

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*Pseudo-Clémentines* and Critical French Scholarship on Early Christianity in the Modernist Crisis: Notes on an Unpublished Letter

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Abstract: This article analyzes an unpublished 1933 letter from Alfred Loisy to Louis Canet as a lens onto the intellectual, historiographical, and ideological dynamics of French scholarship on early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

- 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.

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- 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 Elchesaite ideas. To begin with, Peter’s method of presenting the teachings of the True Prophet as esoteric ties in closely with the Elchesaite 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 Elchesaite 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 Elchesaism, 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 entertaining function: “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, Faustinianus, 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 *Céryrgmes*, 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 supplément 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 *Homélie*s-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 Homélie's 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 Légace, *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).