they are mastered by their emotions. The literary motif of suicide is probably used to explain to the reader that their vices are responsible for the death of their souls. Their death is their own doing.

3.4 The Death of the Soul as an Ontological Transformation

As John Conroy convincingly argues, the “death of the soul” is not just a metaphor for Philo, but corresponds to an actual ontological transformation of the soul: “the soul experiences metempsychosis from a human soul into a beast’s soul”.⁷³ Conroy’s argument is essentially that Philo thinks that the loss of rationality transforms a human being into a lower form of animal, a “beast”.⁷⁴ An analogy between the body, the soul, and reason is fundamental: “[...] the body perishes if the soul quit it, and the soul if reason quit it, and reason if it be deprived of virtue.”⁷⁵ So, just as the body cannot exist

⁷⁰ Philo, *Det.* 47–48.

⁷¹ See further Philo, *Agr.* 171; *QG* 4.66.

⁷² On suicide in early Christian, early Jewish, and Greco-Roman writings, see Kurt Erlemann, “Die fatalen Folgen eines Ehebruchs (Totenaufweckung des ermordeten Vaters) – ActJoh 48–54,” in Zimmermann (ed.), *Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen*, vol. 2, 359–68, at 364–65, and Janet E. Spittler, “Bargeld nicht akzeptiert (Die Heilung der Söhne des Antipatros) – ActJoh 56f,” in Zimmermann (ed.), *Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen*, vol. 2, 369–75, at 372–73.

⁷³ John T. Conroy, “Philo’s ‘Death of the Soul’: Is This Only a Metaphor?,” *SPhA* 23 (2011), 23–40, at 40.

⁷⁴ Conroy, “Philo’s Death,” 24.

⁷⁵ Philo, *Det.* 141. A similar idea can be found in Philo, *Agr.* 72–77.

without the soul, the soul cannot exist without reason. *Mutatis mutandis*, reason cannot exist without virtue.

What happens to a human being if his or her soul perishes? Philo clearly states that such a person is transformed into a wild beast: "For everyone who is left forsaken by reason, the better part of the soul, has been transformed into the nature of a beast, even though the outward characteristics of his body still retain their human form."⁷⁶ This idea can be found in a number of exegetical examples by Philo. For instance, in *Abr.* 32–33, Philo attempts to explain why Noah is called ἄνθρωπος δίκαιος in Gen 6:9:

But we must not fail to note that in this passage he gives the name of man not according to the common form of speech, to the mortal animal endowed with reason, but to the man who is man pre-eminently, who verifies the name by having expelled from the soul the untamed and frantic passions and the truly beast-like vices. Here is a proof. After 'man' (ἄνθρωπον) he adds 'just,' (δίκαιον) implying by the combination that the unjust is no man, or more properly speaking, a beast in human form (ἄνθρωπομόρφου θηρίου) and that the follower after righteousness alone is man.⁷⁷

Those who lack virtue cannot properly be called human beings, since they are actually beasts in human form. Similarly, in *Decal.* 110, Philo claims that those who do not "cling to piety and holiness may be thought to have been transformed into the nature of wild beasts (μεταβεβληκέναι δόξαιεν ἄν εἰς θηρίων φύσιν)". As piety is the root of all other virtues for Philo, those who lack it, lack virtue in general.⁷⁸ Consequently, their soul is dead. This implies an ontological transformation, as the text states that they are transformed into the nature of wild beasts.

As argued in the previous section, a similar anthropology can be found in the *AJ*. If the rational capacity of a person is overwhelmed by emotions and desires, this person can no longer be called a human being, but is transformed into the nature of a wild animal without rationality.

To conclude the present section, let us summarise our findings. There are considerable similarities between Philo and the *AJ* concerning the death and life of the soul in some rather distinct ways: (i) Both consider virtue and emotional self-control to be essential conditions for the life of the soul. If a person lacks them, his or her soul is entombed by the emotions and desires and their corresponding vices; (ii) a person can only control his or

⁷⁶ Philo, *Spec.* 3.99.

⁷⁷ See also Philo, *Mos.* 1.43.

⁷⁸ See *supra* 3.2.

her emotions and desires if that person obeys God and lives according to the divine will. Both Philo and the author of the *AJ* consider the rational capacities of a person to be granted by God. Therefore, both authors consider piety to be the most important virtue. Without this virtue, the soul cannot live; without it, it is dead; (iii) due to the importance of virtue, both Philo and the author of the *AJ* consider the death of the soul to be a form of suicide. The death of the soul is caused by the practice of vice. If the soul dies, its death is always self-induced; and (iv) for both Philo and the author of the *AJ*, the death of the soul is not just a metaphor but indicates a real ontological transformation. When human beings are unable to live up to their rational capacities, their bodies are tombs for their souls. The absence of reason in their souls transforms them into beasts, although they keep their human shape. The death of the soul corresponds to a chaotic state of the soul in which reason has no place, whereas the life of the soul denotes its orderly state in which the emotions and desires are ruled by reason.

Conclusion

From the above analyses of the *AJ*, and in comparison with Philo of Alexandria, four conclusions can be drawn concerning the concepts of death and life in the *AJ*:

(1) The categories of 'dead' and 'alive' are not as ambiguous as scholars have previously contended. Instead, they are often used univocally in the *AJ* in reference to the soul.

(2) Similarly, 'dead' and 'alive', respectively, are not metaphors or symbols for the unconverted and converted state of people but rather denote ontological realities. The dead soul is chaotic and without measure. People's rational capacities are overcome by their passions and desires. In the living soul, on the other hand, passions and desires are ruled by reason and there is order and stability. 'Dying' is not a metaphorical expression but an ontological transformation of human beings into wild animals without rational capacities.

(3) The soul of a person is dead if that person's rational capacities are mastered by his or her emotions and desires. Only faith in Christ and the corresponding virtue of piety enables this person to master his or her emotions and desires. Virtue is the practice of reason. The apostle John, as the mediator of Christ, teaches this virtue to enable people to control their emotions and desires so that they can fully dedicate themselves to Christ.

(4) The concepts of the life and the death of the soul in the *AJ* are strikingly similar to how Philo employs these concepts. In addition to the role of virtue and emotional self-control mentioned in the previous point, both Philo and the author of the *AJ* conceive of the death of the soul as a form of suicide. People are responsible for the care of their own soul, and neglect of one's soul leads to its death; its death is self-inflicted. Furthermore, both sources consider God to be the source of people's ability to practice virtue and control the emotions, enabling them to dedicate themselves to God.

These conceptual similarities between Philo and the *AJ* suggest that the author of the *AJ* adopted the concepts of the life and the death of the soul from Philo's writings. Another possibility is that the author of the *AJ* stands in the same Alexandrian platonic tradition as Philo does. As Istvan Czachesz convincingly argues, the author of the *AJ* undoubtedly knew some of Plato's writings, especially the *Symposium*.⁷⁹ He probably knew the slavery and mastery imagery that Plato uses to depict the defeat of reason by the irrational parts of the soul.⁸⁰ Just like Philo, he might have concluded from the bad outcome of the battle between reason, on the one hand, and the emotions and desires, on the other, that the soul actually died. The soul is killed by the passions and desires that dominate reason.⁸¹

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79 See Istvan Czachesz, "Eroticism and epistemology in the *Apocryphal Acts of John*," *NThT* 60 (2006), 59–72; István Czachesz, *Commission Narratives: A Comparative Study of the Canonical and Apocryphal Acts*, SECA 8 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 106–111, 115–119.

80 For this imagery, see Wasserman, *The Death*, 15–27.

81 Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) – 512257962. This article was written for the 80th birthday of my colleague and friend Jan Bremmer: Congratulations Jan, may your soul live forever! Special thanks go out to Daniel Gurtner for proofreading the English of this article.

Die Erforschung apokrypher Apostelerzählungen: Entscheidende Ergebnisse und Wege in die Zukunft¹

Tobias Nicklas

Abstract: Research on Apocryphal Apostolic Narratives: Key Findings and Future Directions

This article reviews two generations of scholarship on the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles – or, more appropriately, apostolic narratives. Particular emphasis is placed on the contribution of Jan N. Bremmer and the clearly discernible paradigm shift in the study of these writings that his work helped to bring about. Looking ahead, several promising avenues for future research are outlined: broadening the source base (including intensified work on texts outside the Greek and Latin linguistic spheres); focusing on the fluidity of texts and textual forms (including greater interest in later textual versions); investigating various aspects of the texts' heteronomy and their embedding within parabiblical traditions; and examining their intermedial relationships with evidence preserved in other media (e.g., images), an approach described as “entangled traditions.”

Keywords: Jan N. Bremmer; Apostolic Narratives; Apocryphal Studies

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Persönliche Einleitung

Vor knapp 25 Jahren, also in der Zeit meiner Habilitation, als ich begann, mich mit apokrypher Literatur zu beschäftigen, ist mir der Name Jan Bremmer wohl zum ersten Mal begegnet. Es dürfte einer der Bände in der damals neuen und mutig-innovativen Reihe *Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (heute: *Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha*) gewesen sein, den ich in die Hand genommen habe.² Erst etwas später lernte ich, wie weit und umfangreich Jan Bremmers Oeuvre wirklich ist. Im Juni 2005 habe ich Jan Bremmer dann auch persönlich kennengelernt; ich war damals als frisch berufener Professor in Nijmegen Gast bei einer Konferenz in Groningen zu den

¹ Dieser Beitrag versteht sich als Hommage an Jan N. Bremmer. Er wurde im Rahmen einer kleinen Tagung aus Anlass seiner 79. Geburtstags im Dezember 2023 vorgetragen und seitdem leicht überarbeitet. Der persönliche Einstieg versteht sich vor diesem Hintergrund. Lieber Jan: deine Freundschaft ist mir sehr wichtig. *Ad multos annos*.

² Inzwischen liegen 23 Bände dieser Reihe vor; weitere sind in Planung und Vorbereitung.

Themes in Biblical Narrative, die sich um die Figur des Propheten Bileam drehte.³ Seitdem ist unser Kontakt nie abgerissen; er hat sich besonders seit der Zeit intensiviert, als ich die Möglichkeit hatte, die Groninger Konferenzen zu Apokryphen (wenigstens teilweise) nach Regensburg zu holen.⁴ Inzwischen ist Jan Bremmer ein Fellow, ohne den die Arbeit am Centre for Advanced Studies „Beyond Canon“ nicht zu denken ist.⁵

Gleichzeitig liegt es nahe, in einem Beitrag zu seinen Ehren ein Thema aufzugreifen, in dem Jan Bremmer entscheidend Impulse geliefert hat – und das zudem unsere Arbeit verbindet: die Arbeit an apokryphen Apostelakten oder – vielleicht besser – Apostelerzählungen.⁶ Dabei werde mich nicht in Detailkenntnissen verlieren,⁷ von denen es zugegebenermaßen viele gibt, sondern versuchen zu skizzieren, wie sich der Blick auf apokryphe Aposteltexte – auch aufgrund von Jan Bremmers Arbeiten – in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten verändert hat und worin ich die entscheidenden Herausforderungen für die Arbeit an diesen Schriften in den kommenden Jahren sehe.

1. Ein Blick zurück

Noch vor etwa 30 Jahren dürften apokryphe Apostelerzählungen zu den am meisten vernachlässigten Schriften des frühen Christentums gehört haben. Noch stärker als heute verband sich mit dem Attribut „apokryph“ das Vorurteil, es handele sich um „häretische“ und, damit verbunden, historisch wie theologisch wertlose Schriften. Ihr Interesse an Wundererzählungen, aber auch phantastischen Motiven wie sprechenden Tieren, abenteuerlichen

3 Die Konferenz, die von 17.–18. Juni 2005 stattfand, wurde publiziert als George H. van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten (eds.), *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*, *Themes in Biblical Narrative* 11 (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2008).

4 Die erste dieser Tagungen fand im Jahr 2013 statt und wurde zusammen mit älteren Beiträgen publiziert als Jan N. Bremmer, Thomas R. Karmann and Tobias Nicklas (eds.), *The Ascension of Isaiah*, *SECA* 11 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016).

5 Zu den entscheidenden Prämissen der Arbeit dieser Gruppe vgl. Tobias Nicklas, „Beyond Canon: Eine kurze Erläuterung des Projekts“, *Early Christianity* 12 (2021), 265–75.

6 Ich halte es für zunehmend wichtig, weder von einem einheitlichen Genre apokrypher Apostelakten auszugehen noch dieses gar zu sehr von dem Genre der kanonischen Apostelgeschichte her zu bestimmen. Deswegen spreche ich gerne offen und in einem weiten Sinne von „Apostelerzählungen“.

7 Die wichtigsten Beiträge sind gesammelt in Jan N. Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity. Collected Essays I*, WUNT 379 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017); dies heißt natürlich nicht, dass die „Produktion“ seitdem zu einem Stillstand gekommen wäre.

Details und nicht zuletzt auch der in manchen Schriften erkennbare Humor galt (und gilt zum Teil bis heute) als wertvoller theologischer Literatur unangemessen und schien der „Schlichtheit“ der Evangelien des Neuen Testaments zu widersprechen.⁸ Theologie und Phantasie schienen ebenso wenig zusammenzugehören wie Theologie und Freude am Erzählen oder gar Theologie und die Selbstdistanz, die dazu gehört, um über Aspekte der eigenen Ursprünge wenn nicht lachen, so doch schmunzeln zu können.⁹ Der größte Teil der Arbeit an apokryphen Apostelerzählungen konzentrierte sich auf fünf Texte, die sich mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit auf das zweite und das dritte Jahrhundert unserer Zeitrechnung datieren lassen:¹⁰ die *Akten des Petrus*, des *Paulus* (inclusive der *Akten des Paulus und der Thekla*), die *Akten des Andreas*, des *Johannes* und des *Thomas*.¹¹ Sie alle konfrontieren uns auf unterschiedliche Weise mit z.T. dramatischen Überlieferungsproblemen, die selbst die grundlegende Frage nach einer einigermaßen gesicherten Textbasis, aufgrund derer gearbeitet werden kann, zu einer echten Herausforderung werden lassen: Gehören die *Akten des Andreas und Matthias in der Stadt der Anthropophagen* zum ursprünglichen Textbestand der *Akten des Andreas*

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- 8 Ich halte es für überflüssig, aus der Fülle von Publikationen zu zitieren, die in solch abwertender Weise über apokryphe Apostelerzählungen sprechen; ich habe dies oft genug getan. Zu einer Neubewertung der Wundererzählungen vgl. allerdings z.B. Janet E. Spittler, „The Development of Miracle Traditions in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles“, sowie Tobias Nicklas, „Absonderlich und geschmacklos? Antike christliche Wundererzählungen zwischen ‚kanonisch‘ und ‚apokryph‘“, in Jörg Frey, Claire Clivaz and Tobias Nicklas (eds.), *Between Canonical and Apocryphal Texts: Processes of Reception, Rewriting, and Interpretation in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, WUNT 419 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 357–80, 415–40.
- 9 Ich bin grundsätzlich skeptisch gegenüber Versuchen, in den verschiedensten antiken christlichen Schriften Humor zu entdecken; ich fürchte, dass in großen Teilen der Bewegung der frühen Christusanhänger:innen nicht allzu viel Raum für befreites Lachen gewesen sein dürfte. Eine Ausnahme aber würde ich in einigen apokryphen Apostelerzählungen sehen. Hierzu z.B. Janet E. Spittler, „Joking and Play in the Acts of John“, in Harold W. Attridge, Dennis R. MacDonald and Clare K. Rothschild (eds.), *Delightful Acts: New Essays on Canonical and Non-canonical Acts*, WUNT 391 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 209–26.
- 10 Für eine Einleitung in diese Schriften (mit Hinweisen auf ältere Sekundärliteratur) vgl. Tobias Nicklas, „Second Century Apocryphal Acts“, in Michael Bird and Scott Harrower (eds.), *A Handbook to Second-Century Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2025), 387–416. Dort auch Hinweise zu den im Folgenden erwähnten Überlieferungsproblemen (mit Sekundärliteratur).
- 11 Mit diesen Schriften setzten sich auch die ersten, von Jan Bremmer mit initiierten Groningen-Budapester Konferenzen auseinander – und bildeten dabei entscheidende Impulse für einen Neuansatz ihrer Erforschung.

oder nicht, wie dies zumindest in der lateinischen Epitomé des Grgor von Tours der Fall ist?¹² Und inwiefern bewahrt letzterer Text auch auf anderen Ebenen einen Eindruck von den ursprünglichen *Andreasakten*? In welcher Sprache wurden die *Akten des Thomas* verfasst – und welche Version dieser Schrift überliefert den ursprünglicheren Text in präziserer Weise?¹³ Inwiefern bewahren die lateinischen *Akten des Petrus* (*Actus Vercellenses*) eine ursprüngliche Fassung dieser im Original teilweise verlorenen Schrift?¹⁴ In welchem Verhältnis stehen sie zu dem ursprünglichen griechischen Text, wie er sich im *Martyrium des Petrus* erhalten hat?¹⁵ Inwiefern lassen sich die *Akten des Paulus* als eine (ursprünglich) einheitliche Gesamtkomposition begreifen? Und wie verhalten sie sich zu den *Akten des Paulus und der Thekla* oder dem 3. *Brief an die Korinther*, die teilweise als Teil der *Paulusakten*, teilweise unabhängig überliefert sind?¹⁶ Inwiefern sind einzeln überlieferte Fragmente, sei es der *Akten des Petrus*, sei es der *Akten des Paulus und der Thekla*, die sich dem ansonsten Erhaltenen nicht zuordnen lassen, Teil verlorenen ursprünglicher Fassungen der jeweiligen Schriften? Und wie soll man exegetisch mit den alten *Akten des Johannes* umgehen, wenn es letztlich keine einzige Handschrift gibt, die den Text in einer Form überliefert, wie

12 Ich gehe allerdings davon aus, dass die *Akten des Andreas und Matthias* nicht den ursprünglichen *Andreasakten* zuzurechnen sind.

13 Selbst wenn wir von ursprünglich syrischen *Akten des Thomas* ausgehen wollen, scheint die griechische Langform einen ursprünglicheren Text zu bewahren. Aktuell zu Überlieferungs- und Einleitungsfragen z.B. Harold W. Attridge, „Acts of Thomas“, in Christopher Edwards (ed.), *Early New Testament Apocrypha*, Ancient Literature for New Testament Studies 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 290–307 (mit weiterführender Sekundärliteratur).

14 Entscheidendes zur Forschungsgeschichte an den *Petrusakten*, ausgehend von den *Actus Vercellenses*, bietet die kommentierte Edition von Marietheres Döhler, *Acta Petri: Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den Actus Vercellenses*, TU 171 (Berlin – Boston: de Gruyter, 2018), 3–10 (Textüberlieferung und Editionen) sowie 35–48 (Forschungsgeschichte). Natürlich wird auch hier Jan Bremmers Beitrag zur Erforschung dieses Texts ausführlich gewürdigt.

15 Edition und detaillierte Diskussion der Edition bei Otto Zwiernlein, *Petrus in Rom: Die literarischen Zeugnisse. Mit einer kritischen Edition der Martyrien des Petrus und Paulus auf neuer handschriftlicher Grundlage*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 96 (Berlin – Boston: de Gruyter, 2010), 337–400 und 404–25.

16 Zur Diskussion beider Fragen, die ja eng miteinander zusammenhängen, vgl. z.B. Glenn E. Snyder, *Acts of Paul: The Formation of a Pauline Corpus*, WUNT 2.352 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), mit Überblick über die Forschungsgeschichte und weiterführender Sekundärliteratur.

sie in der kritischen Edition von Junod und Kaestli¹⁷ wiedergegeben ist?¹⁸ Die Aufreihung der hoch spannenden „klassischen“ Fragen und Probleme im Zusammenhang mit den fünf „großen“, alten außerkanonischen Apostelakten könnte durchaus fortgesetzt werden.

Um nicht missverstanden zu werden: Ich kann und will diese (und ähnliche) Fragen hier nicht beantworten, denn jede von ihnen würde einen Text vom Umfang einer Monographie erfordern. Stattdessen geht es mir darum, beispielhaft aufzuweisen, vor welchen Problemen die Auslegung auch nur der bekanntesten apokryphen Apostelerzählungen steht, bevor sie überhaupt beginnen kann, weiterführende inhaltliche und historische Fragen zu beantworten: Besonders breiten Raum in der Forschung der vergangenen Jahrzehnte nahmen dabei Überlegungen zum literarischen Verhältnis zwischen den verschiedenen Einzeltexten ein, deren Beantwortung wiederum eine wichtige, in manchen Fällen eine entscheidende Rolle für die Datierung der Texte einnahm. Im Grunde für alle alten *Akten* hat, zum Teil auf früheren Argumenten aufbauend und sie kritisch vertiefend, Jan Bremmer häufig mit Hilfe subtiler historischer Anspielungen, aber auch aufgrund literarkritischer und philologischer Beobachtungen, besonders der Verwendung von spezieller Terminologie, eine Unzahl von Argumenten geliefert, die für präzisere und bessere Datierungsvorschläge als bisher gesorgt haben.¹⁹

Damit verbanden sich schon bei der Erforschung apokrypher Apostelakten historische Überlegungen auf verschiedenen Ebenen: Sobald man die (für die Erforschung der apokryphen Apostelerzählungen letztlich irrelevante) Frage zurückstellt, was diese Texte uns an historisch Glaubwürdigem über Leben, Wirken und Sterben der Apostel Jesu sowie die früheste christliche Mission aussagen, ergibt sich eine Vielzahl von Möglichkeiten, bieten die Texte doch auf verschiedensten Ebenen hoch Spannendes, was sich jedoch in erster Linie als relevant für unser Verständnis späterer Entwicklungen des antiken Christentums auswerten lässt.

17 Éric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis 1–2* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983) sind sich natürlich des Problems bewusst – und ihre Edition bleibt ein Meisterwerk.

18 Janet E. Spittler spricht in diesem Zusammenhang von einer *Acts of John Library*: Ein schönes Beispiel, wie mit dieser umgegangen werden kann, bietet sie in Janet E. Spittler, „Apokryphe Apostelerzählungen und ihre Funktion in der Geschichte des Christentums. Von den Rändern ins Zentrum“, *Zeitschrift für Neues Testament* 51 (2023), 55–77.

19 Die entscheidenden Arbeiten hierzu sind zusammengestellt in Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 99–265.

Der Kerngedanke, von dem aus sich Entscheidendes entwickeln lässt, ist der, dass wenigstens die fünf frühen apokryphen Apostelerzählungen für ein Interesse an, ja in Teilen wohl auch für ein Vordringen des Christentums in neue Milieus stehen. Die noch in den Evangelien, aber auch der kanonischen Apostelgeschichte bedeutsamen intertextuellen Beziehungen zu alttestamentlichen Texten wie auch die Frage nach dem Verhältnis des Christentums zum Judentum treten in den meisten dieser Texte recht weitgehend oder gar vollständig zurück.²⁰ Wo die Auseinandersetzung mit Juden auftaucht, werden diese meist noch mehr als im Neuen Testament in sehr stereotypisierter Weise gezeichnet.²¹ Gleichzeitig unterstützt bereits die Tatsache, dass das Genre des antiken Romans zumindest hilfreich für das Verständnis der fünf alten Akten ist, diese grundsätzliche Tendenz.²² Die Texte erzählen von Welten, die noch in den Schriften des Neuen Testaments kaum einmal berührt werden: Wir begegnen regelmäßig Menschen der lokalen wie regionalen Eliten; bei Szenen, die in Rom selbst angesiedelt sind, spielen Senatoren und ihre Frauen, Stadtpräfekten und selbst der Kaiser eine Rolle.²³ Senatoriale Familien wenden sich dem Christentum zu und werden zu „Sklav:innen Christi“ bzw. des „Gottes der

20 In manchen Schriften könnte man geradezu von einer Art „Israelvergessenheit“ sprechen.

21 Soweit ich sehe, bieten z.B. die alten *Akten des Johannes* keinerlei Zitate aus dem Alten Testament mehr, ohne deswegen schon markionitisch beeinflusst zu sein. Ein Beispiel dafür, dass wenigstens die lateinischen *Petrusakten* (Actus Vercellenses) ein wenig mehr zum Thema „Judentum“ anbieten als auf den ersten Blick erkennbar, findet sich in Tobias Nicklas, „Spuren des Judentums in den lateinischen Petrusakten (Actus Vercellenses)“, in José Costa, David Hamidovic and Pierluigi Piovaneli (eds.), *Aux Origines Judéenes du Christianisme: Études en l'honneur de Simon Claude Mimouni pour son soixante-quinzième anniversaire*, BEHE.SR 207 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), 57–70.

22 Siehe m.W. erstmals Rosa Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (Stuttgart, 1932; Ndr. Darmstadt: WBG, 1969); aktueller z.B. Richard Pervo, „The Ancient Novel becomes Christian“, in Gareth K. Schmeling (ed.), *The Novel in the Ancient World* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 1996), 685–711 sowie Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) und Christine M. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel: Rewriting the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) (u.a.). Vgl. jedoch die wichtigen Gedanken von Jan N. Bremmer, „The Apocryphal Acts: Authors, Place, Time and Readership“, in Bremmer (ed.) *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 219–34.

23 Besonders deutlich zeigt sich das in den *Akten des Petrus*, in denen der Senator Marcellus eine Schlüsselrolle spielt. Zu dieser Figur ausführlicher z.B. Thomas J. Kraus, „Dramatis Personae in the Acts of Peter: Character Identification and the Conveyance of Ethical Values“, *Biblical Interpretation* 29 (2021), 590–615, hier 604–10. – Zur Frage, inwiefern dies tatsächlich historischen Gegebenheiten entsprechen könnte, vgl. – allerdings mit einem Schwerpunkt auf den kanonischen Texten – Alexander Weiß, *Soziale Elite und*

Christen“, den sie mit ihrem ganzen Herzen verehren sollen.²⁴ Dabei verläuft die Einfallstür häufig nicht über den jeweiligen *Pater familias*, sondern über Frauen, für die die Botschaft des Apostels (z.T. auch wegen der Forderung nach sexueller Enthaltsamkeit)²⁵ offenbar besonders attraktiv ist. Auch junge Menschen, häufig mit Hintergrund in den führenden Familien ihrer Stadt, folgen der Verkündigung der Apostel – und brechen dabei immer wieder aus den durch ihre Familie wie auch durch die Gesellschaft vorgegebenen Erwartungen an ihr Leben und ihre Rolle aus.²⁶ Die Paulusbegleiterin (und zumindest in späterer Literatur explizit so bezeichnete Apostolin)²⁷ Thekla ist (im Rahmen antiker Apostelerzählungen) sicherlich das bekannteste und interessanteste Beispiel dafür. Doch auch die in den *Andreasakten* (Epitomé des Gregor von Tours, §§ 4 und 12) genannten Sostratos und Exuos – Ers-terer wird von seiner Mutter zum Inzest gezwungen – könnten genannt werden. Während ich weiterhin der Meinung bin, dass dieses Phänomen einer ausführlichen, auch soziologisch interessierten Studie wert wäre, gehe ich zwar davon aus, dass die alten apokryphen Apostelerzählungen eine gewisse Attraktivität auf Frauen höherer Kreise ausgeübt haben dürften. Die Frage,

Christentum: Studien zu den Ordo-Angehörigen unter den frühen Christen, Millennium-Studien 52 (Berlin – Boston: de Gruyter, 2015).

- 24 Zur Bedeutung dieser Begriffe für die Identitätskonstruktion früher Christusanhänger:innen sowie die von ihnen geforderte Haltung totaler Hingabe vgl. Jan N. Bremmer, „Slaves of God/Christ: Narrated Total Devotion in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*“, *Religion* 53.1 (2023), 87–115.
- 25 Hierzu auch Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts*, *Studies in Women and Religion* 23 (Lewiston – Queenston: Edwin Mellen, 1987). – Dass (weitgehende) sexuelle Enthaltsamkeit und das damit geringere Risiko in Zusammenhang mit Schwangerschaft und Geburt für antike Frauen attraktiv gewesen sein muss, liegt auf der Hand. Das Motiv wiederum wird in vielen Fällen zum Ausgangspunkt von Konflikten des Apostels mit den jeweiligen Ehemännern.
- 26 Ich verdanke diese Beobachtung Jan N. Bremmer. Siehe z.B. Jan N. Bremmer, „*Felicitas: The Martyrdom of a Young African Woman*“, in Jan N. Bremmer und Marco Formisano (eds.), *Perpetua's Passions: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 35–53, hier 51, wo er die Radikalität antik-christlicher Märtyrer:innen mit der moderner Kamikazeflieger vergleicht. Die Passage fehlt in der Neuauflage des gleichen Aufsatzes in Bremmer, *Maidens*, 387–401. Vgl. aber ders., „*The Motivation of Martyrs: Perpetua and the Palestinians*“, in *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 403–422, hier 418.
- 27 Dies geschieht explizit in *Leben und Wunder der hl. Thekla*. Edition: Bernd Kollmann und Burghard Schröder (eds.), „*Pseudo-Basilios von Seleukia*“, *Vita et Miraculae Sanctae Theclae. Leben und Wunder der hl. Thekla*, FC 93 (Freiburg et al.: Herder, 2021); Tobias Nicklas, *Spätantike Apostelerzählungen. Hagiographie und erzählte Christusgeschichte*, *Tria Corda* 17 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2025), 141–196.

inwiefern wir sie deswegen als Frauenliteratur interpretieren dürfen (oder gar müssen), halte ich jedoch für kaum sicher beantwortbar.²⁸ Die einzelnen in den Texten begegnenden Frauenfiguren genauer zu untersuchen und ihre Wege „zur Bekehrung“ (wie auch ihre Nachgeschichte in späterer Literatur und Ikonographie) nachzuzeichnen, dürfte sich jedoch durchaus lohnen.²⁹

Die Tatsache wiederum, dass wenigstens über weite Strecken die Bezüge zu alttestamentlicher und frühjüdischer Literatur weitgehend zurücktreten, bedeutet nicht, dass wir in den apokryphen Apostelakten weniger Wundererzählungen finden als im Neuen Testament, gleichzeitig aber auch nicht, dass die vielen Wundererzählungen der Apostelakten *grundsätzlich* phantastischer, unglaublicher oder absurder sind als die der kanonisch gewordenen Schriften.³⁰ Stattdessen finden sich in ihnen Motive, Vorstellungen und Gedanken, die in der Welt der kanonischen Schriften kaum eine Rolle spielen: Trotz immer wieder begegnender Abgrenzungen zu als „magisch“ bezeichneten Praktiken³¹ verschwimmen die Grenzen zwischen Wunder, Magie, aber auch Medizin immer wieder.³² Zudem bevölkert eine bunte Tierwelt (inclusive gefährlicher Fabelwesen)³³, deren Funktion sich häufig nur

28 Recht extrem z.B. Stephen L. Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows: The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale – Edwardsville: Bardic Press, 1980 [2012]) bes. 95–96 und Burrus, *Chastity*, 108; differenziert Bremmer, „The Apocryphal Acts: Authors, Place, Time and Readership“, 225–34; kritisch auf der Basis der handschriftlichen Überlieferung Kim Haines-Eitzen, „The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles on Papyrus: Revisiting the Question of Readership and Audience“, in Thomas J. Kraus und Tobias Nicklas (eds.), *New Testament Manuscripts. Their Texts and their World*, TENT 2 (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2006), 293–304.

29 Ein schönes Beispiel bietet die Dissertationsschrift von Veronika Niederhofer, *Konversion in den Paulus- und Theklaakten. Eine narrative Form der Paulusrezeption*, WUNT 2.459 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

30 Zur Diskussion siehe z.B. Spittler, „Development“, und Nicklas, „Absonderlich“. – Eine Vielzahl von Einzelanalysen, bietet zudem der Band von Ruben Zimmermann (ed.), *Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen 2: Die Wunder der Apostel* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2017), 299–1006.

31 Mir ist bewusst, dass es magische Praktiken an sich nicht gibt, sondern die Grenzen zwischen Wunder, Magie und Medizin rhetorisch bestimmt werden. Die in manchen apokryphen Apostelerzählungen erkennbare Rhetorik ist dabei allerdings hoch inkonsequent.

32 Ein Beispiel bei Tobias Nicklas, „Zaubertränke, sprechende Statuen und eine Gefangenbefreiung Magie und Wunder in den Akten des Andreas und Matthias“, *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 24 (2008), 485–500.

33 Zu ihrer Funktion vgl. v.a. Janet E. Spittler, *Animals in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. The Wild Kingdom of Early Christian Literature*, WUNT 2.247 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) sowie, darauf weitgehend basierend, Hans-Josef Klauck, *Die apokryphe Bibel: Ein*

über Bezüge zu griechisch-römischer Mythologie, aber auch naturkundlichen Quellen erschließen lässt, viele Erzählungen unserer Texte. Sich mit ihnen zu beschäftigen und sie dabei nicht nur als Marginalphänomen zu deuten, bedeutet, allzu eindimensionale Bilder des antiken Christentums, wie sie bis heute noch in manchen kirchenamtlichen Erklärungen und systematischen Traktaten vorherrschen, über Bord werfen zu müssen. Selbst solch entscheidende theologische Themen wie die Entwicklung christologischer Vorstellungen oder die Darstellung liturgiegeschichtlicher Entwicklungen lassen sich anders – komplexer als bisher – bearbeiten, wenn wir apokryphe Apostelerzählungen als ernstzunehmende, gleichzeitig aber natürlich immer kritisch zu hinterfragende Quellen in unsere Untersuchungen einbeziehen.³⁴

2. Der Stand der Dinge – Herausforderungen für die Zukunft

Damit ist in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten, obwohl die Arbeit an apokryphen Apostelerzählungen weiterhin eher ein Randphänomen in der Arbeit an frühchristlichen Quellen darstellt, bereits Gewaltiges geschehen.³⁵ Zumindest zaghaft hat sich der Blick dabei auch von den fünf frühen Apostelakten zu weiteren Schriften geöffnet, unter denen die frühbyzantinischen *Akten des Philippos* sicherlich besonders hervorzuheben sind.³⁶ Auch das Interesse an den mit den Apostelakten zumindest verwandten *Pseudoklementinen* hat

anderer Zugang zum frühen Christentum, Tria Corda 4 (Tübingen: 2008), 95–138. Knapper Livia Neureiter und Janet E. Spittler, „Tiere und Monster in apokryphen Apostelwundern“, in Zimmermann (ed.), *Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen* 2, 82–91.

34 Zur christologischen Vielfalt, für die auch Apostelerzählungen wichtige Beiträge liefern, ist besonders interessant Jean-Daniel Dubois, *Jésus apocryphe* (Paris: Desclée, 2011) sowie Philip Jenkins, *The Many Faces of Christ: The Thousand-Year Story of the Survival and Influence of the Lost Gospels* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); zur liturgiegeschichtlichen Bedeutung vgl. Harald Buchinger, „Liturgy and Early Christian Apocrypha“, in Andrew Gregory und Christopher Tuckett (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 361–377 sowie Predrag Bukovec, *Die frühchristliche Eucharistie*, WUNT 499 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023), die exemplarisch und hoch spannend den Mehrwert liturgiegeschichtlicher Untersuchungen zeigen, in denen apokryphe Quellen – unter ihnen auch Apostelerzählungen – bewusst miteinbezogen werden.

35 Grundlegendes auch bei Nicklas, *Spätantike Apostelerzählungen*.

36 Den entscheidenden Impuls hierzu lieferte sicherlich die kritische Edition durch François Bovon, Bertrand Bouvier und Frédéric Amsler (eds.), *Acta Philippi: Textus*, CCSA 11 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999). Für eine gute Einführung in den Text (unter Einbezug der wichtigen Sekundärliteratur) plus englischer Übersetzung vgl. François Bovon and

sich trotz der Vielzahl von Überlieferungsgeschichtlichen Problemen, die mit diesen Texten verbunden sind, erweitert.³⁷ Die Tatsache aber, dass die lange undurchlässig scheinende Grenze zwischen hagiographischen und apokryphen Texten in den vergangenen Jahren mehr und mehr aufgeweicht wurde, hat den Blick für zwei wichtige Tatsachen geöffnet, die eigentlich längst offen vor Augen liegen: Bereits die Überlieferungsgeschichte der älteren Apostelakten zeigt, dass diese – wenn auch in sich immer wieder ändernder, z.T. stark verkürzter Form – auch und wohl vor allem *nach dem 4. Jahrhundert* – und damit nach der weitgehenden Festlegung des neutestamentlichen Kanons – verwendet wurden. Soweit ich sehe, liegen uns nur wenige Fragmente apokrypher Apostelakten aus der Zeit vor dem fünften Jahrhundert vor, also einer Zeit, in der von einem mehr oder minder klar definierten neutestamentlichen Kanon ausgegangen werden kann: POxy. vi 850 mit einem Fragment der *Johannesakten* könnte aus dem vierten Jahrhundert unserer Zeitrechnung stammen, PBodmer 10 mit dem *3. Korintherbrief* (aber ohne den Kontext der *Akten des Paulus*) geht womöglich auf den Übergang vom dritten zum vierten Jahrhundert zurück; hinzu kommen mehrere Fragmente der *Paulusakten* oder der *Akten des Paulus und der Thekla*, die wahrscheinlich in diese Zeit einzuordnen sind.³⁸ Doch alleine die Zahl der spätantiken und mittelalterlichen Manuskripte, die wenigstens einen Auszug der *Akten des Thomas* enthalten, geht in die Dutzende.³⁹ Die Geschichte ihrer vielfäl-

Christopher R. Mathews, *The Acts of Philip. A New Translation* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012).

- 37 Ausgezeichnete Überblicke hierzu u.a. bei Frédéric Amsler et al. (eds.), *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines. Plots in the Pseudo-Clementine Romance*, PIRSB 6 (Prahins: Éditions du Zèbre, 2008); Jan N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Pseudo-Clementines*, SECA 10 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010) und Benjamin M. J. de Vos and Danny Praet (eds.), *In Search of Truth in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: New Approaches to a Philosophical and Rhetorical Novel of Late Antiquity*, WUNT 496 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022). Hinzu kommen wichtige Monographien wie die von Nicole Kelley, *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines: Situating the Recognitions in Fourth Century Syria*, WUNT 2.213 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), Patricia A. Duncan, *Novel Hermeneutics in the Greek Pseudo-Clementine Romance*, WUNT 395 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017) sowie (zur Einführung) Benjamin M. J. de Vos, *The Pseudo-Clementine Tradition: The Hermeneutics of Late-Antique Sophistic Christianity*, Cambridge Elements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025).
- 38 Weiterführend (auch mit Sekundärliteratur) z.B. die Einführungen bei Thomas A. Wayment, *The Text of the New Testament Apocrypha (100–400 CE)* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 9–36 (Beschreibungen) sowie 213–244 (Abbildungen).
- 39 Vgl. z.B. die Übersicht in bei Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, „Reinterpreting the Textual Transmission of the Acts of Thomas. Towards a New Understanding, Classification,

tigen Fortschreibungen bis hinein ins 19. Jahrhundert schließlich ist kaum je im Detail untersucht worden.⁴⁰ Selbst von einer im Rahmen des Zweiten Ökumenischen Konzils von Nizäa im Jahre 787 eindeutig verurteilten Schrift wie den alten *Johannesakten* wurden Teiltex te über lange Zeit hinweg recht breit überliefert; sie beeinflussten nicht nur spätere Apostelerzählungen wie die überaus erfolgreichen *Johannesakten des Pseudo-Prochorus*, sondern (direkt wie indirekt) auch die spätere Ikonographie. Dass wir heute den Seher Johannes der Apokalypse, identifiziert mit dem Apostel, als alten Mann, der auf die Insel Patmos verbannt ist, verstehen, hängt damit zusammen.⁴¹ Diese Information jedoch, die im christlichen Westen wie im Osten Eingang in die „Bibeln in den Köpfen“⁴² vieler Christ:innen gefunden hat, findet sich nicht in kanonischen Schriften, sondern geht im Kern auf spätantike Fortschreibungen der alten *Johannesakten* zurück. Ähnlich komplex lassen sich auch die Weiterentwicklungen der anderen alten *Akten* beschreiben; die Konzentration auf deren Ursprünge allein hat jedoch bisher weitgehend verhindert, sie, in einen breiteren Kontext gestellt, als Teile komplexer Traditionen zu beschreiben, innerhalb derer verschiedene Medien miteinander, nebeneinander und ineinander wirken. Teile dieser Traditionen wirken bis heute z.T. versteckt, z.T. ganz offen fort wie etwa in der Verlesung als hagiographisch verstandener Auszüge und Fortschreibungen alter Apostelerzäh-

and Chronology of the Greek Testimonies“, sowie Israel Muñoz Gallarte, „New Textual Witnesses for the Greek Apocryphal Acts of Thomas“, beide in Israel Muñoz Gallarte Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta (eds.), *New Trends in the Study of the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, SECA 20 (Leuven: Peeters, 2024) 1–24 und 25–42.

- 40 Hilfreich allerdings Cosmin Pricop, „Thomas weitererzählt: Rezeption der apokryphen Thomasakten im Synaxarion des Thomas-Festes“, in Tobias Nicklas, Janet E. Spittler and Jan N. Bremmer (eds.), *The Apostles Peter, Paul, John, Thomas and Philip with their Companions in Late Antiquity*, SECA 17 (Leuven: Peeters, 2021) 270–94.
- 41 Einen faszinierenden Überblick über die parabiblichen Traditionen, die sich um den Apostel Johannes ranken, die von phasenweise weit jenseits des Kanons wieder in den Kanon hineinwirken, bietet Spittler, „Apokryphe Apostelerzählungen“; zu den ansonsten wenig bekannten, gleichzeitig aber erfolg- und einflussreichen *Akten des Johannes durch Pseudo-Prochorus* vgl. jetzt Janet E. Spittler, „The Acts of John by Prochorus“, in Tony Burke (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures 3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023), 262–361.
- 42 Zu diesem Begriff vgl. Tobias Nicklas, „Neutestamentlicher Kanon, christliche Apokryphen und antik-christliche ‚Erinnerungskulturen‘“, *New Testament Studies* 62 (2016), 588–609, sowie Tobias Nicklas, „Embroidered Bible and Bibles in Our Heads: Some Changes of Paradigm in the Study of Christian Apocrypha and Parabiblical Traditions“, in Mari Mamyán and Tobias Nicklas (eds.), *Parabiblical Traditions Related to Armenia* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2026) [im Druck].

lungen, über Bilder und Gesänge oder verbunden mit besonderen Orten der Erinnerung (z.B. an den Martyrien der Apostel).

Die Konzentration auf die fünf alten Apostelakten wiederum verstellte für lange Zeit den Blick darauf, dass neben diesen Schriften (und vor allem danach) eine im wahrsten Sinne unüberschaubare Zahl weiterer und späterer Aposteltexte z.T. sehr unterschiedlichen Charakters und z.T. mit sehr unterschiedlichen Funktionen entstand. Besonders häufig und wichtig erscheinen Schriften, die als Ursprungserzählungen den Anspruch regionaler und lokaler Kirchen untermauerten, durch einen Apostel gegründet zu sein oder – vielleicht sogar noch wichtiger – das Grab eines Apostels zu bewahren. Gleichzeitig bieten viele dieser Schriften an ihrem Ende knappe Passagen, in denen ihre liturgische Verlesung am Gedenktag des Apostels geregelt werden soll.⁴³ Sich auf die Entdeckungsreise zu machen, um solche Texte aufzufinden, erfordert nicht, in den Wüsten Ägyptens zu graben, sich in vergessene Bibliotheken Osteuropas aufzumachen oder gar die Geheimtresore des Vatikans zu erkunden. In vielen Fällen reicht es einfach, alte Bände der *Analecta Bollandia* zu durchstöbern oder Hilfsmittel wie die *Bibliotheca Hagiographica* durchzusehen; eine großartige Hilfe aber bietet vor allem die Website der NASSCAL (www.nasscal.com). Vieles wurde schon vor langer Zeit entdeckt, zum Teil erstedierte und mit kurzen Einführungen versehen, um fast unmittelbar darauf wieder in Vergessenheit zu geraten. Sobald man aber beginnt, einen Faden zu verfolgen, findet sich fast immer Weiteres – und höchst spannende nicht nur literarische Landschaften entstehen. Im Zusammenhang mit Alexandria hat in den vergangenen Jahren wenigstens das griechische *Martyrium des Markus* (ECCA 593; CANT 287) erste Aufmerksamkeit auf sich gelenkt.⁴⁴ Die Tatsache, dass der Text aber in einer Reihe antiker Sprachen – bis hin ins Altkirchenslawische – überliefert

43 Einige Beispiele bei Tobias Nicklas, „Spätantike Apostelerzählungen als liturgiegeschichtliche Quellen“, in Korinna Zamfir (ed.), *Ünnepló ember a közösségben. Baráti köszöntő kötet Nóda Mózes tiszteletére* (Budapest – Koloszar: Verbum, 2019), 97–106.

44 Im Jahr 2021 wurde die Studie Tobias Nicklas, „The Martyrdom of Mark in Late Antique Alexandria“, in Jörg Frey, Thomas J. Kraus, Benjamin Schliesser and Jan Rügemeier (eds.), *Alexandria: Hub of the Hellenistic World*, WUNT 460 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2021), 519–42 veröffentlicht; im Jahr 2023 eine noch einmal auf den neuesten Stand gebrachte Einführung Tobias Nicklas, „The Martyrdom of Mark“, in Burke (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* 3, 375–92. Ganz aktuell nun eine kritische Fortführung meines Ansatzes durch Stefan Pfeiffer, „Apostolische Sukzession versus Alexandertradition. Die Konkurrenz von Sarapis und Christus im Spiegel des Markusmartyriums“ [Vortrag Erfurt Dezember 23]. Ich bin dem Autor für die Zusendung seines unpublizierten Beitrags zu Dank verpflichtet.

wurde, ihre Bedeutung und die Funktionen der verschiedenen Textformen und Übersetzungen ist noch nicht einmal ansatzweise untersucht.⁴⁵ Doch dies ist nur die Spitze des Eisbergs, nur einer von vielen Texten, die sich mit dem Apostel und Evangelisten Markus beschäftigen und die ab dem vierten Jahrhundert unserer Zeitrechnung entstanden, ihren Fokus zunächst auf Alexandria legen, schließlich sich aber selbst für sein angebliches Wirken in Aquileia oder die Translation der Reliquien bis nach Venedig interessieren.⁴⁶ Ganz Ähnliches lässt sich über die *Akten des Titus* (ECCA 702; CANT 298) sagen, die für die Kirche Kretas sicherlich eine ähnliche Funktion aufweisen wie das *Markusmartyrium* für die Kirche Alexandriens. Mit einer allerersten kleinen Studie habe ich vor einigen Jahren auf diesen Text aufmerksam gemacht.⁴⁷ Diese stieß eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit meinen Ergebnissen durch Michael Scott Robertson an, der inzwischen in einem Regensburger Projekt nicht nur die von mir knapp vorgestellte Rezension der *Titusakten* weiter bearbeitet, sondern auch deren Rezension B sowie spätere Rezeptionen dieses Texts untersucht.⁴⁸ Der Text selbst wiederum setzt sich nicht nur in ein Verhältnis zu den (angeblichen) Ursprüngen der Kirche von Kreta (und deren Organisation), sondern stellt sich in Relation zu konkreten Orten, in diesem Fall der (heute nur noch als Ruine erhaltenen) Kathedrale von Gortys, in der die (nach der arabischen Eroberung Kretas im Jahre 823 nach Venedig verschleppten) Reliquien des Titus verehrt werden sollen. Neben das bereits in Andeutungen beschriebene mediale Zueinander von Texten, Ritus und Performance sowie materialer Kultur (inclusive Architektur und Ikonographie)

45 Überblick über die verschiedenen Versionen (incl. Editionen) bei Nicklas, „Martyrdom“, (2023), 376–78, 383–84.

46 Höchst spannend hierzu die Arbeiten von Dean Furlong, *The John also called Mark: Reception and Transformation in Christian Tradition*, WUNT 2.518 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020) sowie Bernd Kollmann und Burghard Schröder, *Der Evangelist Markus: Historische Konturen. Altkirchliche Legenden. Hagiographische Zeugnisse*, SBS 257 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2023).

47 Tobias Nicklas, „Die *Akten des Titus*: Rezeption ‚apostolischer‘ Schriften und Entwicklung antik-christlicher ‚Erinnerungslandschaften‘“, *Early Christianity* 8 (2017), 458–480. Vgl. zudem weitgehend parallel hierzu Richard I. Pervo, „The Acts of Titus“, in Tony Burke and Brent Landau (eds.), *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures 1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 406–15.

48 Eine wichtige Publikation hierzu bereits: Michael Scott Robertson, „The Problem of Cretan Myths in the Reception of the Letter of Titus in Jerome, Chrysostom and the *Acts of Titus*“, *Apocrypha* 33 (2022), 247–63. – Spannend ist zudem das mehr und mehr erkennbar werdende Verhältnis des Texts zu anderen, für die Identitätsbildung der Kirche(n) Kretas wichtigen Schriften.

tritt also nicht nur in diesem Text ein weiteres intermediales Element, das einen Aspekt der Heteronomie dieser Schriften ausmacht, ein Element, das ich nur mit Hilfe von Fragen beschreiben kann, deren Antworten wir heute wohl nur noch ansatzweise errahnen können:⁴⁹ Was bedeutet es, die *Akten des Titus*, also einen Text, der immer wieder auf Orte in Kreta verweist, von denen einige nicht mehr erhalten sind, tatsächlich in Kreta, z.B. in der Kathedrale von Gortys, am Titusgrab zu lesen? Und welchen Einfluss hat die Möglichkeit, beginnend mit dem Turm Pharos, verschiedene Orte Alexandriens, die im *Markusmartyrium* erwähnt sind, zu imaginieren, auf die Bilder, die sich mit der Lektüre des ansonsten nicht allzu spannenden Texts verbinden? Welche Bilder wollen sich mit den Orten in Zypern verbinden, von denen die *Akten des Barnabas* (und andere Apokryphen, die in Zusammenhang mit der Mission Zyperns zu lesen sind) wenigstens kurz sprechen, die sie aber kaum einmal näher beschreiben? Zukünftige Interpretationen derartiger Schriften müssen nicht nur ihre Fluidität, d.h. die mangelnde Stabilität ihrer Überlieferung, und damit die Vielzahl ihrer Funktionen und Bedeutungen in unterschiedlichen Kontexten, sondern auch diese Form der Heteronomie zu berücksichtigen suchen: Ich sehe darin eine vollkommen neue Herausforderung, die nicht alleine durch die Arbeit von Expert:innen, die an Texten arbeiten, sondern nur in interdisziplinärer Kooperation zu bewältigen ist.

Mit der Konzentration auf fluide, z.T. in höchst kompetitiver Weise Autorität beanspruchende Ursprungserzählungen ist es jedoch nicht getan.⁵⁰ Bereits die bekannten *Akten des Andreas und Matthias in der Stadt der Anthropophagen* können kaum als Erzählung über die Erstmission der mythologischen Kannibalenstadt Mygdonia oder Myrmidonia gedeutet werden;⁵¹ sicherlich wollen sie (auch) unterhalten, womöglich spielen sie zudem mit polemischen

49 Erste Gedanken hierzu bei Tobias Nicklas, „Mit heteronomen Texten arbeiten: Beispiele aus der Welt christlicher Apokryphen“, *Early Christianity* 14 (2023), 121–42, hier 138–42.

50 Wenn ich davon spreche, dass diese Texte Autorität beanspruchen, dann bedeutet dies nicht, dass sie den Anspruch stellen würden, als kanonisch anerkannt zu werden. Beide Konzepte dürfen nicht einfach in eins miteinander gesetzt werden.

51 Der Name der Stadt ist in vielerlei Varianten überliefert. – An meiner grundsätzlichen Aussage ändert sich auch nichts durch die Identifikation des pontischen Sinope mit Myrmidona in Kapitel 13 der Schrift *Theodosii de situ terrae sanctae*, die sich auf die Pilgerreise eines Erzdiakons Theodosius in der ersten Hälfte des sechsten Jahrhunderts ins Heilige Land bezieht. Zur späteren Bedeutung der heute weitgehend als marginal angesehenen *Akten des Andreas und Matthias in der Stadt der Anthropophagen* vgl. Tobias Nicklas and Janet E. Spittler, *Reading Christian Apocrypha: Tradition, Interpretation, Practice* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2025), 122–133.

Ideen, die Christen verzehrten bei ihren Mählern den Leib und das Blut eines Menschen. Die erst kürzlich durch Julia Snyder und Slavomir Ceplö einem breiteren Publikum zugänglich gemachten *Akten Christi und Petri in Rom* (ECCA 956; CANT 198), nicht zu verwechseln mit den alten *Petrusakten*, haben weder sehr viel mit dem zu tun, was wir aus den alten Akten, noch mit dem was wir aus den späteren Ursprungserzählungen kennen. Sie scheinen sich stattdessen für die unerkannte Präsenz Christi in der Mission der Apostel, hier in Form eines versklavten Kindes, das Petrus dient, zu interessieren.⁵² Vielen Jakobustexten wiederum liegen noch einmal andere Funktionen zugrunde: sie begründen die Verehrung des Apostels in Santiago de Compostela und auf dem Pilgerweg dorthin, versuchen in vielen Fällen aber vor allem die so genannte „Reconquista“, also die „christliche“ Rückeroberung Spaniens aus muslimischer Herrschaft, als durch den Apostel unterstützt und damit von Gott gewollt zu begründen.⁵³ Der Blick auf die Vielfalt und Variationsbreite antiker (und z.T. nachantiker) Apostelerzählungen zeigt somit, dass wir weder von *einem* mehr oder minder klar festzulegenden Genre antiker Apostelakten ausgehen dürfen, noch dass dieses allein oder auch nur in erster Linie von der kanonischen Apostelgeschichte her bestimmt werden sollte. Um die Funktion und Bedeutung dieser Schriften angemessen zu erfassen, ist es daher sinnvoll, sie nicht zuallererst von einem mehr oder minder eindeutig vorgegebenen Genre her zu interpretieren, sondern so präzise wie möglich ihre jeweils konkreten Strukturen wie auch ihr Verhältnis zu anderen Schriften und Traditionen zu beschreiben.

Mit all dem jedoch stellt sich die Frage, wo die Grenze dessen anzusetzen ist, was wir als Apostelerzählungen anzusehen haben. Ich plädiere dafür, diese je nach Fragestellung sehr unterschiedlich zu setzen, sie aber grundsätzlich sehr weit offen zu halten, um damit nicht den Blick auf spannende Entwicklungen und Zusammenhänge zu verstellen:

(1) Bereits der Blick auf die *Akten des Titus* oder die Texte um Johannes Markus hat gezeigt, dass ich von einem weiten Apostelbegriff ausgehe,

52 Ausführlicher Julia A. Snyder and Slavomir Ceplö, „The Acts of Christ and Peter in Rome“, in Burke (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha. More Noncanonical Scriptures* 3, 241–61.

53 Wichtiges Material findet sich z.B. bei William Melczer, *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela* (New York: Italica Press, 1993); Kevin R. Poole, *Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin. Book IV of the Liber Sancti Jacobi* (New York: Italica Press, 2014) sowie Thomas F. Coffey and Maryjane Dunn, *The Miracles and Translatio of Saint James* (New York: Italica Press, 2019) (jeweils mit weiterführender Sekundärliteratur).

müssten doch beide Protagonisten eigentlich präziser als Apostelschüler bezeichnet werden.⁵⁴ Doch bereits die Offenheit dessen, wer überhaupt als Teil der Zwölf anzusehen ist, das Zueinander verschiedener Apostelbegriffe bereits im Neuen Testament, das Zueinander der Zwölf zu den sieben bzw. zweiundsiebenzig von Jesus für die Mission erwählten Schülern⁵⁵ sowie die Tatsache, dass auch Paulus in Zusammenhang mit einer Anzahl von Reisegefährten und Schüler:innen in Bezug gebracht werden konnte, öffnet die Möglichkeiten, wer alles als Apostel verstanden werden konnte, weit. Obwohl das Neue Testament dies nie tut, bezeichnet das *Martyrium des Markus* seinen Protagonisten mehrfach ganz explizit als Apostel (z.B. zwei Mal in § 3 und § 8). Während die alten *Akten des Paulus und der Thekla* zögern, Thekla besondere Attribute zuzuschreiben, beschreiben die bereits erwähnte spätere Doppelschrift *Leben und Wunder der hl. Thekla* nicht nur ihren Weg zur Apostolizität, sondern bezeichnen Thekla ganz explizit als solche (z.B. § 28 im *Leben der Hl. Thekla*).⁵⁶ Doch auch andere Figuren geraten in den Blick: Selbst dem in der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas (Apg 10,1–11,18) erwähnten, von Petrus getauften Hauptmann Cornelius, sicher in der kanonischen Apostelgeschichte kein Apostel im engeren Sinne, sind Akten gewidmet, die *Akten des Centurio Cornelius* (BHG 370yz, 371 ECCA 303), in denen Cornelius als Missionar der Stadt Skepsis die Funktion eines Apostels einnimmt.⁵⁷ Eine andere, jedoch vergleichbare Technik kann darin bestehen, in Apostelerzählungen neue Figuren einzuführen, die, durch den Apostel beauftragt, die Erstmission einer Region oder eines Landes weiterführen und vertiefen bzw. gegen gefährdende Einflüsse verteidigen. Diese wiederum können dann in späteren Schriften ein Eigenleben gewinnen. In den womöglich im 6. Jahrhundert unserer Zeitrechnung entstandenen, in einem griechischen Fragment sowie einer armenischen Übersetzung überlieferten

54 Hoch spannend in diesem Zusammenhang ist auch das Projekt von Dan Batovici an der Universität Wien zu „Secondary Pseudepigraphy“ des frühen Christentums und der Art und Weise, wie sie in späteren Texten memoriert werden (<https://claim.univie.ac.at/>).

55 Interessant hierzu die spätantiken Apostellisten mit den in ihnen knapp angedeuteten Traditionen, wie sie bei François Dolbeau, „Listes d'apôtres et de disciples“, in Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestli (eds.), *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens II*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 453–80 vorgestellt sind.

56 Ausführlicher Nicklas, *Spätantike Apostelerzählungen*, 153–196.

57 Hierzu sehr hilfreich Tony Burke and Witold Witakowsky, „The Acts of Cornelius the Centurion“, in Burke and Landau (eds.), *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures 1*, 337–61.

Akten des Herakleides etwa wird eine Nebenfigur aus den *Barnabasakten* zum Protagonisten.⁵⁸ Dieser wiederum wird durch einen fiktiven, inhaltlich weitgehend uninteressanten Brief der Apostel Barnabas und Paulus explizit mit der apostolischen Zeit verbunden.⁵⁹

(2) Bereits erwähnt wurde, dass apokryphe Apostelerzählungen keineswegs nur in griechischer oder lateinischer Sprache erhalten sind, sondern dass daneben Übersetzungen in andere Sprachen (und damit Kulturräume) existieren, die sich in vielen Fällen nicht einfach als Übersetzungen, sondern als Fortschreibungen verstehen lassen und die zum Objekt eigenständiger Untersuchungen werden sollten. Nur *ein* sehr schönes Beispiel ist die Untersuchung der syrischen *Akten der Thekla* – man bemerke bereits den Unterschied im Titel im Gegenüber zu den griechischen *Akten des Paulus und der Thekla* – durch Jacob Lollar⁶⁰; besonders faszinierend ist die Weiterentwicklung apokrypher Apostelerzählungen aber auch ins Armenische, wie z.B. Arbeiten von Valentina Calzolari⁶¹ oder das Projekt von Mari Mamyan, das sich mit armenischen Thomastraditionen beschäftigt, zeigen.⁶² In manchen Fällen ergeben sich dann weitere Transformationen der Texte wie z.B. ihre Integration in neue Genres wie Historiographie, um die Mission durch einen Apostel oder eine apostolische Figur in die Geschichte eines Landes oder einer Region zu integrieren und so zum Teil der damit verbundenen Identitätskonstruktion zu machen. Vor allem in Ländern und Regionen, die ihre christlichen Ursprünge nicht in die apostolische Zeit hinein zurückverlegen können, können andere Personen in den Vordergrund rücken, die explizit oder implizit als „apostolisch“ oder „Apostel“ bezeichnet werden. Für das entstehende Merowingerreich der Zeit des bereits erwähnten Gregor von

58 Edition: François Halkin, „Les actes apocryphes de saint Héraclide de Chypre, disciple de l'apôtre Barnabé“, *Analecta Bollandiana* 82.1–2 (1964), 133–69 [griechisch]; Michel van Esbroeck, „Les Actes arméniens de saint Héraclide de Chypre“, *Analecta Bollandiana* 103.1–2 (1985), 115–62 [armenisch].

59 Hierzu weiterführend Tobias Nicklas (in collaboration with Mari Mamyan), „Paul and Barnabas to Herakleides (and Mnason). An Unknown Apocryphal Letter in the Acts of Herakleides“, in D. P. Moessner et al. (eds.), *Paul, Christian Textuality, and the Hermeneutics of Late Antiquity: Essays in Honor of Margaret M. Mitchell*, NovT.S 190 (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2023), 284–301.

60 Es handelt sich um ein von der Alexander von Humboldt-Gesellschaft gefördertes Projekt.

61 Hierzu Valentina Calzolari, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles in Armenian*, SECA 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 2022).

62 Es handelt sich um ein von der DFG gefördertes Projekt.

Tours (538–594) ist das der natürlich in besonderer Weise mit dem Bistum des Gregor verbundene Martin von Tours (gest. 397), für das mittelalterliche Serbien der Hl. Sava, gleichzeitig ein Prinz aus der Gründungsdynastie der Nemanjiden (zwischen 1166 und 1371):⁶³ die Zahl der Beispiele ließe sich fast beliebig fortsetzen. Natürlich haben wir mit diesen Figuren und den mit ihnen verbundenen Texten den Boden klassischer Apokryphenforschung verlassen; es ist aber hoch interessant zu sehen, wie sich bestimmte Muster biblisch inspirierter Ursprungserzählungen in späteren Schriften wiederholen, gleichzeitig aber auch kontextbedingt weiterentwickeln.

(3) In eine ganz andere Richtung weist die Beobachtung, dass eine für mich noch nicht klar überschaubare Zahl hagiographischer Schriften ihre Protagonist:innen und die mit ihnen verbundenen Erzählungen nach dem Vorbild von Aposteln, Apostolinnen sowie mit diesen verbundenen Erzählungen formen. Dies hat sich exemplarisch in den vergangenen Jahren ganz besonders anhand einer Reihe von Texten gezeigt, in denen die weibliche Hauptfigur u.a. als eine Art neuer Thekla beschrieben, ja explizit mit dieser verglichen wird.⁶⁴ Dies gilt etwa für Olympias aus Konstantinopel, deren Weigerung, nach dem Tod ihres ersten Mannes erneut zu heiraten, mit der Entscheidung Theklas, jungfräulich zu bleiben, verglichen und deren Beziehung zu Johannes Chrysostomus ins Licht des Verhältnisses von Paulus und Thekla gestellt wird.⁶⁵ Bei Eusebeia Xene und ihren Gefährtinnen trägt der spirituelle Vater gar den Namen Paulus. Für einen Moment mag man als Leser:in des Texts an den Apostel Paulus denken, doch es stellt sich bald heraus, dass es sich um den ansonsten nicht bekannten Bischof Paulus von Mylasa

63 Interessante Quellen in englischer Übersetzung hierzu bei Mateja Mateijić and Dragan Miliivojević (eds.), *An Anthology of Medieval Serbian Literature in English* (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers, 1978).

64 Hierzu v.a. Klazina Staat, „Useful Models: The Reception of the Acts of Paul and Thecla in Late-Antique Hagiographical Narratives about Female Virgins“, in Nicklas, Spittler and Bremmer (eds.), *The Apostles Peter, Paul, John, Thomas and Philip*, sowie Staat, „Reception and Rejection: Thecla and the Acts of Paul and Thecla in the Passion of Eugenia and Other Latin Texts“, in Ghazzal Dabiri und Flavia Ruani (eds.), *Thecla and Medieval Sainthood: The Acts of Paul and Thecla in Eastern and Western Hagiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 256–81.

65 Hierzu weiterführend Tobias Nicklas, „An ‚Apocryphal‘ Role Model Allowing for a Different Life Style: Olympias as a Late Antique Thecla“, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 96 (2020), 509–19.

handelt.⁶⁶ Dies sind nur Einzelbeispiele, die zeigen, wie Viten von Heiligen sich wenigstens teilweise bewusst an Apostelerzählungen anlehnen können. Ich würde in solchen Fällen von Apokryphen zweiter Ordnung sprechen.⁶⁷

Dies ist nur ein Teil der Perspektiven, die sich ergeben, wenn wir die literarischen Linien, die sich von der Forschung an apokryphen Apostelakten ergeben, konsequent verfolgen. Ich habe noch nicht von Texten gesprochen, die sich in erster Linie für die Präsenz und Wirksamkeit apostolischer Reliquien interessieren, noch nicht von metaphrastischer Literatur oder bildlichen Darstellungen apostolischer Wirksamkeit.

Wir sind noch weit davon entfernt, dass die hier vorgestellten Schriften alle in einfacher Weise einem akademischen Publikum (oder gar einem breiteren Publikum an Interessierten) zugänglich gemacht wären. In den allermeisten Fällen haben wir keine angemessenen Antworten auf selbst die einfachsten Einleitungsfragen, was auch daran liegt, dass nur wenige Texte angemessen ediert vorliegen.⁶⁸ So wünschenswert es wäre, in einer angemessenen Reihenfolge vorzugehen und zuerst auf moderne kritische Editionen zu warten, bevor in einem nächsten Schritt grundlegende Fragen beantwortet werden, so sehr plädiere ich aus pragmatischen Gründen dafür, das Wagnis einzugehen, wichtige inhaltliche Fragen bereits auf der Basis des Vorliegenden zu diskutieren. Nur wo bestimmte Schriften wenigstens grundsätzlich bekannt gemacht werden, besteht überhaupt die Chance, dass sich um sie so etwas wie ein erster Forschungsdiskurs entwickelt, aus dem dann eventuell die Möglichkeit erwächst, kritische Editionen modernster Standards zu entwickeln. Die Tatsache etwa, dass der von Tony Burke und Brent Landau verantwortete Band *More New Testament Apocrypha I* eine englische Übersetzung der *Akten des Timotheus* (ECCA 270; CANT 295) zugänglich machte,⁶⁹ führte dazu, dass dieser auf verschiedenen Ebenen höchst

66 Die *Vita der Eusebeia* ist erstediert in Band 56 der *Analecta Bollandiana* aus dem Jahre 1938.

67 Hierzu Tobias Nicklas, „Semiotik – Intertextualität – Apokryphität: Eine Annäherung an den Begriff ‚christlicher Apokryphen‘“, *Apocrypha* 17 (2006), 55–78, hier 73 (jetzt auch in *The Canon and Beyond: Collected Essays on the History and Hermeneutics of Biblical and Parabiblical Traditions*, WUNT 525 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2024], 179–200, hier 195).

68 Dies liegt nicht nur an mangelndem Interesse an der Edition dieser Schriften, sondern auch an den besonderen Herausforderungen, die sich bei der Edition dieser häufig in hohem Maße fluid überlieferten Texte ergeben.

69 Cavan W. Concannon, „The Acts of Timothy“, in Burke and Landau (eds.), *New Testament Apocrypha. More Noncanonical Scriptures 1*, 395–405.

spannende Text, der in Ephesus spielt, nun mehrfach wenigstens in kleineren Untersuchungen diskutiert wurde – zuletzt u.a. in sehr grundlegender und hilfreicher Weise durch Jan Bremmer.⁷⁰ Ähnliches kann über Schriften wie das *Martyrium des Markus*, die *Akten des Barnabas* oder die *Akten des Titus* gesagt werden – weitere derartige Initiativen sind wichtig.

Fazit:

Damit sind wenigstens ansatzweise einige Linien beschrieben, entlang derer sich neue, spannende Forschungsprojekte beschreiben lassen:

(1) Es bleibt eine kaum zu bewältigende Aufgabe, die Vielzahl von Texten, die selbst bei unserer Skizze in den Blick kamen und kommen, durch angemessene Editionen, Übersetzungen, Einführungen und Analysen für die breitere Forschung, ja für ein breiteres Publikum zugänglich zu machen. Weiterhin – oder vielleicht mehr denn je – ist also enorme Grundlagenarbeit zu leisten, die zum Teil auch dadurch erschwert wird, dass viele apokryphe Apostelerzählungen deutlich weniger stabil überliefert sind als die Schriften des Neuen Testaments: Zukünftige Editionen dürfen sich nicht alleine für die Rekonstruktion von Ausgangstexten mit Hilfe von Stemmata interessieren, sondern sollten Offenheit zeigen für die Vielfalt der Überlieferung und der Überlieferungskontexte der jeweils edierten Schriften.

(2) Die Arbeit an Apostelerzählungen profitiert ungemein, wenn durch allzu fixe Kategorien gesetzte Grenzen offen gehalten werden: Ich denke in diesem Zusammenhang vor allem an die in manchen Fällen durchaus sinnvolle, häufig aber künstliche Grenze zwischen Apokryphen und Hagiographen, aber auch an geographische Grenzen oder die Grenze zwischen Aposteln, apostolischen Figuren, Figuren der ersten christlichen Generation und Apostelschüler:innen.

(3) Sobald wir uns nicht nur für eine rekonstruierte möglichst ursprüngliche Fassung von Schriften interessieren, ist deren Fluidität ernst zu nehmen. Anders als bei kanonisch gewordenen Schriften beobachten wir in vielen Fällen christlicher Apokryphen – und darunter natürlich auch apokrypher Apostelerzählungen – üblicherweise keine Stabilisierung der Textüberlieferung, sondern verschiedenste Formen der Fortschreibung und Veränderung – von

70 Jan N. Bremmer, „Timothy, John and Ephesus in the *Acts of Timothy*“, in Nicklas, Spittler and Bremmer (eds.), *The Apostles Peter, Paul, John, Thomas and Philip*, 215–39 (mit Diskussion der in den vergangenen Jahren entstandenen Studien zum Text).

Übersetzungen, Hinzufügung neuer Szenen, redaktioneller Bearbeitung der Texte auf sprachlicher wie inhaltlicher Ebene (z.B. zur Anpassung an „rechtgläubige“ Kontexte), Kürzung (z.B. als Erstellung von Auszügen, z.B. in Konzentration auf die Martyrienberichte etc.). Die Fluidität ihrer Überlieferung ist aber nicht nur als ein Manko zu begreifen, sondern als eine Möglichkeit und Herausforderung, ihre Bedeutung in verschiedenen Kontexten als noch komplexer und sich dynamischer ändernd zu verstehen, als dies bisher geschehen ist.

(4) Die Fluidität der Texte aber stellt nur einen Aspekt ihrer Heteronomie dar, deren grundlegendste Dimension sicher darin besteht, dass christliche Apokryphen – und mit ihnen Apostelerzählungen – in einem privilegierten intertextuellen Verhältnis zu Texten, Motiven und Figuren der Bibel, in diesem Falle besonders des Neuen Testaments, stehen. Neben diesen bekannten Aspekten aber könnte es besonders spannend sein, Texte, die in besonderer Weise an Orte gebunden sind (bzw. die aus diesen kommunikativ „augmentierte Räume“ erschaffen)⁷¹ im Verhältnis zu diesen Orten zu lesen, die im Text häufig nicht beschrieben sind, sondern deren Kenntnis offenbar vorausgesetzt wird. Mit anderen Worten: es ist ernst zu nehmen, dass es einen großen Unterschied ausmacht, eine Schrift wie das genannte *Martyrium des Markus* im Alexandrien des vierten oder fünften Jahrhunderts (oder wenigstens mit Kenntnis der örtlichen Gegebenheiten) zu lesen oder sich an einem weit davon entfernten Ort – ohne Kenntnis der Gegebenheiten im spätantiken Alexandrien – mit ihrer altkirchenslavischen Übersetzung auseinanderzusetzen.

(5) Dabei kann die Arbeit an diesen Schriften vor allem dann auf eine neue Ebene gehoben werden, wo sie nicht alleine als apokryphe Texte angesehen werden, sondern als Teil komplexerer parabiblischer Traditionen, Traditionen also, die sich dem (häufig nur ansatzweise und in interdisziplinärer Arbeit) erkennbaren Zusammenspiel verschiedener Medien verdanken.⁷² Genauer:

Parabiblische Traditionen sind durch das Zueinander verschiedener Medien (Texte, Dinge, Bilder, Riten etc.) bestimmte Konstellationen, die an der imaginierten Welt der

71 Zu diesem Konzept vgl. Andreas Merkt, „The Hetero-Topography of the Forum Romanum: How Late Antique Peter Traditions Generated an Augmented Reality of Public Space“, in Nicklas, Spittler and Bremmer (eds.), *The Apostles Peter, Paul, John, Thomas and Philip*, 21–54.

72 Um in der Lage zu sein dieses Zueinander noch präziser als bisher zu beschreiben, arbeitet derzeit Stefan Alkier an einem Band über Intertextualität als Intermedialität.

Bibel teilhaben, jedoch nicht vollkommen in ihr aufgehen, sondern dies in neue Kontexte hinein aktualisieren, ja präsentieren. Diese Konstellationen sind keineswegs stabil, sondern entstehen erst durch die in ihrer Rezeption gebildeten mentalen Räume, d.h. in der Vorstellungskraft derer, die sie in Verbindung miteinander setzen.⁷³

Erst der Versuch, parabiblische Traditionen und nicht nur die Funktion isolierter apokrypher Texte allein zu beschreiben, kann uns einen entscheidenden Schritt weiterführen, um die Frage zu beantworten, welche Funktion apokryphen Texten als Teil komplexerer Systeme Einfluss auf eine Kultur, Gesellschaft oder auch Gruppen innerhalb einer solchen Gesellschaft zukam – und inwiefern sich dieser Einfluss auch in verschiedenen Zeiten und Kontexten veränderte. Die Arbeit an apokryphen Apostelakten (wie christlichen Apokryphen allgemein) könnte somit von einer Rolle am Rande biblischer Studien *allein* befreit werden: Sie verbindet biblische Exegese und Rezeptionsgeschichte mit altkirchlichen, byzantinischen und mediävistischen, kunsthistorischen und archäologischen, philologischen und paläographischen, liturgiegeschichtlichen und literaturgeschichtlichen Studien – und reicht damit bis weit hinein in die verschiedensten Bereiche der Erforschung antiker wie zeitgenössischer Kulturen.

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73 Nicklas, „Neutestamentlicher Kanon und christliche Apokryphen“.

A. Siouville's *Pseudo-Clémentines* and Critical French Scholarship on Early Christianity in the Modernist Crisis: Notes on an Unpublished Letter

Benjamin M. J. De Vos

Abstract: This article analyzes an unpublished 1933 letter from Alfred Loisy to Louis Canet as a lens onto the intellectual, historiographical, and ideological dynamics of French scholarship on early Christianity during the Interbellum. The letter, which refers to the anonymous scholar A. Siouville, provides new evidence for reassessing both the reception of the *Pseudo-Clementine* Homilies and the constraints imposed on critical research during the Modernist Crisis.

It situates Siouville's work, identified as that of Auguste Lelong, within contemporary source-critical debates on the *Pseudo-Clementines*, including discussions of the *Grundschrift*, the *Kerygmata Petrou*, and the *Praxeis Petrou*. While largely dependent on earlier German and French scholarship, Siouville developed an evolving assessment of the *Homilies*, moving from a dismissive view of their marginality to recognizing their importance for reconstructing Jewish-Christian traditions and the transition from Jewish Gnosticism to early Christianity, under the influence of Oscar Cullmann. The article further examines Siouville's hypothesis regarding the relationship between *Pseudo-Clementine* traditions and the emergence of Islam, suggesting that Jewish-Christian ideas preserved in the *Kerygmata* contributed to the broader religious milieu of the early Islamic world.

Finally, the study contextualizes Loisy's discretion concerning Siouville's identity within a climate of renewed anti-modernist repression. By revisiting the "Siouville-Turmel affair" involving Joseph Turmel and situating both figures within the intellectual network surrounding Paul-Louis Couchoud, the article highlights the entanglement of (*Pseudo-Clementine*) scholarship, pseudonymity, and ecclesiastical control. It thus underscores how critical inquiry into early Christianity remained deeply shaped by institutional pressures in early twentieth-century France.

Keywords: Pseudo-Clementines; Auguste Lelong; Joseph Turmel; Alfred Loisy; French Catholic Modernism and the Modernist Crisis

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1. Introduction

On December 9, 1933, Alfred Loisy (1857–1940) wrote an intriguing letter to his friend, French diplomat and former Septuagint scholar Louis Canet (1883–1958). Since this letter remains as of yet unpublished, I begin by quoting it (almost) in full.

Ceffonds, le 9 décembre 1933.¹

Cher Ami,

Mes livres paraissent à un mauvais moment. Cependant j'y vais joindre un appendice important, mon étude sur *le Mandéisme et les origines chrétiennes*. Je fais la publication à mes frais, Nourry n'osant dans les circonstances présentes en assumer la responsabilité. Je le publie tout de suite parce que je ne vois pas qui pourrait assurer la correction des épreuves si je venais à manquer, la question n'ayant été abordée ni seulement étudiée sérieusement par personne dans notre pays.

Vous ne me parlez pas d'*Y a-t-il deux Sources*, ni de l'incident Bergson, dont pourtant j'ai dû vous écrire. [...] ²

Vous savez probablement qui était Siouville. Couchoud en m'adressant le volume, conformément aux intentions de l'auteur, me fait connaître sa mort. Cette édition des *Clémentines* vaut au moins celle des *Philosouphena* [sic]. Peut-être aurait-on bien fait d'y ajouter l'analyse des *Actus Vercellenses*, dans un volume complémentaire pour épuiser la question Pierre-Simon. Mais Siouville n'est plus, et je ne vois pas qui pourrait le continuer.

Nous revenons au chaos, et les ténèbres couvrent cet abîme. Cependant l'esprit de dieu couvre les eaux.

Bien affectueusement à vous

A. Loisy

P. S. J'ai reçu récemment deux très bonnes lettres de Pautonnier. Il me dit que la santé de Marcion est fort ébranlée.³

- 1 Loisy's letter of 9 December was a reply to a letter of Canet of 7 December, in which the latter wrote: "Je viens aussi d'acheter les homélies clémentines de Siouville, mais je ne les lirai que plus tard." No further reply to the remark of Loisy came from Canet.
- 2 At this point in the letter follows a lengthy discussion of the polemic between Loisy and the French philosopher Henri Bergson about the latter's widely influential essay *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1932), criticized by Loisy in his *Y a-t-il deux sources de la religion et de la morale?* (1933). This (philosophical) part of the letter transcribed above is left out of the quote as it is unrelated to the central theme of the present article.
- 3 "Dear Friend, my books are appearing at an unfortunate moment. Nevertheless, I shall append to them an important supplement: my study on *le Mandéisme et les origines chrétiennes*. I am undertaking the publication at my own expense, Nourry not daring, under the present circumstances, to assume responsibility for it. I am publishing it

Between 1905 and Loisy's passing in 1940, he and Canet exchanged over 550 letters, making their correspondence one of the most extensive among the preserved files of this leading French exegete, historian, and excommunicated Catholic priest. Until recently, it remained unknown that Loisy's letters to Canet have been preserved. In a neat twist of historical irony, these are not kept in the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, alongside most of Loisy's (largely passive) correspondences, but in the uncatalogued archives of Canet at the *Institut catholique* in Paris, the very institution from which Loisy was unceremoniously fired in 1893 due to his critical biblical scholarship.⁴ Because of their many historically and historiographically valuable scientific and philosophical discussions and their perspicuous observations of the dramatic events of the first decades of the 20th century, these letters are currently being prepared for online open access publication at the *Institut Romand des Sciences Bibliques* of Lausanne University.⁵

immediately because I do not see who might ensure the correction of the proofs should I be no longer able to do so, the question having neither been addressed nor even seriously studied by anyone in our country. You do not mention *Y a-t-il deux Sources*, nor the Bergson incident, about which I must nevertheless have written to you. [...] You are probably aware who Siouville was. In sending me the volume, in accordance with the author's wishes, Couchoud informs me of his death. This edition of the *Clémentines* is at least equal to that of the *Philosouphena* [sic]. It might perhaps have been advisable to add an analysis of the Actus Vercellenses in a supplementary volume, in order to exhaust the question of Peter and Simon. But Siouville is no more, and I do not see who might continue his work. We are returning to chaos, and darkness covers the abyss. Yet the Spirit of God hovers over the waters. Yours very sincerely, A. Loisy. P. S. I have recently received two very good letters from Pautonnier. He tells me that Marcion's health is gravely weakened." [My translation]

4 The letters Canet wrote to Loisy are preserved in the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*: NAF 15650, f°284–509.

5 The localisation and survey of the unpublished active and passive correspondence of Loisy were made possible by a grant of the Faculté de théologie et de sciences des religions of the University of Lausanne and carried out in Autumn 2010 by Elisabeth Scheele. Following this preliminary work, SNSF project 100011_134959 (1.6.2011 to 31.5.2012) enabled Scheele to produce a first transcription of 530 letters exchanged between Loisy and Canet. The letters of Loisy to Canet are in the archives of the *Institut catholique* in Paris, in unclassified and undigitized form. In the context of SNSF project 100015_208261 (1.9.2022 to 31.8.2025), Annelies Lannoy has been preparing the online edition and commentary of the Loisy-Canet correspondence (via the University of Lausanne's CATIMA database generator). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Annelies Lannoy for the valuable remarks and nuances she provided during the preparations of this article.

The letter cited above illustrates the exciting dynamism of the 1930s in the study of early Christianity. Debates on the relevance of Mandaeism for the origins of the Jesus movement continued, as shown by Loisy's announcement of his new publication.⁶ Earlier correspondence also discussed the discovery of the Manichaean Medinet Madi library and the not less spectacular findings of the painted synagogue and *domus ecclesiae* in Dura-Europos.⁷ In the same period, an anonymous author under the pseudonym A. Siouville published his French translation of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* (1933)⁸ in the collection *Les Textes du christianisme* of Parisian publisher Rieder.⁹ Five years earlier, the same author had published with the same publisher the first French translation of an equally important early Christian text: *Philosophumena ou Réfutation de toutes les hérésies*. Accompanied by critical introductions and notes, these translations made important early Christian texts accessible to

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- 6 Cf. Alfred Loisy, *Le Mandéisme et les origines chrétiennes* (Paris: Nourry, 1934). This work, self-funded due to the disastrous consequences of the Great Depression, was an appendix to Loisy's earlier published synthesis on the origins of Christianity: *La Naissance du Christianisme* (Paris: Nourry, 1933). A rather self-conscious scholar, Loisy tended to highlight his own scientific merits and downplay those of others, as is clear from his statement that the then pressing Mandaean question "had not been discussed nor seriously studied" by any other French scholar. While the interpretation of "seriously" is up for debate, other French scholars did publish on the matter. We may for instance refer to Marie-Joseph Lagrange, "La gnose mandéenne et la tradition évangélique," *Revue biblique* 37:1 (1928), 5–36. It is true, though, that the debate was largely dominated by German scholars such as Hans Lietzmann, Rudolf Bultmann, and Richard Reitzenstein.
- 7 Many of these topics were more elaborately discussed by Loisy in his letters to the Belgian historian of religions Franz Cumont (1868–1947), published by Annelies Lannoy, Corinne Bonnet and Danny Praet (eds.), *"Mon cher Mithra..." La correspondance entre Franz Cumont et Alfred Loisy*, 2 vol. (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2019). Louis Canet was a mutual friend of Loisy and Cumont, and the *exécuteur testamentaire* of both scholars. See *infra*, part 3 of this article for more biographical information on Canet.
- 8 In recent scholarship, the denomination of *Klementia* is increasingly preferred, since this particular title is found in one of the two important manuscripts of this tradition (the tenth-century Codex Parisinus gr.930 folio 4v) and in two eleventh-century sermons of Nikon Monachos; see also Benjamin M. J. De Vos and Danny Praet, "The *Pseudo-Clementines*: Title, Genre and Research Questions," in Benjamin M. J. De Vos and Danny Praet (eds.), *In Search of Truth in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies. New Approaches to a Philosophical and Rhetorical Novel of Late Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 1–36, here 3. In this contribution, I will refer to the '*Homilies*'/'*Homélies*', in line with Siouville's work and the *Pseudo-Clementine Forschung* of the 1930s.
- 9 A. Siouville, *Les Homélies Clémentines* (Paris: F. Rieder, 1933).

a wider French-speaking audience and stimulated new hypotheses, as the one here mentioned by Loisy.

The first part of this contribution examines Siouville's view on the *Pseudo-Clementines* and his position within contemporary *Forschung*. Between 1929 and 1933, he published his ideas in an extensive but introductory overview in the *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (RHR, 1929), in two reviews of Carl Schmidt's *Studien zu den Pseudo-Clementinen* (1929) and Oscar Cullmann's *Le problème littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-clémentin* (1930) in the same journal, and in a reworked version of his 1929 contribution as introduction to his 1933 translation, to which Loisy refers in his letter. Particular attention will be given to shifts in Siouville's evaluation of the *Pseudo-Clementines* for our understanding of the earliest forms of Christianity and to his views on their possible influence on the rise of Islam. However, there is more to say about Loisy's letter, and also about "A. Siouville".

Interestingly, the letter is not only a testimony to the strong scholarly interest that the *Homilies* enjoyed in the first half of the twentieth century. Brief as it may be, it also offers new insight into the ideological controversies that hosted the critical study of this and other early Christian texts among French scholars. Who was this A. Siouville? Why did he publish the aforementioned writings anonymously? Why did Loisy refrain from mentioning his name, even in a private letter to one of his closest friends? And who was the no less enigmatic "Marcion" mentioned in the post-scriptum?

With the publication of this letter (part 1), a thorough discussion of Siouville's views (part 2), and a brief study of the letter's ideological context (part 3), I wish to pay tribute to an esteemed colleague to whom I am indebted for the many studies on the history and historiography of ancient religion.

2. Siouville and the *Pseudo-Clementines* in the 1930s

In his letter, Loisy mentions that Paul-Louis Couchoud, on the author's advice, had sent him the volume on the *Homilies*. A plausible reason for this may be that Loisy had attached little or no value at all to the *Pseudo-Clementines*, given his own extensive oeuvre on early Christianity. Within *La Naissance du Christianisme*, published the same year as Siouville's *Homélies*, he rather ignored the *Pseudo-Clementines*, though he acknowledged that these "apocryphes clémentins" might deserve a more significant role in the search for the earliest Christian sources. "On néglige peut-être trop aujourd'hui ces

apocryphes clémentins, dont l'école de Baur a fait grand bruit vers le milieu du siècle dernier."¹⁰

By the 1930s, scholarship on the *Pseudo-Clementines* was already extensive and complex, more specifically regarding its potential value for the study of the earliest expressions of Christian thought. Siouville's 1929 article and his 1933 translation offered not only an overview of the varied and unique ideas present in the *Homilistic* version but also discussed several of those ideas within the early Christian environments.

The various traditions of the *Pseudo-Clementine* narrative, especially the Latin *Recognitions* and the Greek *Homilies*, offer an account of Clement of Rome's search for truth, his reunion with his long-lost parents and brothers, and his encounter with Peter, who introduces him to the teachings of the True Prophet. As Siouville points out, this Peter is no longer the fisherman of Lake Genesareth, but "une sorte de rhéteur, très versé dans la dialectique, un philosophe subtil qui parle, comme Aristote, de substance et d'accidents, de matière et d'éléments."¹¹ Siouville even lets slip the following: "Il n'est pas possible de déformer plus complètement l'histoire."¹² Simon Magus, likewise, appears not primarily as a magician in Samaria, as in the *Acts of the Apostles*, but as an arch-heretic and chief opponent of Peter, and above all, a rhetorician and Sophist engaged in extensive dialectical disputes with the apostle, rather than performing magical performances as in the *Acts of Peter*.¹³

10 Loisy, *La Naissance du Christianisme*, 69, note 2. "These Clementine apocrypha are perhaps too much neglected today, although the school of Baur made a great deal of them around the middle of the last century." [My translation]

11 "A kind of rhetorician, highly versed in dialectic, a subtle philosopher who speaks, like Aristotle, of substance and accidents, of matter and elements." [My translation] For an extensive discussion of Peter's character in the *Homilies*, see Joseph Verheyden, "In Tripolis (*Homilies* 8–11): Peter Orator and Healer, or How to Handle the Relationship between Knowledge, Wisdom and Truth," in De Vos and Praet, *In Search of Truth*, 163–187, and Benjamin M. J. De Vos, "The Literary Characterisation of Peter in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: Life-guide, Rhetorician, and Philosopher," in Judith Lieu (ed.), *Peter in the Early Church: Apostle, Missionary, Church Leader* (Leuven: Peeters, 2021), 483–509.

12 "It is not possible to distort history more completely." [My translation] A. Siouville, "Introduction aux Homélies clémentines," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 100 (1929), 142–204, here 166.

13 See for an excellent overview of the development of the character of Simon Magus in early Christian sources, Jan N. Bremmer, "Simon Magus: The Invention and Reception of a Magician in a Christian Context," *Religion in the Roman Empire* 5:2 (2019), 246–270. For Simon's characterization in the *Pseudo-Clementines*: Dominique Côté, "La fonction littéraire de Simon le Magicien dans les Pseudo-Clémentines," *Laval théologique et*

Siouville exhibits particular interest in the Greek *Homilies* rather than the *Recognitions*, owing to certain “traits choquants pour l’orthodoxie.”¹⁴ For example, Peter strongly emphasizes strict monotheism and denies Jesus the status of god, presenting him instead as one manifestation of the True Prophet, alongside Adam, being the first manifestation, and Moses. The *Homilies* establishes no difference between the three figures in that they all proclaim the same eternal and divine law.¹⁵ Those who know and follow the teachings of Moses, but are unfamiliar with those of Jesus, are just as much saved as those who follow Jesus’ teachings. Both categories of followers actually fall under one and the same heading: “Ioudaioi” or “theosebeis.” In this regard, the Jewish denominator acquires a broader and more universal character. Salvation emphatically depends on the practicing of deeds, including observance of the Law and taking daily, purifying baths. The body here plays an important role according to the *Homilistic* Peter, who at one point even takes four baths in two days.¹⁶ Moreover, rather than advocating virginity, marriage is the law.¹⁷ Peter is married, his wife accompanies him on all his missions, and at one point, she is even yielded the floor and is allowed to say a mere few words – once!¹⁸ In addition, there is a strong objection to any form of sacrificial rite, and vegetarianism seems to be prescribed. Peter, for example, subsists on bread and olives alone.¹⁹

However, as Peter also makes clear, the True Prophet offers the true *gnosis*: besides the emphasis on the practicing of correct deeds, one finds salvation by being revealed true *gnosis* about humankind, about the world as a creation of the one God, and about the way in which one should adopt

philosophique 57:3 (2001), 513–523, and Benjamin M. J. De Vos, “Paideia, Plato’s Sophist and the Pseudo-Clementines: Simon Magus’s Characterisation in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies,” in David Hamidovic, Eleonora Serra, and Philippe Therrien (eds.), *The Reception of Biblical Figures: Essays in Method* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), 187–222.

14 Siouville, “Introduction,” 204; Siouville, *Homélies clémentines*, 63.

15 *Hom.* 8.7; Siouville, *Homélies clémentines*, 42: “ce sont trois hommes différents. Mais tous trois ont été chargés de la même mission, tous trois ont prêché aux hommes la même doctrine, tous trois ont été unis de la même manière, intime et permanente, avec l’Esprit divin. On peut dire qu’Adam, Moïse et Jésus ne sont qu’un seul et même Prophète de la vérité, puisque ce qui compte en eux, ce n’est pas l’homme mortel, mais l’Esprit saint, toujours le même, qui a fait d’eux ses organes infaillibles.”

16 *Hom.* 9.23; 10.1 and 26; 11.1; see also 7.4 and 11.29.

17 *Hom.* 3.26.

18 *Hom.* 13.1 and 11.

19 *Hom.* 3.26, 45, 56; 12.6.

a correct ethical and pious disposition. This prophetic *gnosis* stands in sharp contrast to the false, deceiving *gnosis*. The *Homilistic* version puts forward an emphatically dualistic view according to which the entire world history is divided into succeeding generations of *syzygiae* or pairs, in which each succeeding generation contains a representative of the superior prophetic line which began with Adam as the True Prophet, such as Abel, Moses, Jesus, and Peter, while the inferior, deceiving line, characterized as 'female' and going back to Eve (who is not mentioned by name), is continued by figures such as Cain, Aaron, John the Baptist, and Simon Magus.²⁰ The latter representatives always precede their counterparts, dispersing any distress or illusion among the people they visit. Only afterwards are they surpassed by the true *gnosis*.

True *gnosis* manifests itself, among other things, in the knowledge of the way by which Old Testament passages should be read. According to Peter, Moses did not write down the Law, but he only received the Law in oral fashion. False pericopes only corrupted the Law after Moses' death, when it was written down, and falsely introduced stories about a sinning Adam, a jealous God, or Moses having killed a soldier. However, these false pericopes serve God's plan: whoever might believe these errors or false pericopes regarding the patriarchs or God reveal their true but sinful attitude.²¹ Even the figure of the Evil One, as he is called, is integrated into this divine plan, exerting control over the sinners. Moreover, the *Homilies* deploys one of the most striking theories present in the narrative, regarding the Evil One's disposition, which enables him to punish sinners: this disposition is the result of a particular mix (as arranged by God!) of the four basic elements. At the end of time, God will remix the Evil One's very disposition and grant him a place in His Kingdom.²²

These particular, but original, ideas in the *Homilies* have led to extensive discussions regarding the way in which one should approach them within the framework of the history of Christianity and Judaism, but also about what exactly the notion of a "Jewish-Christianity" entails, and how this early thinking is to be related to the clearly divergent teachings of the early Church: "Ce sont les points sur lesquels l'enseignement des *Homélie*s s'écarte plus

²⁰ Cf. *Hom.* 2.33.

²¹ E.g., *Hom.* 3.3–5.

²² Cf. *Hom.* 19.16–20.

ou moins de celui de la grande Église et qui, par conséquent, présentent un intérêt particulier.”²³

Even before the 1930s, by the time Siouville was working on the *Pseudo-Clementines*, scholars already had long disagreed on whether such teachings reflect first-century, even “Jewish-Christian”, traditions or later developments, and on what “Jewish-Christianity” should entail.²⁴

While it is by no means my intention to offer a fully detailed account of *Pseudo-Clementine* scholarship before the 1930s,²⁵ I would like to highlight a few points in order to better assess Siouville’s position, and to highlight his – relatively modest – originality in this scholarship. It must be said that Siouville mainly follows the insights of earlier and contemporary *Pseudo-Clementine* specialists.

23 Siouville, “Introduction,” 173. “These are the points on which the teaching of the *Homilies* departs, to a greater or lesser extent, from that of the Great Church and which, consequently, are of particular interest.” [My translation]

24 The concept of “Jewish-Christianity” is still heavily debated, as the extensive discussions by Jean Daniélou, S. J., *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme* (Paris: Desclée et Cie, 1958); Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018); and Matt Jackson-McCabe, *Jewish Christianity: The Making of the Christianity-Judaism Divide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020) clearly indicate. For a discussion of “Jewish-Christianity” in the *Pseudo-Clementine Grundschrift*: F. Stanley Jones, “Jewish Christianity of the Pseudo-Clementines,” in F. Stanley Jones, *Pseudoclementina Elchasaïticaque inter Judaeochristiana* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 138–151.

25 For an extensive *status quaestionis* of *Pseudo-Clementine* scholarship, it suffices to refer to Frédéric Manns, “Les Pseudo-Clementines (*Homélies et Reconnaissances*). État de la question,” *Liber Annuus* 53 (2003), 157–184; Frédéric Amsler, “État de la recherche récente sur le roman pseudo-clémentin,” in Frédéric Amsler et al. (eds.), *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clementines: actes du deuxième colloque international sur la littérature apocryphe chrétienne, Lausanne-Genève, 30 août–2 septembre 2006* (Prahins: Éditions du Zèbre, 2008), 25–45; Jan N. Bremmer, “Pseudo-Clementines: Texts, Dates, Places, Authors and Magic,” in Jan N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Pseudo-Clementines* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 1–23; reprinted in Jan N. Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays I* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 236–249; F. Stanley Jones, “The Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research,” in Jones, *Pseudoclementina*, 50–113; De Vos and Praet, “The Pseudo-Clementines”. It should be noted, though, that most contributions in recent *Clementine* scholarship – among which the several overviews of the *state of the art* – undeservedly neglect 19th and early 20th century Dutch scholarship, or as Bremmer remarks in “Pseudo-Clementines: Texts, Dates, Places,” 3: “Batava non iam leguntur.” For our purposes it suffices to note that Siouville already seemed to neglect Dutch scholarship of his time. An extensive overview of earlier Dutch *Clementine* scholarship could come in handy for future *Clementine* research: this is perhaps an idea for the next Festschrift on the occasion of our celebrant’s 90th birthday!

The *Pseudo-Clementine* Literature as Witness of "Primitive Christianity"?

Around the middle of the 19th century, Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860) and the Tübingen School, interpreted the *Homilies* as a second-century expression reflecting tensions between Jewish-Christian/Petrine/Law-keeping and Gentile-Christian/Pauline/Law-refuting factions.²⁶ Baur, moreover, dated the *Homilies* to the end of the second century and considered them a Gnostic Christian expression of this tension, which could be traced back to the anti-Pauline stance during Paul's own lifetime. In this way, according to Baur, the *Homilies* offers important insight into the development of the history of the Church.²⁷ This position was followed, among others, by Adolph Schliemann (1817–1872), who in turn labelled the *Homilies* as 'Gnostic Ebionite'.²⁸ Adolf (von) Harnack (1851–1930) countered this point of view, minimizing the *Pseudo-Clementines*' doctrinal importance, and argued that no important role to this literature should be attributed in the history of the Church.²⁹

In his 1929 contribution, Siouville adds nuance to earlier Tübingen-scholarship and does not consider the *Homilies* as an expression of earliest Christianity. In line with Harnack, he argues that it is not an "expression autorisée du christianisme primitif", nor has it had any influence on "la dogmatique chrétienne."³⁰ This represents a point of view which he, interestingly, seems to retract in his Cullmann-review (1931) and in his 1933 introduction, as I will discuss further on. As Siouville states in all of his contributions, the *Homilies* is to be approached as offering insight into Jewish-Christian thought of the second and third century. It is to this end that he discusses the potentially older sources underlying the fourth-century *Homilistic* tradition.

26 See Ferdinand Christian Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 3:4 (1831), 61–206, here 199–200.

27 In 1835, Baur changed his point of view and considered the *Homilies* to be anti-Marcionite, rather than a witness to a refutation of earlier Paulinism: Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religions-Philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Tübingen: C. F. Osiander, 1835), 405.

28 Adolph Schliemann, *Die Clementinen nebst den verwandten Schriften und der Ebionitismus: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen und Dogmengeschichte der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1844), 548–551.

29 Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Erster Band* (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1888), 264–270.

30 Siouville, "Introduction," 204.

In line with the then dominant paradigm of source-critical analyses, or, in German, *Quellenkritische Untersuchungen*, Siouville engages in rather intense and complex debates concerning the possible sources that underlie the *Pseudo-Clementines* and how these older layers relate to possible Jewish-Christian thought. Generally speaking, from the 1890s onwards, with the work of Gerhard Uhlhorn (1826–1901), it has been assumed that the *Homilies* was written in Syria, and following the work of Charles Bigg (1840–1908), that this version can be dated to the fourth century (just like the *Recognitions*). In this way, Baur's view on the *Homilies* as a second-century source was refuted and the fourth-century traditions of the *Pseudo-Clementines* were no longer considered to be expressions of the earliest (Jewish-)Christian doctrines. Nevertheless, by assuming the presence of different layers and sources to be distinguished, scholars have attempted to locate earlier expressions of Jewish-Christianity in the oldest nuclei of the *Clementines*. This remained a paradigm in *Clementine* scholarship, until well after the 1930s, resulting in many diverse and hotly debated theories, which, by means of example, led the German historian of religions, Hans-Joachim Schoeps (1909–1980), to state: "Die Quellenlage ist also verzweifelt ungünstig; die biblische Quellenkritik ist geradezu ein Kinderspiel gegen die der Pseudoklementinen."³¹

Siouville acknowledges the complexity of this source-critical research and expressed a similar *caveat*: "Mais ces résultats ne sont pas tous également assurés et l'accord est loin d'être complet entre les spécialistes de la question pseudo-clémentine."³²

The originality of Siouville's work does not lie in this source-critical approach: he largely follows earlier and contemporary German and French scholarship, in particular Hans Waitz, Werner Heintze, and Oscar Cullmann, regarding their views on the hypothetical sources and their potential Jewish-Christian character.³³

31 Hans-Joachim Schoeps, "Die Pseudoklementinen und das Urchristentum," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 10:1 (1958), 3–15, here 4. "The state of the sources is thus exceedingly unfavourable; biblical source criticism is, quite literally, child's play in comparison with that of the Pseudo-Clementines." [My translation]

32 Siouville, "Introduction," 147; see also *Homélie clémentine*, 12. "But these results are not all equally certain, and agreement is far from complete among specialists in the Pseudo-Clementine question." [My translation]

33 There have been a few scholars, even before the 1930s, who argued that there is nothing Jewish-Christian about the *Pseudo-Clementines*. In particular John Chapman ("On the Date of the Clementines," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 9 [1908],

The Grundschrift as a Jewish-Christian source?

A first source (still) generally accepted in scholarship is the *Grundschrift*. Siouville argues that the fourth-century *Homilies* and *Recognitions* derive from a common source, the *Grundschrift*, or as he calls it, *l'Écrit primitif*.³⁴ Following Richard Adelbert Lipsius (1830–1892), it has been assumed that a single narrative underlies both works and was – perhaps independently –³⁵ reworked by the authors of the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*.³⁶ Its precise relation to the Jewish-Christian character of the *Pseudo-Clementines* has been the subject of fierce debate: Lipsius considered it an Ebionite writing,³⁷ while Uhlhorn, who considered it to be a collection of discussions between Peter and Simon without Clement playing any role in this writing, located it in Syria, and more specifically, in a context of Gnostic Jewish-Christianity.³⁸

Subsequent scholarship produced many divergent views, often linking the *Grundschrift* to Ebionite and even Elchesaite doctrines. Fenton J. A. Hort (1828–1892) saw it as an early third-century Elchesaite work from Transjordan,³⁹ whereas Charles Bigg commented on some of the patristic testimonies of the *Pseudo-Clementines* and argued that the *Grundschrift* must have been

147–159) considered the *Clementine* literature to be a (post-Nicene) reaction against Neoplatonism; see also Eduard Schwartz, “Unzeitgemäße Beobachtungen zu den Clementinen,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 31 (1932), 151–199, here 196.

34 Siouville, “Introduction,” 145. For an extensive overview of the *Grundschrift* hypothesis in *Clementine* scholarship, see Jones, “A History of Research”.

35 It is generally assumed that the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions* independently made use of the *Grundschrift*, see, e.g., F. Stanley Jones, “The Orphic Cosmo-Theogony in the Pseudo-Clementines,” in Guillaume Bady and Diane Cuny (eds.), *Les polémiques religieuses du Ier au IVe siècle de notre ère. Hommage à Bernard Pouderon* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2019), 71–82. There are (recent) voices who, with good reason, consider the *Recognitionist* to have consulted both the *Grundschrift* and the *Homilies*, see, e.g., Bernhard Rehm, “Zur Entstehung der pseudoclementinischen Schriften,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 37 (1938), 77–184 and Patricia A. Duncan, “Faustus at the Borders of Christian Community,” in De Vos and Praet, *In Search of Truth*, 335–349, here 349.

36 Adelbert Lipsius, *Die Quellen der römischen Petrus-Sage* (Kiel: Schwertsche Buchhandlung, 1872), 14ff; and Adelbert Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, vol. 2 (Braunschweig: Schwetske und Sohn, 1887), 37ff.

37 Lipsius, *Die Quellen*, 14.

38 Gerhard Uhlhorn, *Die Homilien und Recognitionen des Clemens Romanus nach ihrem Ursprung und Inhalt dargestellt* (Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1854), 381–429.

39 Fenton J. A. Hort, *Judaistic Christianity. A Course of Lectures* (Cambridge and London: Macmillan and Co, 1894), 201.

an orthodox work from the beginning of the third century.⁴⁰ Arthur C. Headlam (1862–1947) instead situated this basic source in an “unorthodox,” Ebionite context of the late second, early third century.⁴¹ Hans Waitz (1864–1904) turned the table once again by rejecting its Jewish-Christian character, situating the *Grundschrift* in a ‘syncretistic’ but Catholic circle in Rome, between the years 220 and 230.⁴² This view influenced the work of Werner Heintze (1889–1914),⁴³ Adolf Harnack, who dated the *Grundschrift* a little later (to 260),⁴⁴ and Wilhelm Bousset (1865–1920), who rather dated this source to 200 (and did not situate it in Rome).⁴⁵ Carl Schmidt (1868–1938), Harnack’s mentee, then compared the *Grundschrift* to the *Didaskalia*,⁴⁶ placing both in the same Transjordanian environment, between 220–230, and describing the *Grundschrift* author as a Catholic of the great Church influenced by his Jewish background, rather than labelling him a ‘Jewish-Christian’ Ebionite or Elchesaite.⁴⁷ Schmidt was then refuted by Oscar Cullmann (1902–1999) in 1930, arguing for a Jewish-Christian author strongly critical of the Catholic Church – a view Siouville endorses.⁴⁸

40 Charles Bigg, “The Clementine Homilies,” *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism* 2 (1890), 157–193, here 185–188.

41 Arthur C. Headlam, “The Clementine Literature,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 3:9 (1901), 41–58, here 56–57, defines the *Grundschrift* rather as a collection of writings, nevertheless produced by a versatile author.

42 Hans Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen, Homilien und Rekognitionen: Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1904), 52–53, 60–75. Hans Waitz, “Die Pseudoklementinen und ihre Quellenschriften,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 28 (1929), 241–272, here 270–272, also suggested Rome as the place of origin. However, in his later work, Hans Waitz, “Die Lösung des pseudoclementinischen Problems?,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 59 (1940), 304–341, here 340, changed his point of view and considered the author of the *Grundschrift* to be of Jewish origin and living in Syria.

43 Werner Heintze, *Der Klemensroman und seine griechischen Quellen* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1914).

44 Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius* 2 Bd. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1893–1904), here 522–532.

45 Wilhelm Bousset, Review of “Hans Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen, Homilien und Rekognitionen*,” *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 167 (1905), 425–447, here 447; see also René Cadiou, “Origène et les ‘Reconnaissances Clémentines,’” *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 20 (1930), 506–528, here 526.

46 The context in which this source might have originated is also much debated, as also Bremmer, “Pseudo-Clementines: Texts, Dates, Places,” 6, noted.

47 Carl Schmidt, *Studien zu den Pseudo-Clementinen nebst einem Anhang: Die älteste römische Bischofsliste und die Pseudo-Clementinen* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1929), 1.

48 Oscar Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-clémentin: Étude sur le rapport entre le gnosticisme et le Judéo-Christianisme* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan,

This same Schmidt also stated that the *Grundschrift* author is “ein Kompilator im grossen Stile,”⁴⁹ an opinion Siouville also shares to the extent that he considers the *Grundschrift* not exactly “très original, mais plutôt une vaste compilation.”⁵⁰ Siouville, in line with the views of earlier and contemporary scholars, distinguishes four sources underlying the *Grundschrift* as compiled work: (1) the so-called, but heavily debated *Kerygmata Petrou*, (2) the *Praxeis Petrou*, (3) a Jewish apologetical work, and (4) a pagan novel.

The Elusive *Kerygmata Petrou*

In *La Naissance du Christianisme*, Loisy adds to his aforementioned remark that the *Kerygmata Petrou* and the *Praxeis Petrou*, two sources possibly underlying the *Pseudo-Clementines*, may well deserve more attention in research on early Christianity.

Il y faut distinguer les *Kerygmata*, qui sont de gnose judéo-chrétienne, et les *Praxeis*, œuvre de christianisme antignostique, où sont racontés les combats de Pierre contre Simon depuis Césarée jusqu'à Antioche.⁵¹

Yet earlier scholarship had already advanced diverse views with regard to these two hypothetical sources. The *Kerygmata Petrou* in particular has – even to this day – long puzzled many *Pseudo-Clementine* specialists, and this had already been the case since long before Loisy and Siouville.

In his 1848 work on the *Clementines*, Adolf Hilgenfeld (1823–1907) did not yet discuss the *Grundschrift*-theory but offered decisive encouragement for future source-critical approaches and argued that the Jewish-Christian

1930), 154–157; A. Siouville, “Oscar Cullmann – Le problème littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-clémentin, étude sur le rapport entre le gnosticisme et le judéo-christianisme,” *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 103 (1931), 164–168, here 166: “Et en cela Cullmann a parfaitement raison [...]”

49 Schmidt, *Studien*, 18.

50 Siouville, “Introduction,” 145. Recent scholarship, however, has provided nuance to this point of view, be it of limited extent, and has increasingly been considering the *Grundschrift* as an original Christian novel, rather than a fabricated compilation, of a well-educated author (cf. Jones, “A History of Research”). Bremmer, “The *Pseudo-Clementines*: Texts, Dates,” 10 and 12, recently concluded that the “truth is on both sides”: the author was clearly well-read, but “he was also a compiler in that he does not satisfy modern standards of consistency and fluent transitions.”

51 Loisy, *Naissance du Christianisme*, 69, note 2. “One must distinguish here the *Kerygmata*, which belong to Judeo-Christian gnosis, from the *Praxeis*, a work of anti-Gnostic Christianity, in which the struggles of Peter against Simon are recounted from Caesarea to Antioch.” [My translation]

character is itself the result of the multilayered nature of the work. To begin with, Hilgenfeld's second-century *Homilies* is an expression of Ebionite thought,⁵² and is itself a re-edition of the *Recognitions*.⁵³ Underlying these extant versions, the German theologian identified the Jewish-Christian *Anagnorismoi Klementos* (to be situated in a context in which Valentinian Gnosis arose), the slightly older and anti-Pauline *Periodoi Petrou* (again a Jewish-Christian text dating from the last years of Trajan or the early years of Hadrian, aimed to convince Gentiles of the validity of Jewish-Christian thinking),⁵⁴ and finally, the oldest layer, being the *Kerygma* (note the singular) *Petrou*, which he dated shortly after the Jerusalem Temple's destruction and which he situated in Rome.⁵⁵ Thus, he followed Baur's point of view by arguing that this source responded to contemporary Paulinism.⁵⁶ Hilgenfeld regarded the *Kerygma* as a kind of *Grundschrift*, reconstructable from *Rec.* 1.27–72 and, by extension, *Rec.* 1–3, and including the first two introductory letters preserved only in the *Homilistic* version.⁵⁷ A few years later, Lipsius distinguished the *Kerygmata Petrou* (from now on in the plural in order to distinguish this source from the *Kerygma* mentioned in the work of Clement of Alexandria) from the *Grundschrift* and denied its Jewish-Christian origin, instead positing an even older underlying Jewish-Christian source: *the*

52 Adolf Hilgenfeld, *Die clementinischen Recognitionen und Homilien, nach ihrem Ursprung und Inhalt dargestellt* (Jena: J. G. Schreiber / Leipzig: Chr. E. Kollmann, 1848), 307, and Uhlhorn, *Die Homilien und Recognitionen*, 431, 434–435, considered the *Homilies* as a second-century expression of Gnostic Jewish-Christianity, in particular in the case of Hilgenfeld, an expression of Ebionism. Uhlhorn, *Die Homilien und Recognitionen*, 399 and 401, argued that this Gnostic Jewish-Christian character owed to a development of Elchesaite doctrines under the influence of Gentile Christians and Hellenistic ideas.

53 Hilgenfeld, *Die clementinischen Recognitionen*, 185–186 and 307.

54 Hilgenfeld, *Die clementinischen Recognitionen*, 148–149 and 170–171.

55 A few later scholars, such as Antoine Salles, "La diatribe anti-paulinienne dans le 'le roman pseudo-clémentin' et l'origine des 'Kérygmes de Pierre'," *Revue Biblique* 64 (1957), 516–551, here 517 and 544, also dated this source to the end of the first century. Salles also suggested that this work was known to Elchesai. Other scholars, such as Johannes Lehmann, *Die clementinischen Schriften mit besonderer Rücksicht auf ihr literarisches Verhältniss* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1869), 58–78, rather dated this – according to him – Ebionite source to ca. 160. For a similar view, see François Nau, "Notes sur les Clémentines," *Actes du XIVe congrès international des orientalistes* (1906), 24–38, here 32–33.

56 Hilgenfeld, *Die clementinischen Recognitionen*, 93.

57 Hilgenfeld, *Die clementinischen Recognitionen*, 52–81 and 100–149.

Ebionite Acts of Peter or *Praxeis Petrou*.⁵⁸ He, thus, traced the Jewish-Christian character of the *Pseudo-Clementines* to this hypothetical earliest layer, which he regarded as a direct reaction against Paul.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, most later scholars identified the *Kerygmata*, rather than the *Praxeis Petrou*, as the earliest source underlying the *Pseudo-Clementines*.

Although some, including Schliemann⁶⁰ and Meyboom,⁶¹ dismissed the *Kerygmata* as mere fictional, most scholars, including Siouville, accepted its validity. In his 1929 article, Siouville approaches the *Kerygmata* as a Jewish-Christian, anti-Pauline writing composed around 200, “vraisemblablement en Orient.”⁶² The passage of *Rec.* 3.75, he argued in alignment with earlier scholars, indicates that this original source was divided into ten books. Two other passages, this time from the *Homilistic* tradition, would even offer a direct, unaltered witness of the *Kerygmata*. These “deux curieux fragments” are the two introductory letters of Peter to James and James’ answer or the *Diamartyria*.⁶³ In his introduction to his 1933 translation, Siouville revised the *Kerygmata*’s dating even to the early second century, “en tout cas avant l’an 200.”⁶⁴

In this, Siouville follows Waitz, who dated the *Kerygmata* to 135 (in Caesarea) and considered it a (Gnostic) Palestinian-Syrian Jewish-Christian work, written by a former Elchesaite and anti-Marcionite.⁶⁵ He also aligns with Cullmann, by whose work he is strongly influenced as his 1931 review indicates. This French theologian dated this source earlier, to the beginning of the second century (in Transjordan), and emphasized its Jewish-Christian and anti-Pauline character, with affinities with Gnosticism, or more

58 Lipsius, *Die Quellen*, 13ff. According to Lipsius, *Rec.* 1.44–71 belongs to the *Praxeis Petrou*. *Rec.* 1.22–43 and 72–74 are later additions.

59 *Ibid.*, 16–18.

60 Schliemann, *Die Clementinen*, 260–264.

61 Hajo U. Meyboom, *De Clemens-Roman*, vol. 2: *Wetenschappelijke Behandeling* (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1902–1904), 71–72. Today, most scholars refute the existence of the *Kerygmata*. However, a few scholars still (seem to) cling to it, for example, Bernard Pouderon, *La genèse du roman pseudo-clémentin: études littéraires et historiques* (Paris: Peeters, 2012), 342.

62 Siouville, “Introduction,” 145.

63 *Ibid.*, 150; the third introductory letter, Clement’s letter to James, is according to Siouville (1929, 150), not a witness to Jewish-Christianity, “mais celle du christianisme moyen de la grande Église,” and was originally part of the *Grundschrift*.

64 Siouville, *Homélies clémentines*, 10.

65 Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, 151–162, 366, followed by Bousset (“Hans Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*,” 435 and 443).

specifically, “un gnose essentiellement juive,” and with a pronounced Baptist orientation.⁶⁶ Cullmann attached particular importance to this *Clementine* layer for understanding early Christianity: New Testament writings must be interpreted against the backdrop of early Jewish Gnosticism. The *Kerygmata Petrou*, in his view, crucially preserves traditions of a Baptist Jewish Gnosticism that influenced early Christianity, *in casu* the Church of Jerusalem which, after the Temple’s fall, fled to Transjordan, where it preserved these Gnostic Jewish-Christian traditions in isolation.⁶⁷

Siouville further links the *Kerygmata* to Elchasaite ideas. To begin with, Peter’s method of presenting the teachings of the True Prophet as esoteric ties in closely with the Elchasaite Alcibiades,⁶⁸ while the oath by heaven, earth, and water (in order to be initiated into the same doctrine, as expounded in the *Diamartyria*) parallels the Elchasaite oath described by Hippolytus in his *Philosophumena*, a work which was of course not unknown to Siouville.⁶⁹ As Siouville furthermore notes regarding the *Pseudo-Clementine* link with Elchasaism, the True Prophet’s teachings do not deal with the Trinity,⁷⁰ emphasizing instead God’s unity, monarchy, and uniqueness. Jesus does not claim divine status nor is he identified as God, but he is the Son of God and, above all, a manifestation of the True Prophet,⁷¹ who manifests himself throughout time, until God eventually grants him eternal rest.⁷² Jesus is not said to be born of a virgin, and the teachings of Jesus and Moses express the same eternal law of God.⁷³ Siouville considers these ideas as hearkening back to the *Kerygmata*, specifically its first book (based on the passage of *Rec.* 3.75). He even goes one step further, a step in which he follows the work of *Le Vrai Prophète des Clémentines* (1928) by the Belgian theologian Lucien Cerfaux (1883–1968), and suggests these particular doctrines may even predate the *Kerygmata*, possibly originating in Alexandrian Gnostic

66 Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire*, 98 and 207–210. Cullmann, in line with Bousset, argued that Gnosticism represented a phenomenon older than the rise of Christianity itself. This Gnosticism, according to Cullmann, was Jewish of nature and influenced by the typical Eastern syncretism.

67 Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire*, 220ff, 256–257.

68 Siouville, “Introduction,” 150.

69 *Diamartyria* §2; *Philosophoumena* IX,3,15; Siouville, *Philosophumena*, tome II, 199–200.

70 Cf. Siouville, “Introduction,” 175.

71 *Hom.* 16.15.

72 *Hom.* 3.20.

73 *Hom.* 8.5–7.

or Neoplatonic context.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Siouville does not discuss this in further detail, and he even adds to his 1933 edition that however plausible Cerfaux's point of view might be, Cullmann's is even more plausible. "Mais plus probablement encore cette doctrine aurait sa source dans le gnosticisme juif dont le christianisme primitif a été tout imprégné."⁷⁵

Siouville also identifies the doctrine of the *syzygies* as originally incorporated in the *Kerygmata*,⁷⁶ as well as anti-Pauline aspects, such as with regard to the idea of visions (of God, but especially of Jesus) and how one could claim authority as an apostle in this respect. In the *Homilies*, Simon Magus – often considered as a *persona* of Paul – claims apostolic authority through visions of Jesus,⁷⁷ which Peter refutes: authority cannot derive from apparitions. Moreover, Jesus' death on the cross does not function as atonement. Salvation depends instead on knowledge (*gnosis*) of the truth as communicated by the Prophet, in addition to correct adherence to Mosaic Law, including the sexual, purity rites, and frequent ablutions. This emphasis on works, according to Siouville, also counters the Pauline emphasis on 'faith': "Jésus, le Prophète de la vérité, est essentiellement un *illuminateur*, non un rédempteur au sens de Paul."⁷⁸

Simon Magus' figure raises the broader question of his historical and intellectual referent – whether Simon himself or the Simonian Gnostics, Paul, Marcion, or another figure or community –, an issue that has produced diverse scholarly interpretations, even to this day.⁷⁹ Moreover, when approaching this search, which layer or hypothetical source is to be taken into consideration? The many answers offered in earlier *Pseudo-Clementine* scholarship are highly diverse, and exceed the scope of this contribu-

74 Siouville, "Introduction," 182.

75 Siouville, *Homélies clémentines*, 43 (with reference to Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire*, 207–212): "But even more likely, this doctrine had its source in Jewish Gnosticism, which thoroughly permeated early Christianity." [My translation]

76 Siouville, "Introduction," 184 and *Homélies clémentines*, 45.

77 Cf. *Hom.* 17.14–19.

78 Siouville, "Introduction," 195–196: "Jesus, the Prophet of Truth, is essentially an illuminator, not a redeemer in the Pauline sense." [My translation]

79 For the recent discussions on the hybrid and complex characterization of Simon Magus as arch-opponent (in the *Pseudo-Clementines*), rather than being merely a *persona* of one particular historical figure, see Côté, "La fonction littéraire" and Dominique Côté, "Simon Magus in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: 'magician' or philosopher?" in De Vos and Praet (eds.), *In Search of Truth*, 261–300.

tion.⁸⁰ Siouville, for his part, understands the *Kerygmata* as primarily anti-Pauline, with “Paul” opposed by “Peter.”⁸¹ For example, as Siouville argues, the *Clementine* True Prophet implies a refutation of Paul’s view on Jesus as Christ, but one must here understand the relevance of second-century Jewish-Christian anti-Paulinism, which is also directed against Marcionism. Siouville also regards the Jewish-Christian theory of the One God as a reaction against Marcionism.⁸² In this way, Siouville discusses the character of Simon Magus and what exactly can be found behind his *persona* or mask, in relation to Peter’s character. But where exactly does the motive of the discussion itself between the characters of Peter and Simon Magus issue from?

The *Praxeis Petrou* and the *Actus Vercellenses*

In his letter, Loisy criticizes Siouville for insufficient engagement regarding another hypothetical source: the *Praxeis Petrou*. Loisy posits that there must exist a link between the *Actus Vercellenses*, i.e., the Latin testimony of the *Acts of Peter*, and the *Pseudo-Clementines*. While Siouville indeed only briefly mentions that another version of the *Acts of Peter* served as one of the sources of *l’Écrit primitif*, other scholars had already extensively discussed this hypothetical source, be it in widely diverse ways. Lipsius was one of the first scholars to state that there must have been an Ebionite source, called the *Praxeis Petrou*, underlying both the *Actus Vercellenses* and the *Kerygmata*. According to Lipsius, this would be, therefore the oldest source underlying the *Pseudo-Clementine* dossier.⁸³ Thirty years later, Waitz argued that the *Praxeis*, again distinct from and older than the *Actus Vercellenses*, must have served as a source for the *Grundschrift* and for the extant *Acta Petri* by means of the addition of Paul as a character and the episode of Peter’s martyrdom.⁸⁴ The author of this older *Praxeis*, according to Waitz (and *contra* Lipsius), was a Catholic, from Antioch, who was active in the second decade of the third century.⁸⁵ Schmidt, in turn, rejected the existence of an older *Praxeis Petrou*: the *Grundschrift* author was indeed familiar with the *Acta Petri*, but

80 For an extensive overview, see Bremmer, “The *Pseudo-Clementines*: Texts, Dates” and De Vos, “Paideia, Plato’s Sophist”.

81 Siouville, “Introduction,” 195; see also *Homélie clémentine*, 55–56.

82 Siouville, “Introduction,” 200.

83 Lipsius, *Die Quellen*, 13ff.

84 Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, 188–202; for a change in his view, see Waitz “Die Pseudoklementinen,” 241–272.

85 Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, 238.

the originality of the reworking owes to the author of the *Grundschrift* himself.⁸⁶ Cullmann, on the other hand, came up with another original view. The *Actus Vercellenses* inspired the *Periodoi Petrou*, itself an early third-century reworking of the *Kerygmata*. Nowadays, it is assumed that the *Periodoi Petrou* was most likely the title of the *Grundschrift*, but Cullmann, thus, first distinguished the two: the *Grundschrift* author depended indirectly on the *Kerygmata* via the *Periodoi* and introduced the characters of Simon Magus and Clement of Rome. This *Periodoi*, as Cullmann continued, was probably less anti-Pauline and more anti-Simonian. The author was a Jewish-Christian, albeit influenced by “Catholic” doctrines.⁸⁷ Cullmann’s point of view was subsequently followed by later scholars such as Einar Molland (1908–1976).⁸⁸ Slightly earlier, in 1929, Siouville already accepted the existence of a *Praxeis Petrou*, without further defining this particular source. The French scholar only mentions that this source must be dated no later than the early third century.⁸⁹ In 1933, Siouville merely adds a brief clarification and argues the necessity of an intermediate document, whatever the exact title of the work must have been, between the *Kerygmata* and the *Grundschrift*: “un document intermédiaire, dans lequel les predications de l’apôtre étaient encadrées dans le récit de ses voyages.”⁹⁰ Nevertheless, as Loisy rightly underscores, Siouville does not elaborate on this particular point of view and its relation to the extant *Actus Vercellenses*.

⁸⁶ Schmidt, *Studien*, 65.

⁸⁷ Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire*, 112, 114–115, and 142.

⁸⁸ Einar Molland, “La circoncision, le baptême et l’autorité du décret apostolique (Actes XV, 28 sq.) dans les milieux judéo-chrétiens des Pseudo-Clémentines,” *Studia Theologica* 9 (1955), 1–39; see also Salles, “La diatribe,” 517 and 551. It is, however, Joseph Thomas, “Les Ébionites baptistes,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 30 (1934), 257–296, here 291, who refuted Cullmann’s view and stated that the *Periodoi* is to be considered the oldest layer of the *Pseudo-Clementines*, which served as source for the *Kerygmata*. The *Periodoi* are responsible for the narrative *Clementine* parts and originated within a Jewish-Christian community influenced by Essene doctrines, and the discursive parts of the *Clementines* goes back to the *Kerygmata*, which rather reflects a form of Elchasaite Ebionism. Later, Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1949), 58, stated that *Periodoi Petrou* is not really Ebionite, but rather a Catholic edition of the Ebionite *Kerygmata Petrou*, which is not Gnostic nor Baptist, as Cullmann had argued.

⁸⁹ Siouville, “Introduction,” 146.

⁹⁰ Siouville, *Homélies clémentines*, 12: “An intermediate document, in which the apostle’s teachings were framed within the account of his travels.” [My translation]

A few more hypothetical sources: the Jewish apology and the pagan novel

Of the four sources that Siouville put forth as possibly underlying the *Pseudo-Clementine Grundschrift*, the *Kerygmata* and the *Praxeis Petrou* are by far the most debated hypothetical ones in *Clementine* scholarship. Nowadays, most scholars refute their existence. The other two suggested sources, however, namely the *Jewish Apology* and a non-Christian novel have been generally accepted in recent scholarship, although some scholars are increasingly beginning to question them as well. Siouville, for his part, follows earlier and contemporary work closely. Cullmann, for instance, argued that the *Grundschrift* author combined the *Periodoi Petrou* with two additional sources: a *Jewish Apology against polytheism and fatalism* (originally including the characters Apion⁹¹, Annoubion, and Athenodorus in an active role) and a non-Christian novelistic framework centered on the Christian hero Clement. The *Homilist* would have followed the doctrines of this *Grundschrift* (re-using the *Jewish Apology* in *Hom.* 4–6), while the *Recognitionist* produced a more ‘orthodox’ version by downplaying several of those doctrinal elements and emphasizing the novelistic framework.⁹² Siouville, however, does not distinguish the *Periodoi* from the *Grundschrift*.

Regarding the Jewish apologetical work, Siouville locates its origin in Egypt and argues that it already featured figures such as Apion and Annubion – the *Egyptian Fools*, as Bremmer calls them in his insightful contribution on these two.⁹³ This source would have been used by the *Grundschrift* author (which is still to be noted in *Rec.* 9–10), as well as by the *Homilist* in the early fourth century,⁹⁴ for the incorporation of the passage of *Hom.* 4–6, which contains the discussions between Clement and Appion (with double *pp* in the *Homilies*) on the role of philosophy, rhetoric, mythology, or, in brief, *Greek paideia*. Siouville even suggests that this may be the oldest source of the *Clementine* corpus, dating to the second century, but, as he remarks, this source has been completely reworked by the later *Clementine*

91 In the *Pseudo-Clementine* tradition, we find “Apion”.

92 Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire*, here 98, 109; for a recent overview of the scholarship regarding the *Jewish apology*, see Benjamin M. J. De Vos, “The Role of the Homilistic Disputes with Appion (*Hom.* 4–6),” *Vigiliae Christianae* 73:1 (2019), 54–88.

93 Jan N. Bremmer, “Apion and Anoubion in the Homilies,” in Jan N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Pseudo-Clementines* [SECA 10] (Leuven: Peeters, 2010b), 72–91; reprinted in Bremmer, *Maidens*, 251–265.

94 Siouville, “Introduction,” 146; and *Homélies clémentines*, 27.

authors. As such, the two introductory letters of the *Epistula Petri* and the *Diamartyria*, preserve the oldest unaltered testimonies of the *Kerygmata* to be found within the *Clementine* oeuvre.

The final source suggested is a pagan novel incorporated into the *Grundschrift*. Again, following earlier scholarship, Siouville denies that the *Grundschrift* is an original Christian novel, viewing it instead as a compilation. The novelistic framework, moreover, serves an an entertaining fuction: “Mais a-t-il été créé par l'imagination de l'auteur de l'*Écrit primitif*? Assurément non.”⁹⁵ The pagan novelistic source itself would date to ca. 150–200, the time of the Antonine family (in particular Antoninus Pius),⁹⁶ since the names of several *Clementine* characters, such as Faustus, Faustianus, and Mattidia, may reflect this context.⁹⁷ In its original form, this novel likely featured Faustus as protagonist,⁹⁸ and with Clement absent any role.⁹⁹ While this view remains influential in studies of the ancient novel and early Christian narrative, recent *Pseudo-Clementine* scholarship increasingly credits the *Grundschrift* author with greater originality, treating it as a genuinely Christian ‘novel’.¹⁰⁰ Overall, Siouville adheres closely to the works of other *Pseudo-Clementine* specialists of his time, although he limits the possible sources to a list of four, without further elaborating on the relationship between the *Periodoi*, the *Kerygmata* and the *Grundschrift*.

However, the French scholar does offer a broader evaluation of the *Pseudo-Clementine* corpus for the history of early Christianity – a view he changed over the years. In 1929, Siouville argues that the Jewish-Christian doctrines, derived from the *Kerygmata*, were not to be accepted as an “expression autorisée du christianisme primitif,”¹⁰¹ and had not exercised influence on later dogma. Rather, these are early expressions of Jewish-Christian thought, but these were already to be considered outside of the ‘main Church,’ even qualifying the earliest *Pseudo-Clementine* thought as a regression rather than progress: “Loin de marquer un progrès quelconque, elles retardent sur toute

95 Siouville, “Introduction,” 156.

96 See also Bremmer, “The *Pseudo-Clementines*: Texts, Dates,” 5.

97 Siouville, “Introduction,” 146.

98 Siouville, “Introduction,” 156.

99 Siouville, *Homélies clémentines*, 20.

100 See F. Stanley Jones, “Eros and Astrology in the Περίοδοι Πέτρου,” in Jones, *Pseudo-clementina*, 114–137; De Vos and Praet, “The Pseudo-Clementines,” 22–24.

101 Siouville, “Introduction,” 204.

la ligne.”¹⁰² Interestingly, this particular view is abandoned in his 1931 and 1933 publications. In line with Cullmann’s 1930 study and the idea that the *Kerygmata* represents a witness to the transition of Jewish Gnosticism to the earliest Jewish-Christian Church of Jerusalem, Siouville revises his view regarding the value of the *Pseudo-Clementines* and the history of early Christianity: “Cette concluion [sic] est fort juste et nous ne pouvons qu’y souscrire.”¹⁰³ In his 1933 contribution, he also alters his original 1929 contribution:

Les Clémentines ont une double importance historique, l’une qui concerne le passé, et l’autre l’avenir. Par les *Cérygmes*, le document le plus ancien et le plus considérable qu’elles utilisent, elles nous font assister au passage du judaïsme, ou plus exactement du gnosticisme juif, au christianisme de la primitive Église de Jérusalem, dont l’Église judéo-chrétienne de Transjordanie et de Syrie a été l’héritière directe.¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, both in his 1929 and 1933 publications he consistently maintains the later *Pseudo-Clementine* layer, namely the *Homilies*, featuring so-called “traits choquants,” must have originated in peripheral regions such as then Transjordan, or in any case “quelque province écarté et arriérée”, far away from “la Grande Église” and from the large, intellectual centres where the Catholics were active. This remote region is defined by the presence of Baptist groups with a Gnostic character, such as Ebionites and Elchesaites: “là, elles étaient dans leur véritable patrie.”¹⁰⁵ In other words, such doctrines

102 Siouville, “Introduction,” 204: “Far from marking any kind of progress, they set things back in every respect.” [My translation]

103 Siouville, “Oscar Cullmann,” 168.

104 Siouville, *Homélies clémentines*, 63: “The *Clementines* possess a dual historical significance: one pertaining to the past, and the other to the future. Through the *Kerygmata*, the oldest and most substantial document they employ, they allow us to witness the transition from Judaism – or more precisely, from Jewish Gnosticism – to the Christianity of the early Church of Jerusalem, of which the Judeo-Christian Church of Transjordan and Syria was the direct heir.” [My translation]

105 Siouville, “Introduction,” 204; also *Homélies clémentines*, 63. In the meantime, the *Homilist* is increasingly considered as having been active within the vibrant context of an intellectual centre such as Antioch, Apamea, or Edessa, where ongoing discussions concerning Jewish-Christian relations were prevalent, in addition to Christological debates and the role of *paideia*. It is striking that Siouville does not so much elaborate on the possible Arian character of the *Homilist* and that he rather ignores the possible contemporary debates. It was Bigg, “The Clementine Homilies,” 167 and 191–192, who had already argued that several of the discussions about God should be understood within an Arian context, for example in relation to the *homoousios*-debate. He did, however, consider the *Homilist* as a Catholic converted to Ebionism, who then intervened in such Arian debates. Several years later, Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*,

could only still play a role in the fourth century in remote regions, away from the “Catholic” centres of power. The same applies to the *Grundschrift*. In his review of Schmidt's work, Siouville clarifies:

Nous avons peine aujourd'hui à comprendre cet éclectisme bizarre; mais il faut nous reporter à l'époque où le livre a été composé, vers 220–230, surtout dans les pays écartés comme la Transjordanie, le christianisme n'avait pas encore pris les lignes arrêtées qu'il eut un siècle plus tard, après le concile de Nicée.¹⁰⁶

It must be stated that the shift in his evaluation has significant implications for the relationship between the *Pseudo-Clementines* and “Christianisme primitive”, though Siouville does not fully explore them. The question remains as to whether his change of view was solely due to Cullmann's influence or also driven by broader ideological considerations. I will return to this matter in the next section of this contribution.

In assessing the contribution of Siouville's studies to *Pseudo-Clementine* scholarship, it is worth noting a second aspect he considers significant, namely the relevance of the *Homilies* for the history of Islam.

Saint Pierre et Mahomet!

Siouville offers a thought-provoking perspective on the possible reception of the Jewish-Christian doctrines of the oldest layers of the *Pseudo-Clementines* and their value to the history of religions. He suggests a link between the *Clementine* doctrines and the emergence of Islam: “Saint Pierre et Mahomet!

368–70, stated that the *Homilist* was an Arian of Syrian origin, who aimed to solve Christological problems by examining Jewish-Christian Gnostic doctrines. Thus, Bigg and Waitz were in essence attempting to understand Jewish-Christian ideas about the role of Christ and God in the *Clementine* corpus in context of Arianism. At the time, there were also several dissenting voices who argued that Jewish-Christian thought present in the *Pseudo-Clementine* literature should not be understood within an Arian context, but rather as a product of a pre-Nicene, Jewish-Christian author (see Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire*, 161). Siouville does not elaborate on this.

106 Siouville also confirms his agreement with Schmidt's point of view in his review of the latter's work: see Siouville, “Carl Schmidt – Studien zu den Pseudo-Clementinen,” *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 101 (1930), 79–82, here 82: “Today we find it difficult to comprehend this peculiar eclecticism; but we must refer back to the period in which the book was composed, around 220–230, particularly in remote regions such as Transjordan, Christianity had not yet assumed the fixed forms it would take a century later, after the Council of Nicaea.” [My translation]

Voilà assurément deux noms qui jurent d'être associés."¹⁰⁷ In particular, he points to the absence of Trinitarian reflection, the emphasis on the absolute unity and monarchy of God, teachings on final Judgment, heaven and hell, the idea that Jesus should not be considered a god, and Peter's stress on good deeds and daily purifying baths: these elements, he argues, influenced early Islamic thought.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, Muhammad's recognition of Jesus as a prophet, while presenting himself as successor to Moses and Jesus, further reflects this convergence.

Siouville does not claim a direct relationship between the *Pseudo-Clementines* and Muhammad, nor that the latter had read the *Pseudo-Clementines*. Rather, he proposes that the oldest, Jewish-Christian *Pseudo-Clementine* layer, the *Kerygmata*, originated near Arabia and influenced the very rise of Islam in "l'Orient sémitique"¹⁰⁹ In this, he follows earlier insights of Adolf Harnack, who had argued that: "Als Religionssystem basirt der Islam z. Th. auf dem synkretistischen Judenchristenthum."¹¹⁰ Siouville writes: "C'est en ce sens seulement qu'on peut affirmer que les Clémentines ont été l'une des sources de l'Islam et que le saint Pierre qu'elles mettent en scène a été un précurseur de Mahomet."¹¹¹

At the same time, Siouville's formulation reflects a latent negative appreciation. The French scholar presents this earliest *Clementine* and Jewish-Christian thinking as an active force within an otherwise passive East ("dans l'immobilité de l'Orient sémitique").¹¹² His evolving interpretation of the *Kerygmata* and the older expressions of Jewish-Christianity also affected his view of Islam's origins, the consequences of which he did not discuss in his studies. In 1929, Siouville still considers the Jewish-Christian character an unauthorized and regressive form of primitive Christianity, heading in an alternative direction from Christian dogmatic thinking. By 1933, this

107 Siouville, "Introduction," 200–202, here 200; see also *Homélie clémentine*, 59–62, here 59: "Saint Peter and Muhammad! These are certainly two names that seem ill-suited to be associated." [My translation]

108 Siouville, "Introduction," 201.

109 Siouville, "Introduction," 202.

110 Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 265, note 1.

111 "It is only in this sense that one can assert that the *Clementines* were among the sources of Islam, and that the Saint Peter they portray was a forerunner of Muhammad." [My translation]

112 Siouville, "Introduction," 204.

particular view had disappeared, likely under the influence of Cullmann's views, though without further elaboration, partly due to Siouville's death.

Regardless, his implied view of a connection between (*Clementine*) Jewish-Christian thought and the rise of Islam has continued to surface in later scholarship. In his review of Siouville's work, Henri-Charles Puech (1902–1986) conforms to his view and even proposed two intermediate stages: first, the Coptic *Apocalypse of Nicotheus* and, second, Manichaeism, with Mani and Muhammad showing similarities regarding the notions of the True Apostle of Light and the True Prophet.¹¹³ Although this hypothesis is no longer widely accepted, a few subsequent scholars have explored related possibilities, including the influence of *Clementine* ideas of the True Prophet on later Shiism¹¹⁴ or the impact of texts such as the *Homilies* and the *Didascalia* on the environment in which Islam emerged.¹¹⁵ Given the thought-provoking but still suggestive nature of Siouville's insight, a nuanced study remains warranted regarding the connection between the *Pseudo-Clementines* and Islamic thought, particularly, I add here, one that also considers Arabic translations of the *Pseudo-Clementines* and their interaction with later Islamic thought.¹¹⁶ This, be it broader than Siouville initially intended, represents perhaps the only original legacy left of his work within *Pseudo-Clementine* scholarship. However, I here aim to highlight his efforts to render the *Homilies* accessible to a wider audience and estimate it as highly commendable in the context of the 1930s, since the *Pseudo-Clementines* were then, and still are, too often shrouded in the mysteries of complex theories and hypothetical assumptions. Nevertheless, they are, however, thought-provoking with respect to the history of Christianity of the first four centuries, as well as its aftermath.

113 Henri-Charles Puech, review of "*Les Homélie clémentines, première traduction française avec une introduction et des notes par A. Siouville*," *Revue critique d'histoire et de littérature* 102 (1935), 53–56, here 55–56.

114 Cf. Alain Le Boulluec, "La doctrine du Vrai Prophète dans les Écrits pseudo-clémentins," in Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi et al. (eds.), *L'Ésotérisme Shi'ite, ses racines et ses prolongements* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 139–162.

115 See, esp., Shelomoh Pines, "Notes on Islam and on Arabic Christianity and Judaeo-Christianity," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 4 (1984), 135–152.

116 See, e.g., Giovanni DiRusso, "From Mournful Mattidia to Mitradora the Philosopher: Family Recognitions, Authority, and Believability Across Arabic *Pseudo-Clementine* Literature," in Benjamin M. J. De Vos (ed.), *To Believe or Not to Believe? Reading Hermeneutics and Strategies of Truth(fulness) and Believability in Premodern Christian Narrative* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2026), 171–196.

Now that I have clarified the *Forschungsgeschichte* of the *Homilies*, A. Siouville's position therein, and Loisy's remarks regarding Siouville's work, it is time to turn to the ideological complexities behind Loisy's curious testimony on "A. Siouville" and "Marcion."

3. The Siouville-Marcion Puzzle. Critical Scholarship of Early Christianity in France During the Late 1920s and Early 1930s

Scholarly correspondence is almost always regarded as a strictly private space of exchange. While this may be true for certain files, many of them can better be understood as a semi-private mode of communication. Both Loisy and Canet were aware that their letters might circulate beyond their immediate context. They also sufficiently recognized the potential historical value to be gleaned through the preservation of these documents for posterity. Loisy (and presumably also Canet) knew the identity behind the pseudonym A. Siouville but decided not to disclose it to possible third parties, likely out of respect for the personal decision of the author of the *Homélie Pseudo-Clémentine*, but it is reasonable to assume that there was another, ideological reason at play. The early 1930s observed a resurgence in anti-scientific ecclesiastical sanctions against Catholic scholars who critically investigated the Christian tradition, be it historically, theologically, or philosophically. This section of this paper will demonstrate that Loisy cautiously aimed to shield the priest behind the A. Siouville pseudonym against the censure and condemnations which he himself had experienced: an understandable concern, given that only three years earlier, another Catholic priest, the one mockingly labelled "Marcion" in Loisy's letter, had been excommunicated for his allegedly "anti-Christian and antireligious"¹¹⁷ studies of early Christianity and the early Church. In the defamation campaign leading to this excommunication, "Marcion" was wrongly accused of being A. Siouville. This polemical and erroneous connection has since proved particularly persistent.

117 Louis Saltet, "L'œuvre théologique pseudonyme de M. l'abbé J. Turmel," *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 30 (1929), 165–182, here 170. On Louis Saltet, one of the main accusers of "Marcion", see the next section of this part.

**"Des considérations très respectables de prudence et de décence":
the Modernist Crisis in the Catholic Church**

In his review of Siouville's *Homélies*, leading Sorbonne Professor of History of Christianity Charles Guignebert (1867–1939) declared to have known the then already deceased author quite well. The chosen path of anonymity, Guignebert wrote, was the result of both moral considerations and reasons of caution: "Des considérations très respectables de prudence et de décence l'obligeaient à voiler son nom, par ailleurs avantageusement apprécié par les christianisants."¹¹⁸ That we are indeed dealing with a public Christian figure has long been confirmed by the late Émile Poulat, who correctly linked the pseudonym to Catholic priest Auguste Lelong.¹¹⁹

Auguste Lelong (1855–1933) began his ecclesiastical studies at the Saint-Sulpice seminar in Paris but was forced to finish them in Montréal due to anti-congregationist hostilities under the young Third Republic. An ordained priest since 1883 and an *agrégé de l'Université* since 1893, he began teaching at the *Faculté des lettres* of the *Institut catholique* in Paris until his appointment as vicar of several Parisian parishes in 1896, a position of sufficient leisure for him to enable his pursuit of his research into early Christianity. A fine Hellenist, Lelong published two text editions and translations under his own name in the collection of Hemmer and Lejay *Textes et documents pour l'étude historique du christianisme*, the first of the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp (1910), and the second of *The Shepherd of Hermas* (1912).¹²⁰ At about the

118 Charles Guignebert, review of "A. Siouville, *Les Homélies clémentines*," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 112 (1935), 308: "Very respectable considerations of prudence and propriety compelled him to conceal his name, which was otherwise held in high esteem by Christian scholars." [My translation]

119 Émile Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique dans la crise moderniste* (Paris: Casterman, 1979 [1962]), 660. See also Émile Poulat, review of "Christian Jambet (ed.), *Les Homélies clémentines. Traduction et introduction d'André Siouville*," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 87:1 (1992), 224–227; this incisive review of the 1991 re-edition of A. Siouville's *Homélies* provides more detailed biographical information on which this briefer account is based (A. Siouville, *Les Homélies Clémentines*, introd. Par C. Jambet [Lagrasse: Verdier, 1991]). Sadly, Poulat did not mention the specific sources ("les documents en ma possession") that allowed him to establish the Siouville-Lelong link. There is no doubt, however, that the link is correct, as we will see *infra*. In his review, Poulat rebuked the editor of the 1991 re-edition, Christian Jambet, for having mentioned the name of "André Siouville" on the cover, while the first name "André" was never actually part of the pseudonym.

120 Auguste Lelong, *Ignace d'Antioche et Polycarpe de Smyrne* (Paris: Picard, 1910) and Auguste Lelong, *Le Pasteur d'Hermas* (Paris: Picard, 1912).

same time, however, he also began publishing under the pseudonym A. Siouville. Besides the already mentioned translations of the *Philosophumena* and the *Homilies*, particular mention should be made of the articles and volumes published by the French masonic journal *Le Symbolisme*, including the translation of *Les Vers d'Or de Pythagore*¹²¹ and historical-critical studies of ancient Christianity. In the latter, Lelong travelled along the contemporaneously less-trodden scholarly paths of gnosticism,¹²² the early Christian beliefs in the devil, and the dogma of original sin, which his volumes sought to introduce to an educated freemason audience. Another second set of A. Souville's articles, written for specialists, was published in the widely reputed *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (RHR), among which are several reviews and the article on the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* discussed above.¹²³

Regarding the publications in *Le Symbolisme*, subtitled *Organe du Mouvement universel de régénération initiatique de la franc-maçonnerie*, the reason why a Catholic priest should prefer anonymity is evident. The journal was founded and led by the Swiss occultist Oswald Wirth (1860–1943), who moved to France and who became an important personality in French freemasonry due to his involvement in its ritual and spiritual reform. Wirth was among the category of practitioners who had developed a scholarly interest in the history and development of esoteric symbolism with the purpose of putting such knowledge to spiritual use.¹²⁴ A close friend of Lelong, Wirth invited him to write for his journal, sometimes even commissioning specific studies such as one about the devil, *Le Prince de ce monde*.¹²⁵ Biographical information on Lelong being scanty, it is unknown to us whether he himself was an initiate, but collaboration with this journal would certainly have deemed him as such by his Catholic superiors.

121 A. Siouville, *Les Vers d'or de Pythagore* (Paris: Collection du 'Symbolisme', 1913).

122 A. Siouville, "Deux Hymnes gnostiques," *Le Symbolisme* (1914); and "Le Gnosticisme," *Le Symbolisme* (1923).

123 Siouville, "Introduction"; "Carl Schmidt"; "Oscar Cullmann".

124 On Wirth, see the detailed article by André Combes, "Oswald Wirth, du GODF à la GLSE, de la GLSE à la GLDF (1884–1914)," *Chroniques d'histoire maçonnique* 78 (2016), 29–55.

125 First published as an article (A. Siouville, "Le Prince de ce Monde," *Le Symbolisme* [1923]), the study was later republished together with a study of the history of original sin, with a preface and introduction of Wirth as A. Siouville, *Le Prince de ce monde et le péché originel* (Paris: Collection du 'Symbolisme', 1925).

If the reason is now clear as to why Lelong published pseudonymously in *Le Symbolisme*, this would have been less the case to a 21st century reader with respect to his volumes on the *Philosophumena* and the *Homilies* as well as the *RHR* articles. A short digression on the intellectual climate in the early 20th century Catholic Church is here required to grasp the relevant historical context, although this only offers limited explanatory power concerning Lelong's own reasons.

In the late 19th century, a heterogeneous group of Catholic biblical scholars, historians, and philosophers more or less simultaneously called for a theological and institutional renewal of the Church and its dogmas in light of modern scientific and philosophical insights. This loose and uncoordinated movement later came to be known as Roman Catholic Modernism, a term coined by the encyclical letter *Pascendi dominici gregis*.¹²⁶ Issued by Pius X in 1907, this encyclical intentionally misrepresented "Modernism" as a well-structured and coordinated group of scholars, a "synthesis of all heresies" aiming to destroy the Church from within. Alfred Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église* (1902)¹²⁷ is widely considered the catalyst of the Modernist crisis. Loisy had received his first introduction in biblical criticism from Louis Duchesne and Ernest Renan, and through personal reading further acquainted himself with the historical-critical methods developed in liberal-Protestant biblical exegesis.¹²⁸ Drawing on those very same methods, *L'Évangile et l'Église* offered a reply to Adolf Harnack's widely influential essay on *Das Wesen des Christentums*

126 Research literature on Roman Catholic Modernism, and its individual national protagonists, is vast. Poulat's "*Histoire, dogme et critique*" remains essential. Other important studies include Gabriel Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence: A Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Darrell Jodock (ed.), *Catholicism Contending with Modernity: Roman Catholic Modernism and Anti-Modernism in Historical Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Alfonso Botti and Rocco Cerrato (eds.), *Il modernismo tra cristianità e secolarizzazione* (Urbino: Quattro Venti, 2000); Harvey Hill, *The Politics of Modernism* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2002); Arnold Claus and Giacomo Losito, *La Censure d'Alfred Loisy (1903). Les documents des congrégations de l'Index et du Saint-Office* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009); Charles J. T. Talar (ed.), *Modernists and Mystics* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2009); Giacomo Losito and Charles J. T. Talar (eds.), *Modernisme, mystique, mysticisme* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017).

127 Alfred Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église* (Paris: Picard, 1902).

128 Loisy was also a fine Assyriologist. On this lesser-known component of his scholarly activities, see Jeffrey Morrow, *Alfred Loisy & Modern Biblical Studies* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2018).

(1900).¹²⁹ Loisy strategically represented his reply as an apology on behalf of Catholicism with respect to Harnack's Protestant take on the birth of Christianity and the New Testament sources, but in reality his own account of the Christian origins especially challenged the historical truth of the Catholic dogmas while his underlying developmental approach to the history of Christianity was diametrically opposed to the official neothomistic philosophy of religion then promoted by the Church. *L'Évangile et l'Église* was listed in the Index of Forbidden Books in 1903, and five years later, Loisy was issued with the "vitandus" excommunication.¹³⁰

Subsequent repressive anti-Modernist measures issued under Pius X (including an obligatory anti-Modernist oath decreed in 1910) created a fearful climate that severely constrained critical Catholic scholarship for many decades to come. Although anti-Modernist repression somewhat diminished during and after WWI, conservative anti-scientific forces in the Church remained dominant throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1932, shortly after the publication of his autobiography, Loisy saw his entire oeuvre being put on the Index, and yet another condemnation of his post-1932 publications followed in 1938. In 1935, Loisy warned Canet to be careful when sending postcards instead of sealed letters, as the local post office was not to be trusted and insufficient caution on their own part with respect to the identities of critical Catholic scholars could cause harm. Canet himself was not a priest, but was instead a Catholic high official at the national administration who was close to several of the Modernists.¹³¹

129 Adolf von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1900). See Jan N. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity through the Eyes of Gibbon, Harnack and Rodney Stark* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2010), 1, where in his insightful retirement lecture from the chair of Religious Studies at the University of Groningen, he calls Adolf (von) Harnack "the greatest historian of early Christianity of all time."

130 One year later, he was symbolically elected to the *Collège de France*. On his long and fruitful second career as an independent scholar: Annelies Lannoy, *Alfred Loisy and the Making of History of Religions* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020).

131 After his studies in classical philology, Canet studied under Louis Duchesne at the *École française de Rome*. Actively involved in the French embassy in Rome during WWI, he broke off his promising scholarly career after the war to enter French diplomacy, much to the regret of Loisy. He was an important consultant on religious affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1920 and 1946 and was nominated to the *Conseil d'État* in 1929. Canet played a key role under the later Vichy regime and was profoundly involved in the Jewish question. No intellectual biography of Canet is as yet available. See Bruno Neveu, "Louis Canet et le service de conseiller technique pour les affaires religieuses au ministère des Affaires étrangères, 1921–1946," *Revue d'histoire*

This anti-Modernist climate – which stimulated pseudonymous and anonymous writing¹³² – helps explain why Loisy avoided naming Lelong. However, it remains much more difficult to establish its role in Lelong's decision to publish his specialized studies on the *Philosophumena* and the *Homilies* pseudonymously. As I have discussed in the first part of this paper, these publications were rather uncontroversial in nature when compared against contemporary scholarship. Neither the content of the *Philosophumena*, nor that of the *Homilies*, seems sufficiently “dangerous” in and of itself – or at least Siouville did not spin it out any further – to be able to trigger anti-Modernist sanctions which, in any case, were most often directed towards critical studies of the canonical biblical texts.

While Lelong's reported timid personality may have played a role,¹³³ perhaps preferring the quiet life of his vicariate over the more public nature of academic life, this remains pure speculation. What is clear, by contrast, is that his *Philosophumena* volume and articles within the *RHR* eventually did attract conservative Catholic hostility due to its incorrect association with another figure: Joseph “Marcion” Turmel.

The Siouville-Turmel Affair: A Late Round of the Modernist Crisis (1929–1930)

That Loisy was reminded of “Marcion” when writing about Siouville in 1935 was far from coincidental. “Marcion” is a mock nickname for the Catholic priest and historian of early Christianity, Joseph Turmel (1859–1943), excommunicated “vitandus” in 1930 for his critical studies on patristics, dogma, Church history, and biblical studies – the latter including a number of studies on the alleged Marcionite origins of the New Testament.¹³⁴ Turmel had already lost his faith some years before the Modernist movement gained momen-

diplomatique 2 (1968), 1–47, for a detailed biographical account, but note however that this requires completion in the form of the addition of the critical study on Canet's Vichy period recently published in *Le Monde*: Franck Johannès, “Les pratiques zélées du Conseil d'État vis-à-vis des juifs sous le régime de Vichy,” *Le Monde* (6 February 2024), https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2024/02/06/les-pratiques-zelees-du-conseil-d-etat-vis-a-vis-des-juifs-sous-le-regime-de-vichy_6214973_3224.html (accessed 8 August 2024).

132 See the pioneering study in Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique*, 621–677.

133 Guignebert, “A. Siouville,” 308, and Poulat, “Christian Jambet,” 226.

134 The fact that Loisy's letter mentions Turmel's close friend, abbé Adrien Pautonnier (1853–1943), director of the *Collège Stanislas* in Paris, represents further proof that “Marcion” is Turmel.

tum. This happened after “a protracted and painful struggle”¹³⁵ to reconcile faith and reason. As Charles Talar points out, Turmel differs somewhat from other “Modernist” scholars like Loisy: rather than seeking to renew Catholic dogma through historical criticism, he sought to historically deconstruct the very notion of dogma itself.¹³⁶ In that sense, he proved less naïve than Loisy, who only fully recognized the incompatibility of a Catholic historical-critical science of religion after his excommunication. Although a freethinker, Turmel continued to wear the soutane and to give Mass on Sundays after his excommunication.¹³⁷ His biography illustrates the struggles and paradoxes faced by many of the critical Catholic scholars of his time, whose long religious beliefs clashed with the results of their research.

Following the condemnation of several of his historical studies (e.g., on angelology¹³⁸) in 1901, Turmel resorted to pseudonymous writing. He also soon extended this strategy to the New Testament study and the historiography of the origins of Christianity.¹³⁹ In the late 1920s, Turmel had been identified as the author behind no less than 15 pseudonyms, the only incorrect identification being that of A. Siouville. Since Loisy’s letter represents a new evidence that Siouville and Turmel “Marcion” were not the same author, I want to add a few words on the “Siouville-Turmel” affair. It should be stated clearly, though, that none of Siouville’s publications on the *Pseudo-Clementines* contributed to the vilification campaign that led to Turmel’s excommunication on November 6, 1930.

135 Charles J. T. Talar, “Introduction,” in Charles J. T. Talar and Elizabeth Emery (trans. and ed.), *“Martyr to the Truth”: The Autobiography of Joseph Turmel* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), xi–xxiii, here ix.

136 Turmel amply describes his religious and intellectual “deconversion” from the Church in his autobiography: Joseph Turmel, *“Martyr to the Truth.” The Autobiography of Joseph Turmel*. Trans. by Charles J. T. Talar and Elizabeth Emery (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012) [initially 2 volumes, 1934 and 1939]. For a necessary introduction to any historiographical use of this autobiography, see Charles J. T. Talar, “Multiple Identities: Joseph Turmel, *Moderniste Démasqué*,” in Lawrence Barmann and Harvey Hill (eds.), *Personal Faith and Institutional Commitments* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2002), 67–89.

137 Talar, “Introduction,” xxii.

138 Joseph Turmel, “Histoire de l’angélologie des temps apostoliques à la fin du Ve siècle,” *Revue d’histoire et de littérature religieuses* 3 (1898), 289–308, 407–434, 533–552.

139 Turmel, *“Martyr”*, 73: “Up until the end of 1901, fighting without a mask I had avoided not only direct attacks against dogma, but certain bold statements likely to scandalize narrow minds.”

Protagonists of the campaign against Turmel were Louis Saltet (1898–1946) and Jean Rivière (1878–1946), the former a Benedictine professor of ecclesiastical history at the *Institut catholique* in Toulouse and the latter a priest and professor of systematic theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Strasbourg. While the details of Turmel's final unmasking need not concern us here, it may be useful to mention that Saltet had already identified Turmel as the author behind the articles signed by Antoine Dupin and Guillaume Herzog as early as 1908. The Dupin-Herzog articles had been published in Loisy's *Revue de l'histoire et de littérature religieuses* (RHRL) over the course of 1906 and 1907, in addition to the Dupin articles on the history of the dogma of Trinity, and the Herzog article on the history of the Virginity of Mary, all of them, in Turmel's own words, "lethal to dogmas."¹⁴⁰ Turmel vividly denied Saltet's accusations and was temporarily let off the hook due to insufficient proof.

After the RHRL was suspended in 1907 pursuant to anti-Modernist measures, Loisy relaunched the journal in 1910, now as professor of history of religions at the *Collège de France*. Turmel immediately resumed his collaboration, using ten new pseudonyms between 1910 and the RHRL's final issue of 1922. The RHR was Turmel's other intellectual haven. Of particular relevance here is that Turmel alias "Henri Delafosse" penned a positive review of A. Siouville's *Philosophumena* in 1928, while Siouville had done the same in 1927 for Delafosse's translation and study *Lettres d'Ignace d'Antioche*, a corpus with which Lelong was well familiar.¹⁴¹ Moreover, both works appeared in the same series, *Les textes du Christianisme*, edited by Paul-Louis Couchoud with Rieder.

The hunt for Turmel was relaunched in the 1920s, and produced this time decisive proof for him being Dupin-Herzog. Unexpectedly, the decisive piece of evidence came from the camp that had supported Turmel's pseudonymous publications: it was a postcard of Turmel's, found within the correspondence

¹⁴⁰ Turmel, "Martyr," 98.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Lelong, *Ignace d'Antioche*; Henri Delafosse, "Hippolyte de Rome – *Philosophumena* ou *Réfutation de toutes les hérésies*, première traduction française par A. Siouville," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 98 (1928), 144–149 and Siouville, "Lettres d'Ignace d'Antioche, traduction nouvelle avec une introduction et des notes par Henri Delafosse," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 96 (1927), 413–417. An interesting detail here is that this 1927 review was not signed A. Siouville but Auguste Siouville. It is ironic that precisely this review – which could more easily be traced back to Auguste Lelong – constituted a major element of Saltet's argumentation for the Turmel identification.

of Paul Lejay (1861–1920), a respected Latinist at the *Institut catholique* in Paris, friend of Loisy's, and silent secretary of the first series of the *RHLR* between 1896 and 1907.¹⁴² While not involved in the Modernist crisis himself, Lejay was close to several of its French protagonists. His untimely death in 1920 prevented him from safely securing his received correspondence, which resulted in it falling into the hands of the ultraconservative rector of the *Institut catholique*, later cardinal Alfred Baudrillart (1859–1942).¹⁴³ Stored in the archives of the archdiocese of Paris, the postcard finally came to Saltet's attention in 1922¹⁴⁴ and revealed Turmel instructing Lejay to substitute Herzog's name for Dupin's for the articles on *Sainte Vierge dans l'histoire*, explaining that he did not think Dupin was "secret enough".¹⁴⁵

Finally in 1929, Saltet published a series of articles attributing 14 pseudonyms to Turmel.¹⁴⁶ Since material proof existed only for Herzog and Dupin, the remaining identifications relied largely on a malign *argumentum ex silentio*. Saltet had explicitly asked the publishers of the concerned journals and book series to take a public position on any one of the pseudonyms they knew was not his. Unsurprisingly, none of them heeded the call, proving, thus Saltet, his hypothesis. Saltet only added the A. Siouville pseudonym in a later article dated 1929.¹⁴⁷ The reason for this, Saltet explained, was a personal communication which a befriended priest had purportedly received from Couchoud concerning the *Philosophumena* author being the same as that of several other volumes in his *Christianisme* series, or in other words, Turmel.¹⁴⁸ This time, Couchoud did take up the invitation to defend his author. Couchoud's letters of protest were published in the *Bulletin de*

142 On the first series of the *Revue* and the role of Lejay, see Annelies Lannoy, "Envoyez-nous votre taurobole...": Franz Cumont, Paul Lejay and the *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* (1896–1907)," *Forum Romanum Belgicum* 12 (2015), 1–19.

143 The sad fate of the Lejay papers represented a wake-up call to several of those previously involved within Modernism, Loisy for one. He commented on the Lejay affair in letters to Cumont, cf. Lannoy, Bonnet and Praet, "*Mon Cher Mithra...*," I, 387.

144 See Turmel, "*Martyr*," 143 for the full account of how this happened.

145 Turmel, "*Martyr*," 140.

146 The list is given in Saltet, "L'œuvre théologique pseudonyme".

147 Louis Saltet, "L'œuvre pseudonyme et le silence de M. J. Turmel," *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 30 (1929), 213–223, here 223, note 21.

148 Louis Saltet, "Le silence de MM. Couchoud, Dussaud et Loisy sur J. Turmel," *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 31 (1930), 31–36, here 35–36, elaborates on the nature of this communication.

littérature ecclésiastique of the *Institut catholique* in Toulouse, the *Revue apologétique*, and the more widely read *Mercure de France* in 1929 and 1930. A highly public polemical dispute ensued during which Saltet and Rivière (who largely summarized Saltet's findings in the *Revue apologétique*) firmly adhered to the Turmel-Siouville link while changing tactics. On the one hand, they adduced thin analyses of alleged linguistic similarities, while on the other, they pointed to the joint link with Couchoud's series and to the mutual Delafosse-Siouville reviews, which were considered a strategic move on Turmel's part to avert discovery.

Even after Turmel eventually admitted responsibility for 14 of the listed pseudonyms, while explicitly denying authorship of Siouville, his accusers remained unconvinced.¹⁴⁹ According to Rivière, Turmel had only denied the Siouville identification to protect the venerable *RHR* editors, embarrassed by having published reciprocal reviews of Delafosse-Siouville as if they were two authors instead of one.¹⁵⁰ Strikingly, the content of Siouville's works played little role in the many and lengthy articles of Saltet and Rivière. In a declaration sent to his archbishop and later reproduced in his autobiography, Turmel himself rightly pointed out that these publications were harmless from an ideological point of view: "The book [i.e., *Philosophumena*] published under this pseudonym being irreproachable with respect to orthodoxy, I have no interest in rejecting its authorship", and adding later that "it sufficed to read *Philosophumena* edited by this scholar to realize the accuracy of my declaration."¹⁵¹ Only after this claim did critics begin searching for anti-Catholic criticisms within Siouville's *Philosophumena*. The introduction, Rivière subsequently asserted in 1931: "est une histoire de l'Église et de la théologie romaine primitive dirigée tout entière contre l'autorité de la tradition et strictement conforme au schéma polémique emprunté à M. Turmel par 'L. Coulange', un de ses pseudonymes avérés."¹⁵² No specific arguments for this alleged unorthodox content were provided. The same is true for

149 Turmel did so in a declaration sent to the archbishop in 1930, which was published in the conservative Jesuit newspaper *La Civiltà Cattolica*: "La catastrofe del caso Turmel et i metodi del modernism critico," *La Civiltà Cattolica* (1930), 434–445, here 442–443.

150 Jean Rivière, "Autour des aveux de M. Turmel," *Revue apologétique: doctrine et faits religieux* LII (1931), 176–187, here 178.

151 Turmel, "Martyr," 164–165.

152 Rivière, "Autour des aveux," 177.

Siouville's 1929 article on the *Homilies*, which receives first mention in the polemic only in 1931, when Turmel's fate had already been sealed.¹⁵³

Interestingly, a Catholic reviewer later on even recommend Siouville's 1933 volume in the ultraconservative *Revue apologétique* that had published Rivière's earlier allegations against Turmel.¹⁵⁴ The reviewer did regret, though, that Siouville's volume had been published within a collection that was "une machine de guerre contre l'Église catholique."¹⁵⁵ To fully grasp the Siouville-Turmel affair and its polarized ideological context, further attention is required to this collection and its editor.

"Before the Altar of Panmarcionism"¹⁵⁶: Turmel, Lelong, and the Radical School of Couchoud

Despite Turmel's disavowal and Couchoud's public statements, the polemical Turmel-Siouville identification proved to be tenacious.¹⁵⁷ Its initial proponents relied primarily on the mutual *RHR* reviews and on the fact that Siouville could be linked to the same social-scientific network as Turmel

153 Rivière, "Autour des aveux," 178: "De fait, la signature d'A. Siouville' vient de reparaitre dans la Revue de l'histoire des religions, au bas d'une étude sur les homélies pseudo-clémentines, et rien n'empêche que cette fiction ou toute autre puisse indéfiniment se renouveler." As far as I know, this is the only mention of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* in the Siouville-Turmel affair. That it appears only late in the vilification campaign against Turmel is due to the fact that at the time, the volumes of the *RHR* were published with a year's delay.

154 Gustave Bardy, "Chronique d'Histoire des origines chrétiennes," *Revue apologétique* 59 (1934), 96–112, here 104: "son ouvrage [i.e., of A. Siouville] rendra service."

155 Bardy, "Chronique d'Histoire," 104: "A war machine against the Catholic Church." [My translation]

156 This sarcastic phrase is taken from Louis Saltet, "Suite du supplement théologique aux Supercheries littéraires dévoilées de M. J. Quérard," *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 31 (1930), 124–141, here 128.

157 It has survived even Poulat's scientific rectification of 1962, though most scholars nowadays assign the pseudonym to its right owner. Notable exceptions include Jean-Claude Polet, "Turmel (Joseph)," in Jean-Claude Polet (ed.), *Patrimoine littéraire européen. Index Général* (Bruxelles: De Boeck Université, 2000), 577, which establishes a wrong link between A. Siouville's edition of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* and the article which Turmel had published on the "Homélie clémentine" in the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, 1 Feb. 1905, the latter article not even being on the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*. Another example is Bernard Pouderon, "Clément de Rome, Flavius Clemens et le Clément juif," in Philippe Luisier, S. J. (ed.), *Studi su Clemente Romano. Atti degli incontri* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2003), 197–218, here 206, note 27.

"Delafosse," "Coulange," etc. In this one particular regard, Saltet and Rivière were proven correct.

At the core of the rationalist network with which both Lelong and Turmel had links was Paul-Louis Couchoud (1879–1959), a former physician of Anatole France, poet, Japan lover, self-made specialist on early Christianity, and, most importantly: leading representative in France of the then modestly popular theory that Jesus had never been a historical figure.¹⁵⁸ In the early 1920s, Couchoud established intellectual relationships – of differing intensity and duration – with several (former) Modernist priests, including Loisy, Turmel, but also Albert Houtin (1867–1926) and Prosper Alfarc (1876–1955), who had both turned to rationalism after their deconversion. As editor of the series *Christianisme* and *Textes du Christianisme* with the leftist publisher Rieder, Couchoud clearly sought to unite these and other critical voices in the field of the history of Christianity. While some volumes in the Couchoud series critically discussed controversial episodes in Church history such as the Modernist crisis, others offered uncompromising strictly historical-critical accounts of canonical and non-canonical Christian literature and of the history of early Christianity. This, in itself, was largely enough for conservative Catholics to give the series the label of an anti-Catholic "machine de guerre," which, in fact, many of the volumes were not. Importantly, only some volumes in the series did seem to have thematic compatibility with Couchoud's radical Christ myth thesis and only a few of Couchoud's collaborators went as far as to become "mythologists" themselves. Loisy, for one, severely criticized Couchoud's ideas and later also broke off all personal ties.¹⁵⁹

Among the volumes most compatible with Couchoud's thesis were particularly those published by Turmel "Delafosse" on the Marcionite origins of the New Testament and several other early Christian writings.¹⁶⁰ Turmel's "pan-marcionisme" offered Couchoud a method of explaining the origins of the depictions of a human Jesus within these texts. According to Couchoud, Marcion had played a crucial role in the humanizing process of the Jewish god that was Jesus. He transformed Paul's belief in the myth of a heavenly

158 See, for instance, Paul-Louis Couchoud, "Le Mystère de Jésus," *Mercur de France* (1 March, 1924), 335–358. On Couchoud and his network: Lannoy, *Alfred Loisy*, 248–254.

159 Loisy did so, however, after Couchoud had organized an honorary conference on the occasion of his 70th birthday; see Lannoy, *Alfred Loisy*, 254. I would here like to remark that I do hope the celebrant will appreciate this contribution!

160 See Henri Delafosse, *Les Écrits de saint Paul I–III* (Paris: F. Rieder, 1926–1928), and Henri Delafosse, *Les Lettres d'Ignace d'Antioche* (Paris: F. Rieder, 1927).

crucified god Jesus into the belief in the historical crucifixion of a human and historical Jesus.

This link between “Marcion” and Couchoud’s Christ Myth constitutes the last missing piece of the “Turmel-Siouville” puzzle. In his review of Delafosse’s *Lettres d’Ignace d’Antioche*, Siouville endorsed Turmel’s controversial thesis that those letters were of Marcionite origin but had been interpolated by a Catholic (the opposite of what had allegedly happened in Paul’s letters).¹⁶¹ For Turmel’s Catholic enemies, this endorsement represented sufficient reason to assume, not that Siouville quite simply belonged to the same rationalist *Christianisme* network as Turmel, but that Siouville was Turmel. On this occasion they chose to “forget” that Delafosse’s review of A. Siouville’s *Philosophumena* had in fact included a rather critical objection.¹⁶²

Siouville’s *Homélie*s and Couchoud’s Christ Myth: A Match Made in Heaven?

As noted earlier, Lelong revised his opinion on the relevance of the *Pseudo-Clementines* to the history of early Christianity. Whereas his 1929 article speaks of the Jewish-Christian ideas therein represented as a “regression” with regard to the doctrines of the early Church, his 1933 volume does in fact underline the importance of the *Homélie*s towards apprehending the views of the earliest Church in Jerusalem, and thus also of the later Catholic Church. At the centre of Lelong’s thesis – one borrowed from Cullmann’s 1930 work – the *Kerygmata* is featured, in which he identifies traces of pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism. Although he does not elaborate on this point, he quite likely thought of the representation of Jesus as incarnation of the True Prophet as indicative of a gnostic continuum between pre-Christian Judaism and the *Pseudo-Clementines*. The – again implicit – consequence is that the *Pseudo-Clementines* (through the *Kerygmata*) and the earliest Jewish-Christian Church in Jerusalem similarly preserve the continuity of a pre-Christian Jewish-gnostic ancestor.

While Lelong was familiar with Turmel’s “pan-marcionisme”, his relationship to Couchoud’s Christ myth theory remains uncertain due to limited documentation of Lelong’s scientific and personal views. What we can say,

161 Siouville, “*Lettres d’Ignace d’Antioche*,” 416. Lelong did add that not all of Turmel’s hypotheses were of even quality.

162 See Delafosse, *Les Lettres d’Ignace d’Antioche*, 149. The objection concerned Siouville’s statement that Hippolytus of Rome (and not Callistus) had been the anti-pope.

though, is that Lelong's new hypothesis demonstrated at least some thematic compatibility with it. In the first decades of the 20th century, several scholars grew convinced that a pre-Christian gnostic savior myth of a heavenly God-Man spread in Judaism and that this Jewish myth was the hermeneutical key to the New Testament. According to the contemporary theories of, for example, Richard Reitzenstein, the popularity of this (in Reitzenstein's view originally Iranian) myth in Judaism explained why the historical Jesus was so easily deified and mythologised after his death. "Mythologists" like Couchoud represented a logical inversion, arguing that Jesus was originally a god gradually humanized and historicized.

In his review of A. Siouville's *Homélies*, Couchoud made no mention of his own Christ Myth thesis, but he did not fail to note that: "La thèse principale du livre est que la révélation de Dieu a été donnée à Adam, à Moïse et à Jésus, incarnations successives du Prophète véritable."¹⁶³ That the *Pseudo-Clementines* insist on the thoroughly human form that Jesus had assumed as incarnation of the pre-existing divine "True Prophet", will quite likely have interested Couchoud even if he left that point unmentioned in his own publications. In his article "Le mystère de Jésus" (1924), Couchoud had explained:

Des sects demi-juives adoraient le plérôme et les anges. Le christianisme commençait quand on jurait qu'un seul être privilégié qu'on appelait le Messie Jésus absorbait en lui tout le plérôme et qu'il était le Premier après Dieu, avec Dieu, de tous les êtres célestes.¹⁶⁴

Couchoud conjectured that at a certain point, believers of this Jesus received a mystic vision, in which he appeared to them, among which Paul. He further developed the myth by introducing the idea of the heavenly crucifixion: Jesus was now a God-Man who died an expiatory death. Subsequent developments such as those in *Hebrews* depict the still heavenly Jesus as having a body of flesh and blood. The final step towards a Jesus as a real human being with

¹⁶³ Paul-Louis Couchoud, "A. Siouville – Les Homélies clémentines," *Revue internationale de sociologie* 42 (1934), 210–211, here 211.

¹⁶⁴ Couchoud, "Le Mystère de Jésus," 345: "Semi-Jewish sects venerated the pleroma and the angels. Christianity emerged when it was affirmed that a single exalted being, known as the Messiah Jesus, encompassed the entire pleroma and was the foremost, after God, yet with God, of all celestial entities." [My translation] Couchoud's argumentation of his non-historical Jesus was highly complex and drew on different arguments and sources. The gnostic thesis – based on Reitzenstein – is only one of the argumentative roads taken. According to Couchoud, the gnostic belief in the divine Jesus derived from new mystic exegesis of saviour figures mentioned in older biblical texts, such as *Isaiah's* Suffering Servant.

a historical and terrestrial existence is taken by Marcion, who invented the historical story of the crucifixion of Jesus. In his short review of Siouville's work, the Belgian Benedictine monk Dom Bruno Reynders (1903–1981) pointedly remarked that the objectivity of the *Homélies*-volume stood in sharp contrast to the other volumes of Couchoud's series.¹⁶⁵

In this article, I have shown that Lelong indeed offered a fairly factual and unbiased account of the *communis opinio* of the *Forschung* of his time. That being said, Lelong's decision to publish in Couchoud's series can only have been a conscious one, and the same will be true for Couchoud's decision to host it. Lelong's decision does not imply adherence to Couchoud's thesis – only a few of the authors in this series actually did so – but rather reflects Lelong's great independence of mind with regard to the anti-critical attitude that reigned widely in contemporary conservative Catholic milieus.¹⁶⁶ In this context, Loisy's letter can be interpreted as an instructive illustration of how deeply polarized the French field of early Christian studies was at that time,¹⁶⁷ and how this complicated matters for many scholars, Catholics and others, concerning interrelated personal and institutional levels, even when dealing with seemingly "safe" texts such as the *Pseudo-Clementines*.

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¹⁶⁵ Bruno Reynders, "Les Homélies Clémentines," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 6 (1934), 334–335.

¹⁶⁶ Doubtlessly, this is the reason why former New Testament professor of the *Institut catholique* in Toulouse and priest, Simon Légace (1926–2009), gives him the title of a "crypto-Modernist": Simon Légasse, *L'Antipaulinisme sectaire au temps des pères de l'église* (Paris: Gabalda, 2000), 41.

¹⁶⁷ In his autobiography, unambiguously entitled *De la foi à la raison* (Prosper Alfaric, *De la foi à la raison: Scènes vécues* [Paris: Publications de l'Union rationaliste, 1955]), professor of history of religions of Strasbourg University and later president of the Union rationaliste Prosper Alfaric wrote that Auguste Lelong had become "radicalement incroyant" shortly after having been ordained priest, but that he had decided to stay in the Church "pour des raisons familiales d'ordre moral" (p. 131). Again, due to the scanty biographical information at our disposal, it is unclear to us to what extent Lelong was integrated within the *Christianisme* network. Alfaric's testimony is useful, though, in that it shows that he was definitely seen as "one of us" by this former priest (and fervent supporter of the Christ Myth theory).

The Martyrdom of Luke the Evangelist: A Syriac Translation of a Coptic Apocryphon?

Jacob A. Lollar and Samuel P. Cook

Abstract: This essay presents the first complete analysis of the Syriac and Coptic versions of the *Martyrdom of Luke the Evangelist*. There is no Greek or Latin version of this narrative, and it appears to have originated in the Christian East. In this essay, we argue in fact that the Coptic version is the original and that all subsequent versions, including the Syriac, are based on the Coptic original. We present here an introduction to the Syriac and Coptic manuscripts followed by a comparative edition of both versions, translated into English for the first time.

Keywords: Syriac; Coptic; manuscripts; St Luke; martyrdom; hagiography; translation

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In 1992, Hieronymos, the Orthodox Metropolitan of Thebes in Greece, sent a letter to Antonio Mattiazzo, Bishop of Padua, Italy, requesting that certain relics belonging to St. Luke the Evangelist be returned to the site of Luke's purported tomb in Thebes. The Christians of Padua had long possessed a reliquary that they believed contained the relics of St. Luke, discovered in a cemetery in the 12th century.¹ This request prompted a decade-long investigation that ended in 2001 with a scientific analysis of two teeth from the reliquary. The analysis concluded that the teeth could, in fact, have belonged to a man who had lived in Syria, or possibly in Turkey, between the first and the fourth centuries.²

Whatever one may think of the results of the tests performed on the teeth, we are presently more interested in the exchange between the bishop and

1 On the relics in Padua see G. Leonardi and F. G. Trolese (eds.), *San Luca evangelista testimone della fede che unisce. Atti del Convegno internazionale (Padova, 16–21 ottobre 2000)* (Padova: Ist. Storia Ecclesiastica, 2002).

2 The story even made it to the New York Times in 2001. The article can be viewed here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/16/world/body-of-st-luke-gains-credibility.html> (accessed 23 January, 2024). The results of the radiocarbon study were published by C. Vernesi, et al., "Genetic characterization of the body attributed to the evangelist Luke," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 98.23 (6 Nov. 2001): 13460–13463, which can be read online here: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.211540498> (accessed 23 January, 2024).

the metropolitan about where Luke's relics *should be*, how they ended up in Padua, which *traditions* were important, and how we could know any of these things. We are thus interested in the stories behind Luke's death that culminated in the radio-carbon dating of two teeth extracted from the reliquary in Padua. What stories were told about Luke's death? There are actually very few, beyond traditions and passing statements. Gregory of Nazianzus lists him among several figures executed during the reign of Domitian (*Or. 4 Cont. Jul.* in *PG* 35.589) and the Latin tradition places his death in Chalcedon.³ The Byzantine *Synaxarion* records that Luke was eventually buried in Thebes – hence, Catholicos Hieronymus' request.⁴ Here, we will discuss a particular story, quite distinct from these other traditions, entitled simply "the Martyrdom of Luke the Evangelist" (*Mart. Luke*).⁵

Mart. Luke follows the final days of the purported companion of Paul and writer of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles (though in the Syriac version he is identified as *Peter's* follower!). At the outset, Luke is said to be the last of the Apostles in the region surrounding Rome, Nero having executed the rest. While he preaches, the Jews inform Nero of a surviving Christian leader. The emperor then sends soldiers after Luke, who, in both Coptic and Syriac, is said to reside in the city of "Prokonnesus" (a town not mentioned in the Arabic and Gəʿəz versions). Luke hears that soldiers are coming for him and flees to the coast, where he meets a man named Silas (Theophilus in Arabic). He gives Silas his books and tells him to read them constantly, for they are the gospel of Jesus. Silas takes the books and follows Luke's orders, leading to the conversion of many. Luke then returns to the city and is arrested and brought to Nero. After a trial, during which Luke performs several feats and gives an oral defence, Nero sentences Luke to death. He is taken out to sea and beheaded, and his body is placed in a sack and dumped into the sea. "Divine providence" then causes a wave to take Luke's body to an unnamed island, where it is found and becomes a source of miracles and the exorcism of demons.

3 September 10, according to the *Martyrologium Romanum*, along with Apollos and Clement. cf. G. Balestri, "Il martirio di S. Luca evangelista (Testo copto e traduzione)." *Bessarione* 2.8 (1905): 129–140, here 129.

4 Cf. Hier. Makarios of Simonos Petra, *The Synaxarion: The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church*, vol. 1 (trans. C. Hookway; Ormylia/Chalkidike: Holy Convent of the Annunciation of Our Lady, 1998), 412–15.

5 BHO 570.

This narrative is quite distinct from any of the summaries found in the *Synaxaria* or *Martyrologies* in the Latin and Greek traditions. In fact, one of the striking features about *Mart. Luke* is that there is no trace of a Greek or Latin version of this work. The only surviving versions are written in Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, and Gəʿəz.⁶ In other words, *Mart. Luke* appears to be a distinctly Eastern/North African tradition. Importantly, the Coptic and Syriac versions have direct connections to the Wādī al-Naṭrūn in Egypt, their extant manuscripts date very close together, and both transmit a very similar version of the story. Despite this, these two earliest extant versions of *Mart. Luke* have never been compared.

The present study constitutes the first comparative analysis of the Coptic and Syriac version of *Mart. Luke*. First, we will provide codicological details for both traditions, with references to the known surviving Arabic and Gəʿəz manuscripts. Second, we will offer brief analytical hypotheses and conclusions based on the textual comparison. Finally, we provide the texts and translations, side-by-side, divided into sections for the first time. As we shall demonstrate, it is most likely that the Coptic version served as the basis for the Syriac, as well as all subsequent iterations of the story.

The Codicology of the Syriac and Coptic Martyrdom of Luke

Syriac

Mart. Luke appears in two Syriac manuscripts, one of which is extremely fragmentary. The earlier manuscript, BL Add. ms 12172, is dated by William

⁶ All the versions have been translated into modern languages. For the Coptic version, see Balestri, “Il martirio di S. Luca evangelista” (ed. and Italian trans. of the complete version); H. G. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrūn. Part 1: New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926), 47–50 (English trans. of fragments); for the Syriac, see F. Nau, “La version syriaque inédite des martyres de S. Pierre, S. Paul et S. Luc d’après un manuscrit du dixième siècle.” *ROC* 3 (1898): 39–42 (text), 151–67 (French trans.); for Arabic see A. Smith Lewis, *Acta Mythologica Apostolorum, Transcribed from an Arabic Ms. in the Convent of Deyr-es-Suriani, Egypt, and from Mss. in the Convent of St Catherine, on Mount Sinai* (Horae Semiticae 3; London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1904), 130–133 (English trans.); for the Gəʿəz, see E. A. W. Budge, *Gadla Hawāryāt: The Contendings of the Apostles, Being the Lives and Martyrdoms and Deaths of the Twelve Apostles and Evangelists*. Vol. 1 (London: Henry Frowde, 1899), 119–25.

Wright to the tenth century.⁷ The three texts are divided into two columns (the pricking is still visible) of about 27–34 lines each. On fol. 12r, there is a note stating that the manuscript belonged to Dayr al-Suryān (the Monastery of the Syrians) in the Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Egypt, and was donated to the monastery by a man named Zechariah bar Yuḥannon.⁸ A large cache of Syriac manuscripts were brought to this monastery in the tenth century by Abbot Muše of Nisibis,⁹ though this manuscript was evidently donated to the monastery by Zechariah. Although it is not certain from where Zechariah brought this manuscript, it is possible that it originated in Egypt in a Syriac-speaking community.¹⁰

The other manuscript, BL Add. 14732, is a paper manuscript that is heavily mutilated but originally contained 56 stories of holy men and women, to which were added 14 more. It dates to about the thirteenth century, by palaeography,¹¹ but the added material makes it difficult to assess the handwriting. Fols. 1r–2r (containing a table of contents) differ slightly from fols. 217–27¹² – *Mart. Luke* appears in fragmentary form beginning on fol. 225v, meaning it belongs to the added material. Aside from the damage,

7 W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the year 1838*, vol. 3 (London: British Museum, 1872), 1116–17. This manuscript was split into two (by the request of Zechariah in the note) and Wright gives a very similar description of the first half of the manuscript (featuring the writings of Isaiah of Scetis). See Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, 465.

8 This same name is found in BL Add. 14577, though there Zechariah has erased the name of a previous owner and added his own name, but with a similar note saying that the manuscript should be donated to Dayr al-Suryān. Wright dates Add. 14577 to the ninth century. See Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, 784–88. This manuscript also has the writings of Isaiah of Scetis.

9 See H. G. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wādī 'N Naṭrūn Part II: The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and Scetis* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973), 337–338; S. P. Brock, “Without Mushe of Nisibis, Where Would We Be? Some Reflections on the Transmission of Syriac Literature,” *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56 (2004): 15–24; idem, “Abbot Mushe of Nisibis: Collector of Syriac Manuscripts,” in C. Baffioni, R. B. Finazzi, A. Acqua, P. Dell, and E. Vergani (eds.), *Gli Studi Orientalistici in Ambrosiana nella cornice del IV centenario (1609–2009)* (Milan: Bulzoni, 2012), 15–32.

10 On the existence of such communities, see K. Innemée and L. Van Rompay, “La présence des syriens dans le Wadi al-Natrun (Égypte): À propos des découvertes récentes de peintures et de textes muraux dans l'Église de la Vierge du Couvent des Syriens,” *ParOr* 23 (1998): 167–202; L. Van Rompay, “Takritans in the Egyptian Desert: The Monastery of the Syrians in the Ninth Century,” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 1 (2001): 41–60.

11 Wright, *Catalogue*, 3.1141–46.

12 See the various notes in the colophons in Wright, *Catalogue*, 3.1145–46.

the handwriting is relatively clear, in two columns of 30 to 47 lines each. One of the notes by the contributor of the latter 14 stories, Yuḥannon of Sigistān, mentions the hardship he and his fellow monks at Dayr al-Suryān experienced to procure a Syriac copy of the life of Pachomius for the volume (the beginning of which appears on fol. 227r, but is mutilated after that). Both manuscripts thus spent time at Dayr al-Suryān and quite probably even originated there, giving the Syriac version a specifically Egyptian provenance.

François Nau pointed out that, in both manuscripts, the story appears alongside stories of Peter's and Paul's martyrdoms and the three texts serve as a kind of trilogy.¹³ He demonstrated that the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul are related to the Greek versions.¹⁴ The third story, *Mart. Luke*, does not appear to have an extant *Vorlage* in Greek or Latin. As Nau states, Lipsius had already noticed the lack of any Western basis for *Mart. Luke* and had conjectured that the narrative originated in Coptic:

Le martyre de saint Luc n'existe ni en grec ni en latin, mais seulement en copte et en éthiopien. Ces deux dernières Églises, en effet, font de Luc un martyr; tandis que les deux premières le font en général mourir de mort naturelle. M. Lipsius pouvait donc en conclure que le martyre de saint Luc était d'origine copte.¹⁵

Nau considers Lipsius's theory plausible, but maintains that "la publication d'une version syriaque qui existait au dixième siècle obligera à se demander si le martyre de saint Luc n'aurait pas une origine grecque relativement moderne et n'aurait pas passé du grec simultanément ou successivement au syriaque et au copte et de là à l'arabe et à l'éthiopien."¹⁶ In other words, Nau prefers a scenario in which a (now-lost) Greek archetype existed for the Syriac version which was then transmitted to Coptic, which in turn served as the basis for Arabic and Gəʿəz versions of *Mart. Luke*.

Coptic

The Coptic version of *Mart. Luke* is found in two manuscripts, both of which were once part of the extensive library of Dayr al-Anba Maqār (the Monastery of Saint Macarius) in the Wādī al-Naṭrūn. The first, MACA.DM/

¹³ Nau, "La version syriaque," 41–42.

¹⁴ Nau, "La version syriaque," 39–41.

¹⁵ Nau, "La version syriaque," 41. For the hypothesis of Lipsius, see R. A. Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichte un Apostellegenden* (3 vols.; Braunschweig, 1884), 3.368–71.

¹⁶ Nau, "La version syriaque," 41–42.

CLM 148,¹⁷ is the only complete copy of the text preserved in Coptic. This parchment manuscript is currently held in the Vatican Library (Vat. Copt. 68 ff. 16–21), and is part of the large number of well-preserved codices obtained from the monastery by Lebanese orientalist Giuseppe Simone Assemani during his mission from June 30 1715 to January 9 1717 to collect manuscripts on behalf of Pope Clement XI.¹⁸ MACA.DM can be broadly dated based on its scribe, one Khael son of Matoi (identified on the basis of palaeography), who copied 26 manuscripts for the monastery sometime between 945 and 1025 CE.¹⁹ The text of *Mart. Luke* begins on page 37 of the codex. However, since the manuscripts from Dayr al-Anba Maqār were divided in situ at some point before the 17th century and rebound in new combinations on the basis of liturgical date, it is unclear which text or texts preceded it, or if any came after it.²⁰

The second copy of the Coptic *Mart. Luke* appears in CLM 2879, a fragmentary paper manuscript containing several apocryphal acts of the Apostles. The manuscript can only be tentatively dated on the basis of palaeography to the 12th–14th centuries.²¹ None of the works in this manuscript are preserved in their entirety, although both the beginning and the end of the *Dormition of John* are extant. The works, and their attested page ranges, are as follows:

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- 17 The MACA sigla refers to the referencing system used by the Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari (CMCL): <http://www.cmcl.it/>. The CLM number is the identifier employed by the Tracking Papyrus and Pathways (PAThs) database: <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/>.
 - 18 Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn, Part I*, xxxix; D. V. Proverbio, “Per una storia del fondo dei Vaticani Copti”, in P. Buzi and D. V. Proverbio (eds.), *Coptic Treasures from the Vatican Library: A Selection of Coptic, Copto-Arabic and Ethiopic Manuscripts. Papers collected on the occasion of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies (Rome, September 17th–22nd, 2012)* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2012), 11–20, here 14; S. P. Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius (9th–14th C): A Study on the Monastic Context of Apocryphal Literature*, forthcoming.
 - 19 On the dating of the Coptic manuscripts from Dayr al-Anba Maqār, see S. P. Cook, “Social Network Analysis and the Dating of Coptic Manuscripts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 79.3 (2025): 271–310, for Khael son of Matoi in particular, 301; Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.
 - 20 On the division and reorganisation of the codices, see Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.
 - 21 On dating the manuscripts from Dayr al-Anba Maqār on the basis of palaeography, see Cook, “Social Network Analysis,” 274–78; Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.

145 leaves missing; it is unclear how many texts were in this lacuna.

1. *Preaching of John* (pp. x + 291–353)
2. *Dormition of John* (pp. 353–378)
3. *Preaching of Philip* (pp. x (379?) + 391–398 + x)
4. *Martyrdom of Philip* (pp. x + 401–412 + x)
5. *Preaching of Bartholomew* (pp. x + 421–428 + x)

148 leaves missing; it is unclear how many texts were in this lacuna

6. *Martyrdom of Matthias* (pp. x + 727–728 + x)
7. *Martyrdom of Mark* (pp. x + 759–770 + x)
8. *Martyrdom of Luke* (pp. x + 781–788 + x)

The surviving leaves of CLM 2879 are spread across three different collections. 38 leaves are currently held in the Coptic Museum in Cairo. These were collected from the monastery in 1920/1921 by Hugh Evelyn-White, who edited and translated them with the identifier Cairo nos 5–6.²² All the leaves which Evelyn-White obtained during this visit were most likely returned to Egypt prior to his death in 1924.²³ A further leaf is held in the library of the University of Cambridge, under the call number Add. 1886 f. 3 (pages 787–788 of the manuscript). It was among those leaves which Constantine von Tischendorf obtained from the monastery during his visit in April 1844, which were divided between the libraries of the University of Cambridge and the University of Leipzig.²⁴ The Cambridge leaf forms part of the *Martyrdom of Luke*, and was published along with the Cairo leaves by Evelyn-White.²⁵ A further three leaves were obtained by William Henry Paine Hatch during his visit to the monastery in 1923 and which he published in 1950.²⁶ However,

22 Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn, Part I*, 28–49. The current call numbers in the Coptic Museum are unknown. The pages are not consecutive: for an overview of the extant fragments, see the edition of Evelyn-White.

23 H. N. Takla, “Bohairic Literature of St. Macarius Monastery,” in S. Moawad (ed.), *Coptic Literature: Proceedings of the Ninth International Symposium of Coptic Studies by the Saint Mark Foundation, Monastery of St. Bishoi (Wadi al-Natrun), 10–14 February 2019* (Cairo: Saint Mark Foundation, 2022), 281–94, here 284; Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.

24 Takla, “Bohairic Literature,” 283; Cook, *The Medieval Coptic*. On the expedition of Tischendorf, see C. von Tischendorf, *Travels in the East* (Cambridge: Longman, 1847).

25 Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn, Part I*, 50.

26 W. H. P. Hatch, “Three Hitherto Unpublished Leaves from a Manuscript of the *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* in Bohairic Coptic,” in *Coptic Studies in Honor of Walter Ewing Crum* (Bulletin of the Byzantine Institute 2; Boston: Byzantine Institute, 1950), 305–17.

since his death in 1972, the whereabouts of these leaves is unknown. They contain sections of both the *Preaching of John* (pp. 317–318, 351–352) and the *Martyrdom of Mark* (pp. 761–762).

Both MACA.DM and CLM 2879 are written in the Bohairic dialect of Coptic, in a language variety previously referred to as “Nitrian Bohairic” based on an early error in scholarship which equated the Wādī al-Naṭrūn with the nearby region of Nitria.²⁷ The term “Medieval Bohairic” is more preferable, referring to a language variety which, as Funk states, represents “the *état de langue* that Bohairic writing had reached by the 9th and 10th centuries encompassing the work of a great number of different scribes with slightly different orthographical habits.”²⁸ MACA.DM is written in a blocky, unimodular hand (also erroneously referred to as “Nitrian” by some scholars), typical of those manuscripts from Dayr al-Anba Maqār dated between the 9th and 11th/12th centuries.²⁹ CLM 2879 is also written in a unimodular hand, typical of Bohairic manuscripts dated after the 12th century, and characterised by thin strokes and the use of red ink to decorate initials and certain letters such as ϥ and ⲑ.³⁰

Particular paratextual features of MACA.DM point to the fact that it was read aloud during liturgical celebrations in Dayr al-Anba Maqār.³¹ On the first page of the text, the top margin (though trimmed) contains the date “Day 22 of Bābah” (ϥⲟⲩⲕⲉⲃ ⲙⲓⲛⲁⲃⲁⲛ): the date of Luke’s martyrdom as given in the text and in the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*. Such dates appear throughout the corpus of Coptic manuscripts from Dayr al-Anba Maqār, often with other instructions on which sections of the text to read, and locations within the

27 W.-P. Funk, “Coptic Dialects and the Vatican Library,” in *Coptic Treasures from the Vatican Library*, 47–52, here 50; M. Sheridan, “The modern historiography of early Egyptian monasticism,” in M. Bielawski and D. Hombergen (eds.), *Il Monachesimo tra Eredità e Apertura. Atti del simposio “Testi e temi nella tradizione del monachesimo Cristiano” per il 50° anniversario dell’Istituto Monastico di Sant’Anselmo* (Studia Anselmiana 140; Rome: Studia Anselmiana, 2004), 197–220, here 201.

28 Funk, ‘Coptic Dialects and the Vatican Library’, 50. On the dialect of the manuscripts from Dayr al-Anba Maqār, see also Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius*.

29 On the dating of this hand, see Cook, “Social Network Analysis,” 275–77; Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.

30 Cook, “Social Network Analysis,” 275–77; Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.

31 On the use of the Coptic literary manuscripts for liturgical purposes at Dayr al-Anba Maqār, see Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.

monastery where the readings were to take place.³² On folio 21v, the word [σκ]ῆρκερ “roll” appears in the left margin. The exact translation in this context is unclear: Crum relates it to other marginal notes in the corpus such as σοκς and χας εβολ, which he suggests could refer to the mode of reading.³³ When the term is employed in the Dayr al-Anba Maqār manuscripts, it is almost always in the last few paragraphs of the text, suggesting it could have indicated to the reader to change his posture or manner of speaking to herald the impending end of the reading.³⁴ Two geometric shapes in different hands appear in the right margin of folio 20r: one where Nero speaks after Luke is tortured (§16) and the other at beginning of the first prayer spoken by Luke (§17). A small, lunate sigma in red ink appears twice in the margins of the manuscript (folios 17r and 19r). Marginal sigma and antisigma are common throughout the corpus, possibly as a way of drawing attention to the passages they accompany. The geometric shapes and lunate sigma may be related to private reading. However, due to the wealth of other paratextual marks and marginal notes in the corpus which designate sections of the texts to be read aloud, it cannot be ruled out that the signs in MACA.DM perform a similar function. The first page of the manuscript also contains a small miniature of Luke in the right margin, with the caption “Luke the Evangelist” (λογκας π[ε]ρ[ι] λουκα), with the face of Luke also drawn in the same style in the enlarged initial λ which begins the main text.

Some Comparative Observations

In general, the Coptic and Syriac versions of the story are quite similar, but there are some important differences worth mentioning. In terms of their material embodiments, the fact that the narrative appears in groupings with stories of other apostles is noteworthy, given the propensity for such stories to be grouped together in medieval manuscript collections, particularly in the African milieu.³⁵ Since the four manuscripts discussed here all have an

32 S. P. Cook, “‘Omit This – it Was False’: Editing, Erasure, and Multiple Authors in Ps.-John Chrysostom’s On Michael A,” *Journal of Coptic Studies* 24 (2022): 9–34, here 12; Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.

33 W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 329b (σκερκερ) and 326a (σοκς).

34 Cook, *The Medieval Coptic Manuscripts*.

35 See, e.g., the collections including *Mart. Luke* in Gəʿaz studied by A. Bausi, “Alcune osservazioni sul *Gadla ḥawāryāt*,” *Annali dell’Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 60–61 (2001–2002): 77–114.

Egyptian provenience, and three are dated no earlier than the tenth century, it is not surprising that they would group *Mart. Luke* in such collections of “Contendings of the Apostles.”

There are reasons to prefer Lipsius’s hypothesis about a Coptic origin for *Mart. Luke*. In fact, we may go even further to suggest that the story had a specific Egyptian origin. For example, the Syriac version contains at its end both the Egyptian date of Luke’s martyrdom (22 of Bābah) and the Syrian date (19 of Tishrīn), whereas the Coptic only includes the Egyptian date. It would make sense for the Syriac translator to add the Syrian date to a text that already included an Egyptian date. At the same time, it is important to note that the two texts with which *Mart. Luke* circulated in Syriac, the *Martyrdom of Peter* and the *Martyrdom of Paul*, also include the Egyptian date (day 5 of Abīb, three years apart³⁶) before giving the Syrian date. As Nau already observed, the stories of Peter and Paul clearly derive from Greek origins, which means that the Syriac translator intentionally added the Egyptian dating to the text, mostly likely because the manuscripts came from an Egyptian provenance. Thus, the inclusion of the Egyptian date in *Mart. Luke* may simply be a matter of consistency between the narratives. This, however, would not omit the possibility of the Syriac *Mart. Luke* being dependent on a Coptic source.

Another example is the strange name for the city in which Luke is said to be preaching, “Prokonnesus,” which could refer to the second largest island in the Sea of Marmara. Prokonnesus was home to a bishop as early as 5th century, who was present at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The mention of this city in connection to Nero would be, of course, anachronistic, and the text appears to associate “Rome” here with *new* Rome, or Constantinople. Such a confusion in geography is not uncommon in Coptic parabiblical narratives.³⁷

At the text-critical level, there are some other curious discrepancies between the two versions. The most striking comes at §20 where in Coptic

³⁶ See the translations in Nau, “La version syriaque”.

³⁷ See the recent essay by I. Miroshnikov, “The Preaching of Philip: A New Edition of the Sahidic Fragments with an Introduction, Translation, and Notes,” in I. Miroshnikov *Parabiblica Coptica* (Parabiblica 1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2024), 53–100, esp. 61. See also O. von Lemm, *Kleine koptische Studien* (Subsidia Byzantina 10; Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1972), 5 n. 20: „Die Kopten sind sicher keine grossen Kenner der Geographie des Auslandes gewesen.”

Luke refers to his “father Paul” while the Syriac has “father Peter”. Indeed, the opening section of the Coptic version maintains the traditional relationship between Luke and Paul, while the Syriac has Luke and Titus as disciples of Peter. The Syriac version is the more difficult to explain, though it may have something to do with the traditional locations of the apostles, with Rome being the domain of Peter. This detail in Syriac is further mystifying in that it departs from what is recorded in the *Martyrdom of Paul*, which appears prior to *Mart. Luke* in both Syriac manuscripts. In the *Martyrdom of Paul*, Luke and Titus are visited by the departed Paul, following the well-attested Latin tradition from the *Martyrdom of the Blessed Paul* by Ps-Linus (CANT 212).³⁸ Thus, the earlier observation of scribal consistency between these stories regarding the Egyptian dates is seemingly broken here regarding important details of the story.

In many ways, the Coptic version is more elaborate than the Syriac. For example, §§14–16 in the Coptic contains the tortures and verbal showdown between Luke and Nero, which are completely missing in the Syriac. The Syriac has its typical elaborations of style (e.g., adding extra modal verbs, descriptors for various characters, etc.) which makes some of the sequences longer and more detailed. Occasionally, the prayers (e.g., §20) and narrative sequences (e.g., §11) are more detailed in content in the Syriac version, but by and large the expansions appear to favour a Coptic-to-Syriac direction of influence. That said, it is also important to note that the Syriac version is more closely related to the later Coptic manuscript (CLM 2879). The speech of the priest in *Mart. Luke* 8, for example, more closely aligns with the Syriac than does the earlier Coptic manuscript. If the Syriac relied on a Coptic version akin to CLM 2879, then we must imagine that it represents an earlier form of the narrative that was then expanded, translated, and transmitted into various languages and versions.

In past scholarship, it was generally almost axiomatic to assume a Greek Vorlage for nearly every extant Coptic text. Recent scholarship has pushed against this notion and revealed the ingenuity, creativity, and distinctiveness of the Coptic literary tradition.³⁹ Given the absence in the Western Christian

³⁸ See D. A. Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts of Peter and Paul* (WGRW 39; Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 139–69.

³⁹ See, e.g., the essays in Miroshnikov, *Parabiblica Coptica*; Graz, Florian. “I Found a Little Book Which the Apostles Had Written.” PhD thesis, University of Oslo, 2024.

traditions of any clear traces of the traditions preserved in *Mart. Luke*, it is worth positing a distinctive Eastern origin for this story, probably in Egypt and probably in Coptic, where it was then translated into Syriac, Arabic, and Gəʿəz.

Comparative Edition and Translation

Title		
MACA.DM	^{16r} ܠܗܡܪܬܝܪܝܐ ܢܬܡܝܕܝܘܥ ܠܘܕܟܐܥ ܡܢ ܝܠܕܝܬܝܬܝܥ ܥܘܕ ܕܐܒ ܕܥܝܕܝܪܝܢܢ ܢܬܡܝܕ ܕܡܢܢ	The martyrdom of Saint Luke, the holy evangelist. In the peace of God, amen.
CLM 2879	<i>No extant title</i>	<i>No extant title</i>
BL Add. 12172	ܠܡܪܬܝܪܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ^{21v} ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ	The martyrdom of Saint Luke the evangelist who was perfected ⁴⁰ in Rome on the 22nd of the month of <i>Baobe</i> ⁴¹ of the Egyptians and in the month of the Syrians later Kanūn
BL Add. 14732	ܠܡܪܬܝܪܝܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ^{225v}	Again, the martyrdom of Saint Luke the evangelist
§1		
MACA.DM	ܢܐܩܡܢ ܝܥܝܕܝܠܝܥ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܥܩܝ ܢܐܩ ܢܡܐܠܝܬܝܥ ܕܘܕܝܥ ܥܢܓܪܡܢܡܬܝܥ ܥܩܕܝ ܢܡܥܢܩܩܪܝܥ ܬܝܪܘܕ ܢܡܝܕܘܐ ܢܡܝܕ ܥܘܢܐܢܝܥ ܕܬܥܩܪܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܢܡܝܕܘܕ ܕܥܢܦܪܐܢ ܢܡܡܥܝܬ ܝܥܝܥ ܡܝܥ	Luke remained with Paul, being a disciple and scribe for him, writing all his deeds and every good thing which he proclaimed in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
	ܥܬܐܕܝ ܕܥ ܥܪܡܢ ܬܒܐܩܝ ܕܝܪܝܬܝܐ ܢܘܕܝܬ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܝܬܝܐ ܕܬܝܪܝܬܝܐ ܢܡܥܬܐܢܐܥ ܕܝܪܝܬܝܐ ܥܢܦܝܬܝܐ ⁴² ܥܢܡܥܝܬ ܝܥܝܥ ܡܝܥ	And when they went to Rome, the city, they seized a great captivity from the hand of Satan for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

40 Note that the scribe omits the *alep* as a filler letter for the vowel. The same occurs a few words later with the word “Egyptians”.

41 That is “Bābah”. See the end of the narratives in both Coptic and Syriac.

42 Possibly an erroneous spelling of ܘܕܝܥ “glory”. This is how it is translated by Balestri, ‘Il Martirio Di S. Luca Evangelista’, 137.

[illegible]

43 Beginning of the Cairo leaves. From here until the beginning of the Cambridge leaves, the edition is that of Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrun, Part I*, 47–49.

44 On the phrase $\chi\omega\kappa\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda$ “to be completed, perfect” as a euphemism for death, see J. van der Vliet, “A note on $\chi\omega\kappa\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda$, ‘to die’,” *Enchoria* 16 (1988): 89–93.

§2		
MACA.DM	Ἐταφῆνι ἑ'[[i]]να⁴⁵ ἵχεκεσαρος νηρων ἀφ'αὐτῶν[[i]]⁴⁶ ἕανοῦνιωτ' ἵλιβι' ἐβοῦνι ἐπαῦλος νενλογκας οὔορ παῦλος μεν ἀφ'οροῦαλι ἵτεφναρβι λογκας Δε ἀφ'αὐτ' ἐβολ' ῥαπρὸ ἵπογρο ἀφ'ωπι ἐφριωῖα καταβακι νιβεν νεντ'ι ἐτρεντ'παρاليا τῆρς ἵτερωνν ἵππεγαγγελιον ἵτεπενῶς ἱῆς πᾶς ἐαφταχρεφναρτ' ἵππῆς ἕεντ'γχι νρᾶννιῶ	When Caesar Nero learned of these things, he grew angry in a great madness at Paul and Luke. And he caused Paul's neck to be cut, while Luke fled from before the king. He was preaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in every city and village which was on the entire coast of Rome, having strengthened the faith of Christ in the souls of many.
CLM 2879	Κεσαρ Δε νηρων ποῦρο ἀφ'αὐτονι ἵπαῦλος ἀφ'αὐτῶν ἵτεφᾶφε ἕανρωννι λογκας Δε ἀφ'αὐτ' ἐβολ' ῥαπρὸ ἵπογρο Δαφωπι ἐφριωῖα καταβακι νιβεν νεντ'ι νιβεν ἐτρεντ'παρاليا τῆρς ἵτερωνν Νῶορ Δε λογκας ναφοι ἵγραννατεῦς ἵππᾶγιος παῦλος οὔορ ἐφ'αὐτῶν κατανιπραζις 782 ἵταφ νενρῶν νιβεν ἐῶνανεῦ ἐτεφριωῖα ἵνῶορ <ἕενφραν>⁴⁷ ἵτεπενῶς ἱῆς πᾶς	And Caesar Nero the king seized Paul and he cut off his head in Rome, and Luke fled from before the king. He was preaching in every city and village which was on the entire coast of Rome. And he, Luke, was a scribe of Saint Paul, and he was writing according to the deeds of his and every good thing which he was preaching <in the name> of our lord Jesus Christ.
BL Add. 12712	Κεσαρ ἀφ'αὐτῶν [[i]]να⁴⁵ ἵχεκεσαρος νηρων ἀφ'αὐτῶν[[i]]⁴⁶ ἕανοῦνιωτ' ἵλιβι' ἐβοῦνι ἐπαῦλος νενλογκας οὔορ παῦλος μεν ἀφ'οροῦαλι ἵτεφναρβι λογκας Δε ἀφ'αὐτ' ἐβολ' ῥαπρὸ ἵπογρο ἀφ'ωπι ἐφριωῖα καταβακι νιβεν νεντ'ι ἐτρεντ'παρاليا τῆρς ἵτερωνν ἵππεγαγγελιον ἵτεπενῶς ἱῆς πᾶς ἐαφταχρεφναρτ' ἵππῆς ἕεντ'γχι νρᾶννιῶ	But Nero Caesar captured the Saint and apostle Paul and killed him in Rome. But Luke escaped from the king and went forth and in every town and village which surrounded the great (city of) Rome and this Luke was the chronicler of Saint Paul after Peter and he wrote down all of his acts and all of the good deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ which he preached to them.

45 The scribe appears to have written an epsilon over an erroneous iota.

46 The scribe seems to have first left a space after the preceding nu, written an iota, then added the tau in this gap, with the right side of the vertical bar covering the top of iota.

47 Restoration by Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn, Part I*, 48.

BL Add. 14732	ܐܘܢ ܕܥܠ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ	But Nero captured the saint and apostle Paul and killed him in Rome. But Luke went forth in every town and village which surrounded Rome and was preaching. And [th]is blessed Luke w[a]s the chronicler of saint Paul after St. Peter and he wrote down all of his acts and all of the [go]od deeds which he preached to them about our Lord Jesus Christ.
§3		
MACA.DM	ܕܐܢܢܝܘܬ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܢܡܪܝܢܘܬܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܢܡܪܝܢܘܬܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ ܕܐܢܢܝܢ	And great wonders and marvels he was performing on those who were sick. Blind people he caused to see, lame people he caused to walk, lepers he purified, deaf people he caused to hear, and multitudes of other sorts of sicknesses of many sorts he healed in the name of our lord Jesus Christ. Many cities and villages believed in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ upon seeing the marvels that his servant Luke was doing. Churches and monasteries were built everywhere. And all those who believed were joyful in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching of Saint Luke.

BL Add. 14732	ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܠܘܟܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ	And this blessed evangelist Luke preached in the cities and villages and our Lord Jesus [...] performed [...] and wonders and miracles through him among the si[ck] [...]
§4		
MACA.DM	ܐܬܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ	But when the priests of the idols saw (this), Satan filled their hearts. They took council with the Jews who were in that entire country so that they might gather in the temple which was in their metropolis on day 20 of the month of Thoth.
CLM 2879	ܐܬܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ	But when the priests of the idols of the pagans saw (this), Satan entered them, and they made council with the Jews who were in all the villages and cities so that they might gather in the temple which was in the metropolis of their country on ⁴⁸ day 20 of the month of Thoth.
BL Add. 12172	ܐܬܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ	But when the priests of the idols of the pagans saw all of these virtuous deeds of our living God and Lord Jesus Christ, which happened by the hand of Luke the evangelist, Satan entered into them. They took ⁴⁹ counsel with the Jews who dwelled with them in their cities and villages so that they gathered together in one of the pagan temples which was in a certain metropolis of that region. Then they set a meeting with one another to gather in that temple of idols on the 20 th of December.
BL Add. 14732	[Lacuna]	[Lacuna]

⁴⁸ The phrase ܐܬܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ, lit. “up to”, is unusual here, as it implies a duration of time rather than a single point. More usual would be ܐܬܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ, as in ܐܬܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ “on day 22 of Bābah” in §23 below.

⁴⁹ They took: the original reading is the third singular and the final waw was added to make the plural.

§5		
MACA.DM	ΔΑΥΔΠ ΔΕ ΕΤΑΟΥΜΗΩ ΕΦΟΩ ΝΤΕΠΙΡΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ ΝΕΜΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ ΘΑΟΥΤ' ΕΝΟΥΓΕΡΗΟΥ ΔΥΩΕ ΝΑΟΥ ΕΒΟΥΝ ΕΠΙΕΡΦΕΙ ΕΥΣΟΠ ΟΥΟΖ ΑΥΖΕΜΙ	And it happened that when a multitudinous crowd of pagans and Jews gathered to each other, they entered into the temple at once and they sat.
CLM 2879	ΔΑΥΔΠ ΔΕ ΕΤΑΟΥΘΟΥΤ⁷⁸⁴ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΝΧΕΠΙΛΑΟΣ ΝΕΜΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ ΟΥΟΖ ΑΥΩΕ ΝΑΟΥ ΕΒΟΥΝ ΕΠΙΕΡΦΕΙ ΕΥΣΟΠ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΙΟΥΗΒ ΝΤΕΠΙΕΡΦΕΙ ΝΕΜΝΟΥΝΟΥΤ' ΝΑΥΣΕΛΣΩΔ ΞΕΝΖΑΝΦΑΝΟΣ ΗΝΟΥΒ ΝΕΝΖΑΝΚΥΡΩ(Η) ΝΟΥΘΟ ΝΡΗΤ ΜΕΝΕΝΣΑΝΑΙ ΑΥΖΕΜΙ ΝΧΕΠΙΛΑΟΣ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΝΕΜΝΙΝΙΟΥΤ' ΝΤΕΠΙΠΑΛΛΑΤΙΟΝ ΝΤΕΠΟΥΡΟ ΝΕΜΝΙΝΙΟΥΤ' ΝΤΕΤΒΑΚΙ ΕΥΖΕΜΙ ΖΙΧΕΝΖΑΝΘΡΟΝΟΣ ΝΕΝΖΑΝΣΚΑΜΝΙΝ	And it happened that when the people and the Jews gathered and entered the temple— and the priests of the temple and their gods were adorned with gold lamps and candles of many sorts— after these things, all the people and the magistrates of the palace of the king and the chiefs of the city sat, sitting upon thrones and benches.
BL Add. 12172	כְּשֶׁמָּה כְּזִי כְּחָ אַשְׁמִיכָה אֲדִיכָּה כְּזִי כְּ דָּאָה אֲמִלְ מַא אֲבָהּ כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר אֲמִלְ כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר אֲמִלְ כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר אֲמִלְ כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר אֲמִלְ כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר אֲמִלְ כְּזִמָּר כְּזִמָּר	And when the great populace of pagans and Jews was gathered together they entered the pagan temple. Now, the priests of those idols adorned their idols (their empty gods) with gold, silver, furs, and lights and the pagans and Jews all sat together in the pagan temple.
BL Add. 14732	[Lacuna]	[Lacuna]

§6		
MACA.DM	ձգի Եօմի՛՛՛ և չեք քննույ՛՛՛ ի նօղիւ ¹⁷ օղօ՛՛ թե՛ ձգ չեք քննու նենք նիւօ՛՛ տէրենի չե՛՛ ձրէ՛՛ յետրեղերք Եօմիւնեզ Գօր նա՛՛ իւնտրոնօ՛՛ ի նիւօղի՛՛	The high priest came into their midst and said: “Men, our brothers, you know that it is through the providence of the gods that beneficence exists for us.
	Օղօ՛՛ ձնօն շօն թէ՛ ժաբէ Երօն թե՛՛ Է՛՛ ձո՛՛ Եւօ՛՛ ի նօրաթա՛՛ նիւեն ի՛՛ տօյ՛՛ օղօ՛՛ ի՛՛ տեղտեմ՛՛ ձօ Եօյօն նիւեն Եօմիւնեք թօ՛՛ ձաշի ի՛՛ քօյ՛՛ ժեմօյ՛՛	And it is also we for whom it is fitting to complete every sacrificial worship of theirs, and not to suffer anyone who will hinder their service.
	Օղօ՛՛ շիքիւ ձնե՛՛ Է՛՛ ձոն ի՛՛ օղիւ՛՛ ի նեղնիւ շի՛՛ տեննիւօղի՛՛ Եօրօչձոնտ Երօն օղօ՛՛ ի յեղօտթե(ն) Եւօ՛՛ չե՛՛ ձերձնեք Եօմիւնեք ի նիւօղի ի՛՛ նա՛՛ Գօ՛՛ ձեղօղկա՛՛ Եօրեզձօրեմ ի՛՛ քննու ի նօղիւ ի տէրեքաթա Եւօ՛՛ շաթեմօյ՛՛ ի նիւօղի ի նեզի՛՛ ի՛՛ քա՛՛ յօյն Եթեմօյ՛՛ ի նօղիւ չե՛՛ Ի՛՛ օղօ՛՛ ի նեքի ի տէրքիւ ի՛՛ նիւօղի ի թա՛՛ քա՛՛ ձօն յօղի յօղի	And behold! We have brought upon ourselves a great accusation through the gods, so that they are angry with us and might obliterate us, since we have allowed this human magician, Luke, to lead the entire multitude of our country astray from the service of the life-giving gods to the service of a man, namely Jesus. And the temple of the great gods, Apollo, they have considered as nothing.”

BL Add. 14732	בא דא זאן פארט און זאגט ווען איך בין געווען אין ירושלים האט מיר געפאלן און געזאגט אזוי ווי ער האט געזאגט אזוי ווי ער האט געזאגט אזוי ווי ער האט געזאגט	After the priest had spoken one of the chiefs of the Jewish party who was c[alle]d Isaac stood and opened [his] mouth and said, "When I was in Jerusalem, before I came here, and I st[udied] the La[w] [at] the feet of one [...] Law who [...] and Gamaliel and [...] priests of the pe[op]le [...]"
§8		
MACA.DM	ἀγερῶν ἡμετέρων θεογονιῶν ἡμετέρων εὐεργειῶν ἀπολαύ- νοντες οὗτοι περ ἐξελθόντες ἐβόλ- ησαν τὰ εἰδωλά ἀσπασίαι δὲ ἐταχθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἀγρεῖ τηρῶν ἡμετέρας λείπονται ὅτι ἡμετε- ραῖς ἐκείνοις ἠδυνάμην ἐταχθέντες δὲ ἡμετέροις αἱδεσμένοις ἐπὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀρχάντων θεογονίας ἐφ' ᾧ ἀγῶν ἡμετέρους ἀναλαμβάνοντες ἐβόλ- ησαν τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀγῶντος ἐφ' ᾧ ἡμετέρους ἡμῶν Ὁ βασιλεὺς οὖν πάντοτε ζήσων ἵσταται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡμῶν καὶ καταλύσει τὰς εἰδωλολατρίας καὶ τὰς ἀνομίας	The multitude, marvelling, answered in a great voice: "What sort is he, that he rose from the dead?" And it happened that when they said the name of Jesus, all of the idols fell and broke like shards. And when the idolaters saw the destruction of their gods, they became angry in a great madness. They tore their clothes and pulled out the hair of their heads. They went to Rome and said to the king: "The king is alive forever! A man came to our country, and he has led the masses astray through the name of the Galilean. And also our gods, those who give strength to you, he has crushed."

CLM 2879 ⁵⁰	⁷⁸⁷ ⲁϥⲉⲣⲟϥⲱ ⲛⲁⲉⲡⲓⲛⲛⲱ ⲧⲏⲣⲓ ⲃⲉⲛⲟϥⲃⲣⲱⲟϥ ⲛⲟϥⲱⲧ ⲁⲉⲟϥⲁⲱ ⲛⲣⲏⲧⲓ ⲡⲉ ⲛⲁⲉⲡⲓⲣⲁⲛ ⲁⲉⲓⲛⲥ ⲟϥⲟⲣ ⲁⲉⲁϥⲧⲱⲛⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲃⲉⲛⲛⲏ ⲉⲙⲱⲟϥⲧ ⲁⲥⲱⲱⲡⲓ ⲁⲉ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲁⲉⲡⲣⲁ(ⲏ)⁵¹ ⲛⲓⲛⲥ ⲛⲡⲉⲛⲉⲟ ⲛⲓⲛⲟϥⲧⲓ ⲁϥⲣⲉⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲟϥ ⲛⲁⲉⲛⲓⲗⲱⲗⲟⲛ ⲁϥⲃⲟⲛⲃⲉⲛ ⲛⲉⲡⲣⲏⲧⲓ ⲛⲣⲁⲛⲃⲉⲗⲁ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲛⲁϥ ⲁⲉ ⲛⲁⲉⲛⲓⲟϥⲛⲃ ⲉⲡⲧⲁⲕⲟ ⲛⲛⲟϥⲛⲟϥⲧⲓ ⲁϥⲁⲱⲛⲧⲓ ⲃⲉⲛⲟϥⲗⲓⲃⲓ ⲉϥⲟⲱ ⲛⲏⲁⲱⲱ Ⲑϥⲟⲣ ⲁϥⲱⲃⲏ ⲛⲛⲟϥⲣⲃⲱⲥ ⲁϥⲁⲱⲗⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲥⲁⲡⲓϥⲱⲓ ⲛⲧⲉⲧⲟϥⲁⲉ ⲁϥⲱⲉ ⲛⲱⲟϥ ⲁⲉ ⲣⲁⲡⲟϥⲣⲟ ⲛⲏⲣⲱ(ⲏ) ⲉⲣⲣⲏⲓ ⲉⲣⲱⲛⲏ ⲁϥⲱⲱ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉϥⲁⲱ ⲛⲏⲣⲟⲥ ⲁⲉ ⁷⁸⁸ ⲱ ⲛⲉⲛⲛⲓⲛⲁⲓⲁⲓⲁ ⲛⲧⲉⲡⲁ[i] ⲣⲱⲛⲓ ⲁⲉⲓⲛⲥ	The entire multitude answered in a single voice: “What sort is it, this name Jesus?”, and: “Did he rise from the dead?” And it happened that when they said the name of Jesus before the gods, the idols all fell and broke like shards. And when the priests saw the destruction of their gods, they became angry in an exceedingly great madness. And they tore their clothes and pulled out the hair of their heads. And they went before the king Nero in Rome and cried out saying: “Oh,⁵² the sorceries of this man, Jesus!”
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⁵⁰ Beginning of the Cambridge leaf.

⁵¹ The phi and rho are written as a single character.

⁵² On the exclamatory construction ⲱ ⲛⲉⲛ-, see W. E. Crum, *Coptic English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 170b.

BL Add. 12172	(and) the whole assembly [an] swered in one voice and said, "What is this name and (who is this) man Jesus who rose from the dead?" And it happened that at the moment when the name of Jesus was named, the gods of the pagans, those idols, were broken to pieces and were like dust. When the priests saw the destruction of their gods, they were angry and were inflamed with great rage and rent their outer garments and were tearing the hair from their head. Then all of them went to the city of Rome, to the king, and cried out before him saying, "Destroy the witchcraft which is in this name of Jesus (and) through which our gods perish and dissolve and become like dust in a violent wind."	[And] the whole assembly [an] swered in one voice and said, "What is this name and (who is this) man Jesus who rose from the dead?" And it happened that at the moment when the name of Jesus was named, the gods of the pagans, those idols, were broken to pieces and were like dust. When the priests saw the destruction of their gods, they were angry and were inflamed with great rage and rent their outer garments and were tearing the hair from their head. Then all of them went to the city of Rome, to the king, and cried out before him saying, "Destroy the witchcraft which is in this name of Jesus (and) through which our gods perish and dissolve and become like dust in a violent wind."
BL Add. 14732	[Lacuna]	[Lacuna]

§9		
MACA.DM	Κεσαρ νερων πεχαυ νωου χερωμι νιβεν εοριωυ ηπαρην ηενταλχωρα λιθοβογ φατενογαι χελογκας αφωτ εβολ ηε(ν)ναχιχ	Caesar Nero said to them: "Every man who preaches this name in this country I have killed, except for one, namely Luke. He fled from my hands."
	Διφερογυ ηχεπινηυ χεφαι ρω πε πρωμι ετωρεν ητενωρα ογορ ρηππε ρηεντπολις^{18r} προκονησον ογορ ρτςβα ηνινηυ εορογρενογ εβολ ηνινογτ ηρεφτ ηπωη ογορ σκελον αρεωτενπεκκρατος ερβοηοιν τενωρα τηρς ναωε ηεντεγλδανη	The multitude answered: "This indeed is the man who is leading our country astray. And behold! He is in the city (of) Proconnesus, and he is teaching the masses to move themselves away from the life-giving gods. And if your strength does not help, almost our entire country will enter into his deceit." ⁵³
	Εταφωτεν δε ενα ηχεπογρο αφχωντ αφβραχεχ ηνεφναχ`ρι Τοτε αφοωρη νεκατονταρχος β νενπογυ ηνατοι εορογενε	And when the king heard these things, he became angry and gnashed his teeth. Then he sent two centurions and their 800 soldiers to fetch him.

53 In his translation, Hyvernath understands the Coptic σκελον "almost" (Greek σχεδόν), as modifying the subject of the following apodosis – "ferme universa regio nostra ibit in eius errorem": H. Hyvernath, *Acta Martyrum* (Vol. 2.2. CSCO 125. Leuven: Peeters, 1950), 2; see also the translation in Balestri, 'Il martirio di S. Luca evangelista,' 138. This seems the most likely interpretation, although one might expect the adverb to stand before or after the apodosis. It appears that σκελον tends to stand before or after the sentence or clause to which it belongs, regardless of the element it is modifying semantically. Compare, for example, the Sahidic translation of Heb 9:22, in which it precedes the entire sentence although it is modifying the subject ηκα ηιη "everything": αγω σκελον ρηπεςνοφ ηκα ηιη φαγτββο καταπνομος "and almost everything is purified in blood according to the law" (ed. Horner, *The Coptic version of the New Testament in the Southern dialect* [7 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911–1924], 5:74). On the use of σκελον in Bohairic, see Müller, *Grammatik des Bohairischen* (Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica 24. Hamburg: Widmaier, 2021), 529; on the position of borrowed Greek adverbs, see also 523.

CLM 2879	Ποῦρο ΔΕ ἀφ'ερωτῶ πεχάσιν ἡρώω χερσὶν ἡβεν ἐωνὰρ-τ' ἐπαίραν ἥενταίχωρα αἰρεθωγῶ φαιτενογαί χελούκας ἀφ'αυτ' ἐβολ ἥενναχιχ ἀγερῶν ἡχενίνην εὔχῳ ἡμῶς χερσίνε ις π' ἀ' ἡρώω ἐτενμαγ φ'τσω ἥεντενχωρα ἥενπαίραν χείης οὔρος ις φαί φχῆ ἥεν-πολις προκονήσιος Ζαννῶν ἡμνῖνι ἀφαγοῦ ἥεννῇ ἐτωῶνι ποῦθο ἡρη-τ' ἀφχωντ ΔΕ ἡνωτῶ ἡχεποῦρο οὔρος ἀφ'πραχ[⁷⁸⁹ ρεχ...]	And the king answered and said to them: "Every man who believes in this name in this country I have killed, except for one, namely Luke. He fled from my hands. The multitudes answered, saying: "Behold, this very man! He is teaching in our country in this name, Jesus, and behold! This man is in the city of Proconnesus. Hosts of wonders he has performed on those who are sick in many ways." And the king became exceedingly angry, and he gnashed [...]
BL Add. 12172	. . . መለ ነቀሎ ያዩኑ ክልሉ ቤተ ክርስቲያን በመሆኑም አገሩን ያዘነጋገሩ ስለሆነው . . . የእርሱ ፊት ለፊት እንዲሁም ሌሎችም ሕዝቦችን ያዘነጋገሩ ሲሆን . . . መለ ነቀሎ ያዩኑ ክልሉ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ስለሚገኝበት ሁኔታ . . . መለ ነቀሎ ያዩኑ ሕይወት እንዲቆይ ያደረጓቸው ሲሆን . . . እርሱም ሌሎችም ሕዝቦችን ያዘነጋገሩ ሲሆን . . . መለ ነቀሎ ያዩኑ ሕይወት እንዲቆይ ያደረጓቸው ሲሆን . . .	King Nero answered and said to them, "All of those who believe in this name I have destroyed." The priests said to him, "There is a certain man among us called Luke and by means of this name he has performed wonders and signs and has led astray the whole country of the Romans." The king answered and said to them, "Where is this man?" They replied, "In the city of Prokonnesus."⁵⁴ Then the king was inflamed with wicked rage against Luke and gnashed his teeth like a lion and ordered four <i>protectores</i> and 200 soldiers to go fetch Saint Luke the evangelist.
BL Add. 14732	[Lacuna]	[Lacuna]

Here, the text of CLM 2879 breaks off

54 Mentioned by Paladius in his fourteenth oration on the trial of Chrysostom. See https://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/palladius_dialogus_02_text.htm#C14.

§10		
MACA.DM	ΛΟΓΚΑΣ ΔΕ ΕΤΑΦΩΤΕΜ ΑΦΩΟΥΤ ΉΠΗΝΗΘ ΕΤΑΓΝΑΖΤ ΑΦΤΣΒΩ ΝΩΟΥ ΉΕΠΙΣΑΔΙ ΉΦΤ ΕΘΡΟΥΩΠΠ ΕΥΤΑΧΡΗΟΥΤ ΉΕΠΙΝΑΖΤ ΕΠΕ(Ν)Ω ΙΗΣ ΠΧ ΟΥΟΖ ΉΤΕΩΤΕΜΖΛΙ ΦΟΡΧΟΥ ΕΡΟΥ ΙΤΕ ΦΗΟΥ ΙΤΕ ΠΩΝΉ ΙΤΕ ΠΩΛΕΜ ΉΝΙΕΥΠΑΡΧΟΝΤΑ ΙΤΕ ΟΛΙΨΙC ΉΒΕΝ ΑΝΟΚ ΓΑΡ ΠΕΧΑΥ ΤΉΝΑΨΕ ΝΗΙ ΚΑΤΑΦΡΗΤ ΕΤΑΥΘΑΨΥ ΝΗΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΕΝΦΤ ΝΑΙ ΔΕ <Ε>ΤΑΦΧΟΤΟΥ ΑΥΧΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΦΧΑΥ ΜΗΟΣ ΧΕΤΖΙΡΗΝΗ ΉΤΕΦΤ ΕΣΕΨΑΠΠ ΝΕΝΑΥΤΕΝ ΣΑΤΟΤΟΥ ΑΥΣΑΤΕΜ ΧΕΑΥΉΩΝΤ ΕΤΠΟΛΙC ΉΧΕΝΙΜΑΤΟΙ ΉΤΕΠΟΥΡΟ ΑΥΧΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΑΥΧΑΥ ΉΤΕΝΤΖΟΥΤ	And Luke, when he heard (this), gathered the believing masses. He taught to them from the word of God so that they might be strengthened in the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and so that nothing might separate them from him, either death or life or the seizing of possessions or any tribulation. “For I,” he said, “will depart as is determined for me by God.” And when he had said these things, he dispatched them, saying: “May the peace of God be with you.” As soon as they heard that the soldiers of the king had approached the city, they all dispersed, and they abandoned him in fear.
BL Add. 12172	כאל אס כחיס כאל ה כאל .כחש ,מכ מכ כחיסמכ ככחש כחל אכח כחיס אכח כח כח .מכ כחס ,מכחכ כחל כחל	At that hour, Saint Luke was teaching a great crowd of believers, and when he knew in the Spirit that soldiers were approaching the place where he was, he dismissed the crowds.
BL Add. 14732	[Lacuna]	[Lacuna]

§11		
MACA.DM	Ἐταφσινι Δε ἡχεπιάγιος λογκας ριχενφιον αφχιμι ἡογβελλο ἡρῳνι εφριωμι ἑταρετεβτ πεχαφ ναφ	And when Saint Luke passed by the sea, he found an old man casting a hook in order to fish. He said to him:
	18v Δεαισεροκ ἡοοκ πρῳνι ετταρετεβτ ἀνογ ραροι ἡτατανοκ ἐννι ετεσιπῳα ἡτεκαίτογ	“I say to you,⁵⁵ fisherman, come to me and I will tell you about those things which it is fitting for you to do.”
	Ἐταφῳντ Δε εροφ ογορ ἑταφναγ επρηνот ετρενπεφρο αφογῳτ^τ ἡνοφ	And when he approached him, and when he saw the grace which was in his face, he venerated him.
	Πεγαγγελιστис εθογαβ Δε πεχαφ χερηπτε ις πογρο αφογῳρπ ἡραννατοι ἡσῳι ογορ τῆμι χεφνατἀποφασις ἑ^ρροι φαι γαρ πε φογῳτ ἡφτ	And the holy evangelist said: “Behold! The king has sent soldiers after me, and I know that he will pass a death sentence upon me, for this is the will of God.
	Οι ογν νακ ἡναιχῳν χαγ ἡενογνα εφτογβηογτ ἡεππεκνι ογορ σενασινῳτ νακ επῳνῃ νενερ	Therefore, take these books. Put them in a pure place in your house, and they will lead you to eternal life.”
	Πρῳνι Δε ναφῆνι εογκογχι νῳτ πε εταφει νηιχῳν αφῳτ ἡρῳτογ αφῳτπ εφριῳτ ἡπισαχι ἡτεφτ ἡενηαι νιβεν φραν Δε ἡπρῳνι πε σιλας	And the man knew how to read a little. When he received the books, he read from them, and he kept preaching the word of God everywhere. And the name of the man is Silas.
	Κεγαρ ἡοοφ ρῳφ αφῳτπ ἡογῳτπ ἡφτ	Thus, he too became a chosen one of God.

55 Balestri interprets the phrase αἰσεροκ as a contraction of αἰσε εροκ, equivalent to αἰσεροκ “I say to you”: Balestri, ‘Il Martirio Di S. Luca Evangelista’, 138 n. 1. The contraction is attested in Sahidic: see Crum, *Coptic English Dictionary*, 755b. However, the spelling σεροκ would be somewhat unusual.

BL Add. 14732	[...] מַשֶּׁה [...] and he saw [...] וַיֹּאמֶר לְ[הוּם] [...] and he said to [him] [...] וַיְהִי כִּשְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים [...] of completion of [...] [... מִלִּפְנֵי הַ[בְּרִית] אֵלֶּיךָ וְאַתָּה יִדְעָה אֵת כֻּלָּם אֲנִי מְבַרְכְּךָ. וְאַתָּה יִדְעָה לִּי אֶת־הַמַּלְאָכִים הַזֵּהֵם. [... לְפָנָיו וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וַיִּבְרָךְ. וְכַךְ עָשָׂה, וְ [...]]	[...] and he saw [...] and he said to [him] [...] of completion of [...] these boo[k]s of mine [...] And you should read in them c[onstantly] and fr[...] will be revealed to you a country of healing and of life for yo[...] and for many with you." When he looked at the face of [...] [...]]
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§12		
MACA.DM	ⲗⲟⲥⲁⲉ ⲉⲣⲉ[ⲁ]ⲭⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ ⲛⲭⲉⲡⲓⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲗⲟγⲕⲁⲥ ⲁγⲓ ⲛⲭⲉⲡⲓⲕⲭⲏⲗⲏⲣⲓⲱⲛ ⲛ̅ ⲛⲉⲛⲡⲟγϥ ⲛ̅ⲙⲁⲧⲟⲓ ⲉβⲟγⲛ ⲉⲧⲃⲁⲕⲓ ⲡⲣⲟⲕⲟⲛⲛⲏⲥⲟⲥ ⲁγⲁⲙⲟⲓ ⲛ̅ⲡⲓⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲗⲟγⲕⲁⲥ ⲁγⲥⲟⲛⲉϥ ⲁγⲟⲗϥ ⲛ̅ⲡⲟγⲣⲟ	And as Saint Luke was speaking with him, the two centurions and their 800 soldiers entered the city (of) Proconnesus. They seized Saint Luke, bound him, and took him to the king.
	ⲛⲟⲟϥ ⲁⲉ ⲡⲓⲛⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲟⲥ ⲛⲁϥⲥⲛⲟγ ⲉⲑⲧⲉ ⲉϥⲭⲱ ⲛ̅ⲙⲟⲥ ⲭⲉⲧⲱⲉⲣⲉⲙⲟⲧ ⲛⲧⲟⲧⲕ ⲡⲁⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲙⲥ ⲡⲭⲥ ⲟγⲟⲗ ⲧⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲉⲑⲟγⲁⲃ ⲭⲉⲁⲕⲁⲓⲧ ⲛ̅ⲱⲩⲡⲏⲣ ⲉⲛⲉⲕⲏⲕⲁ ⲩⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲣⲉϥ¹⁹ ⲧⲁⲛⲃⲟ ⲟγⲟⲗ ⲁϥⲟⲗⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲉϥⲥⲟⲛⲉ ⲛ̅ⲡⲉⲙⲟⲟ ⲛ̅ⲡⲟγⲣⲟ ⲟγⲟⲗ ⲡⲉⲭⲉⲡⲟγⲣⲟ ⲛⲁϥ ⲃⲉⲛⲟγⲭⲱⲛⲧ ⲭⲉⲛⲟⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲗⲟγⲕⲁⲥ ⲡⲏ ⲉⲧⲱⲉⲑⲟⲣⲧⲉⲣ ⲛ̅ⲧⲣⲱⲙⲁⲛⲓⲁ ⲧⲏⲣⲥ ⲟγⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ⲛⲓⲟγⲧⲉ ⲁⲕⲱⲉⲣⲱⲩⲣⲟγ ⲗⲓⲧⲉⲛⲛⲓⲛⲁⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲁⲕⲧⲥⲁⲃⲟ ⲉⲣⲱⲟγ ⲗⲓⲧⲉⲛⲡⲁγⲗⲟⲥ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲉⲧⲁⲓⲧⲁⲕⲟϥ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲡⲉϥⲛ̅ⲡⲱⲁ	And he, the blessed one, was praising God, saying: "I give thanks to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, and I praise your holy name, since you have made me a companion to your life-giving sufferings." And he stood bound before the king. And he (Nero) said to him angrily: "You are Luke, the one who disturbs all of the Roman empire, ⁵⁶ and you have upset the gods through the sorceries which you were taught by Paul, this one whom I destroyed according to what he deserved."
	ⲁϥⲉⲣⲟγϥ ⲛ̅ⲭⲉⲡⲓⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲡⲉⲭⲁϥ ⲭⲉⲥⲥⲃⲏⲙⲟγ ⲭⲉⲱⲟγⲛⲓⲁⲧⲉⲛⲟⲛⲛⲟγ ⲉϥⲱⲡ ⲁγⲱⲁⲛⲱⲉⲣⲱⲛⲛⲟγ ⲟγⲟⲗ ⲛⲥⲉⲭⲉⲡⲉⲧⲣⲱⲟγ ⲛ̅ⲃⲉⲛ ⲛ̅ⲥⲁⲑⲏⲛⲟγ	The saint answered and said: "It is written: 'Blessed are you if you are despised and if every evil thing is said against you.' ⁵⁷
	ⲛ̅ⲓⲗⲉⲃⲛⲟγⲓ ⲓⲁⲣ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲡⲓⲥⲁⲃ ⲡⲁγⲗⲟⲥ ⲥⲉⲥⲟγⲧⲱⲛ ⲉⲛⲁⲩⲱ ⲟγⲟⲗ ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲧⲥⲁⲃⲟⲓ ⲉⲣⲱⲟγ ⲗⲁⲛⲥⲁⲭⲓ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲡⲱⲛⲃ ⲛⲉ	For the deeds of the teacher Paul are exceedingly straight, and those things which he taught are words of life.
	ⲙⲁⲓⲁ ⲓⲁⲣ ⲧⲥⲱⲟγⲛ ⲛ̅ⲗⲓ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲃⲛⲁ ⲉⲡⲁⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲙⲥ ⲡⲭⲥ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲉⲑⲛⲁⲧⲁⲕⲟⲕ ⲃⲉⲛⲡⲓⲛⲓⲁ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲧⲉϥⲟⲣⲓⲛ	As for sorceries, I know none, save for my Lord Jesus Christ, this man who will destroy you through the spirit of his wrath."

56 The term used here in Coptic is ⲣⲱⲙⲁⲛⲓⲁ, rather than ⲣⲱⲙⲏ which is normally used for the city. The term appears in an 8th century letter by the Theban monk Frange (O. Frange 379 ll. 13–14), in which he refers to Christ as "the saviour of the world from Rome to Anti-Lebanon" (ⲡⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ ⲛ̅ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲭⲓⲛⲧⲉⲗⲣⲱⲙⲁⲛⲓⲁ ⲱⲣⲁⲛⲧⲁⲛⲧⲓⲃⲁⲛⲟⲥ). Boud'hors and Heurtel suggest that this phrase refers to all of the Roman empire up to its eastern borders: A. Boud'hors and C. Heurtel, *Les ostraca coptes de la TT 29. Autour du moine Frangé* (2 vols. Études d'archéologie thébaine 3. Brussels: CReA-Patrimoine, 2010), 1:256.

57 (Matt 5:11).

[illegible]

58 (Mt. 10:11-14; Lk. 10:5-11).

59 (Mt. 5:11–12 Peshitta; cf. Luke 6:22–23).

§14		
MACA.DM	ΤΟΤΕ ΝΕΡΩΝ ΠΟΥΡΟ ΑΦΟΥΑΓΑΖΕΝΙ ΕΘΡΟΥΣΟΛΚΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΗΣΕΣΙΟΥ ΕΡΟΥ ΗΖΑΝΗΟΥΤ ΗΜΑΣΙ 19v ΘΑΤΕΝΕΦΕΝΩΥ ΖΩΡΠΗ ΗΠΚΑΖΙ ΕΥΧΩ ΗΝΟΣ ΝΑΚ ΧΕΤΗΝΟΥ ΣΕΝΑΣΙ ΗΠΩΡΙΩ ΝΕΜΑΚ Ν . ΧΕΝΗΝΟΥΤ ΕΤΑΚΤΕΡΩΡΩΡΟΥ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΕΩΟΥ ΠΕ ΕΤΑΓΙΝΙ ΕΧΩΚ ΗΤΑΛΙΜΩΡΙΑ ΔΑΦΕΡΟΥΔ ΝΧΕΠΑΓΙΟΣ ΛΟΥΚΑΣ ΧΕΩ ΝΙΑΤΖΗΤ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΑΤΚΑΤ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΑΤΗΟΥΤ ΝΟΥΡΩΟΥ ΙΣΧΕ ΔΙΩΡΩΦΕΡ ΗΝΕΤΕΝΝΟΥΤ ΉΝΦΡΑ(Ν) ΗΠΑΘΕ ΙΗΣ ΠΧΕ ΟΥΟΖ ΗΠΟΥΓΕΡΒΟΗΘΗΝ ΕΡΩΟΥ ΗΜΙΝ ΗΜΩΟΥ ΝΑΩ ΗΡΗΤ ΣΕΝΑΣΙ ΗΠΩΡΙΩ ΗΖΑΝΡΩΝΙ ΚΕΓΑΡ ΚΕΡΝΕΘΕΡΕ ΖΩΚ ΤΗΝΟΥ ΧΕΗΠΟΥΧΟΣ ΝΑΚ ΕΠΓΗΡΥ ΧΕΔΗΝΟΥ ΗΤΑΛΙΜΩΡΙΑ ΕΧΩ{1}<4> ΕΘΒΕΧΕΡΑΝΕΒΟ ΝΕ ΗΒΕΛΛΕ ΟΥΟΖ ΗΚΟΥΡ ΝΗ ΕΤΕΙΝΗΟΝ ΠΠΔ ΉΝΡΩΟΥ	Then Nero the king commanded that he be stretched and beaten with calf sinew until his blood drenched the earth, saying to him: “Now the gods which you upset will take revenge on you, and it is they who have brought this punishment upon you.” Saint Luke answered: “Oh senseless and ignorant and godless kings! Since I have upset your gods through the name of my lord Jesus Christ, and they have not been able to help themselves, how will they take revenge on men? For you yourself bear witness now that they have not said to you at all ‘bring this judgment upon him’, because they are blind and deaf mutes, those in whose mouths there is no breath.”⁶¹
BL Add. 12172	ⲁⲩⲉⲣⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲕⲁⲗⲁ ⲙⲉ ⲛⲁⲙ ⲕⲁⲙ ⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲙⲁⲗ ⲕⲁⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲕⲁⲛⲁ ⲛⲁ ⲟⲩⲙ .ⲕⲁⲓⲛ ⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁ ⲙⲁⲗ ⲙⲉⲕⲁⲛⲁ ⲙⲁⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲁⲗ ⲕⲁⲙⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲁ ⲕⲁⲙ ⲕⲁⲙ ⲕⲁⲙⲁ ⲕⲁⲙ ⲁ ⲙⲁⲗⲁ ⲟⲩⲙ ⲕⲁⲙⲁⲙⲁ	Then the king ordered he be beaten with a whip until his whole holy body was wasted and his all his blood was poured out on the ground. But in his heart Saint Luke was praising God, who strengthened him against these harsh and bitter tortures.
BL Add. 14732	[Lacuna]	[Lacuna]

61 Compare Psalm 114.

§17		
MACA.DM	Τότε πογρο αφογαρσαρνη εκωχι ηπεφснаρ νογίнан εвол еqxω ημος χετíнаxωχι εвол ηтxιx етсгаи ηηηпλaηη ογορ маrinaγ χείηс ναωγταλлок	Then the king gave the command to cut off his right arm, saying: “I will cut off the hand which writes these deceits, and let me see whether Jesus will be able to heal you.”
	Сагогq аqоугоwηгeφxιx εвол аqι ηxεоускепoλaгoр аqт noγωaω naq ηenпeφcнаг aφηεгq εвол ηηoφ	Immediately, he stretched out his hand. A torturer came and he struck him in his arm, and he separated it from him.
	Πάγιос δε λογκας πεχαq χεεπλaη κxω ηηος χεπαηoγт оγελι пе тíηaгaηoк eгeφxoη	And Saint Luke said: “Since you say that my God is nothing, I will tell about his power.”
	Ογορ егагoвг peχαq χεπαoс ηηс пхс φη eгaηxαгoв ηиβeη ηсoη aηoγaггeη ηсoφ χeηooк пе псoггηг ηтγxη ηиβeη	And when he prayed, he said: “My Lord Jesus Christ, the one for whom we have renounced everything and followed, since you are the saviour of every soul!
	Мπεгтгoηк eηηeгaηeлeс eгaиaггoγ ηη eтeмi epωoγ 20v ηeηηη eтeηи epωoγ aη ηпepaис eoвηг aλλa eoβeпeкpaη eooγaв гиa ηгoγoγгeηxoc ηxεηeηeηoc χeαqeoη noγηoγт	Do not pay heed to the acts of carelessness which I have done, those which I know and those which I don’t know. Do not do it because of me, but rather because of your holy name, so that the nations may not say: “Where is their God?”
	Ναι eгaφxoгoγ аqоугоwηгeφxιx ηxαcη εвол аqάmoηи ηпeφcнаг noγίnan eгaγxoxq εвол еqηη eпeчгг aφгггq eпeφηa cагогq аqepпeφpηт ηгeωopгг	When he had said these things, he stretched out his left hand and seized his right forearm, which had been cut off and was on the ground, and he put it in its place. Immediately, it became like before.

§18		
MACA.DM	Ἐταφναγ δὲ ἵκετο πορρο πεχαρ ναρρεντ̣ς κυκλῆτος χεῖμπλχος νωρτεν χεογνιωτ̣ ἡναγος πε παρρωι ἀγερογῶν ἵκετῆς ἰαγος πεχαρ χεῖννεσῶρρι νηι ἵταερμαγος ἀλλα ρινα ἵτεκεῖνι εἴχον ἵτεπαῶς ἱῆς οὐορ χεῖντ̣φντ̣ ἀν ἵτοτϣ ἡφνογ ἡπαικοςνος ἀρῶμονι ἵτεφχλχλ ἀρχας ἐπεσντ̣ ἡπεσρηντ̣ ὀν	And when the king saw (this), he said before the senate: “Did I not say to you that this man was a great sorcerer?” The Saint answered and said: “It shall not be for me that I become a sorcerer, but rather so that you may know the power of my Lord Jesus, and that I do not run from death in this world.” And he took his hand and he place it on the ground in its manner again.
BL Add. 12172	κωμα ραο κωιϣ κωλο ρα κω ρα ρλθι ρλκ ρωλο κθιαιαθι κθι κωαθι ρωλο δα .κωαυλ ρωλο κωμα κωκ κθιαιαθι ρα δακ ρα κωιϣ ρα κωλο .ρωλο υ ιαο .κωκ ρα κωκ κωκ κω αω ιαο κθιαιαθι ρα ,κωκ κω .κωκ ρωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κω ια ,δακ ρα ιαο κωκ κωκ κω ια κω κω ααθι δα ρα κω ρα κωκ ρα ρα .κωκ αα κωκ ααθι υλο .κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ.	Then when the cruel king and all of those who were around him saw this miracle which happened, a great wonder fell upon them on account of this miracle which happened before all of their eyes. But the cruel king, who had neither human nor divine intelligence, was rubbing his face from confusion and said, “See how great is the witchcraft of this Galilean!” Saint Luke replied and said, “I am not a magician, but in order to make known to you the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, I will not flee from the death of this world.” And he took his arm again and set it on the ground.
BL Add. 14732	[...] ια ρα ιαο [...] [...] [[ι]α .κωκ αα ια κω ααθι .κω κωκ κωκ ρα κω ρα ια ρα κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ κωκ	[...] And he said, “For not [...] [in order to] make known the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [that] I will not [f]lee from the death of this world.” And he took his arm again and set it on the ground.

§19		
MACA.DM	ἘΤΑΥΝΑΥ ΔΕ ἔΝΑΙ ἸΧΕΝΙΜΗΩ ΔΥΩΩ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΥΧΩ ἸΜΟΣ ΧΕΟΥΑΙ ΠΕ Φῖ ἸΠΛΑΓΙΟΣ ΛΟΥΚΑΣ ΟΥΟΞ ΑΥΗΝΑΖῖ ΕΠΙΧῖ ἸΧΕΡΑΝΗΩ ἸΡΩΝΙ ΝΕΜΖΑΝΖΙΟΝΙ ΝΕΜΠΕΠΑΡΧΟΣ ἸΤΕΡΩΝΗ ΝΕΜΠΕΦΗ ΤΗΡΦ ΠΟΥΡΟ ΔΕ ΑΦΟΥΔΖΣΑΖΗ ΕΘΡΟΥΟΛΟΥ ΣΑΒΟΛ ἸΤΠΟΛΙΣ ἸΣΕΘΕΤΩΤΟΥ ἸΤΣΗΦΙ ΟΥΟΞ ΠΑΙΡΗῖ ΔΥΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΥΣΟΠ ΝΟΥΕΞΟΥ ΝΟΥΩΤ ἸΣΟΥΓῖΒ ἸΠΑΟΠΙ ΞΕΝΟΥΖΙΡΗΦΙ ΔΜΗΝ	And when the masses saw these things, they cried out saying: “One is the God of Saint Luke.” And hosts of men and women and the eparch of Rome and all of his house believed in Christ. And the king commanded that they be taken from the city and cut themselves with the sword. And thus they ended their lives together in a single day, on day 22 of Bābah, in peace, amen.
	21 ἘΤΑΦΟΥΩ ΔΕ ἸΧΕΠΟΥΡΟ ἔΙΝΙ ἸΖΑΝΚΕΒΑΣΑΝΟΣ ΕΞΡΗ ΕΧΕΝΠΛΑΓΙΟΣ ἸΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΤΗΣ ἸΠΕΝΑῖΤΣΥΝΚΛΗΤΟΣ ΧΑΦ ΕΥΧΩ ἸΜΟΣ ΧΕΜΟΙ ἸΤΕΦΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ ΕΡΟΥ ἸΜΟΝ ΦΗΑΣΩΡΕΝ ἸΤΠΟΛΙΣ ΤΗΡΣ	And when the king wished to bring some other tortures down upon the holy evangelist, those of the senate did not permit him, saying: “Give his sentence to him, else he will lead the entire city astray.”
BL Add. 12172	ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܝܬ ܥܠܡ ܕܐܠܗ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܐܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܥܠܡ	Now, when Anatolius, chief of the king’s soldiers, saw these wonders and miracles that God performed through his servant Luke the evangelist, he believed in the Lord, he and his entire household, who were 267 souls in number. Then that wicked king Nero ordered that all of them be killed at the edge of the sword and thus all of these saints met their end in a single day, for faith in the Messiah, thirteen (days) before the ides of December, the month of the Romans, and the 18th (day) of the month of <i>Baobi</i>⁶² of the Egyptians.

62 That is Bābah. See the note above on the Syriac title for the spelling.

BL Add. 14732	[...]
[...] Now, Anatolius, the chief of the king's soldiers [...] these wonders and miracles which God performed through his servant and preacher blessed Luke the evangelist, he believed [...] he and his entire household and his family, who [...] and 67 [so]Juls. [...] wicked king [...] [Ne]ro ordered [...]	

Here, the text of BL Add. 14732 breaks off

§20		
MACA.DM	ΤΟΤΕ ΠΟΥΡΟ ΑΦΕΡΚΕΛΕΥΙΝ ΕΘΡΟΥΛΙ ΝΤΕΦΑΦΕ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΣΕΡΙΤΥ ΕΟΥΣΟΚ ΕΦΟΙ ΝΦΑΩΙ ΝΩΩ ΝΣΕΡΙΤΥ ΕΦΙΟΙ ΝΙΚΕΝΤΗΡΙΩΝ ΔΕ ΑΥΣΟΚΩ ΕΠΗΝΑ ΕΙΡΙ ΝΑΦ ΚΑΤΑΤΚΕΛΕΥΣΙΣ ΗΠΟΥΡΟ ΕΤΑΦΩΡΩ ΔΕ ΗΝΕΦΧΙΧ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΧΕΠΑΓΙΟΣ ΛΟΥΚΑΣ ΑΦΤΩΒΕ ΗΠΑΙΡΗΤ ΕΦΧΩ ΗΝΟΣ ΧΕΠΑΘΕ ΙΗΣ ΠΧΣ ΧΩ ΝΗΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΗΝΑΠΑΡΑΠΤΩΝΑ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΟΥΟΖ ΟΠΤ ΖΩ ΝΕΜΠΑΙΩΤ ΠΑΥΛΟΣ ΕΞΡΙΝ ΞΕ(Ν) ΤΕΚΜΕΤΟΥΡΟ	Then the king commanded that they take off his head and cast it into a sack, which was half sand, and throw it into the sea. And the centurions dragged him there to act towards him according to the command of the king. And when Saint Luke stretched out his hands, he prayed in this manner saying: “My Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me all my transgressions, and also count me and my father Paul in your kingdom.”

§21		
MACA.DM	Նաւ եղչաւ նմաօղ ազմօքի ընօղ(ն) երօղ նչեքլանի՝ Կօս ընօլի նքեզաքե եօսի նքաւրի նչեքեչքի	While he saying these things, the executioner walked towards him to take his head, while the prayer was half done.
	Տատօղ ազօղան նչեքեքալ նօյնան նքլանիօս եքլան ռազօի ռօյքալ նօչաղք քե	Immediately, the left eye of the executioner opened, since he was one-eyed.
	Տատօղ ազքաղքեքի եօլ ազօղօքդ նքլաքօքօլօս եղչաւ նիօս չեալերնօւ քրօնի նքի քնաղք եքլչ չեքեքօղ քե քի քեօնօղքեքնի	Forthwith, he threw away the sword and he worshipped the apostle, saying: “I have sinned, man of God. I believe in Christ that he is truly God.”
	Տօք նիքնքիքիքիքն ձ[գ]քլի ն _{21v} թնաղքի նքլանիօս նքօքք նեքեքքք քաղիօս լօղքաք նքալեքքք քա օն օղօղ քալքիք աղքիք եքլօք աղքաղք եքլօն	Then the centurions struck the neck of the executioner first, and subsequently also Saint Luke on this very day, and thus he was thrown into the sack and cast into the sea.

65 Water damage to the page has left a lacuna of two words.

The Hymn of the Pearl: Apocryphal Acts, Women and Later Greek Conceptions of the Soul

Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta

Abstract: This article examines the Hymn of the Pearl within the Acts of Thomas in relation to later Greek conceptions of the soul and their reception in early Christian and Gnostic literature. Bringing together three central themes prominent in the scholarship of Professor Jan Bremmer – the soul, women, and the Apocryphal Acts –, the study first outlines the development of the concept of the soul from early Greek thought to Middle Platonism, emphasizing its increasing autonomy, divine origin, and estrangement from the body. It then analyzes the *Exegesis of the Soul* (NHC II,6), highlighting the consistent portrayal of the soul as female and its descent and degradation through embodied existence, followed by redemption through divine intervention. The article then proceeds to a close reading of the Hymn of the Pearl, arguing against the widespread view that it is a later interpolation and defending its originality within the Acts of Thomas. Through comparative analysis, it demonstrates strong structural and thematic parallels between the Hymn and the *Exegesis of the Soul*, suggesting that both texts adapt a shared Platonic myth of the soul's descent and return. While the *Exegesis of the Soul* preserves the feminine characterization of the soul, the Hymn transforms it into a male figure, reflecting different narrative and theological aims. Ultimately, the study argues that these texts emerge from a common second-century Mediterranean intellectual milieu and that the Hymn of the Pearl should be considered integral to the *Acts of Thomas*.

Keywords: Hymn of the Pearl; *Acts of Thomas*; Middle Platonic views of the Soul; *Exegesis of the Soul* (NHC II,6); Descent and ascent of the soul

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Introduction

On the occasion of Jan Bremmer's birthday, I have chosen to organize my article around some of Jan's favorite themes. First is the theme of the "soul," to which Jan devoted considerable attention, and a pivotal book, his *Early Greek Concept of the Soul* from 1983 – a work that, forty years after its publication, remains essential for all those investigating this aspect of the human being. Next is the theme of "women" or femininity, which holds particular significance for Jan's oeuvre, witness the title of the first volume of his "Kleine Schriften," in Mohr Siebeck, *Maidens, Magic, and Martyrs in*

Early Christianity.¹ The third subject I choose is, of course, “Apocryphal Acts,” a theme that has left an indelible mark on his scientific output since the end of the 1990s – a period that coincided with my pursuit of a Theology PhD at the University of Groningen. During this time, the collaboration with Caspar Caroli University in Budapest played a crucial role in providing impetus to the research on the Apocryphal Acts in Groningen and as well as to *Studies in Early Christian Apocrypha*, a book series edited by Jan and published by Peeters, which is set to reach its 24th volume shortly.

The following pages will address all three themes. Firstly, I will provide a preliminary approach to the soul, focusing especially on later Greek views. Unlike early Greek conceptions, which timidly recognised the soul’s independence from the body for the first time,² later views asserted the soul’s absolute autonomy due to its divine origin, emphasising its unnatural relationship with both body and world. Among other sources, I will refer to the *Exegesis of the Soul*, a treatise in Nag Hammadi Codex II,³ which exemplifies this later Greek perspective on the soul and simultaneously connects it with the second theme of this article. The *Exegesis of the Soul* not only presents the soul as overtly female but also draws a parallel between its descent to earth and a maiden abandoning the house of her father.⁴

Regarding the third theme, “Apocryphal Acts of Apostles,” I will delve into the *Acts of Thomas* – a subject that has captured my attention during the last few years and was the focal point of the twentieth volume of the *Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha*.⁵ More specifically, I will focus on the *Hymn of the Pearl*, a section of the *Acts* that since the end of the 19th century has

1 Jan Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays I* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

2 Jan Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press 1983).

3 *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHC II,6) 127, 18–137, 27.

4 On the theme, see Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, “Platonism and the Expository Treatise,” on the Soul (NHC II,6),” in Luc van der Stockt et al. (eds.), *Gods, Daimones, Rituals, Myths and History of Religions in Plutarch’s Works* (Logan-Málaga: Universidad de Málaga and Utah State University, 2010), 345–62; Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, “‘Come out of your Country and your Kinsfolk’: Allegory and Ascent of the Soul in The Expository Treatise on the Soul (NHC II,6),” in Martin Goodman, George van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten (eds.), *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 401–20.

5 See now Israel Muñoz Gallarte and Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta (eds.), *New Trends in the Research on the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Leuven: Peeters, 2024).

frequently been suspected of being an alien interpolation into the primitive text, but which I consider an integral part of the *Acts of Thomas*.

The common thread throughout these three sections is primarily Jan Bremmer's scholarly work, to which we all, especially myself, owe so much. Secondly, it is also the soul's femininity, a recurring theme in all the treatments of the soul this article addresses, except for the *Hymn of the Pearl* in the *Acts of Thomas*, where the soul is represented by a "prince from the East." Does this *Hymn* alter the gender of the soul for the sake of the story? Was the protagonist of the *Hymn of the Pearl* originally a man or a woman (or androphile or gynephile, according to the more politically correct terms recently shaped by modern behavioural sciences)? I hope to shed at least some light on these questions. In an age in which gender boundaries are blurring, my question might sound futile. However, assessing the issue properly may help us both to unravel the question of the *Hymn's* origin and its time of composition, and perhaps also to definitively affirm the *Hymn's* belonging to the *Acts of Thomas*.

1. The Soul

If it is true that "in mainstream fifth-century Greek culture, belief in an afterlife of the soul was weak and unclear,"⁶ the development that the concept of the soul underwent in the following five centuries is surprising. By the time of Plutarch, almost no one doubts the pre- and after-life of the soul, as the numerous ancient overviews of opinions on the soul properly record.⁷ Moreover, from a timid belief in the soul's mobility and its capacity to temporarily leave the body in the earlier period, Greco-Roman texts assert the soul's absolute separateness and independence from the body.

Consequently, Plato's insistence in several of his dialogues on the soul's pre-existence seems to have paid off. Even if Socrates did not convince Cebes or Simmias in the *Phaedo* (70a; 77b), he managed to persuade many readers

6 See Hendrik Lorenz, "Ancient Theories of Soul," in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2009 Edition), in reference to David B. Claus, *Toward the Soul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1981), 68; John Burnet "The Socratic Doctrine of the Soul," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 7 (1916), 235–59, at 248–9.

7 See Aristotle, *De an.* 406A–411B; Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1.9–49; Aetius, *Placita* IV, 2–3 (Doxogr. gr. 386–389); Tertullian, *De an.* 5; Plotinus, *Enn.* 4; Iamblichus, *De an.* (Stobaeus, Ecl. 1.362–367); Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 536–537.

in later centuries to such an extent that he provided the pattern that has dominated views on the soul ever since. The soul not only originates in the godly region, but its character is also radically different from the physical body and the material world it inhabits.

Plato could not convince Aristotle though. His criticism reveals a more extensive disagreement with Plato than (Ps-)Hippolytus was ready to admit (*Aristoteles in tertio de philosophia libro multa turbat a magistro suo [Platone] uno dissentiens*).⁸ Aristotle's view of the soul leaves no room for ambiguity. Unlike Plato, he affirmed the indissoluble bond between soul and body, asserting the mortality of the soul, which seems to nullify the entirety of Plato's theory. As is well known, however, these views, even if central to the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, were not widespread in Antiquity – at least not until the publication of the corpus in the first century BCE.⁹ Until that time, the “Aristotelian” view was more aligned with what Aristotle presented, for example, in his dialogue *Eudemus* or *On the Soul*, where the bond between soul and body is likened to the torture inflicted on captives by Tyrrhenian pirates. Indeed, in his *Contra Julianum Pelagianum*, Augustine attributes to Aristotle the following view:

[...] we are punished much as those were who once upon a time, when they had fallen into the hands of Etruscan robbers, were killed with studied cruelty; their bodies, the living (*corpora viva*) with the dead, were bound so exactly as possible one against another: so our souls, bound together with our bodies, are like the living joined with the dead.¹⁰

The story of the Etruscan robbers left an indelible mark in Antiquity, and besides Aristotle, we also find it in Cicero's *Hortensius*, Virgil's *Aeneis*, Iamblichus's *Protrepticus*, and, as mentioned earlier, in Augustine. Nevertheless, the influence of the Platonic view of the soul can even be found outside Platonism, for example among Stoics such as Cicero, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, which perhaps explains Eduard Zeller's description of them as

8 Cf. (Ps-)Hippolytus, *Haer.* I 20, 3; I 20, 6. See also Cicero, *De nat. deor.* I 13, 33 = Arist. *Philos.* fr. 26 Ross; 25, 1 Gigon, with J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne* (Paris, 1964), 140, who reads: *Aristoteles in tertio de philosophia libro multa turbat a magistro suo [Platone] uno dissentiens*. See A. P. Bos, “‘Aristotelian’ and ‘Platonic’ Dualism in Hellenistic and Early Christian Philosophy, and Gnosticism,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 56 (2002), 273–291, at 277 note 15. Cf. also Atticus fr. 7 (= Euseb. *P.E.* XV 9, 14).

9 Interestingly, Cicero in his *Tusc. disp.* 1.31 does not mention Aristotle among those who denied the soul's immortality, only referring to Epicureans and Stoics.

10 Augustine, *Contra Jul. Pelag.* IV 15, 78.

“platonisierende Stoiker.” It is also visible among Neo-Aristotelians, such as in Alexander of Aphrodisias’ *De anima*.¹¹

However, it is Middle Platonic views that interest me, since they provide the background for Christian views of the soul, which I focus on in the second and third sections of this article. For the sake of space, I will limit myself to Plutarch, as he discusses the pre- and after-life of the soul in different tracts of his *Moralia*. As for the afterlife, it appears predominantly in the three writings that develop Plato’s myth of Er, namely *De sera*, *De genio*, and *De facie*, which extensively describe the soul’s whereabouts after death. Regarding the soul’s pre-existence, I refer to the fragments of his treatise *De anima* as preserved by Themistius (177) and Stobaeus (178), in which it is implied. To begin with, there is the view that “the soul’s entanglement with the body and confinement in it are against nature.”¹² Originally independent, the soul not only leaves the body behind after death but any time it can, for example, in sleep. According to Plutarch, this is what produces the pleasure of sleep, as it is “the soul’s release and respite, when it lays down its burden, as it were, later to take it up and shoulder it again.” This is so because “in its association with mortal limbs, organs and affections, that which is unnatural and alien to it seems, because of long familiarity, not to be at all oppressive; yet it has a feeling of release and lightness, accompanied by pleasure, on release from its bodily activities. It is by them that it is harassed, on them that it wears itself out, from them that it needs rest and relaxation.”¹³

In Plutarch’s view, the soul suffers when associated with the body much in the same way as it does in the *Exegesis of the Soul* (NHC II,6). This text offers a clear example of the separateness of the soul I mentioned earlier, and its artificial bond with the body. Originally divine, the soul is now degraded due to incarnation: the soul’s sojourn in the physical world, where it has to cope with both body and world, is equated to exile in an alien environment and described in terms of physical and emotional alienation:

Wise men of old gave the soul a feminine name. Indeed, she is female in her nature as well. She even has her womb. As long as she was alone with the father, she was virgin and in form androgynous. But when she fell down into a body and came to this life,

11 See Philip Merlan, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, Metaconsciousness: Problems of the Soul in the Neoaristotelian and Neoplatonic Tradition*, International Archives of the History of Ideas 2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).

12 Plutarch, Frag. 177.

13 Plutarch, Frag. 178.

then she fell into the hands of many robbers. And the wanton creatures passed her from one to another and [...] her. Some made use of her by force, while others did so by seducing her with a gift. In short, they defiled her, and she [...] her virginity.¹⁴

2. Women

Written in the second century, the *Exegesis on the Soul* presents one of the rare descriptions of the soul's descent into the world and subsequent embodiment. Most interestingly, the soul is depicted as female, and her doomed destiny on earth is compared to different social aspects of a woman's life, all presented in very dark hues. This is not surprising, as everything is the result of the soul's disobedience, and in the androcentric framework of ancient literature female defiance necessarily results in disaster.

The story is straightforward: while the soul lived in her father's house, her existence was happy; she was a virgin and androgynous in form. One day, she abandoned the fatherly house and came to this life. Once on earth, she forgets her divine abode and falls "in the hands of many robbers" who force her to serve them on their beds. She gives herself to other wanton creatures who again abuse her, and with whom she conceives defective, feeble children. She then repents and decides to abandon her sordid life. The Father then intervenes, sending her the bridegroom so that she, after uniting with him in the Bridal Chamber, may recover her pristine condition.¹⁵

That the soul is feminine is a well-established *topos* in Gnostic literature. This is not the case only in the *ExSoul*, but also in numerous texts related to Achamot/Sophia,¹⁶ or Helena.¹⁷ With their stories about the descent and ascent of ill-fated female figures, these texts might be seen as metaphorical descriptions of the soul's sojourn on earth and its possible redemption. Behind all of them, we find the same disobedience triggering feminine

14 *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHC II,6) 127, 18–128, 1. Translated by William C. Robinson Jr., in Bentley Layton (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7 Together with XIII,2, Brit Lib. Or. 4926 (I) and P.Oxy 1, 654, Vol. 2* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 1436–169.

15 Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "La existencia terrena como violencia en dos textos de Nag Hammadi: La enseñanza autorizada (NHC VI,3) y La exégesis del alma (NHC II,6)," *Oriente y Occidente* 18.1/2 (2022), website: <https://research.rug.nl/en/publications/cc2a4f2e-56ed-4b46-afff-07288799bc47>.

16 See, e.g., Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.5–8.

17 See Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 6.19–20.

disgrace.¹⁸ The imagery of the Bridal chamber, frequent both in Valentinian¹⁹ and non-Valentinian Nag Hammadi texts²⁰ also indirectly bears witness to it, since it stages the reunion of what was separated in the beginning due to insubordination.

However, it is not only Gnostic literature that is explicit about the soul's femaleness. Perhaps because in Greek the term for the soul is a feminine noun, Greek literature also assumes the femininity of the soul from the outset, sometimes presenting it as a goddess.²¹ Different Middle-Platonic testimonies are also clear about the soul's femaleness: for example, Philo of Alexandria provides a precedent for the notion of the womb of the soul that we also find in *ExSoul*, as we will see later.²² This is also the case in Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, where the famous story of Eros and Psyche presents the soul as a girl. The sentence *et Psychen hoc enim nomine puella nuncupebatur* ("and Psyche, for by this name the girl was now called") aptly summarizes Venus's repeated references to the soul as a mortal girl (4.30). Due to Venus's influence, her destiny on earth is comparable to that of the soul in *ExSoul*, since the goddess determines that the girl "be seized by a violent, burning passion for the most wretched of men, one to whom Fortune has denied rank, wealth, even health, one so insignificant there is none on earth equal to him in misery." More importantly, Plutarch's *Platonicae Quaestiones* 2 (1001BC) and his *De animae procr. in Timaeo* also stress the femininity of the soul, which is described as God's daughter. Due to its participation in God's intellect, reason and harmony the soul was not created by God but is a part of him.²³ It is through his daughter that the Father can transmit his order

18 While Plato's *Symposium* attributes the separation to external forces (Zeus and Apollo), Christian gnostic texts make the female part responsible for the loss of the pristine androgynous condition.

19 *Exegesis of the Soul* (NHC II,6) 132.2–133.10; *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) 93.1; 122.15–16, 21; 128.33; 138.11; reconstructed in 135.31; *Gospel of Philip* (NHC II,3) 65.1–26; 67.2–27; 69.1–70.4; 70.9–71.15; 72.17–23; 74.12–24; 76.1–5; 81.34–82.26; 84.14–86.18; reconstructed in 75.29.

20 *Gospel of Thomas* (NHC II,2) 75, 104; *Dialogue of the Savior* (NHC III,5) 138.48–50; *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC VII,2) 57.10–18; 62.6–10; 65.35–66.8; 67.5–11; *Authoritative Teaching* (NHC VI,3) 22.23–34; *Teachings of Silvanus* (NHC VII,4) 94.19–29.

21 See Richard Reitzenstein, *Die Göttin Psyche in der hellenistischen und frühchristlichen Literatur* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1917).

22 Philo, *De mutatione* 255; *Leg. Alleg.* III 180.

23 Plutarch, *Qu. Plat.* 2,1001BC; *De an. procr.* 1014AB.

to chaotic matter.²⁴ Finally, as mentioned earlier, Plutarch of Chaeronea's fragment 178, probably a portion of his lost tract *De anima*, also deals with the soul's embodiment, presenting it as an utter disaster.

Admittedly, however, *ExSoul* is perhaps the clearest enunciation of the soul's femininity. This is evident from the start of the text: "Wise men of old gave the soul a feminine name. Indeed, she is female in her nature as well. She even has her womb."²⁵ According to Kulawik, in the framework of the text, womb and soul are compared because they are capable of generating and growing both good and bad things.²⁶ And indeed *ExSoul*, in line with Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*, refers to soul as having good and bad offspring.²⁷ The continuation of the text, however, develops this image in even clearer tones, presenting the soul as fulfilling different female social roles. Needless to say, all of these are depicted in a very negative light. While originally divine and androgynous, the soul is initially described as a daughter after her first disobedience and the abandonment of her house. She then becomes a mistress, and subsequently a prostitute. In these roles, she associates with the wrong husbands, and both willingly and by force has sex with them. As a result, she becomes a mother – specifically, a mother of weak and feeble-minded children – and finally a poor widow.

As is frequently the case in the context of the *descensus animae*,²⁸ *ExSoul* remains ambiguous as to the first cause of the soul's devolution. However, it seems obvious that her disobedience in abandoning her maiden's quarters determines all the following steps of degradation. Her redemption consequently depends on the Father's will. It is only after his intervention that she becomes a bride, ready to unite with the bridegroom in the Bridal Chamber, and thanks to this reunion recover her androgynous form.

24 Plutarch, *De an. procr.* 1013E; *Qu. Plat.* 4, 1003A. See on the issue, Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "Dios como Padre y artifice en *Moralia* de Plutarco," in Pedro de Navascués et al. (eds.), *Filiación. Cultura pagana, religión de Israel, orígenes del cristianismo* (Madrid: Trotta, 2014), 139–156.

25 *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 127, 19–22.

26 Cornelia Kulawik, *Die Erzählung über die Seele (Nag-Hammadi-Codex II,6). Neu herausgegeben, übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin – New York: de Gruyter, 2006).

27 *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 134,2–3, good offspring; 128, 23–26, bad offspring. See Roig Lanzillotta, "Platonism and the Expository Treatise," 345–62, at 348–49.

28 See André Jean Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste. III: Les doctrines de l'âme* (Paris: Gabalda, 1953), 63–118; John Dillon, "The Descent of the Soul in Middle Platonic and Gnostic Theory," in Bentley Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 357–364.

3. The Hymn of the Pearl

The *Hymn of the Pearl* includes a similar story, narrating the soul's descent, its wandering in the world of matter, final redemption, and restitution to its divine abode. Unlike the *Exegesis of the Soul*, the protagonist of the story is not a girl but a young man. The conspicuous parallels between both, however, seem to imply that we are facing two versions of the same story of the soul's descent that develop along different narrative lines.

The *Hymn of the Pearl* is perhaps the most famous section of the *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*. Inexplicably, very soon after the text's first publication in Syriac (1871) and Greek (1903), the *Hymn* was suspected of not belonging to the primitive text of the *Acts of Thomas*.²⁹ This is for two reasons: 1) ever since the publication of the Syriac text by Wright, several studies have claimed the existence of an underlying poetic meter in the Syriac text, the so-called *Doppeldreier*, which in their view is proof that the text is different to the rest of the *Acts of Thomas*; 2) the style, vocabulary, tenor, and message of the *Hymn* did not seem to accord with the rest of the text.³⁰

However, as I have sufficiently shown in my other studies on the *Acts of Thomas*, the claim that the *Hymn* does not belong to the primitive text is a fallacy based on a biased analysis of the data at our disposal.³¹ To begin with, the very fact that the *Hymn* is transmitted in two manuscripts, belonging to two different branches of the textual transmission, Greek and Syriac, ought to be enough evidence to assert that the *Hymn* belonged to the primitive

29 William Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Edited from the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum and Other Libraries*, 2 vols. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1871–1872); Maximilian Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha. Partis alterius volume alterum. Acts Philippi et Acta Thomas, accedunt Acta Barnabae* (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1903).

30 This is exactly the synthesis of the history of research provided by Paul-Hubert Poirier, *L'Hymne de la Perle* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 175. After affirming that the *Hymn of the Pearl* is “an independent piece, without any relation with the work in which it is transmitted,” he points out that “scholars arrived at this conclusion mainly due to internal criteria by comparing, on the one hand, contents, vocabulary, themes and style of the *Hymn of the Pearl*; and, on the other, those of the *Acts of Thomas*.”

31 Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, “Reinterpreting the Textual Transmission of the Acts of Thomas. Towards a New Understanding, Classification, and Chronology of the Greek Testimonies,” in Gallarte and Roig Lanzillotta (eds.), *New Trends in the Research on the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, 1–25; Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, “Codex Vallicellianus B 35: An Assessment of the only Extant Greek Manuscript of Acta Thomae Including the “Hymn of the Pearl,” in Gallarte and Lanzillotta (eds.), *New Trends in the Study of the Acts of Thomas*, 43–60.

text of the Acts – at least, to the only text one can reconstruct based on the materials available today.

Regarding the first reason mentioned above, in an article from 2015, I assessed one by one all the arguments adduced to sustain the alleged existence of a six-syllable meter behind the Syriac text, which served both the argument for the priority of the Syriac version, and that of the independence of the *Hymn* from the *Acts of Thomas*.³² The results of my analysis are clear: the hypothesis first proposed by Nöldeke in 1871 and restated in 2021 by P. H. Poirier, in the re-edition of his doctoral thesis of 1981, lacks any scientific basis whatsoever and seems to be based on pure speculation.³³

In a more recent study, I also assessed the alleged differences in style, vocabulary, tenor, and message between the *Hymn of the Pearl* and the rest of the *Acts of Thomas*. First of all, it is important not to overstate these differences. There are indeed some minor variances when we compare the *Hymn of the Pearl* (and that of the Bride) with the rest of the text, but these differences are not enough to provide evidence that they are later additions to the primitive text. Rather, the differences can be explained by the simple fact that the *Hymn* and the rest of the *Acts of Thomas* were diversely affected by textual transmission.³⁴ The bulk of the *Acts of Thomas* shows traces of heavy secondary and even tertiary redactions. In particular, the sections including discourses by the apostle Thomas show editorial intervention, in which later redactors intended either to adapt the apostle's words to later modes of thinking or, if this was not possible, to eliminate them altogether. The latter was the case with the *Hymn of the Pearl*. The allegorical nature of the *Hymn* made it difficult, if not impossible, to adapt to later standards, as a result of which most of our manuscripts simply eliminate it. The conclusions of my research are clear: 1) together with the *Hymn of the Bride*, the *Hymn of the Pearl* was an integral part of the *Acts of Thomas* from the beginning; 2) the fact that both sections were less affected by textual transmission means that their tenor is closer to the primitive text of the *Acts of Thomas*.

32 Roig Lanzillotta, "A Syriac Original for the Acts of Thomas? The Theory of the Syriac Priority Revisited, Evaluated and Rejected," in Ilaria Ramelli and J. Perkins (eds.), *Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: The Role of Religion in Shaping Narrative Forms* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 105–133.

33 Paul-Hubert Poirier, *L'Hymne de la Perle des Actes de Thomas* (Louvain-La-Neuve: Center for the History of Religions, 1981), 35–39; Poirier, *L'Hymne de la Perle* (2021), 75–78.

34 See Roig Lanzillotta, "Reinterpreting the Textual Transmission."

Be that as it may, the focus of this part of this article is not the textual transmission of the *Acts of Thomas* but the contents of the *Hymn of the Pearl*. In my view, its tenor and message are very much in line not only with the rest of the *Acts of Thomas*, but also (and especially) with the religious and philosophical world of the second century CE. In this sense, if we can show the close contact between the *Hymn* and other literary products of the historical period, we will kill two birds with one stone: on the one hand, we will reassert that the *Hymn* belongs to the primitive text, since it reflects the same intellectual background as the rest of the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*; on the other hand, it will show that the *Acts of Thomas* are a product of the same cultural milieu as the other apocryphal Acts of the apostles, namely the Mediterranean milieu of the second century.

The story included in the *Hymn* is as straightforward as that of the *Ex-Soul*. A young prince from the East is sent by his parents from “the House of his Father” to Egypt to recover a precious pearl guarded by a serpent. On departing, he leaves his royal dress back home with the promise that he will recover it once he returns with the pearl.³⁵ Even if in local disguise, however, the Egyptians realize he is a stranger:

I clothed myself in garments like theirs, so that I would not be seen as a stranger and as one who had come from abroad to take the pearl, lest the Egyptians might arouse the serpent against me. But somehow, they learned that I was not their countryman. They dealt with me treacherously, and I tasted their food.³⁶

As it is well known, in Antiquity Egypt was considered “the land of the body.”³⁷ Due to the attraction of the sensual, the prince forgets both his origin and his mission. His parents, however, intervene and release him from his sufferings by sending a letter through an eagle that will wake him from his torpor. After recalling his origin and mission, the prince leaves all Egyptian pleasures behind, snatches the pearl, and gets back to his Father’s kingdom, where he reunites with both his royal dress and his brother.³⁸

35 Israel Muñoz Gallarte, “The Robe in the ‘Hymn of the Pearl’: Analysis of ATh 111.75–113.97,” in Ch. Burnett and P. Mantas España (eds.), *Spreading Knowledge in a Changing World* (Córdoba: UCOPress – The Warburg Institute, 2019), 119–138.

36 Translated by J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), 439–511, at 489.

37 Sarah J. K. Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo’s Representation of Egypt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

38 *ATh* 108–113.

The striking similarity between the stories in the *Hymn of the Pearl* and the *Exegesis of the Soul* has not gone unnoticed. Bernard Pouderon compared both stories in two articles published in 2002.³⁹ Similarly, the 2006 Cornelia Kulawik's commentary on *ExSoul* mentioned the *Hymn* among the possible sources of the *ExSoul*.⁴⁰ Kulawik also refers to a paper on the matter presented by U. Tervahauta at a Ph.D. seminar in Helsinki in 2001, under the title "Authoritative Teaching, the Exegesis on the Soul, and the Hymn of the Pearl: A Comparison."⁴¹ Finally, in 2007, Andrew Philip Smith published a comparison of both writings.⁴²

I cannot go into detail on the analysis of these previous studies. Suffice to say that they all underline the conspicuous similarities between both stories: in both the *Hymn* and *ExSoul* the protagonists, the prince and the soul, depart from their fatherly house, in a reference to the divine region to which they both belong.⁴³ In so doing they arrive in Egypt, which in both stories represents the land of the body, and consequently symbolizes the soul's embodiment, and the subsequent attraction and enchantment of the world of matter.⁴⁴ Both texts present the soul's incarnation and sojourn in Egypt as a time of servitude;⁴⁵ while the prince is intoxicated by the food of the Egyptians and, due to heavy sleep, forgets his mission on earth,⁴⁶ the soul prostitutes herself to the sons of the Egyptians "receiving from them the bread, the wine and the oil"⁴⁷

39 Bernard Pouderon, "Paysages d'âmes gnostiques: 1. L'Exégèse sur l'âme," and "Paysages d'âmes gnostiques: 2. L'Hymne de la perle," in Bernard Pouderon and Daria Crismani (eds.), *Lieux, décors et paysages de l'ancien roman des origines à Byzance. Actes du 2e colloque de Tours, 24-26 octobre 2002* (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux, 2005), 319-336 and 337-343.

40 Cornelia Kulawik, *Die Erzählung über die Seele (Nag Hammadi-Codex II,6). Neu herausgegeben, übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin und New York: De Gruyter, 2006), 311-314.

41 Kulawik, *Die Erzählung über die Seele*, 311, note 211. I was unable to consult this unpublished paper.

42 Andrew Philip Smith, *Gnostic Writings on the Soul. Annotated & Explained* (Woodstock, Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2007).

43 *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 127, 22-25; *AThom* 111, 75.

44 While *AThom* is explicit in its references to Egypt (109, 28; 42; 46, etc.), *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 130, 19-20; 20-24 refers to the "sons of the Egyptians." See also *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 137, 11-15.

45 *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 128, 10-11.

46 *AThom* 109, 32-35.

47 *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 130, 24-25: For she said, "I shall prostitute myself to my lovers. It was they who gave me my bread and my water and my garments and my clothes and my wine and my oil and everything I needed."

and subsequently “forgets the time when she was at the house of her Father”.⁴⁸

In both stories the Father’s intervention puts an end to their suffering: in the *Hymn of the Pearl* the parents send a letter to wake the prince from his torpor; in *ExSoul* the father in turn sends the bridegroom. However, this step takes place only after the necessary purification: whereas the prince takes “off the dirty clothing and left it behind in their land,”⁴⁹ the soul in *ExSoul* is “cleansed of the external pollution which was pressed upon it, just as garments, when dirty, are put into the water and turned about until their dirt is removed and they become clean: And so the cleansing of the soul is to regain the newness of her former nature and to turn herself back again. That is her baptism.”⁵⁰

Once so far both protagonists are ready for redemption. And indeed, thanks to the Father’s intervention in both cases we find the same happy ending: the prince awakens from his slumber, remembers his mission, and snatches the pearl from the dragon. He then recovers his royal dress, which symbolizes the recovery at the same time of his pristine androgynous condition: “I perceived in it my whole self as well and through it, I knew and saw myself. For though we originated from the one and the same we were partially divided, then again, we were one, with a single form.”⁵¹ Similarly, in *ExSoul* thanks to the Father sending her the bridegroom, the soul gets into the Bridal Chamber, where she recovers her androgynous condition, and finally comes back to her original abode: “For since that marriage is not like the carnal marriage... But once they unite with one another, they become a single life.”⁵²

It seems plausible that we are dealing in both cases with the same basic story, which is articulated differently depending on the goals of the texts. Based on close similarities of the *Hymn* with other Nag Hammadi texts, such as the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, Bentley Layton reconstructed what he calls the “Myth of the Soul in Thomas Literature,” the basic line of which he summarizes as follows:⁵³

48 *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 132, 19–21.

49 *AThom* 11, 62.

50 *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 131, 27–34.

51 *AThom* 112, 77–78.

52 *ExSoul* (NHC II,6) 132, 35–133, 7.

53 Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (New York, 1987), 366–370.

The first principle of the spiritual realm providentially causes the individual soul to descend past the heavenly bodies into incarnate life in a material body, in order to be educated (get salvation). The soul becomes unconscious and inert because of matter. But it disengages itself in response to the saviour or message of philosophy (wisdom). It becomes acquainted with itself and its career and is metaphysically reunited with itself (i.e. it becomes integral) and with the first principle, gaining true repose.⁵⁴

We have seen, however, that the *ExSoul* reflects the same myth of the soul without belonging to a scholarly construct such as the alleged “Thomasine literature.” In this sense, I am inclined to think that the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Hymn of the Pearl* in the *Acts of Thomas*, the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, and the *ExSoul* reflect the same Platonic background, which all of them adapt according to the changing goals and contexts they serve.

4. Conclusions

It is time to offer some conclusions:

1. I have argued that *ExSoul* and the *Hymn of the Pearl*, together with the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, share the same basic Platonic myth. Of all four Christian adaptations, *ExSoul* preserves the myth of the soul in its purest form. The femaleness of the embodied soul, the myth of its original androgynous form which she recovers at the end of the story, its unnatural mixture with the world of nature, and especially its capacity to produce good and bad children, are clear reminiscences of Plato’s *Symposium*, which the other texts tend to blur together due to their major degree of Christianization. Admittedly, this Nag Hammadi tract also adapts the myth to a Christian framework. This is mainly visible in three elements: the notion of the soul’s responsibility in its fall, which echoes the female disobedience we find in other (Gnostic) texts; repentance, or *metanoia*, as the starting point of the soul’s redemption; and finally, and especially, the Father’s grace as the only efficient cause enacting the soul’s salvation.
2. Following closely in proximity is the *Hymn of the Pearl*. Behind its apparent folktale character and numerous Oriental embellishments (which have distracted many a scholar), the *Hymn* still betrays a clear Platonic background. Notably, the first cause of the soul’s devolution is still attributed to the providential intervention of the spiritual realm, something that was

⁵⁴ Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures*, 367.

missing in *ExSoul*. The soul's descent and ascent are well preserved, and there are still clear echoes of its androgynous original form. The myth of the soul, however, has been dramatically adapted to such an extent that the femaleness of the soul disappears in favour of a more androcentric view, one that is in line with Peter's criticism and Jesus's reply in logion 114 of the *Gospel of Thomas*:

Simon Peter said to him, "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life." Jesus said, "I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven."⁵⁵

3. The *Hymn's* Platonism, and its conceptual proximity to *ExSoul* and the *Gospel of Thomas*, shows that it was an integral part of the *Acts of Thomas*. In my view, this proximity allows us, on the one hand, to place the composition of the *Acts of Thomas* not in Edessa, but in the same Mediterranean context that produced the other Apocryphal Acts; and, on the other hand, to date the *Acts of Thomas* to the second rather than to the third century.

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⁵⁵ *GosThom* (NHC II,2) 114. Translated by Thomas O. Lambdin, "The Gospel according to Thomas," in Layton (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7*, 52–93, at 93.

Fixing the Name, Shaping the Saint: The Mother of the Maccabees in Jewish and Christian Reception*

Osnat Rance and Stephanie Hallinger

Abstract: The Mother of the Seven Maccabean Martyrs offers a striking case of interreligious transformation in Late Antiquity. Anonymous in 2 Maccabees 7 and philosophically expanded in 4 Maccabees, she became a powerful symbolic figure in both Jewish and Christian traditions. This paper traces her reception from deliberate anonymity in Greek patristic texts – where she functions typologically as martyr, image of the Church, and Marian prefiguration – to the Syriac tradition, where she acquires the name Shamuni and a fully articulated martyrdom. Byzantine liturgy and art later stabilize the name Salomone, reflecting processes of saintly individualization and canonization. Meanwhile, Jewish adaptations in Midrash Lamentations Rabbah and b. Gittin reframe her story within post-Temple discourse, even renaming her Miriam in a context shaped by Marian devotion. Her evolving name and role reveal a dynamic field of entangled Jewish-Christian traditions in which martyrdom, motherhood, and identity are continuously renegotiated.

Keywords: The Mother of the Maccabees; Maccabean Martyrs; Motherhood; Identity; Name; Shamuni

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Introduction

The cult of the Maccabean martyrs and their mother is a unique phenomenon within the religious climate of late antiquity. Despite their Jewish origins and death for the laws of Moses, the Maccabean brothers and their mother were perceived in Christianity as archetypes of the sacrifice of Christ, becoming exempla for future Christian martyrs.¹ They were appropriated as

* Dear Jan, with this little contribution we want to congratulate you on your 80th birthday, and at the same time thank you for years of support, mentorship, and friendship at the Beyond Canon Centre for Advanced Studies in Regensburg. *Ad multos annos!*

1 For a sketch of the cult and veneration of the Maccabean martyrs and their relics in Antioch during Late Antiquity see Margaret Schatkin, “The Maccabean Martyrs,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 28 (1974), 97–113. Johannes Hahn, “The Veneration of the Maccabean Brothers in Fourth Century Antioch: Religious Competition, Martyrdom, and Innovation,” in G. Signori (ed.), *Dying for the Faith, killing for the Faith: Old-Testament Faith Warriors (1st and 2 Maccabees) in Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 79–123, regarding

Christian saints already in the writings of Origen, Augustine, and Theophilus of Alexandria.

Late Antique texts on the Maccabean Martyrs show that the mother, though often overshadowed by her sons, played an important role in both Jewish and Christian traditions. This article traces the evolution of her character and the shifting values she embodied, following her trajectory from a minor figure in a Jewish text outside the biblical canon to a venerated Christian saint, and eventually back into Jewish tradition. Particularly revealing is the transmission of her name: once attested, it moves from Semitic origins to Graecized forms in early Christian art, is reshaped by patristic theology, and reappears in medieval Jewish contexts under a different name.

1. The Nameless Mother in Antique Sources

The books of the Maccabees describe the struggle of the Hasmonean family in the Seleucid kingdom and the beginning of the Jewish kingdom. There are four books of Maccabees: 1 Maccabees, written in Hebrew in Judea and 2 Maccabees, an epitomised version of Jason of Cyrene's Greek composition, were written around the time of the Hasmonean rebellion (second half of the second century BCE) and describe their events. The third book of Maccabees, written a little later, contains events of religious devotion in Judea and Egypt under Ptolemy. The fourth book of Maccabees is a Jewish philosophical tractate, probably written in Antioch or its surroundings in the first century CE.² This composition describes the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV 'Epiphanes' in 167 BC, which preceded the Maccabean revolt. All four books of Maccabees were preserved only in Greek and subsequently translated into other languages. None of the four books of Maccabees was included in the Jewish Bible, but due to their inclusion in the Septuagint, they are in parts deuterocanonical for Christians.³

the Synagogue of the Maccabees in Antioch, which was confiscated and transformed into their shrine. However, see discussion in Leonard V. Rutgers, *Making Myths: Jews in Early Christian Identity Formation* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 26–32.

- 2 David Arthur deSilva, *4 Maccabees: Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Sinaiticus* (Leiden, Boston: de Gruyter, 2006), xi; Tessa Rajak, "The Fourth Book of Maccabees in a Multi-Cultural City," in Yair Furstenberg (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 134–50, esp. 134.
- 3 1–3 Macc. are canonical in the orthodox church, 1–2 are deuterocanonical from the Catholic point of view. For reformed churches, all four books are considered apocryphal.

The name of the treatise in the earliest manuscripts is *4 Maccabees* (Μακκαβαίων δ', as in Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus). However, in church writers' compositions, such as Eusebius of Caesarea, and Jerome it was referred to as *On the Supremacy of Reason* (Περὶ αὐτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ).⁴ Eusebius and Jerome unjustly attributed it to Josephus Flavius, hence it was included in several early editions of his works.⁵ *4 Maccabees* is a philosophical Jewish sermon in Hellenistic style, and its purpose is to convince the audience that reason is superior to emotion, and that the Torah preserves the best philosophy, which can be truly tested even in death. To prove his point, the author recounts a harrowing tale of religious persecution under the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Faced with the edict to renounce their Jewish faith and partake of forbidden foods, a mother and her seven sons courageously defy the king's orders. Each son, in turn, endured horrific torture rather than compromise his beliefs, ultimately choosing martyrdom. Throughout this ordeal, the mother remains unwavering in her faith, offering constant encouragement and support to her sons. The story of the mother and seven sons, however, is already briefly narrated in 2 Macc. 7; our author adjusts it to his Hellenic audience and expands it, giving the mother an extensive role.

As part of the philosophical-Hellenistic adaptation of 2 Macc. 7,⁶ the author of *4 Macc.* took the liberty of making minor changes in the narrative. For example, this composition is characterized by the use of Hellenistic rhetorical terms as 'competition' and 'struggle', as well as other philosophical ideas, such as the four virtues, brotherly love, and more.⁷ The mother appears to be a personification of Sophia, the Greek concept of wisdom, often depicted as a female figure.⁸ The composition emphasizes her age, nobility, wisdom, and strength.

The most striking difference concerns the fate of the mother: while in 2 Macc. the mother is simply put to death, in *4 Macc.* the author takes the liberty to expand the narrative and notes that according to some of the

4 DeSilva, *4 Maccabees*, xiii–xiv.

5 See Jan Willem van Henten, "4 Maccabees," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Apocrypha*, G. Oegema (ed.) (Oxford, 2021), 200–216, esp. 201.

6 Rajak, "The Fourth Book of Maccabees," 135.

7 Van Henten, "4 Maccabees," 203–4, 206, 209.

8 See, e.g., Proverbs 1, 8, 9; and in Ananda B. Geyser-Fouché, "A Love Triangle Between God, Sophia, and the Righteous Interwoven in the Retelling of the Pentateuchal Stories in Wisdom 10," *Journal for Semitics* 30:2 (2022), 15 pp.; George R. S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia* (London – New York: Theosophical Pub. Society, 1896), and more.

guards, the mother herself jumped to her death, in order to not have her body corrupted by their touch (4 Macc. 18.1). This change is not accidental but intended to present the mother as a tragic mythical heroine.

This philosophical infrastructure, alongside the Hellenistic ideals, and the re-occurring persecutions against Christians during the first centuries, led to the acceptance of the narrative of the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons with enthusiasm, turning her into a symbolic figure in early Christianity and beyond, as an example for Entangled Traditions⁹ in both literature and visual art.

During the first centuries Eleazar and the mother and her seven sons served as a model for adherence to the Christian faith in a time of religious persecution. In the writings of Origen, Theophilus, and church fathers, such as Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and Augustine, the Maccabean Martyrs were presented as proto martyrs who by their death testified the strength of their faith. In these compositions, however, the apologetic urgency for appropriating the Maccabees, and especially their mother, as Christian saints, is evident.¹⁰ These three great Christian scholars, active in the age of the formation of Christian religion and thought, had different agendas that could profit from this initiative.

9 Stephanie Hallinger, "Entangled Traditions about Judith: From Heroine to Vamp," in Jan Runggemeier, Elizabeth Shively (eds.), *Characters in Mind: The Migration of Characters in Early Jewish, Early Christian, and Greco-Roman Literature and Art* (Bonn – Leiden: Bonn University Press, forthcoming 2026), defines Entangled Traditions as "parabiblical traditions that include cultural manifestations in various media. They are defined by the interconnectedness of texts in the recipients' heads, their updating, reception, and presentation in all kinds of media. Those traditions usually center around a narrative that bears a special set of traits: A stable narrative core with unique, recognizable motifs is being transmitted over time, landscapes, religious and socio-cultural borders. During the process of transmission – orally, in written or artistic form –, these motifs are re-contextualized, so they fit into the new setting, offering potential for identification."

10 It is important to note that it is not sure whether some of these texts are referring to the Maccabean Martyrs of 2 and 4 Maccabees, Eleazar, the brothers and their mother, or the Hasmonean warriors.

According to van Henten, Hippolytus (Hippolytus: Comm. Dan. 10–11; PG 10, 649) refers in his commentary on Daniel explicitly to the Maccabees, implying 1 Macc. See Jan Willem van Henten, "The Christianization of the Maccabean Martyrs: The Case of Origen," in J. Leemans (ed.), *Martyrdom and Persecution in late Antique Christianity: Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 333–51, esp. 336, n. 16. The same goes for Tertullian's *Adversus Iudaeos*, where he mentions the "*temporibus Machabeorum*" (Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.* 4).

(1) The first surviving source to appropriate the Maccabean Martyrs as Christian martyrs was Origen. According to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, which contains the biography of Origen, in the time of the Neronian persecution, Origen's father, Leonides of Alexandria, was imprisoned because he was a Christian. Origen wished to join him in his martyrdom, but eventually, while he intended to give himself to the authorities, his mother took away all of his clothes, and hence he was forced to stay at home and abandon his plans.¹¹ In his treatise, Origen glorified the Mother for enduring her sons' death, unlike other mothers.¹²

(2) Gregory of Nazianzus delivered the first whole surviving sermon praising the Maccabean Martyrs, hence this oration is a pivotal point in the evolution of their veneration, as well as the mother as a separate symbolic figure.¹³ In this homily, Gregory stresses the urgent need to appropriate the Maccabean Martyrs as Christian ones:

the festival today is indeed in their honor, though not many recognize them because their martyrdom antedates Christ. 2 Yet they deserve universal recognition for their unswerving devotion to the ways of their fathers. (15.1)¹⁴

In paragraph 2 he addresses his audience directly:

Who were these people? Where did they come from? What kind of culture and education did they have so as to rise to such a peak of valor and renown that they are both honored annually with these festal processions and every heart treasures their glory in greater measure than these visible expressions indicate? (15.2)¹⁵

This question of Gregory, asked in the second part of his composition, lays the ground to praise their education, and more precisely, their educator,

11 Eusebius, *HE*, 6.1–2.

12 Origen, *Exhortation to martyrdom* 22–27. See Origen, *Prayer; Exhortation to Martyrdom*, trans. John J. O'Meara. Ancient Christian Writers 19 (Westminster: Newman Press, 1954), 162–67. Cyprian, *Fort.* 11 (CCSL 3:1, 205); Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum* (CCSL 3, 183–216). And see Anna-Liisa Tolonen, *The Reception of the Maccabean Martyrs. Their Historiographical and Paradigmatic Functions in Antique and Late-antique Jewish and Christian Sources* (MA Thesis, Helsinki University, 2010), 5.

13 Martha Vinson, "Gregory Nazianzen's Homily 15 and the Genesis of the Christian Cult of the Maccabean Martyrs," *Byzantion* 64 (1994), 166–92, esp. 175–76.

14 Text: Migne, J.-P. (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus: series graeca*. Vol. 35 (Paris, 1857), 911–34; English translation by Martha Vinson, *Gregory of Nazianzus: Selected Orations* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 72.

15 Vinson, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 73.

the mother. Like Origen, he was in debt to his mother for his clerical career. As a son of a religiously mixed couple, Gregory's mother raised him to be a devoted Christian, despite his father's polytheistic belief, and in his view, she was responsible for his career as a churchman. In the same manner, the depiction of the Mother in his homily strengthens her sons' courage and their bold answers to Antiochus and even surpasses them. He dedicates most of his homily to her praise. Martha Vinson has convincingly shown that in this homily Gregory intended to depict the mother, as well as his own mother, Nonna, in assimilation with Greek mythological heroines, such as Hecuba, Hector's mother (*Iliad*, 22.79–89).¹⁶

However, Gregory had more at stake. As the Constantinopolitan bishop in the times of emperor Julian the Apostate, Gregory fiercely criticised this emperor's initiatives against the Christian community. As an oration that was intended to influence the emperor and most of all the members of his congregation in times of persecution, he delivered his 15th oration (*In Machabaeorum laudem*), in December of 362 CE, close to the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, which celebrates the Maccabees' triumph over the Seleucids.

While successfully contextualizing the 15th homily of Gregory as a discourse against Julian's edict which forbids Christian educators from teaching Greek literature (*Cod. Theod.* 13.3.5, issued on June 17, 362 CE),¹⁷ Vinson almost completely neglects Gregory's discourse with Jews and Judaism, and particularly his claims against Julian's initiative to reconstruct the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, in 362 CE.¹⁸ In this homily, the Mother's depiction and the family metaphor go much further than Homeric allusions to prove his grasp of mythological education, as Gregory urges his audience to martyrdom, as brothers originated from one womb:

Let us show ourselves true brothers, in death as well as in birth; and let us face the danger all as one and each for all. Eleazar, welcome us; mother, follow after us; [...] Recite, if you will, our deeds and point out to posterity and to those who love you the sacred common sepulchre of men born of one womb. (15.7)

16 Vinson, "Gregory Nazianzen's Homily 15," 167–168. About twenty years later, the bishop of Antioch and Greek Church father, John Chrysostom also delivered a sermon at the feast of the Maccabean martyrs. He was also one of the first prelates to praise the Maccabean Martyrs in his homilies. Chrysostom's agenda is clearly to elevate his see by prompting the local pride for having their shrine in that city.

17 *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*. Transl., comm., gloss., and bibl. by Clyde Pharr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 88.

18 See Vinson, "Gregory Nazianzen's Homily 15".

The mother's death gives birth to the spiritual kinship of all Christians, the new sons of Abraham, the new Israel:

We are both sons and disciples of men who were shown the way by a pillar of *fire* and *cloud* [Ex 13.21], for whom the sea parted [Ex 14.21] and the river stood still [Jos 3.16] and the sun was stayed [Jos 10.13] and the bread rained down [Ex 16.4] and who stretched forth their hands and, with prayers as their missiles, put thousands to flight [Ex 17.11]; who overcame wild beasts and whom fire did not singe and before whom kings, awed by their courage, gave way [Dn 3–4.6]. (15.6)

By deploying Abraham as a prototype of the mother (with both of them ready to sacrifice their sons),¹⁹ Gregory lays the foundations of replacement theology, and claims the un-carnal-familial brotherhood-like connection of the Christian nation.²⁰ Moreover, he declares that the mother's sacrifice is even greater than Abraham's, who was willing to sacrifice his own child: "The heart of a man in a woman's body! What an incredibly magnanimous act, a sacrifice the equal of Abraham's, unless we dare call it even greater!" (15.4)²¹, as she sacrificed not only one son, and not "almost", but true sacrifice of seven sons. Thus, the mother triumphs over the Jewish Patriarch not only with her sacrifice, but also with excellence. Throughout his homily, and especially in paragraph 5, Gregory emphasizes that her victory is the highest of them all:

The brave children did not flinch before a single one (of the persecutor's threats and tortures), nor did their even braver mother. Instead, she rose high above it all and, commingling courage and love, gave herself as a glorious funeral offering for her children by following after those who had already passed on [...]. Yet finer still were the words their mother addressed to them both when she was encouraging them and later when she buried them. (15.5)²²

The Mother surpasses her sons in answers, boldness, and her sacrifice. Yet, "she raised her chin and smiled broadly just like an Olympic champion high of heart." (15.9) Gregory once again uses the Hellenistic champion metaphor,

19 See Tessa Rajak discussion regarding the role of Abraham in 4 Macc., as the father of Jewish people, Tessa Rajak, "The Maccabean Mother between Pagans, Jews, and Christians," in Carol Harrison et al. (eds.), *Being Christian in Late Antiquity: A Festschrift for Gillian Clark* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 39–56, esp. 41.

20 Of course, these ideas are already to be found in the NT (e.g. Rom. 9:6–13, Gal. 6:15) as well as Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 135. More sources could be added here.

21 Vinson, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 74.

22 Ibid., 76.

as he does with the other martyr protagonists of his homily, comparing her achievement as a suffering mother to her sons' heroic death. She does not lament her sons' death, as "ordinary mothers do, *mothers in flesh alone*, whose children die without any record of achievement" (15.9).²³

Her final achievement, according to Gregory, is her perfect martyrdom, despite the original doubtful tone of 4 Maccabees (4 Macc 17.1):

After she finished speaking, she advanced to join her children. How? By moving with eager anticipation to the pyre – this was the punishment decreed – as though to a bridal chamber, without even waiting for the guards to take her, lest any impure hand so much as touch her pure and noble body. (15.10)²⁴

By declaring the mother's original doubtful death in Greek 4 Maccabees 8.1 a suicide for higher reasons, the Mother is elevated to be the spiritual mother of all (future) martyrs, hence building a bridge between the Jewish past and Christian present, and from there developing a symbolic role in artistic reception.

2. From Syriac Sources to Early Christian Art

The mother as bearing the Christian future and as a symbol for Christian familial relations is emphasized even more in other two textual witnesses from the same area, both of which are ecclesiastical compositions written at the end of the fourth century in Greek and translated into Syriac, as part of the famous Syriac *Codex of Edessa* (British Museum, Add. 12150), which its colophon dates to the year 411 CE.²⁵

The first testimony for the mother's status in these originally Greek texts is the Syriac translation of the Greek, *Encomium for the Martyrs*, which is the fifth composition in this codex.²⁶ It is hard to overestimate the pivotal role of the Maccabean Martyrs in this Encomium. Their, or perhaps it would be better to say the Mother's, commemoration is situated in the text among

²³ Vinson, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 80–81.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

²⁵ On this codex see Wright William, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838*, 3 vols. (London: Longmans, 1870–1872), 2.631–33.

²⁶ See Luise M. Frenkel, "The 'Encomium of the Martyrs' and the Syriac Reception of Eusebius of Caesarea," in S. Talay (ed.), *Überleben im Schatten: Geschichte und Kultur des syrischen Christentums. Beiträge des 10. Deutschen Syrologentages an der FU Berlin 2018* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2020), 81–101.

other “Old Testament martyrs”, such as Noah, Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael (in this order), Daniel, Jeremiah, Zechariah and Abel, and New Testament martyrs, preceded by Peter the Apostle, only then Stephen the proto-martyr; then moving to the other Apostle, Paul, and ending with a long list of Antiochian saints. In fact, the Mother is placed after Abel and before Peter. Being a bridge between Old and New Testament saints, and old and new heavenly commands, these martyrs occupied the lion’s share of the Encomium.²⁷ However, despite their importance for the local Antiochian church, which possessed their relics, this extended passage opens with the declaration: “But the crown of victory in the great contest both for men and for women, who are in confession (*or become confessors*), the mother of seven sons put on.”²⁸ Despite her doubtful death she is crowned as the ultimate martyr by the author of the Encomium, who was eager to emphasize her central role in her sons’ death, celebrating her motherhood:

A wise mother... O blessed woman, who didst bring forth with hard pains, and without griefs didst restore, by prayer, the fruit thou didst rear; thou, without laments, didst send a messenger for thyself before God. For (ﻫﻰ) what time is there, or what day, or what godly congregation of the passion of Christ, and glorious day of the memorial of his resurrection, when the members of the resurrection of the confessor Christ may not be remembered and honoured by every mouth and by every tongue?²⁹

In this text, the mother is lauded as a wise and true mother and her female characteristics are praised. The mother’s role is emphasized by her repeated sacrifices, and by the image of sending her youngest son as a messenger to God, showing her true devotion for Him. Here, the conjunction “for” (ﻫﻰ) serves as a pivotal rhetorical and causal bridge between the mother’s individual sacrifice and the universal glory of the Church. The author utilizes this term to provide a theological justification for the mother’s remarkable lack of lamentation; although she brought forth her sons with “hard pains,” she is depicted as a “blessed woman” who restores her “fruit” to God “without griefs” and “without laments”. The transition from private bereavement to a state of spiritual exaltation is mediated by the rationale introduced by “For”: the assurance that the martyrs have become “members of the resur-

27 Frenkel, “The Encomium,” 91 and n. 45.

28 William Wright, “The Encomium of the Martyrs,” *Journal of Sacred Literature*, NS 5 (1864), 403–8 (Syriac text) and *Journal of Sacred Literature*, NS 6 (1864/65), 129–33 (English translation).

29 Wright, “The Encomium”.

rection of the confessor Christ". By situating her sons within the eternal Christian liturgical cycle – specifically alongside the “passion of Christ” and the “glorious day of the memorial of his resurrection” – the text argues that their perpetual honor by “every mouth and by every tongue” effectively transcends the mother’s earthly loss. Consequently, the rhetorical function of “For” is to validate the mother’s “wisdom” in exchanging a temporal, personal tie for the martyrs’ participation in a sacred and collective divine memory. Therefore, according to the author, “the crown of victory in the great contest both for men and for women, who are in confession (*or become confessors*), the mother of seven sons put on.”³⁰ Elsewhere, Osnat Rance argued that this *Encomium* was written in the vicinity of Antioch and was meant to be read in one of the sermons during November to December.³¹ This was apparently the original date of the day of veneration of the Maccabean martyrs. It is evident, from Gregory Nazianzus’s sermons that, at his time the Maccabean feast used to be held in December.

Vinson has convincingly shown that Gregory’s Homily 15 was delivered in December, among other reasons, reading the reference to “these annual processions and festivals” as an allusion to the eight-day Jewish festival.³² However, in those years, there was an attempt to separate the Christian feast of the Maccabees from the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah – symbolizing the victory of Judaism over its persecutors –, which was also celebrated in December. Instead, in the Christian calendar, the feast was attached to the Jewish mourning day of the Temple destruction, in the month of Av. It seems that in John Chrysostom’s days this shift was accomplished.³³ Moreover, according to Obermann, “some calendars of the Oriental church list the Memorial day

³⁰ Wright, “The Encomium”.

³¹ Osnat Emily Rance, “‘Although Their Names Escaped Me’: Local Patriotism and Saints Commemoration in Late Antique Syria,” in Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Martin Goodman (eds.), *Essays on Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity in Honour of Oded Irshai* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 141–57.

³² According to Vinson, “Gregory Nazianzen’s Homily 15,” 188. See also John Chrysostom, *The Cult of the Saints: Select Homilies and Letters*, introduced, translated, and annotated by Wendy Mayer with Bronwen Neil (Crestwood: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2006), 119; W. Mayer, “John Chrysostom,” in Johan Leemans, Pauline Allen et al. (eds.), *‘Let Us Die That We May Live’. Greek homilies on Christian Martyrs from Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria c. 350 – c. 450 AD* (London: Routledge, 2003), 111–26, esp. 116, regarding veneration of the Maccabean martyrs *within* the city walls of Antioch, already in the time of Chrysostom.

³³ See John Chrysostom, *The Cult of the Saints*, 119; Mayer, “John Chrysostom,” 115.

as the Eight of August".³⁴ This date demonstrates even more the Christian intention to adopt the Jewish mourning day as the Christian veneration day of the Maccabees, rather than the Jewish feast commemorating the heroic deeds of the Hasmonean family.³⁵

Indeed, the Syriac Menologion, which is the last text (and considered to be of a later date than all other texts) in the same Syriac codex, sets her feast, alongside her sons, for the first of Av (August).³⁶ In this text, the mother finally received a name: a significant achievement for a woman, and she is called Shamuni ("the sons of Shamuni, those who are written in Maccabees"). Here, the Maccabees are called after their mother, and not the mother after her sons as in her nickname "the Mother of the Maccabees", or "Mother of seven sons".³⁷ The origin of the mother's name is uncertain; in later Christian sources, it appears in the form of "Salomone" without further explanation (and therefore assumed to be generally known).

Only around that time (the end of the fourth century), and probably in the same region, 4 Maccabees was translated into Syriac, and immediately gained wide recognition, as the many Syrian ecclesiastical compositions prove that were written under its inspiration.³⁸ However, the Syriac translation of the composition reveals several unique issues. The most striking one is the

34 Julian Obermann, "The Sepulchre of the Maccabean Martyrs," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 50 (1931), 250–65, p. 250.

35 Mayer, *The Cult of the Saints*, p. 119, and above, n. 31.

36 On this martyrology see in Nicholson (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, s.v. "Martyrology of 411, Syriac," 976.

37 כְּנַנְיָהּ בְּרִיגְדָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא
 כְּנַנְיָהּ בְּרִיגְדָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא מְרִימָא
 William Wright, "An Ancient Syrian Martyrology," *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 8/16 (1866), 423–32. The origin of the mother's name is unclear. According to Robert Bensly, *The Fourth Book of Maccabees and Kindred Documents in Syriac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895), xiii, her name is apparently a corruption of the name חַשְׁמוֹנַיִת (Hashmonaite), which could be derived from the name Hasmonean (Ἀσμοναῖος), as they are called by Josephus. However, this assumption must be taken carefully into consideration, as the sound SH does not exist in Greek, and so might indicate a possible Jewish origin of her late, Syriac name. For another view on the mother's name Shamuni, see Witold Witakowski, "Mart(y) Shmuni, the Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs, in Syriac Tradition," in R. Lavenant (ed.), *VI Symposium Syriacum 1992: University of Cambridge, Faculty of Divinity, 30 August–2 September 1992* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1994), 153–68, esp. 155–57, where he suggests that it derives from the Hebrew number eight (shmonē), marking the number of the martyrs, i.e., Shmuni and her seven sons.

38 Most of the Syriac treatises dealing with the Maccabees are collected in Bensly, *The Fourth Book of Maccabees*.

difference in the composition's title. While in the Greek the title is "On the sole rule of reason" (Περὶ αὐτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ), or simply, 4 Maccabees, according to Robert Hiebert, in the Syriac translation the title is "The fourth book of the Maccabees and their Mother".³⁹ The Syriac title signifies the mother's role, leading its readership to expect her appearance in the focal point of the story, and demands the audience's regard for her sacrifice. Moreover, the Syriac translator significantly alters the mother's fate to align with a different theological emphasis. Rather than following the Greek original, which suggests she committed suicide to preserve her honor, the translator depicts her death as the culmination of prolonged physical agony. This shift transforms her from a figure of self-preservation into a martyr of endurance (chapter 22). Thus, in the Syriac tradition, her character developed according to the patterns of martyrological literature: The mother is depicted according to a male hero, and her steadfastness (ܐܬܝܪܐܬܐ, the eastern manly "virtus") is emphasized while she is bearing her suffering. This change likely expresses the needs of local contemporary Christian communities, who suffered from repeated persecution.

The different notions of the mother's fate seem to cause a split in the Christian view of the mother of the Maccabees, between Greek and Syriac Christian ecclesiastical texts: in Syriac literature, the mother is glorified for encouraging her sons to die and for her own martyrdom.⁴⁰ In Greek texts, however, there is no trace of her being tortured, and her good qualities and perfection as a woman and as a mother are emphasized. This division leads to different traditions in the Mother's reception, and forms the basis for her further development as a symbolic figure.

39 Robert J. V. Hiebert, "Preparing a Critical Edition of IV Maccabees: The Syriac Translation and the *Passio Sanctorum Machabaeorum* as Witnesses to the Original Greek," in F. García Martínez and M. Vervenne (eds.), *Interpreting Translation: Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 193–216.

40 The influence of 4 Maccabees on the production of *passio* literature is to be traced in martyrdom narratives from both, East and West. For western impact see discussion in van Henten, "4 Maccabees," 205 (regarding the Acts of Carpus, Pionius and Agape). See also Daniel Boyarin, "Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6.4 (1998), 577–627, esp. 612, 616.

3. First Appearances in Christian Art

It is surprising how little attention the Mother has retrieved from art history: The *Lexikon of Christian Iconography* dedicates two separate articles to “The Maccabees” and “The Maccabean Brothers”.⁴¹ However, their mother is only briefly mentioned in both – probably because outside biblical pictorial cycles she is almost exclusively shown amidst her sons. Nevertheless, she is featured most prominently in some of the earliest known works of art, such as the frescoes of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome from the 7th century, naming her “Hagia Solomone” and showing her underneath Christ on the Throne.

The biblical account in 2 Maccabees 7 does not name the mother of the seven martyrs, therefore all later references to her name are secondary in terms of history of tradition. Neither Origen nor Gregory of Nyssa or John Chrysostom mention her name, as anonymity favours typological interpretations; thus, the mother figure appears here exclusively in functional descriptions: as a teacher of hope in resurrection (Origen, *Exhortatio ad martyrium* 27), a mother who “sends her sons into immortality” rather than losing them (Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima et resurrectione*, PG 46, 108) and as the proclaimer of the cross (John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Maccabaeos I*, PG 50, 617). She is understood as a typological figure by the Church Fathers.⁴² Even in the Coptic *Synaxarion*, the name is usually not mentioned; she appears under formulas such as “the mother of the seven Maccabees” or “the holy mother with her sons,” and therefore retains a more typological than individualized quality.

The name *Salomone/Salomonía* (a telling name that deliberately evokes associations with wisdom) is absent from early Byzantine iconography, in which the Maccabean brothers usually appear collectively: The fragment of an early Byzantine wall painting from the 6th–7th century at the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, depicts her without inscription⁴³; the very early *Brescia Casket*, an ivory lipsanoteca from ca. 370 CE, from northern Italy, not even

41 J. Paul, W. Busch, “Makkabäer/Makkabäische Brüder,” in E. Kirschbaum et al. (ed.), *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*. Vol. 3 (Freiburg: Herder, 1992), 142–145, at 144.

42 On the mechanisms behind this typologization, see John Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997), Robin Darling Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Washington, D. C., 2004).

43 See Kurt Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

includes her.⁴⁴ The proper name *Σαλωμώνη, μήτηρ τῶν ἐπτὰ παίδων* (Salomone, mother of the seven sons) first appears in the Byzantine liturgical context of the 10th century, within the *Menologion of Basil II* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Menologion Basilii II*, Vat. gr. 1613, fol. 366r; ca 985–995). With no other early name traditions except for “Shamuni” in the Syriac Menologion, it is highly plausible that Salomone is a graecized derivation from Shamuni (as feminine reference to the wisdom of Solomon, and therefore a significant name).⁴⁵

John Lowden notes that the close integration of text and image in Byzantine menologia helps stabilize the identity of individual saints, with inscriptions often supplying names absent from earlier traditions in order to secure liturgical classification.⁴⁶ Likewise, Henry Maguire argues that the explicit naming of saints in 10th–11th-century Byzantine art reflects a conscious shift from earlier unlabeled depictions, signaling both increasing individualization and liturgical appropriation.⁴⁷ In the accompanying illustration, the already executed mother occupies a central, prominent position in relation to her sons. Her inscription thus marks the transition from a functional type to a named saint – a development rooted in iconographic and liturgical practice rather than in exegetical tradition.

Standing within the Eastern line of tradition, although predating its earliest evidence, is the mural painting of S. Maria Antiqua (Rome, ca. 705 CE). As the oldest Marian church in Rome (and thus the foundation stone of Marian devotion in the West),⁴⁸ S. Maria Antiqua occupies a special place

44 See Robert L. McGrath, “The Martyrdom of the Maccabees on the Brescia Casket,” *The Art Bulletin* 47/2 (1965), 257–61.

45 In the Western Middle Ages, Solomon is attributed wisdom, insight, and exceptional abilities in dealing with people, animals, and plants, with the (para-)biblical Wisdom of Solomon (Σοφία Σαλωμώνος) creating a standing connection between the name and the property. See Norbert H. Ott, “Salomo,” in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 7 (Munich: Herder, 2002), 1310–14, at 1311. A derivation of the name from this is conceivable. On the wisdom of Solomon, see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews 4 Bible times and characters from Joshua to Esther* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1968), 130–42.

46 See Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, 278–79.

47 See Henry Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), especially the chapter “Naming and Individuality” (100–145).

48 Joseph Wilpert (ed.), *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV bis XII. Jahrhundert unter den Auspizien und mit allerhöchster Förderung seiner*

in the development of Christian iconography: built as an imperial vestibule under Domitian (81–96 CE), the church was used for Christian purposes by the 6th century at the latest and decorated with explicitly Christian images.⁴⁹ Until it lost its title to S. Maria Nuova in the 9th century (possibly due to destruction by an earthquake), the building served as a lively place of worship. This is evident from the entry in the *Liber Pontificalis* on Pope John VII (705–707), who was responsible for the decoration campaign during which the fresco of the Maccabees was created.

The floor plan (image 1) architecturally juxtaposes the Seven Sons with their Mother to the Annunciation of Mary; a multi-figure composition decorates the southwestern pilaster – ‘the grouping of the figures is excellent’, as Wilpert⁵⁰ notes. The central figure of the mother (image 2) is dressed in a floor-length tunic, with a *palla* covering her hair. Her right hand is raised in a gesture of speech (as is often the case in depictions of teachers), while in her left hand she holds a folded cloth (*mappula*). Wilpert was the first to draw attention to the nail holes around the mother’s neck, which indicated a special distinguishing feature of veneration:⁵¹ they were used to attach a brooch that was placed around the neck of the painted saint figure. Per Jonas Nordhagen sees this as a special feature with regard to the veneration of the mother, whose image was given a heightened real presence by the jewellery and thus a greater potential for identification by believers.⁵²

The name “Salomone” is reminiscent of several characters named Salome from the narrative world of the New Testament: Mark 15:41 refers to a Salome who, together with Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James the Younger, witnessed the crucifixion; in addition, from Mark 6:17–28 and Matthew 14:6–11, we know of the daughter of Herodias, who demands the head of John the Baptist and who is also traditionally identified with the name Salome. Both offer little basis for the naming of the martyrs’ mother; However, in the extra-canonical *Protoevangelium of James*, there is a third

Majestät Kaiser Wilhelms II. Zweiter Band: Text: Zweite Hälfte (Freiburg: Herder, 1916), 656.

49 For a condensed survey of the church’s history, see Eileen Rubery, Giulia Bordi, John Osborne, “Introduction,” in *ibid.* (ed.), *Santa Maria Antiqua – The Sistine Chapel of the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 5–8.

50 Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken*, vol. 2, 680.

51 *Ibid.*

52 Per Jonas Nordhagen, “In Praise of Archaeology: Icons before Iconoclasm,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 60 (2010), 101–13.

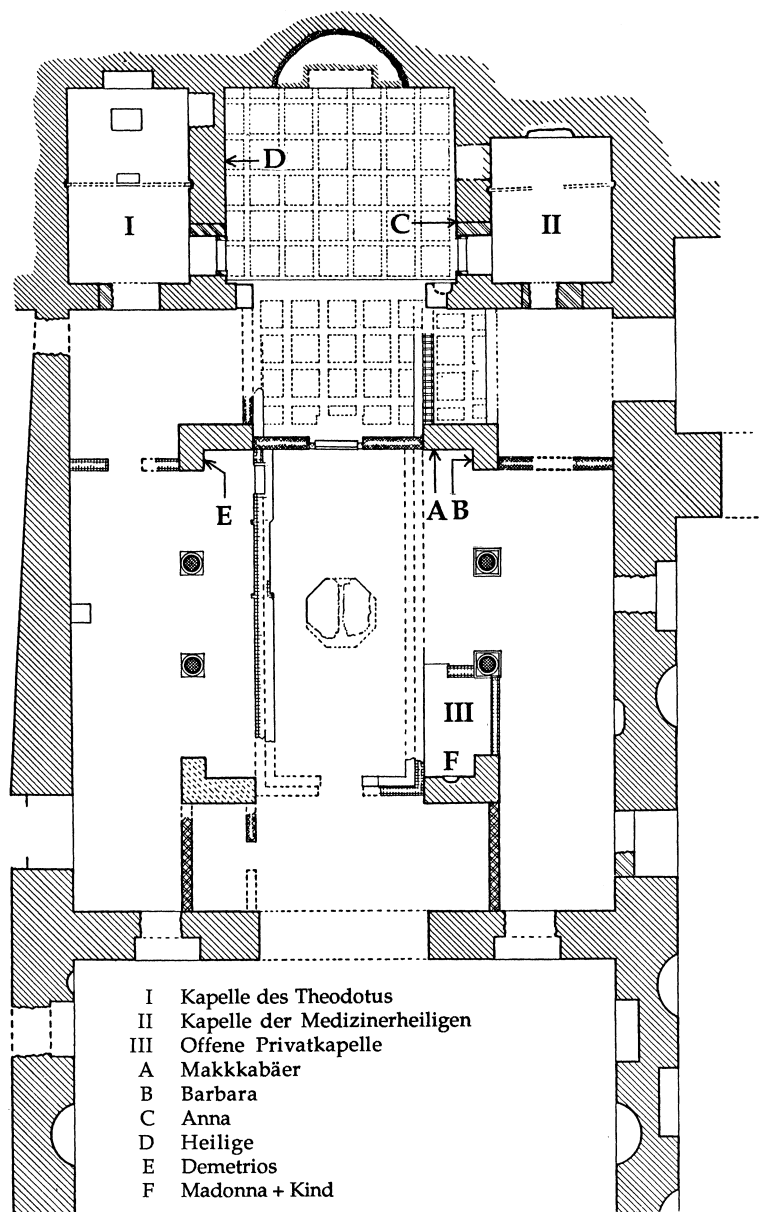


Figure 1: Floor plan of S. Maria Antiqua. – Hans Belting, “Eine Privatkapelle im frühmittelalterlichen Rom,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987), 55–69, at 55.



Figure 2: The Seven Sons with their Mother, S. Solomone, and their tutor Eleazar. Presbytery of S. Maria Antiqua, Rome (705). – Photograph by Dr. Steven Zucker for Smarthistory (<https://smarthistory.org/smantiqua/>). Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Salome who may be a possible reference (especially in terms of Mariology): after the birth of Jesus in a cave, the (unnamed) midwife emerges from the cave and suddenly encounters Salome, who tells her about the miraculous virgin birth (19:3). Like a doubting Thomas, Salome “inserted her finger into her to test her physical condition” (20:1)⁵³ – and as a consequence, her hand caught fire and fell away from her.

In response to her humble prayer and repentance, an angel of God appears and tells her to touch the child, “and you will have salvation and joy.” (20:3) Salome’s hand is healed and she leaves the scene. As Lily C. Vuong explains, “she functions to confirm and witness Mary’s virginal status after the birth of Jesus, but also to serve as an antithetical character to the eager-to-believe midwife, since unlike the midwife, Salome requires physical proof to believe.”⁵⁴ It is possible that the formation of tradition was also

⁵³ Translation from Lily C. Vuong, *The Protevangelium of James* (Eugene, OR, 2019), 99.

⁵⁴ Vuong, *The Protevangelium of James*, 99.

influenced by the *Protoevangelium Jacobi*, which was widely disseminated and received in late antiquity, due to its Mariological reference and the motif of “learning”/“recognizing.” In addition to her seven sons, Salomone is here (also recorded in writing) accompanied by “ΕΛΕΑΖΑΡ Ο ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΥΣ” (Eleazar, the scribe), whose name is mentioned in 2 Maccabees 6:18; 7:41.⁵⁵

Within the overall iconographic program of Santa Maria Antiqua, the scene stands alongside other Old Testament models and depictions of martyrs as a martyr motif that focuses in particular on the exemplary nature of the mother. The function introduced here as an example of heroic faith in the time before Christ was later codified in the Menologion. The using of names was not yet common in the 7th century in the West and therefore – together with the cultic decoration of the mural – is evidence of the special veneration of the mother of the Maccabees in early Christian times. In this context, it seems all the more surprising that she does not have her own entry in many standard iconographic works (such as Louis Réau’s *Iconographie de l’art chrétien* or the *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*). This may be due to the fact that she was regarded as a type rather than an individual, representative of those who remained faithful to Christ and behaved in an exemplary manner, like the later Christian martyrs.

4. The Mother, the Church, the Theotokos

By the time of Augustine of Hippo, the “pure and noble body” of the mother obtained a new quality, approaching the role of the ‘body of the church’:

One woman, one mother, how she set before our eyes our one mother, holy Church, everywhere urging her children to die for the name of the one by whom she conceived and bore them! In this way the world has been filled with the blood of the martyrs, and from the seed thus broadcast it has yielded the crops of the Church” (Aug. *Ser.* 301.2, delivered in 417 CE).⁵⁶

55 Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken*, vol. 4, 679. In this context, he refers to *Das Handbuch der Malerei vom Berge Athos* (translated from the original handwritten Modern Greek text with annotations by Didron the Elder and Godehard Schäfer [Trier, 1855], 318–319), under “§410 The Holy Maccabees” names “Eleazar, young and beardless” with the addition “Eleazar was a priest.” The painter’s book, compiled in the 18th century, goes back to much older sources and traditions, which are difficult to identify.

56 J. E. Rotelle (ed.), *The Works of Saint Augustine, Part 3: Sermons*, Vol. 8: *Sermons* 273–305A. Transl. and notes E. Hill (New York, 1994), 276–288, esp. 282.

crucifixion. And both, while mothers, are more men than men (as already ingrained in the Syriac tradition).⁶⁰

In the Greek sources, the Mother's nobility and preservation of her body so as not to be corrupted are emphasized. Thus, it is difficult not to find similarities between the ideas laying under the cult of the Mother of the Maccabees and her attributes in the Greek texts, and the cult of the Theotokos, the "bearer of God", aside for their common origin from Hellenized Syria.⁶¹ Like a mother, she witnessed her son's sacrifice, seeing him depart to the kingdom of heaven. And like the mother, who was also a pure virgin until her marriage,⁶² Mary's body remains uncorrupted both by original sin and death. Thus, it seems that there is a connection or even a mutual formation between the traditions of the Mother of the Maccabees and the Theotokos ('Mother of God'), a title which was officially affirmed at the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE, both evidently having been worshiped in Jerusalem already at the beginning of the fifth century.⁶³

5. Concurring Names in Hebrew Sources and Western Reception

As already mentioned, 4 Macc. was not accepted as part of the Jewish bible. Yet, this para-biblical tradition found its way into the Jewish milieu. There are two main Jewish re-adaptations of the narrative of the mother and

⁶⁰ According to the Gospel of Thomas 114, Mary will be saved thanks to her manliness under Jesus' instruction, "Simon Peter said to him, 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.' Jesus said, 'I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.'" And see David deSilva, *4 Maccabees: Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Sinaiticus* (Leiden, Boston, 2006), 226.

⁶¹ Brian E. Daley, "The Divinization of the Theotokos: Fifth-Century Christological Controversy and the Figure of Mary", in Don W. Springer and Kevin M. Clarke (eds.), *Patristic Spirituality: Classical Perspectives on Ascent in the Journey to God* (Leiden, 2022), 309–339, at 313; Vuong, 2019, p. 21–22 (Jewish origins). Hunter 1993, p. 63; Hunter 2008, p. 412 (Syrian cult origins).

⁶² 4 Macc. 18.7–8. See also van Henten, "4 Maccabees", 209.

⁶³ Steven Shoemaker, "Death and the Maiden: The Early History of the Dormition and Assumption Apocrypha," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 50 (2006), 59–97. See also discussion in Daley, "The Divinization", 311–312, regarding her title as emphasizing Mary's unique role in the divine plan of salvation.

seven sons – a Palestinian one (*Midrash Lamentations Rabbah* 1:40), and a Babylonian one (*BT Gittin* 57b). The later Jewish versions are a contemporary adaptation for the story of the mother and seven sons: the previously (Hellenic) king is now (a Roman) “Caesar” (emperor, in Jewish sources), and his command changed from eating forbidden food to idol worship.

Both later Jewish adaptations follow the Greek version of the mother’s fate: In the end she commits suicide. Thus, it is interesting to note not only the unusual use of martyrdom narratives in these Jewish texts but also the fact that the narrative of the mother and seven sons is foreign to the Hebrew bible. Furthermore, the Palestinian adaptation demonstrates other influences from the Greek version: The nations of the world function as a kind of Greek chorus. However, while the Babylonian version only notes in the end that immediately after her youngest son’s death “she also went up to the roof, and fell, and died”, the Palestinian version undermines the mother’s heroism and concludes: “After a while, that woman lost her mind, fell from the roof and died.” Her act, once of extreme piety, turns into an act of misery and desperation in the Jewish Palestinian version.

A deeper examination of the Palestinian circumstances might shed light on the narrator’s agenda: The Palestinian adaptation is located in *Midrash Echa Rabbah* (*Lamentation Rabbah*), in a dossier of legends that were intended to be read during Tish’a B’Ab (the ninth of the month of Ab, more or less equivalent to the month of August), the Jewish day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple. Perhaps not coincidentally, that date is close to the Christian commemoration day of the Maccabean martyrs. More striking even is the fact that the mother’s name is Miriam in the Palestinian *Midrash Echa Rabbah*⁶⁴, written in the fifth century in Jerusalem, where the cult of Mary emerged.⁶⁵ This naming of the mother as Miriam is a very strong

64 This name is already attested in both versions/manuscripts of this composition, ms. Munich 229 (version A, ed. Buber, 1:47, p. 86 [Hebrew] which is considered to be more corrupted), and ms. Parma 2559 (version B, a more reliable version of this text. For ms. Parma 2559 see: [https://www.nli.org.il/he/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH990000869320205171/NLI#\\$FL17268418](https://www.nli.org.il/he/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH990000869320205171/NLI#$FL17268418))

This manuscript belongs to the Biblioteca Palatina di Parma, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Italy, The National Library of Israel. “Ktiv” Project, The National Library of Israel.

65 In the orthodox church calendar, the veneration of the Mother of Seven Sons is inserted into the same day as Mary’s, on the 1st of August: In the Eastern Orthodox Church: On 1 August, the Feast to the All-Merciful Saviour and the Most Holy Mother of God is celebrated. However, this feast was established only in medieval times.

indicator for the fact that the Syriac and Greek renaming and “re-framing” of the Maccabean Mother into an *antitypus* of Mary has influenced the continuing Hebrew tradition, in which the mother originally was unnamed.

The Maccabean Mother assumes the role of a prophetic figure, foreshadowing the coming of the Christian Messiah and the role of his mother – and from this starting point develops into an *antitypus* in Christian iconography in a complex interplay of cultural traditions which can only briefly be sketched here with a few examples from material culture.⁶⁶ The veneration of Mary evolved over centuries, shaped by theological developments, cultural influences, and popular piety. Her enduring appeal lies in her role as a compassionate mother and a powerful intercessor.

In the West, the narrative character became more pronounced from the High Middle Ages onwards: Salomone was emotionalized as a suffering mother, and the scenes took on more of the character of a hagiographic narrative. The *Martyrologium Romanum* lists the legends (already understood here as a single entity) *De SS. Martyribus Eleazaro sene, septem fratribus Machabaeis, et horum matre. Antiochiae in Syria*⁶⁷ on August 1, placing particular emphasis on the mother.

From there, the seven Maccabees and their mother found their way into the most influential collection of legends of the Middle Ages, Jacobus de Voragine’s *Legenda aurea* (*Golden Legend*) from the late 13th century. Its immense manuscript distribution disseminated the descriptions of saints and feasts so broadly that the iconography attached to them almost reached a level of unwritten “canonicity”. What Raphaëlle Ziadé writes about the literary character also goes for her artistic afterlife: “The mother of the Maccabees is first and foremost a figure subject to the hyperbolic aesthetics of epideictic rhetoric, where exaggeration was accepted as a necessary and appreciated device.”⁶⁸

66 Brief and convincing introductions into the formation of *typus* and *antitypus* in Christian art are offered by Sabine Schrenk, *Typus und Antitypos in der frühchristlichen Kunst* (Münster, 1995) and Alexander Linke, *Typologie in der Frühen Neuzeit. Genese und Semantik heilsgeschichtlicher Bildprogramme von der Cappella Sistina (1480) bis San Giovanni in Laterano (1650)* (Berlin, 2014).

67 *Acta Sanctorum Augusti. Ex Latinis & Graecis, aliarumque gentium Monumentis, servata primigenia veterum Scriptorum phrasi. Collecta, digesta, commentariisque & observationibus illustrata* a Joanne Bapt. Sollerio, Joanne Pinio, Guilielmo Cupero, Petro Boschio e Societate Jesu Presbyteris Theologis. Tomus I (Venice, 1750), 5; the passus on the praise of the mother at 8.

68 „La mère des Maccabées est d’abord une figure soumise à l’esthétique hyperbolique de l’éloquence épideictique, où l’exagération était admise comme une figure obligée, et



Figure 3: The Martyrdom of the Seven Maccabees. Illustration of the *Alsacian Golden Legend* Cgm 6 (Strasbourg, 1362), fol. 129v. (https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb00043859_00262/full/full/0/default.jpg)

Two illustrated Middle High German manuscripts of the *Golden Legend* demonstrate differing perceptions of the Maccabean mother: Cgm 6 (Bavarian State Library, Munich – image 3), probably produced in Strasbourg in 1362 for the Dominican convent of St Nikolaus in undis, presents a monastic type adapted to its devotional context. By contrast, Cpg 144 (University Library, Heidelberg – image 4), a paper manuscript from Diebold Lauber's workshop in Hagenau (1418), reflects economical urban production.⁶⁹ In the pen-and-ink

apprécie.“ – Raphaëlle Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées de l'histoire juive au culte chrétien. Les homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze et de Jean Chrysostome* (Leiden, 2007), 255.

⁶⁹ For an analysis of the two manuscripts and their image programs, see Stephanie Rappel (= Hallinger), *Text und Bild in der Elsässischen Legenda aurea. Der Cgm (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München) und der Cpg 144 (Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg)* (Hamburg, 2015).



Figure 4: The Martyrdom of the Seven Maccabees. Illustration of the Alsatian Golden Legend Cpg 144 (Hagenau, 1418), fol. 46v. (<https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.2196#0109>)

drawing preceding the legend, the illustrator omits the mother and instead emphasizes the dualism between martyrs and persecutors by contrasting the enthroned brothers with King Antiochus. Individualization and hagiographic accuracy are secondary to an emblematic, abbreviated visualization of the legend through the seven brothers.⁷⁰

Medieval iconography thus continues the trajectory from the anonymous figure of early patristic literature – interpreted typologically in relation to Christ and the Church – to the personalized Saint Salomone⁷¹ of Byzantine art and liturgy. While early images stress theological function, later conventions stabilize memory through fixed name and narrative detail. Even so, the mother rarely appears independently of her sons and remains a secondary figure in her artistic reception. She is primarily presented as a model of heroic motherhood and as an *antitypus* to Mary, whose typological relationship to her, already articulated in patristic literature, persists throughout the Middle Ages.

This development culminates in Heloas Merz's *Chronik des Benediktinerklosters SS. Machabaeorum* (1525), composed for a monastery dedicated to the Seven Martyrs. In his earlier poem *Dat lyden der hilger Machabeen und afflaes tzo Mauren bynnen Colen* (1507), Merz shaped the narrative for a Cologne audience.⁷² Influenced by Marian piety, both texts downplay Jewish elements and intensify the comparison between Salomone and the medieval image of Mary with her heart pierced by seven swords.⁷³ Typology thus serves to promote the local cult of the Maccabees and their mother by aligning them with the ultimate exemplarity of Christ and the Theotokos.

70 It was common practice in the paper-manuscript workshop of Diebold Lauber to simplify scenes into strict dualistic compositions opposing a saint to an "evil" adversary; within this scheme, the mother was often considered dispensable. Comparable reductions occur earlier, for example on the Brescia casket. For a detailed study of the workshop, see Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch, *Spätformen mittelalterlicher Buchherstellung: Bilderhandschriften aus der Werkstatt Diebold Laubers in Hagenau* (Wiesbaden, 2001).

71 The Graecized form Shamuni/Salomone ultimately prevailed over alternative medieval names such as Miriam or Hannah, which left little trace in Christian art. On the use of Hannah as the mother's name in medieval Ashkenaz, see Elisheva Baumgarten and Rella Kushelevsky, "From 'The Mother and her Sons' to 'The Mother of the Sons' in Medieval Ashkenaz," *Zion* 71, no. 4 (2006): 273–300 (Hebrew).

72 Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkowi, *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs* (New York, 2009), 144.

73 See Joslyn-Siemiatkowi, *Christian Memories*, 145.

6. Conclusion: A Symbolic Figure with Many Character Facettes

The Maccabee mother's transformation from a marginal biblical figure to a revered saint illustrates cultural exchange and religious appropriation. In Second Temple Judaism, she appears briefly in the brothers' struggle against Antiochus (2 Maccabees), but by first-century Antioch, in Greek *4 Maccabees*, she emerges as a heroine whose conduct, and also her presumed death – sometimes portrayed as suicide – model bravery, wisdom, and bodily purity, anticipating her typological link to Mary, the Theotokos. In the Syriac translation, her martyrdom is framed through suffering, highlighting her exemplary character within Eastern contexts. Jewish versions of the legend – Babylonian and Palestinian – reflect engagement with Christian traditions, with the Palestinian text particularly incorporating Mariological awareness through the assimilation of her name to Miriam. As a case of Entangled Traditions, her story was adapted for different communities' needs, a process visible in Christian iconography: in *Santa Maria Antiqua* she serves as an antitype of Mary, while in Middle High German manuscripts such as Munich Cgm 6 she exemplifies virtuous behavior, tailored to the work's audience. Studying her evolution illuminates the dynamic interplay between Jewish and Christian traditions.

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