

University of Denver

Digital Commons @ DU

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Graduate Studies

1-1-2013

Representations of the Care of the Soul in Early Christian Texts

Deborah Ann Niederer Saxon
University of Denver

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Niederer Saxon, Deborah Ann, "Representations of the Care of the Soul in Early Christian Texts" (2013).
Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 1390.
<https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1390>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu, dig-commons@du.edu.

Representations of the Care of the Soul in Early Christian Texts

Abstract

Michel Foucault argues that modern scholars have inaccurately conceptualized ancient Greco-Roman philosophies as the pursuit of abstract knowledge. He proposes instead conceiving of these philosophies more broadly as sets of practices that focused on “the care of the self/soul.” Such care involved exercises (“technologies of the self”) effecting both identity formation and spiritual transformation. It is possible to re-conceptualize the history of the early Christianities in these terms as well, particularly in examining the discourses circulating in the second and third centuries of the Common Era. Juxtaposition and close reading of texts from this period reveal that competing visions of the care of the soul informed by Stoic ideals were circulating among Christians. Specifically, these conflicting perspectives revolved around, on one hand, a dominant, “proto-orthodox” discourse glorifying martyrdom and, on the other, disruptions to this discourse by those misleadingly subsumed under the umbrella term, “Gnostic.” Chapter one explores the value of applying Foucault's framework to the history of the early Christianities. Chapter two explains the way in which martyrdom functions as care of the soul, or therapy of the emotions, in texts ascribed to Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Chapter three demonstrates the way other early Christian texts disrupt this discourse of a “suffering self” while simultaneously laying out other views of self-care. Specific texts for examination include two texts from Nag Hammadi—*Apocalypse of Peter* and *Testimony of Truth*, two fragments preserved by Clement of Alexandria—one attributed to Basilides and one to Valentinus, and the *Gospel of Judas*. Chapter four discusses how Mary Magdalene and Perpetua are represented in terms of the care of the soul in, respectively, the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* and what is at stake for women's leadership roles in each of these portrayals. Viewing the early debates in this way—as conflicts regarding issues of self-identity and spiritual development—rather than as debates about knowledge per se (doctrines defined in essentialist terms) provides a means of moving beyond the simplistic characterization of the richly diverse groups in this period as either merely “proto-orthodox” or “heretical.”

Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Ph.D.

Department

Religious and Theological Studies

First Advisor

Albert Hernández, Ph.D.

Keywords

Care of the soul, Foucault, Gnostic, Martyrdom, Nag Hammadi

Subject Categories

History of Christianity | Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion

Publication Statement

Copyright is held by the author. User is responsible for all copyright compliance.

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CARE OF THE SOUL
IN EARLY CHRISTIAN TEXTS

A Dissertation Presented to
the Faculty of the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology
Joint PhD Program
University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Deborah Ann Niederer Saxon
June 2013
Advisor: Dr. Albert Hernández

©Copyright by Deborah Niederer Saxon 2013

All Rights Reserved

Author: Deborah Niederer Saxon

Title: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CARE OF THE SOUL IN EARLY CHRISTIAN TEXTS

Advisor: Dr. Albert Hernández

Degree Date: June 2013

Abstract

Michel Foucault argues that modern scholars have inaccurately conceptualized ancient Greco-Roman philosophies as the pursuit of abstract knowledge. He proposes instead conceiving of these philosophies more broadly as sets of practices that focused on “the care of the self/soul.” Such care involved exercises (“technologies of the self”) effecting both identity formation and spiritual transformation. It is possible to re-conceptualize the history of the early Christianities in these terms as well, particularly in examining the discourses circulating in the second and third centuries of the Common Era. Juxtaposition and close reading of texts from this period reveal that competing visions of the care of the soul informed by Stoic ideals were circulating among Christians. Specifically, these conflicting perspectives revolved around, on one hand, a dominant, “proto-orthodox” discourse glorifying martyrdom and, on the other, disruptions to this discourse by those misleadingly subsumed under the umbrella term, “Gnostic.” Chapter one explores the value of applying Foucault’s framework to the history of the early Christianities. Chapter two explains the way in which martyrdom functions as care of the soul, or therapy of the emotions, in texts ascribed to Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Chapter three demonstrates the way other early Christian texts disrupt this discourse of a “suffering self” while simultaneously laying out other views of self-care. Specific texts for examination include two texts from Nag Hammadi—*Apocalypse of Peter* and *Testimony of Truth*, two fragments preserved by Clement of Alexandria—one attributed

to Basilides and one to Valentinus, and the *Gospel of Judas*. Chapter four discusses how Mary Magdalene and Perpetua are represented in terms of the care of the soul in, respectively, the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* and what is at stake for women's leadership roles in each of these portrayals. Viewing the early debates in this way—as conflicts regarding issues of self-identity and spiritual development—rather than as debates about knowledge per se (doctrines defined in essentialist terms) provides a means of moving beyond the simplistic characterization of the richly diverse groups in this period as either merely “proto-orthodox” or “heretical.”

Acknowledgements

I thank the Rev. Dr. Albert Ray Niederer and Anna Niederer for their unwavering support. It was my dad's own love of Christian history and my parents' openness to others that inspired this project. Thanks also to Dr. Albert Hernández, who saw the value of my project and supported me throughout; Dr. Frank Seeburger, who promptly and thoughtfully critiqued each draft; Dr. Ann Graham Brock, who went the extra mile at each stage and painstakingly guided me throughout; Dr. Katherine Turpin, outside chair; Ally Kateuz, who read each chapter; Dr. Lucy McGuffey, who helped me discover Foucault's later works; Dr. Paul Middleton, who sent copies of SBL papers; Karen Smith, who translated material in French; Brian Hartman and the Rev. Dr. James White, who read and edited; coordinators Meghan Laurvick and Arianna Nowalkowski; librarians Katie Cook, Laura Harris, Alice Runis, Douglas Brown, Donna Groben, and Michelle Kyner; former professors, the Rev. Dr. Glen Hilburn, Dr. Julio Jiménez, Dr. Alan Robb, and Dr. Anabel Newman; fellow students Dr. J. Duce, N. Hamid, S. Humble, S. Littrell, L. Schrader, S. Paulson, and Dr. S. Yuhas; conversation partners E. Brown, M. Carlson, the Hall's, the Howard's, I. Jezierska, A. Medina, the Rev. Dr. R. Meyers, K. Mordeaux, P. Strovink, the Vandenheuvel's, the Vincent-Morrison's, the Watt's, S. Walker, and family: Dr. George and Dottie Saxon; David, Misty, Megan, and Peyton Niederer; the Rev. Dr. Darryl and Dorothy DeBorde, Shannon Black, Frances Bray, Rob and Seana Saxon; First Congregational UCC-Colo. Springs (and missions committee); Christ's Episcopal Church-Castle Rock; Prof. Y. Ishio, who secured research privileges, and the Hay family. Above all, I thank my husband, John, for steadfast support in every respect.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: The Importance of the Care of the Soul in the History of the Early Christianities.....		1
The Care of the Self as the Main Focus of Greco-Roman Philosophies.....		1
Why Historians Have Not Recognized the Importance of Care of the Soul.....		6
Usefulness of the Care of the Self in Re-conceptualizing Christian History		8
Martyrdom as a Discursive Formation.....		12
Disruptions to the Discourse of Martyrdom		18
Chapter Two: Martyrdom Represented as Care of the Self/Soul in “Proto-Orthodox” Texts.....		21
Martyrdom as Care of the Soul/Self.....		21
<i>1 Clement</i>		28
<i>Letters of Ignatius</i>		33
Polycarp.....		40
<i>Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians</i>		41
<i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>		43
Further Support for Martyrdom as Care of the Soul in Secondary Sources		46
Development of a Collective Identity through the Discourse of Martyrdom		50
Resurrection of the Flesh.....		54
Chapter Three: Competing Visions of the Care of the Soul in the <i>Apocalypse of Peter</i> , the <i>Testimony of Truth</i> , Fragments of Basilides and Valentinus, and the <i>Gospel of Judas</i>		58
Heresiological Framing		61
Alternative Perspectives		64
<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>		67
<i>Testimony of Truth</i>		79
Fragment of Basilides.....		87
Fourth Fragment of Valentinus.....		93
<i>Gospel of Judas</i>		99
Background.....		101
Judas’ Moral Character		103
Judas’ Ambiguous Representation		106
Critique of Apostolic Succession in Terms of the Care of the Soul		115
Further Critique of Sacrifice and Martyrdom.....		122
Preparation for Martyrdom.....		133
Further Discussion Regarding the Resurrection of the Flesh		137
Chapter Four: Complementary Representations of the Care of the Soul in the <i>Gospel of Mary</i> and the <i>Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity</i>		144
The Representation of Mary Magdalene in the <i>Gospel of Mary</i>		150
The Positive Connotation of Not Wavering		152
Male Disciples’ Fear vs. Mary’s Lack of Fear		157
Mary as a Disciple Who Did Not Waver.....		160

Mary's Vision	163
Mary's Equanimity vs. Peter's Passion	165
The End Result	168
Parallels between Mary and Perpetua.....	169
Representation of Perpetua's Character	172
Perpetua's Representation in the Arena Itself	179
Perpetua's Contemplation of Death in Visions	182
Perpetua's Power of Intercession	185
Troubling Aspects of Perpetua's Representation	186
Unpacking "Gnosticism"	192
Chapter Five: Conclusion	196
Bibliography	206
Texts and Translations.....	206
Modern Works	212

CHAPTER ONE: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CARE OF THE SOUL IN THE HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANITIES

The Care of the Self as the Main Focus of Greco-Roman Philosophies

There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all But, then, what is philosophy today—philosophical activity, I mean—if it is not the critical work that thought brings to bear on itself? In what does it consist, if not in the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known?¹

Foucault's challenge to theology is to think differently by freeing theology from what it 'silently thinks', to enable Christian theology to recognize its hidden regimes of knowledge power beneath the rituals of its performances.²

In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*,³ Michel Foucault argues that since the “post-Cartesian moment,” modern scholars have inaccurately conceptualized Greco-Roman

¹ Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (trans. Robert Hurley; London: Penguin, 1984), 9.

² See page 5 of Bernauer and Carrette, *Michel Foucault and Theology*, 2004. Though relatively little has been written about the application of Foucault's work to theology and religion, various essays in the following works are useful in demonstrating the relevance of Foucault's thought in these areas: James W. Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Toward an Ethics of Thought* (London: Humanities Press International, 1990); James W. Bernauer and Jeremy R. Carrette, eds. *Michel Foucault and Theology: The Politics of Religious Experience* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004); Jeremy R. Carrette, *Foucault and Religion: Spiritual Corporality and Political Spirituality* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Jeremy R. Carrette, ed. *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Jonathan Tran, *Foucault and Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2011).

³ Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981–82* (ed. Frédéric Glos; trans. Graham Burchell; New York: Picador, 2001). These are lectures Foucault gave in the latter part of his life before he died in 1984. James Bernauer, who attended Foucault's lectures for two years, describes his style and the excitement generated by his lectures: “It was during his fourteen years at the Collège de France that Foucault achieved his greatest renown as a thinker and teacher. The cacophony of foreign tongues heard before each of his classes among the hundreds of students who filled the large lecture hall at the Collège testified to the audience that his work had found in other countries. Although the major languages into which he had been translated was a sign of an interest in his writings that extended far

philosophies as the pursuit of abstract knowledge. He proposes situating our understanding more broadly in terms of sets of practices centered around the *epimeleia heautou*, or “the care of the self/soul” instead.⁴ In the rest of the book and in *Technologies of the Self*,⁵ he traces the history of this concept and discusses the means through which one goes about “the care of the self/soul.”⁶ Such care revolves around what he terms “technologies of the self.” Indeed, these “technologies” are simply practices, or exercises, which effect both identity formation and spiritual transformation. In a published interview done when he led a seminar on these at the University of Vermont, he defines these “technologies” as those practices

which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct,

beyond the classroom, the best single indication of his thought’s appeal was the tangible sense of excitement that possessed his auditors as they heard him thinking aloud. The regular, almost monotone voice in which the words poured forth seemed irreconcilable with the bursts of dramatic images that exploded in his speech: word paintings in which Greek philosophers and Christian theologians, medical doctors and psychiatrists, those searching for truth and those inflicted with the passion for power found themselves depicted together with the figures of madmen, the dissected bodies of the dead, and the cowering expressions of the imprisoned and the exploited. In hearing Foucault, many felt that the world we did in fact inhabit had found a craftsman to portray it.” See Bernauer, *Michel Foucault’s Force of Flight*, 3–4. One cannot help but think that Foucault would empathize with juxtaposing the voices of the “proto-orthodox” Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp with those of the writers of the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Gospel of Judas*, and the other extra-canonical texts discussed in this dissertation even if the figures represented in these texts might have themselves been horrified at being lumped together.

⁴ See Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 2–27 for a good overview.

⁵ Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton; Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16–49.

⁶ “Care of the self” and “care of the soul” are used interchangeably by Foucault. There are several examples on pages 25–27 of his essay, “Technologies of the Self.” For example, when he discusses the way in which Socrates urges Alcibiades to take care of himself, Foucault says, “Alcibiades tries to find the self in a dialectical movement. When you take care of the body, you don’t take care of the self. The self is not clothing, tools, or possessions. It is to be found in the principle which uses these tools, a principle not of the body but of the soul. You have to worry about the soul—that is the principal activity of caring for yourself.” See Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 25.

and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.⁷

Foucault explains that in antiquity, these practices consisted of things like writing in a notebook, writing letters, the art of listening well, certain kinds of meditation, examination of conscience, dream interpretation, and practices related to medical care.⁸

Foucault argues that since Descartes, the modern history of philosophy has typically focused on the Greco-Roman love of knowledge and assumed it to be the primary emphasis of the ancients. However, Foucault proposes that it is actually the care of the soul which is the main interest of the philosophers of antiquity. He explains that the emphasis on “knowing oneself” in ancient Greek and Roman thought is actually subsumed within the broader notion of the care of the self/soul. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* as a whole lays out the case for this thesis with extensive examples from the time

⁷ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 18.

⁸ See also Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Arnold I. Davidson, ed. Michael Chase, trans.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1995). Hadot became the chair of the department of philosophy at the Collège de France in 1983, just after Foucault gave the lectures which have been transcribed and translated as the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* in 1981–82 (see Davidson’s “Introduction” to *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 2). Foucault cites Hadot’s work several times in *Hermeneutics of the Subject* (23, 62, 79, 123, 146, 203, 216, 226, 312, 269, 387, 417, 418, 434) as they share the view that philosophy represented “a way of life” rather than the mere acquisition of abstract knowledge in the Greco-Roman world. What Foucault terms “the care of the self/soul,” Hadot refers to as the practice of “spiritual exercises.” He gives examples listed by Philo of Alexandria: “research, thorough investigation, reading, listening, attention, self-mastery, and indifference to indifferent things,” and then, in a second list, “reading, meditations, therapies of the passions, remembrance of good things, self-mastery, and the accomplishment of duties” (84). Hadot does mention some points of difference which he says he would have liked to discuss with Foucault had he lived longer on pages 206–13 of *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. These are based on Hadot’s reading of Foucault’s three-volume, *History of Sexuality*, originally published as *Le Souci de soi*, Paris 1984 and translated into English by Robert Hurley which was published in New York by Vintage Books in 1986) rather than the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* as Hadot’s book preceded the lectures by six years. The most important difference in emphasis is Hadot’s wanting to emphasize not only the ethics of caring for oneself but also the Stoic emphases on cosmology and logic. For Hadot, care of the self leads one to see that one is part of the greater whole. Thus, ethical reflection leads to cosmological reflection. Martha Nussbaum has also written extensively on these practices: Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Martha C. Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” *Apeiron* 20 (1987), 129–77.

of Socrates⁹ to the fifth century of the Common Era.¹⁰ Foucault argues that this concept of self-care simply cannot be underestimated as it is the “justificatory framework, ground and foundation”¹¹ for the concept of knowing oneself which has long been seen as the dominant concept undergirding Greek and Roman thought: “Throughout the long summer of Hellenistic and Roman thought, the exhortation to care for oneself became so widespread that it became . . . a truly general cultural phenomenon.”¹² Foucault argues that it is a major thread for roughly a thousand years—for five hundred years both prior to and after the beginning of the Common Era.¹³

Foucault goes on to provide justification for seeing the prevalence of this concept. He himself admits that it is a concept which has scarcely been thought of as significant in the history of philosophy.¹⁴ To begin with, he reinterprets the famous inscription at the oracle of Delphi, “Know thyself,” and shows how the connotation associated with it would have meant something more like, “Know your limitations,” or “Understand that

⁹ Hadot, too, discusses the importance of the care of the soul in Socratic dialogue saying that such a teaching exercise “is not concerned with the exposition of a doctrine, but with guiding an interlocutor to a certain settled mental attitude.” See Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 20. In the postscript of this same work, Hadot refers to Alcibiades’ description of Socrates to argue for the definition of a philosopher as “someone who lived in a philosophical way,” 281. On pages 89–93, Hadot discusses the role of the representation of Socrates in detail. William V. Harris also discusses Socrates and his focus on care of the soul: William V. Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 352–53.

¹⁰ See also Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, especially pages 264–267.

¹¹ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 8. See pages 2–27 for a good overview of several points mentioned in this chapter.

¹² Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 9.

¹³ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 11. See also Carette and Bernauer, *Michel Foucault and Theology*, 8.

¹⁴ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 2.

one should not ask for too much.” Second, Foucault provides three examples of Socrates’ use of the term in the *Apology*. Socrates’ whole discussion revolves around the fact that he has not taken care of himself in terms of trying to acquire fame or fortune but rather, that he sees his role as one who not only does not seek these things for himself but also encourages others to take care of their souls in ways that are far more important than these. He alludes to the fact that if he is forced to leave the Athenians, they will suffer by not having someone who provides such encouragement. Socrates also says that after providing the guidance that he has, he deserves to be rewarded by his society rather than punished.¹⁵ Finally, Foucault points to the dialogue in the *Alcibiades* to make his case regarding the prominence of the notion of the care of the self for Greek thought, pointing out that the concept is important for the Pythagoreans, Stoics, Cynics, Epicureans, and neo-Platonists—in short, for all of the philosophical schools of ancient Greece and Rome with the exception of the Aristotelians.¹⁶ Foucault then traces the history of what begins as a rather specific kind of activity (in which Socrates encourages only the elite young men who will be rulers to engage) to what becomes, over time, a process in which spokespeople for various philosophical schools advocate the care of the self for a much wider group of people. Foucault also traces the process whereby the care of the soul shifts from being considered a practice one should take on in youth to being thought of as a life-long process.

Foucault also sees the concept of the care of the self as relevant for certain Christian groups—particularly those of Alexandria and the East. He believes that this

¹⁵ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 6–8.

¹⁶ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 17.

concept permeates asceticism and monasticism in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Common Era. He gives an example from Gregory of Nyssa's *Treatise on Virginity* in which he cites Gregory as comparing the care of the self to finding a lost drachma. Gregory says that if one loses such a coin, one must light a lamp and search diligently in every corner until one sees the metal shining in the dark. He then explains this phenomenon as analogous to rediscovering the image which God has imprinted on our soul by taking care of it, shining the light of reason into and exploring every recess of it. In this sense, the care of the soul becomes an obligation for the Christian.¹⁷

Why Historians Have Not Recognized the Importance of Care of the Soul

Foucault discusses the reasons for this distorted focus on knowledge rather than the care of the self and the obscuring of the latter in modern times. He argues that in the modern period, historians of philosophy have simply *assumed* that the emphasis was on knowledge. He feels this assumption is a result of what he terms the “Cartesian moment,” that is, the moment “when [it came to be thought that] knowledge itself and knowledge alone gives access to the truth.”¹⁸ He does, however, qualify this by indicating an even earlier dissociation between, on the one hand, philosophy conceived of as a discourse revolving around the care of the soul and, on the other, philosophy conceived of as a discourse about mere knowledge, the latter occurring as practices of spirituality and the study of theology become separated. He argues that this separation actually begins as early as the period of Scholastic theological discourse in the thirteenth

¹⁷ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 22, 492.

¹⁸ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 17.

century with theologians such as Thomas Aquinas who relied heavily on Aristotle.¹⁹ As he explains,

[t]his theology, by claiming, on the basis of Christianity of course, to be *rational reflection* founding a faith with a universal vocation, founded at the same time the principle of a knowing subject in general, of a knowing subject who finds both his point of absolute fulfillment and highest degree of perfection in God, who is also his Creator and so his model. The correspondence between an omniscient God and subjects *capable of knowledge*, conditional on faith of course, is undoubtedly one of the main elements that led Western thought—or its principal forms of reflection—and philosophical thought in particular, to extricate itself, to free itself, and separate itself from the conditions of spirituality that had previously accompanied it and for which the *epimeleia heautou* was the most general expression (emphasis added).²⁰

Foucault goes on to say that until the seventeenth century, it is not spirituality and *science* which are at odds but spirituality and *theology*. At that point, the “Cartesian moment” occurs, obscuring the emphasis on the care of the soul in pre-modern times.

Foucault also mentions one other reason. Paradoxically, in some respects, an emphasis on one’s own self is at odds with the renunciation of self and the focus on non-egoism that has permeated Western, Christian thought.²¹ For example, figures such as Gregory of Nyssa as well as Methodius of Olympus and Basil of Caesarea also associate the care of the self with themes of self-renunciation and freedom from marriage. In fact, in the thought of these ascetics, the concept becomes related to austerity and self-restraint rather than being a positive activity which allows for human flourishing. For all these

¹⁹ For Foucault, Aristotle is the great exception to the emphasis on the care of the soul in Greek thought: “Aristotle is not the pinnacle of Antiquity but its exception.” See Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 17.

²⁰ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 26–27.

²¹ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 13.

reasons, then, Foucault argues that later generations have neglected the concept of the care of the soul.²²

Usefulness of the Care of the Self in Re-conceptualizing Christian History

The focus on *knowledge* in modern interpretations of Greco-Roman philosophies parallels the focus on *doctrine* in the way the story of Christianity has been told. In fact, in *Technologies of the Self*, Foucault says that, “Christianity has always been more interested in the history of its *beliefs* than in the history of real *practices* (emphasis added)”²³ and that a hermeneutics of technologies of the self “was never organized into a body of doctrine like textual hermeneutics.”²⁴

Re-conceiving the history of the early Christianities to delve more deeply into practices regarding the care of the self/soul rather than merely the history of knowledge, doctrines, or beliefs proves to be just as valuable as re-conceiving Greek philosophies in this way.²⁵ In particular, this reconception yields crucial insights into the fierce conflicts between early Christians in the second and third centuries of the Common Era. We can apply and extend Foucault’s insights regarding the care of the self/soul in re-conceptualizing issues of “orthodoxy” and “heresy” particularly with respect to

²² Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 10, 13. Hadot, too, feels that the recognition of the importance of “spiritual exercises” has been obscured, but he cites several “exceptions” who recognized the importance of such practices in the formation of self-identity and as a means of spiritual transformation (33).

²³ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 17.

²⁴ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 17.

²⁵ Bernauer and Carrette agree, stating that Foucault’s work is not “simply a modernist critique of knowledge: it also continually opens up the space of theology and Christian living to new possibilities. Foucault offers theology the critical apparatus to find new inclusive and non-dualistic forms of living; he offers the possibility of imagining new ways of rethinking theology, as practice rather than belief.” See Bernauer and Carrette, *Michel Foucault and Theology*, 4. See also Carrette, *Foucault and Religion*, 108–28.

“defining” the problematic category of “Gnosticism,”²⁶ reframing the issue as debates about the care of the self/soul rather than knowledge or doctrine per se (whether or not these disagreements were necessarily explicit or conscious). Therefore, this dissertation will not attempt to catalogue and interpret a “body of doctrine” but rather to illustrate the ways in which various early Christian groups envisioned the care of the soul (and corresponding technologies of the self) and to articulate the ways in which the discursive strategies they used to do so involved a collision of discourses in the ever-shifting, hybrid conditions of the world of the early Christianities.

Foucault himself provides a clue to the means whereby a re-conceptualization of Christian history in terms of its practices (or technologies of the self) might begin. In describing Christianity, Foucault mentions that

Christianity belongs to the salvation religions. It’s one of those religions which is supposed to lead the individual from one reality to another, from death to life,

²⁶ Interestingly, Foucault himself does not necessarily seem to be aware of the problems with the categorization of some Christians as “Gnostics.” Ironically, Foucault himself absorbs and expresses beliefs that are stereotypical of what have been continually put forth in the discourses of orthodox Christianity about “Gnosticism.” He himself does not see “Gnostics” as being interested in the care of the soul but rather as the extreme exception to this kind of concern: Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 16. In actuality, the Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi which are often referred to as Gnostic were discovered in 1945, but they were not translated and available to anyone other than a very small group of scholars until the 1970’s. Thus, Foucault’s knowledge of them seems to have been understandably limited. In fact, A. I. Davidson, a noted Foucauldian scholar, believes that his knowledge about them may have been based on reading Henry Puech, a noted history-of-religions scholar and expert on “Gnosticism” who taught at the same institution that Foucault did (*Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 23–24, n. 49). Puech’s student, Jean Doresse, was the first to view some of the codices found near Nag Hammadi. Puech was then one of the first to see them. See pages 5, 11, 13, 24, and 29 of John Dart, *The Jesus of Heresy and History: The Discovery and Meaning of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). However, the history of religions school would have simply assumed the texts to be Gnostic using precisely the kinds of typological definitions Karen King deconstructs in *What is Gnosticism?*, relying heavily on Foucauldian insights (see especially her “note on methodology,” 239–247). Foucault died before the texts became accessible and studied extensively. It is thus understandable that Foucault simply did not have access to the insights of later scholars such as Williams, King, and Dunderberg. See Michael Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003); Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

from time to eternity. In order to achieve that, Christianity imposed a set of conditions and rules of behavior for a certain *transformation of the self* (emphasis added).²⁷

Foucault then goes on to say that for Christians, this involved *exmologēsis*: “to recognize publicly the truth of their faith or to recognize publicly that they were Christians.”²⁸ For Foucault, this includes “the dramatic recognition of one’s status as a penitent.”²⁹

However, if one who engages in *exmologēsis* can be defined as one who publicly recognizes the truth of one’s faith, it sounds strikingly similar to the definition of a *martyr: witness*.³⁰ *Martyrdom* means simply *to bear witness*.³¹ Foucault goes on to say:

²⁷ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 40. Interestingly, imposing “a set of conditions and rules of behavior for a certain transformation of the self” is the way in which philosophical schools functioned, and in the second century, Galen, the noted physician of the son of Marcus Aurelius, refers to Christianity itself as a philosophical school rather than as a “superstition” as earlier non-Christian writers had done. See page 73 of Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (2d ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). Wilken goes on to say, “In calling Christianity a philosophical school, even one whose dialectical skill did not impress him, Galen gave Christianity a boost on the ladder of acceptance within the Roman world. . . . what led him to call it a philosophy was the success Christianity had in leading men and women *to a life of virtue*” (emphasis added) (79).

²⁸ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 41. See also Carrette, *Religion and Culture*, 172–73, 179–81, 203–04.

²⁹ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 41.

³⁰ The very first definition for “martyr” in the comprehensive *Oxford English Dictionary* is “a person who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce faith in Christ or obedience to his teachings, a Christian way of life, or adherence to a law or tenet of the Church; (also) a person who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce the beliefs or tenets of a particular Christian denomination, sect, etc.”

³¹ The Latin word *martys* referred to one who gave testimony in a Roman court of law. It acquired the particular connotation of suffering death for one’s beliefs in the context of the Roman persecution of Christians. Norbert Brox locates the first definitive usage of *martys* in this way in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. See Norbert Brox, *Zeuge und Märtyrer: Untersuchungen zur frühchristlichen Zeugnis-Terminologie*. Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 5 (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1961). See also Hans Von Campenhausen, *Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1936); G. W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Paul Middleton, too, argues that martyrdom functions differently in the Maccabean context and the early Christian context: “Sacrifice, Salvation, and Holy War in Maccabean and Early Christian Martyrdom” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 18, 2012). Others argue that precedents for the willingness to suffer for one’s convictions have Jewish or Greco-Roman antecedents whether or not those who did so were specifically labeled as “martyrs.” See Theofried Baumeister, *Die Anfänge der Theologie des Martyriums*. Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie 45 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1980); W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the*

[t]he most important model used to explain *exmologēsis* was the model of death, of torture, or of *martyrdom* (emphasis added). The theories and practices of penance were elaborated around the problem of the man who prefers to die rather than to compromise.³²

Although Foucault refers to *exmologēsis* within the context of acts of self-punishment which constituted penance,³³ such an insight resonates with a certain desire for martyrdom which seems to have been prevalent in some early Christian groups in the first

Maccabees to Donatus (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1965 and 2008) (who begins his history of Christian martyrdom with a chapter on the Maccabees); Jan Willem van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 Maccabees and 4 Maccabees*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 57 (ed. John J. Collins; Leiden: Brill, 1997); Jan Willem Van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity*. London: Routledge, 2002; Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992); Emily R. Wilson, *The Death of Socrates* (London: Profile, 2007); Candida R Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 23–48, 174–78 concisely synthesizes this complex debate in her excellent treatment of the subject, astutely pointing to the fact that a particular linguistic term and the concept of an action are not necessarily always one and the same. It is possible that a certain community or culture could have understood and valued a practice such as dying for one's convictions without using the same word applied to such an action by later groups. Moreover, the definition may vary over time and geographic location. See especially pages 3–6, 169–70 of *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*. For an overview of the way that *martys* functions in secular Greek sources, the Septuagint, and the New Testament, see Allison Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Allison Trites, “μαρτύριος and Martyrdom in the Apocalypse,” *NovT* 15 (1973): 72–80.

³² Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 43.

³³ Foucault jumps rather abruptly from Greco-Roman philosophy to fourth and fifth century Christian monasticism. While recognizing that both martyrdom and asceticism ground themselves in a sense of self-renunciation, Foucault does not elaborate on the way in which the process of facing and enduring martyrdom is itself conceived of as a kind of care of the self. His examples of the way in which the care of the self is practiced come from ascetic and monastic contexts. He was planning to publish a fourth volume in the History of Sexuality series called *Confessions of the Flesh*. However, this could not be completed before he died. See page 2, note 6 of Jeremy R. Carrette, “Prologue to a Confession of the Flesh,” in Jeremy Carrette, *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 1–47. See also Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, 160. Chapter two of this dissertation, however, articulates the way in which martyrdom can also be conceived as a kind of care of the self. See also Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 133. Hadot says: “Like philosophical meditation, Christian meditation flourished by using all available means of rhetoric and oratorical amplification, and by mobilizing all possible resources of the imagination. Thus, for example, Evagrius Ponticus used to invite his disciples to imagine their own death, the decomposition of their bodies, the terrors and sufferings of their souls in Hell, and eternal fire; then, by way of contrast, they were to picture the happiness of the just.” One can well imagine how such an exercise could have functioned in earlier times when a Christian might actually have been facing martyrdom. Interestingly, though, Hadot, too fails to apply his insights regarding philosophy as a way of life specifically to the context of Christian persecution.

three centuries prior to the Edict of Milan in 313 when the Roman Empire legally declared the toleration of Christianity. Thus, an examination of discourses related to martyrdom can yield important insights regarding practices in the early Christianities.³⁴

Martyrdom as a Discursive Formation

Judith Perkins has utilized a Foucauldian framework to argue that the very identity of Christianity was being established through the envisioning of the Christian community as the body or bodies of a “suffering self.” In particular, Perkins contrasts the comedic ending of Greco-Roman novels in marriage with the comedic ending of martyr accounts, the culmination of suffering in death. Death as a happy ending (the name of her first chapter) turns Greco-Roman morality on its head. In the moral universe of Greco-Roman values, there is no virtue in suffering; therefore, suffering epitomized by an ignominious death, a death which allows the sufferer to transcend the established social order and established hierarchies of this world for union with Christ, actually subverts the moral and political order of the elites who rule this earthly domain.³⁵ Though Perkins traces the way in which the notion of a suffering self is emerging in other Greco-Roman discourse (that of an Asclepius follower, for example), noting that Christian discourse

³⁴ I would argue that while *exmologēsis* dominates the proto-orthodox form of Christianity which will become institutionalized in the fourth century, this is not necessarily the case with respect to *all* forms of early Christianities. The practices and beliefs of certain groups later deemed Gnostic align quite closely with Greco-Roman notions about the care of the soul in certain respects. Of course, many of the texts have been lost, but with the discovery of texts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly the large find near Nag Hammadi in 1945, we now have access to far more texts of early Christian groups than at any time since late antiquity. If we closely examine them, what we find is not a Gnostic spirit but rather a variety of attitudes toward the care of the soul which intersect the dominant discourse of the glorification of martyrdom. Chapter three argues this point in depth.

³⁵ Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 15–40.

does not emerge out of a complete vacuum, she effectively argues that Christian discourse completely transforms notions of selves and suffering. Moreover, the very emergence of this subject, while not the sole reason for the success of Christianity, is helpful in at least two ways: a) in constituting an audience of suffering selves to whom Christianity can address itself (the sick, poor, suffering, widowed, and orphaned all of whom the discourses of Greco-Roman elites largely ignored) and b) the appropriation of the wealth of the rich for the serving of the poor. In this sense, she is articulating the operation of a communal technology of selves in the shaping of Christian identity.³⁶

In Perkins' more recent book, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, she explores the way that the themes of alienation and estrangement from this world emerge in the construction of collective Christian identity, again by means of discursive analyses of a variety of ancient texts. Perkins points out that the power of the Roman Empire revolved in part around an alliance of elites (the class known as *honestiores*). The law exempted such persons from cruel, physical punishments. The emphasis on the value of martyrdom for Christians whether they were socially and economically of high or low status (including discourses emphasizing joy and rejoicing in the face of cruel, physical punishments and a belief in resurrection) "opened a crack in the unity of elite self-interest that informed the early empire"³⁷—as this strategy stridently opposed the traditional distinction between the elites and the non-elites (*honestiores* and *humiliores*).

³⁶ Jeremy R. Carrette, *Religion and Culture*, also discusses Foucault's equating religion with a "political force." See Carrette, "Prologue to a Confession of the Flesh," 38. Likewise, Foucault refers to the church as "a superb instrument of power for itself." See page 107 of Thierry Voeltzel, "On religion (1978)" (Trans. Richard Townsend) in Jeremy R. Carrette, ed., *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 106–109.

³⁷ Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies; New York: Routledge, 2008), 180.

Thus, the cult of martyrdom served larger social and political purposes as a means of *disidentification* with the status quo—being a member of the Roman Empire—and clear identification with a new institution which eventually served as an alternate space or site of power, the Christian church. In short, through the praise of martyrdom, Christians were discursively delineating their very self-definition over and against the Roman status quo.³⁸

Simultaneously, however, the meaning of Christian martyrdom for the individual was also being shaped discursively in particular ways. Many early Christians believed that martyrdom assured one of salvation and was the ultimate means by which a self continued to exist and would be resurrected in the same fleshly form—the care of the self *par excellence*. Such views are prevalent in the texts of the Apostolic Fathers. The next chapter will discuss representative strategies with examples from *I Clement*, the *Letters of Ignatius*, the *Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians*, and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* while chapter four utilizes the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* as an example. In *Martyrdom and Memory*, Elizabeth Castelli examines early Christian texts such as these and articulates the means by which writing by and about martyrs and elaborations on their lives and deaths constituted a “technology of the self.” She specifically invokes Foucault’s notion of the technology of self-writing³⁹ in analyzing the letters attributed to

³⁸ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 172–180.

³⁹ Michel Foucault, “L’écriture de soi.” *Corps écrit* no. 5, “L’autoportrait” (February 1983): 3–23. Reprinted in Foucault, *Dits et écrits: 1954–1988*, 4:415–30. Translated as “Self Writing” by Paul Rabinow in Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, vol. 1 of *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, 207–22 (New York: The New Press, 1994).

Ignatius, the martyrdom account of Perpetua, and the work of Pionius, thus extending Foucault's ideas to the martyrs themselves.⁴⁰

Perkins' and Castelli's work also supplement Daniel Boyarin's development of the idea that discussions of martyrdom functioned as a discourse in *Dying for God*. As he explains,

I propose that we think of martyrdom as a "discourse," as a practice of dying for God and of talking about it, a discourse that changes and develops over time and undergoes particularly interesting transformations among rabbinic Jews and other Jews, including Christians, between the second and the fourth centuries. For the "Romans," it didn't matter much whether the lions were eating a robber or a bishop, and it probably didn't make much of a difference to the lions, either, but the robber's friends and the bishop's friends told different stories about those leonine meals. It is in these stories that martyrdom, as opposed to execution or dinner, can be found, not in "what happened."⁴¹

Moreover, for Boyarin, accounts of martyrdom are "a particularly fertile site for the exploration of the permeability of the borders between so-called Judaism and so-called Christianity in late antiquity."⁴² In other words, deconstructing this discourse is the basis for showing how various strands of Judaism and Christianity overlapped with each

⁴⁰Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 69–103.

⁴¹ Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 94–95. Paul Middleton's comment is also useful: "Martyrdom is not a category that can be defined. Martyrdom is essentially created when a narrative about a death is told in a particular way. The central character is not the most important element in the creation of a martyrdom; it is the narrator." See Paul Middleton, *Martyrdom: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2011). Candida R. Moss also defines martyrdom as a discourse by utilizing the work of Talal Asad (himself no stranger to the work of Foucault) in providing a very useful definition of martyrdom as "a set of discursive practices that shaped early Christian identities, mediated ecclesiastical and dogmatic claims, and provided meaning to the experience described by early Christians as persecution, and in doing so produced a new economy of action." Moss goes on to say that what is at stake in the definition is "less about what makes or does not make a martyr in some ontological sense than about how martyrs are created and for what purposes." See Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 17.

⁴² Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 21.

other rather than being separate, monolithic entities.⁴³ Doing so is a key in deconstructing what he terms “supercessionist theology”⁴⁴ such as that in the work of W. H. C. Frend. Scholars have long considered Frend’s text on martyrdom a classic and cite it repeatedly.⁴⁵ However, in this work, Frend portrays martyrdom as originating in Judaism which Christians adopt as Christianity “replaces” Judaism. Boyarin argues that such work has unwittingly obscured the nature of the relationship between Judaisms and Christianities in the early centuries of the Common Era.

As evidence, Boyarin points to stories in the Talmud that show that it was possible for the authorities to mistake Jews for Christians even in the second and third centuries. A prime example is the story of the arrest of Rabbi Eliezer for engaging in “sectarianism”:

The ruler said to him: A sage such as you having truck with these matters!
He said to him: I have trust in the judge.
The ruler thought that he was speaking of him, but he meant his Father in Heaven.
He said to him: Since you trust me, I also have said: Is it possible that these gray hairs would err in such matters? Behold, you are dismissed!⁴⁶

Boyarin goes on to discuss the fact that “sectarianism” may well have been a form of Christianity and that the boundaries between the two faiths may have been rather unclear to people living at that time.

What is also interesting, even more fascinating for the purposes of this dissertation, however, is that the rabbi chooses to avoid martyrdom through the use of

⁴³ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 8.

⁴⁴ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 128.

⁴⁵ Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 1965.

⁴⁶ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 27.

clever, ambiguous language (“trust in the judge”). In fact, the Talmud juxtaposes this story against others that embrace martyrdom. Therefore, for Boyarin, given that both kinds of responses are recorded as acceptable, the Talmud demonstrates an openness to questions regarding what the response of a faithful person should be. These positions function as “nodes on a continuum.”⁴⁷ By contrast, for those Boyarin terms “Christian,” the response is almost always a choice to face martyrdom bravely or even a desire for it.

He states:

It is not finally the issues themselves, or even the positions taken on them, that divide the traditions, but the forms of textuality and authority that they generate and venerate. Ambrose (and other patristic ‘authors’) control their texts in ways that the unauthored rabbinic text does not. A useful analogy would be to Bakhtin’s distinction between Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, with Ambrose playing Tolstoy to the Talmud’s Dostoevsky. This analogy should make clear, as well, that this typology does not imply a hierarchy. It should also be emphasized that ‘tolerance’ for diversity is not what was at issue here. There is no reason to see the Rabbis as any more tolerant than the Fathers. The issue is rather the elasticity or plasticity of the discourse of the different traditions in their ability and desire to allow heterogeneity on certain kinds of questions.⁴⁸

Though we can applaud Boyarin’s desire not to label certain groups as more tolerant than others, it is worth noting that there is remarkable diversity of opinion regarding the value of martyrdom *within* the early Christianities as well. The statements of some⁴⁹ of those labeled Gnostic serve as a complement that fills out even more

⁴⁷ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 66.

⁴⁸ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 66.

⁴⁹ This qualification is crucial as some texts traditionally labeled “Gnostic,” for example, do not necessarily disrupt a discourse glorifying martyrdom. For example, the *Letter of Philip to Peter* and the *Apocalypse of James* are quite different in their representation of martyrdom than the *Gospel of Judas*. There is no one attitude toward martyrdom but rather a spectrum of attitudes. Karen King elucidates this nicely, suggesting that it may be helpful to see extra-canonical Christian texts as representing a range of viewpoints for readers to consider with respect to the meaning and significance of martyrdom. See Karen King, “Martyrdom and Its Discontents in the Tchacos Codex,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*

completely (if not fully) the continuum about which Boyarin speaks. Boyarin has shown us that Judaism and Christianity were not monolithic entities but were each composed of fluid strands that continuously overlapped, and this research illustrates that variety even more specifically with regard to the early Christianities.⁵⁰ In fact, chapter three addresses this topic in much more depth.

The recognition of a discursive formation of martyrdom so well-elaborated by Boyarin and others accords well with Foucault's notion of the importance of the theme of self-renunciation mentioned above. "Throughout Christianity there is a correlation between disclosure of the self, dramatic or verbalized, and the renunciation of self."⁵¹ Near the end of his essay on "Technologies of the Self," Foucault states that for a Christian, "the acts by which he *punishes* himself are indistinguishable from the acts by which he *reveals* himself (emphasis added)."⁵² Although Foucault mentions this in the context of exhibiting penitential behavior, it applies to the establishment of both individual and collective Christian identity as well.

Disruptions to the Discourse of Martyrdom

If, then, the very constitution of Christian identity revolved around a specific technology of self, the discourse of martyrdom, which denoted also a means of not only

(ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 23–42. See also Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 155–67.

⁵⁰ Boyarin is familiar with the work of Karen King, citing her article on "Gnosticism as Heresy" as a "productive influence" on his own work. He also mentions that there were "Gnostics" who did not see martyrdom as valuable, but he repeatedly refers to the "Christian" view as one which saw martyrdom as absolutely crucial. See note 24 on pp. 136–37.

⁵¹ Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," 48.

⁵² Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," 42.

caring for one's soul, but indeed, guaranteeing the eternal salvation of one's soul and one's bodily resurrection,⁵³ one can well imagine that any disruptions to the discourses of glorifying and exalting the practices of martyrdom may have constituted a challenge, even a threat, to the very means by which the identity of Christianity was developing in various circles. As Perkins clearly shows us, this discourse involved not only themes of individual salvation but eventually played a role in the establishment of an alternative power site, the Christian Church of the fourth century, as well. Thus, such disruptions were probably not merely theological but may well have represented challenges to the developing power of the "orthodox" who came to dominate the institutional Church eventually centered in Rome. One finds such a challenge in the discourses of certain individuals excoriated as "Gnostics" (a number of different early Christian groups being lumped together under this term).⁵⁴ These challenges must be closely examined and understood with this context in mind if we are to better understand the hostility and contentiousness which dominate the tone of the proto-orthodox texts with regard to other early Christian groups (and the similarly derogatory tone of these groups with respect to the proto-orthodox). Indeed, close reading of the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Testimony of Truth*, two fragments preserved in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (one attributed to Basilides and one to Valentinus), and the recently-discovered *Gospel of Judas* provides striking insight. We will examine these texts more closely in the third chapter.

⁵³ The best exposition of this topic is that by Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200 – 1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). This relationship between martyrdom and the development of a doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh will be explored in more depth in chapters two and three.

⁵⁴ Again, the seminal work for understanding this conflation of several different groups under this one term is Michael Williams' *Rethinking "Gnosticism"* cited above.

In summary, rather than conceiving of differences as primarily doctrinal, perhaps it is possible to shed post-Cartesian assumptions and recognize that “orthodoxy” and “heresy” are not binary opposites centered in doctrinal differences defined in terms of essential characteristics. Rather, they are discursive constructions arising out of competing visions regarding the best way to care for one’s soul (individually or collectively). These perspectives simultaneously serve to reinforce certain technologies of the self which operate in a variety of ways in relation to the development of the proto-orthodox Christian body as a distinct, identifiable group with accompanying concrete political and social consequences. This is not to deny the existence of doctrinal differences but rather to try to understand the troubling dichotomy of “orthodoxy” and “heresy” in terms of the broad notion of the care of the self/soul which, according to Foucault, better represents the concerns of those inhabiting the ancient world.

CHAPTER TWO: MARTYRDOM REPRESENTED AS CARE OF THE SELF/SOUL IN “PROTO-ORTHODOX” TEXTS

Perfect love casts out fear.

—1 John 4:18¹

Martyrdom as Care of the Soul/Self

In chapter one, we have explored Foucault’s notion of the care of the soul and the way in which martyrdom functions as a discourse. According to Judith Perkins, this discourse serves to unify the “proto-orthodox” as they view themselves as part of a collective “suffering self.” In this chapter, we turn more specifically to the way in which certain proto-orthodox² texts attributed to Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural citations refer to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). While this sentence is the most striking in illuminating the theme described in this chapter, 1 John 4:17–18 is actually useful in its entirety: “Love has been perfected among us in this: *that we may have boldness* on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears *has not reached perfection* in love” (emphasis added). Tertullian refers to this passage in section nine of *De Fuga in Persecutione (On Flight in Persecution)*: “And yet who will flee from persecution but he who fears? Who will fear, but he who has not loved? Yes; and if you ask counsel of the Spirit, what does He approve more than that utterance of the Spirit? For, indeed, it incites all almost to go and offer themselves in martyrdom, not to flee from it; so that we also make mention of it. If you are exposed to public infamy, says he, it is for your good; for he who is not exposed to dishonour among men is sure to be so before the Lord. Do not be ashamed; righteousness brings you forth into the public gaze. Why should you be ashamed of gaining glory? The opportunity is given you when you are before the eyes of men.” Unless otherwise noted, citations of the Ante-Nicene Fathers throughout the dissertation come from Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (American Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition) 10 vols (ed. A. Cleveland Coxe; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903).

² See chapter one for the problems inherent in using this term.

Polycarp of Smyrna repeatedly represent martyrdom³ as a kind of care of the self⁴ in terms of Stoic ideals and how this representation circulates in tandem with the signification of martyrdom as an imitation of Christ's sacrifice. Specifically, this representation of martyrdom as care of the self accords with Foucault's definition of "technologies of the self" as those practices

which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.⁵

For the proto-orthodox, as the suffering of the body becomes emphasized in particular ways (as Perkins has demonstrated in *The Suffering Self*),⁶ the body—as it endures torture, imprisonment, and death—becomes the means by which one can become a true disciple who re-enacts Christ's own passion and who will become a fully-formed self, enjoying a blessed eternal existence, and eventually, the fleshly resurrection of one's body.⁷

³ As noted in chapter one, the very first definition for "martyr" in the twenty-volume *Oxford English Dictionary* is "a person who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce faith in Christ or obedience to his teachings, a Christian way of life, or adherence to a law or tenet of the Church; (also) a person who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce the beliefs or tenets of a particular Christian denomination, sect, etc."

⁴ Martyrdom could certainly be represented otherwise. There are multitude ways to conceptualize death, and scholars debate the very definitions of "martyr" and "martyrdom." Lacey Baldwin Smith discusses "the debate over definition," providing a good overview of other ways in which such deaths can be represented: as pathological, as the acts of the insane who foolishly put themselves in harm's way, or as just punishment for traitorous acts or attitudes. See Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 3–20. For further discussion of the difficulty in defining martyrdom and an overview of various theories about what motivates human beings to be willing to undergo martyrdom, see pages 8–26 of Eugene Weiner and Anita Weiner, *The Martyr's Conviction: A Sociological Analysis* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990). See pages 29–38 for more on the historical development of the concept.

⁵ See Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," 18.

⁶ Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, 1995.

⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum delineates the development of the doctrine of the fleshly resurrection in the second century C. E. in the context of the persecution of Christians. See Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, particularly chapter one, "The Patristic Background," 19–58. See also Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Blood*

Contemporary readers may take for granted that these notions of attaining immortality and resurrection are central concerns of the texts simply because such doctrines have dominated Christian theology through the centuries. For our purposes, though, the most important aspect is the manner in which proto-orthodox texts refer to the process of martyrdom in terms of how a self becomes fully actualized, the key element in Foucault's delineation of technologies of the self.

This process of transformation, of actually becoming a certain kind of self, also goes hand-in-hand with Stoic ideals regarding freedom from passions and an emphasis on the "cure" of the passions, or the "therapy of emotions." Stoics believed that in order to be free, one should extirpate the passions from one's soul. Passions were equated with illnesses. Just as medical cures involved healing and freedom from physical maladies, philosophical "cures" helped one to root out and become free of passions such as fear, anger, jealousy, and greed. "We call on the philosopher as we call on the doctor in cases of illness."⁸ The Stoics thought that such passions undermined self-control, and ultimately, it is self-control which allowed one to be truly free.

Foucault illuminates this in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* in discussing the way in which the term *therapeuein* informs the care of the soul.⁹ It can have three meanings.

One is to perform a medical operation in order to effect a treatment or cure. Another is

of Martyrs: Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence (New York: Routledge, 2004), 31–53. This will be discussed more fully in chapter three in conjunction with our exploration of the ways in which some early Christian texts resist the insistence on belief in such a doctrine.

⁸ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 55.

⁹ For further in-depth treatment of these issues, see Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*, 1994; Nussbaum, "The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions," 129–77. See also A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 410–23.

that it can describe a servant engaged in the activity of serving a master obediently. Lastly, it has the connotation of being devoted to oneself in the sense of keeping oneself free and pure of the emotions.¹⁰ One must “protect, defend, respect, worship, and honor oneself.”¹¹ It is in this sense that Marcus Aurelius says that one must “surround [one’s inner self] with sincere service (*Med.* II.13).¹² He also describes the “intelligence free from passions” as a “citadel.” He says that when in this state, a person “has no stronger place into which to withdraw and henceforth be impregnable” and that one’s “inner guide” is also unassailable (*Med.*, VIII.48).¹³ Seneca also discusses the value of curing the passions, saying “How much wiser to stifle one’s own passions than to recount for posterity those of others?” (*Nat.*, Preface to Book III).¹⁴ He then articulates the way in which greatness lies in the following:

[I]t is seeing the whole of this world with the eyes of the mind and having carried off the most beautiful triumph, triumph over the vices. Those who have made themselves masters of towns and entire nations are countless; but how few have been masters of themselves . . . What is great is a steadfast soul, serene in adversity, a soul that accepts every event as if it were desired . . . What is great is having one’s soul at one’s lips, ready to depart; then one is free not by the laws of the city but by the law of nature.¹⁵

He goes on to say,

¹⁰ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 8–9, 98–99

¹¹ For Seneca’s elaboration of this, see Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 272.

¹² The translations are those of Foucault unless otherwise noted. See Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 105, n. 59.

¹³ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 101, n. 10.

¹⁴ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 269, n. 36.

¹⁵ Foucault cites this passage on p. 265 of *Hermeneutics of the Subject* and cites it only as *Natural Questions* in n. 39 on p. 269.

I am not surprised that so few people enjoy this happiness: we are our own tyrants and persecutors; sometimes unhappy due to loving ourselves excessively, sometimes from disgust with our existence, in turns the mind is swollen by a deplorable pride or strained by greed; giving ourselves up to pleasure or burning up with anxiety (*Nat.*, IV, Preface).¹⁶

Toward the end of the second century of the Common Era, Galen, the doctor to

Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, also discusses these themes in a text entitled *On the Treatment of the Passions*.¹⁷ Helmut Koester has commented insightfully that for

Stoics,

. . . the integrity of [the] rational human self is threatened by emotions and affections of the soul. Psychology, therefore, becomes a central and highly refined element of Stoic teaching as a doctrine of the affections . . . which are seen as diseases of the soul. Not only desire, fear, and pleasure, but also regret, sorrow, and compassion, are pathological states, from which the wise man must free himself in order to reach the goal of imperturbability (*apatheia*, later, in Epiktetos, *ataraxia*). In their description of the affections, Stoics borrowed many terms and concepts from the medical sciences. Their view of the affections as diseases of the soul is modeled on pathological insights into the diseases of the body. The philosopher becomes a physician of the soul.¹⁸

¹⁶ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 392, n. 11.

¹⁷ See Foucault's discussion of the text on pp. 396–401 in *Hermeneutics of the Subject*. The focus on the care of the soul also continued to prevail in works Foucault does not discuss explicitly. Gregory the Great, for example, wrote a long treatise entitled "Pastoral Care" in the sixth century C.E. which dealt with the care of souls and was influential throughout the medieval and early modern period. See Thomas C. Oden, *Care of the Souls in the Classic Tradition* in *Theology and Pastoral Care Series* (ed. Don S. Browning; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984). Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, also written in the sixth century C. E., delineates the role of virtue in attaining happiness as well. See Ancius Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (ed. Victor Watts; London: Penguin, 1999). The term itself is also popular in contemporary works such as that by Thomas Moore, *The Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

¹⁸ Helmut Koester, *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*. vol. 1 (2d ed.; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995). See also Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 82–89 for discussion of the Stoic notion of the care of the soul and its therapeutic connotations.

Recently, Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pederson, and Ismo Dunderberg have argued that Stoic ideals permeate the first two centuries of the Common Era,¹⁹ that is, in the time in which Christians were starting to write down accounts of martyrdom. As we closely examine these texts, we see the process of embracing martyrdom represented in terms of “patient endurance,”²⁰ a term consonant with the ideas of self-control whatever the circumstances, even in anticipating a painful death which ultimately brings freedom.²¹ In fact, the authors of the texts actually represent death as desirable and the process of facing it successfully as the means of gaining eternal reward.²²

¹⁹ Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg, eds., *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

²⁰ In most of the passages discussed below, the Greek term for “patient endurance” is *hypomonê*. All citations come from Michael W. Holmes, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Text and English Translations* (3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

²¹ Brent D. Shaw has also noticed the prominence of this theme and refers to it as “an ideology of patience” on page 296 of “Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs,” *J ECS* 4.3 (1996): 269–312.

²² A key debate concerns to what extent early Christians even actually sought martyrdom. Lack of hard, factual evidence regarding the extent of and degree of persecution makes studying Christian martyrdom in the first centuries of the Common Era problematic. See Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 8–16, 171–73. However, some scholars have argued that a certain desire seems to have existed at times. See G. E. M. De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy* (ed. Michael Whitby and Josephy Streeter; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Paul Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), Philip L. Tite, “Voluntary Martyrdom and Gnosticism” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 17, 2012). During the Donatist controversy of the fourth century C. E., Augustine and others were at pains to curb any enthusiasm or desire for martyrdom, and an orthodox condemnation of any voluntary seeking of death entered Christian discourse with vociferous force, obscuring any early Christian tendencies in this direction. See Droge and Tabor, *Noble Death*, 167–83; Salisbury, *The Blood of Martyrs*, especially 189–204. The main thesis of Droge and Tabor’s work, however, is to point out that earlier generations did not necessarily conceive of a desire for death in negative terms. See also Jonathan Koscheski, “The Earliest Christian War: Second and Third Century Martyrdom and the Creation of Cosmic Warriors,” *JRE* 39.1 (March 2011), 100–124. Moss, too, cautions contemporary scholars against indulging in the modern tendency to judge a desire for death as pathological or abnormal: Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 49–52, 165–66. She also urges us to reconsider the use of the term, “voluntary martyrdom,” pointing out that the term itself is little used prior to the writings of Clement of Alexandria in the third century of the Common Era. The term is first used broadly in debates in seventeenth century England in reference to practices of self-denial. Moreover, she argues that modern conceptions of martyrdom as voluntary have developed as part of the broader discourse about what is “natural” and in the context of a disdain for martyrdom on the part of scholars such as Edward Gibbon. See Candida R. Moss, “The Discourse of Voluntary Martyrdom: Ancient and Modern,” *CH* 81.3 (Sept 2012): 531–551. In her most recent work, though, while she does not use the term

Close readings of the *Apostolic Fathers*²³ and the *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*²⁴ reveal ample evidence of early Christians conceiving of martyrdom itself as well as the whole process leading up to the final event, as a kind of care of the self.²⁵ The idea that martyrdom assures one of salvation is prevalent. The suffering of the body could serve to

“voluntary,” even the very title supports the idea that Christian discourse has magnified the degree to which early Christians were actually persecuted: *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: HarperOne, 2013). P. Lorraine Buck also questions de Ste. Croix’s suppositions pointing to the fact that a relatively small percentage of Christians were probably martyred and that there was not “a free-for-all of crazed Christians thirsting after death.” See page 135 of P. Lorraine Buck, “Voluntary Martyrdom Revisited,” *JTS* 63.1 (April 2012): 125–35.

²³ Holmes notes that the association of the group of texts known as the “*Apostolic Fathers*” is a loose and somewhat arbitrary one (6). Traditionally, it refers to the earliest still-existing works other than those in the New Testament (3). Anastasius of Sinai used it in the seventh century, but its modern provenance dates to 1672 in a work published by J. B. Cotelier and to 1765 in a collection published by A. Gallandi (5). Holmes’ most recent edition is the third version of a translation first published in 1891 by Lightfoot and Harmer (ix). Holmes carefully includes the Nag Hammadi Library and the Apocrypha in the bibliography of his introduction (23), pointing out the variety of early Christian texts that existed in addition to those of the New Testament. However, it is very difficult to rid ourselves of thinking of the texts in terms of their belonging to a category such as Gnostic if they are part of the Nag Hammadi collection or, on the other hand, as “proto-orthodox” if they are part of the New Testament, the “Apostolic Fathers,” or the “Ante-Nicene Fathers.” In his excellent *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus*, Ismo Dunderberg notes his decision “to drop the term ‘Church Fathers,’ which . . . creates a misleading image of a unified, ‘orthodox’ front as opposed to ‘heretical’ Valentinians” (xii). Neither the term “Church Fathers” nor the term “Apostolic Fathers” appear in his work. Such a move is noteworthy. See Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 2008.

²⁴ All citations come from Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

²⁵ Although this chapter presents primarily my own reading of these texts, the idea that facing and undergoing martyrdom is tied intimately with self-formation or the development of ethical living is present in other scholarly work even when the specific term, “care of the soul/self” is not necessarily used. See, for example, an excellent introductory text: Clayton N. Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers: A Student’s Introduction* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2012), xxv. See also Nicole Kelley, “Philosophy as Training for Death: Reading the Ancient Christian Martyr Acts as Spiritual Exercises,” *CH* 75:4 (2006): 723–47. Candida R. Moss also notes the emphasis on self-control on pages 173–74 of *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): “The martyrs speak the words of the dying Christ and physically embody his self control . . . The image of Christ, glimpsed through the cloudy windows of the martyrs, is controlled, stoic, and apathetic. The emotional appeals of the agony of Gethsemane are nowhere to be found. Read in the context of persecuted communities that valued both suffering and self-control, the stoic Jesus was the most appealing.” In *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, she also discusses the way in which martyrs were represented in terms of philosophical ideals, using Justin as a prime example. On page 81, she remarks: “[t]he narrative presentation of the deaths of Christians in a particular and distinctive manner was part of dressing Christianity in the trappings of Roman ideology and literary conventions. Styling the martyr as philosopher was a way to draw upon cultural values that prized the endurance, calm, and courage of the ethical, imperiled philosopher.”

ensure one's eternal health and happiness and the body's fleshly resurrection. Thus, suffering had a purpose—the care of the self in ultimate and eternal terms. This seems to be in line with a shift Judith Perkins discusses: from the Greco-Roman philosophical belief that the rational mind could control the body to a focus on the body itself as in pain and need of care.²⁶ In turn, we shall examine *1 Clement*, the *Letters of Ignatius*, and both the *Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians* and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* for the ways in which notions about freedom and self-control appear in characterizations of selves as cured of enslaving passions. As we shall see, these notions merge with the representation of martyrdom as a sacrifice which imitates Christ's own.

1 Clement

The book²⁷ opens with those in Rome addressing the problem of “schism” in the church at Corinth (*1 Clem.* 1.1). Primarily at stake are matters of authority. The author

²⁶ Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, 173.

²⁷ *1 Clement* exists in two Greek manuscripts, the eleventh century Codex Hierosolymitanus (or Codex Constantinopolitanus) and the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus (though the latter lacks 57.7–63.4), two fourth or fifth century Coptic texts (although one lacks 34.6–42.2 and the other consists only of 1.1–26.2), an eleventh century Latin manuscript (probably corrupted in the 800's or 900's C.E. in order to support the ecclesiastical authority of the Roman bishop), a twelfth century Syriac copy from a Greek text, and in quotations in the *Letter of Polycarp* (9.2) and by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Didymus the Blind, Jerome, Eusebius, and Jerome. However, the letter was less popular in the West than the East. By medieval times, Western theologians had forgotten about it, and even in the East, the letter eventually ceased to be used as it emphasized the importance of Rome. Traditionally, scholars attributed the authorship to Clement, bishop of Rome, who addresses it to the Corinthian Christians. However, it is crucial to note that the text does not actually contain the author's name and that a single leader probably was not in charge of the churches in Rome as early as the end of the first century. Moreover, the text uses “we” and “us” quite liberally. Chapter forty-four in particular indicates leadership by a group rather than an individual. The style is a combination of a Greek diatribe (in which the author constructs an imaginary dialogue in a question-and-answer format and leads the reader to a certain conclusion) and a synagogue homily (in which the author starts with a scriptural text and then connects it to other scriptural passages which contain similar words and phrases). Most scholars date it between 65–110 C.E. Probably a Christian leader or leaders in Rome wrote it during the reign of Domitian (81–96 C.E.) or possibly a bit earlier during the reign of Nero (54–68 C.E.) Jefford provides a good introduction and overview in *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 103–21. See also Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 33–43; Andrew Gregory, “*1 Clement: An Introduction*,” in *Writings of the Apostolic Fathers* (ed. Paul Foster; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 21–31.

emphasizes the importance of humility and submissiveness, and the way in which one demonstrates having them is by respect for hierarchy—that of the bishop and leaders in the line of the Roman apostolic succession. Interestingly, the writer frames the schism as the result of improper control of unruly emotions, particularly an excess of jealousy (*I Clem.* 3.2). Jealousy is characterized as leading to death (*I Clem.* 9.1). Thus, Stoic notions regarding a need for therapy of the emotions²⁸ seem to be in play.²⁹

In descriptions of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, the author depicts these two apostles as the particular targets of jealousy and as exemplifying the very antithesis of those who are subject to it. Consider the following passage:

Let us consider the noble examples that belong to our own generation. Because of jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars were persecuted and fought to the death. Let us set before our eyes the good apostles. There was Peter, who because of unrighteous jealousy endured not one or two but many trials, and

²⁸ Michael Holmes notes the prominence of Stoic influence in *I Clement* on page 37 of his introduction as does Andrew Gregory on page 30 of “*I Clement: An Introduction*.” See also Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, especially 103–21. He explains that maintaining order in the Christian community is a strong emphasis of the text and that the author(s) explicate this theme using Stoic concepts of cosmology. Moreover, two images popular in Stoic texts appear. One is the phoenix, and the other is the Roman army (invoked as a model for proper behavior). Jefford also explains that some argue for a strong Jewish influence on the text as well.

²⁹ Interestingly, in 4.1–13, the author gives a genealogy of biblical characters said to be consumed by “jealousy.” The very first figure named is Cain. Thus, it is interesting to think of the possible allusions being made when later heresiologists brand certain “Gnostics” as Cainites and accuse them of thinking of Cain as a positive figure and as one of their ancestors. If, indeed, such heresiologists conceive of “Gnostics” as exuding the “jealousy” which leads to a lack of recognition of the authority of those claiming apostolic succession (perhaps due to their conducting meetings, services, rituals, or educational sessions without the bishop present), labeling them “Cainites” might well be a discursive strategy denoting their emotional state rather than a literal description of their origins. Such discursive strategies also seem to be at work in grouping a variety of early Christian groups together as “Gnostics” descended from Simon Magus. Such is the accusation of Irenaeus (*Haer.*, Preface, Book II). It is amazing how often this is referred to as the description of a literal statement of origins in modern history of Christianity texts. If we look at texts such as the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, particularly the *Acts of Peter*, in which the contest between Simon Peter and Simon Magus clearly reveals debates about who has been given authority to speak and act for God (see Judith Perkins’ excellent analysis in chapter five of *The Suffering Self*), one wonders if Irenaeus is discursively signaling that all those who criticize the apostles are “descendants” of Simon Magus. April DeConick also discusses this possibility. See pp. 100–103 of *The Thirteenth Apostle: What the Gospel of Judas Really Says* (New York: Continuum, 2007).

thus having given his testimony went to his appointed place of glory. Because of jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize for patient endurance. After he had been seven times in chains, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, and had preached in the east and the west, he won the genuine glory for his faith Finally, when he had given his testimony before the rulers, he thus departed from the world and went to the holy place, having become an outstanding example of patient endurance (*1 Clem.* 5.1–7).

Here the writer does not directly discuss details of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul themselves but rather simply refers to them as events with which the readers would be familiar, merely stating that they have “given witness/testimony” and then gone on to their rewards (5.7).³⁰ Interestingly, what the author notes about their faithful witness is not their imitation of Christ or an association with atonement but rather the fact that they “patiently endured.” Thus, the author describes them in terms of facing suffering and persecution with the proper attitudes or emotions.³¹ It is as though the suffering they face enables them to practice the therapy of the emotions and actually *become* the kinds of selves who demonstrate properly “cured” passions. The writer does not describe their witness in dramatic terms; there is no sense of spectacle involved. Rather, the manner in which they face suffering exemplifies the attitude of one who is taking care of the self properly while maintaining self-control and exercising restraint through “patient endurance.” Simultaneously, the author reminds those who are not able to subdue their passions of the witness of Peter and Paul as persons who *were* in control, which, in turn, prompts the reader to remember their authority as apostles. Over and over, the readers of

³⁰ The phrase used contains the same root as that in the noun, “martyr” thus we see an early usage of the linking of “witnessing” and “martyrdom.” As explained in chapter one, the very definition of a “martyr” is a “witness.”

³¹ Candida R. Moss also discusses this point. See Moss, *Other Christs*, 102. While she discusses the wide range of positive qualities associated with martyrdom (105), she notes that “faithfulness” and “endurance” are the virtues which authors representing martyrdom as a model for virtue most commonly encourage their readers to imitate (108).

the text (or those listening to it being read) receive exhortations to proper behavior: kindness, gentleness, and peacefulness like that exhibited by the apostles (*I Clem.* 13, 14). In fact, the ultimate desired goal for the church is “peace” (19.2).³²

Christ is also lifted up as an example of a “pattern” to “imitate” (*I Clem.* 16.7, 33.8), and this involves modeling oneself on his example in terms of one’s emotions and attitudes (*I Clem.* 17.1). The author emphasizes that the proper sacrifice is that of a “broken spirit” (*I Clem.* 52.4) rather than a “burnt offering” (*I Clem.* 18.16–17). Conceivably, this writer is advocating following Christ in terms of imitating him with respect to notions of the therapy of the emotions.³³ Likewise, the author describes God in terms consonant with the therapy of emotions as one who is “patient” and “free of anger”: “Let us observe [God] with our mind, and let us look with the eyes of the soul on his patient will. Let us note how free from anger he is toward all his creation (19.3).

At the same, time, however, there is language of sacrifice (as noted just above). *I Clement* does represent Christ’s death as an atoning sacrifice which can mediate in the lives of those who practice repentance:

Wash and be clean; remove the wickedness from your souls out of my sight. Put an end to your wickedness; learn to do good; seek out justice; deliver the one who is wronged; give judgment on behalf of the orphan, and grant justice to the widow. And come, let us reason together, he says: even if your sins are as crimson, I will make them white as snow, and if they are as scarlet, I will make them white as wool (*I Clem.* 8.4).

³² Jefford notes the importance of this theme and its Jewish context in *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 111. The language of “patient endurance” here is similar to that of Seneca in *Prov* 4.12–13.

³³ For a thorough, nuanced discussion of the way that *imitatio Christi* functions in texts related to martyrdom, see Moss, *Other Christs*, 2010). Pages 105–109, 253–55 are especially relevant in discussing martyrdoms as models or “embodiments of Christian virtues” (105). For discussion of Ignatius, see Moss, *Other Christs*, 41–44, 224–25.

Moss comments: “These texts present us with a view of Christ’s death as spiritual detergent, as an expiatory sacrifice, that washed away sin.”³⁴ She later comments on the way in which texts mingle and interweave concepts of martyrdom as sacrifice, martyrdom as a victory over Satan (a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement),³⁵ and martyrdom as a model of virtue which Christians can imitate (this third being what Foucault discusses as “the care of the soul.”³⁶ Such intermingling sets up suffering as a good. As she goes on to say:

Through attachment to the death of Jesus, suffering and death become inherently ‘good,’ even becoming a form of ‘salvation.’ The view that Christ’s death provides a model of salvation is a common one both in the *acta* and patristic literature. What is striking about this statement is that imitating the Jesus model entails only suffering and death, not a set of moral values. Strange and alien though this concept is to modern ears, at its core the model exemplified in Christ encouraged one thing: suffering.³⁷

³⁴ Moss, *Other Christs*, 80.

³⁵ Gustaf Aulén discusses this theme in detail in *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (New York: Macmillan, 1966) (based on lectures Dr. Aulén gave in 1930). In the texts discussed in this dissertation, we will first see an example of this in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, but it is also conceivably present in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Gospel of Judas*, and quite prominent in the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*.

³⁶ Moss, *Other Christs*, 102.

³⁷ Moss, *Other Christs*, 105.

Letters of Ignatius

Traditionally thought to be epistles that Ignatius³⁸ wrote to various churches while being taken to Rome by soldiers to be executed, the tone of the *Letters of Ignatius*³⁹

³⁸ The dating of both the life of Ignatius and the letters themselves remains contested. Eusebius refers to Ignatius being the bishop of Antioch during the time that Trajan was emperor (98–117 C.E.) (*Eccl. hist.* 3.21–22), and this date has been cited repeatedly in commentaries. For a good, modern translation of Eusebius' work, see Paul L. Maier, trans. *Eusebius: The Church History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007). However, in 1979, Robert Joly seriously questioned this dating: Robert Joly, *Le dossier d'Ignace d'Antioche* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1979). Since then, others have followed suit. They date the life and letters attributed to Ignatius to a much later date during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 C.E.). Most recently, Timothy D. Barnes has dated the letters to an intermediate period during the reign of Antoninus Pius (138–161 C.E.), arguing that Ignatius used phrasing found in Ptolemaeus, a disciple of Valentinus. Barnes cites Adolf Harnack's dating of the letters to a time between the reigns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius—to the time of the Emperor Hadrian (117–138 C.E.). See Timothy D. Barnes, "The Date of Ignatius," *Expository Times* 120 (2009): 119–30; Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). However, Candida R. Moss questions Barnes' central argument in "The Date of Ignatius" regarding Ignatius' knowledge of Ptolemaeus writings in her own excellent explanation of the textual complexities and dating difficulties in *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 52–57, 178–80, arguing that the term Barnes places so much emphasis upon for his dating is also used elsewhere, 178, n. 2. See also Moss, *Other Christs*, 41–44, 224–25. For excellent commentary on the *Letters of Ignatius* as a whole, see William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (ed. Helmut Koester; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). See also William R. Schoedel, "Are the *Letters of Ignatius* of Antioch Authentic?" *RelSRev* 6 (1980) 196–201. For a good introduction, see Michael Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 166–81; Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 44–62. Ross Shepard Kraemer, too, notes the difficulty in dating the *Letters of Ignatius* including certain feminist considerations in *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 188, n.92, 245–46.

³⁹ The textual history is quite complex as the letters exist in three recensions: Long, Middle, and Short. The Long Recension actually contains thirteen letters, but scholars only consider the seven mentioned by Eusebius authentic. In 1637, James Ussher wrote a letter to Samuel Ward discussing the fact that he had uncovered a Latin version of what is now called the Middle Recension in the library at Cambridge. It contains only the letters to the churches in Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, and the *Letter to Polycarp*, all actually listed by Eusebius (*Eccl. hist.* 3.36). However, Ussher did not initially publish an edition of this until 1644 as he realized that a Greek copy existed in the Codex Mediceo Laurentianus 57, 7 in the Medicean Library in Florence dating to the eleventh century. He wanted to see this first but was unable to obtain it, so he published an edition of the Latin copy in 1644. An edition of the Greek copy in Florence was first published by Isaac Voss in 1646: *Epistolae genuinae S. Ignatii martyris; quae nunc primum lucem vident ex bibliotheca Florentina* (Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1646). Portions of the Middle Recension also exist in Greek papyrus fragments and in Latin, Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, and Coptic. John Pearson established the authenticity of the Middle Recension, including the *Letter to the Romans*, to the satisfaction of scholars who had previously bitterly debated whether the Long or Middle Recension should be considered the most authentic in 1671 for various political reasons (largely having to do with Reformation debates over the degree of authority that bishops enjoyed in the early centuries of Christianity). However, the Codex Laurentianus does not contain the *Letter to the Romans*. This was published in an edition of the *Letters of Ignatius* by Thierry Ruinart in 1689 from the Codex Parisiensis–Colbertinus 1450 which dates to the tenth century: Thierry Ruinart, *Acta primorum martyrum sincera et selecta* (Paris: Muguet, 1689). Later, in 1845, William Cureton found and published a Syriac version of the letters, which

provides a striking contrast.⁴⁰ The tone and rhetorical style that dominates the epistles is that of Asianism. This kind of writing is characterized by a certain floridity and colorfulness.⁴¹ However, these classic texts provide clear examples of the meaning of martyrdom for the proto-orthodox and the way it is being shaped discursively as a kind of care of the self.

In the *Letter of the Ephesians*, Ignatius states that it is his hoped-for success as a martyr that will allow him to become a disciple (*Eph.* 1.2).⁴² In other words, this is what

is referred to as the Short Recension, containing only abridged versions of the *Letter to Polycarp*, the *Letter to the Ephesians*, the *Letter to the Romans* and a single paragraph of the *Letter to the Trallians*. Cureton challenged the authenticity of the Middle Recension, arguing that the Short Recension was the oldest. See William Cureton, *The Ancient Syriac Versions of the Epistles of Saint Ignatius to St. Polycarp, the Ephesians and the Romans* (London: Rivington, 1845). However, Theodor Zahn and Joseph Barber Lightfoot re-established the authenticity of the Middle Recension to the satisfaction of all in 1873 and 1889. See Theodor Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1873); Joseph B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* 2.1 (London: Macmillan, 1889), 70–430. The stemma in Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity*. vol. 2 (New York: DeGruyter, 2000), 57 shows the way in which the manuscript tradition has been transmitted. In this summary of a complex transmission process, I am indebted to Timothy D. Barnes, “The Date of Ignatius,” 119–30; Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 52–57, 178–80.

⁴⁰ Here Candida Moss’s note on the use of texts which come from different geographic and social contexts is worth remembering. She discusses the fact that social networks and various kinds of interaction existed across the Roman Empire. Thus, while it is important to pay attention to variation in attitudes and practices in particular geographic contexts, communication and a sharing of ideas across regional borders was also taking place: Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 20–21, 173.

⁴¹ Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 174. Some scholars characterize it more harshly. Schoedel refers to Norden’s characterizing of this style as one that “violates the language” although Schoedel also mentions Perler’s discussion of Ignatius’ work as marked by “unusual diction and poetic color” in “the expression of pathos.” See Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 7–8. Helmut Koester simply refers to Ignatius’ style as “bombastic,” saying that it “invite[s] the reader into a realm of religious experience rather than rational reflection. See Koester, *History and Literature*, 285–86.

⁴² Some scholars argue that Ignatius’ desire for death is pathological. See Donald W. Riddle, *The Martyrs: A Study in Social Control* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931); De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, 133; Perkins, *Suffering Self*, 33; Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 6–7; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 197. See also the discussion in Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 6–8, 49–52, 165–66, 170–71, 178–79, 202–03 warning scholars against too easily conceiving of martyrdom in this way. A recent dissertation by Jennifer Garcia Bashaw contrasting the *Letters of Ignatius* with the Gospel of Matthew also ascribes a negative value to Ignatius’ longing for suffering. Garcia Bashaw argues that Ignatius’ texts “document his captivity to the cycle of sacred violence, the very myth that Matthew’s Gospel works to counter. A Girardian analysis of Matthew reveals that his Gospel establishes Jesus as the scapegoat to end all scapegoats, thus releasing humanity from the perpetual cycle of sacred violence.

will allow the complete formation of his identity as a truly Christian self. He clearly feels that he has not yet attained this status. Paradoxically casting his impending death as “success,” he states,

For when you heard that I was on my way from Syria in chains for the sake of our shared name and hope, and was hoping through your prayers to succeed in fighting with wild beasts in Rome—in order that by so succeeding I might be able to be a disciple—you hurried to visit me (1.2).

A little later on, he says,

For even though I am in chains for the sake of the Name, I have not yet been perfected in Jesus Christ. For now I am only beginning to be a disciple, and I speak to you as my fellow students. For I need to be trained by you in faith, instruction, endurance, and patience (3.1).⁴³

The theme continues as Ignatius repeatedly implies that successfully facing and enduring martyrdom, rather than apostatizing, will lead to true discipleship. In other words, performing an operation on the body which requires grueling endurance allows one to become a perfected self. Ignatius makes use of an interesting analogy, referring to his chains as “spiritual pearls” (11.2). Here the value of suffering is clear. Just as there are irritants that produce something of worth and beauty, a pearl, so his chains will be the means of his spiritual perfection. This is true only, of course, if he is successful in persevering to the end (*Eph.* 14.2). Moreover, just as the author of *1 Clement* refers to

Ignatius’ letters, however, when viewed through a Girardian lens, demonstrate that Ignatius unwittingly reenters that cycle of religious violence by envisioning his own martyrdom as a sacrifice and himself as a scapegoat. See pages 54–55 of Jennifer Garcia Bashaw, “Martyrdom and Sacred Violence: Dying for God in Matthew and Ignatius” (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, Center for Advanced Theological Study, 2012.)

⁴³ It is interesting that Ignatius refers to his fellow Christians as “fellow students.” Such phrasing contrasts with the kinship language of “brother” and “sister” which is often used in proto-orthodox texts, but it suggests the kind of relationship which would have been in effect in a philosophical school where understanding how to practice virtues such as “endurance” and “patience”—virtues in accord with the care of the soul—would have been a major topic of study. This phrasing in terms of “endurance” and “patience” also echoes that of *1 Clement*.

Christ as a “pattern (16.7, 33.8),” so Ignatius talks about suffering as an imitation of Christ’s forbearance toward his persecutors and of his patience and gentleness with them, portraying the Savior as one who exercised proper self-control with regard to his emotions when he was persecuted.

In the *Letter to the Trallians* and the *Letter to the Magnesians*, Ignatius briefly reiterates these themes. In the former, he talks about his desire to suffer and then speaks of his need for “gentleness” in order to be able to do so (*Trall.* 4.1). Likewise, in the latter, Ignatius states reaching God is possible for those who “patiently endure all the abuse of the ruler of this age and escape” (*Magn.* 1.2). Toward the end of the letter, Ignatius even maintains that a desire for death or at least a willingness to die is not just admirable but *necessary* when he says that Christ’s “life is not in us unless we voluntarily choose to die into his suffering” (*Magn.* 5.2). Over and over again, Ignatius frames suffering as a means of discipline that allows one to develop proper attitudes and emotions. It is an opportunity to engage in such therapy. This practicing of self-control in a manner consonant with those who engage in the therapy of emotions is the means of ultimate care for one’s eternal self. Those who “patiently endure” are the ones who “may be found to be disciples of Jesus Christ” (*Magn.* 9.1).

In his *Letter to the Romans*, Ignatius mentions these ideas yet again, speaking of his impending martyrdom as “an opportunity . . . to reach God” (*Rom.* 2.1). He implores his community to allow him to “be food for the wild beasts . . . ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, so that I may prove to be pure bread” (*Rom.* 4.1). Simultaneously, however, issues of the formation of self-identity are at stake. Ignatius asks the Roman Christians to

pray that I will have strength both outwardly and inwardly so that I may not just talk about it but want to do it, so that I may not merely be called a Christian *but actually prove to be one*. For if I prove to be one, I can also be called one, and then I will be faithful when I am no longer visible to the world (emphasis added) (*Rom. 3.2*).

He says that it is only *after* he has been martyred that “I will truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world will no longer see my body” (*Rom. 4.2*). Finally, he says, “I am even now still a slave. But if I suffer, I will be a freedman of Jesus Christ and will rise up free in him” (*Rom. 4.3*). Perkins sees this passage similarly as meaning that Ignatius actually

understood his real existence as beginning with his suffering and martyrdom. . . . the ‘self’ did not really come into being until it suffered; suffering was not simply something that happened to a person. Rather, it was the means of achieving real selfhood.⁴⁴

Likewise, a little later, Ignatius says

Bear with me—I know what is best for me. Now at last I am beginning to be a disciple. May nothing visible or invisible envy me, so that I may reach Jesus Christ. Fire and cross and battles with wild beasts, mutilation, mangling, wrenching of bones, the hacking of limbs, the crushing of my whole body, cruel tortures of the devil—let these come upon me, only let me reach Jesus Christ (*Rom. 5.3*)!⁴⁵

Again, in chapter six, he begs and pleads to be allowed to suffer as he refers to death as “life” and life in this world as “death”:

Bear with me, brothers and sisters: do not keep me from living; do not desire my death. Do not give to the world one who wants to belong to God or tempt him with material things. Let me receive the pure light, for when I arrive there I will be a human being. Allow me to be an imitator of the suffering of my God. If

⁴⁴ Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, 190–191. See also Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 56, 179–80; Koester, *History and Literature*, 290.

⁴⁵ Carole Straw discusses the way in which Ignatius is alluding to a gladiator’s oath in this passage on pages 45–46 of “‘A Very Special Death’: Christian Martyrdom in Its Classical Context,” in Margaret Cormack, ed., *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 39–57.

anyone has him within, let that person understand what I long for and sympathize with me, knowing what constrains me (*Rom.* 6.2–3).

In fact, Ignatius even says that he is “in love with death” (*Rom.* 7.2).

In the *Letter to the Philadelphians*, Ignatius also talks about not yet being perfect:

My brothers and sisters, I am overflowing with love for you, and greatly rejoice as I watch out for your safety—yet not I, but Jesus Christ. Though I am in chains for his sake, I am all the more afraid, because I am still imperfect (*Phld.* 5.1).

In the *Letter to the Trallians*, Ignatius again alludes to the idea that a certain *practice*—that of suffering—is the way in which he can fully achieve a sense of self-identity as a disciple of Christ. He actually contrasts the kind of self-care that suffering enables as opposed to that which mere comprehension “of heavenly things” allows. He claims that the latter does not make him a disciple; it is suffering that does (*Trall.* 5.2).

Finally, in the *Letter to Polycarp*, Ignatius repeats this theme once again. Ignatius mentions that he has learned that there is peace in his church at Antioch and says that he has “become more encouraged in a God-given freedom from anxiety—provided, of course, that through suffering I reach God, *so that I may prove to be a disciple by means of your prayer*” (*Pol.* 7.1) (emphasis added).⁴⁶

In *Martyrdom and Memory*, Elizabeth Castelli examines the *Letters of Ignatius* and discusses the way in which Ignatius crafts his very self-identity through the process of writing,⁴⁷ linking the achieving of selfhood specifically to the technology of the self

⁴⁶ Candida Moss nicely captures the way in which endurance and suffering serve as a process for self-formation when she says, “Patient endurance and righteous suffering became part of a set of Christly moral virtues that early Christians were exhorted to emulate. Suffering as Christological imitation was not just a passive interpretive move; it was an active practice to which Christians were constantly encouraged.” See Moss, *Other Christs*, 20.

⁴⁷ Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 85.

which Foucault terms “the technology of self-writing.”⁴⁸ She discusses the way in which Ignatius emphasizes the on-going process of his spiritual transformation as a process of “attaining God or Christ”: “Ignatius’s preparation for martyrdom is a spiritual exercise in focusing his wants and gaining control over his desires. It is, in essence, a form of askesis *avant le letter*.”⁴⁹ In short, the self that he is crafting through language is located “at the place where language and the body intersect.”⁵⁰

Robin Darling Young also discusses the function of letter-writing in the formation of collective Christian identity:

Those in training to become martyrs are shaped by the letters of people who have previously trained for and thought about this contest. . . . Certainly those Christians who joined this apostolic tradition of witness knew that their testimonies and deaths would be written about and that these accounts would be circulated. But the training went further than that. Because martyrs bore the name of Christ, *they were themselves like letters* meant to be read by the community and the world, letters from Christ that were recognizably like Christ (emphasis added).⁵¹

⁴⁸ Foucault, “L’écriture de soi,” 207–22.

⁴⁹ Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 82.

⁵⁰ Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 85. Castelli discusses the fact that Foucault did not discuss martyrdom in terms of the care of the self, focusing on Christian asceticism in the fourth and fifth centuries instead. However, Castelli argues that “techniques of self-formation” are “also very much on display” in “second- and third-century texts related to Christian martyrdom” (71). It is actually hard to know the full extent of Foucault’s thought on these matters as he was planning to publish a fourth volume in his History of Sexuality series, *Confessions of the Flesh*, exploring the history of the early Christianities in greater detail. Unfortunately, he died before it could be published, asking that it never appear in print. See page 2, note 6 of Jeremy R. Carrette, “Prologue to a Confession of the Flesh,” in Jeremy R. Carrette, *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Bernauer, *Michel Foucault’s Force of Flight*, 160.

⁵¹ Robin Darling Young, *In Procession Before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 9–10.

At the same time, the *Letters of Ignatius* emphasize martyrdom as an imitation of Christ's sacrifice.⁵² Moss carefully points out that this is only one of the ways martyrdom is represented in the Apostolic Fathers and martyr acts themselves; yet, the idea that Christ died as a sacrifice is most definitely present. In the *Letter to the Ephesians*, for example, Ignatius addresses his audience by saying: "Being imitators of God, once you took on new life through the blood of God you completed perfectly the task so natural to you" (*Eph.* 1.1). A little later, Ignatius tells the Ephesian church: "I am a humble sacrifice for you and I dedicate myself to you" (*Eph.* 8.1). Near the end of the letter, he says,

My spirit is a humble sacrifice for the cross, which is a stumbling block to unbelievers but salvation and eternal life to us. . . . For our God, Jesus the Christ, was . . . born and baptized in order that by his suffering he might cleanse the water (*Eph.* 18.1–2).

In the *Letter to the Romans*, he begs the readers: "Grant me nothing more than to be poured out as an offering to God while there is still an altar ready" (*Rom.* 2.2).

Polycarp

The themes common in *1 Clement* and the *Letters of Ignatius* also appear in the two texts of the *Apostolic Fathers* related to Polycarp, the *Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians* and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. Polycarp has traditionally been thought to

⁵² Several scholars explore this idea in depth: Frances M. Young, *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975); Frances M. Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom*, Patristic Monograph Series 5 (Cambridge, Mass: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979); Robert J. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice: The Judaeo-Christian Background before Origen* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1978); Robert J. Daly, *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 51. See Moss, *Other Christs*, 77–87 for an excellent summary of the function of sacrifice in martyr acts specifically. For explication of the wide variety of ways in which sacrifice functions, see Daniel C. Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Karen King, "Martyrdom among the Heretics" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 19, 2012). This paper was part of a session on "Redescribing the Discourses of Sacrifice and Martyrdom in Early Christian Cultural Formation."

have been the bishop of Smyrna in the mid-2nd century C.E. and to have been martyred circa 155–160. Ignatius actually mentions Polycarp in his own letters: *Letter to the Ephesians* (21.1) and *Letter to the Magnesians* (15.1) and writes an entire letter to him as mentioned above. Polycarp also refers to Ignatius and his letters, mentioning that he is passing the letters of Ignatius that he has received on to the Philippians for their own encouragement (Pol. *Phil.* 13.1–2).

Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians

The *Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians*⁵³ clearly depicts martyrs in a favorable way as Polycarp immediately commends the Philippians for “help[ing] on their way those confined by chains suitable for saints” (Pol. *Phil.* 1.1) and exhorts the Philippians to follow God faithfully, reminding them that “the Lord said . . . ‘blessed are the poor and those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God” (Pol. *Phil.* 2.3). Later, the narrator depicts martyrs in a manner similar to that in *I Clement*, as those who “exercise[d] unlimited endurance” (Pol. *Phil.* 9.1–2). This and the frequent calls for “self-control” are quite reminiscent of *I Clement*.⁵⁴ Moreover, such “endurance” is attributed to Paul and the apostles as well as the martyrs Ignatius, Zosimus, and Rufus. In particular, Polycarp mentions that the *Letters of Ignatius*, which he is attaching to his own letter, will be of “great benefit . . . for they deal with faith and

⁵³ There is only one existing text of this epistle which is complete, a Latin manuscript. However, parts of the letter exist in nine Greek manuscripts, in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, and in Syriac fragments. See Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 73–85; one of the main textual issues revolves around whether the extant manuscripts are actually a combination of two separate letters. See pages 60–62 of Michael W. Holmes, “Polycarp of Smyrna, Letter to the Philippians,” *Expository Times* 118.2 (2006), 53–63.

⁵⁴ Michael W. Holmes notes that “Polycarp seems to be particularly familiar with 1 Peter and *I Clement*,” 273. Jefford notes familiarity or access to the Gospel of Matthew and *I Clement*, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 82.

patient endurance and every kind of spiritual growth that has to do with our Lord” (Pol. *Phil.* 14.2). Such phrasing resonates with the overtones of the kind of technologies of self associated with the care of the soul.⁵⁵

Michael Holmes has analyzed this emphasis on behavior and practicing virtue rather than doctrine per se:

This understanding of the letter makes sense of the way Polycarp stresses so strongly the behavioural aspects of what is usually viewed as a purely “theological” concept, i.e. “righteousness”. For him, orthopraxy is the other side of the coin of orthodoxy; if the community is behaving properly, it is also likely believing properly. This position may explain the vigour with which he reinforces (what he thinks should be) the community’s sense of behavioural norms and standards throughout the letter.⁵⁶

Stanley K. Stowers has written extensively on the role that letter-writing played in advocating ethical ideals in antiquity. He notes that a letter like that of Polycarp’s provides a “model of what it means to be a good person in a certain role” and “attempts to persuade and move the audience to conform to that model and to elicit corresponding habits of behaviour.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Jefford also notes the ethical emphasis, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 80.

⁵⁶ See Holmes, “Polycarp of Smyrna,” 57. For more regarding the function of the epistle as *paraenesis*, or moral exhortation, see also Harry O. Maier, “Purity and Danger in Polycarp’s Epistle to the Philippians: The Sin of Valens in Social Perspective,” *JECSt* 1 (1993), 229–47. Holmes analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of this argument: Holmes, “Polycarp of Smyrna,” 56–57.

⁵⁷ Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter-Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 94. See also Holmes’ discussion in “Polycarp of Smyrna,” 54.

Martyrdom of Polycarp

The *Martyrdom of Polycarp*⁵⁸ is the only martyr account⁵⁹ per se included in the works of the *Apostolic Fathers*. Moreover, scholars have long considered it the oldest martyrdom account outside the New Testament although Moss compellingly argues for a

⁵⁸ The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is considered to be the first of the acts of the martyrs although its provenance and dating have proven hard to establish. The many textual variants have provoked considerable scholarly debate. For discussion of these, see pages 3–42 of Boudewijn Dehandschutter and Johan Leemans, *Polycarpiana: Studies on Martyrdom and Persecution in Early Christianity* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007). Although the text is well-attested in seven Greek manuscripts (including the Codex Hierosolymitanus of Jerusalem and the Codex Mosquensis) and one Latin one as well all of these sources date from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. Moreover, the text claims that the account of Polycarp’s arrest and execution have been written down by an eyewitness to the latter. However, narration in the first person is not consistent throughout the account. In 15.1, for example, the plural pronoun “we” is used, indicating that the text may have been the work of more than one author. It is important not to confuse the date of the martyrdom itself with the date of the composition of the martyr account. Scholars have tended to assume that the original version was written close to the time of Polycarp’s actual death (sometime between 155–180 C.E. as indicated by references to Statius Quadratus and Philip the Asiarch and by Eusebius’ placing it in this period), but there is actually no external evidence for dating the writing of the account to the same time as the event itself. In fact, there are certain literary qualities which have led some scholars to place it considerably later. Among the various manuscripts, we find two basic versions of the martyrdom, an account attributed to Pseudo-Pionius and that of Eusebius (*Eccl. hist.* 4:15), the latter dated to 324–325 C.E. Hans von Campenhausen has noted the possibility of four stages of redaction between Eusebius’s account and that of the account in Pseudo-Pionius. See Hans von Campenhausen, “Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polykarp Martyrium,” in *Aus der Frühzeit des Christentums: Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des ersten und zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963), 253–301. His analysis has stimulated both intense admiration and fierce criticism. For the latter, see pages 510–11 of Timothy D. Barnes, “Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*,” *JTS* 19 (1968): 509–31.

⁵⁹ Moss also urges us to consider the variety of contexts in which such a text may have functioned: “liturgical, catechetical, intra-ecclesial, pedagogical, apologetic, and heresiological” and to remember that even within any one of these contexts, a text can function in multiple ways. The very fact that a martyrdom account could serve a heresiological function is an important one to note. Moss, *Other Christs*, 17, 210, n. 61. Traditionally, scholars doing research on the differences between “orthodoxy” and “heresy” have relied primarily on treatises such as Ignatius’ *Adversus Haereses* (*Against Heresies*). Moss’s point accords well with Foucault’s use of multiple genres in researching any issue. Including those genres ignored by previous scholars may shed tremendous light on a subject especially regarding the way in which it is represented and perceived in a particular social context. Later, Moss is at pains to argue for what martyrdom texts can teach us about the way Christianity was being practiced and to deconstruct the labeling of such texts as “Kleinliteratur” written only for the masses, a designation used by Franz Overbeck and Adolf Deissmann. She also helpfully points us to Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995). Her work dispels the notion that martyr acts “represent the tawdry underbelly of Christian literature.” See Moss, *Other Christs*, 45, 225, n.1.

possible later date.⁶⁰ Scholars repeatedly note its high quality as literature and defend its authenticity. The writer has discursively shaped it to parallel that of Jesus' own death in order for it to be "in accord with the gospel" (*Mart. Pol.*, 1.1). For example, the name of the captain of the police who arrests Polycarp is Herod (*Mart. Pol.*, 6.2); Polycarp sits on a donkey (*Mart. Pol.*, 8.1) to be taken before the official who will condemn him just as Christ entered Jerusalem on a donkey, and Polycarp also hears a "voice from heaven" (*Mart. Pol.*, 9.1) just as Christ did at his baptism. He is also very kind toward his persecutors, inviting them to eat a meal and praying for them when they come to arrest him (*Mart. Pol.*, 7.2–3).⁶¹ Clearly, these elements are in keeping with a martyrdom account that the author is shaping to represent Polycarp as a Christ-like figure rather than a literal recounting of the story.

⁶⁰ Moss incisively summarizes the reasons for questioning the integrity, dating, and authenticity of the account, pointing instead to its elegance as a literary text. Certain elements are not historically plausible. As just one example, Polycarp's trial occurs in an amphitheater rather than a judicial basilica. Such was not normal legal precedent. The text also explicitly condemns voluntary martyrdom, carefully contrasting Polycarp's flight from persecution with that of Quintus, a man who presents himself to the Roman authorities but demonstrates cowardice when he actually faces the beasts. As noted above, criticism of seeking martyrdom became particularly pronounced in the conflict between the Catholics and the Donatists, and such a direct criticism of the practice leads some to date the text as late as the mid-third century C.E: Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 62, 181. Scholars also use the fact that the text shows evidence of well-developed ideas about a martyr's function and status, ideas consonant with those at a time when the cult of the saints was more solidly in place, to support this later dating. For general discussion of these issues, see Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 87–101; Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 57–76, 180–85; Moss, *Other Christs*, 57, 231, n.60, 196–98.

⁶¹ For a table listing all of the similarities between the representation of Christ in the New Testament gospels and the representation of Polycarp in the martyrdom account, see Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 97. For in-depth scholarly analysis of parallels between Christ's passion and Polycarp's martyrdom, see Boudewijn Dehandschutter, *Martyrium Polycarpi: Ein literair-kritisch studie*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 52 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 241–54, and Moss, *Other Christs*, 56–69, 231–238. However, see pages 59–63 of Judith Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); Michael W. Holmes, "The Martyrdom of Polycarp and the New Testament Passion Narratives," in *Trajectories Through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers* (ed. Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher Tuckett; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 407–32 for discussion of the difficulty in making intertextual parallels.

The theme of martyrdom as an imitation of Christ's sacrifice definitely appears as well. At the end of the account, Polycarp looks up toward heaven and prays, "May I be received . . . in your presence today, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice" (14.2). Moreover, the narrator then goes on to represent Polycarp's body in terms that bring the Eucharist to mind—as fragrant, baking bread:

For the fire, taking the shape of an arch, like the sail of a ship filled by the wind, completely surrounded the body of the martyr, and it was there in the middle, not like flesh burning but like bread baking or like gold and silver being refined in a furnace. For we also perceived a very fragrant aroma, as if it were the scent of incense or some other precious spice (15.1–2).

In this passage, the idea of being refined like pure metal resonates with the idea of martyrdom as a process that develops one's virtuous qualities, and indeed, as in other texts of the *Apostolic Fathers*, the narrator represents martyrdom as a means of developing and exhibiting "patient endurance" consonant with self-care (*Mart. Pol.*, 2.2) throughout the text.⁶² In fact, the writer explicitly mentions the fact that Polycarp does "not collapse in fright" (*Mart. Pol.*, 12.1) and that he does not need to be nailed to a post to prevent him from escaping the fire because he is so in control of his emotions (*Mart. Pol.*, 13.3).⁶³ Many scholars note parallels to the noble death of Socrates.⁶⁴ Others note

⁶² Michael Holmes also notes that Polycarp is portrayed in ways that embody Greco-Roman virtues as well as Christian ones. See p. 300 of his edition of *The Apostolic Fathers*.

⁶³ Jefford also discusses the way in which Polycarp's martyrdom is represented as a "noble death" as well as an example par excellence of an imitation of Christ's suffering which is "painted against the canvas of similar events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth." See *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, 97. The chart of the many parallels between Christ and Polycarp on p. 97 clearly demonstrates this. He also discusses the representation of these deaths as atoning sacrifices associated with the Eucharist on pages 95–96, and he articulates the ways in which the account clearly supports the developing doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh on page 99.

⁶⁴ See Johannes Geffcken, "Die christlichen Martyrien," *Hermes* 45 (1910): 481–505; Christel Butterweck, "Martyriumssucht" in der Alten Kirche? *Studien zur Darstellung und Deutung frühchristlicher Martyrien*.

similarities to the literary representation of the binding of Isaac, as scene in which both Abraham and Isaac exhibit a virtuous sense of self-control and patience.⁶⁵

Further Support for Martyrdom as Care of the Soul in Secondary Sources

The just-published *Stoicism in Early Christianity*⁶⁶ provides fascinating insight into the ways in which those inhabiting the social and cultural world of the Roman Empire in the first two centuries of the Common Era lived in a world pervaded by Stoic philosophical ideas and ideals. In the introduction to the text, Thomas Rasimus argues for “borderlines”⁶⁷ between the various pagan philosophies and early Christian and Jewish ones (these latter two also being characterized by diverse points of view). Though Rasimus does not specifically invoke Boyarin’s term or the hybridity theories of Homi Bhabha⁶⁸ on which such a concept rests, he argues that characterizations of “eclecticism” are quite understandable as a Platonist might borrow from a Stoic, a Stoic from a Platonist, a Christian from a Stoic, etc.⁶⁹

In the one article in the volume related specifically to the ways in which the discourse of Stoicism influences representations of martyrdom, Nicola Denzey argues

Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 87 (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), 8–22; Gregory E. Sterling, “*Mors philosophi*: The Death of Jesus in Luke,” *HTR* 94:4 (2001), 383–402. See also discussion in Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 182, n. 47.

⁶⁵ Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 65, 182.

⁶⁶ Rasimus, Engberg-Pedersen, and Dunderberg, *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, 2010.

⁶⁷ Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partitioning of Judaeo-Christianity*. *Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion* (ed. Daniel Boyarin, Virginia Burrus, Charlotte Fonrobert, Robert Gregg; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁶⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁶⁹ Tuomas Rasimus, “Introduction,” in *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 8–10.

that early Christian writers represent martyrdom in accord with Stoic ideals of virtue regarding freedom from the emotions;⁷⁰ that is, in terms consonant with the care of the soul.⁷¹ She is careful to qualify the relationship between Stoicism and Christianity in an illuminating way:

I argue that Christians pursued a complex relationship with Stoic philosophy, rejecting it overtly while nevertheless embracing elements of it in a complicated pattern of rebuttals, refutations, and ultimate assimilation of Stoic ideals, even while deliberately repudiating them.⁷²

With regard to martyrdom specifically, she maintains that it is not merely a desperate, counter-cultural or anti-social move, an attempt to subvert the existing society or rebel politically.⁷³ In the end, it actually draws on Stoic ideals regarding “noble death,” representing martyrdom as a courageous feat that accords with Roman notions of social respectability.⁷⁴ As she notes,

In Roman Stoicism, freedom was attainable—almost ironically—through self-discipline and self-mastery. Control of the passions ensured the necessary

⁷⁰ Nicola Denzey, “Facing the Beast: Justin, Christian Martyrdom, and Freedom of the Will,” in *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

⁷¹ For other articles citing the influence of Stoicism on Christian martyrdom, see David Aune, “Mastery of the Passions: Philo, 4 Maccabees, and Early Christianity.” Pages 125–58 in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World* (ed. W. E. Hellerman; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994); Straw, “A Very Special Death,” 39–57.

⁷² Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 177. Moss, too, notes this “complex relationship” and comments: “When interpreting their own experiences and crafting their own concept of martyrdom, early Christians adapted, transformed, shaped, and subverted existing cultural tropes. Things changed; things stayed the same.” See *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 47.

⁷³ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 177, 184. As counter-evidence for Denzey’s own position, she cites many of those who conceive of the desire for martyrdom as pathological: Riddle, *Martyrs*, 1931, De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, 2006; Friend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 1965, Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 1995; Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987).

⁷⁴ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 177. See also Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 93–101 for discussion of philosophy as “training for death.”

emotional detachment of the *sapiens*. . . . Controlling death defines *virtus* in the Roman context; the word *virtus* itself embraces notions of bravery while facing down death with steely emotional control. . . . the death of the Christian martyr mirrors or refracts the death of the Stoic philosopher, reduplicating its image rather than merely turning away.⁷⁵

In other words, the practice of welcoming death is one common to both Stoics and proto-orthodox Christians, and Christians were “participat[ing] in a language whose rules Roman Christians did not seek to alter.”⁷⁶ In other words, Christians may well have been subverting and resisting the Roman Empire and demonstrating their allegiance to a different community, but they did so using the language spoken by the rulers of the Empire.

Denzey notes the way in which this language influenced Justin, the philosopher who converted to Christianity and ultimately became a martyr:

It was, above all, the Christians’ preternatural calm and sense of control, of utter freedom or lack of participation in a regime they found to be demonic, that Justin found the most moving. These living philosophers—not the schoolhouse wisecracking of the Platonists, Stoics, Cynics, or Epicureans—inspired Justin to face life as a Christian (2 *Apol.* 12.1). This control of the passions was ‘right behavior’ at its most sublime.

She goes on to note that this total lack of fear in the face of death compelled Justin to desire such for himself⁷⁷ and that

These [were] Stoic virtues, and Christian martyrs aimed to create a potent and lasting display of virtuous behavior that their audience would read as such the Christian performance of martyrdom is merely a Christian enactment of

⁷⁵ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 183.

⁷⁶ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 185.

⁷⁷ Candida R. Moss also explores the way in which Justin is conceiving of martyrdom in philosophical terms. See chapter three, “Rome: Contesting Philosophy” of *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 77–99, 185–190.

Roman cultural values. That he is moved to “convert” by witnessing Christian control of the passions is ironic.⁷⁸

Denzey points out that the work of Foucault has been generally useful in conceiving of martyrdom “as actively participating in a broader discourse of power, characterized by resistance to a dominant, hegemonic order.”⁷⁹ She agrees that “resistance was indeed power,”⁸⁰ but then says,

What is most remarkable to me about Foucault’s work is that it develops Christian notions of resistance to Roman power *within* (emphasis added) the framework of Stoic articulations of self. He sees this development not as oppositional, but rather as a direct and logical progression; early Christians engaged the same ethical problematic that Romans and Greeks before them faced . . . the ancient sources themselves do not need to be massaged to reveal such a provocative *mise-en-place* of Christian emotional theory.⁸¹

In this sense, Denzey seems to be saying that Christian martyrdom is consonant with Greco-Roman notion of the care of the soul. She concludes,

Going peacefully to one’s fate was to ultimately accommodate to philosophies of self-control, which themselves had Stoic foundations. Thus, to show control in the amphitheater was to own and embody deeply ingrained Roman models of emotional continence.⁸²

Moss also notes the philosophical framing of martyr narratives:

Narratives about the death of Jesus were used to frame descriptions of the deaths of early Christians. The martyrs speak the words of the dying Christ and *physically embody his self-control*. The imitation of Christ in the martyr acts is about more than simple repetition. In their presentation of martyrs as Christly imitators, the martyr acts construct their own portraits of Christ and

⁷⁸ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 190–91.

⁷⁹ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 184.

⁸⁰ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 185.

⁸¹ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 185.

⁸² Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 193–94.

martyrological ideals. The image of Christ, glimpsed through the cloudy window of the martyrs, is controlled, stoic, and apathetic. The emotional appeals of the agony of Gethsemane are nowhere to be found. Read in the context of persecuted communities that valued both suffering and self-control, the stoic Jesus was the most appealing.⁸³

Development of a Collective Identity through the Discourse of Martyrdom

The cultivations of individual selves through the process of facing and enduring martyrdom accompanied the formation of a corporate self among the proto-orthodox. In fact, Judith Perkins utilizes a discursive, Foucauldian framework to argue that the very identity of Christianity (although I would argue that it is the identity only of one particular form, that of “proto-orthodoxy”)⁸⁴ was being established through the envisioning of the Christian community as a “suffering self.” She argues that in the moral universe of Greco-Roman values, there was no virtue in suffering; therefore, suffering epitomized by an ignominious death, a death that allowed the sufferer to transcend the established social order and hierarchies of this world for union with Christ, actually subverted the moral and political order of the elites who rule this earthly domain.⁸⁵ In her more recent book, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, she also argues that through the praise of martyrdom, Christians were discursively delineating their very self-definition over and against the Roman status quo, opening “a crack in the unity of elite self interest that informed the early empire.”⁸⁶

⁸³ Moss, *Other Christs*, 173–74.

⁸⁴ Perkins herself readily agrees. In discussing “Imperial Time Frames” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 19, 2011), she directly mentioned that she was talking about one kind of Christianity in her paper but that there were also many other kinds.

⁸⁵ Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, 15–40.

⁸⁶ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 180.

Denzey argues for understanding the discourse of martyrdom differently. She asserts that martyrdom reflects a conservative social perspective.⁸⁷ Seemingly, this argument is at odds with the one Perkins makes in *The Suffering Self*. Perkins argues that Christian martyrdom is a radical social move that aligns the members of the Christian community with each other and, in fact, creates an institution at odds with the values of Roman society as a whole. In actuality, both Denzey and Perkins illuminate important parts of the way martyrdom is being represented. Perkins may well be right about the ways in which the representation of martyrdom help to create a new institution; however, the Roman elites are challenged by means of a kind of discourse they can understand—a discourse that highlights the virtue of Christians in terms that resonate with Stoic sensibilities regarding freedom from the emotions, a virtue attained through proper care of the soul. If Rasimus, Engberg-Pedersen, and Dunderberg are correct about the degree to which Stoic philosophical ideas permeated the Roman world at the time the early Christian martyr acts were being written, it would have been hard for Christians to think of presenting themselves in any other way. Such notions were part of the philosophical “deep structure” in which they lived.⁸⁸ In this sense, Denzey’s insights ring true. The

⁸⁷ Denzey, “Facing the Beast,” 193–94.

⁸⁸ George Tinker and Loring Abeyta regularly present the ideas of Noam Chomsky to their classes at the Iliff School of Theology. Chomsky argues that there is a universal grammar wired into the brains of all infants which allows them to quickly acquire language. What particular language is acquired depends on the social context the infant inhabits. One acquires the language one hears, but the underlying basis of all cognitive linguistic development is the universal grammar that is intrinsically part of the human brain. Another name for this universal grammar is “deep structure.” The grammar of the specific language an infant learns is a “surface structure.” Chomsky’s seminal work in laying out his theory is *Syntactic Structures*, first published in 1957 (2d ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972). Tinker and Abeyta transfer this concept to the world of culture, arguing that while it is possible to think differently in terms of “surface structure,” it is impossible to change one’s cultural view in terms of “deep structure.” Such an argument resonates with what seems to be happening with regard to martyrdom. Early Christians are representing martyrdom in ways consonant with the philosophical tenets that pervaded the Roman cultural view.

arguments are “conservative” and reflect the viewpoint of those that inhabit the social context of the Roman Empire in the first two centuries of the Common Era. This is simply a way of saying that the arguments utilize strategies understandable to those living in this culture. It is noteworthy that those of lower socio-economic status are engaged in making them and that these arguments appear in martyr acts whose narrative form was popular with all classes rather than merely in philosophical or theological treatises accessible only to the elites. However, they are in service of an alternative group, one with a different hierarchy, that of the proto-orthodox church. I fully concur with Perkins’ arguments about proto-orthodox Christians constructing an alternative site of power although the degree to which such a community was democratic or granted equality to its members is not clear-cut. Certainly, the discourse speaks of equality, but the very texts which the members of the community value the most, speak unceasingly of obedience to and respect for the bishop, deacons, and presbyters. The *Letters of Ignatius* are a prime example. Repeatedly, Ignatius tells each of the churches to whom he writes that they must do nothing without the bishop:

For Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is the mind of the Father, just as the bishops appointed throughout the world are in the mind of Christ. Thus, it is proper for you to run together in harmony with the mind of the bishop, as you are in fact doing. For your council of presbyters, which is worthy of its name and worthy of God, is attuned to the bishop as strings to a lyre. Therefore in your unanimity and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung. You must join this chorus, every one of you, so that by being harmonious in unanimity and taking your pitch from God you may sing in unison with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, in order that he may both hear you and, on the basis of what you do well, acknowledge that

However, as Judith Perkins has argued particularly cogently, they are investing the meaning of martyrdom with allegiance to a new community, one that will become an alternate site of political power, the Christian Church.

you are members of his Son. It is, therefore, advantageous for you to be in perfect unity, in order that you may always have a share in God (*Eph.* 3.2–4.2).

I Clement reiterates this theme, simultaneously defining and reinforcing a hierarchy:

Let us fear the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us. Let us respect our leaders; let us honor the older men; let us instruct the young with instruction that leads to the fear of God. Let us guide our women toward that which is good: let them display a disposition to purity worthy of admiration; let them exhibit a sincere desire to be gentle; let them demonstrate by their silence the moderation of their tongue; let them show their love, without partiality and in holiness, equally toward all those who fear God (21.6–7).

Shelly Matthews insightfully points out the way in which the discourse of martyrdom can work both to subvert the existing sites of power and authority and yet also generate new ones in a manner that illuminates the insights of both Perkins and Denzey:

As a discourse that attempts to wrest meaning out of violence through inverting categories of strength and weakness, victory and loss, and life and death, martyrdom narratives can subvert hegemonic powers, providing a language of, and hence a means for, resistance to those facing similar violent circumstances Paradoxically, the anti-judgment, anti-authority alignment of Christian martyrdom discourse can work in the service of generating new sites of authority.”⁸⁹

Here she cites Beth Berkowitz specifically with regard to the way in which Ignatius links the themes of martyrdom with those of obedience and submission to the bishop:

We have [in Ignatius] martyrdom on top of martyrdom on top of martyrdom: Ignatius martyrs himself for those church members who in turn “martyr” themselves for the bishop, all of whom imitate the originary martyrdom of Christ for God. Yet Ignatius also demands obedience as a bishop: He is both the subject of suffering and the object for whom one suffers.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4–5.

⁹⁰ See Beth Berkowitz, *Execution and Invention: Death Penalty Discourse in Early Rabbinic and Christian Cultures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 200. See also discussion by Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 139, n. 6.

Resurrection of the Flesh

Interestingly, themes regarding the nature of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, actual love not just for Christ, but for "his suffering and resurrection," and those of respect for apostolic authority also interweave with those in which immortality is promised to the Christian and in which participating in the Eucharist is linked with certain notions of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection as well. The text also links medical imagery and the notion of an "undisturbed mind" with these ideas in an intriguing manner as well. Such language resonates with the idea of a properly-cared for soul and the notion of "immovability" and emotional stability discussed in chapter four. Ignatius says, for example:

If Jesus Christ, in response to your prayer, should reckon me worthy, and if it is his will, in a second letter . . . I will explain to you the subject about which I have begun to speak, namely, the divine plan with respect to the new man Jesus Christ, involving faith in him and *love for him, his suffering and resurrection* All of you, individually and collectively, gather together in grace, my name, in one faith and one Jesus Christ . . . in order that you may obey the bishop and the council of presbyters with an *undisturbed mind, breaking one bread*, which is the *medicine of immortality*, the antidote we take in order not to die but to *live forever* in Jesus Christ (*Eph. 20:2*) (emphasis added).

This passage is also interesting because participating in the Eucharist, a symbol of Christ's sacrifice, goes hand-in-hand with obedience to the church authorities. Ignatius makes this clearer in his *Letter to the Smyrneans* when he accuses heretics of "abstain[ing] from Eucharist . . . because they refuse to acknowledge that the Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father by his goodness raised up" (6.2). He then goes on to tell the readers "to avoid such people" (7.2) as he emphatically thunders,

You must all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the council of presbyters as you would the apostles; respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no one do anything that has to do with the church without the bishop. Only that Eucharist which is under the authority of the bishop (or whomever he himself designates) is to be considered valid. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the congregation be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church. It is not permissible either to baptize or to hold a love feast without the bishop. But whatever he approves is also pleasing to God, in order that everything you do may be trustworthy and valid. Finally, it is reasonable for us to come to our senses while we still have time to repent and turn to God. It is good to acknowledge God and the bishop. The one who honors the bishop has been honored by God; the one who does anything without the bishop's knowledge serves the devil (8.1–9.1).

Indeed, in such passages, it is hard to delineate the point where one theme ends and another begins. Ignatius' comparison of his chains to "spiritual pearls" is also intriguing because he sees those very chains as the means of resurrection, and he then intermingles notions of agreement with or submission to apostolic authority as well:

Let nothing appeal to you apart from him, in whom I carry around these chains (my spiritual pearls!), by which I hope, through your prayers, to rise again. May I always share in them, in order that I may be found in the company of the Christians of Ephesus, who have always been in agreement with the apostles by the power of Jesus Christ (*Eph.* 11.2).

Though Ignatius does not use the term "flesh" in speaking of the resurrection, he carefully notes that Jesus Christ "*really* was raised from the dead when his Father raised him up" (*Trall.* 9.2; emphasis added).

In *1 Clement*, the author speaks of resurrection, invoking the image of the phoenix and a passage from Job, and the notion of a *fleshly* resurrection is clear: "[Y]ou will raise this flesh of mine, which has endured all these things" (26.3). Likewise, Polycarp's words are represented as follows:

I bless you because you have considered me worthy of this day and hour, so that I might receive a place among the number of the martyrs in the cup of your Christ,

to the resurrection to eternal life, *both of soul and of body*, in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit (14.2) (emphasis added).

Theologians such as Tertullian make the insistence on this idea of a fleshly resurrection extremely plain:

If God raises not men entire, He raises not the dead. For what dead man is entire, although he dies entire? Who is without hurt, that is without life? What body is uninjured, when it is dead, when it is cold, when it is ghastly, when it is stiff, when it is a corpse? When is a man more infirm, than when he is entirely infirm? When more palsied, than when quite motionless? Thus, for a dead man to be raised again, amounts to nothing short of his being restored to his entire condition,—lest he, forsooth, be still dead in that part in which he has not risen again. God is quite able to remake what He once made. This power and this unstinted grace of His He has already sufficiently guaranteed in Christ; and has displayed Himself to us (in Him) not only as the restorer of the flesh, but as the repairer of its breaches Thus our flesh shall remain after the resurrection—so far indeed susceptible of suffering, as it is the flesh, and the same flesh, too; but at the same time impassible, inasmuch as it has been liberated by the Lord for the very end and purpose of being no longer capable of enduring suffering (*De res.* 57).

It is important to note the interweaving of these themes as all of them will play a part in discussing the ways in which other texts disrupt the meaning of martyrdom as a kind of care of the soul linked with notions of martyrdom as sacrifice, notions of apostolic authority, and the doctrine of a fleshly resurrection. Caroline Walker Bynum shows the means by which this doctrine actually arises in the context of persecution, and we will discuss it more fully in chapter three as we put both those who promoted it and those who disagreed with it in conversation.⁹¹

In summary, the main argument of this chapter is that early Christian writers represent martyrdom in terms consonant with the care of the soul, particularly in its Stoic conception. In signifying the meaning of martyrdom in this way, suffering becomes a

⁹¹ Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 21–58.

good and martyrdom something to be desired. In some cases, the texts also link martyrdom with the imitation of Christ's sacrifice as a blood atonement for sin, a sacrifice pleasing to God. In addition, it is linked with the development of proto-orthodox belief in a bodily resurrection of the very flesh of one's existing, earthly body. Moreover, the discourse of martyrdom upholds the legitimacy of the proto-orthodox insistence on the authority of the bishops in the line of the apostolic succession from Peter and Paul. Finally, all of these together make the discourse of martyrdom one of the significant ways by which the Roman Empire's claim to authority is challenged as an alternate sense of corporate selfhood develops and an alternative site of power starts to coalesce in the Christian church. Chapter three delineates the ways in which so-called Gnostic texts disrupt this discourse in two ways: by articulating alternate views about how to care for the soul using practices that reflect more traditional Greco-Roman notions regarding the therapy of emotions while simultaneously critiquing the glorification of martyrdom, disrupting the increasingly dominant discourse.

**CHAPTER THREE: COMPETING VISIONS OF THE CARE OF THE SOUL IN
THE *APOCALYPSE OF PETER*, THE *TESTIMONY OF TRUTH*, FRAGMENTS
OF BASILIDES AND VALENTINUS, AND THE *GOSPEL OF JUDAS***

*May nothing wind you up,
Nothing affright you;
Everything comes and goes
God, still, just there;
Through patience
All will be achieved.
If you have God,
You lack nothing;
God alone will do.
--Teresa of Avila¹*

If, then, the very constitution of proto-orthodox Christian identity was revolving around a specific technology of self—the discourse of martyrdom—one can well imagine that any disruptions to this discourse may have constituted a challenge, even a threat, to the means by which that identity was starting to coalesce. One finds such a challenge in the discourses of certain individuals excoriated as “Gnostics” (a number of different early Christian groups being lumped together under this term).² In contrast to the way that the meaning and significance of martyrdom are represented in texts of the proto-orthodox, such as *1 Clement*, the *Letters of Ignatius*, and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, other early

¹ Rosalind Bradley, ed., *A World of Prayer: Spiritual Leaders, Activists, and Humanitarians Share Their Favorite Prayers* (trans. James Alison; Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2012), 5.

² Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, 1996. Williams provides a compelling argument regarding the lumping of a variety of groups under a single umbrella term.

Christian writers and theologians offer a broad range of differing interpretations.³ Like the proto-orthodox, several thinkers describe the care of the soul in terms consonant with Stoic philosophy particularly regarding the therapy of emotions and healing, which results in freedom from enslavement to desires or passions.⁴ For the writers of these texts, Christ is the teacher and healer who can effect a “cure” from passions such as fear and anger through his teaching, through his revelation, and through his wise interpretations of the visions his followers have. It is through being acquainted with Christ, knowing him, and interacting with him that freedom comes.⁵ However, these thinkers see entrapment in desire of any kind as weakness; therefore, while articulating this Christian therapy of emotions, these writers simultaneously adopt a discursive strategy of criticizing those

³ This by no means implies that the discourse in proto-orthodox texts is itself monolithic. See Moss, *Other Christs*, 87.

⁴ For an excellent discussion of this idea, which differs somewhat from but supplements those provided by Foucault in the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* and *Technologies of the Self*, see Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 1994. Chapters nine and ten consider Stoic conceptions of the self-government of the soul and the extirpation of the passions. In contrast to Foucault, Nussbaum emphasizes the focus on reason in Greek texts. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 1995 is also extremely useful in understanding the notion of the care of the soul as discussed in chapter one.

⁵ Bentley Layton’s analysis of the Greek *gnōsis* is helpful here. Layton explains that in Greek, “knowledge” is represented by several different words. Some knowledge is propositional while other knowledge is *relational*, involving personal acquaintance with something or someone. There are different words for these kinds of knowledge, and Layton feels that *gnosis* connotes relational knowledge and translates it accordingly as “acquaintance with.” This helps us to understand the connotations of *gnōsis* as having to do with one’s relationship to knowledge provided by Christ and even to Christ himself rather than the acquiring of supposedly mysterious and esoteric cult knowledge. As Layton summarizes: “One kind [of knowledge] is propositional knowing—the knowledge that something is the case (“I know that Athens is in Greece”). Greek has several words for this kind of knowing—for example, *eidenai* (French *savoir*). The other kind of knowing is personal acquaintance with an object, often a person (“I know Athens well”; “I have known Susan for many years”). In Greek the word for this is *gignoskein* (French *connaître*), and in English one can call this kind of knowledge “acquaintance.” The corresponding Greek noun is *gnōsis*. If, for example, two people have been introduced to one another, each one can claim to have *gnōsis* or acquaintance of the other. If one is introduced to god, one has *gnōsis* of god. The ancient Gnostics described salvation as a kind of *gnōsis* or acquaintance, and the ultimate object of that acquaintance was nothing less than god.” Layton carefully qualifies this distinction, saying “Ordinary language is not a rigid system of course, and thus in natural usage the distinction between the two kinds of knowledge is sometimes blurred.” See Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 9.

who glorify or even desire martyrdom as “filled with passion,” representing them as lacking in self-control.⁶ Thus, this criticism disrupts a proto-orthodox discourse increasingly dominated by such praise.

It is in this context that disputes regarding doctrine erupt. Those responsible for the texts discussed in this chapter do not necessarily agree with the particular significance ascribed to the death of Christ by some of the proto-orthodox—as an atonement needed to appease a God who requires sacrifice.⁷ While they agree that there is a life (or lives) beyond this one, they do not necessarily agree with the developing theology of the resurrection of the *flesh*. They do believe in immortality but not necessarily that of the very same material body one inhabited prior to death.

⁶ Interestingly, these writers are not altogether different in their critique than non-Christian Romans. For example, the Stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius remarks in *Meditations* 11.3, “What a soul that is which is ready, if at any moment it must be separated from the body, and ready either to be extinguished or dispersed or continue to exist; but so that this readiness comes from a man’s own judgment, not from mere obstinacy, as with the Christians, but considerately and with dignity and in a way to persuade another, without tragic show.” See Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* (ed. Charles W. Eliot; trans. George Lang; New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1937), 285.

⁷ Moss discusses the way in which sacrifice is represented in various martyr acts. In some (as well as in other genres, such as the *Letters of Ignatius*), language and imagery associated with sacrifice is present, but in others, such language is rare or altogether lacking, and martyrs are represented as conquering Satan (in accord with a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement) or as moral exemplars. See Moss, *Other Christs*, 75–111, 240–255. Thus, it is crucial to understand that early Christians in a wide variety of groups and social and geographical contexts are responding and reacting to a wide spectrum of representations. As Moss says, “while the basic principle that martyrs are models was a feature of the majority of the *acta*, there was considerable disagreement about the core values that the martyrs embody. Ancient Christians employed a variety of linguistic and conceptual images to describe the significance of martyrdom. We have considered the function of the death of the martyr as a sacrifice, as a victory over Satan, and as a moral exemplar . . . these elements often appear in nuanced and integrated forms in the same texts. These concepts were frequently interwoven in a manner so that while one particular soteriological model may dominate our interpretation of that individual account, other models nevertheless resonate in the background of the narrative. The *Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne* presents the deaths of its protagonists as both victories over Satan and moral exemplar, and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* combines elements of all three models. One of the more consistent features of all three perspectives, however, is that whatever the function of the martyr’s death, it functions in the same way as the death of Jesus. Thus, whether or not a martyr is explicitly named as a model of virtue for others, the function of his or her own death mirrors that of Christ. Even here, though, we should be hesitant to generalize and reach broad conclusions. *If we attempt to harmonize the passion into a single interpretation of the martyr’s death, then we do a disservice to the richness and complexity of the texts themselves.* See Moss, *Other Christs*, 110–11 (emphasis added).

Heresiological Framing

Unfortunately, these disputes have long been refracted through the lens of heresiologists who accused their opponents of disloyalty or a lack of courage in not embracing martyrdom. Criticism begins with Justin, who observes that “they [Gnostics] are neither persecuted nor put to death” (*I Apol.* 26).⁸ Irenaeus, too, accuses the Gnostics:

[s]ome of these men have proceeded to such a degree of temerity, that they even pour contempt upon the martyrs, and vituperate those who are slain on account of the confession of the Lord, and who suffer all things predicted by the Lord, and who in this respect strive to follow the footsteps of the Lord’s passion, having become martyrs of the suffering One; these we do also enrol with the martyrs themselves. For, when inquisition shall be made for their blood, and they shall attain to glory, then all shall be confounded by Christ, who have cast a slur upon their martyrdom (*Haer.* 3.18.5).

Later, Irenaeus returns to this theme:

Wherefore the Church does in every place, because of that love which she cherishes towards God, send forward, throughout all time, a multitude of martyrs to the Father; while all others not only have nothing of this kind to point to among themselves, but even maintain that such witness-bearing is not at all necessary, for that their system of doctrines is the true witness [for Christ], with the exception, perhaps, that one or two among them, during the whole time which has elapsed since the Lord appeared on earth, have occasionally, along with our martyrs, borne the reproach of the name (as if he too [the heretic] had obtained mercy), and have been led forth with them [to death], being, as it were, a sort of retinue granted unto them. For the Church alone sustains with purity the reproach of those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, and endure all sorts of punishments, and are put to death because of the love which they bear to God, and their confession of His Son; often weakened indeed, yet immediately increasing her members, and becoming whole again (*Haer.* 4.33.9).

⁸ As noted above, all citations come from Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1905 unless otherwise noted.

Moss points out that Irenaeus actually uses an analogy in which he equates those he deems heretics with the wild beasts of the arena. In other words, he uses the discourse of martyrdom itself as a discursive strategy of “othering”:

Utilizing the language of the arena, Irenaeus casts himself as the martyr and the heretics as wild beasts and dumb animals (*Haer.* 4.31.4). The violence of the heresiological contest is striking: Irenaeus hopes to inflict the heretics with wounds and trample them underfoot (*Haer.* 4.31.4). Such imagery emulates the discourse of martyrdom in Gaul: battle with heresy functions like conflict with the animals, which in turn encapsulates the cosmic battle with Satan. In an ironic act of narrative violence, Irenaeus drags the Gnostics to the arena in order to force them to play the persecutor (157).

In the first chapter of the *Scorpiace*, Tertullian, too, refers to some who scorn martyrdom:

This among Christians is a season of persecution. When, therefore, faith is greatly agitated and the church burning, as represented by the bush, then the Gnostics break out; then the Valentinians creep forth; then all the opponents of martyrdom bubble up, being themselves also hot to strike, penetrate, kill. For, because they know that many are artless and also inexperienced, and weak moreover, that a very great number in truth are Christians who veer about with the wind and conform to its moods, they perceive that they are never to be approached more than when fear has opened the entrances to the soul, especially when some display of ferocity has already arrayed with a crown the faith of martyrs. . . . we are in the midst of an intense heat, the very dog-star of persecution Of some Christians the fire, of others the sword, of others the beasts, have made trial; others are hungering in prison for the martyrdoms of which they have had a taste in the meantime by being subjected to clubs and claws besides. We ourselves, having been appointed for pursuit, are like hares being hemmed in from a distance; and heretics go about according to their wont.

At the end of the chapter, he says,

But woe to them who turn sweet into bitter, and light into darkness. For, in like manner, they also who oppose martyrdoms, representing salvation to be destruction, transmute sweet into bitter, as well as light into darkness; and thus, by preferring this very wretched life to that most blessed one, they put bitter for sweet, as well as darkness for light.

In fact, the entire *Scorpiace* is an antidote to what Tertullian considers the poison of heretics who are akin to small but very dangerous scorpions. Finally, in the fourth chapter

of Book IV of the *Stromata*, sometimes referred to as “miscellanies” or even a “carpet bag” due to its loosely-organized and eclectic nature, Clement of Alexandria says,

Now some of the heretics who have misunderstood the Lord, have at once an impious and cowardly love of life, saying that the true martyrdom is the knowledge of the only true God (which we also admit), and that the man is a self-murderer and a suicide who makes confession by death; and adducing other similar sophisms of cowardice.⁹

The style and tone of such writers varies somewhat, but in the end, some would argue that all these critiques are “hostile sources”¹⁰ whose framing of the issues as doctrinal disputes has long perpetuated the discourse of “orthodoxy” and “heresy.”

Ismo Dunderberg notes that Gnostic texts have not often been examined for what they have to say about “moral exhortation, views about emotions, and critical analysis of power and society” simply because such topics have not been considered main themes of “the core of Gnostic thought.”¹¹ As he succinctly points out, “None of these features has been regarded as constituting the distinct essence, or the ‘spirit,’ of Gnosticism.”¹² In effect, the focus of scholarship has been influenced by presuppositions about what the main themes of Gnostic writing are.¹³ Philip Tite reinforces this point in his comprehensive discussion of the ways in which scholars usually explicate texts deemed

⁹ There are other examples as well, particularly in Origen’s *Exhortation to Martyrdom*. See John O’Meara, trans., *Prayer: Exhortation to Martyrdom* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman, 1954). Eusebius of Caesarea cites Agrippa Castor’s critique as well (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.7.7). However, the passages above serve to capture vividly the flavor of the accusations against the “Gnostics.”

¹⁰ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 8.

¹¹ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 1.

¹² Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 1.

¹³ For a fuller discussion of this point, see also Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, 1996; King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 2003), and Lance Jenott, *The “Gospel of Judas”: Coptic Text, Translation and Historical Interpretation of the “Betrayal’s Gospel”* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum; ed. Christoph Marksches et al.; 64 Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

Gnostic in terms of their esoteric myths, arguing that these writings are worth re-examining with respect to their ethical teachings.¹⁴ Likewise, Lance Jenott also discusses the impossibility of presupposing a Gnostic point of view and the distorted perspective that evolves from doing so.¹⁵

Alternative Perspectives

Therefore, in this chapter, we take a fresh look at some of these texts with respect both to what they have to say about the care of the soul as the therapy of emotions and their critique of martyrdom. In particular, the texts of the *Apocalypse of Peter*,¹⁶ the *Testimony of Truth*,¹⁷ two fragments preserved in the writings of Clement of

¹⁴ Philip L. Tite, “Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse: Determining the Social Function of Moral Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity” (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2005). In particular, see 1–2, 6–7, 102 and 192–195.

¹⁵ Jenott, *Gospel of Judas*, 2, 10.

¹⁶ There are actually two texts by this name, the contents of which are completely different. The one discussed in this chapter is the Coptic *Apocalypse of Peter* in codex VII of the Nag Hammadi library. It is in Coptic but was probably originally in Greek. Andreas Werner dates it to the late second or early third century. See page 702 of Andreas Werner, “The Coptic gnostic Apocalypse of Peter,” in *Writings Relating to the Apostles, Apocalypses, and Related Subjects*, vol. 2 of *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher; trans. and ed. R. McL. Wilson; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1991), 700–05. All citations here are from James Brashler, trans., *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII,3), in *Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (ed. Birger A. Pearson; NHMS 30; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 201–47. Also valuable is the translation in the easily-obtained, one-volume edition of the texts found near Nag Hammadi along with the *Gospel of Mary* and those in the Codex Tchacos: Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 491–97. Here the work is referred to as the *Revelation of Peter*. (The other work of the same name, surviving in Ethiopic, was probably also originally written in Greek. An English translation is available in *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, 620–38. This name was also given to some other apocalypses written considerably later, which now exist in Arabic and Ethiopic. See Michel Desjardins, Introduction to the *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII,3), in the *Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (ed. Birger A. Pearson; NHMS 30; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 201–16.

¹⁷ Birger A. Pearson discusses the difficulty in dating the text. He argues that the “most plausible hypothesis” is the late second or early third century of the Common Era. See Birger A. Pearson, introduction to the *Testimony of Truth* (NHC, IX, 3) in the *Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* (ed. Birger A. Pearson; NHMS 15; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 118–20.

Alexandria—one attributed to Basilides¹⁸ and the other to Valentinus,¹⁹ and the *Gospel of Judas*,²⁰—offer insight into these interpretations.²¹ In these five texts, a discourse which articulates the positive value of the therapy of emotions intersects with a discourse challenging the meaning of martyrdom as described in chapter two (as, in and of itself, ultimate care of the soul associated with imitation of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, the doctrine of the fleshly resurrection, and notions of apostolic succession). Close examination of these texts reveal not the existence of two opposed religions—

¹⁸ See the translation of Fragment G and accompanying commentary by Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 440–43.

¹⁹ See the translation of Fragment F and accompanying commentary by Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 240–41.

²⁰ Rodolphe Kasser, Gregor Wurst, Marvin Meyer, and François Gaudard, *The Gospel of Judas Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and a Book of Allogenes from Codex Tchacos: Critical Edition* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2007). Irenaeus of Lyon may have known about this text, which would place its dating prior to ca. 180 of the Common Era. See discussion below.

²¹ The *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Testimony of Truth* were both a part of the cache of texts discovered in a jar near Nag Hammadi, Egypt in the 1940’s. This collection of texts contains thirteen codices written on papyrus. These thirteen codices contain a total of forty-six different works. (There are fifty-two works, but six of them are duplicates.) This discovery constitutes a tremendous find as forty-one of these texts were not extant at the time they were found. The texts date to the mid-fourth century and are written in Coptic, though the original texts were in Greek. The codices may have come from a Pachomian monastery which once existed near the area where they were uncovered. The texts themselves are probably mostly from the second and third centuries of the Common Era although dating many of them is quite difficult as is often the case with ancient texts. It is important to keep in mind that certain details of the discovery are contested, and the circumstances surrounding the placement of the jar out into the desert are pure speculation. For more on the discovery, see John Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics: An Introduction to the Gnostic Coptic Manuscripts Discovered at Chenoboskion* (trans. Philip Mairet; London: Hollis & Carter, 1960); James M. Robinson, “From the Cliff to Cairo: The Story of the Discoverers and Middlemen of the Nag Hammadi Codices,” in *Colloque International sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22–25 août 1978)* (ed. Bernard Barc, 21–58; Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section “Études” 1; Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval; Louvain: Peeters, 1981); James M. Robinson, “Nag Hammadi: the First Fifty Years,” in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (ed. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire; NHMS 44; Leiden, Brill, 1997), 3–33; Dart, *The Jesus of Heresy and History*, 1988; Marvin Meyer, *The Gnostic Discoveries: The Impact of the Nag Hammadi Library* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005); Marvin Meyer, “Preface,” *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, xi–xii; Marvin Meyer and Elaine H. Pagels, “Introduction,” *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 1–13. (Meyer and Pagels also succinctly summarize the problems with even using the term “Gnosticism,” citing Williams’ *Rethinking “Gnosticism”* and King’s *What is Gnosticism?*, 9). For more on the problems with the accounts of the discovery, see Nicola Denzey, “‘The Beauty that Came to Me in the Books’ (NHC VI.6.54): Scribal Cultures in the Nag Hammadi Codices” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, San Francisco, November 20, 2011).

“Christianity” and “Gnosticism”—but rather a shifting, fluid web of interactions among that branch of Christianity that will come to be thought of as the orthodox and a variety of other Christian groups, such as those that scholars increasingly refer to as Sethians, Basilideans, and Valentinians. The boundaries among groups such as these were not necessarily clearly defined or fixed, and such groups may have been marked by internal diversity as well.²² These inner-Christian borderlines are in many ways analogous to those between the strands of the various Judaism and Christianities Daniel Boyarin has articulated so well.²³ In fact, Boyarin discusses the ways in which attitudes toward martyrdom reflect a spectrum of religious identities in his *Dying for God*.²⁴ He describes Christians as those who embrace martyrdom, and he maintains that Jews hold a variety of positions regarding its value, but closer examination of Christian texts previously deemed Gnostic actually serves to extend Boyarin’s thesis regarding the variety of attitudes toward martyrdom. His ideas on the ways in which attitudes toward martyrdom serve as markers of identity can be applied to the inner-Christian debates regarding its value as well.

²² Lance Jenott describes this well: “The *Gospel of Judas* therefore raises questions about the internal diversity of the Sethians’ cult movement. Scholars classify writings like the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Gospel of Judas*, and the *Holy Book* as ‘Sethian’ because they share many unique mythological characters and themes. Yet if we choose to use such labels as Sethian (or Valentinian, or any other) to typologically sort texts according to the unique features they share, we must also remember that our typologies do not represent monolithic ‘systems’ with no internal diversity. When one looks closely at the specific details of each text, it is clear that they also tell drastically different narratives and advocate different theological perspectives. This raises a larger question that historians of early Christianity are only beginning to explore, namely, what sorts of controversies there were *within* the various ‘schools’ of thought that we typologically construct by blurring differences among their members. Although much attention has been paid to Sethian disputes with other forms of Christianity, I find it quite likely that many of the differences found within the Sethian corpus itself can be explained on the basis that they carried on more disputes with each other than they did with non-Sethians” (*Gospel of Judas*, 132).

²³ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 2004.

²⁴ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 1999.

Apocalypse of Peter

The single extant text of the *Apocalypse of Peter* in Nag Hammadi Codex VII, 3 (70,13–84,14)²⁵ provides clear support for understanding the way in which an early Christian text can articulate a vision of the care of the soul as healing from the destructive effects of one's emotions. This text revolves around Peter's need for a therapy of emotions and the portrayal of Jesus as being able to provide such a cure. At the same time, it serves as critique of those whom the author sees as blindly attributing the source of liberation from one's passions to a glorification of suffering centered in theologies of a substitutionary atonement and a fleshly resurrection.²⁶

The main thrust of the text is that Peter lacks courage. In short, he is consumed by his passions and in need of the kind of healing that a therapy of the emotions can provide. The text progresses with Jesus repeatedly telling Peter not to be afraid. Indeed, as the editor of the Brill edition points out, exhortations to Peter to be strong, perfect, or unafraid frame the entire text, appearing at both the introduction and the end as well as throughout the text (71,16; 71,22; 80,32–33; 82,18; 84,7–12). Specifically, Peter expresses his fear three times, and Jesus reassures him in each case, instances that are

²⁵ As noted above, the translation used here is that by Brashler, *Apocalypse of Peter*, 1996. For other editions, see Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 491. See also Desjardins, Introduction, *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII,3), 201–16; chapter two, “Die Polemik der Petrusapokalypse (NHC, VII, 3) gegen das Kirchliche Christentum,” in Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das Kirchliche Christentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 11–90.

²⁶ The dating of this text is unclear. It has often been assumed to have been written in the third century because it clearly reflects the existence of discord among Christian groups rather than the supposed unity which characterized the earliest Christianity. However, such reasoning is circular. The notion of an original unity within which heresy arose has been deconstructed: Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Kroedel; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). Thus, a paradigm shift has ensued. Interestingly, the editors of the Brill edition note that this work could be as early as 150 C.E. See Desjardins, Introduction, *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII, 3), 214.

discussed below. First, Peter fears that both he and Jesus will be killed when a mob runs toward them with stones. Later, he expresses fear regarding who will win the battle for control of the “little ones.” Finally, Peter expresses fear in his vision of the crucifixion, begging Jesus to flee. In each case, Jesus carefully explains why Peter does not need to be afraid and exhorts him to be “perfect” (71,16) or “strong” (71,22).

The term “perfect” also appears in Seneca, Philo, the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, and the *Secret Revelation of John*.²⁷ The Stoic notion of perfection entailed the extirpation of the passions, or *apatheia*. It is used in the *Gospel of Judas* as well. Judas is the one who more closely approaches the status of “the perfect human” (35,4) than do any of the other disciples (although scholars sharply debate whether, in the end, he is portrayed positively or negatively).

Repeatedly in *Apocalypse of Peter*, Peter fails to demonstrate such *apatheia*. Near the beginning, he says, “I saw the priests and the people running toward us with stones, as if they were about to kill us. And I was afraid that we were going to die” (72,5–9). Some scholars feel this scene takes place on the night of Jesus’ arrest. Others argue it occurs in a heavenly temple.²⁸ In any case, it is Peter’s sense of fear that is highlighted, the same fear recorded in all four gospels of the New Testament, which results in Peter’s

²⁷ See Ismo Dunderberg, “Judas’ Anger and the Perfect Human,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 201–21.

²⁸ Michael Desjardins’ comment is pertinent here: “Brashler (125–35) and Dubois (“Le preambule,” 387–90) argue that the author sets his work in a heavenly temple, with the revelation given by the risen Savior. Koschorke (13), Perkins (*Gnostic Dialogue*, 116), and Brown and Griggs (133) posit an earthly, pre-crucifixion setting and do more justice to the passage. In fact, however, the Savior’s spiritual nature moves the revelation to a non-earthly sphere regardless of the option one chooses.” See Desjardins, Introduction, *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII, 3), 203, n.15.

three-fold betrayal of Jesus. The *Apocalypse of Peter* does not explicitly mention this betrayal, but it comes to mind when the text says that Jesus “will correct you three times in this night” (72,2–4). Through these corrections, which actually function as special insights, Jesus provides the words of revelation Peter needs to help him overcome his fears.

There are also interesting parallels with the transfiguration that Peter, James, and John witness in the Gospel of Mark (chapter 9), the Gospel of Matthew (chapter 17), and the Gospel of Luke (chapter 9). In the *Apocalypse of Peter*, Peter sees Jesus bathed in light: “For I saw a new light greater than the light of day. Then it came down upon the Savior” (72,22–26). This allusion is interesting because it can serve to remind the reader of Peter’s lack of full understanding and his fear. In that transfiguration scene, Peter wants to honor Jesus, Moses, and Elijah equally (Mark 9:5; Matt 17:4). A voice from heaven has to tell him to listen only to Jesus (Mark 9:7; Matt 17:5). Moreover, Peter and the others (James and John) are afraid (Mark 9:6; Matt 17:6). Jesus has to tell them explicitly not to fear (Matt 17:7). When they come down from the mountain, a man with a son in need of healing immediately confronts them, but in spite of the experience they have just had, they are unable to cure him (Mark 9:18; Matt 17:16). The father has to bring him to Jesus (Mark 9:17; Matt 17:17). Jesus tells them that they are still lacking in belief (Matt 17:20) and that a cure is possible only with prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29; Matt 17:21). The limited understanding Peter and the others exhibit in these passages seems similar to Peter’s lack of awareness in the *Apocalypse*.

Interestingly, as the narrative progresses, Jesus understands and responds to Peter even though Peter has never voiced his fear out loud. Peter does tell Jesus what he has

seen, and Jesus responds with a lengthy discourse (72,29–79,31) in which he tells Peter that those whom he fears are “blind and deaf” (73,13–14) and that they are “dry canals” (79,31). In other words, they are not drinking of and filled with Jesus, the living water (John 4:10), the “spring of water gushing up to eternal life” (John 4:14), or the bubbling spring (*Gospel of Thomas*, Logion 13). It is in this context that a long conversation ensues in which a clear critique of those who embrace martyrdom appears (as discussed below). In fact, it is those “who name themselves bishops”—that is, those who falsely claim authority—that Jesus is describing as “dry canals.”²⁹

Jesus also alludes in this passage to his “forgiveness of their transgressions into which they fell through their adversaries, whose ransom I got from the slavery in which they were, to give them freedom” (78,9–16). Here are allusions to a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement. Those who are blind and ignorant do not properly understand this. The implication may well be that they instead insist on a substitutionary atonement theory in which Jesus’ blood serves to appease a wrathful God.

However, once again, Peter is afraid. He is worried that the wrong leaders will prevail. He says,

I am afraid because of what you have told me—that indeed little ones are in our view counterfeit. Indeed, there are multitudes that will mislead other multitudes of living ones, and they will be destroyed among them. And when they speak your name, they will be believed (79,32–80,6).

Again, the text shows Jesus reassuring Peter, saying, “[Y]ou, oh Peter, will stand in their midst. Do not be afraid because of your cowardice” (80,31–33). In fact, Jesus has already affirmed Peter’s leadership over these “blind and deaf” ones. He has told

²⁹ This closely parallels the critique of the apostles in the *Gospel of Judas* which will be further discussed below.

Peter, “But you yourself, Peter, become perfect in accordance with your name, along with me, the very one who chose you. For from you I have made a beginning for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge” (71,15–71,21).

However, even toward the end of the text, after Jesus has revealed many things to him, Peter is still afraid! His visions continue, and he starts to see the crucifixion of Jesus. The divine part of Jesus, which cannot die, actually comes and stands beside him, and he and Jesus watch the crucifixion together. He pleads with Jesus saying, “Lord, no one is looking at you. Let us flee this place” (81,26–28).

Again, Jesus responds with words of reassurance, telling Peter that those who think they are killing him are blind and ignorant (81,30–32), and he once again exhorts Peter: “Be strong!” (82,18). Again, he names Peter as “the one to whom these mysteries have been given” (82,18–19). He tells Peter that the “living Savior, the primal part in him whom they seized” (82,28–29) cannot be destroyed. In fact, “he has been released” (82,30).

A scene such as this reflects a two-natures Christology rather than Docetism *per se*. Docetism is the belief that Jesus only *appeared* to be human; thus, he could not actually suffer and die. A two natures, or *pneumatic*, Christology affirms that the pre-existent Son of God either transformed into or inhabited a human body. In this latter case, it is still possible that the human body could suffer and die efficaciously for humankind.³⁰

³⁰ See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (rev. ed.; San Francisco: Harper, 1978), 141–158. Lance Jenott’s discussion of this issue with regard to the *Gospel of Judas* is pertinent here as well; see especially pp. 23–30. Jenott builds on the classic work of Elaine Pagels: “Gnostic and Orthodox Views of Christ’s Passion: Paradigms for the Christian’s Response to Persecution?,” in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*, vol. 1 (ed. Bentley Layton; SHR; Supplements to Numen 41; Leiden: Brill, 1980–1981), 262–88.

Ultimately, Christ triumphs. Jesus is making all of this clear to Peter, and, therefore, Peter does not need to feel any fear.

At the very end, Jesus says, “You, therefore, be courageous and do not fear anything. For I will be with you so that none of your enemies will prevail over you. Peace be to you! Be strong!” (84,6–11). The text ends by saying that Peter “came to his senses” (84,12–13). Perhaps this implies that Peter comes to his senses on a couple of levels—he comes back to regular consciousness after being in a visionary state, and, seemingly, he is now equipped with the knowledge he needs to serve and lead courageously. The text does not state this explicitly, but the story ends as the task of healing Peter of his fear has apparently been accomplished.

In summary, the fact that Peter feels or expresses fear three times seems to be in keeping with the fact that he betrayed Jesus three times in the canonical gospels. Here, though, it is Peter’s emotions that are emphasized along with a representation of Jesus as the one who can heal Peter of those emotions. The pro-Petrine emphasis seems to be stronger in this text than in the Gospel of John where Peter (and the reader) are reminded of the fact that Peter betrayed Jesus three times by Jesus’ asking Peter three times if he will “feed his sheep” (John 21:15–17). In both texts, Jesus affirms that Peter will ultimately have the courage to be loyal to Jesus, but in the Gospel of John, this courage is linked to martyrdom, whereas in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, it is not. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says to Peter,

Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go. . . . Follow me (John 21:18–19).

In the context of the *Apocalypse of Peter*, Peter is not asked explicitly to follow Jesus to a martyr's death but to be strong and unafraid. Indeed, Jesus continues believing in Peter as one who will ultimately be healed of his fear and become a suitable leader. Although these two perspectives are not necessarily at odds, the emphasis is different regarding what Peter needs in order to be a strong leader. The source of his apostolic authority in the *Apocalypse of Peter* stems from his ability to perceive things in such a way that he is cured of the passion of fear. As Desjardins notes:

In the *Apoc. Pet.*, Peter needs the strength not only to realize that those putting Jesus to death can do him no harm but especially to await the Savior's Parousia (78,4–6; perhaps also 71,22–23) which ends the rule of the present generation of Christians, thereby allowing Peter to resume his rightful leadership over the 'remnant' (71,18–19).³¹

Indeed, Jesus' teaching provides this "strength."

Moreover, the source of Peter's authority does not derive from his understanding Jesus as an atoning blood sacrifice who was then resurrected into a fleshly body. The knowledge that Peter needs in order to develop the courage that will enable him to lead others comes before Jesus actually dies as Jesus interprets Peter's visions and clothes them with significance, revealing why Peter need not fear. As PHEME PERKINS notes, "*Apocalypse of Peter* has turned Peter, the witness of the sufferings of Jesus, *into the witness of the true meaning of those sufferings*; they did not touch the heavenly redeemer" (emphasis added).³²

³¹ See Desjardins, Introduction, *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII, 3), 203–04.

³² PHEME PERKINS, *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 121.

However, this means of effecting Peter's transformation from fear into boldness does not involve Peter's buying into a discourse in which sacrifice and suffering are exalted in and of themselves. In fact, those who glorify martyrdom, those immersed in the discourse of what Perkins has termed the "suffering self," are subject to sharp critique. While the discourse of the suffering self, elaborated in chapter one, also seeks to eradicate fear and incite its subjects to boldness in the face of death, in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, Jesus explains that this is an improper understanding and a false means of overcoming fear. He clearly disrupts the discourse of this type of glorification, saying that such people

are without perception. And the guileless, good, pure one is pushed to the executioner, even into the kingdom of those who praise a restored Christ. And they praise the men of the propagation of falsehood, who will succeed you. And they will hold fast to the name of a dead man, while thinking that they will become pure. But they will become greatly defiled. And they will fall into an explicit error and into the hand of an evil, cunning man with a multifarious doctrine. And they will be ruled heretically. For some of them will blaspheme the truth and proclaim evil teaching. And they will say evil things to each other (74,3–27).

The allusion to a "restored Christ" and a "multifarious doctrine" may be that of the resurrection of the flesh. To "hold fast to the name of a dead man" may also imply disputes over whether the human part of Jesus was resurrected in the flesh. The writer may feel not that Christ only *appeared* to be human but that he did indeed have a human nature that died. However, he also had an immortal nature that triumphed over Satan, demons, and death. Such would be consistent with a two-natures Christology. This triumph, though, would not necessarily have resulted in the restoration of the fleshly body.

Jesus goes on to say that the “deaf and blind ones” (76,21–22) “will create an imitation remnant in the name of a dead man” (78,15–17). The referent may well be the proto-orthodox church. He then states,

These are the ones who oppress their brothers, saying to them, “Through this our God has pity, since salvation (allegedly) comes to us through this.” They do not know the punishment of those who are delighted by what has been done to the little ones whom they sought out and imprisoned. And there will be others of those who are outside our number who name themselves “bishop” and also “deacons,” as if they have received their authority from God. They submit to the judgment of the leaders. Those people are dry canals (79,11–20).

Michel Desjardins notes that

the context suggests that the term “allegedly” in line fifteen begins a parenthetical and ironic comment expressing the author’s rejection of the oppressors’ motivation that they are promoting the salvation of the Gnostics by forcing orthodox doctrine upon them.³³

Unfortunately, such a statement perpetuates the notion of a unified, orthodox group versus a unified Gnostic group. It also perpetuates the idea that differences originate in doctrine rather than practice. However, it does clearly show us that the editor recognizes the tensions between different groups in the early Christianities.

PHEME PERKINS has also commented insightfully on the contrast between the way in which the orthodox (or proto-orthodox) see martyrdom as a source of victory and the way in which other early Christian groups (which she terms Gnostics) locate it elsewhere:

The Christian may also be said to triumph over the powers through the victory that Christ works in him or her. Orthodox Christians saw this victory represented in the martyrs (Origen, *Comm Matt XII 25*; *Exhort ad Martvr.* XL 1). We have seen that Gnostics locate the Christian’s share in the victory in the preaching of Gnosis as the Savior had done (e.g., *SJC CG III 119, 1–9*, *PetPhil VIII 137, 20–25*). *ApocPet* also associates the victory with the Docetic account of the crucifixion. The powers are crucifying what they think is the Savior, while the living Jesus is standing aside and laughing at them (*CG VII 81, 15–24*). Patristic

³³ See Desjardins, Introduction, *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII, 3), 237, n. 37.

authors could never go this far and deny that Christ died, but they do agree that those who crucified him were deceived in thinking that they had gained power over him. Origen even speaks of Christ laughing with scorn at the ignorance of those who accepted the Son handed over to them (*Comm Matt* xiii, 9). Thus, Gnostic preaching shares broad lines of thought with other Christian preaching. These similarities show how a Gnostic soteriology might find a sympathetic audience in larger Christian circles.³⁴

Finding a “sympathetic audience” would be particularly likely if the account of the crucifixion is not that of a Docetic one but that of a two-natures Christology in which Jesus did indeed triumph over the power of death, such that the proponents of the view at issue were not actually denying that Christ died, at least in his human nature.

Even Jesus’ laughing (81,11; 81,16–17; 82,6) may serve to disrupt a discourse in which martyrdom is being idealized as an imitation of Christ’s own death with that death being given a very specific interpretive twist—that of a substitutionary blood sacrifice. Jesus’ laughter may function as a kind of signal to the reader pointing out Jesus’ recognition of a lack of understanding on the part of a group. Indeed, in this case, the writer of the *Apocalypse of Peter* explains, “he laughs at their lack of perception” (83,1–2). It is interesting that Jesus is not cursing those who persecute them but merely able to dismiss it by laughing at their lack of perception. This response shows Jesus himself to be in control of his emotions. He is neither afraid nor angry.³⁵

³⁴ Perkins, *Gnostic Dialogue*, 179–80.

³⁵ Often, scholars have simply assumed laughter to be mockery, but one must be very careful about attributing a certain significance to laughing, crying, or other expressions of emotion given the fact that these can have quite different meanings in varying social and narrative contexts. Jesus’ laughter is not consistently interpreted as mockery. For example, in the introduction to *The Gospel of Judas Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and a Book of Allogenes from Codex Tchacos: Critical Edition* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2007), Rodolphe Kasser describes Jesus’ laughter as “an affectionate smile, tinged with pity and gentle irony” (24).

By reading the text in terms of what it says about the care of the soul, it is possible to see the relationship between what have often been characterized as two separate themes: Peter's strengthening and the inner-Christian debates. For example, Michel Desjardins notes in his introduction to the text that there seem to be two issues: "Koschorke, noticing that the *Apoc. Pet.* deals with two issues, and considering the inner-Christian polemic to be more important than the discussion about Jesus' passion, has postulated a tripartite structure."³⁶ He goes on to give his own analysis:

The inner-Christian polemic which dominates the central discourse is all but excluded from the rest of the work, where the focus is on Jesus' coming death, Peter's need to be strong, and the necessity of distinguishing the physical Jesus who dies on the cross from the spiritual one who remains unaffected by the passion.³⁷

Thus, he sees these issues as separate and not necessarily bearing a relationship to each other.

In effect, however, these issues are intimately related if one reads the text in terms of competing visions of the care of the soul. The *Apocalypse of Peter* articulates a vision elaborating a particular kind of care of the soul while simultaneously challenging the competing vision regarding martyrdom as the ultimate care of the soul. Tradition has long held that Peter ultimately gave his own life as a martyr. In the *Apocalypse of Peter*, however, an alternate explanation for Peter's boldness is given. Peter does not achieve the status of a holy martyr but that of one healed of his fear by Christ's intervention in a whole other way, his explanations of Peter's visions.

³⁶ See Desjardins, Introduction, *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII, 3), 202.

³⁷ See Desjardins, Introduction, *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII, 3), 203.

Of course, there is yet another twist. We cannot discount the possibility that the readers of the text would actually have thought that Peter had suffered and died for the faith whether or not such is mentioned specifically in this text. Although we have no hard proof that this is the case, it is a part of long-standing tradition.³⁸ Moreover, there is a crucifixion scene in this text. The body of Jesus does indeed suffer. What differs from proto-orthodox texts is the meaning and significance the text ascribes to Christ's suffering and that of his followers. Such suffering should not necessarily be desired or sought, but if it comes as a result of proclaiming the gospel, Jesus' teaching clearly allows Peter to see that it is *not to be feared* either.

In this respect, the *Apocalypse of Peter* can be compared with the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, the *Apocalypse of James*,³⁹ and the *Gospel of Mary* (discussed further in chapter four). In each of these texts, fear of persecution is real, and the reality of such is not denied. In short, in the *Apocalypse of Peter* suffering is not to be sought because it is not represented as the imitation of an atoning blood sacrifice that aids in the forgiveness of sin, and neither does it result in a fleshly resurrection. However, it certainly can come as the result of proclaiming the gospel boldly, as doing so often brings one into conflict with the evil powers that dominate this world. Thus, the texts themselves simply do not represent those depicted in them as having a lack of courage or refusing to embrace

³⁸ *I Clement*, for example, mentions it as discussed in chapter two.

³⁹ Karen King discusses the fact that the *Letter of Peter to Philip* and the *Apocalypse of James* were found in the same codex containing the *Gospel of Judas*. In each of these texts, the possibility of persecution and death is real. She suggests that it may be helpful to see them as representing a range of viewpoints for readers to consider with respect to the meaning and significance of martyrdom: King, "Martyrdom and Its Discontents," 23–42.

martyrdom. In fact, the opposite may be true as they empower the reader in understanding Jesus' teaching and thus can serve to encourage the reader to proclaim the gospel boldly and face suffering bravely as she/he realizes that Christ has triumphed over these powers.

Testimony of Truth

Another text found near Nag Hammadi, the *Testimony of Truth*, is also relevant to our discussion for describing the manner in which the text discusses the care of the soul while simultaneously disrupting a discourse which glorifies martyrdom. One copy of this text has surfaced and appears in Nag Hammadi Codex IX,3,⁴⁰ but unfortunately, only in a heavily fragmentary condition. Only about forty-five percent of the text is decipherable. However, in what remains, this text also presents the care of the soul in a manner consonant with the therapy of emotions. Simultaneously, it voices concerns about the practice of martyrdom.

The text bears no name, but based on its content, modern scholars have assigned it the title the *Testimony of Truth*. The first major section of the text resembles a homily in form. Here, the text concerns the Son of Man revealing the “word of truth” (31,8) and

⁴⁰ All citations come from Birger A. Pearson, ed., *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX, 3), in the *Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* (trans. Birger A. Pearson and Søren Giversen; NHS 25; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 122–203. The introduction to the text on pages 101–120 is also by Pearson. Another useful translation is that of Birger A. Pearson with accompanying introduction in Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 613–628. See also Klaus Koschorke, “Die Polemik von Testimonium Veritatis (NHC IX, 3) gegen die ‘Häresien’ der Katholiken und Gnostiker,” in *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das Kirchliche Christentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 92–174; Birger A. Pearson, “Anti-Heretical Warnings in Codex IX from Nag Hammadi,” in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity* (New York: Clark International, 2004), 183–93; Birger A. Pearson, “Gnostic Interpretation of the Old Testament in *The Testimony of Truth* from Nag Hammadi (CG IX, 3),” *HTR* 71 (1980): 311–19; Birger A. Pearson, “Jewish Haggadic Traditions in *The Testimony of Truth* from Nag Hammadi,” in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity* (New York: Clark International, 2004), 39–51.

the importance of our receiving it. The section concludes, “This therefore is the true testimony. When man knows himself and God who is over the truth, he will be saved and he will be crowned with the crown unfading” (44,30–45,6).⁴¹

In the context of the ways in which Foucault has highlighted the significance of “knowing” within the broader context of “caring for the soul,” such a term is especially interesting. So is the fact that this kind of knowing is associated with receiving a crown, the athlete’s crown typically being associated with martyrdom. However, as we will see, in this text, such knowing goes along with being able to struggle against the passions successfully while the glorification of martyrdom is actually critiqued.⁴² Several references in the text to overcoming passion resonate with the terminology of the therapy of emotions. Thus, the text actually seems to focus on an ability to rid one’s soul of harmful desires. Esoteric knowledge is not a goal in and of itself but rather a means of

⁴¹ For discussion regarding choosing the title, see Pearson, *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX, 3), 101. It comes from the phrasing near the end of the text.

⁴² Bas von Os has argued that this text may not necessarily be referring to martyrdom per se but rather to ascetic practices. See “The *Testimony of Truth* Reconsidered” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 17, 2012). He has argued similarly with respect to the *Gospel of Judas* as will be discussed below. It is very difficult to parse a text such as this because baptism and martyrdom were both associated with a purifying death. Jesus himself is represented as associating his death with a kind of baptism (Luke 12:50). Tertullian, for example, writes: “Uncleanness is washed away in baptism, of course, but the stains of it are made immaculately white through martyrdom” (*Scorp.* 12.10). In the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*, too, the editor represents Saturus’s martyrdom as a “drench[ing] with blood” after which the crowd yells, “Well washed!” The editor describes it as their “witness to his second baptism” (21.7). See also the discussion on page 97 of F. Forrester Church, “Sex and Salvation in Tertullian,” *HTR* 68 (1975): 83–101; repr. in *Women in Early Christianity* (ed. David M. Scholer; vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney; New York: Garland, 1993), 199–217. See also Moss, *Other Christs*, 14. Likewise, see Gordon Jeanes, “Baptism Portrayed as Martyrdom in the Early Church,” *SL* 23 (1993): 158–76; repr. in *Forms of Devotion: Conversion, Worship, Spirituality, Asceticism* (ed. Everett Ferguson; vol. 5 of *Recent Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson; New York: Garland, 1999), 62–80. This article provides a detailed overview of associations between baptism and martyrdom. However, the thrust of Jeanes’ argument is that language associated with martyrdom enters into baptismal rites *after actual martyrdoms are no longer occurring* (174). However, it seems likely that martyrdom is the referent in the *Testimony of Truth*. Pearson clearly states this with respect to 31,22–34,26 in his introduction to the *Testimony of Truth* in Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 614.

engaging in the therapy of emotions.⁴³ Closer examination of the passage in which the phrase “word of truth” appears helps us to see this:

And this is what the Son of Man reveals to us: It is fitting for you (pl.) to receive the word of truth. If one will receive it perfectly,—. But as for one who is [in] ignorance, it is difficult for him to diminish his works of [darkness] which he has done. Those who have [known] Imperishability, [however,] have been able to struggle against [passions] (31,5–31,15).

The text also discusses the idea that the subjugation of desire is important for salvation. The author praises the one who has “subdued desire” (41,12) and is in the state of “having examined himself” (41,14). Likewise, it talks about the need for “endurance” (44,9) and “patience” (44,13–19), terms frequently associated with those who are sufficiently healed of their emotions to be able to practice self-control: “He rejects for himself loquacity and disputations, and he endures the whole place; and he bears up under them, and he endures all of the evil things. And he is patient with every one” (44,4–14).

Moreover, this kind of knowing contrasts with the ignorance of those who desire martyrdom. In fact, the glorification of martyrdom is severely critiqued:

The foolish, thinking [in] their heart [that] if they confess, “We are Christians,” in word only (but) not with power, while giving themselves over to ignorance, to a human death, not knowing where they are going nor who Christ is, thinking that they will live, when they are (really) in error, hasten towards the principalities and the authorities. They fall into their clutches because of the ignorance that is in them. For (if) only words which bear testimony were effecting salvation, the whole world would endure this thing [and] would be saved. [But] in this way, they [drew] error unto themselves (31,22–32,14).

⁴³ Pearson attributes an Alexandrian origin to the text and feels that it can be dated to the late second or early third century, possibly as early as 189 C.E. See discussion in Introduction, *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX, 3), 117–18. If the *Apocalypse of Peter* can be dated as early as 150 C.E. and the *Gospel of Judas* can be dated prior to 180 C.E., these three texts may belong to a similar time period. However, dating remains quite speculative with regard to early Christian writings.

The author goes on to argue that it would be “vainglorious” for the Father to desire a human sacrifice (31,22–32, 21). Such an attitude would implicate the Father himself in passionate emotions. This implies a clear critique of Christ’s death as a substitutionary blood atonement necessary for the appeasement of God (though not necessarily a critique of an atonement as a ransom paid to Satan, the *Christus Victor* perspective).

Rather, just following the passage above, the author not only represents Christ as bringing freedom to those in Hades but also freedom to those on earth in that Christ “granted healing” (33,7–8) to “the lame, the blind, the paralytic, the dumb, (and) the demon-possessed” (33,5–7). This connotes healing from both physical and emotional infirmities.

This is followed by another passage in which the glorification of martyrdom is disrupted. The author calls those who seek martyrdom “empty martyrs” (33,25) who “bear witness only to themselves” (33,26–27). They are described as “sick” and unable “to raise themselves” (33,28–34,1). Then follows a particularly interesting section. The author says that when those he or she has been describing above “are filled with passion, this is the thought that they have within them: ‘If we deliver ourselves over to death for the sake of the Name, we will be saved’” (34,1–6). But, the author disagrees, saying, “These matters are not settled in this way” (34,6–7). The Coptic reads as follows:

λΔ
 ΟΥΑΑΥ· ΖΟΤΑΝ ΔΕ ΕΥΨΑΝ
 2 ΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΟΥΠΑΘΟΣ· ΠΑΪ
 ΠΕ ΠΜΕΕΥΕ ΕΤΟΥΚΩ ΗΜΟΘ
 4 ΝΖΡΑΪ ΝΖΗΤΟΥ· ΧΕ ΕΝΨΑΝ
 ΠΑΡΑΔΙΔΟΥ ΗΜΟΝ ΕΠΜΟΥ
 6 ΖΑ ΠΡΑΝ ΤΗΝΑΟΥΧΑΕΙ· ΝΑΪ
 ΔΕ ΣΜΟΝΤ̄ ΑΝ Ν†ΖΕ· ΑΛΛΑ

The English translation in the Nag Hammadi Library reads,

themselves. But when they are
“perfected” with a (martyr’s) death, this
is the thought that they have
within them: “If we
deliver ourselves over to death
for the sake of the Name we will be saved.” These
matters are not settled in this way. But

The context of the passage clearly refers to those who desire martyrdom, but the author is literally accusing them of being filled with “passion,” that is, a state which is the opposite of being healed of emotions; in this sense, when one seeks death, one is simultaneously “passionate,” or “ignorant.” For this author, salvation lies in being healed of passion, not filled with it.

Interestingly, in this edition of the *Nag Hammadi Library*, Birger Pearson has translated the Coptic phrase “filled with passion” into English as “perfected with a martyr’s death.” The term *πάθος*, or *passion*, is translated as “death.” The term *martyr* is not actually in the Coptic. This is signified by placing the word *martyr* in parentheses. Pearson has inserted a footnote explaining that this phrase has been translated as “‘filled with passion’ (‘Wenn sie aber ihr [Leben voller] Leidenschaft vollenden’) by Koschorke in a German translation of the text.”⁴⁴ However, here he states that “it probably means the suffering of martyrdom.” The Coptic word for passion can, of course, refer to death as when we talk about “the passion of Christ.” However, Pearson himself notes that the best translation of the Greek *πάθος* is just “passion” at three other places in the *Testimony of Truth* (30,5; 42,28; 58,7).

⁴⁴ See Pearson, *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX, 3), 132–33.

I would argue that the precise translation of this term is crucial as the author of the *Testimony of Truth* cleverly associates those who seek passion (or death) with those who are “filled with passion” and in need of the kind of healing that Christ can bring. In fact, Pearson recognizes this as the better translation and has recently changed it to read “filled with passion” in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition* where the passage reads: “But when they are full of passion, this is their motivating idea: ‘If we give ourselves up to death for the sake of the name, we will be saved. ‘That is not the way things are. Rather’”⁴⁵

If we examine these other three places where *πάθος* is used, the term clearly connotes the kinds of desire or emotion that needs to be dealt with in a therapy of emotions. *πάθος* is the “desire which constrains the souls of those who are begotten here” (30,5–7). It is associated with ignorance (31,11; 31,28) and a lack of knowledge of the truth. People afflicted thus are said to be filled with the “old leaven” of the Pharisees (29,13), which is equated with “errant desire” (29,16). In the second passage where *πάθος* is used, the phrase “he struggled against their passions” (42,28) occurs within a long passage endeavoring to discern why some are lame, rich, poor, and so on (42,8–21). Unfortunately, these three adjectives are the only ones that can be deciphered, as the text is fragmentary, but clearly the author seems to be asking why sickness, both physical and emotional, exists. Struggling against the passions seems to be a way of discussing the struggle to heal people enslaved to their passions.

⁴⁵ Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, 618.

In the final passage containing πάθος (58,7), the context is not at all clear. πάθος seems to refer to the attitude of a group that the author does not necessarily approve of; but other than this, it is hard to understand what the passage is about as the text is very fragmented.

The author also critiques the notion that those who seek martyrdom will be resurrected in the flesh. The author discusses the misperceptions of those who expect a “carnal resurrection” (36,31):

[Do not] expect, therefore, [the] carnal resurrection, which [is] destruction, [and they are not] [stripped] of [it (the flesh) who] err in [expecting] a [resurrection] that is empty. [They do] not [know] the power [of God,] nor do they [understand the interpretation] of the Scriptures [on account of their] double-mindedness (36,30–37,10).

In fact, Pearson cleverly notes in his introduction that in this context, the author equates such persons with the Sadducees whom Jesus criticizes (Matt 22:29).⁴⁶ In this passage, the author of the *Testimony of Truth* seems to be talking about the fact that knowledge of Christ has already allowed for a different kind of resurrection, which involves some people having come to know themselves. The translators’ footnote says that lines 35,22–36,3 refer to “the process of gnostic awakening,” but such phrasing may simply be the author’s conception of the way Christ helps his followers to care for their souls. These people are described as being in “the place [in] [which] they will rest from their senselessness, [arriving] at knowledge” (35,28–36,3).

Finally, in lines 38,6–8, the author seems to be reiterating that when people try to sacrifice themselves “they die [in a] human [way].” However, it is hard to be sure given that the text is rather corrupt at this point.

⁴⁶ See Pearson, *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX, 3), 104.

The end of the first major portion of the text invokes “the crown unfading” (45,5–6). The athlete’s crown was, of course, a primary symbol for the martyr who faced death bravely and successfully. This allusion nicely contrasts the “achievement” of martyrdom with a different kind of triumph—engaging successfully in the therapy of emotions and becoming healed and whole.⁴⁷

There is also a reference to a salamander that is quite interesting: “[like a] salamander. [It] goes into the fiery oven which burns exceedingly; it slithers into the [furnace]” (71,26–29). In antiquity, the salamander was thought unharmed by fire. Although much of the context of this passage has been lost due to the fragmentary form of the manuscript, Pearson notes that “the author of *Testim. Truth* may have utilized the salamander for allegorical purposes . . . in praise of the Gnostic who can live untouched by the fires of passion (for this metaphor see Sir 9:8; 23:16; Philo *Rev. Div. Her.* 64; I Cor 7:9).”⁴⁸

In summary, this text repeatedly discusses the need for the Christian to overcome “passion.” In this sense, it is not esoteric knowledge that the Christian needs but rather the ability to live in a manner free of entanglement in harmful desires. Those who seek martyrdom are not living in this way as they associate salvation with a carnal resurrection of a material body that is enslaved to the passions.

⁴⁷ See Dylan M. Burns, “Sethian Crowns, Sethian Martyrs? Jewish Apocalyptic and Christian Martyrology in a Gnostic Literary Tradition” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, 17 November 2012) for insights regarding the way crown imagery functions in early Christian texts although the *Testimony of Truth* is not discussed specifically since it is not Sethian.

⁴⁸ Pearson, *Testimony of Truth*, 114.

Fragment of Basilides

Yet another interesting representation of the proper way for a Christian to live comes from Basilides, a second-century Alexandrian teacher widely credited with being one of the first to write commentaries on the Gospels. Bentley Layton astutely describes Basilides as “a skilled, independent, and outrageously original philosopher *within* Christianity” (emphasis added).⁴⁹ Unfortunately, the vast majority of his writings have been lost, making it difficult for modern readers to access his thought although a few fragments remain in the quotations of Clement of Alexandria and Origen.⁵⁰

Basilides also portrays Christian care of the soul in terms consonant with Stoic philosophy. For example, according to Clement of Alexandria, Basilides says, “that one part of the so-called ‘will’ of god is to love all. . . . A second, is to desire nothing; and a third, is to hate nothing.”⁵¹ This admonition accords well with the Stoic virtue of freedom from passion.⁵² Moreover, it provides a marked contrast to the kind of desire or craving for martyrdom present in proto-orthodox texts. For Basilides, it is liberation from desire of any kind that marks the spiritually mature soul, for it is only when one

⁴⁹ Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 413.

⁵⁰ Eight of the fragments have been translated into English with brief commentary by Bentley Layton in *Gnostic Scriptures* 417–44. For another translation and commentary, see Winrich A. Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule: Eine Studie zur Theologie-und Kirchengeschichte des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (WUNT 83; ed. Martin Hengel und Otfried Hofius, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996), 42–254; Werner Foerster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*, vol. 1, Patristic Evidence (ed. and trans. R. McL. Wilson; London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1972), 74–83.

⁵¹ Fragment D, Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 435.

⁵² Bentley Layton notes that this loving all is “in accordance with the strong Stoic element in Basilides’ ethical theory” and that it “must mean to live in complete harmony with the rational order of the universe, accepting all of one’s fate without regret or protest; accordingly, there is no place for desire or revulsion, since all is dictated by providence” (*Gnostic Scriptures*, 435).

realizes and accepts the order in all things preordained by Providence that one can be liberated.⁵³

Significantly, however, Basilides does see martyrdom as providing possible benefit in terms of spiritual development. His ideas are found in Fragment G,⁵⁴ which is, interestingly, by far the longest fragment preserved for us by Clement, mirroring, perhaps, the degree to which debates surrounding the interpretation of martyrdom dominated inter-Christian conversations in the second century. In this fragment, he holds that the soul “receives benefit, profiting by many unpleasant experiences” when it “experiences suffering” (4.82.1).⁵⁵ This statement is strikingly *similar* to the kind of benefit described by the Apostolic Fathers when they discuss “patient endurance,” which is elaborated in chapter two.⁵⁶

Basilides also describes a martyr’s death as an honorable one, a “good end” (4.81.2), saying that such a death is preferable to death for murder or adultery or other crimes as one is likely to believe that in this case one’s death has purpose and meaning and thus one may not necessarily feel oneself to be suffering:

Through the kindness of that which leads each one of them about, they are actually accused of an extraneous set of charges so they might not have to suffer as confessed criminals convicted of crimes, nor be reviled as adulterers or murderers, but rather might suffer because they are disposed by nature to be

⁵³ Bentley Layton also notes this Stoic influence on 418. Interestingly, Layton’s assertion accords with the recent interest in linking Stoic thought with the New Testament and developments in the first three centuries of Christianity by Troels-Engberg Pedersen and other scholars as discussed in chapter two.

⁵⁴ Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 442.

⁵⁵ Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 442.

⁵⁶ On page 306, vol. 1, Le Boulluec comments that chastisement and punishment were commonly viewed as beneficial purifications, remarking that both Clement and Basilides accepted this idea: Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque*, 2 tomes (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1985).

Christian. And this encourages them to think that they are not suffering (4.81.2).⁵⁷

However, Basilides provides clear disruptions to the discourse of martyrdom as a sacrifice willed by and pleasing to a God who must be appeased through a substitutionary blood sacrifice along with the accompanying theology of the resurrection of the flesh. He clearly states that “suffering is not caused by the plotting of some power” (4.81.3).⁵⁸ In fact, Basilides actually represents the agonizing death of a martyr as possible punishment for previous sin: “I believe that all who experience the so-called ‘tribulations’ must have committed sins other than what they realize” (4.81.2).⁵⁹ While there are many theological alternatives to this point of view, it is the way in which Basilides reconciles his belief in the goodness of Providence with the fact of brutal physical suffering endured by Christians in times of persecution. He asserts, “For I will say anything rather than call Providence evil” (4.82.2).⁶⁰ In other words, if God is good, it cannot be *necessary* for Christ or Christians to suffer to appease God, but their doing so may indeed be the means of their spiritual development or “benefit.” Basilides carefully notes that since seeming suffering may be of benefit, it is even possible that an innocent person may suffer. He thinks that such cases are rare, but he does not rule out the possibility (4.81.3).⁶¹

⁵⁷ Layton, Fragment G, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 442.

⁵⁸ Layton, Fragment G, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 442.

⁵⁹ Layton, Fragment G, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 442.

⁶⁰ Layton, Fragment G, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 442. One only wonders what a thorough comparison of writings by figures such as Basilides who are criticized as “deterministic” with those of Calvin, praised as one of the greatest orthodox theologians of all time, who similarly espouses deterministic beliefs in “predestination” and “election,” would yield.

⁶¹ Layton, Fragment G, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 442.

Although it is hard to be sure given the scanty evidence remaining to us, it seems that Basilides may be referring to Jesus himself as one such person when he writes,

Nevertheless, let us suppose that you (sing.) leave aside all these matters and set out to embarrass me by referring to certain (famous) figures, saying perhaps, “And consequently so-and-so must have sinned, since he suffered!” If you permit, I shall say that he did not sin, but was like the newborn baby that suffers. But if you press the argument, I shall say that any human being that you can name is human; god is righteous. For no one is “pure of uncleanness,” as someone once said (4.81.1).⁶²

Such an idea is hardly representative of the supposed Docetism attributed to some Gnostics.⁶³

Moreover, Basilides does not promote a doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. He appears to believe in the transmigration of souls. For example, in Fragment F, Origen refers to Basilides’ belief in this concept and quotes him as saying, “Indeed, the apostle has said, ‘I was once alive apart from the law,’ at some time or other. That is (Paul means), before I came into this body, I lived in the kind of body that is not subject to the law; the body of a domestic animal or a bird.”⁶⁴ Likewise, Irenaeus accuses Basilides of

⁶² Layton, Fragment G, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 442.

⁶³ There is also the matter of Irenaeus’ accusation regarding Basilides’ supposed assertion that Simon of Cyrene actually died rather than Jesus himself. This example is often used to support Basilides’ supposed Docetism. However, we have only Irenaeus’ word regarding this. Given Irenaeus’ propensity for distortion of the ideas of his opponents, it is hard to be sure what Basilides actually said or meant. Irenaeus represents Basilides as saying that Jesus was laughing while Simon was crucified. It is important to note that such laughing is not necessarily mere mockery. In many early Christian texts, Jesus’ laughing serves as a signal to the reader that Jesus is aware of spiritual ignorance on the part of those with whom he is interacting. They misunderstand him. Jesus does not curse or condemn them, but his laughter serves to show that he is not subject to passions of anger or fear with regard to them. It is interesting that Christ laughs in the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Gospel of Judas* as well.

⁶⁴ Layton, Fragment F, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 439.

believing that “salvation belongs only to the soul; the body is by nature corruptible” (*Haer.* 1.24.5).⁶⁵

Such views might constitute merely a theological difference but for the fact that the discourse of suffering and martyrdom is becoming increasingly key to the way in which the proto-orthodox are at that time consolidating the Christian story in a triumphal way, linking martyrs and the resurrection of the flesh with the order of apostolic succession. Peter Brown’s *The Making of Late Antiquity*⁶⁶ provides an excellent description of the ways in which the cult of the saints increasingly provided support for notions of apostolic authority. Likewise, Judith Perkins’s notion of the “suffering self” (as discussed in chapters one and two) does so as well. It appears that Basilides opposed such conceptions and thus, not surprisingly, proto-orthodox writers such as Irenaeus angrily denounced him.

As noted above, this fragment is preserved only in Clement of Alexandria’s writings. Clement includes it in Book IV of his *Stromata* (which can be translated as *Miscellanies* or even literally as *Carpet Bags*). Clement explains that Book IV is devoted entirely to a discussion of martyrdom, and indeed he lays out the relevant issues in a careful manner, discussing the nuances of the kinds of significance attributed to martyrdom by various groups and figures. He includes this particular fragment in order to refute Basilides’ teaching. Alain Le Boulluec insightfully points out Clement’s methodology, noting that Clement uses an ancient rhetorical technique of question and response that involves imagining what an opponent would say if present, presenting this

⁶⁵ Layton, Fragment F, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 423.

⁶⁶ Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

in the form of a question, and then refuting this question in a response, as one would in an oral debate. Unfortunately, helpful as such a technique might be as an exercise, it can result in attributing an argument to an adversary that the opponent never actually made. This could well be the case regarding Basilides' teaching on martyrdom.⁶⁷

Irenaeus of Lyons also discusses Basilides' teaching about martyrdom. Irenaeus does not quote the fragment verbatim as Clement does, but he does comment on it. However, Irenaeus' description of Basilides' thought differs dramatically from what is preserved in Fragment G. Irenaeus writes that the Basilideans say, "Recognize them all, But let none recognize you!" and then he goes on to comment, "For this reason, such people are prepared to deny; or, rather, they are not even susceptible to suffering on behalf of the name" (*Haer.* 1.24.6).⁶⁸ However, in Fragment G, Basilides does *not* denounce the martyrs or even fail to recognize that their suffering has meaning and purpose; he simply attributes a different kind of meaning and purpose to such suffering. In short, then, even though only miniscule portions of Basilides' writings remain to us for examination, what seems clear is Basilides' disruption of a discourse that glorifies martyrdom and presents its meaning and significance in simple, black-and-white terms linked strongly with proto-orthodox notions of apostolic authority.

Christoph Marksches and Bentley Layton have both noted the discrepancies between the actual text of Basilides and the accusations of Irenaeus. Layton is careful to point out that Basilides was accused by later theologians of "disparaging" or "opposing"

⁶⁷ See page 306 in part II, chapter 4 which translates as "The 'Liberalism' of Clement of Alexandria and Its Limits," and section V: "The art of rhetorical dialectic in the struggle against heresy in Alain Le Boulluec," in Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque*, 1985.

⁶⁸ Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 425.

martyrdom although nothing in this fragment actually bears that out.⁶⁹ Marksches goes so far as to maintain that Irenaeus has probably not read Basilides directly, mentioning that Irenaeus' accusation—that Basilides encourages the avoidance of martyrdom and denial of the faith—simply does not correspond to the pastoral manner in which Basilides addresses the issue of persecution.⁷⁰

Basilides is interesting, too, because supposed Gnostics are often accused of dualism, but Basilides' insistence on the ultimate goodness of Providence extends all the way to the circumstances of individuals' material, earthly existence. In this sense, it is markedly less dualistic than the views of those among the proto-orthodox who represent this life as one filled with darkness and suffering and the afterlife alone as happy and peaceful.

Fourth Fragment of Valentinus

The fourth fragment of Valentinus also fails to exhibit what might be considered “Gnostic” elements, presenting rather a perspective regarding the care of the soul that intersects the dominant discourse of the glorification of martyrdom. Clement of Alexandria has preserved the fourth fragment of Valentinus in Book IV of his *Stromata*. Clement quotes Valentinus as saying,

From the beginning, you (plur.) have been immortal, and you are children of eternal life. And you wanted death to be allocated to yourselves so that you might spend it and use it up, and that death might die in you and through you. For when

⁶⁹ Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 441.

⁷⁰ Christoph Marksches, *Gnosis: An Introduction* (trans. John Bowden; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 79, 81.

you nullify the world and are not yourselves annihilated, you are lord over creation and all corruption (*Strom.* 4.89.1–3).⁷¹

This passage provides an excellent example of the way Valentinus discusses the care of the soul in terms of a therapy of the emotions while simultaneously critiquing the way in which the care of the soul is represented in the increasingly dominant discourse of martyrdom. Scholars usually argue that Valentinus is doing one or the other, but in actuality, the passage contains a marvelous ambiguity lending itself to both interpretations—as an affirmation of the therapy of emotions and a critique of the glorification of martyrdom.

Clement himself includes this passage in Book IV of the *Stromata*. In the introduction, Clement specifically remarks that he will be dealing with the topic of martyrdom, and indeed, he addresses a great many issues in a complex way, presenting the points of many different Christian thinkers. He does not espouse a simple “pro” or “con” approach but tries to consider the issues thoughtfully from many different angles. It is within this context that he critiques Valentinus (and Basilides). Thus, he clearly represents the passage as having something to do with the issue of martyrdom.

Most modern scholars have assumed Clement’s interpretation of this passage—as a Valentinian critique of martyrdom.⁷² Hans Holzhausen focuses on the fiscal imagery

⁷¹ This is the translation of Bentley Layton in Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 241. For another translation and commentary, see Foerster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*, 239–43; Christoph Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1992), 118–52.

⁷² Jens Holzhausen, “Gnosis und Martyrium: Zu Valentins viertem Fragment,” *ZNW* 85 (1994): 116–131. See also Jens Holzhausen, “Valentinus and Valentinians,” in vol. 2 of *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (ed. J. Hanegraaff et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1144–1157.

contained in the text. The phrase, *use it up*, could indicate the idea that the “immortal ones” wish to pay for eternal life with their own martyrdom.

However, Ismo Dunderberg explicates this passage in a completely different way. He argues that it may well demonstrate Valentinus’ characterization of the way Christians should take on a proper attitude of detachment from the world, an explanation similar to teaching regarding the therapy of the emotions in Stoic philosophy.⁷³ Dunderberg makes several convincing arguments. First of all, he points out that the present tense is used in the first line, “You *are* immortal from the beginning, and you are children of eternal life.” Such phrasing would indicate that the readers or listeners already understand themselves to have eternal life; they do not need to become martyrs in order to gain it. Second, Dunderberg notices that previous interpretations of this fragment have translated the passage as though the second sentence begins with the word *but*. However, in Dunderberg’s reading, the second sentence simply affirms the character and wishes of the hearers. In other words, “you are immortal” *and* you wished to have “death bestowed upon you.” If this is the case, “death” may well be referring to the death of passions, desires, and emotions, not the physical death of martyrs. This kind of death is a way of “nullify[ing] the world.” “Death” becomes paired with “self-control.” When one has self-control, one is able to rule over oneself and all of creation. Such a reading evokes Socrates’ sense of the care of the soul as necessary for being a good ruler of others (as discussed in chapter one).

⁷³ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 45.

Later, in the context of discussing the Valentinian myth of wisdom, Dunderberg suggests that the Valentinians described this therapy, the curing of excessive emotion, as a kind of gift that Christ could give to those who followed him.⁷⁴ This focus on issues of spiritual transformation accords with the kind of care of the self that Foucault discusses as prevalent.

I would argue that this passage might represent a kind of “both/and” argument on the part of Valentinus. Such a passage works both to provide a positive vision of what is possible for those who come to realize that they can indeed overcome their passions and attain self-control through following Christ, and it simultaneously provides a critique of those who try to “nullify the world” by literally seeking death. The passage is cleverly written such that both readings are possible. The ambiguity allows for an interpretation that would provide support both for those who see martyrdom as a way of fusing care of soul and body (believing it insures eternal salvation) and by those who feel a glorification of martyrdom to be a distortion of the care of the soul, seeing Christ as the one who helps the believer to find self-control and attain freedom from one’s emotions here and now.

Dunderberg’s reading is astute, but one wonders if Clement would have included this passage in Book IV—all of which is devoted to a discussion of martyrdom—had the fragment been totally irrelevant to that issue. On the other hand, while Clement’s tone toward figures such as Valentinus and Basilides is understandably considerably less hostile than that of an Irenaeus or a Tertullian, it is interesting that Clement utilizes his

⁷⁴ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 117.

adroitness with respect to discursive strategies to categorize this passage as a refusal to embrace martyrdom rather than in terms of Stoic detachment from the world.

Le Boulluec argues that Clement attributes ideas to Basilides that he does not actually express. It may well be that Clement indulges in a similar tactic with respect to Valentinus. However, it seems more plausible that the strategy here is one of omission. Clement is thoroughly versed in the idea that Christian perfection involves the therapy of emotions. This theme occurs repeatedly in the *Stromata*. For example, in chapter one, book 1 of the *Paedagogus* (or “instructor”), Clement describes Christ as follows:

The Instructor being practical, not theoretical, His aim is thus to improve the soul, not to teach, and to train it up to a virtuous, not to an intellectual life. . . . Hence accordingly ensues the healing of our passions . . . the Paedagogue strengthening our souls, and by His benign commands, as by gentle medicines, guiding the sick to the perfect knowledge of the truth.

In fact, at times Clement seems to echo Valentinus. Consider the following passages where Clement discusses martyrdom as “confession to God” and death to passion, which may or may not entail a martyr’s physical death:

If the confession to God is martyrdom, each soul which has lived purely in the knowledge of God, which has obeyed the commandments, is a witness both by life and word, in whatever way it may be released from the body,—shedding faith as blood along its whole life till its departure. For instance, the Lord says in the Gospel, “Whosoever shall leave father, or mother, or brethren,” and so forth, “for the sake of the Gospel and my name,” he is blessed; not indicating simple martyrdom, but the gnostic martyrdom, as of the man who has conducted himself according to the rule of the Gospel, in love to the Lord (for the knowledge of the Name and the understanding of the Gospel point out the gnosis, but not the bare appellation), so as to leave his worldly kindred, and wealth, and every possession, in order to lead a life free from passion (*Strom.* IV.4).

At the beginning of Book V, Chapter XI, Clement even describes the sacrifice that is truly acceptable to God in terms of freedom from passion:

Now the sacrifice which is acceptable to God is unswerving abstraction from the body and its passions. This is the really true piety. And is not, on this account, philosophy rightly called by Socrates the practice of Death? For he who neither employs his eyes in the exercise of thought, nor draws aught from his other senses, but with pure mind itself applies to objects, practises the true philosophy. . . . For the gnostic soul must be consecrated to the light, stripped of the integuments of matter, devoid of the frivolousness of the body and of all the passions, which are acquired through vain and lying opinions, and divested of the lusts of the flesh. But the most of men, clothed with what is perishable, like cockles, and rolled all round in a ball in their excesses, like hedgehogs, entertain the same ideas of the blessed and incorruptible God as of themselves.

It is well known that Clement himself left Alexandria at one point when persecution broke out. Given his love of philosophy and his possible affinity for fellow Alexandrians such as Basilides and Valentinus, he may simply have felt a need to set himself apart from thinkers such as these and establish his own “orthodoxy.” Characterizing the passage he attributes to Valentinus as a critique of martyrdom would have been a clever discursive means of doing so.

Candida Moss also picks up on the ways in which Clement discursively shapes martyrdom in accord with his own purposes:

The distinctions between Clement’s position and those of his interlocutors are hardly the radical breaks in thought that his rhetoric leads us to believe. In pushing the heretics to the margins, Clement acquires power. In creating and claiming the middle position, he also assumes the rhetorical high ground that the Aristotelian mean affords him. His own perspective, grounded as it is in a philosophy of love, emerges as a middle course and thus as the default position on martyrdom. Much has been made of the ways in which Clement is influenced by the positions of his opponents and takes a reasonable middle position Much more should be made, however, of the ways in which he creates this middle position and sets himself firmly on it. Scholars have tended to treat Clement’s categories of true martyrdom, enthusiasm, and anti-martyrdom as an adequate description of the various positions on martyrdom in his day, yet perhaps he is more constructive than descriptive.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 149; see also 145–58. Later, she continues, “The intellectual and ideological functions of reluctance and enthusiasm are rarely documented and are instead constantly elided by ancient record. If these practices can be historically associated with schismatic or heretical groups, then

In short, we must remember that we are reading Valentinus as Clement represents him and keep in mind that Clement may be using particular discursive strategies in his reading of an intriguing passage which seems to offer interesting insights regarding the care of the soul but which can be interpreted in more than one way. Valentinus may well be offering a critique of seeking martyrdom as well, but this position in no way implies a lack of Christian devotion. It simply reflects a perspective different from “proto-orthodox” thinkers such as those discussed in chapter two.

Gospel of Judas

Finally, we turn to the *Gospel of Judas*. First of all, it is worth noting that the parallels between the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Gospel of Judas* are particularly striking. Both are revelation dialogues that take place with disciples of Jesus prior to his crucifixion. These are the very two men whom the canonical gospels portray as having betrayed Jesus. In each of the texts respectively, Peter and Judas are represented as

they are rhetorically stabilized by Clement and attributed to the nonorthodox. Clement’s self-positioning as the moderate, temperate bastion of orthodoxy is rhetorically powerful, reproducing an Aristotelian cultural investment in moderation as a means of self-elevation. Martyrdom that occurs outside of this construction is either the nonrational product of excessive passion, like the voluntary martyrs, or the result of womanly cowardice, as in the case of Gnostics. The association of volunteerism and reluctance with the ugly feminizing vices of excessive passion and cowardice sets up a contrast with the manliness of Clement’s prudent orthodox martyr. The rhetorical effect of this construction is twofold: on one hand, heretical groups are associated with these passionate, nonrational forms of self-governance; on the other, there is no orthodox intellectual basis for these practices” (Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 162). Finally, she concludes, “Clement’s construction of the true martyr as the true gnostic Christian has had far-reaching effects. Traditionally, overviews of ancient Christian martyrdom have tended to plot three points on a sliding scale: the hot enthusiasm of the New Prophecy, the frigid apostasy of the Gnostics, and, in between, the measured position of the orthodox, who got it just right. Yet, when used in a survey of the ancient Christian ideological terrain, this model produces results that are flatly two-dimensional. Under the slightest pressure, Clement’s model breaks down. Adherents of the New Prophecy were perhaps no more enthusiastic about martyrdom than any other group, and some Gnostic authors wrote approvingly about martyrdom. There was no homogenous, moderate, orthodox position on the performance and significance of martyrdom” (Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 162).

struggling with destructive passions—Peter with fear and Judas with anger. The *Apocalypse of Peter* shows Jesus patiently revealing the way of liberation and transformation to Peter in spite of his repeated failures to comprehend Jesus’ teaching while the author of the *Gospel of Judas* portrays Judas as the one who comes closer than any other disciple to being “the perfect human.”⁷⁶ Some scholars feel that, ultimately, Judas fails miserably in this role, but others feel just as strongly that he models it (as discussed below). Still others feel that he is portrayed ambiguously. Likewise, Peter’s portrayal—in the *Apocalypse of Peter* and elsewhere—is also riddled with ambivalence.⁷⁷ Thus, similarities regarding a need for healing and Jesus’ insight regarding a cure, the care of the soul in terms of the therapy of emotions, emerge. Other remarkable affinities arise as well: a critique of apostolic succession, a critique of practices of sacrifice (including martyrdom conceived of as a particular kind of sacrifice), and two-natures Christology (with the divine nature engaging in laughter). In addition, neither text interprets Jesus’ death as a substitutionary blood atonement or advocates a belief in a fleshly resurrection.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Gospel of Judas* 35,4. As stated above, citations come from Kasser, et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 2007 unless otherwise noted.

⁷⁷ For similarities between the portrayals of Judas and Peter, see also Jean-Daniel Dubois, “L’Évangile de Judas et la Tradition Basilidienne,” in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 145–154.

⁷⁸ One other parallel concerns the date of the works. Interestingly, the dating of neither work is clear, and both have often been characterized as “late” simply because of their anti-orthodox remarks, but a gospel featuring Judas is mentioned by Irenaeus in *Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies)*, circa 180 C.E. As noted above, Michael Desjardins states that the *Apocalypse of Peter* could possibly be dated as early as 150 C.E. Therefore, the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Gospel of Judas* may come from a similar time period.

In this section, we examine first the representation of Judas and its relation to the care of the soul in terms of the therapy of emotions. In order to do so, we will examine most closely the interpretations of Judas as an ambiguous moral figure. We then turn to the critique of apostolic succession and of the practices of sacrifice and martyrdom. Finally, we explore the way in which this text may have served as reflection for early Christians facing persecution.

Background

Irenaeus sarcastically refers to a text called the *Gospel of Judas* as a “fictitious history:”

Others again declare that Cain derived his being from the Power above, and acknowledge that Esau, Korah, the Sodomites, and all such persons, are related to themselves. On this account, they add, they have been assailed by the Creator, yet no one of them has suffered injury. For Sophia was in the habit of carrying off that which belonged to her from them to herself. They declare that Judas the traitor was thoroughly acquainted with these things, and that he alone, knowing the truth as no others did, accomplished the mystery of the betrayal; by him all things, both earthy and heavenly, were thus thrown into confusion. They produce a fictitious history of this kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas (*Haer.* 1.31.1).

However, until the late 1970s, not a single copy was known to exist; therefore, it was impossible to discern the merit of Irenaeus’ critique.⁷⁹ Most scholars think the text released to the world by National Geographic in 2006 is the one to which Irenaeus is referring. The actual copy that was found around 1970 dates to the fourth century C.E.,

⁷⁹ Pseudo-Tertullian, Epiphanius, and Theodoret also refer to either this text or ideas contained in it. See pages 190–195 of John D. Turner, “The Place of the *Gospel of Judas* in Sethian Tradition,” in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 187–237.

but it is most probably a copy of a work composed by the time at which Irenaeus is writing, the latter half of the second century.⁸⁰

Johannes van Oort argues that Irenaeus had actually read and had first-hand knowledge of the *Gospel of Judas*.⁸¹ Likewise, Lance Jenott, the author of yet another newly published critical edition of the text that incorporates fragments to which the National Geographic team did not have access, also argues for a second-century composition.⁸²

Scholars unanimously agree that the text is not a literal recounting of actual conversations between Jesus and Judas, and that it tells us nothing about their historical relationship in the first century of the Common Era. However, the text provides

⁸⁰ By means of comparison, our oldest copy of the Bible, the Codex Sinaiticus, dates to the fourth century, but the New Testament gospels contained therein were composed in the first century. It is interesting to note that while the *Gospel of Judas* is certainly of a later date than most of the books of the New Testament, recent scholarship has pointed to a later date than previously thought for Luke-Acts. This, too, may be a second-century composition rather than a first-century one. It is difficult to establish exact dates for the composition of many early Christian writings. Acts is particularly interesting for it contains the sole account of what was later widely perceived as a martyrdom (though this term is not actually used in Acts itself)—the stoning of Stephen. Shelly Matthews' recent book provides a fascinating overview and discusses the ways in which the representation of Stephen's death functions to strengthen the proto-orthodox discourse of martyrdom: Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*, 2010.

⁸¹ See Johannes van Oort, "Irenaeus on the *Gospel of Judas*: An Analysis of the Evidence in Context," in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 43–56.

⁸² See Jenott, *Gospel of Judas*, 5–6. There are some dissenting opinions. See page 3 of Alastair Logan, "The Tchacos Codex: Another Document of the Gnostics?," in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3–21. See also pages 90–94 of Gesine Schenke Robinson, "The *Gospel of Judas*: Its Protagonist, Its Composition, and Its Community," in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 75–94. Additionally, see pages 131–33 of John D. Turner, "The Sethian Myth in the *Gospel of Judas*: Soteriology or Demonology?" in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 95–133.

invaluable insight into inner-Christian debates of the second or third century particularly concerning attitudes regarding the care of the self.⁸³

Judas' Moral Character

Scholars have fiercely debated the issue of Judas' moral character, and it is significant for discussing the way in which the text serves to illuminate the care of the soul. Thus, we follow the debate around relevant textual passages in some detail below. Ultimately, it is the compelling argument of Ismo Dunderberg—that Judas is an ambiguous figure—which is most compelling. As such, he serves as a moral exemplar for the care of the soul, but not a perfect one.

National Geographic acquired the right to publish what has become known as the Codex Tchacos and put together a team of scholars to prepare a critical edition in Coptic, English and French; however, each person involved was forced to sign a non-disclosure agreement, and the text could not be widely and freely discussed.⁸⁴ This work was not

⁸³ The discovery of the text and its modern history is in and of itself a fascinating story which has been shrouded in a great deal of mystery. Rodolphe Kasser, one of the scholars chiefly responsible for the text's restoration, describes what is summarized below in detail. It appears that Egyptian farmers found the codex containing this text in a tomb on the Nile River north of the town of Al Minya. The manuscript came into the hands of local antiquities dealers and was divided up into several parts, as the owners thought doing so would be a more profitable way to dispose of it. The portion containing the *Gospel of Judas* was shown to scholars in the early 1980s, but although its value was recognized, none of the institutions with which they were associated were willing to part with the three million dollar asking price. Unfortunately, the manuscript simply sat in a vault in New York for several years, deteriorating in a humid climate. It was finally sold and resold, but this, too, resulted in further deterioration. In fact, one of the new owners decided to freeze the manuscript, thinking that this would be the best way to preserve it. However, when the papyrus was removed from the freezer, it started to crumble. Finally, the text was purchased by Frieda Tchacos, and several years of painstaking restoration ensued in which crumbled fragments had to be pieced together with tweezers under high definition microscopes. An estimated ten to twenty percent of the text could not be recovered. See Rodolphe Kasser, "Introduction: Lost and Found: The History of Codex Tchacos," in *The Gospel of Judas Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and a Book of Allogenes from Codex Tchacos: Critical Edition* (ed. Rodolphe Kasser et al.; Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2007), 1–25.

⁸⁴ See DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 181 for a concise summary of the ways in which the profit-making motives of corporations impede the cause of scholarship. See also John D. Turner's article in

published in any form until 2006. Then, it appeared only on-line:

www.nationalgeographic.com/lostgospel/document.html.

In this version, the editors represented Judas as a hero, one actually doing Jesus a favor by releasing his immortal spirit from entrapment in a human body. Bart Ehrman promoted this view widely in a popular book released immediately for publication as well:

In late Christian anti-Semitic rhetoric he (Judas) becomes the prototypical Jew: a greedy, money-grubbing, God-denying Christ-killer. The Christian tradition has consistently and increasingly portrayed Judas in a bad light. The *Gospel of Judas* provides an alternative vision The *Gospel of Judas* stands alone in insisting that Judas was not only close to Jesus but also was the only one among the disciples who understood who Jesus was and did what he wanted.⁸⁵

The critical edition (containing photographic plates of the actual manuscript) was then published in a hardback copy in 2007.⁸⁶ Shortly thereafter, Karen King and Elaine Pagels published an additional translation and interpretation called *Reading Judas* which largely followed that of the National Geographic team. Einar Thomassen provides a nice summary of the positive portrayal of Judas:

According to one interpretation, Judas Iscariot is the hero of the gospel. He alone of all the disciples understands who Jesus really is and where he has come from. He is favoured by Jesus with a special revelation about the divine realm and about the origins and structure of the cosmos. Finally, he is entrusted with the painful but necessary task of handing Jesus over to the authorities, in order that the Saviour may be liberated from the prison of his earthly body. This is the interpretation of the *Gospel of Judas* that was promulgated together with the publication of the text on April 6, 2006, and which no doubt contributed to the

which he sharply critiques the lack of access to the text on the part of National Geographic as well as the interpretation of the team: "The Sethian Myth in the *Gospel of Judas*: Soteriology or Demonology?," 187–88.

⁸⁵ Bart D. Ehrman, *The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot: A New Look at Betrayer and Betrayed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 138.

⁸⁶ Kasser, et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 2007.

sensationalism surrounding the event of the publication: here is an ancient gospel that turns on its head what the Church has always taught by making the greatest villain of the canonical gospels into the hero of the passion story.⁸⁷

He then notes: “Already, however, dissenting voices are beginning”⁸⁸

Indeed, when the photos became available, a wider circle of scholars was able to look at the actual text, and fierce debates over translation choices ensued particularly regarding the nature of Judas’ moral character. April DeConick soon provided a translation which differed substantially, discussing the disputes in detail.⁸⁹ As one example, she talks about the fact that Judas is referred to as a *daimon*. The National Geographic team chose to translate this as “spirit,” avoiding the negative connotation of the English “demon” and in fact, using this translation as support in interpreting Judas as a positive figure. Such a translation is possible, but DeConick argues that it is not plausible in the time period the text was written. She maintains that *pneuma* would be the more probable term if “spirit” had been intended.⁹⁰ She sees Judas represented not as a hero but as the one who is condemned to the fate of betraying Jesus. Such a betrayal is motivated by the demons which control him.

⁸⁷ See page 157 of Einar Thomassen, “Is Judas Really the Hero of the *Gospel of Judas*?,” in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 157–170.

⁸⁸ Thomassen, “Is Judas Really the Hero of the *Gospel of Judas*?,” 157.

⁸⁹ In fact, several scholars mention critiques of the National Geographic team’s translation surfacing first at the Université de Laval in Québec, Canada under scholars such as Wolf-Peter Funk and Louis Painchaud. Painchaud’s article provides a good overview: “Polemical Aspects of the *Gospel of Judas*,” in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 171–86.

⁹⁰ DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 48–51.

Judas' Ambiguous Representation

Some scholars, however, interpret the portrayal of Judas as ambiguous rather than either wholly good or bad. Indeed, this perspective has ramifications for understanding the way in which the text reflects early Christian views regarding the care of the soul. In particular, Ismo Dunderberg has done a remarkable job of reading the *Gospel of Judas* in terms of its articulation of a way to care for the self, focusing on the way in which the text elaborates Stoic ideals of ethics and morality regarding the value of total extirpation of the passions.⁹¹ He hopes to “move beyond the polarized hero-or-villain debate,”⁹² which he feels is often too simplistic and “far too dualistic.”⁹³ He finds the alternative interpretation offered by the revisionists plausible, but he does not feel they necessarily offer convincing proof of the original editors of the text necessarily being wrong or of their interpretation being impossible.⁹⁴ Thus, he carefully points out the ways in which the text seems to be focused on the theme of overcoming the passion of anger with Judas serving as a model of one who is partially (but *only* partially) able to do so. Dunderberg explains that while at first he read the text as more aligned with the Platonic and Aristotelian ideals which allow for the expression of anger when injustice needs to be

⁹¹ The discussion below is based on Dunderberg, “Judas’ Anger and the Perfect Human,” 201–221. In *Beyond Gnosticism*, Dunderberg has argued for the influence of Stoicism on early Christian thought: Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 2008. For discussions of anger in antiquity, see also Harris, *Restraining Rage*, 2001. Finally, Tage Petersen also discusses the *Gospel of Judas* as engaged in philosophical dialogue in “From Perplexity to Salvation: The *Gospel of Judas* Read in Light of Platonic Didactic Strategies,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 413–434.

⁹² Dunderberg, “Judas’ Anger and the Perfect Human,” 203.

⁹³ Dunderberg, “Judas’ Anger and the Perfect Human,” 219.

⁹⁴ Dunderberg, “Judas’ Anger and the Perfect Human,” 202, n.5.

addressed and combated, he came to find the text more in agreement with Stoic ideals which uplift a total rooting out of and abandonment of anger.⁹⁵

The theme of anger emerges in the following passage:

And one day he was with his disciples in Judea, and he found them seated and gathered together practicing their piety. When he [approached] his disciples, gathered together and seated and offering a prayer of thanksgiving over the bread, [he] laughed. [And] the disciples said to him, “Master, why are you laughing at [our] prayer of thanksgiving? Or what did we do? [This] is what is right (to do).” He answered and said to them, “I am not laughing at you. You are not doing this because of your own will but because it is through this that your god [will receive] thanksgiving.” They said, “Master, you [---] are the son of our god. Jesus said to them, “In what way do [you] know me? Truly [I] say to you, no generation of the people that are among you will know me.” And when his disciples heard this, [they] started getting angry and infuriated, and began blaspheming against him in their hearts. And when Jesus observed their lack of understanding, [he said] to them, “Why has this agitation led (you) to anger? Your god who is within you and [his ---] have become angry together with your souls. [Let] any one of you who is [strong enough] among human beings bring out the perfect human and stand before my face.” And they all said, “We have the strength.” But their spirits could not find the courage to stand before [him], except for Judas Iscariot (33,22–35,9).⁹⁶

Using the analogy of a “morality ladder” to discuss the idea that in antiquity, figures could be thought of as more or less advanced in terms of moral perfection, Dunderberg argues that Judas himself is positioned ambiguously. On the one hand, he is not classed with the disciples referred to in this passage, who exhibit a great deal of anger and are later roundly criticized, and he is the one who will have special visions in the passages that follow and the one to whom Jesus will impart certain secrets regarding the Kingdom. He is the only one who even begins to approach the status of the “perfect

⁹⁵ Dunderberg notes that for the Stoics, even anger for a just cause, or *metropatheia*, (as advocated by Aristotle) was inappropriate for those who were truly advanced in caring for their souls. See “Judas’ Anger and the Perfect Human,” 203–205.

⁹⁶ It is interesting to note that Jesus laughs just as he laughs in the *Apocalypse of Peter*. He carefully clarifies, however, that he is *not* laughing *at* the disciples.

human” as he alone dares to stand before Jesus in this passage. Referring to Seneca’s *Epistle 75*, Dunderberg explains that

The concept of “the perfect human” looms large in the works of ancient philosophers as indicating the ultimate goal of moral progress. The most prominent characteristic of the perfect human is freedom: this figure is free of emotions, of all worldly concerns, and, as Seneca summarizes, of the fear of humans and gods.⁹⁷

The fact that Judas “stands” is indeed important. “Standing” often connotes a sense of being firmly positioned in an unwavering state of rest, free of passion and entanglement in the world of sense perceptions. To be “immovable” is to be stable and at rest—cured of volatile, shifting emotions. Such is impossible for a person who has not been cured of passions.⁹⁸

However, Judas seems to represent someone who will never be among the few who become completely perfect. He is characterized as a *daimon*, and like many other scholars, Dunderberg feels this term has a negative connotation. Moreover, Dunderberg acknowledges that Judas is not allowed to enter the divine realm that he sees in his vision, but is subject instead to a certain fate related to his star (45,12–14; 56,23). What the text embodies is his struggle, his wrestling with the whole issue of caring for his soul with Jesus’ help. Such a representation provides an honest portrayal of the struggle involved

⁹⁷ See Dunderberg, “Judas’ Anger and the Perfect Human,” 205.

⁹⁸ See Michael A. Williams, “Stability as a Soteriological Theme in Gnosticism,” in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Vol 2: Sethian Gnosticism* (ed. Bentley Layton; SHR 41; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 819–829; Michael A. Williams, *The Immovable Race: A Gnostic Designation and the Theme of Stability in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1985). Lance Jenott also picks up on Williams’ important discussion in his translation: *The Gospel of Judas*, 2011. See especially pages 35, 475. Elaine Pagels and Karen L. King also discuss Williams’ explication of this theme in *Reading Judas: The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Christianity* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2007), 131–32.

in being a follower of Christ, one that brings to mind Paul's confession of doing that which he does not wish to do (Romans 7:15).

This ambiguity in the text is quite enlightening, especially as Judas' struggles are fully represented. He receives both special revelation and Jesus' teaching, but wrestles with understanding and acting as one who is "perfect." If perfection could be equated with reaching the top rung on a ladder of moral progress, Judas has climbed only part-way up. In this sense, his portrayal parallels Peter's in the *Apocalypse of Peter* (as discussed above). Both figures seem to function usefully as tools in a pedagogical discussion of what it would mean to be fully healed of the crippling and destructive effects of anger or fear. Such portraits are compelling and perhaps easier to relate to than those of the glorified heroes of proto-orthodox apostolic succession. Stephen Emmels suggests that the *Gospel of Judas* may have been intended for those who "stand apart from the ordinary group of Christians . . . but do not (or may not, or do not clearly, or do not yet) belong among the most spiritual."⁹⁹ Such a suggestion fits well with the kind of pedagogical purpose Dunderberg ascribes to the text and seems applicable to the *Apocalypse of Peter* as well.

Several other scholars see Judas as represented ambiguously as well. By comparing several texts in which Judas features prominently, Pierluigi Piovanelli insightfully demonstrates that it is not information about a historical Judas that can be gleaned from texts but rather insights about how he is represented. Overall, Piovanelli

⁹⁹ See page 38 of Stephen Emmel, "The Presuppositions and the Purpose of the *Gospel of Judas*," in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 33–39.

argues that the *Gospel of Judas* provides us “a more sophisticated and humanized picture of the disciple”—not a simplistic hero or villain.¹⁰⁰

The idea that Judas may change within the pages of the text is also noted by Marvin Meyer who is not sure whether *daimon* is the final characterization of Judas in the text.¹⁰¹ He goes on to suggest certain parallels between Judas and the figure of Sophia. These parallels bring to mind the striking analysis of Ismo Dunderberg regarding the way in which the Sophia myth may be a Valentinian reflection on the therapy of emotions as Christ actually heals Sophia of her passions.¹⁰²

Specifically, in tracing the struggle to translate the term “set apart” and whether Judas is “set apart *for*” or “set apart *from*” others (45,13–46,18), Meyer says that he is increasingly convinced that the translation should be the latter and that “Judas is one who is enlightened but estranged in this world—rather like Allogenes the Stranger in the next tractate, also Sethian, in Codex Tchacos, and perhaps like Sophia in *Pistis Sophia*.”¹⁰³

In particular, with regard to Judas ruling over the thirteenth aeon, Meyer discusses the fact that on the one hand, the realm of the evil demiurge is that of thirteen aeons, and here the implication may be “that the fate of Judas is that he is destined to become no

¹⁰⁰ See page 235 of Pierluigi Piovanelli, “Rabbi Yehuda versus Judas Iscariot: The *Gospel of Judas* and Apocryphal Passion Stories,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 223–239.

¹⁰¹ Marvin Meyer, “Interpreting Judas: Ten Passages in the *Gospel of Judas*,” in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 41–55.

¹⁰² See chapter six of Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 95–118.

¹⁰³ Meyer, “Interpreting Judas: Ten Passages in the *Gospel of Judas*,” 45–46

more than a lackey of the demiurge by joining him in the thirteenth aeon.”¹⁰⁴ However, Meyer goes on to note that the text says that ultimately, Judas will rule over the thirteenth aeon:

In that case, perhaps the text means to proclaim that, in the end, Judas—like Sophia elsewhere—will overcome the demiurge and all his megalomaniacal forces, and through Judas the power of ‘that generation’ will be triumphant and will be extended over all the world.¹⁰⁵

What is important here is not whether Judas will ultimately triumph or not but rather the comparison to Sophia in terms of the care of the soul. Both Sophia and Judas are subject to their passions and in need of the freedom that Christ can provide.

In a second article, Meyer further elaborates some of these views. He again points out that “themes associated with Wisdom, even personified Wisdom, may be disclosed as well in the person of Judas Iscariot as a figure of wisdom and a prototype of a person of knowledge in the *Gospel of Judas*.”¹⁰⁶ Then he goes on to say that both Judas and Sophia are associated with the thirteenth aeon. This aeon is mentioned in *Pistis Sophia* and the *Book of Jeu*. In *Pistis Sophia*, it is described as an intermediate dimension between this earthly world and the place of righteousness. The description of Judas as a *daimon* who will end up in the thirteenth aeon may thus parallel the restoration of Sophia to the thirteenth aeon.

¹⁰⁴ Meyer, “Interpreting Judas: Ten Passages in the *Gospel of Judas*,” 47.

¹⁰⁵ Meyer, “Interpreting Judas: Ten Passages in the *Gospel of Judas*,” 47.

¹⁰⁶ See pages 65–66 of Marvin Meyer, “When the Sethians were Young: The *Gospel of Judas* in the Second Century,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 57–73.

Meyer states that Judas is

neither a completely positive character nor a totally demonic being, but rather a figure, like Sophia, and like any gnostic being, who is embroiled in this world of mortality yet is striving for gnosis and enlightenment. . . . Judas, like Sophia, is caught between the worlds of mortality and immortality, looking for liberation.¹⁰⁷

Again, intriguingly, Ismo Dunderberg has commented extensively on the way in which the restoration of Sophia takes place when Christ is able to heal her of her passions. Such an interpretation nicely parallels Dunderberg's thinking with regard to the *Gospel of Judas*—that Judas is represented neither as a hero nor a villain but as an ambiguous figure who is able to become more morally advanced because Jesus helps him to manage his anger (though not to completely eradicate it). Judas cannot achieve the status of a “perfect human,” but he will manage to enter the thirteenth aeon.¹⁰⁸ In effect, these interpretations point to the way in which the text serves as a vivid depiction of the human quest for healing.

Elaine Pagels also points to possible ambiguities in the text, pointing out that characters' moral status are not necessarily fixed within a narrative framework but often develop within it. She argues that Jesus' teaching on baptism may serve to help the reader understand its transformative and liberating power. She encourages us to consider the possibility that Judas himself may be transformed by this teaching rather than

¹⁰⁷ Meyer, “When the Sethians were Young,” 73.

¹⁰⁸ Meyer, “When the Sethians were Young,” 68–73. For dissenting opinions, see Turner's comments in “The Sethian Myth in the *Gospel of Judas*: Soteriology or Demonology?,” 132, n. 70. Also see page 255 of April DeConick, “Apostles as Archons: The Fight for Authority and the Emergence of Gnosticism in the Codex Tchacos and Other Early Christian Literature,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 243–288. These two scholars argue that Meyer is incorrectly applying ideas from fourth century works to the earlier *Gospel of Judas*.

remaining static throughout the text and questions analyses that see him as incapable of change and asking, “Where, after all, do one-sided interpretations leave us?”¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately, Jesus’ teaching regarding baptism is one of the places where a significant number of lines are missing. However, Lance Jenott has supplied part of the textual puzzle with his newly-published translation of the *Gospel of Judas* which incorporates a fragment hitherto missing from the critical edition and other translations. In this fragment, Jesus says that baptism in his name “will wipe out the entire race of earthly Adam” (56, 4–6). Jenott interprets this as a reference to physical, human bodies, suggesting that in baptism, the initiate’s human body is liberated from demonic forces and subjugation to astrological and cosmic powers. Jenott refers to Paul’s similar belief in such liberation as expressed, for example, in Romans 5. In addition, a connection exists between baptism and Jesus’ death. Baptism is a symbolic death that “wipes away” the power of demonic forces in a person’s life just as Jesus’ death wiped away the power of these forces in the universe as a whole (a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement). Jenott goes on to propose a reconstruction of the text involving the exaltation of “the [fruit] of the great race of Adam” (57,8–14). Jenott points out that earlier (43,12–44,2) Jesus has associated “fruit” with the heavenly ascent of the soul. The “fruit” consists of those souls

¹⁰⁹ See page 355 of Elaine Pagels, “Baptism in the *Gospel of Judas*: A Preliminary Inquiry,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 353–366. Johanna Brankaer makes a similar point, noting that Judas seems to change, or be transformed from 56,21 on. This is just after the section beginning with 55,24 where Jesus has started to talk about baptism. See page 409 of Johanna Brankaer, “Whose Savior? Salvation, Damnation, and the Race of Adam in the *Gospel of Judas*,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 387–412.

who have been baptized.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Judas sees this “great race” ascending to a large house which Jenott has argued resembles that in Jewish apocalyptic literature (specifically, the Book of the Watchers in 1 Enoch 14). Judas describes the holy members of this “great race” as “standing” in this heavenly temple which reminds the reader of the connotations associated with “standing” as being in a place of transcendent rest free from the movement in the sensory world. There is additionally the connotation of their becoming more like the angels in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature.¹¹¹

In fact, then, according to Jenott, the perspective that Jesus’ death allowed for the destruction of demonic forces and that Christians are themselves saved through baptism is *similar* to that of proto-orthodox thinkers.¹¹² This is not a “Gnostic” text with a

¹¹⁰ Jenott, *Gospel of Judas*, 31–34.

¹¹¹ Jenott, *Gospel of Judas*, 35.

¹¹² It should be noted that Bas van Os, Einar Thomassen, and John Turner see the *Gospel of Judas* as *critical* of the practice of baptism. None of these critiques, however, include the fragment to which Jenott refers. Bas van Os explicitly critiques the martyrdom hypothesis, pointing out that the text does not explicitly mention persecution by Roman authorities. Thus, he feels it is the actual sacraments of the Eucharist or, even more likely, baptism that are being criticized as many early Christians conceived of baptism as a kind of death. See “Stop Sacrificing! The metaphor of sacrifice in the *Gospel of Judas*,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 367–86. Einar Thomassen concurs. He discusses the idea that Jesus’ denunciation of sacrificial acts is an allusion to baptism on page 164 of “Is Judas Really the Hero of the *Gospel of Judas*?”: “[T]he polemic there is directed against the baptismal practice of the proto-orthodox Christian Church, which the author of the *Gospel of Judas* equates with human sacrifice because that baptism hands the initiates over to the evil ruler of the material cosmos, the realm of corruption and death.” He then notes, “It has been suggested by scholars in the debates following the publication of the *Gospel of Judas* that the polemic against sacrifice in the text is directed against the extolling of martyrdom by the proto-orthodox church. I am not convinced by this interpretation, since the characterization of proto-orthodox practices as human sacrifice is embedded in a list of other abominable acts such as fornication and homosexuality” (see p. 165, n. 20). John Turner argues that baptism is a referent as well, but he feels that this is *in addition to* the Eucharist and possibly even martyrdom. See “The Place of the *Gospel of Judas* in Sethian Tradition,” 187–237. On page 213, he notes a “hostile stance toward the practice of ordinary Christian baptism in Jesus’s name (55,22–56,1) and indeed toward any formal use of his name (38,22–40, 26).” Also see “The Sethian Myth in the *Gospel of Judas*: Soteriology or Demonology?,” 95–133. On page 127, he says, “Rather than creating a new spiritual race that has superseded the fleshly race of the Jews, their sacrificial practices only confirm their membership in a similarly worldly and material race. Markedly singled out are their ritual practices such as baptism in the name of Jesus by which one participates in his

“Docetic” Christology. Overall, Jenott argues that figures such as Irenaeus and Epiphanius harshly condemned this text for its critique of the proto-orthodox leaders, a theme to which we now turn.

Critique of Apostolic Succession in Terms of the Care of the Soul

John Turner colorfully describes the *Gospel of Judas*' characterization of the successors to the disciples as “ministers of error, doomed angelic lackies of the lord ruling the universe.”¹¹³ This phrase aptly describes the scholarly consensus regarding the text's vehement critique of the proto-orthodox leaders, the successors to the disciples. Jenott, for example, extends Dunderberg's emphasis on the theme of anger management by pointing out that the primary error of the disciples is their rage. It is their emotional state of being that constitutes their blasphemy against Jesus and therefore allows Judas to be so starkly contrasted with them. In Stoic terms, the disciples are not healed of passion. While Judas is not “perfect” in this respect, he is clearly not as ill as they are. In this respect, the twelve apostles, who will stone Judas to death out of their anger over his betrayal of Jesus, serve as counterpoints to the ideal of persons able to engage successfully in the cure of the passions.

All of this becomes clear in the following passages. The first is one in which the apostles speak with Jesus, asking him where he had gone after leaving them, and Jesus

death and resurrection, the practice of fasting like angels who need no food, and especially their priestly offering of Eucharistic sacrifices at the altar in the name of Jesus, whether those offerings be personal acts of abstemious loyalty or material elements such as bread and wine or fish or other animals—and perhaps even humans whose martyrdom echoes that of Jesus—symbolizing the redemptive death either of Jesus or of the sinful nature of the communicants themselves. Since they do not know that there is a higher God, they betray the name of Jesus by offering sacrifices to the wrong god, the God of Israel, and thus cannot join the higher, holy generation” (emphasis added).

¹¹³ See Turner, “The Sethian Myth in the *Gospel of Judas*: Soteriology or Demonology?,” 127.

replies, “I went to another great and holy generation (36,16–17). The disciples then respond, “Lord, what is the great generation that is superior to us and holy (36,19–20) and Jesus actually laughs (36,23) and tells them that “no one born [of] this aeon will see that [generation] . . . and no person of mortal birth will be able to associate with it” (37,3–8). When they hear this, they are “troubled in [their] spirit” (37,18–19). Clearly, they are not members of “the strong and holy generation.”

Later, the apostles tell Jesus that they have had a vision (37,22) in which they saw an altar with twelve priests. The priests were engaged in all kinds of immoral sacrifices, including sacrifices of their very own wives and children. They were also engaged in eating the bodies and blood of these sacrifices. Jesus tells them that they themselves are those priests and that they are mistaken in thinking that he comes from the god who is pleased by such sacrifices:

“We [have] seen a great house [with a] large altar [in it, and] twelve men—they are the priests, we would say; and a name < --- >; and a crowd of people is waiting at that altar, [until] the priests [finished] [presenting] the offerings. We [also] kept waiting.” [Jesus said], “What are [---] like?” And they [said], “Some [--- for] two weeks; [others] sacrifice their own children, others their wives, in praise [and] in humility with each other; others sleep with men; others are involved in slaugh[ter]; still others commit a multitude of sins and deeds of lawlessness. [And] the men who stand [before] the altar invoke your [name]. And while they are involved in all the deeds of their sacrifice, that [altar] is filled” (38,1–39,3).¹¹⁴

After this, the disciples are “quiet” (39,4) because they are “troubled” (39,5). Jesus then says to them,

Why are you troubled? Truly I say to you, all the priests who stand before that altar invoke my name. And again I say to you, my name has been written on [---] of the generations of the stars by the human generations. [And] they have planted trees without fruit, in my name, in a shameful manner (39,6–17).

¹¹⁴ All citations from the *Gospel of Judas* come from Kasser, et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 2007.

He then says,

It is you who are presenting the offerings on the altar you have seen. That one is the god you serve, and you are the twelve men you have seen. And the cattle that are brought in are the sacrifices you have seen—that is, the many people you lead astray before that altar (39,18–40,1).

He goes on to equate priests with “ministers of error” (40,22–23) and commands them:

“Stop sac[r]ificing ---] (41,1–2).

The charges of human sacrifice—that of the priests’ own children and wives—are particularly striking. Many scholars have recognized that the charge of human sacrifice was a discursive strategy in the ancient world by which one group could cast another as cultural barbarians associated with a practice deemed crude and barbaric.¹¹⁵ Jenott emphasizes this fact and in his most recent work, he sees no more in this passage than a stock list of polemics meant to disparage the leaders of the proto-orthodox churches.¹¹⁶

Philip Tite also expounds on the nature of the use of negative moral exempla (of which the disciples seem to be examples par excellence) and the use of virtue and vice lists in marking the presence of *paraenesis*, or moral exhortation.¹¹⁷ Such lists derive from the Stoic perspective that linked knowing a particular truth with the ability to act virtuously in a certain respect.¹¹⁸ Indeed, the list of accusations against the apostles functions much like one of these vice lists. These are clearly not models for imitation or figures of authority to whom one should be submitting.

¹¹⁵ See J. Rives, “Human Sacrifices Among Pagans and Christians,” *JRS* 85 (1995), 65–85.

¹¹⁶ See Jenott, *Gospel of Judas*, 58–60.

¹¹⁷ See Tite, “Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse,” 133–44. Tite analyzes Valentinian texts, but his analysis seems applicable to the Sethian text of the *Gospel of Judas* as well.

¹¹⁸ Tite, “Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse,” 137.

Tite identifies five features common to paraenesis: the use of the imperative or hortative subjunctive, discussion of figures who serve as moral exemplars, vice/virtue lists, two-way schema, and household codes. The *Gospel of Judas* manifests three of these five features: imperatives, moral exempla (the disciples serving as negative exempla and Judas as an ambiguous one), and vice lists. Overall, Tite argues that paraenetic texts function as “discursive voices” that attempt to persuade their readers regarding morality.¹¹⁹ Indeed, it is with this type of argument—that texts categorized as Gnostic have much to say about morality—that Dunderberg also concurs when he describes the *Gospel of Judas* as a reflection on anger management in a manner reminiscent of Stoic thought.¹²⁰ Thus, although Tite’s insightful dissertation was published prior to the *Gospel of Judas*, it could well be argued that its narrative framework functions as moral exhortation. Such paraenesis functions as a call to engage in the therapy of the emotions and the care of the soul.

For Jenott, the argument is not so much over the practice of Eucharist itself as over who has the right to conduct it and the moral character of those who are claiming the exclusive right of officiating:

The author of *Judas* responded by writing the equivalent of a modern political attack ad: a smear campaign against the twelve disciples that cut at the very root of the clergy’s authority. The target of the *Gospel of Judas*’s criticism is neither the Eucharist, nor the ideology of sacrifice, nor the sacrificial interpretation of Jesus’ death, but the twelve disciples and their corrupt moral character. The author takes issue with the form of church leadership which established itself upon the doctrine of apostolic succession. Thus he carefully develops a portrayal of the Twelve as men who were confused about the true identity of Jesus and the god they served. Although they believed they worshipped the true God and father

¹¹⁹ Tite, “Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse,” 300.

¹²⁰ This is also a primary argument of Dunderberg’s *Beyond Gnosticism*.

of Jesus, in actually their god is nothing more than an apostate angel *who afflicted their souls with bitter passion*. As a consequence of their devotion to such a god, the disciples themselves became enflamed with anger and contention, were morally debased, and ultimately led their followers into sin and error. By telling the story of the twelve disciples this way, *Judas* challenges the foundational myth held by many Christians who maintained that the Twelve were the authoritative group to whom Jesus entrusted his teaching, commissioned to evangelize the world, and who established the only legitimate, apostolic churches to which all true Christians must belong (emphasis added).¹²¹

Certainly many other scholars have discussed the negative depiction of the apostles and the critique of apostolic authority. Einar Thomassen does so at length, arguing that the *Gospel of Judas* portrays the disciples with even less intelligence or understanding than other texts such as the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Mary*, and the four New Testament gospels. In the *Gospel of Judas*, the apostles are completely beyond redemption in failing to worship the right God, in committing terrible crimes, and in leading others astray.¹²² Later, he notes,

The *Gospel of Judas* is clearly a very unusual document. It uses a genre, the revelation dialogue of Jesus and the disciples, that is normally used to legitimise certain doctrines as secret apostolic tradition. But it totally subverts this genre by discounting the disciples altogether and by portraying Judas Iscariot as simultaneously the worst and the best of the disciples. Judas receives a revelation, but he is utterly unable to profit from it, because his destiny has already been decided. So who is supposed to profit from the revelation? This is another of the enigmas of the *Gospel of Judas*. Normally in revelation dialogues, the recipient, or recipients, of the revelation are models of identification for the readers. The reader, by identifying with the recipient disciple, himself becomes the recipient of the revelation divulged by the written text. That cannot be the situation here. . . . Jesus is seen as the source of revelation, but every single one of his disciples is rejected as able to receive and transmit his revelation.¹²³

¹²¹ Jenott, *Gospel of Judas*, 41.

¹²² Thomassen, "Is Judas Really the Hero of the *Gospel of Judas*?" 160.

¹²³ Thomassen, "Is Judas Really the Hero of the *Gospel of Judas*?" 168–70.

April DeConick actually interprets the text as a parody in which even Judas, corrupt as he is, understands who Jesus is better than twelve of his other apostles do, but that fact only underscores the ways in which these twelve greatly lack understanding of Jesus. It does not make Judas a hero. She compares the portrayal of the apostles in the *Gospel of Judas* to that in the *Gospel of Mark* where the twelve repeatedly fail to “get” who Jesus is and what he is about.¹²⁴

In fact, DeConick and virtually all scholars regardless of their position with respect to Judas’ moral character agree in seeing the text as a critique of what she refers to as “apostolic,” “catholic,” or “mainstream” Christianity (also termed proto-orthodox Christianity by many scholars).¹²⁵ She argues that the text bitterly lampoons the notion of apostolic succession and the church structure based on that hierarchy,¹²⁶ as well as the practice of sacrifice and the doctrine of the atonement as a sacrifice pleasing to and even willed by God. Thus, while scholars vigorously debate the nature of Judas’ character,¹²⁷ they concur in seeing the text serving as a critique of practices and theological beliefs centered around sacrifice.¹²⁸ In fact, for those scholars who see Judas as represented

¹²⁴ DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 103–08.

¹²⁵ DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 6.

¹²⁶ DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 169, 180–182. Lance Jenott refers to this specifically when he says that the focus on the critique of sacrifice has been too far entwined with the discussion surrounding the moral character of Judas. See Jenott, *Gospel of Judas*, 23.

¹²⁷ Simon Gathercole notes that a delineation of Judas’ character is really not the main point of the text as a whole. He feels that the vision which Judas sees is the main theme rather than a denigration or vindication of Judas per se: *The Gospel of Judas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹²⁸ The dissenting voice is that of Lance Jenott who, as discussed above, feels the text reflects a vision of a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement. His argument is well-made and does much to dispel the notion that Gnostic texts are “anti-atonement.” However, it is quite plausible that the author is at odds with the conception of a substitutionary atonement, which is a major theme in some early Christian writers such as

unfavorably, Judas' very act of sacrificing Jesus serves to epitomize and underscore the negative representation of sacrifice in the text. Einar Thomassen, for example, contends:

The *Gospel of Judas* generally holds a very negative opinion of sacrifice When the author chooses to describe Judas' handing over of Jesus as an act of sacrifice, that can hardly, therefore, be intended as a positive characterization. The phrase 'you will exceed all of them' may even be taken to imply the opposite: by performing his particular sacrifice, Judas is even worse than the others.¹²⁹

Louis Painchaud shares this opinion as well, stating that in no way does this text rehabilitate Judas.¹³⁰ Rather, Judas "is the ruling 'archon' presiding over this sacrificial ideology and governing those who adhere to it and curse him."¹³¹ He commits "the worst of inequities" in sacrificing Jesus and is worse even than the other twelve apostles.¹³²

DeConick has also described the text as one in which "[a] harsher treatment of the doctrine of apostolic authority could not be had!"¹³³ She goes on to say that "[t]he twelve disciples are little more than puppets of the archons." For her, the genre is that of a tragedy:

Ignatius of Antioch. In these texts, martyrdom is linked to this particular interpretation of Jesus' death as well.

¹²⁹ Einar Thomassen, "Is Judas Really the Hero of the *Gospel of Judas*?" 166. Thomassen does go on to say that there is a certain ambiguity even here, however, as Judas is represented as better than the others in certain ways.

¹³⁰ Painchaud, "Polemical Aspects of the *Gospel of Judas*," 177. See also Louis Painchaud, 'You will sacrifice the man who bears me.' (*Gos. Jud.* 56.19–20) (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, 17 November 2012).

¹³¹ Painchaud, "Polemical Aspects of the *Gospel of Judas*," 178.

¹³² Painchaud, "Polemical Aspects of the *Gospel of Judas*," 183–84.

¹³³ See page 254 of April DeConick, "The Mystery of Betrayal. What does the *Gospel of Judas* Really Say?," in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 239–264.

Judas is linked to the cosmic system in such a way that he becomes inseparable from Ildabaoth and his evil plans against Jesus. He is tied to Ildabaoth's realm and his cloud of operations, the thirteenth aeon, and Ildabaoth's persona as the King of the Archons. He is identified with the archdemon ruling over his twelve assistants, a coincidence in number that was exploited by the Sethians to expose the illegitimacy of apostolic authority. The mainstream Church's appropriation of knowledge handed down from the apostles is ridiculous when the apostles are recognized as the lesser archons ignorant of God and powerless over their arrogant demonic ruler whose evil plan to kill Jesus is engaged.¹³⁴

Moreover,

by betraying Jesus, Judas has offered Jesus' body as a sacrifice to Ildabaoth, a sacrifice more evil than any the other apostles would ever make (56,17–21).

By framing Judas' sacrifice of Jesus alongside that of the other apostles who sin by also offering Ildabaoth evil sacrifices (c.f. *Gospel of Judas* 56,11–13; 39,18–40,1), the gospel goes a long way to critique and mock mainstream interpretations of Jesus' death in sacrificial terms. This criticism and mockery includes a strong condemnation of eucharist theology.¹³⁵

Further Critique of Sacrifice and Martyrdom

Anna Van den Kerchove most clearly points out the details which help us to see how the *Gospel of Judas* may indeed be offering incisive critique of the glorification of sacrifice and both the Eucharist and martyrdom conceived of as symbolizing or imitating sacrifices of substitutionary atonement desired by God.¹³⁶ She clearly points out the

¹³⁴ DeConick, "The Mystery of Betrayal," 256–257.

¹³⁵ DeConick, "The Mystery of Betrayal," 261. Franklin Trammell notes a similar critique of the apostles but in the *Apocalypse of James* which immediately precedes the *Gospel of Judas* in the Codex Tchacos. See "The God of Jerusalem as the Pole Dragon: The Conceptual Background of the Cosmic Axis in James," in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 337–349.

¹³⁶ Anna Van den Kerchove, "La Maison, l'Autel et les Sacrifices: Quelques Remarques sur la Polémique dans l'Évangile des Judas," in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 311–29.

ways in which the author of the *Gospel of Judas* seems to be inscribing himself (or herself) into inner-Christian debates regarding specific interpretations of the Eucharist and martyrdom that were prevalent in Christian discourse of the second and third centuries. She argues that the author most certainly belongs to a social context in which accusing a group of making human sacrifices is a general way of accusing them of social deviance, but it is important not to overlook the possibility that this critique may well be referring to specific practices involving particular interpretations of the Eucharist and martyrdom. She argues that the author specifically uses two discursive strategies to do this: 1) attributing a literal meaning to phrases commonly used metaphorically in early Christian communities, and 2) amalgamating the ritual practices of the Jewish temple (where sacrifice was offered until its destruction in 70 C.E.)¹³⁷ with the discourses of

¹³⁷ Van den Kerchove argues that the conflation of associations regarding Jewish temple practices and early Christian ones is a critique of both. Others discuss this point as well. Majella Franzman has noted the critique of Jewish temple worship: “What is also striking is that the Jewish themes in this gospel are one of its most negative aspects. One of the strongest negative themes concerns ritual or prayer to a false god, in this case summed up in images including the temple (a great house with an altar, 38,1–3), and sacrifices by priests (38,1–39,3). These unworthy sacrifices are offered to the Jewish god (Yaldabaoth/Nebro) who is the object of pious observance by the Twelve (“your god,” 34,10–11,25; “their god,” 36,4)” See page 113 of “Judas as an Abraham Figure in the *Gospel of Judas*,” in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006* (ed. Madeleine Scopello; NHMS 26; ed. Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 113–121.

Also see John Turner, “The Sethian Myth in the *Gospel of Judas*: Soteriology or Demonology?,” 95–133. On page 126, Turner comments specifically on the anti-sacrifice theme saying that the *Gospel of Judas* contains vicious polemic against the sacrificial theology of the so-called apostolic churches of the later second century; they have been defiled by perishable wisdom (43,26–44,5). It portrays them as still mired in the fleshly ritual practices of the Jews that many Christians believed they had superseded with their so-called “spiritual” or “rational” sacrifices. On page 128, he notes that “Christian sacrificial theology is a mere perpetuation of the Israelite temple cult.” A little later on pages 131–32 he says that the *Gospel of Judas* is unique in “its vilification of the fraudulent sacrificial practices of a proto-orthodox church that has no knowledge of the nature and origin of the true Jesus.” Judas is the only one who even begins to approach understanding Jesus’ true identity, but “he too was unwittingly fated to be the demonic agent of a lower god whose wrath was believed to be appeased only through blood sacrifice as the requirement for gaining entrance into his ‘kingdom of the heavens’ ruled by deceitful astral powers.”

In work prior to his dissertation, Lance Jenott has written about the way in which the description of the temple in Judas’ vision (as a temple encircled by “lightning” or “fire” corresponds to parallels of the description of the Jewish temple in the Book of the Watchers, 1 Enoch, and 3 Enoch. In this article, he says

early Christian communities in which both the Eucharist and martyrdom were associated with sacrifice.

Specifically, Van den Kerchove refers to the passage in which the male disciples tell Jesus of their vision, a vision in which twelve priests are making sacrifices of children and women in a house with an altar before which a crowd of people is waiting. She points out that the specific Coptic words used for “house” and “altar” conjure up associations both with the temple in Jerusalem and the altar where sacrifices had been made prior to its destruction as well as with the homes in which Christians met and the table they used for the celebration of the Eucharist. Likewise, the crowd is said to be “waiting before the altar.” The phrase is one that is not found commonly in Greek literature or the Hebrew Bible but which occurs eleven times in the New Testament as well as in texts by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Cyprian, and in the *Acts of Peter*. The verb has the sense of “persevering” before the altar and is associated with activity which is accomplished near the Eucharist table. The use of this phrase may serve to invoke connotations with the point of view in which some Christians saw Christ’s sacrifice (and the Eucharist which commemorates it) as a replacement for the kinds of sacrifices made in the Jerusalem temple. Of course, at the time the *Gospel of Judas* is being written, the temple has almost certainly been destroyed, but by alluding to temple worship and conflating it with celebration of the Eucharist, the author critiques those

that the earthly temple and the heavenly temple are being contrasted in order to criticize the way in which the Eucharist—and martyrdom conceived of as a eucharist sacrifice—are being conceived. See page 476 in “The *Gospel of Judas* 45,6–7 and Enoch’s Heavenly Temple,” in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 471–77.

Christian groups who interpret the Eucharist as a sacrifice or the imitation or commemoration of a sacrifice. More specifically, I would add that it may well be directed to those who see this practice as a commemoration of a substitutionary atonement (as opposed to the kind of sacrifice envisioned in a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement).

Van den Kerchove also points out that in the *Gospel of Judas* 40,22, the priests are described as “ministers of error.” The term for “minister” is *diakonos*, the word commonly used in early Christian texts for deacons, or leaders in Christian churches, persons authorized to serve the Eucharist. In other words, the author of the *Gospel of Judas* is using the very terms and phrases that Christian authors use to speak about the Eucharist in a variety of texts, leading one to believe that possible critique on the part of the author with regard to the interpretations of these practices cannot be excluded.

Van den Kerchove also points out that while references to the sacrificing of children have several classical precedents, accusations of sacrificing women are less common. She refers to the fact that both Polycarp and Tertullian talk about the bodies of women as altars and sites of intercessory prayer that is efficacious for others. While the sacrifice of women could be relevant in some way to the evolving discourse about purity, chastity, and asceticism, she goes on to say that the joint charge of sacrificing both children and women may well have associations with the practice of martyrdom conceived of as a sacrifice. Citing numerous examples of martyrdom interpreted in this way (in the *Recognitions of Pseudo-Clement*, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, a letter of Cyprian, Ignatius of Antioch’s *Letter to the Romans*, and Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies*), she argues that the author of the *Gospel of Judas* may be referring to and critiquing the

practice of martyrdom (or, more accurately, the interpretation of it as a sacrifice) in mentioning the sacrifice of children and women. She goes on to say that it is not the practice itself that is being questioned so much as the particular interpretation of it and any glorification of it within an ecclesiological context. Thus, in summary, she argues that in associating the altar and the house with human sacrifice, the author critiques his adversaries, probably Christians belonging to another “rival” community and their manner of living and accomplishing certain ritual acts. Though she does not discuss the fact that Jesus specifically states that these male disciples are “leading people astray,” this, too fits with the overall argument as does his injunction to “stop sacrificing!”

These details mesh well with the argument of a review appearing shortly after the publication of the critical edition of the *Gospel of Judas*.¹³⁸ This article discusses the *Gospel of Judas*’ portrait of the male disciples as reflecting the author’s critique of the church leaders for endorsing or encouraging martyrdom and leading others to accepting it uncritically. For this author, sacrifice is in vain, and such leaders are no better than those who would lead innocent sheep to slaughter.

In *Reading Judas*, Karen King and Elaine Pagels extensively argue that a critique of martyrdom exists in the *Gospel of Judas*.¹³⁹ In this book, they argue that fierce disagreements over the value and significance of martyrdom are at the heart of the text. They point out that a variety of texts existed that glorified martyrdom and encouraged or exhorted Christians toward this path. Certainly some Biblical passages represent Jesus’

¹³⁸ Eduard Iricinschi, Lance Jenott, and Philippa Townsend, “The Betrayer’s Gospel” (review of Rodolphe Kasser and Gregor Wurst, eds., *The Gospel of Judas Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and a Book of Allogenes from Codex Tchacos: Critical Edition*), *New York Review of Books*, June 8, 2006.

¹³⁹ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 2007.

death as a substitutionary atonement. I Corinthians 5:7 calls Christ a “paschal lamb.” First- and second-century writers such as Ignatius of Antioch (and others discussed in chapter two) think of their impending martyrdom in these terms—as the imitation of Jesus’ sacrifice. Other treatises (Tertullian’s *Scorpiace* being a notable example) also glorify martyrdom. Other sermons, accounts (Polycarp’s and Justin’s being particularly notable), and histories (especially that of Eusebius) also did so.¹⁴⁰ Robin Darling Young’s work on the way in which martyrdom functioned and was represented as a “public liturgical sacrifice” complements Pagel’s and King’s well.¹⁴¹ Noting the strident anger of the tone (which Pagels and King insist must be viewed within the context of its time and place in an era of frightening persecution when perspectives on martyrdom had very concrete consequences for believers),¹⁴² they comment:

The author of the *Gospel of Judas* could not reconcile his belief in a deeply loving, good God with a particular idea that other Christians held at the time: that God desired the bloody sacrificial death of Jesus and his followers. In this author’s view, Christian leaders who called on their fellow Christians to ‘glorify’ themselves that way were murderers. They had totally misunderstood Jesus’s teaching and were worshipping a false god.¹⁴³

They carefully note:

the problem for the author of the *Gospel of Judas* is not simply resistance to martyrdom. He does not criticize the martyrs themselves, nor does he say that dying as a martyr is a bad thing. Rather, he is angry at the *meaning* other Christians give to the deaths of Jesus and his followers, targeting those who claim that God desired Jesus’s death as a sacrifice that God not only wills but

¹⁴⁰ See Pagel’s and King’s discussion on pp. 49–57.

¹⁴¹ Young, *In Procession Before the World*, 2001.

¹⁴² Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 100.

¹⁴³ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, xvi.

commands. For some Christians contemplating their own deaths came to understand Jesus's death—and their own—as sacrifice.

King and Pagels point out the irony of a certain contradiction:

*that while Christians refuse to practice sacrifice, many of them bring sacrifice right back into the center of Christian worship—by claiming that Jesus's death is a sacrifice for human sin, and then by insisting that Christians who die as martyrs are sacrifices pleasing to God.*¹⁴⁴

Many Christians even prided themselves on having superseded the kind of sacrifice practiced in the Jerusalem temple and at pagan altars; nonetheless, an emphasis on such has crept fore and center into their faith.¹⁴⁵

They go on to say that it is of course impossible to know if the author had seen church leaders encouraging martyrdom but that the strong language and tone of the text

conveys the urgency of someone who wants to unmask what he feels is the hideous folly of religious leaders who encourage people to get themselves killed this way—as though their suffering would guarantee the martyrs' personal resurrection to huge rewards in heaven.¹⁴⁶

King and Pagels acknowledge that the author believes that Jesus's death and those of his followers (including Judas himself) should be thought of as sacrifices. Then they state:

But what he thinks is wrong is when bishops like Ignatius and Irenaeus teach that those who 'perfect' themselves through a martyr's death are ensuring that God will reward them by raising them physically from the dead—they are wrong both in the 'God' they worship and in thinking that the physical body will be raised to eternal life.¹⁴⁷

They go on to present some of the questions the author seems to be raising:

¹⁴⁴ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 59.

¹⁴⁵ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 68.

¹⁴⁶ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 59.

¹⁴⁷ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 60.

What does such teaching make of God? Is God, then, unwilling or unable to forgive human transgression without violent bloodshed—from either the cut throats of goats and bulls, or—worse—human sacrifice? Are Christians to worship a God who demands what the Hebrew Bible says that the God of Abraham refused—child sacrifice, even that of his own son? What kind of God would require anyone—much less his own son—to die in agony before he accepts his followers?¹⁴⁸

Of course, it is crucial to realize that there were multiple points of view within the early Christianities, not just two. Regarding the issue of sacrifice itself, Aulén has pointed to the fact that many early Christians saw Christ's death in terms of a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement, not in terms of the kind of substitutionary atonement that the questions above presuppose. Lance Jenott has done a remarkable job of explaining the difference between the two and pointing out that an author such as that of the *Gospel of Judas* may have actually embraced the *Christus Victor* perspective. Thus, it is not even the case that such an author fails to see Jesus' death as a sacrifice but rather that he vehemently opposes a substitutionary atonement perspective.

Certainly many scholars have recently been at pains to point out alternatives to substitutionary atonement in the discourses of the early Christianities as well. Marcus Borg, for example, discusses the fact that a view of Christ's death as a substitutionary atonement did not become entrenched and gain dominance until the Middle Ages under the influence of Anselm¹⁴⁹ while Nakashima Brock and Parker have pointed to the plenitude of images of paradise in early Christianity and the relative scarcity of

¹⁴⁸ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 66.

¹⁴⁹ Marcus Borg, *Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power—and How They Can Be Restored* (New York: Harper One, 2011). See chapter seven, "The Death of Jesus," 97–106.

crucifixion images.¹⁵⁰ While such discussion is very helpful in illuminating the diverse perspectives and opinions circulating in the second and third centuries when the *Gospel of Judas* was written, the presence of a substitutionary atonement perspective in some texts (those discussed in chapter two) cannot be denied, and the *Gospel of Judas* provides a clear critique of such.

King and Pagels insightfully point out that a diversity of viewpoints regarding sacrifice had existed within the various forms of Judaism as well. Prophets such as Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah emphasized loving God and doing justice over mere rituals and insisted that the latter could never substitute for the former. Greek and Roman philosophers, too, argued for the care of the soul rather than bloody rituals.¹⁵¹ Porphyry, for example, said “The best sacrifice to the gods is a pure mind and a soul free from passions.” The *Gospel of Judas* adds greatly to our understanding of the fact that such perspectives existed *within* the early Christianities as well.¹⁵²

For writers such as Irenaeus, a refusal to accept the doctrine of a fleshly resurrection “offended their sense of justice.”¹⁵³ Irenaeus believed that those who suffered in the body “should be rewarded in the body.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Boston: Beacon, 2008).

¹⁵¹ For attitudes toward martyrdom per se, see Daniel Boyarin’s *Dying for God* (discussed in chapter one).

¹⁵² Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 69–71 who provide this comment of Porphyry’s.

¹⁵³ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 84.

¹⁵⁴ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 84. Joyce Salisbury has also developed this idea extensively in her book, *The Blood of Martyrs*, 2004.

For the author of the *Gospel of Judas*, to suggest that God desires or even wills sacrifice is wrong. The immortal life of the soul is a very real thing, but spiritual transformation is the goal not a fleshly resurrection. Encouraging belief in the latter

makes people complicit in murder. By teaching that Jesus died in agony “for the sins of the world” and encouraging his followers to die as he did, certain leaders send them on a path toward destruction—while encouraging them with the false promise that they will be resurrected from death to eternal life in the flesh.¹⁵⁵

King and Pagels note the “alternating tones of hope and fear” within the New Testament itself.¹⁵⁶ Texts such as the *Gospel of Judas* complement and add to our understanding of the array of perspectives within the second and third centuries as well.

While scholars are fiercely divided over the character of Judas himself and many disagree with King, Pagels, and others who have portrayed Judas in this way, many scholars acknowledge King’s and Pagels’ point regarding the critique of martyrdom within the text.

Marvin Meyer, for example, notes:

Elsewhere in the *Gospel of Judas*, Jesus is made to be very critical of sacrifice, and that criticism may be interpreted at celebrations of the Christian eucharist, sacrificial interpretations of the crucifixion story, and as Karen L. King and Elaine H. Pagels propose, the sacrifices that take place in acts of martyrdom. Those who advocate such sacrifice, as in acts of martyrdom, may be the ‘slayers of children’ referred to at 40, 10–11 and in other passages of the *Gospel of Judas*.¹⁵⁷

Later, he says that the *Gospel of Judas*

is harshly critical of anything that smacks of sacrifice, whether that is the death of Jesus understood as sacrifice, or the celebration of the eucharist as a sacrificial

¹⁵⁵ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 74.

¹⁵⁶ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 101.

¹⁵⁷ Meyer, “Interpreting Judas: Ten Passages in the *Gospel of Judas*,” 52.

meal, or, as Elaine Pagels and Karen King suggest, participation in Christian martyrdom as an emulation of the sacrificial death of Jesus.¹⁵⁸

Louis Painchaud also comments extensively on the polemics in the *Gospel of Judas*. He feels it contains incisive critique of

proto-orthodox Christianity delivered with regard to numerous points of doctrine, ritual and discipline, such as the identity of the god of the scriptures, christology and the interpretation of the passion, baptism and eucharist (here differences have more to do with interpretation of the rituals than with the rituals themselves), the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, *and martyrdom* (emphasis added).¹⁵⁹

He concludes:

there is good reason to believe that the *Gospel of Judas* is a polemical text, reacting against the sacrificial ideology that grew and established itself in the Christianity of the second century. The *Gospel of Judas* views this ideology as a perpetuation of the Jewish sacrificial cult, which it sees as being addressed to the archon Saklas, and which Jesus wished his disciples to abolish. This polemic is primarily aimed at the sacrificial interpretation of the death of Christ and the eucharist, but this does not exclude the possibility that it is also aimed at the ideology of martyrdom which was coming into being at this time, especially given the passage dealing with priests who sacrifice their wives and children under the guise of a blessing (38,16–18).¹⁶⁰

Pierluigi Piovanelli, too, discusses the presence of a critique of martyrdom in the *Gospel of Judas*. He comments specifically on the idea that differing view regarding the way in which Jesus' death served as a sacrifice may have contributed to differing viewpoints regarding the value or necessity of dying as a martyr.¹⁶¹

Gesine Schenke Robinson dates the text later than some other scholars, pointing to the bitter inner Christian polemic it contains and says:

¹⁵⁸ Meyer, "When the Sethians were Young," 61.

¹⁵⁹ Painchaud, "Polemical Aspects of the *Gospel of Judas*," 171–86.

¹⁶⁰ Painchaud, "Polemical Aspects of the *Gospel of Judas*," 184.

¹⁶¹ Piovanelli, "Rabbi Yehuda versus Judas Iscariot: The *Gospel of Judas* and Apocryphal Passion Stories," 238.

However, when at the end of the second century the Christological battles between orthodox and Gnostic Christianity were growing more violent, the combined text could have been augmented with the vitriolic vision reports. The dramatic change in tone suggests a fairly well-advanced state of mutual exclusivity. Severe disturbances, such as persecutions and excommunications from orthodox Christian communities, may also have brought about an enlargement of the incipit, now characterizing the gospel as a final judgment on the church and its leaders, who were apparently perceived as continuing the old ways of the failed Jewish religious practices in new clothes, as exemplified by the temple cult with its sacrificial rituals. The acts of piety attacked include fasting, the agape meal or eucharist, and baptism, but the polemic centers on the concept of Christological interpretation of Jesus' death as a necessity for salvation. A further rationale for the schism becomes particularly discernible in the mention of sacrificing wives and children. *This Christian-Gnostic community ostensibly despised and turned against the readiness for any kind of martyrdom as a pointless sacrifice to an inferior God who himself will perish at the end. There is no hope of salvation for anyone in this sacrificial approach* (emphasis added).¹⁶²

Nicola Denzey also finds Pagels' and King's reading "compelling":

Elaine Pagels and Karen King have read the disciples' Temple vision allegorically as a reference to the Church and the perceived corruption of apostolic authority; they see the monstrous activities of the priests—namely human sacrifice—connected to the *exhortations to martyrdom* by some Christians following in apostolic tradition. Given the parallel here with the *Testimony of Truth* where the Christians who boast of their salvation through martyrdom do so through the "agency of the wandering stars," this way of reading the text is compelling (emphasis added).¹⁶³

Preparation for Martyrdom

Another possibility for fresh, creative ways of interpreting texts such as the *Gospel of Judas* is to think of them as "preparation for martyrdom" texts. In other words, it is conceivable that a variety of attitudes toward the care of the self and more specifically, toward martyrdom, existed in the early centuries of the Common Era. This

¹⁶² Robinson, "The *Gospel of Judas*: Its Protagonist, its Composition, and its Community," 91.

¹⁶³ See pages 54–55 of Nicola Denzey Lewis, "Fate and the Wandering Stars: The Jewish Apocalyptic Roots of the *Gospel of Judas*," in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008* (ed. April D. DeConick; NHMS 71; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 289–304.

range of attitudes can be seen by examining the full spectrum of early Christian writings. Karen King takes this approach.¹⁶⁴ Her argument helps us begin to think in terms of a variety of ways in which self-formation was being conceived rather than a distinct binary opposition between orthodox and heretical (or “Gnostic”) views. King is careful to note that it is the *meaning* of martyrdom that is at stake for various groups rather than a simple dichotomy of embracing or shying away from it. In conceiving of these texts as part of a new kind of genre which could be thought of as “preparation for martyrdom” texts,¹⁶⁵ King points out that not only the actual content of a particular text but also its grouping as well as the order of texts within a codex that may be significant in the elaboration and nuancing of certain themes in relation to each other. She notes that not only the *Gospel of Judas* but the two texts which precede it, the *Letter of Peter to Philip* and the *First Apocalypse of James*, articulate views about the meaning of martyrdom. Thus, the codex as a whole reflects a range of perspectives regarding martyrdom for the readers to consider. In the *Gospel of Judas*, the idea that sacrifice is pleasing to God is angrily challenged. Both Jesus and Judas suffer and die at the hands of others. However, for King, their deaths are not portrayed as meaningful sacrifices. She notes that an actual reason for even Jesus’ suffering is not explicitly given. In the *Letter of Peter to Philip* and the *First Apocalypse of James*, encouragement is given to those who are facing martyrs’ deaths. In short, if one is able to understand and accept Jesus’ true teaching, one will be freed from fear, able to act and to preach the gospel, and also able to accept death with equanimity. In the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, it is the apostles themselves who are

¹⁶⁴ King, “Martyrdom and Its Discontents,” 23–42.

¹⁶⁵ King, “Martyrdom and Its Discontents,” 24.

given this message. By contrast, in the *Gospel of Judas*, “the twelve” are severely admonished for participating in evil acts and abominable sacrifices to a false god. In a sense, then, this text, poses a strong counterpoint not only to others in the Tchacos Codex but to one such as Ignatius’ *Letter to the Romans*. King insightfully remarks: “What sets these Christians apart is not that they sought to avoid martyrdom nor were not put to death as Christians, but rather that the meaning they gave to their suffering and deaths was distinctive.”¹⁶⁶ In all three texts, however, Jesus reveals to one or more of his apostles that the true and immortal self is not the same as the body. Even if the body suffers, this is not necessarily the ultimate fate of the soul. King’s overall thesis—that understanding the *Gospel of Judas* as one of a number of texts which provide insight into the array of attitudes regarding martyrdom and a variety of responses as to how to face it—is most helpful for the larger project of elucidating early Christian attitudes toward the care of the soul. Moreover, her insight into the fact that a number of authors emphasize the importance of receiving, understanding, and accepting the teaching of Jesus is likewise crucial for conceptualizing early Christian notions regarding the care of the soul. Such an insight resonates with those of Dunderberg regarding Jesus’ teaching about the therapy of emotions.

Marvin Meyer, too, notes an insight similar to King’s. Citing a private conversation with Rodolphe Kasser, he notes that all the texts in Codex Tchacos are similar in that they relate discussions and revelations that Jesus has with various people

¹⁶⁶ King, “Martyrdom and Its Discontents,” 41.

before his crucifixion. They also “are unified in their common concern for death and life in this world and beyond.”¹⁶⁷

Alistair Logan likewise discusses the other documents included with the *Gospel of Judas* and reflects on the choice of these particular texts and what significance their order in the codex as a whole could have had for those that wrote and read them. He, too, notes that all of the texts involve revelations to disciples and that those texts in which Peter and James figure prominently come first in the codex. These two were well-known for having suffered persecution and martyrdom. The dominant themes seem to center around how one overcomes suffering and how one deals with persecution. Whether one should seek it, avoid it, or merely endure what comes are all questions for discussion.¹⁶⁸

Finally, Stephen Emmels weighs in on the significance of the *Gospel of Judas* regarding preparation for martyrdom:

And is there not also a still deeper message? Perhaps the reader is also meant to be ready to betray the man or woman that bears his or her own spirit, to be a betrayer of his or her own body. I wonder if the *Gospel of Judas*, because of its focus on Judas *the betrayer*, is not finally a work about death. I wonder if its message is not finally that the reader *need not be afraid of death*, just as Jesus is portrayed in this gospel as not in the least concerned about the coming sacrifice of ‘the man who bears’ him.¹⁶⁹

He goes on to say, “If the reader is meant somehow to identify with Judas, then he (or she) is also meant in some sense to be a betrayer.”¹⁷⁰ He continues:

¹⁶⁷ Meyer, “Interpreting Judas: Ten Passages in the *Gospel of Judas*,” 43, n. 6.

¹⁶⁸ Logan, “The Tchacos Codex: Another Document of the Gnostics?” 3–21.

¹⁶⁹ Emmels, “The Presuppositions and the Purpose of the *Gospel of Judas*,” 39.

¹⁷⁰ Emmels, “The Presuppositions and the Purpose of the *Gospel of Judas*,” 38.

But a betrayer of what? Perhaps, metaphorically, a betrayer of “the man that was bearing” the spirit that was Jesus’ essential being. Such a message might have been meant as a call to the reader to reject allegiance to the religious cult of the wonder-working body in which Jesus appeared on earth, which body was killed by crucifixion, and the death of which body is now commemorated by Christians in a ceremony (the eucharist) that the gospels report as having been instituted by Jesus in a scene that the *Gospel of Judas* brilliantly omits by spotlighting Judas on the *outside*, committing his betrayal on the street. Is the reader expected to join Judas in the street, unafraid of the curses that will surely come as a result?¹⁷¹

Definitive answers remain elusive, but the *Gospel of Judas* provides new and valuable insights into the controversies prevailing among Christians in the second and third centuries of the Common Era. Simultaneously, the text provides insight into conversations regarding themes of anger management and other issues related to the care of the soul.

Further Discussion Regarding the Resurrection of the Flesh

All of the texts mentioned above also bear consideration regarding debates over whether the resurrection of the bodies of Christians is a fleshly one, one involving the reconstitution of the very same material parts they had before dying. The *Apocalypse of Peter* criticizes those who believe in a “restored Christ” (74,10) or “cleave to the name of a dead man” (74,14–15). Moreover, the text asserts the triumph of the immortal soul rather than the resurrection of the earthly body, which is ruled by a soul filled with passion: “For every soul of these ages has death assigned to it . . . because it is always a slave, since it is created for its desires” (75,16–20).

In the *Gospel of Judas*, King and Pagels specifically state: “Jesus teaches Judas that at death, the bodies of all human beings will perish—there is no resurrection of the

¹⁷¹ Emmels, “The Presuppositions and the Purpose of the *Gospel of Judas*,” 38–39.

flesh. Only the souls of the great and holy race will be lifted up when their spirits separate from them (8,3–4).”¹⁷² Likewise, they state:

Those disciples who truly understand, like Judas, are the ones who reject the idea that Jesus’s flesh brings salvation. . . . They are the ones who rightly understand Jesus’s teaching in the Gospel of John that “the flesh is useless.” Jesus will be crucified, but it is his ascent to heaven—and the ascent of those he draws with him—that is the true meaning of salvation.¹⁷³

Others, like Jenott, do not see Judas as filled with understanding. His sacrifice of Jesus is an evil act. However, in accordance with a two-natures Christology, it is only the human nature of Jesus that perishes, not the divine spirit. The divine spirit triumphs over death and demons. There is no fleshly resurrection.

In the other three texts, too, different as they are from each other, there is no affirmation of a fleshly resurrection. In the *Testimony of Truth*, the author exhorts the readers/hearers: “Do not expect the carnal resurrection” (36,31). Basilides believes in the transmigration of souls, not a fleshly resurrection. In the fragment of Valentinus, there is not enough context to be sure of the author’s views, but the phrase “have been immortal” implies a belief in a pre-existent soul that will live eternally rather than the resurrection of a fleshly body.

Indeed, fierce controversies over the nature of the resurrection are prevalent in this period. Carolyn Walker Bynum gives a fine exposition of what is at stake in these debates.¹⁷⁴ She helps us to see that the insistence on a fleshly resurrection—and, indeed, the resurrection of exactly the same particles of flesh (or *sarx*) that constituted one’s body

¹⁷² Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 77.

¹⁷³ Pagels and King, *Reading Judas*, 131.

¹⁷⁴ Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 1995.

prior to death—is a theological development of the second century rather than the first. In fact, the doctrine of a fleshly resurrection emerges in the context of persecution. She points out that there existed (and, indeed, exists) a horror of decay and putrefaction. Those facing martyrdom wished for reassurance that even if they were devoured by beasts, burned, or improperly buried, all would be well. Theologians such as Irenaeus and Tertullian spoke to these fears in a very pastoral way, assuring their fellow Christians that God could raise them intact, so to speak.¹⁷⁵

Such a theory actually contrasts with that found in the oldest writings of the New Testament, those of the apostle Paul. Paul clearly lays out a belief in a bodily resurrection in I Corinthians 15, but he characterizes the body prior to death as the “seed” of the transformed, resurrected body. The English translation for this latter body is “spiritual body,” but scholars such as Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Dale Martin explain that such a translation is misleading. The actual phrase is *pneumatic body*. These scholars feel that Paul was influenced by Stoicism, and for the Stoics, *pneuma* was real, tangible matter. Thus, Paul is not saying that the resurrected body is merely spiritual; rather, he feels it is of a different caliber altogether—still altogether material but of a different quality than the fleshly body one has prior to death.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Joyce Salisbury develops this matter further when she discusses the development of the theology of the resurrection of the flesh in the context of persecution. She writes that conceiving of the resurrection in this way resonated with a sense of justice for those facing persecution. See Salisbury, *The Blood of Martyrs*, 2004.

¹⁷⁶ For discussions of the various beliefs regarding resurrection in the New Testament, see Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). I am particularly indebted to Dale Martin for delineating the Stoic understanding of *pneuma* in his lecture entitled “Epistemologies of the Body in the New Testament” at the Rocky Mountains Great Plains SBL/AAR/ASOR luncheon at the Iliff School of Theology, March 19, 2011. For a helpful exposition of distinctions in the various early Christian conceptions of the resurrection, see also Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Considered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

It is important to recognize that to speak of the resurrection of the flesh is to reflect a particular theological choice. It may be that those who believed in Jesus as the healer of the emotions but who did not believe in a fleshly resurrection simply could not accept the development of the kinds of theology reflected in the writings of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others, and indeed, in the passages of *1 Clement*, the *Letters of Ignatius*, and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* discussed in chapter two. However, in voicing their concerns and presenting alternate views, allying themselves with the Pauline conception of the resurrection, they disrupted the discourse of martyrdom and the suffering self, which was gaining enormous momentum—as Judith Perkins traces in *The Suffering Self*. Such debates have come down to us as doctrinally based, but indeed, they may well have been rooted in different practices and conceptions regarding the best way to care for the soul.

One important caveat is in order. Groups that tended to place their emphasis on a kind of spiritual transformation emphasizing the therapy of the emotions were not necessarily disloyal to the faith or lacking in courage or a willingness to endure martyrdom. Indeed, as we have seen, the reader/hearer is exhorted in various ways not to be afraid of anything, including death. Rather, they simply may not have seen such practices as most conducive to the practice of their faith. Indeed, the emotional theatrics and drama associated with the practices of voluntary martyrdom may have seemed to be in direct conflict with the disassociation from the emotions advocated in philosophical circles.¹⁷⁷ Dunderberg himself notes that the opponents were not balanced or neutral in

¹⁷⁷ Certainly this was an issue for the Stoics, and perhaps the Valentinians felt similarly. As mentioned above, the Stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius remarks in *Meditations* 11.3, “What a soul that is which is ready, if at any moment it must be separated from the body, and ready either to be extinguished or dispersed or

presenting the views of those with whom they disagreed, completely failing to mention the presence of moral exhortation and focusing instead on issues of difference.¹⁷⁸

Moss astutely notes that the discursive strategies of both Clement and Irenaeus have been unwittingly assumed as factual and used to

[marshal] support for a rather sharp divide between orthodox Christians, who practiced martyrdom, and Gnostics, who avoided it. Elaborations of this binary have drawn in contrasting concerns about the body, resurrection, and creation as ways to flesh out these different positions The contention that Gnostics disregarded both the body and martyrdom has been largely adopted by martyrdom scholars . . . who [have] argued that the Gnostics were opposed to martyrdom on principle. This recapitulation of Clement's Gnostic/orthodox binary both obscures the thickly braided discourse of martyrdom in antiquity and advances an agenda that reifies and denigrates the Gnostics. The contributions of Gnosticism or Gnostic texts to the discourse of martyrdom in the early church are ripe for reconsideration.¹⁷⁹

In conclusion, one has to ask why the disagreements are so fierce. Ultimately, all the groups involved in the debates believe in Jesus—he is represented as *alive*—and none of the texts discussed here portray him as merely a good man who was put to death and remained in his grave. They all depict him as their leader, model, redeemer, or revealer of the divine. However, not all early Christians buy into the discourse of the glorification of martyrdom and suffering that was often linked to the idea that Christ was transformed in the flesh. PHEME PERKINS comments insightfully:

The distinction between the Gnostic and the undefiled Savior that is introduced in *I ApocJas* presents a problem that will come to preoccupy theologians in later centuries. What is the relationship between Jesus and the humanity he came to save? Both Gnostic and orthodox Christians begin with the presupposition of the

continue to exist; but so that this readiness comes from a man's own judgment, not from mere obstinacy, as with the Christians, but considerately and with dignity and in a way to persuade another, without tragic show." See Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, 285.

¹⁷⁸ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 8–10.

¹⁷⁹ Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 157–158.

sinlessness of Jesus. However, when sin is associated with defilement by bodily and psychic (the passions) reality, then the Savior cannot be caught in the same trap as humanity. So Gnostics minimalize the connection between the Savior and the body required for his presence in this world. Some even go so far as to argue that he never took the final step of assuming a mortal body at all. He merely used the psychic one. He does not have to assume the former, since he has not descended to save what is material (cf. *Haer* I 6,1). Though people today are uncomfortable with the picture of an impassible savior that resulted from this division, it corresponds to a widespread ascetic ideal in Gnostic, Christian, and philosophical circles. The perfected soul represents the *apatheia* of God.¹⁸⁰

Perkins's insight regarding "the perfected soul" as representing "the *apatheia* of God" is most illuminating. This passage is also helpful in seeing the difficulty of escaping interpretation of Gnostic texts through presuppositions such as their inherent Docetism even by scholars as astute as Perkins, whose work has been seminal in paving the way for appreciation of these texts. Whether Gnostics were actually Docetists or whether they ascribed to a two-natures Christology is, of course, a point discussed above. They may have been "minimaliz[ing] the connection" no more or less than proto-orthodox figures who held this position.

Elaine Pagels also discusses the fact that the theology of the Gnostics differed from that of Irenaeus, wondering

But what is so heretical, so dangerous, so blasphemous, about this interpretation of Christian doctrine? I am convinced that we cannot find the answer to this question as long as we consider controversies between orthodoxy and heresy, as scholars traditionally have, exclusively in terms of the history of dogma. When we investigate the writings of the "fathers of the church" and of their gnostic contemporaries to see how Christology actually functions in each type of literature, we may see that it involves specific practical issues—often social and political ones—as well. Specifically, controversy over the interpretation of Christ's passion and death involves, for Christians of the first and second centuries, an urgent practical question: how are believers to respond to persecution, which raises the imminent possibility of their [?] *own* suffering and death?

¹⁸⁰ Perkins, *Gnostic Dialogue*, 185–86.

Irenaeus' defense of martyrdom is precisely the context of his attack on gnostic views of Christ's passion (*Haer.* 3.16.1–3.18.5).¹⁸¹ Thus, such a comment brings us full circle to the thesis of chapter one: that in focusing on practices regarding the care of the soul rather than the history of doctrine, many useful insights can be gleaned regarding the competing visions of early Christian groups and the falsely simplistic opposition between “Gnosticism” and “orthodoxy” can be exposed.

¹⁸¹ Pagels, “Gnostic and Orthodox Views of Christ's Passion,” 265.

**CHAPTER FOUR: COMPLEMENTARY REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CARE
OF THE SOUL IN THE *GOSPEL OF MARY* AND THE *MARTYRDOM OF
PERPETUA AND FELICITY***

Like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved.

—Traditional African spiritual¹

Thus far, we have explored the significance the care of the soul as a concept in Greco-Roman antiquity. Foucault has illuminated the manner in which it dominated philosophical discourse, arguing that “the care of the soul” is the overarching theme around which Greco-Roman philosophical discourse circulates. In particular, as scholars continue to reveal the influence of Stoic thought on the early Christianities, its pervasiveness becomes clearer, especially in discourse regarding the therapy of emotions (see chapter one). In the Greco-Roman world and especially in the Stoic thought that influenced the writers of the New Testament and of Christian texts of the first three

¹ This particular sentence is a conflation of two verses: the beginning of Ps 1:3 (“They are like trees planted by streams of water”) and Ps 62:2 (“[God] alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken”). As I became more aware of the way in which ancient texts equate immovability with emotional stability, I realized that I had encountered this theme as a child when my congregation sang a chorus containing this line.

centuries of the Common Era,² such care of the soul entailed engaging in “technologies of the self” that constituted participation in the therapy of emotions. With Caroline Walker Bynum, we have also explored the way in which care of the soul morphed into care of the body and became associated with an emphasis on a fleshly resurrection in the context of persecution and martyrdom. In this social milieu, the discourse of the suffering self emerged and proved crucial in the formation of proto-orthodox Christian identity, as Judith Perkins helped us see. Eventually, as G. E. M. de Ste. Croix and Paul Middleton argue, martyrdom was glorified to such a degree that some even desired it (chapter two). Third, we have shown how such glorification was disrupted by the discourses of texts that continued to see the Christ as the one who effected the care of the soul as the therapy of emotions (being “cured” or “healed” of passions) needed for the transcendence of the immortal soul into higher, heavenly realms upon its release from the earthly body. This approach also emphasized the extirpation of emotions such as fear and anger but without glorifying suffering and martyrdom (chapter three). In this chapter, we explore the implications of the varying attitudes toward the care of the soul for women in the early Christianities.

Once we understand and acknowledge the significance of the care of the soul and the role that technologies of the self played in Greco-Roman thought during the first three centuries of the Common Era, we are able to recognize these themes in Christian texts including those that represent women in these terms—as those who have successfully engaged in a specific kind of the care of the soul (the therapy of emotions) and have been

² See discussion in previous chapters. An excellent reference for exploring this issue is Rasimus, Engberg-Pedersen, and Dunderberg, *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, 2010).

“healed,” or “cured,” of their passions, particularly the emotions of fear and anger, through their interactions with the Savior. It is rather remarkable that these texts represent women as examples par excellence of such a cure and the spiritual maturity it connotes,³ given a cultural predisposition to depict women as weaker than men.⁴

³ Of course, one can never make sweeping, general statements regarding the status of women but must carefully nuance such discussions. Erika Mohri makes this case well with regard to Mary Magdalene in *Maria Magdalena: Frauenbilder in Evangelientexten des 1. bis 3. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert 2000), 11. Assessing the roles of women in early Christian texts often categorized as gnostic has been the subject of considerable discussion. See James E. Goehring, “Libertine or Liberated: Women in the So-Called Libertine Gnostic Communities,” in *Women in Early Christianity*, ed. David M. Scholer, vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays* (New York: Garland, 1993), 183–98, previously published in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism* (ed. Karen L. King; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 329–44; Lynne C. Boughton, “From Pious Legend to Feminist Fantasy,” *JR* 71 (1991): 362–83; Jo Ann McNamara, “Sexual Equality and the Cult of Virginitly in Early Christian Thought,” in *Women in Early Christianity* (ed. David M. Scholer; vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney; New York: Garland, 1993), 219–32; Elizabeth A. Clark, “Holy Women, Holy Words: Early Christian Women, Social History, and the ‘Linguistic Turn,’” *J ECS* 6 (1998): 413–30; Shelly Matthews, “Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography,” *JFSR* 17.2 (2001): 39–55; Robert L. Wilken, *Remembering the Christian Past* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 141.

⁴ Plato (ca. 429–347 B.C.E.), for example, was open to educating women and allowing them to fulfill leadership roles if suited to doing so (*Resp.* 5.451b–457b), but in the *Timaeus* he recounts a creation myth that portrays women as the manifestations of men who lived immorally and so are reborn to an inferior status as women as a kind of punishment (42b–c). See Plato, *Timaeus* (trans. Donald Zeyl; Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000). Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) assumes the cultural norms of his time—that women are inferior, weaker, and subordinate, passive receivers of that which creates life (*The Generation of Animals*, 726 b30, 729 a20–30). He also states that the soul comes from the man (738 b25–26). Moreover, “the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind” (*Pol.* 1254 b13–15), and men are more fit to rule: “A husband and father . . . rules over wife and children . . . For although there may be exceptions to the order of nature, the male is by nature fitter for command than the female” (*Pol.* 1259 a39–1259 b3). For a useful overview of passages reflecting Greco-Roman philosophers’ views of women including some of those above, see Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation* (2d ed.; Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 38–54. Also, Clement of Alexandria firmly expresses the belief that men are more active and superior to women (*Paed.* 3.3.19, 1). In particular, he comments that a man full of vice is still superior to even a virtuous woman. See *Strom.* 4.8. For a classic, general introduction, see Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), esp. 93–119. See also Julia O’Faolain and Lauro Martines, eds., *Not in God’s Image: Women in History from the Greeks to the Victorians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), esp. 1–33. See also Nancy Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman’s Nature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). See also the discussion by Gail P. C. Streete, *Redeemed Bodies: Women Martyrs in Early Christianity* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 14–24, 126–29.

In this chapter, we juxtapose the roles of two early Christian women, Mary Magdalene and Perpetua of Carthage as represented in the *Gospel of Mary*⁵ and the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*,⁶ respectively, two early Christian texts probably

⁵ Carl Reinhardt bought the manuscript that contains the most complete version of the text (in what is known as the Papyrus Berolinensis or Codex Berolinensis [BG] 8502 from a Cairo antiquities dealer in 1896, but it was not actually published until 1955. A burst water pipe destroyed the edition prepared by Reinhardt as it lay in the editing house, and then the outbreak of the two world wars further delayed publication. The first published version of the Coptic text appeared in 1955 alongside a German translation: W. C. Till, *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502: Zweite, erweiterte Auflage bearbeitet von Hans-Martin Schenke* (TU 60; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972). There are two other published Coptic editions of the text as well. One is in the series in which the Nag Hammadi codices were published even though this work is *not* among those found near Nag Hammadi: R. McL. Wilson and G. W. MacRae, “The Gospel according to Mary BG, I: 7,1–19,5,” in *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2–5 and VI with Papyrus Berlinensis 8502,1 and 4* (ed. D. M. Parrott; NHS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 453–71. An English translation is included as well. The other is that of Anne Pasquier in *L’Evangile selon Marie*, (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section “Textes” 10; Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1983). This contains a French translation. There are two other existing manuscripts, although each consists of only a short fragment: the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus (POxy) 3525 and the Rylands Papyrus (PRyl) 463. The first edition of the former is P. J. Parsons, “3525: *Gospel of Mary*,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1983), 50:12–14, and the latter is C. H. Rylands Library, “463: *The Gospel of Mary*,” in *Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester University Press, 1938), 3:18–23. The most recent critical edition of the text is that by Christopher Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 86–118. Tuckett also provides a good overview of the different manuscripts and translations, 3–9. Karen King has also provided a careful, inclusive, English translation in *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2003), 13–18, which is the one used for quotations in the chapter. Another noteworthy English translation is that of Esther A. de Boer in *The Gospel of Mary: Listening to the Beloved Disciple* (London: Continuum, 2005), 18–21.

⁶ There are both Latin and Greek manuscripts of this *passio*, or martyrdom account. Lucas Holstenius discovered the most complete Latin version in 1661 at the Benedictine Monastery at Monte Cassino. Rendel Harris found the Greek one in 1889 at the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. See discussion in the most recent critical edition: Jacqueline Amat, *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité suivi de Actes* (Sources Chrétiennes 417; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996), 84–88. See also Rex D. Butler, *The New Prophecy and “New Visions”: Evidence of Montanism in The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 2–3. However, most scholars agree that the Latin text is older than the Greek. See J. Armitage Robinson, ed., *The Passion of S. Perpetua in Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature*, 1, no. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891; repr., Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967), 1–9. In the *Acta Minora*, there are also two shorter versions that are included in Amat’s critical edition. These contain some textual variants. For example, Perpetua is depicted as less sympathetic to her father’s pleas and more willing to reject her son. These changes are intriguing and may reflect an attempt to make her transgression of existing social norms less palatable and acceptable to readers in a post-Constantinian world where Christianity had been accepted but where Roman social norms regarding the family were still firmly ensconced. See Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 49–72. However, these differences are not of direct relevance for this chapter. All citations for the discussion in this chapter are from the widely used critical edition of the longer, Latin text into English: Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 106–31. Musurillo’s translation of Perpetua’s account of her time in prison and her visions (though not the account of her ordeal in the arena) are also in the widely accessible Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome*, 313–18.

written within roughly a century of each other.⁷ The former is one of the only surviving Christian gospels⁸ featuring and focused on a woman, while the latter is a very early example of a Christian text that represents itself as written (at least partially) by a woman.⁹ Mary Magdalene has always played a part in the Christian tradition, but

⁷ The martyrdom of Perpetua is usually dated to 203 C.E., and the text recounting it has been traditionally thought to date to about this time. See Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, xxvi–xxvii; Barnes, “Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*,” 521–25. For discussion of the complexity of the dating and textual issues, however, see Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 130–32. However, dating the *Gospel of Mary* is problematic. Most scholars date it to the second century C.E. Karen King dates it to the first half of the second century based on the fact that debates about women’s authority in Christianity were particularly heated then. See *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 184. See also p. 628 of Karen L. King, “Gospel of Mary Magdalene,” in *A Feminist Commentary* (ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; vol. 2 of *Searching the Scriptures*; New York: Crossroad, 1994), 601–34. Anne Pasquier dates it to the second half of the second century, a date that would place its composition closer to that of the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*. See *L’Évangile selon Marie*, 3–4. Dating of early Christian texts is difficult. Karen King discusses the circularity in reasoning that sometimes occurs in the process (*Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 184).

⁸ For a discussion of what the term *gospel* actually means, see Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990). In the case of the *Gospel of Mary*, the text contains a colophon at the end containing the exact phrase “Gospel of Mary.”

⁹ It is highly probable that Christian women were writing long before 200 C.E. However, unfortunately, many Christian texts have been lost or suppressed. Christoph Marksches notes that Theodor Mommsen, the renowned nineteenth-century classicist at the University of Berlin, once wrote that an estimated 85% of known second-century texts no longer remained. See “Lehrer, Schüler, Schule: Zur Bedeutung einer Institution für das antike Christentum,” in *Religiöse Vereine in der römischen Antike. Untersuchungen zu Organization, Ritual und Raumordnung* (ed. Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser and Alfred Schäfer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 97–120. Secondly, it is impossible to know whether Perpetua herself wrote the account. Many commentators feel it is not unreasonable to assume that we may believe the editor when he/she tells us: “Now from this point on the entire account of her ordeal is her own, according to her own ideas and in the way that she herself wrote it down” (8.2). Both Jacqueline Amat and Åke Fridh carefully examine this issue. See Amat, *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité suivi de Actes*, 19–27; Åke Fridh, *Le problème de la passion des Saintes Perpétue et Félicité* (*Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensis* 26; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1968), 5, 8, 83. See also Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 132–33. Francine Cardman reminds us that “regardless of how they are titled or whom they include, the acts of the martyrs do not allow direct access to the experience of those memorialized. Rather, the reader views their passion through the scrim of the authors’ sensibilities—their perceptions of the martyrs and their estimate of their audience’s expectations.” See “Acts of the Women Martyrs,” in *Women in Early Christianity* (ed. David M. Scholer; vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney; New York: Garland, 1993), 98–99. However, what is important for our purposes are the way in which Perpetua is represented within the text regardless of whether or not she actually wrote it down. Some have thought Tertullian to be the editor: P. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913), 345–53. However, this hypothesis currently enjoys less scholarly support. See Butler, *New Prophecy and “New Visions,”* 49–57, 156–60.

theologians with a patriarchal bias¹⁰ distorted her role in the New Testament gospels and other early Christian texts¹¹ grossly over the centuries.¹² However, over the past three decades contemporary scholars have rediscovered and reexamined early Christian texts that represent her as a strong leader, bringing her role as the apostle to the apostles into sharper focus.¹³ Likewise, Perpetua's story of courageous resistance and bravery in facing martyrdom has long been a part of Christian history and inspired Christians

¹⁰ The seminal work that provides an articulate overview of this issue is Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (tenth-anniversary ed.; New York: Crossroad, 2004).

¹¹ Many early Christian texts include Mary: the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of John, the *Epistula Apostolorum*, the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Secret Gospel of Mark*, the *Coptic Gospel of Thomas* (NHC II,2), the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (BG 8502 and NHC III,4), *Eugnostos the Blessed* (NHC III,3 and V,1), the last part of the *Codex Askewianus*, the *Pistis Sophia*, the *Dialogue of the Savior* (NHC III,5), the Gospel of Philip (NHC II,3), the *Manichaean Psalms*, and the *Acts of Philip*. See François Bovon, "Le privilège pascal de Marie-Madeleine" *NTS* 30 (1984): 50–62, translated by Jane Haapiseva-Hunter as "Mary Magdalene's Paschal Privilege," in *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives* (PTMS 36; Allison Park, Pa: Pickwick, 1995), 147–57, 228–35.

¹² The many, varying representations of Mary Magdalene through the centuries are detailed in Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993). See also Ingrid Maisch, *Between Contempt and Veneration . . . Mary Magdalene: The Image of a Woman Through the Centuries* (trans. Linda M. Mahoney; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1998). The distortion of Mary's representation from that of a courageous apostle, teacher, and leader to that of an emotional, passion-filled prostitute in a sermon by Gregory the Great is particularly arresting. See Jane Schaberg, "How Mary Magdalene Became a Whore: Mary Magdalene Is in Fact the Primary Witness to the Fundamental Data of Early Christian Faith," *BRev* 8 (1992): 30–37, 51–52; Jane Schaberg, *The Resurrection of Mary Magdalene: Legends, Apocrypha, and the Christian Testament* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 65–120. For a compelling argument regarding Mary's apostleship which underscores her essential role as a witness, see Ann Graham Brock, *Mary Magdalene, The First Apostle: The Struggle for Authority* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). For an insightful overview of the depiction of Mary Magdalene in the medieval period, see Katherine L. Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹³ While it is hard to date the resurgence of her apostolic role precisely, François Bovon's article listing the early Christian texts in which she is mentioned seemed to have been extremely important in this regard. Certainly, the questioning of the legitimacy of conflating her with the prostitute mentioned in Luke 7:37–50 begins much earlier, notably in the Reformation with John Calvin as well as a French priest, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, in the Counter Reformation. See Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor*, 26, 248–51.

through the centuries.¹⁴ However, her representation also contains certain troubling ambiguities, which are discussed below.

As we use feminist theology, postmodern critical theory, and historiography to pay attention to discursive strategies used to represent Mary and Perpetua, we see that the depictions in both texts provide rich, complex opportunities for reflecting on the ways in which they function as models of those who have achieved a goal much admired in their Greco-Roman cultural context—a “cure” from their enslavement to passions such as anger and fear. Of course, postmodern historiography helps us to understand the difficulty of recovering a historical Mary Magdalene or a historical Perpetua. We read with the understanding that texts are *representations* and that issues of power are always present in the ways that human beings are portrayed as well as in the way each generation interprets these portrayals. Through the lens of the care of the soul, however, powerful new understandings emerge regarding the way in which Mary Magdalene and Perpetua function as model disciples: steadfast, loyal, courageous, fearless, and lacking in anger toward those who persecute them.

The Representation of Mary Magdalene in the *Gospel of Mary*

The foremost example of a woman who demonstrates emotional stability is Mary Magdalene.¹⁵ The *Gospel of Mary* provides a particularly strong representation of her

¹⁴ Theologians in the early church including Tertullian, Augustine, and Quodvulteus remark favorably on her courage, though, at the same time, they carefully qualify her leadership role. For good overviews of the reception history of Perpetua, see Joyce Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 149–79, 204–08; Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 49–72, 132–36.

¹⁵ The word *Magdalene* does not appear in the text; however, most scholars recognize this Mary as the Magdalene. See Karen L. King, “Why All the Controversy: Mary in the *Gospel of Mary*,” in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition* (ed. F. Stanley Jones; SBLSymS 19; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 53–74. See also Antti Marjanen’s piece in the same volume, “The Mother of Jesus or the

character in terms of the care of the soul and the therapy of the emotions. This text is the only surviving gospel whose title contains the name of a woman¹⁶ and is most likely a text composed in the second century C.E.¹⁷ Most scholars judge the genre to be a postresurrection dialogue,¹⁸ although Judith Hartenstein has argued that the vision Mary relates may be one that she had prior to the Savior's death even if she is recounting it in a postresurrection context.¹⁹ The key thing to focus on for our purposes is that the author of the *Gospel of Mary* represents Mary Magdalene as steadfast, resolute, and calm.²⁰ The keys to seeing that the author of the text represents Mary Magdalene as one who has successfully engaged in the therapy of emotions are noticing (a) the vocabulary the writer chooses in representing her (as one who did not “waver”), (b) the role the writer ascribes to her in the first part of the manuscript (as a courageous disciple who stands, faces the male disciples, and boldly exhorts them to preach the gospel in spite of their fear of possible persecution), (c) the fact that she is considered worthy of receiving a vision

Magdalene? The Identity of Mary in the So-Called Gnostic Christian Texts,” 31–41. For a dissenting view, see the accompanying article by Stephen Shoemaker, “A Case of Mistaken Identity? Naming the Gnostic Mary,” 5–30. For general discussion of this issue, see Tuckett, *Gospel of Mary*, 14–18.

¹⁶ See the interesting discussion of this in De Boer, *The Gospel of Mary*, 93–94.

¹⁷ As with many ancient texts, it is hard to date the *Gospel of Mary* precisely (as discussed above).

¹⁸ See Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue*, 1980. See also King, “Gospel of Mary Magdalene,” 602; Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1978), 15; King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 29–34; and Tuckett, *Gospel of Mary*, 31–41. For general discussion of this genre, see James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*.

¹⁹ Judith Hartenstein, *Die Zweite Lehre: Erscheinungen des Auferstandenen als Rahmenerzählungen frühchristlicher Dialoge* (TUGAL 146; Berlin: Akademie, 2000), 128–30, 152–55. Karen King discusses Hartenstein's view on pp. 64–65 in “Why All the Controversy,” 53–74, and in *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 174–75, 209.

²⁰ Toward the end, she weeps (10.5), but this does not necessarily undermine the strength of her depiction as a whole, a point discussed at more length below.

(characteristic of one who is “healed” of her passions), and (d) the particular content of that vision (a description of the ascent of the soul to a place of rest and stability).

The Positive Connotation of Not Wavering

In the text, the Savior praises Mary Magdalene “for not wavering” (7.3) when she saw him in a vision.²¹ The Coptic phrase is ATKIM and in Greek would be *asaleutos*.²² In fact, this short phrase had significant, positive philosophical connotations. Ancient Greco-Roman writers applied the designation of being unwavering or immovable to objects, races, and as in this case, to individual persons.²³ To be unwavering had the connotation of being emotionally stable and free of the volatile, shifting sensations caused by the passions. In fact, the very term *passion* had strongly negative associations. As Long and Sedley explain, passion represented “the source of unhappiness, wrongdoing and the flaws of character which issue in wrong-doing.” Four passions were

²¹ All citations come from Karen King’s inclusive translation in *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 2003.

²² See De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 75–76.

²³ Michael A. Williams has traced the concept of immovability and its relationship to being free of passion extensively. See Williams, *Immovable Race*, 1985. His main focus is the illumination of the term *immovable race* in Sethian writings, but he provides extensive support for the positive connotation that being motionless, or *asaleutos*, had in a wide variety of both Jewish and Greco-Roman philosophical contexts. Throughout this section, I am greatly indebted to his discussion and his translations of certain key passages in ancient texts. See especially pp. 8–9, 27–28, 55, 77, 114–15, 128, and 178–79. Esther de Boer’s discussion of Stoic influences on the *Gospel of Mary* has also been very helpful. See especially chapter three, “Character and Purpose of the *Gospel of Mary*,” in *The Gospel of Mary*, 35–59 as well as pp. 71 and 76–78. De Boer also discusses these issues in “A Stoic Reading of the *Gospel of Mary*: The Meaning of ‘Matter’ and ‘Nature’ in *Gospel of Mary* 7.1–8.11,” in *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 199–219. For an insightful discussion of the influence of Stoicism and Stoic notions of *apatheia* on the *Gospel of Mary*, see also King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 43–47. One of the first to argue for the influence of Stoicism on the *Gospel of Mary* is Anne Pasquier (though she focuses on cosmology rather than the therapy of emotions per se): see pages 48–56 of “L’eschatologie dans *L’Évangile selon Marie*: étude des notions de nature et d’image,” in *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22–25 août 1978)* (Ed. B. Barc; Québec: Les Presses de Université Laval, 1981), 390–404.

considered primary: “appetite, pleasure, fear, and distress.”²⁴ Long and Sedley go on to explain that the passion of appetite included anger, and those of fear and distress included hesitancy and confusion as well as jealousy, grief, worry, and annoyance. A quote from Philo of Alexandria captures the negative view of passion well: “For the soul faints and loses all power through passion when it receives from the body the flood of tossing surge caused by the storm wind which sweeps down in its fury, driven on by unbridled appetite” (*Prelim. Studies* 60 [Colson and Whitaker]). Michael Williams describes the beliefs of ancient thinkers this way:

the instability excited by the archons and demons takes its characteristic form in the churning nausea of deep-seated passions (grief, fear, desire, anger, etc.)—as difficult to root out as ingested bacteria. These turbulent passions, aroused deep within the individual, had to be eradicated in order for one to be perfect and therefore “immovable.”²⁵

In fact, God himself was thought to be perfect and thus completely immovable in this sense. Philo of Alexandria, for example, says that “so vast in its excess is the *stability* of the Deity that he imparts to chosen natures a share of his steadfastness to be their richest possession” (*Dreams* 2.223 [Colson and Whitaker, LCL]; emphasis added). Later, Clement of Alexandria discusses the pillar of fire that led the Hebrews in the wilderness (mentioned in Exod 13:21) as a reflection of “God’s *stable permanence* and his unchanging light, which no form can catch” (*Strom.* 1.163.6 [Ferguson]; emphasis added). Thus, humans who exhibited this kind of stability were also admired greatly.

²⁴ Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1:419. See also Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” 129–77.

²⁵ Williams, *Immovable Race*, 152. Here Williams is discussing the representation of the passions in the *Apocryphon of John*. Christopher Tuckett notes possible parallels between the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Gospel of Mary* in his critical edition on pp. 175–180.

In addition, Greco-Roman texts contain portrayals of various male heroes described in terms of their immovability (with physical stability symbolizing emotional strength of character). The followers of Socrates, for example, described him as standing immovable in contemplation for twenty-four hours at a time. Later, Iamblichus, a third-century Syrian Neoplatonist, describes Pythagoras as making a voyage in which he remained in the same position without moving for three nights without eating or sleeping (*Vit. Pythag.* 16).²⁶

Jewish texts also describe heroes in this way. For example, Philo of Alexandria portrays Abraham and Moses²⁷ in terms of their standing fixed and immovable before God in Gen 18:22 (when Abraham stands before the Lord while the guests he has just hosted turn toward Sodom in order to destroy it) and Deut 5:31 (when Moses continues to stand beside the Lord on Mount Sinai to receive the commandments) respectively.²⁸

Philo says of Abraham,

for when should we expect a mind to stand and no longer sway as on the balance save when it is opposite God, seeing and being seen. For it gets its equipoise from these two sources: from seeing, because when it sees the Incomparable it does not yield to the counter pull of things like itself; from being seen, because the mind which the Ruler judges worthy to come within His sight He claims for the solely best, that is for Himself (*Dreams* 2.226–27 [Colson and Whitaker]).

²⁶ See discussion in Williams, *Immovable Race*, 6, 28.

²⁷ It is interesting that Philo chooses Moses since Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land because he struck a rock in anger and, in this sense, did not demonstrate control over his passion. See Num 20:11.

²⁸ See also discussion in Williams, *Immovable Race*, 27; De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 76–77; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (twentieth-anniversary ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 31–32.

With regard to Moses, Philo says, “For that which draws near to God enters into affinity with what is, and through that immutability becomes self-standing” (2.228). Williams summarizes Philo’s position well:

Persons such as Moses, wise men, filled with virtue, belong to a group whom God draws to himself and grants participation in his own stability. They belong to a group which God has firmly fixed near himself—like Moses to whom he said, “Stand here by me” (Deut. 5:31, SAC 8). Philo is particularly interested in the ethical dimensions of this—the instability of the fool tossed by passions vs. the immovability of virtue and the wise men who possess it. But the achievement of ethical excellence is portrayed by Philo as an *ascent* to the Olympian realm of virtue (*Post.* 31) where divine stability is to be found. Those who follow virtue are set above everything that is earthly and mortal (*Det. pot. ins.* 114). Like Moses, they “stand at rest, firm and unwaveringly, in God alone” (*Ques. Exod.* frag 11, trans. Loeb Classical Library).²⁹

Philo was, of course, writing in the first century of the Common Era, but at the end of the third century C.E., many of the Christian apologists continued to appropriate the thought of Philo, and the Christian Clement of Alexandria makes the same point that Philo did with regard to Abraham and Moses.³⁰

In some of the writings that Christians adopted, the ability to “not be moved” is an ideal as well, particularly in the Psalms. In Psalms 15:5, those who live righteously “shall never be moved.” Likewise, Psalms 21:7 says that the king who “trusts in the Lord” and experiences “the steadfast love of the Most High . . . shall not be moved.”

In the New Testament, too, one also finds references to immovability. Second Thessalonians 2:2 contains an exhortation “not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter.” Likewise, the writer of James 1:6–8 admonishes the readers in terms reminiscent of Philo’s: “But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one

²⁹ Williams, *Immovable Race*, 76.

³⁰ Williams, *Immovable Race*, 55.

who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.”³¹

As we move into Christian texts of the first centuries of the Common Era, we find a continuation of this theme. Ignatius of Antioch, for example, commends the church in Smyrna as “wise” by saying, “I observed that you are established in an *unshakeable* faith, having been nailed, as it were, to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ in both body and spirit, and *firmly established* in love by the blood of Christ (*Smyrn.* 1.1; emphasis added).³² Likewise, the narrator of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* carefully notes that Polycarp does not need to be nailed down when the Romans light the fires that will consume his body. He is completely immovable even without physical constraints:

Then the materials prepared for the pyre were placed around him; and as they were also about to nail him, he said, “Leave me as I am; for the one who enables me to endure the fire will also enable me to remain on the pyre without moving” (13.3).

Clement of Alexandria also writes about one transformed by perfect knowledge who ascends mystically into a state of stability: “into the chamber of the Father, to the abode which is truly the Lord’s, to be, as it were, an eternally standing and abiding light, totally immutable” (*Strom.* 7.57.5).

Clement also discusses the Son of God’s lack of passion in his form as the perfect Logos, or “impassible Human” (*Strom.* 7.5.5). Clement says, “He was quite completely without passion, and into him slipped no passionate movement at all, neither pleasure nor

³¹ See discussion in De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 76.

³² As in chapter two, the translation is that of Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2007. Regarding this point, see the discussion in Williams, *Immovable Race*, 149.

grief (*Strom.* 6.71.2). For Clement, Christian perfection lies in becoming like Christ in this way. In fact, he describes the apostles as those who were completely free from passion, remaining in a state of complete self-control after the resurrection of their Savior (6.71.3).

Male Disciples' Fear vs. Mary's Lack of Fear

Interestingly, however, in the *Gospel of Mary*, we do not find the male disciples represented in these glowing terms. Jesus has just appeared to them and told them to go and preach the gospel (8.21–22). After he departs, the text says:

But they were distressed and wept greatly. “How are we going to go out to the rest of the world to announce the good news about the Realm of the child of true Humanity?” they said. “If they did not spare him, how will they spare us?” (5.1–3).³³

As Esther de Boer notes, “the disciples . . . bring forth passion, which arises from their despair, which is a result of focusing on the suffering of Man.”³⁴ In short, the text depicts them in precisely the terms noted above—as fearful, hesitant, confused, and worried.

It is at this point that Mary stands up and exhorts them to be steadfast rather than afraid:

Then Mary stood up. She greeted them all, addressing her brothers and sisters, “Do not weep and be distressed nor let your hearts be irresolute. For his grace will be with you all and will shelter you. Rather, we should praise his greatness, for he has prepared us and made us true Human beings.” When Mary had said these things, she turned their heart [to]ward the Good, and they began to deba[t]e about the wor[d]s of [the Savior] (5.4–9).

³³ It is interesting that the text contains no hint of Docetism, the belief that Christ did not actually suffer and die. Docetism was a common accusation against supposed Gnostics. See Silke Petersen, “*Zerstört die Werke der Weiblichkeit!*”: *Maria Magdalena, Salome und andere Jüngerinnen Jesu in christlich-gnostischen Schriften* (ed. S. Emmel and H. J. Klimkeit; NHMS 48; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 135, n. 197. See also De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 6, and Tuckett, *Gospel of Mary*, 14.

³⁴ De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 89.

In this context, it is clear that the one who embodies a lack of fear and the emotional stability associated with advanced spiritual status is Mary:

Throughout the Gospel, Mary is clearly portrayed as an exemplary disciple. She doesn't falter when the Savior departs. She steps into his place after his departure, comforting, strengthening, and instructing the others. Her spiritual comprehension and maturity are demonstrated in her calm behavior and especially in her visionary experience. These at once provide evidence of her spiritual maturity and form the basis for her legitimate exercise of authority in instructing the other disciples. She does not teach in her own name, but passes on the words of the Savior, calming the disciples and turning their hearts toward the Good. Her character proves the truth of her revelation and by extension authorizes the teaching of the *Gospel of Mary*.³⁵

Thus, it is, in fact, the content of her character that qualifies her as a leader of the disciples.

Indeed, Mary's spiritual status in many ways parallels that of the Savior himself. Esther de Boer notes the similarity of the beginning of the *Gospel of Mary*, in which Jesus speaks and then departs, to the departure of Jesus in Luke 24:50–51; Acts 1:9, and John 14 and 16:16–23, but whereas Jesus himself encourages the disciples to rejoice in the Gospel of John, it is Mary who takes on the role of the encourager in the *Gospel of Mary*.³⁶ Erika Mohri notes that “Mary replaces the sovereign position of the Savior, who has left the disciples” (“tritt Maria souverän an die Stelle des Erlösers, der die

³⁵ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 90. See also pp. 30–31, where King discusses Mary's position as “parallel to that of the Savior.” In fact, King sees the role Mary plays in this first part of the text as that in the first of three dialogues that are embedded within each other in order to draw the reader into increasingly deeper understanding. In this first dialogue, the conversation is between Mary and other disciples, and Mary *instructs* the others. The second layer is one in which Mary models the way a true disciple *acts*, while the third layer describes the triumph of the soul as it moves upward into joy and rest. King remarks: “Both the content and the configuration [of these three layers] lead the reader *inward* toward the stability, power and freedom of the true self, the soul set free from the false powers of ignorance, passion, and death.” In this sense, “the structure of the *Gospel of Mary* reproduces the same message as the Savior's teaching” at the very beginning of the text (4.2 and 4.5–7).

³⁶ De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 24, 89.

Jüngerinnen und Jünger verlassen hat”).³⁷ Christopher Tuckett also draws attention to Mary’s taking over character attributes and activities of Jesus.³⁸ In this sense, Mary is like Christ. However, the *Gospel of Mary* portrays this Christ-likeness in an entirely different manner than the *imitatio Christi* of the martyr accounts (discussed in chapter two). In those cases, the focus is on freedom from passions such as fear and anger and on patient endurance but it is the patient endurance of torture, suffering, and death. In the *Gospel of Mary*, Mary acknowledges those possibilities and advocates for facing them courageously, but the emphasis is on *living* with freedom from passion and refusing enslavement to any of the fears that would constrain one in pursuing a life that fully reflects Christ.³⁹

The idea that the Savior has “made us into human beings” is also an important part of this passage (9.12–24). Using this particular phrase evokes the idea of being free

³⁷ Mohri, *Maria Magdalena*, 265, see also 273. In conversation, Ann Graham Brock has pointed out a similar parallel representation of Mary as stepping into the role of the Savior in her depiction as a shepherdess in the *Manichaean Psalms*. Jesus is frequently depicted as the Good Shepherd in the New Testament. In the *Manichaean Psalms*, Mary is charged with leading eleven male disciples back.

³⁸ See Tuckett, *Gospel of Mary*: “Another possible verbal echo of New Testament language may occur at 9.4–15, where Mary tells the other disciples ‘not to grieve or be irresolute’. . . the language may be similar to that of Matt. 28:17 where the disciples see the risen Jesus ‘but some doubted’. In general terms too, it is agreed by many that, in the *Gospel of Mary*, the figure of Mary takes over many of the characteristics and/or activities of Jesus himself. Hence it is possible that the note about the ‘doubt’ of the disciples (a statement by the author of Matthew, but placed on the lips of Mary here) may be a further link connecting these two passages. Hence the motif of Mary bidding the other disciples not to ‘doubt’ may be a recollection of Matthew’s resurrection scene in Matthew 28” (68–69). With reference to this point, also see Michel Tardieu, *Écrits gnostiques: Codex de Berlin* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1984), 78, and Antti Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi and Related Documents*, (NHMS 40; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 107, n. 53. With reference to the “doubting” of the disciples upon seeing the resurrected Jesus, see *Ap. John* 2.2.10–11; *Treat. Res.* 47.2–3, 36–7, and Christopher Tuckett’s discussion in *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 28, 70. For another point of view, see King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 93–118. King analyzes the *Gospel of Mary* in terms of its intertextuality rather than in terms of specific dependence on the New Testament gospels.

³⁹ For discussion of the way in which the motif of *imitatio Christi* functions in martyr accounts, see Moss, *Other Christs*, 2010.

from the passions. Philo of Alexandria, for example, comments that Gen 6:9 describes Noah as a

righteous human being . . . not according to the common form of speech, to the mortal animal endowed with reason, but to the one, who pre-eminently verifies the name by having expelled from the soul the untamed and frantic passions and the truly beast-like vices (*Abraham* 32 [Colson & Whitaker]).

Interestingly, Michael Williams persuasively argues that texts idealizing the ability to become a “perfect human” or to achieve “immovability” are not distinctively “gnostic.” His discussion of the way these themes pervade Greco-Roman texts and writers such as Plotinus and Philo is illuminating.⁴⁰

Mary as a Disciple Who Did Not Waver

In the next section of the text, Mary begins to describe a vision, and she starts by recounting the Savior’s saying to her, “How wonderful you are for not wavering at seeing me! For where the mind is, there is the treasure” (7.3–4).⁴¹

⁴⁰ See especially Williams, *Immovable Race*, 5–7, 177–79.

⁴¹ At 7.1, the text shifts from the initial appearance of Christ and the ensuing conversation among the disciples to Mary’s recounting of her vision. Scholars have debated whether or not this shift reflects the joining of two texts into a composite one (or insertion of material into the text). Indeed, the editors of the first published edition, Walter Till and Martin Schenke, support this theory. See Till, *Die Gnostischen Schriften*, 26. See also Henri-Charles Puech and Beate Blatz, “The *Gospel of Mary*,” in *Gospels and Related Writings* (ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, trans. and ed. R. McL. Wilson; vol. 1 of *New Testament Apocrypha*; Cambridge: James Clarke and Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 391–95; R. McL. Wilson, “The New Testament and the Gnostic *Gospel of Mary*,” *NTS* 3 (1957): 236–43; Marksches, *Gnosis: An Introduction*, 42. In particular, Anne Pasquier has pointed out the dissonance between Peter’s attitude in the first section, where he calls Mary his sister and asks her to tell them what the Savior has related to her, and the section near the end where he becomes angry and says that surely the Savior did not speak alone with a woman and reveal things to her alone. See *L’Evangile selon Marie*, 7–10, 96–101. However, Antti Marjanen sees Peter’s (and Andrew’s) criticism as more likely pertaining to Mary’s vision than her exhortation at the beginning (*The Woman Jesus Loved*, 103) as does Judith Hartenstein (*Die zweite Lehre*, 136). Others, too, do not necessarily feel the text to be composite, seeing a unity of form and content throughout. See Michel Tardieu, *Écrits gnostiques*, 22–23; G. P. Luttikhuisen, “The Evaluation of the Teaching of Jesus in Christian Gnostic Revelation Dialogues,” *NovT* 30, 1988, 158–68; King, “Gospel of Mary Magdalene,” 626–22; Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved*, 100–104; Petersen, “*Zerstört die Werke*,” 59; Mohri, *Maria Magdalena*, 266–72; De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 15. Understanding this unity is most relevant to the thesis of this chapter, which emphasizes Mary’s representation as a steadfast, emotionally

The fact that the Savior uses the term *not wavering* is very significant.⁴² As mentioned above, the term for *not waver* is ATKIM in Coptic and would be *asaleutos* in Greek, the very term Williams pays such close attention to and traces in his study on immovability. Pheme Perkins notes precisely this point:

When she sees the vision of the Savior, Mary is praised for not wavering. Not wavering or stability is a metaphor . . . derived from the tradition of philosophic mysticism. It expresses the final state of the soul at rest with the divine.⁴³

Antti Marjanen also comments:

The special spiritual status of Mary Magdalene is underlined by her “not wavering at the sight of Jesus”. . . . In ancient thought immovability was considered to be a spiritual virtue. . . . The fact that Mary’s mind is directed to the “good” implies that she is able to partake in the treasure of a direct revelation from the Savior.⁴⁴

Karen King also emphasizes the fact that the text uses this word:

The term “wavering” carries important connotations in ancient thought where it implies instability of character. Mary’s stability illustrates her conformity to the unchanging and eternal spiritual Realm, and provides one more indication of her advanced spiritual status. . . . It is because Mary has placed her mind with God that she can direct others to the spiritual treasure of the Good.⁴⁵

stable character throughout the text, exhorting the other disciples in the first section and being described as “unwavering” in the second. Her worthiness to receive a vision and the fact that her relating it lead to a successful resolution—Levi and perhaps others (including herself) going out to preach at the end—are also important in terms of the unity of the content.

⁴² The term *wonderful* is also interesting as its source can also be translated as “blessed. Although it is Mary, the mother of Jesus (Mary of Nazareth) who is called blessed in the Gospel of Luke (1:30), this term is also sometimes used of Mary Magdalene. For a discussion of the use of the term *blessed* as it applies to Mary Magdalene in the *Pistis Sophia*, for example, see Ann Graham Brock, “Setting the Record Straight—The Politics of Identification: Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother in *Pistis Sophia*,” in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition* (ed. F. Stanley Jones; SBLSymS 19; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 43–52.

⁴³ Perkins, *Gnostic Dialogue*, 135. Perkins also notes the seminal work of Michael Williams, “The Nature and Origin of the Gnostic Concept of Stability” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1977).

⁴⁴ Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved*, 111.

⁴⁵ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 63. See also King’s earlier article in *Searching the Scriptures: “Gospel of Mary Magdalene,”* 612.

Likewise, Christopher Tuckett comments on Mary's not wavering:

In the account of the conversation that follows, Mary is pronounced "blessed" because she did not waver when she saw Jesus. This seems to be a clear indication of Mary's high spiritual status: "wavering" is probably here the opposite of stability or immovability, and the latter was very highly regarded in the ancient world as a spiritual virtue.⁴⁶

Esther de Boer notes an interesting symmetry between the respective representations of Mary and Peter in terms of their immovability in the *Gospel of Mary* and the book of Acts. In Acts 2:25–26, Peter quotes from Psalms 16:8, saying, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced." De Boer comments insightfully: "Seeing the Lord before him and keeping the Lord at his right hand cause Peter not to waver. Apparently this is an experience full of hope and joy."⁴⁷ In the *Gospel of Mary*, of course, it is Mary rather than Peter who demonstrates the ability to stand firmly, calmly, and peacefully. The contrasts between these two disciples in terms of their character constitute an important theme to which we will return below.

The fact that the Savior refers to the mind being the treasure is also significant with regard to Mary's exemplary, steadfast character (10.15–16). Karen King explains that the text seems to posit a human being with a tripartite composition (body, soul, mind) in which the "mind" is

the most divine part of the self, that which links it with God . . . rules and leads the soul, so that when the mind is directed toward God, it purifies and directs the soul toward spiritual attainment.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Tuckett, *Gospel of Mary*, 171.

⁴⁷ De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 76.

⁴⁸ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 65.

The mind is that part of a human being which can see a vision. The apologist Justin states: “the vision of God does not occur with the eyes, as with other living beings, but He can be grasped only by the mind, as Plato says; and I believe him” (*Dial.* 3).⁴⁹ Origen, too, makes reference to the mind in this way: “God, moreover, is in our judgment invisible, because He is not a body, while He can be seen by those who see with the heart, that is the mind, no indeed with any kind of heart, but with one which is pure” (*Cels.* 6:69).⁵⁰

Esther de Boer explains the significance of the mind with regard to the care of the soul in a way that greatly illumines the significance of the *Gospel of Mary*:

Passion and confusion came into the created cosmos because of a power contrary to Nature. Redemption consists in the fact that the Son of Man, the crucified and resurrected Jesus, as God did when creating truly living beings, once again blows the Spirit into the *nous*, the mind, which has the task of ordering the turbulence of the soul. The Son of Man thus re-creates his followers into (true) Human Beings. Through his living within them they are empowered to bring forth his peace instead of passion and confusion which belong to the power contrary to Nature. They, having been restored to Nature’s Root by the Good One can indeed be “fully assured” (*GosMary* 8.7). Opposite nature has no power over them. They are thus prepared to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of the Son of Man.⁵¹

Mary’s Vision

Mary then goes on to share a vision she has had of the Savior. Unfortunately, six pages are missing from the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae at this point, but what content we do have indicates that Mary can relate a vision regarding the ascent of the soul because she herself has undergone a transformation of “healing” from passion. In other words, she is so

⁴⁹ Also see discussion of the perspectives of Justin and Origen in King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 66–67.

⁵⁰ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 67.

⁵¹ De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 72.

emotionally stable that she is in a position to access this kind of knowledge. It is not clear whether this is an upward movement that the soul of a living human being can experience here and through God's grace in line with a realized eschatology or whether this is the rising of the soul after its release from a human body at death.⁵² There is also ambiguity regarding whether Mary has glimpsed the climbing of the soul of the Savior, whether her own soul has experienced this upward mobility, or whether she is describing a general phenomenon. However, as Anne Pasquier notes, it is precisely because Mary really has become a true human being that she can envision the ascent of the soul so clearly and take on the role of proclaiming this good news.⁵³

Judith Hartenstein reaffirms this thought:

Daß Maria Jesus in einer Vision sehen kann und dabei nicht einmal wankt, zeigt ihre hohe Einsichtsfähigkeit, die sie von den anderen unterscheidet und der Belehrungen Jesu würdig ist. (That Mary can see Jesus in a vision and does not waver once shows her elevated ability to understand that differentiates her from the others and proves her worthy of the teachings of Jesus.)⁵⁴

Moreover, through doing so, she serves as a model to the other disciples for conquering any “wavering” of their own. Mary reveals what it really means to follow Jesus—to allow him to make one into a true human being—and how to live when Jesus renews one's very mind. In short, Mary shows those who *are* wavering how to achieve a state of stability. This stability contrasts with the male disciples' wavering. They are

⁵² De Boer, 81. For an interesting point of comparison, see the description of Seneca's vision of the soul's ascent as described by Catharine Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 16.

⁵³ Pasquier, *L'Évangile selon Marie*, 15–17. See also De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 29–30.

⁵⁴ Hartenstein, *Die zweite Lehre*, 154.

concentrating on the Savior's suffering rather than his greatness. In addition, by relating the vision that the Savior has given her, Mary

shows that the soul's way to Rest in Silence is not a road of suffering, but one of victory and joy. Her knowledge about this may already be behind her words in GosMar 9.14–20 where she encourages the weeping disciples to praise the greatness of the Son of Man, instead of to fear his suffering.⁵⁵

Mary's Equanimity vs. Peter's Passion

After Mary relates the vision, however, Andrew and Peter react defensively to her words:

Andrew responded, addressing the brothers and sisters, "Say what you will about the things she has said, but I do not believe that the S[a]vior said these things, f[or] indeed these teachings are strange ideas." Peter responded, bringing up similar concerns. He questioned them about the Savior: "Did he, then, speak with a woman in private without our knowing about it? Are we to turn around and listen to her? Did he choose her over us?" (10.1–4).

Levi, however, reacts differently. He defends Mary and rebukes Peter, calling him "hot-tempered." De Boer notes that the text uses this same word for wrath, the seventh power in Mary's vision. Thus, she believes the author of the text is making an analogy between Peter's opposition of Mary and the way in which the adversaries in Mary's vision try to oppose the soul, in other words—"the powers of passion." Thus, when Levi makes a comparison between Peter's conduct and that of the soul's adversaries, the text indicates that "the powers are among and inside the disciples themselves."⁵⁶

Others have commented extensively on the conflict between Peter and Mary as well. In a seminal early work, PHEME PERKINS sees Peter as representing the "orthodox"

⁵⁵ De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 88. See also preceding discussion on 77–88.

⁵⁶ De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 57, 91.

and Mary as representing the “Gnostics.”⁵⁷ Ann Graham Brock has extensively examined a wide variety of early Christian texts and pointed out the significance of Peter’s challenges to Mary’s status.⁵⁸ In the *Gospel of Mary* specifically, Karen King has pointed out the contrast between the two figures with particular attention to the issue of character traits, discussing the idea that Mary’s stability contrasts markedly with the contentiousness and fear of the male disciples.⁵⁹ Christopher Tuckett also comments on this theme, noting that Mary is contrasted with the male disciples implicitly by displaying the kind of inner peace that they should be demonstrating.⁶⁰

With regard to the *Gospel of Mary* in particular, Anne Pasquier perceives such a contrast between Peter’s attitude toward Mary at the beginning and end of the text that she postulated that the text is a composite. What needs to be underscored in this respect

⁵⁷ Perkins, *Gnostic Dialogue*. See 133–37 for discussion of this issue in the *Gospel of Mary* specifically. Perkins expands her research in *Gnosticism and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993). Her study of Peter is also very helpful: *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994).

⁵⁸ Ann Graham Brock discusses the confrontation between Peter and Mary in the *Gospel of Mary*. See Brock, *Mary Magdalene, The First Apostle*, 81–86. See also Mohri, *Maria Magdalena*, 278–81.

⁵⁹ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 67. See also p. 177. Here King elaborates her discussion of the contrast between Peter and Mary in terms of their *character* extensively: “In the *Gospel of Mary*, Peter is portrayed as a jealous and contentious character, who cannot see beyond his own male pride and who clearly has not achieved inner stability and peace. . . . Mary, not yet tentatively transformed into a repentant prostitute, is consistently represented as a faithful disciple.” It is not the fact that Mary herself saw the risen Lord or received his teaching (although this is true): “rather it is her exemplary discipleship. . . . This portrayal constitutes an explicit argument that the sure source of truth and authority can be confirmed only by the character of the disciple. . . . The *Gospel of Mary* framed the issue [of whether to accept Christian teaching as true] as a matter of character. Who can be relied upon to preach the gospel? The argument for the truth of its teaching is based on a contrast between Mary’s character and Peter’s.”

⁶⁰ Tuckett, *Gospel of Mary*, 166. Pasquier, *L’Évangile selon Marie*, 7–10 and 96–101 (noted by De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 29). Pasquier argues that Peter’s objection may actually be to Mary’s comments in 9.12–20 when she addresses the male disciples directly, particularly her saying that he has made *us* into true human beings as she believes Peter represents “orthodox” objections to women having authority in the Christian community. De Boer, too, notes that “Peter, apparently, has rules about the roles of women and men. According to Peter, a man is not to listen to a woman, a man should not speak to a woman alone and a woman disciple is never above male disciples” (90).

is that at the beginning of the text, the contrast with Peter has to do with his fear (a fear he exhibits in the *Apocalypse of Peter* which is discussed in chapter three above). At the end, however, the contrast is one of anger. Thus, Peter contrasts markedly with Mary in terms of two significant passions.

Some interpreters feel that Mary's weeping near the end of the text (10.5) somewhat mitigates this contrast and her overall strength of character. Christopher Tuckett particularly emphasizes this, interpreting her weeping as a sign of weakness. However, he also notes that

the weeping could be explained psychologically . . . as a natural human reaction to an unjustified attack on her integrity and/or her status by someone she might have expected support from; or as sorrow at Peter's and Andrew's failure to understand properly.⁶¹

De Boer, too, points out that Mary's weeping reflects a momentary condition and does not necessarily reflect poorly on her character as a whole, noting an interesting parallel in Philo of Alexandria with respect to Abraham's temporary doubt of his and Sarah's ability to have a child. Philo comments that perfect stability at every moment in this life is not possible for humans; only God is perfect in this way: "we are mixtures, with human and divine blended in us" (*Names* 184 [Colson and Whitaker]). De Boer notes that this is the case in the *Gospel of Mary* as well: "Whereas the (male) disciples do not waver all the time, Mary is likewise not stable all the time."⁶² This does not, however, necessarily detract from the strong role she has played (a) in comforting and exhorting the other disciples at the beginning of the text, and (b) remaining unwavering and able to receive a

⁶¹ Tuckett, *Gospel of Mary*, 188–89.

⁶² De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 77–78.

vision that enables her to understand the possibility of the soul's attaining stability and rest as discussed above.⁶³

The End Result

Moreover, these expressions of passion on the part of Peter and possibly Mary are not the end of the story. The very last phrase declares “they started going out [to] teach and to preach” (10.14).⁶⁴ Thus, it is Mary's ability to perceive the true teaching of Jesus in a vision (because of her emotional stability and lack of passion) as well as her steadfastness and perseverance in relating this teaching to the other disciples and serving as a Christ-like figure of encouragement that results in the preaching of the Gospel.⁶⁵

Moreover, Karen King points out the manner in which a text like the *Gospel of Mary* indirectly offers a means to reflect on resistance to earthly powers:

The *Gospel of Mary* makes it possible for people to see the struggle against violence in their own situations as part of a necessary and justified resistance

⁶³ Interestingly, even Jesus weeps at one point—when he learns of the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:35), but this is not usually characterized as a moral failing or weakness.

⁶⁴ For De Boer, this is a positive ending. See *Gospel of Mary*, 57. Tuckett, however, notes that the Greek fragment has *he* rather than *they*. Thus, it may be Levi alone who goes to preach. Even if this manuscript were to prove older or more accurate, Tuckett notes that this does not necessarily preclude the preaching of Peter and the others. See pp. 195–96. I would add that it most certainly does not preclude Mary's preaching either. For King, the ending is ambiguous. See *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 85–86 (where she also comments on the use of *he* vs. *they*) and 109.

⁶⁵ Certainly other extracanonical texts confirm a very positive portrait of Mary. I am grateful to Ann Graham Brock for pointing out that *Pistis Sophia* also portrays her self-control in particular, saying that “Mary remains strong” (2.94), and in the *Manichaean Psalms*, she is the one who rallies the others and strengthens them. It is also worthwhile to compare the depiction of “Mariamme” in the *Acts of Philip* in this respect. The critical edition is that edited by François Bovon, Bertrand Bouvier, and Frédéric Amsler, *Acta Philippi* (vol. 11 of *Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum*, Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1999). This is probably a fourth-century text written in the form of a novel, which provides a literary representation rather than a source of historical information about a first-century Mary (who may or may not be Mary Magdalene). See Bovon, “Le privilège pascal de Marie-Madeleine,” 155–57, 234–35. However, the text's representation of a woman as the one who embodies the traits of one who has been “cured” of passion is remarkable. Mariamme is both compassionate and courageous. She admirably demonstrates one “healed” of both anger and fear who encourages others to live lives reflecting freedom from passion as well.

against Powers that seek to keep people enslaved to their of passions: anger, desire, lust, envy, greed. The mythic framework of the *Gospel Mary* allows the spiritual, the psychological, the social, the political, and the cosmic to be integrated under one guiding principle: resistance to the unjust and illegitimate domination of ignorant and malevolent Powers. It also offers a strategy for that resistance: preaching the gospel and appropriating the teachings of the Savior in one's own life.⁶⁶

A little later she says,

Viewed as a purely internal event, ascent could be apolitical and individualistic. Yet the account of the rise of the soul unites internal spiritual development with resistance to external forces of evil in the practice of preaching the gospel to others. In so doing, the *Gospel of Mary* promulgates an alternative vision of the world, one that has the potential to overcome the passions and the violence that separate the soul from God.⁶⁷

Scholars have sometimes conceived of supposedly gnostic texts as less resistant to existing sociocultural norms or forces of domination;⁶⁸ however, King helps us to see that this is not necessarily true, although the critique may be disguised.⁶⁹

Parallels between Mary and Perpetua

There are also examples of courage, boldness, and a lack of fear typical of one who has successfully engaged in the therapy of the emotions among other early Christian women.⁷⁰ Some of the most vivid are those in martyr accounts.⁷¹ A great example is

⁶⁶ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 79.

⁶⁷ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 81.

⁶⁸ Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, 96–115.

⁶⁹ For those living in a society where critique is punished, this kind of resistance may be the only kind possible. See James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), 103–107, 124, 198–99. See also King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 76–81.

⁷⁰ This chapter focuses on the contrast between the representation of Mary Magdalene and that of a recorded martyr, Perpetua. However, another of the most popular accounts of an early Christian woman who exhibits the courage, boldness, and lack of fear typical of one who has successfully engaged in the therapy of emotions is that of Thecla, a woman who heard the teaching of Paul, converted to Christianity, baptized herself, and then traveled widely with the apostle. Though Thecla was almost martyred several

Perpetua,⁷² a young Roman matron who boldly endured the arena in Carthage in 203 C.E.,⁷³ writing in a diary of her desire to suffer and die.⁷⁴ Her story is a popular and oft-recounted one, perhaps because the written account of her imprisonment and death

times, she died a natural death. For an account of her life excerpted from the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, see Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*, 311–13. Jan Bremmer discusses the possibility that Perpetua heard or read about Thecla: “Magic, Martyrdom and Women’s Liberation in the Acts of Paul and Thecla,” in *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (ed. Jan N. Bremmer; Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996), 44.

⁷¹ For a fascinating account of women martyrs discovered and translated by a modern woman, Agnes Lewis Smith, see *Select Narratives of Holy Women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai Palimpsest as written above the Old Syriac Gospels by John the Stylite, of Beth-Mari-Qanūn in A.D. 778* (*Studia Sinaitica* 10; London: C. J. Clay & Sons/Cambridge University Press, 1900; repr. Nabu). The most often cited critical edition of martyrdom accounts with translation into English is that of Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 1972.

⁷² Several versions of Perpetua’s martyrdom exist in Latin, and there is one in Greek as well as discussed above.

⁷³ As mentioned earlier, there are disputes over the actual date and the dating of the accounts. The dating of the *Gospel of Mary* has also been discussed in this note. It could have preceded the *Martyrdom of Perpetua* and Felicity by more than a century, but it is plausible that the two were written within a few decades of each other. For the difficulty of dating texts and the circularity in reasoning that occurs when so doing, see Karen King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 184.

⁷⁴ Modern scholars question whether Perpetua’s account is actually her own self-representation. Musurillo comments, “The *passio* has been held by most scholars as an authentic reflection of the period of the persecution in Africa about 200, even though one need not accept all the details, or even believe that the author is accurately quoting the words of the martyrs themselves. Indeed, the style of the framework passages is quite different from that of the narrations in the first person, and more closely approaches to what we are familiar with from the works of Tertullian” (*Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, xxvii). See also Barnes, “Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*,” 521–25; J. A. Robinson, *The Passion of S. Perpetua*, 43–47; Butler, *New Prophecy*, 44–49. See also Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 363. Frend says that it is “difficult to imagine anyone besides Perpetua herself writing the poignant and repetitive scenes between herself and her father, or her physical experiences in connection with the suckling of her infant.” Frend’s remarks are, of course, simply conjecture. See also his “Blandina and Perpetua: Two Early Christian Heroines,” in *Women in Early Christianity* (ed. David M. Scholer; vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney; New York: Garland, 1993), 87–97. Elizabeth Castelli cautions against thinking of the account as an autobiography as the very term belongs to the Enlightenment; however, she usefully situates the martyrdom account within Foucault’s framework of self-writing as a discursive strategy used in the care of the soul (also discussed in chapter one above). See Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 70–78, 85–92, 233–35, 237–41. Emanuela Prinzivalli characterizes Perpetua’s account as a “rare jewel,” noting how few women in this time period have left any written records at all and then says, “It is moving to see this woman of the ancient past daring to appropriate a form of narrative expression generally denied her sex—and by this act, placing herself at the center of a public turmoil (and at what a price!), outside that cycle of childbearing and care-giving reserved for women since time immemorial, a way of life that gave them no opportunity to influence current events or politics” (119–20). See “Perpetua the Martyr,” in *Roman Women* (ed. Augusto Fraschetti; trans. Linda Lappin; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 118–40, 221–25.

contains more details than exist in many other cases⁷⁵ and because her story resonates powerfully on an emotional level with a wide range of readers. Her courage has been much admired by the “orthodox”⁷⁶ through the ages, and modern commentator-scholars continue to paint her in glowing terms in recent works.⁷⁷

Perpetua’s narrative parallels the representation of Mary Magdalene in the *Gospel of Mary* in a number of ways. The text strongly frames Perpetua’s character in terms of her steadfast endurance, self-control, and courage—that is, in terms characteristic of one

⁷⁵ See Musurillo, who refers to her account as the “archetype of all later Acts of the Christian martyrs” (*Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, xxv). See also Prinzivalli, “Perpetua the Martyr,” 132.

⁷⁶ Many scholars have also pointed out that Perpetua may actually have belonged to the New Prophecy movement (Montanism). A classic study is that of P. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 1913. For the best, recent overview, see the published dissertation of Rex D. Butler (*The New Prophecy & ‘New Visions’*). Butler argues for Montanist influence but gives a thorough review of other scholars’ opinions. Joyce Salisbury argues against necessarily assuming Montanist influence as she feels “the church in Carthage had not yet split into such clear distinctions.” She also notes: “That both the orthodox and the heterodox could value the same text is testimony to the fact that the religious sensibilities of the two groups were very similar in 203” (*Perpetua’s Passion*, 158). It should be noted that characterizing a work as Montanist has been a means of marginalizing it by categorizing it as heretical. Frederick Klawiter argues that the writer of the martyrdom account of Perpetua is Montanist, but he carefully notes, “It is significant that even as late as the fifth century, Perpetua was remembered as a martyr in both the catholic and Montanist communities of North Africa. Very probably, the persecution of 203 happened when the New Prophecy had not yet been rejected by the Carthaginian catholic community” (“The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution in Developing the Priestly Authority of Women in Early Christianity: A Case Study of Montanism,” *CH* 49 [1980]: 251–61; repr. in *Women in Early Christianity* [ed. David M. Scholer; vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney; New York: Garland, 1993], 105–15).

⁷⁷ The popularity of Perpetua is enormous. In addition to whole books and entire articles devoted to her, there are innumerable texts that choose her as a key example in discussions of early Christian women or of Roman women. However, she has some detractors. Frend, for example, depicts her as “a fanatic” (“Blandina and Perpetua,” 91), noting the disruption of her transgressing social norms and commenting on “a real poignancy in her father’s continuous efforts to save her from humiliating death as a result of which the family itself would hardly recover” (94). Frend’s comments may be a good example of what Mary Lefkowitz comments on as “the consistent failure of male scholars to acknowledge the positive significance of femininity in the performance of certain heroic acts” (“The Motivations for St. Perpetua’s Martyrdom,” *JAAR* 44, no. 3 [1976]: 417–21). For more on this issue, see David Daube, *Civil Disobedience in Antiquity* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1972), 5–6 and Rosemary R. Ruether, “Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Early Church,” in *Religion and Sexism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 150–83; repr. in *Women in Early Christianity* (ed. David M. Scholer; vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney; New York: Garland, 1993), 262–95.

who has successfully engaged in the therapy of emotions and become free of passions such as fear and anger. Like Mary, Perpetua is also a visionary. As in Mary's case, these include visions of ascent. Similarly, these visions provide Perpetua with emotional fortitude and the ability to encourage others in concrete ways. Indeed, at the beginning of the martyrdom account, the compiler refers to the purpose of recounting such deeds as helpful to others in their "achiev[ing] . . . spiritual strengthening" (8.1), and at the end he mentions that they can be read "for the consolation of the Church" (8.21).⁷⁸

Representation of Perpetua's Character

First, it is helpful to discuss the way in which gladiatorial contests served as a means for philosophical reflection generally for Perpetua's courageous participation in such an event is an important part of her representation. For the Stoics in particular, the emphasis in philosophical discussions was on the idea that how one faces death is extremely important, an indication of one's underlying moral character, given the fact that death is inescapable.⁷⁹ A public death, honorably faced, is an opportunity to convey a powerful message to those who witness it. Those who die in the arena can serve as models for how to reflect on and face death. A contest in the arena "was not only a spectacle to amuse and divert the crowd but a . . . ritual designed to affect and transform the witnesses. . . . It was expected that the process of watching people die in the arena would have an impact on the viewer."⁸⁰ Bettina Bergmann comments that the

⁷⁸ All citations come from Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 106–31.

⁷⁹ Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 10. In her chapter on Stoic attitudes toward death, there are many parallels with Perpetua (78–112). See also Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 36–37.

⁸⁰ Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion*, 124. See also 134. Also relevant is Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 53.

gladiatorial contest is an event discussed by the philosophers in terms of a “professional performance of . . . self-control, the performance of virtue.”⁸¹ This is in line with Seneca’s discussion of dying willingly and unconquered” (*Ep.* 37.2). Both imagery of performance in battle and discussion regarding control of the passions are common.⁸²

As we turn specifically to Perpetua’s representation, it is important to note that the compiler consistently represents Perpetua as “a very strong personality” and leader.⁸³ He speaks, for example, of “her perseverance and nobility of soul” (8.16) and of the way in which she and the other Christians speak with “steadfastness” (8.17). Indeed, the *Martyrdom of Perpetua* presents us with human beings who die honorably—as honorably and admirably as any of the Greek, Roman, or Carthaginian heroes or heroines present in the consciousness of those living in the Roman Empire during the second and third centuries C.E.⁸⁴ This is also true of the slave Felicity and the men featured in the narrative, but Perpetua is the one whom the editor of the text features in detail. She is every bit as dignified as Lucretia, Polyxena,⁸⁵ Dido, or Arria (who, like Perpetua, draws the sword to

⁸¹ Bettina Bergman, introduction to *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (ed. Bettina Bergman and C. Kondoleon; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), 22.

⁸² Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 46–77, 90–100.

⁸³ Prinziavalli, “Perpetua the Martyr,” 129. Frend comments that the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* represents the martyrs as “the true leaders of the Church” (“Blandina and Perpetua,” 92–93). For the way in which Christians linked martyrdom and women’s leadership, see Klawiter, “The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution,” 105–15. See also Brown, *Making of Late Antiquity*, 54–80, for discussion of the ways in which the church elevated the status of martyrs as what he terms “the friends of God.”

⁸⁴ Salisbury discusses the particular Carthaginian admiration of women who give their lives as sacrifices, noting that the Carthaginians were even more steeped in the myths of such women than the Romans. See *Perpetua’s Passion*, 33–57.

⁸⁵ Polyxena is particularly interesting because, like Perpetua, she takes an extra step in courage, undoing her clothing and offering her executioner a choice of her breast or her throat. Similarly to Perpetua’s covering her thigh with her tunic, Polyxena takes care “to fall in a seemly way, hiding what ought to be

her own throat, encouraging her husband who is about to follow her in death by telling him that “it does not hurt”; Pliny, *Ep.* 3.16.3).⁸⁶ Society considered such a death honorable.⁸⁷ When Seneca was forced to commit suicide and his wife wanted to die with him, he told her: “I will not grudge you such a noble example. Let the fortitude of so courageous an end be alike in both of us, but let there be more in your decease to win fame” (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15A).⁸⁸ Likewise, the mother in 4 Maccabees, a text greatly influenced by Stoic ideals, encourages each of her seven sons to commit what is represented as a heroic suicide and then follows them by taking her own life.⁸⁹

Catherine Edwards astutely notes that Dido, Lucretia, and Cleopatra are all heroines who take their own lives in accordance with the founding of a new political order (the city of Rome, the Roman republic, and the Roman principate respectively).⁹⁰

In a sense, Perpetua’s death also marks the beginning of a new era, an era in which a

hidden from the eyes of men.” See Mary R. Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 100.

⁸⁶ See also discussion in Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 20.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of women’s deaths that are represented as honorable, see Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 179–206. Her discussion of Lucretia, a noble woman who committed suicide after being raped is especially notable, 180–83. Mary Lefkowitz also discusses the tradition of women heroines who commit suicide in various Greek myths, arguing that doing so is the most active role Greek women are given to play: Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth*, 95–111. Joyce Salisbury focuses on a particular admiration for women’s deaths in Carthage in particular due to a long-standing tradition of such deaths occurring there. Dido, for example, came from Carthage. See *Perpetua’s Passion*, 53–57.

⁸⁸ See discussion of this incident in Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 20.

⁸⁹ For discussion, see Anne Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters: Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women* (trans. O. C. Dean; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996); Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 27, 34, 37.

⁹⁰ Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 186. Mary Lefkowitz interprets Perpetua’s resistance in social terms seeing martyrdom as an escape “releasing women from the hierarchical structure imposed by patriarchal society, which the church in its own organization would increasingly incorporate and emulate.” See Lefkowitz, “The Motivations for St. Perpetua’s Martyrdom,” 421. Other scholars question an emphasis on Perpetua’s resistance in strong political or social terms: Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*, 104.

collective, Christian identity under the rubric of the “suffering self” (as Judith Perkins elaborated so well),⁹¹ is coalescing. Indeed, the formation of this new group is particularly interesting in that it transcends existing social norms regarding class. Heroines who are not high-born like Perpetua are represented as equally courageous. Felicity, for example, is a slave who dies along with Perpetua. At one point, Perpetua helps her to her feet (8.20). Likewise, a slave named Blandina who perishes in the fierce persecutions of Lyons and Vienne, is especially noted for her courage.⁹² Thus, while dying for a worthy cause was in keeping with Roman social ideals,⁹³ it is also important to note that the dignity of women from both high and low social classes serves to distinguish them as part of a new group who owe allegiance to a authority wholly different from that of the Roman Empire. It is truly stories such as these, in which the high-born Perpetua stands hand in hand with the equally valiant slave Felicity (20.6–7), in which the upper-class Perpetua’s story is read alongside that of a slave such as Blandina, that perpetuate the establishment of a new Christian community.⁹⁴

However, although Perpetua belongs to a long lineage of Greco-Roman women who exhort courage and honor in dying, it is important to note one major difference. Usually, these cases of noble death serve to reinforce the existing social norms, not to

⁹¹ See especially Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, 104–23.

⁹² Musurillo, “The Martyrs of Lyons,” in *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 78–81.

⁹³ This issue is discussed in chapter two above. Nicola Denzey’s article is especially helpful: “Facing the Beast,” 176–98.

⁹⁴ This is, of course, the argument of Judith Perkins, *Suffering Self*. See especially 15–40. Streete discusses Perpetua and Blandina in relation to each other: *Redeemed Bodies*, 15–16. Jensen comments articulately on the lack of social distinctions among Christians: *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*, 124. See also Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 275. Edwards remarks on the way in which gladiators serve as models for the marginalized: *Death in Ancient Rome*, 68.

make a social statement against them. Lucretia, for example, commits suicide after being raped. Her death serves to release her from the shame of living with dishonor.⁹⁵

Remarkably, Mary and Perpetua are represented as exemplars⁹⁶ in spite of the fact that they *transgress* accepted social norms for women.⁹⁷ Women are most vulnerable to being portrayed as lacking in virtue when they speak out.⁹⁸ In the texts we will examine, both Mary Magdalene and Perpetua are vocal figures.

Perpetua's speaking out involves a considerable transgression of existing social norms. We see this first during her time in prison. She is resolute in the way she deals both with her father and the local authorities—a further indication of her courage. In the Roman world, a father's authority and legal status as the *paterfamilias* extended to his children and grandchildren from their birth until his death.⁹⁹ However, Perpetua

⁹⁵ Eve d' Ambra, *Roman Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 58–59.

⁹⁶ It is crucial to note, of course, that literary depictions are indeed representations and may reflect idealized notions of what women should be rather than actual realities. See Sandra Dixon, *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres, and Real Life* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 16–25 for discussion of this idea as well as discussion regarding the importance of genre in shaping representations.

⁹⁷ Mary R. Lefkowitz notes that Christian martyrs who are women are different from other Greek and Roman women martyrs in that they “die courageously but in noticeable isolation from their families in defiance of, rather than in loyalty to, their husbands or fathers” (“Motivations,” 418).

⁹⁸ Determining norms is, of course, difficult, as ancient depictions of women are sparse. However, Origen argues against women prophesying in his commentary on 1 Corinthians. See J. Kevin Coyle, “The Fathers on Women and Women's Ordination,” in *Women in Early Christianity* (ed. David M. Scholer; vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney; New York: Garland, 1993), 139. Karen King also comments on negative social evaluation of women who did not keep silent in “Prophetic Power and Women's Authority: The Case of the *Gospel of Mary* (Magdalene),” in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity* (ed. Beverly M. Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 21–41, esp. 29. For modern discussion of the idea that silence was expected in public spaces, see Karen Torjesen and Virginia Burrus's chapter “Household Management and Women's Authority,” in Torjesen's *When Women Were Priests* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 53–87.

⁹⁹ Fathers literally exercised the power of life and death over their families. Legally, fathers determined whether or not their newborn infants would be accepted or exposed to the elements. Society demanded an attitude of unquestioning obedience to fathers. This sense of hierarchy permeated the Roman Empire. Roman subjects even referred to the emperor as “father.” See Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did: A*

unceasingly resists the repeated pleas of her father to recant her Christian faith and escape punishment and death.¹⁰⁰ She is determined that he will not “shake” her “resolution” (8.3). Moreover, she gives up her infant son. In the eyes of Roman society, “Perpetua’s willingness to abandon her child made her . . . absolutely deviant from the ideal of the self-effacing woman, nourisher, and keeper of the house.”¹⁰¹ A modern commentator, W. H. C. Frend, unsympathetically comments: “the example of Perpetua shows just how Christianity appealed to the bored and frustrated intelligent woman of the Greco-Roman world. The social consequences for her family and traditional religion were disastrous.”¹⁰² Francine Cardman notes that “conversion to Christianity, especially by women, begins the dismantling of the patriarchal household; impending martyrdom hastens its disintegration.”¹⁰³ Interestingly, Perpetua’s action calls to mind a saying

Sourcebook in Roman Social History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 13, 18–19, 27–28, 31, and 234.

¹⁰⁰ The representation of Perpetua is that of a mature woman, not a young one. The compiler gives her age as twenty-two. Girls often married around thirteen years of age, and it was common for people to die in their twenties and thirties. See Shelton, *As the Romans Did*, 20–21, 93. The text does not reveal whether the child she is weaning is actually her first and only one, but for an ancient reader, Perpetua would not necessarily have seemed young or immature even though the text does refer to her as “a delicate young girl” (8.20) when she is standing in the arena. (Such a depiction may serve to re-feminize Perpetua and mitigate the “manly” courage she has shown rather than to describe her accurately. See discussion below.)

¹⁰¹ Prinzivalli, “Perpetua the Martyr,” 126.

¹⁰² Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 283. Later, Frend notes “the utter disruption to family life and tradition that a conversion to Christianity could cause,” remarking especially on the disgrace Perpetua’s father felt and the contempt of the procurator for Perpetua’s father as well as the hostility of the mob in the arena toward those they felt had transgressed social norms (321–22). He also speaks of the “gulf between her adopted culture and that which she was leaving,” noting especially her defiance of her father and the procurator (364–65). However, see Mary Lefkowitz’s comment above, regarding the persistence of scholars in failing to accord unmitigated praise to heroic acts done by women.

¹⁰³ Francine Cardman, “Acts of the Women Martyrs,” 98–104, 101. Cardman also notes that the representation of women “as athletes engaged in mortal combat is strangely unsettling” for those inhabiting the second- and third-century Roman Empire (102). Finally, she says, “In their passage from death to life, women martyrs profoundly unsettled the social and familial relationships on which their world had depended for its coherence. Cultural sensibilities were shattered by the graphic demonstration of women’s suffering and the toleration of public violence against their bodies. The ambiguities of female sexuality—its

recorded by Tertullian from the New Prophecy movement: “Do not wish to die in bed, in miscarriage, or with debilitating fever, but in martyrdom, in order to glorify the one who suffered for you” (*Fug.* 9.4).¹⁰⁴

In addition, Perpetua is not afraid of her Roman jailers, and she leads the way in negotiating with them for her group with remarkable poise. During her stay in prison, she demands better food for herself and her fellow prisoners, speaking of them and herself as “the most distinguished of the condemned prisoners” (8.16) and advocating for proper treatment in terms so strong that the official in charge of their care actually blushes (8.16). Likewise, when the authorities try to make her and the others dress as priests and priestesses of Saturn and Ceres during their ordeal in the arena, she asserts their right not to do so according to previous negotiations: “We came to this of our own free will, that our freedom should not be violated. We agreed to pledge our lives provided that we would do no such thing. You agreed with us to do this” (8.18).¹⁰⁵

beauty, vulnerability, and reproductive capacity—were heightened as female bodily experience was both confirmed and contradicted in martyrdom. For women especially, the making of a martyr meant the unmaking of her body—her own, as well as her world’s” (104).

¹⁰⁴ See discussion in Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*, 160.

¹⁰⁵ While the idea of death as a sacrifice to the gods was present in the minds of the Romans, Perpetua refuses to accede to attempts to portray her death in this way. Perpetua staunchly refuses to be arrayed in the robes of priestesses of Saturn or Ceres. Wearing these garments would have allowed the spectators in the arena to conceive of her death as a pagan sacrifice. Aline Rouselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity* (trans. F. Pheasant; New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 116; Salisbury, *Perpetua’s Passion*, 138–39; K. M. Coleman, “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments,” *JRS* 80 (1990): 66.

Moreover, the language ascribed to Perpetua is not the language of imitating Christ in terms of substitutionary atonement. Rather, the representation is one of her triumph over cosmic forces of evil—the devil himself—in her visions. This is in accord with a Christus Victor theory of atonement (as discussed in chapter three above). As Karen King notes, in both the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*, the emphasis is the risen Christ rather than the suffering Savior. It is the former that Perpetua sees in her visions. See King, “Prophetic Power,” 41, n. 87. See also Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 123–25; Moss, *Other Christs*, 97–102.

Perpetua's Representation in the Arena Itself

In going into and enduring the ordeal in the amphitheater itself, however, her representation emerges as that of one completely free of the passion of fear, one who exercises remarkable courage and self-control and acts with composed dignity. This is consistent with a philosophical emphasis on the idea that death is better than slavery—enslavement to one's passions.¹⁰⁶ Above all, she is not a victim but rather an active agent who refuses to allow others control over her life but instead takes charge of her death and makes it a “noble” one.¹⁰⁷ It is perhaps in this sense, if any, that her death is voluntary.¹⁰⁸ Greco-Roman philosophers, particularly Stoics, do not conceive of this kind of willingness to die as negative or immoral. In fact, quite the opposite is true.¹⁰⁹ Death is “an act of heroism, something to be celebrated.”¹¹⁰

Even on the day of sentencing, Perpetua writes that she and her companions “returned to prison in high spirits” (8.6), and on the day itself, they enter the arena calmly,

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 70–72.

¹⁰⁷ For an overview of the meaning of the term *noble death* in Greco-Roman antiquity, see Droge and Tabor, *A Noble Death*, 1972.

¹⁰⁸ The text clearly presents one of the other martyrs, Saturus, as voluntarily turning himself in for arrest. One of the first to emphasize the sometimes voluntary nature of Christian martyrdom was de Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy*, 2006. See also Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 1995, and Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity*, 2006; Tite, “Voluntary Martyrdom and Gnosticism,” 2012. Discussions of whether or not Perpetua was an “orthodox” Christian or a heretical “Montanist” also frequently inform the understandings of particular scholars regarding the degree to which Perpetua may or may not have desired martyrdom. An interesting parallel with the representation of Thecla exists with respect to the issue of desiring martyrdom, as Thecla demonstrates bravery by voluntarily climbing up on a pyre to be burned (though God puts out the fire with a thunderstorm and she does not actually die). The relevant point is that both Perpetua and Thecla face death without fear. See Bremmer, “Magic, Martyrdom, and Women’s Liberation,” 49.

¹⁰⁹ Droge and Tabor’s *A Noble Death* provides a multitude of examples. Catharine Edwards also discusses gives an excellent overview of this belief in *Death in Ancient Rome*, esp. 1–18.

¹¹⁰ Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 1.

joyfully, and free of fear. It is as if they are “joyful collaborators”¹¹¹ in their death.¹¹²

Perpetua in particular marches “with shining countenance and calm step . . . putting down everyone’s stare by her own intense gaze” (8.18). Catherine Edwards notes that spectators considered a steady gaze on the part of a gladiator a sign of invincibility;¹¹³ thus, the inclusion of such a detail is not necessarily arbitrary on the part of the compiler of the text.

During their ordeal, the writer notes that they are in complete control of their own deaths as Christ answers previous prayer “by giving each one the death he had asked for” (8.19). When Felicity is knocked to the ground, Perpetua retains the composure to help Felicity back to her feet and stands with her “side by side” (8.19). Perpetua also encourages the others in terms reminiscent of Mary’s call to be courageous: “You must all stand fast in the faith” (8.20). In addition, three gestures specifically point to Perpetua’s self-control, courage, and dignity. Demonstrating remarkable composure in the face of torture, she pulls her tunic back over her legs when the “mad heifer” attacking her rips it (8.20). Likewise, she smooths out her hair and even has the composure to ask for a pin so that she can tie it up neatly (8.20)!¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 210.

¹¹² Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca A. Parker, too, speak of Perpetua’s death as represented in terms that emphasize her empowerment and moral agency. See *Saving Paradise*, 56–83.

¹¹³ Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 61. See also Salisbury, *Perpetua’s Passion*, 138.

¹¹⁴ Some interpreters see these gestures as part of a representation that re-feminizes Perpetua and emphasizes her femininity, mitigating any unseemly “manly” courage (Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 71). Salisbury comments that the insertions of these gestures into the text reflect the male perspective of the narrator, as Perpetua would hardly have had the time to think of such things (*Perpetua’s Passion*, 143). However, I would argue that these gestures are not unambiguously feminine. They also express a sense of remarkable composure and the ability to attend to the details that allow a woman to feel she is dying with her dignity intact. For an excellent analysis of the ways in which texts represent women martyrs ambiguously in both masculine and feminine terms, see Stephanie L. Cobb, *Dying to Be Men: Gender and*

Finally, most strikingly, she and the others approach their final dispatch at the hands of a gladiator with a sword by going “of their own accord” to the spot where he stands,¹¹⁵ and Perpetua herself guides the gladiator’s sword to her throat. The text states, “It was as though so great a woman, feared as she was by the unclean spirit, could not be dispatched unless she herself were willing” (8.21).¹¹⁶

Spectators generally approved the gladiator who did not flinch and actually offered his neck to his opponent’s blade when vanquished. Such a valiant action is specifically commended by Seneca for gladiators generally (*Ep.* 30.8). He also remarks:

This is Fortune who puts on games for herself. “What are you holding yourself back for, low and fearful creature?” You will suffer more wounds and sustain more blows, because you do not know how to hold forth your throat. But you will both live longer and die more easily, who accept the blade neither with bowed neck nor hands held up but with spirit. One who fears death will never do anything worthy of a living man (*Tranqu.* 11.5–6).¹¹⁷

Even outside the arena, bravely offering one’s neck was seen as a mark of courage.

Cicero, for example, leaned out of the litter he was traveling in and offered his neck for his head to be cut off by soldier sent to execute him when he was condemned by Mark

Language in Early Christian Martyr Texts (New York: Columbia, 2008). Moss also comments on the ambiguities in Perpetua being represented in both masculine and feminine terms as though “her body never quite sets” (*Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 139–40).

¹¹⁵ Prisoners or defeated gladiators were often required to meet their final demise in a spot where the crowd could easily see them and note how they indeed behaved in their very final moments. See Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 62.

¹¹⁶ Again, in this sense, the compiler’s comments seem in keeping with a *Christus Victor* theory of atonement rather than a theory of penal substitution (see discussion in chapter two). Perpetua’s fourth vision also supports this for she fights with and overcomes an Egyptian whom she feels symbolizes the devil. Thus, she expresses her struggle in terms of the overcoming of the cosmic forces of evil rather than in terms of the imitation of a blood sacrifice needed in order to propitiate a bloodthirsty god. Moreover, the representation is always that of victory, not of passive endurance of suffering. On this last point, see King, “Prophetic Power,” 41, n. 87.

¹¹⁷ See Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 73.

Antony.¹¹⁸ Barton sees parallels in Cicero's action with that of a gladiator's "defiant complicity."¹¹⁹ However, Perpetua goes one step farther in not only offering her neck but also actually guiding the sword.

Perpetua's Contemplation of Death in Visions

Even before she approaches the arena, in her visions Perpetua perceives of her death as a victory,¹²⁰ and she is represented as successfully imbuing her earthly demise with that meaning by clearly communicating the content of those visions—her ascent into paradise, her conquest of the Egyptian—in writing.¹²¹ The first is a vision of ascent into heaven. Interestingly, Perpetua is in charge even of her ability to dream. She has this vision after her brother asks her to request one in order that they may know whether or not she will face martyrdom (8.4). Especially noteworthy is the fact that, at the beginning of the vision, Perpetua steps on a dragon, or serpent, who is beneath the bottom rung of a ladder ascending into heaven: "Slowly, as though he were afraid of me, the dragon stuck his head out from underneath the ladder. Then, using it as my first step, I trod on his

¹¹⁸ Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 61–74.

¹¹⁹ Carlin Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 39.

¹²⁰ Joyce Salisbury discusses the representation of the visions articulately: Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion*, 31, 84–90. For the respect accorded to Christian visionaries in this period generally, see Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 440–41, and Brown, *Body and Society*, 65–82.

¹²¹ The fact that Perpetua not only dies but also *contemplates* her death is an important part of the way she is represented. See Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 18, 131–34. That she does so *in writing* is also significant. Self-writing is a "technology of the self" discussed by Foucault: Foucault, "L'écriture de soi," 207–22. Elizabeth Castelli elaborates on the way in which Perpetua engages in this activity as a means of identity formation in *Martyrdom and Memory*, 70–78, 85–92, 233–35, 237–41. For the way Perpetua expresses a sense of taking control of her body in her writing, see Maureen A. Tilley, "The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity," in *A Feminist Commentary* (vol. 2 of *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; New York: Crossroad, 1994), 829–58.

head and went up” (8.4). Such action symbolizes her courageous vanquishing of Satan.¹²²

The fourth is a vision in which she is actually transformed into a male gladiator who successfully defeats an Egyptian one by stepping on his head. Upon awaking, Perpetua states her belief that she has been given a foreshadowing of her ability to fight and overcome the devil in the arena (8.10). She will be successful not only in dying but also in doing so like a strong and courageous gladiator rather than a lowly criminal.¹²³ Indeed, later in the account, the editor emphasizes the significance of this event by referring back to it, explaining that Perpetua starts to sing a psalm as “she was already treading on the head of the Egyptian” (8.18).¹²⁴

Designating an especially courageous woman as “manly” is not uncommon in Greco-Roman texts.¹²⁵ Seneca, though, clearly thinks women capable of moral virtue:

But who has claimed that nature has dealt grudgingly with women’s natures and has restricted their virtues to a narrow field? Believe me they have as much force, as much capacity, if they choose, for virtuous action: they are just as capable of enduring pain and trouble when they are used to them (*Marc.* 16.1).¹²⁶

¹²² Frend points out parallels with Jacob’s vision of a ladder in Gen 28:12 as well as the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Stepping on the head of the dragon brings to mind Gen 3:15. See Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 363. Salisbury also points out parallels with pagan concepts of ladders and the role they play in symbolizing an ascent to another world; see *Perpetua’s Passion*, 101.

¹²³ Prinzivalli, “Perpetua the Martyr,” 128. See also Frend, “Blandina and Perpetua,” 93; Salisbury, *Perpetua’s Passion*, 99–104.

¹²⁴ Salisbury, *Perpetua’s Passion*, 106–12.

¹²⁵ See Edwards’s discussion of the representation of Lucretia in *Death in Ancient Rome*, 187. Mary Lefkowitz, too, notes Augustine’s emphasis on this: *Women in Greek Myths*, 105. Gail Streete’s discussion in *Redeemed Bodies* is also helpful: 21, 26, 130. See also Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 28–33.

¹²⁶ See discussion in Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 189–90.

However, this statement is indeed a defense of women in light of the fact that many do not think of women in this way. Perpetua actually exceeds all expectations in this respect by literally becoming a man in her fourth vision, a male gladiator who defeats the Egyptian he/she faces and conquers him by stepping on him with her foot. Many commentators find the fact that Perpetua has to be represented as “manly” in order to be deemed courageous troubling; however, in the cultural context of that time, it is important to recognize, it was a clear declaration of admiration.¹²⁷ This may seem extremely chauvinistic to contemporary readers, and it behooves us to recognize the inherent sexism. Nonetheless, in the cultural context of the times, referring to a woman as exercising “manly” courage would have been a positive designation.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Noam Chomsky’s concept of deep structure and surface structure in language is helpful here. In conversation, Tink Tinker and Loring Abeyta have helped me to see how Chomsky’s distinction can be applied to culture, arguing that while human beings can transcend the assumptions of their surface culture, it is impossible to change the content of the deep culture one inherits. That courage is “manly” is an underlying assumption thoroughly embedded in the deep culture of Greco-Roman society. To expect writers in this social context to think differently is simply unreasonable. Rather than focusing on the inherent chauvinism in their doing so, it is important to note the intended connotation—that the heroine is indeed being represented as courageous. Interestingly, Mary Magdalene is also portrayed in this way. In the *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus is portrayed as saying that if it indeed he must make Mary male in order for the other disciples to finally recognize the worth (that he *already* recognizes in her), he will gladly do so (log. 114).

¹²⁸ In fact, Perpetua’s courage is represented so positively that later interpreters of her martyrdom are at pains to minimize or carefully qualify it: Brent Shaw, “The *Passion of Perpetua*—Christian Women Martyred in Carthage in A.D. 203,” *Past and Present* 56 (May 1993): 3–45. Augustine, for example, makes clear to emphasize that the courage of Perpetua and Felicity can be *celebrated*, but it cannot be *imitated*: “What is more glorious than these women, whom men may more easily admire than imitate?” See Augustine’s “Sermon 280—On the Birthday of the Martyrs Perpetua and Felicity.” See also Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 59; Salisbury, *Perpetua’s Passion*, 163–79; Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 212. Prinziavalli also notes Augustine’s focus on the socially acceptable values of piety and chastity rather than courage per se in his sermons where he cleverly makes a pun on the “perpetual felicity” of these martyrs: Prinziavalli, “Perpetua the Martyr,” 139–40.

Lefkowitz wryly notes that while Christianity offered Perpetua a chance to separate from the patriarchal values in the Roman Empire, such values also existed in the Christian church. See *Women in Greek Myth*, 104.

Interestingly, historians and theologians never conceive of Perpetua as a gnostic or an adherent of so-called gnostic dualism due to her having a vision of ascent in which she overcomes a cosmic adversary. Neither does anyone identify the dragon with, say, a Gnostic archon. De Boer insightfully argues this point.¹²⁹ However, Perpetua's orthodox status has been questioned. Some have argued that Perpetua belonged to the New Prophecy (or Montanist) movement, which the "orthodox" eventually deemed heresy.¹³⁰ However, her story has resonated with Christians through the ages. As Musurillo says, "the Montanist aspect of the work seems to have escaped the notice of Augustine and many of the early Fathers who admired its primitive charm and Christian fervour."¹³¹

Perpetua's Power of Intercession

Perpetua also conveys her sense of empowerment and the strength of her soul in relating her ability to intercede for those who suffer. Specifically, she tells of her ability to mediate for a younger brother who has already died and to relieve his suffering in her second and third visions.¹³² In *The Making of Late Antiquity*, Peter Brown has explored

¹²⁹ De Boer, *Gospel of Mary*, 82–83.

¹³⁰ See Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 17, 36, 361–62; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, xxvi; Frend, "Blandina and Perpetua," 94; De Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 220; Robinson, "The Passion of St. Perpetua," 50–52. For a recent, comprehensive discussion, see Butler, *The New Prophecy and "New Visions"*, 2006. Salisbury maintains that the work is not necessarily Montanist. See *Perpetua's Passion*, 158–61.

¹³¹ Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, xxvi.

¹³² See discussion in Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion*, 97–98, 104–106. Anne Jensen also discusses the power accorded those who faced martyrdom in interceding and the fact that Perpetua is addressed with a term denoting special respect, *domina* and as someone with particular *dignatio* in the text. See *God's Self-Confident Daughters*, 119, 124. Jensen also comments on the power of intercession but notes the fact that even now translators often translate the term "female confessor" merely as "holy woman" (97, 114). For discussion of the high status of confessors (those who had publicly testified and were awaiting martyrdom), see also Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 419, 440–41; Moss, *Other Christs*, 139–40; Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 38. Klawiter's article is also useful in delineating the contours of the power accorded those awaiting

“the rise of the friends of God” and the transference of regard for pagan holy men and women to the martyrs.¹³³ The latter were believed to have special powers of intercession.¹³⁴

Troubling Aspects of Perpetua’s Representation

However, for all of the ways in which Perpetua is affirmed as a courageous witness of the faith, there are several troubling aspects in her representation. First of all, proto-orthodox writers make it clear that women should exercise such boldness primarily in the context of submitting their bodies to violence in the arena. As Gail Streete notes:

when women laid claim to institutional rather than spiritual or moral authority in the church in accord with these same virtues, they were censured for appropriating “male” roles. Ironically, these pioneering women often made such claims with reference to heroines like Perpetua and Thecla, seeing their stories as more evidence of the power and divine sanction of their antisocial behavior.¹³⁵

Frequently, women were criticized or prevented from occupying other positions as role models, leaders, preachers, or bishops.¹³⁶ Tertullian, for example, declared:

martyrdom. Klawiter discusses their being thought to have “the power of the keys,” that is, the ability to forgive sins. See “Role of Martyrdom and Persecution,” 108–14.

¹³³ Brown, *Making of Late Antiquity*, 54–80. On the honor that Christians gave to confessors and martyrs, also see Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 362–63.

¹³⁴ This belief has a very long life in the Christian tradition as the cult of the saints, also articulately discussed by Peter Brown, dominated Christian tradition for centuries. See Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

¹³⁵ Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 11. See also discussion on 10–11, 21, 30, 41, and 53–54. For discussion of the parallels between Perpetua and Thecla, see Bremmer, “Magic, Martyrdom, and Women’s Liberation,” 42–44.

¹³⁶ Gail P. Corrington suggests that there are only three main models for women’s empowerment in the Greco-Roman and early Christian worlds: that of being possessed by a male deity, martyrdom, and asceticism. See “The ‘Divine Woman’? Propaganda and the Power of Celibacy in the New Testament Apocrypha: A Reconsideration,” in *Women in Early Christianity* (ed. David M. Scholer; vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, ed. Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney; New York: Garland, 1993), 172. Citing Perpetua as an example of the way in which martyrdom

It is not permitted for a woman to speak in the church, nor is it permitted for her to teach, nor to baptize, nor to offer [the Eucharist], nor to claim for herself a share in any masculine function—least of all, in priestly office (*Virg.* 9).

Martyrdom was the most certain means of approval. In a passage praising the strength of the martyrs, Tertullian uses women for half of his examples (*Mart.* 4).¹³⁷ Jo Ann McNamara notes that certain “reservations were nullified when the physical courage of the battlefield was transformed into that of the martyrs.”¹³⁸ After all, Perpetua’s courage did not intercede or help in mediating the increasingly repressive patriarchy of the post-Constantinian church, which successfully suppressed women’s voices and women’s leadership through the centuries with notable exceptions in the still small voices of mystics mentioned above.

In the final analysis, Perpetua achieves high status in her Christian community only through willingly subjecting her body to violence and literally dying. As Peter Brown says,

In Christian circles direct intimacy with God was so drastic as to incapacitate the recipient. Put bluntly, the “power” of the martyr was unambiguous: but the life

could actually have been perceived as empowerment, Corrington states that martyrdom is a means of resisting control, the battleground being the woman’s body (173–74).

¹³⁷ Women could also be praised for their philosophic studies, scholarship, and learning. See McNamara, “Sexual Equality and the Cult of Virginitly in Early Christian Thought,” 230, n. 14. She cites Tatian, Gregory of Nyssa, and Jerome as doing so. However, such praise is relatively rare. Of course, the New Testament portrays many women in leadership roles, depicting them as disciples, apostles, leaders of house churches, deaconesses, workers, and prophets. See discussion in King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 186. For two excellent introductions, see also Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, and Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*.

¹³⁸ McNamara, “Sexual Equality and the Cult of Virginitly in Early Christian Thought,” 221. Klawiter, too, ventures that perhaps “in the ‘catholic’ church woman was ‘liberated’ to become a minister as long as she participated in the suffering of Christ. The moment she was set free from the suffering of prison, she was placed back into the ‘imprisoning’ role of female subordinate to male” (“Role of Martyrdom and Persecution,” 115).

expectancy of such a wielder of power was, by definition, severely limited. We touch on a very savage streak in the Roman world—exaltation by violence.¹³⁹

Indeed, this is the most effective means of allowing her voice to be heard among the clamor of patriarchal voices. As a result, religious conflicts were played out on the very bodies of martyrs, many of whom were women.¹⁴⁰

An admiration for patiently enduring or even subjecting oneself to suffering is particularly true with regard to women. In one of the texts of late antiquity regarding the life of Mary the Mother, even Mary Magdalene is represented as eventually having become a martyr, although we have no reason to believe this portrayal is rooted in any kind of historical fact (Maximus the Confessor, *The Life of the Virgin*). Some of the women who embodied the best of the Christian mystical tradition—Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, Margery Kempe (known for her emotional weeping), and Julian of Norwich—are also represented as sufferers par excellence.¹⁴¹ In modern contexts as well, counseling for Christian women has all too often encouraged enduring abuse silently and patiently.¹⁴² Moreover, Christian tradition has implied that virtue walks hand in hand with suffering.

¹³⁹ Brown, *Making of Late Antiquity*, 66.

¹⁴⁰ This is no less true today, although the bodies are those of Muslim women rather than Christian ones. For parallels between Christian and Islamic women martyrs, see Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 7–8, 112–122; Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 200–201; Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 420.

¹⁴¹ Discussion of these figures at length exceeds the scope of this chapter, but Bernard and Patricia McGinn provides an excellent introduction to the study of many of these remarkable women in their edited volume *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism* (New York: Random House, 2006).

¹⁴² The large number of books recently published on this topic with an autobiographical or biographical focus is sobering. They include Jocelyn E. Andersen, *Woman Submit! Christians and Domestic Violence* (Auburndale, Fla.: One Way Café, 2007); Paul Hegstrom, *Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them: Breaking the Cycle of Physical and Emotional Abuse* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 2004); Lynn Heitritter and Jeannette Vought, *Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse: A Sensitive Biblical Guide for Counselors, Victims, and Families* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2006); Amy Madden, *Stolen Beauty: Healing the Scars of*

Moreover, as is common in the case of women, the compiler cannot resist the temptation to eroticize the deaths of the women. The writer draws attention to the vulnerable nakedness of both Perpetua and Felicity (8.20). In addition, as they enter the arena, they are re-feminized in certain respects. They are matched with “a mad heifer” in order, the writer notes, “that their sex might be matched with that of the beast” (8.20). Feminine modesty returns as Perpetua covers her body (naked just moments before), and smooths her hair. For some, her representation is as much in terms of her propriety as her courage at this point. Notably, in Perpetua’s fourth vision, even just after the moment of her ultimate conquest, her defeat of the Egyptian, the trainer who rewards her with the branch granted to the victor refers to her not as a male but as “daughter.” Evidently, she is a man no more (8.10).¹⁴³ Overall, there is a certain malleability in the representations of women martyrs to which men are simply not subject.¹⁴⁴

Both texts accepted by the “orthodox” (represented in this chapter by the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*) and those of other groups who have unfortunately been marginalized as so-called Gnostics and whose texts have been suppressed, lost, or neglected for centuries (such as the *Gospel of Mary*), coming to light only in the

Childhood Abuse (Minneapolis: Syren Book, 2007); Tammy Maltby, *Confessions of a Good Christian Girl: The Secrets Women Keep and the Grace That Saves Them* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007); and Nancy Nason-Clark and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *Refuge from Abuse: Healing and Hope for Abused Christian Women* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 2004).

¹⁴³ See discussion in Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 39.

¹⁴⁴ Sebastian Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (2d ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Streete, *Redeemed Bodies*, 13, 31–32, 38–47, 70–72; Tilley, “Passion of Perpetua and Felicity,” 829–58. Edwards also delineates multiple ways in which women’s deaths are frequently represented differently than men’s, *Death in Ancient Rome*, 179–206. See also Virginia Burrus, “Torture and Travail: Producing the Christian Martyr,” in *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature* (ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Maria Mayo Robbins; Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings 12; New York: T&T Clark, 2008).

nineteenth and twentieth centuries, represent women in terms of the care of the soul, as those who have successfully engaged in the therapy of emotions through their relationship with Christ and have received complete healing from fear and anger. Thus, both proto-orthodox and other texts reflect an emphasis on a larger cultural value informing the social context of the Roman Empire.

In the texts of the proto-orthodox, however, such courage surfaces primarily in the context of their subjecting the bodies to violence through facing and enduring martyrdom. In the end, admiration for Perpetua must be held in tension with an acknowledgement of the ambivalence in her representation.

The *Gospel of Mary* counters this portrayal strongly by representing Mary Magdalene as a steadfast apostle who is able to share the words of the Savior and encourage others to face any possible persecution fearlessly but without necessarily subjecting her body to such violence or glorifying it in and of itself. As Karen King summarizes,

for the *Gospel of Mary* bodily distinctions are irrelevant to spiritual character since the body is not the true self. Even as God is non-gendered, immaterial, and transcendent, so too is the true Human self. . . . *Rejecting the body as the self* opened up the possibility of an ungendered space within the Christian community in which leadership functions were based on spiritual maturity (emphasis added).¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 88–89. See also “Prophetic Power,” 32–33, where King does not necessarily see this phenomenon in positive terms. King also comments on the fact that while the *Gospel of Mary* advocates courage in the face of persecution, it does not glorify suffering in and of itself. The text does “not ascribe any redemptive value to suffering. It is preaching the gospel that gives life; persecution is only an unfortunate, if inevitable, result of that activity because there are powers that oppose the gospel in the world. Believing the truth of the gospel leads people away from suffering by teaching them to overcome the passions and defeat the powers by putting on the perfect Human” (*Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 127). Furthermore, “the *Gospel of Mary* does not teach that people need to suffer in order to gain salvation . . . There is no intrinsic value in the atoning death of Christ or the martyrdom of believers or the punishment of souls” (127). Finally, “people do not need to be saved from sin, but from error, anguish, and terror. . . . one is redeemed *from* suffering not *by* suffering. . . . Jesus became a human being not in order to

Just as our recovery of the texts discussed in chapter three allows us to see the way in which some groups challenged the discourse of a suffering self (both individually and collectively), our recovery of the way in which the author of the *Gospel of Mary* represents Mary Magdalene disrupts the monolithic focus on the glorification primarily of women who willingly subject their bodies to violence and texts implying that suffering must accompany Christian virtue. This chapter does not seek to minimize or dismiss the courage of Perpetua and other martyrs. However, it is important to put representations such as that of Mary Magdalene in the *Gospel of Mary* alongside those of the martyrs so that it is possible for us to understand that Christian virtue need not necessarily walk hand in hand with suffering and that early Christian texts represent a fuller range of possibilities for faithful witness.¹⁴⁶ Doing so is one way of addressing the task Rosemary Radford Reuther believes one of the most important for those who affirm the Christian tradition:

Perhaps the task of Christians today, as they take stock of this tradition and its defects, is not merely to vilify its inhumanity but rather to cherish the hard-won fruits of transcendence and spiritual personhood, won at such a terrible price of the natural affections of men and the natural humanity of women. Without disregarding these achievements, we must rather find out how to pour them back into a full-bloodied Hebrew sense of creation and incarnation, as male and female,

suffer as an atoning sacrifice for human sin, but to bring the revelation of saving truth. In a theology like this one, martyrdom can be seen as a rational and even necessary alternative to denying Christ, but at the same time there is no enthusiasm for it, since martyrdom does not itself bring salvation. . . . God does not desire human suffering; in his compassion he wants to save people from it” (165–66).

¹⁴⁶ In “Beyond the Canonical and the Apocryphal Books, the Presence of a Third Category: The Books Useful for the Soul,” *HTR* 105, no. 2 (2012): 125–37, François Bovon argues that texts should not be divided into merely two categories—canonical and apocryphal. In so doing, he argues that “an unfortunate polarization among evangelical and liberal scholars occurs (125–26).” He reminds us that in antiquity, while certain books were considered to be “disputed,” they were nonetheless considered “profitable” and “useful for the soul” (128).

but who can now be fully personalized autonomous selves and also persons in relation to each other, not against the body, but in and through the body.¹⁴⁷

Ultimately, the *Gospel of Mary* has not been suppressed. The insights it offers may be helpful as our generation makes ethical choices. As Karen King comments,

Christian doctrine and practice are not fixed dogmas that one can only accept or reject; rather Christians are required to step into the story and work together to shape the meaning of the gospel in their own time. Because human passions and love of the world incline people to error, discerning the truth requires effort, and it insists that communities of faith take responsibility for how they appropriate tradition in a world too often ruled by powers of injustice and domination.¹⁴⁸

Reading across the spectrum of early Christian texts allows us to see that there are various ways to interpret the teachings of our tradition. By analogy, we reflect on the possibility that there are diverse possibilities for faithful interpretations of spiritual traditions and religious practices in a pluralistic world. It is imperative that we examine a wide range of possible ways to witness to the faith—by reading the *Martyrdom of Perpetua* along with the *Gospel of Mary* and many other texts in order that the kind of understanding needed in a pluralistic world may emerge.

Unpacking “Gnosticism”

The categorization of texts such as the *Gospel of Mary* as gnostic¹⁴⁹ has been most unhelpful for exploring these issues.¹⁵⁰ In particular, it has been virtually impossible

¹⁴⁷ See Ruether, “Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Early Church,” 291.

¹⁴⁸ King, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, 189–90.

¹⁴⁹ Esther A. de Boer’s discussion in *The Gospel of Mary* (82–83) is especially helpful.

¹⁵⁰ This term itself has come into question. See Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, 1996); King, *What Is Gnosticism?*, 2003. The issues for jettisoning, retaining, or modifying the term are explored thoroughly in the essays in Antti Marjanen, ed. *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87; Helsinki: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005). Prominent scholars such as Ismo Dunderberg prefer to use terms that delineate a specific group (such as Valentinian). See Dunderberg, *Beyond*

to see the full range of attitudes regarding the care of the soul in the various forms of early Christianity. Instead, the discourse has promoted a false dichotomy (or binary opposition) between orthodoxy and heresy. These categories have been inaccurately characterized as consisting merely of doctrinal differences. As discussed throughout this dissertation, the group who emphasized the kind of care of the soul (conflating body and soul) that merged with a glorification of martyrdom and morphed into doctrines emphasizing the fleshly resurrection of the body within the framework of an apocalyptic world view triumphed, but for Christians in a wide range of groups, the resurrected Jesus was the great physician, the one who could effect healing of the soul in both this life and the next.

If we fail to recognize the importance of the care of the soul in antiquity and in early Christian thought, it is difficult to recognize the significance of the way ancient writers represent women such as Mary Magdalene and Perpetua. Moreover, if we dichotomize orthodoxy and heresy, we may well fail to see the way in which texts portray Christian women as steadfast, self-controlled witnesses for their faith across the spectrum in the various early Christianities. By using a discursive approach, the past comes into

Gnosticism, 2008. Recently, David Brakke has argued for using the term but only for those which contain a certain kind of creation myth usually termed Sethian, these “Sethian” texts being only some of those labeled gnostic by the heresiologists. In supporting this thesis, he provides an excellent overview of this issue (*The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010]). Most recently, April D. DeConick has pointed to the clear existence of notions of spirituality (rather than a religion per se) that ancient people would have recognized as gnostic. See “Crafting Gnosis: Gnostic Spirituality in the Ancient New Age” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, 19 November 2012). DeConick’s position is also useful in reclaiming the value of these texts. However, the use of *gnostic* has serious implications for the persistence of notions regarding the supposed existence of clear binary oppositions such as orthodoxy and heresy in the early Christianities. There is also continued marginalization of the texts that are labeled as such. The term does not function as a mere technical distinction for scholars to parse in the world outside the academy.

sharper focus, and the voices of bold and courageous Christian witnesses from a wide diversity of early Christian groups begins to emerge.

Indeed, when we view Mary and Perpetua in terms of this Greco-Roman philosophical emphasis, particularly the Stoic emphasis, on the therapy of the emotions, we understand the very positive manner in which these figures are represented in the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*.¹⁵¹ By examining the history of Christianity with respect to the practice of the care of the soul rather than via the distractions of doctrinal debates regarding orthodox and Gnostic conceptions of the resurrection of the fleshly body of the Christian believer (and indeed, doctrinal debates about the nature of Christ's own body, and his suffering, death, and resurrection) or doctrinally focused debates about "orthodoxy" and "Montanism," new understandings of the value of these women as role models in the twenty-first century emerges.

In texts that have until recently been dismissed as unorthodox, however, Mary Magdalene emerges as a disciple and leader due to her steadfast courage, one who exhibits the characteristics of a person completely healed of the passions of fear and anger. In these texts, her character often functions as a contrast to that of Peter, one still struggling to overcome these emotions. Just as the rediscovery of the texts discussed in chapter three allows us to see the way in which certain early Christians interrupted and

¹⁵¹ Esther A. de Boer has argued persuasively that the *Gospel of Mary* reflects the influence of Stoicism rather than any Gnosticism per se. She comments insightfully:

Stoic philosophy had a major impact on culture and society in the first and second centuries. Every level of the population was deeply influenced by it, and it also influenced the church. Before the early church begins to feel at home with Platonism in the third century, there is a period in the first and second centuries from Clement of Rome to Clement of Alexandria, in which categories of Stoic philosophy are favourably regarded as a means of explaining the gospel in the culture of the time. The *Gospel of Mary* should perhaps be seen as *a testimony of creative mission* (59) (emphasis added).

challenged the discourse of the “suffering self” (including the glorification of martyrdom), so the rediscovery of texts that were unknown in the world until they came to light in the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries allows us to see the significance of the way that Mary Magdalene is represented, disrupting a monolithic discourse in which the only Christian heroines are those who willingly subject their bodies to violence and represent an ideal in which Christian virtue and suffering must go hand in hand.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Often, it takes months or years to unwind the twisted thread of the discussion of an important point, a thread that may have been in the process of becoming twisted over centuries. Many false starts are made, and many tentative analyses and organizations of the discussions must be proposed, before any real light is thrown on the subject.¹

Such a statement succinctly summarizes the situation with regard to exploring the false binary opposition of “orthodoxy” and “heresy” which has dominated discussions of the history of the early Christianities particularly with respect to untangling the scholarly debate over what exactly constituted “Gnosticism” in the ancient world.² In 1931, a German scholar named Walter Bauer published a work leading to a paradigm shift in the study of Christian history by arguing that in certain places, “heresy” had preceded “orthodoxy.”³ Such thinking has been instrumental in leading scholars to question the idea that heresy was a deviation from an original orthodoxy.⁴ Bauer’s work,

¹ Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 405.

² Four seminal works in this area are Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, 1996); King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 2003); Marjanen, *Was There a Gnostic Religion?*, 2005; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 2008).

³ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 1971.

⁴ In the *Panarion* (or *Medicine Chest*), itself a work dedicated to delineating and refuting “heresies”, Epiphanius claims: “Here I can begin my treatment of the subject of sectarianism, and I shall briefly explain how it arose. How else but in the same way in which tribes arose from the proliferation of the different languages, various nations emerged to correspond with each tribe and clan, and every nation chose its own king to head it, and the result was the outbreak of wars, and conflicts between clashing nations . . . So too at this time we have been discussing. Since there had been a change in Israel’s one religion, and the scripture of the Law had been transferred to other nations—I mean to Assyrians, the ancestors of the colonist Samaritans—the division of Israel’s opinion also resulted. *And then error arose, and discord*

Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum (or *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*) languished unread amidst the strife of Nazi Germany and WWII, receiving wider recognition only after it was translated into English in the U.S. in 1971.⁵ However, over the past forty years, it has led to reassessments of positions “which have been in the process of becoming twisted over centuries.”

The discovery of over forty early Christian texts near Nag Hammadi, Egypt in the mid-twentieth century has also played a seminal role in this process.⁶ These are texts neglected, lost, or suppressed for centuries which complement and shed light on the ways in which various groups of Christians were interpreting the life, death, resurrection, and

began to sow seed from the one true religion in many counterfeit beliefs, as each individual thought, and thought that he was proficient in scripture and could expound it according to his own will (Panarion 8.9.1–9.4) (emphasis added).” See Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book I (Sects 1–46)* (Boston: Brill, 2009). Adapted by Todd Berzon, Columbia University. Even earlier, Irenaeus declared, “the Church, believes . . . as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is the same” (*Haer.* 1.10.2). Such statements encapsulate the perspective that has dominated Christian theology for centuries. Often, scholars have simply accepted such a point of view without questioning it critically. It is this kind of characterization which Bauer’s work deconstructs.

⁵ Helmut Koester has provided a summary of the historical circumstances surrounding the publication and reception of Bauer’s work in “The Impact of Walter Bauer’s ‘Orthodoxy and Heresy’ ” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 17, 2012). Some scholars have critiqued the particulars of Bauer’s work. See, for example, Thomas A. Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen, 1988). Nonetheless, his thesis remains a guiding principle for the investigation of the early Christianities.

⁶ Most of the texts have Christian themes although a work of Plato is included as well. Scholars are still debating why these particular texts were grouped together, the order they were grouped in, and why they were deposited in the desert sands of Egypt. Originally, scholars surmised that they were hidden by someone at a nearby monastery perhaps when such texts were banned, but this is mere speculation. Recently, Nicola Denzey hypothesized that the texts could have been part of a burial collection. This is also simply speculation, but her argument helps us to see how tenuous our knowledge of how and where the finding of the texts actually is. See Denzey, “‘The Beauty that Came to Me in the Books’ (NHC VI.6.54),” 2011. It is crucial not to impose a false sense of unity, coherence, or purpose on the collection as the themes and perspectives of the texts vary widely. In addition, even the original location of the materials is unclear. The local Egyptian man who claimed to have discovered them has changed his account over time; thus, much about the discovery remains unclear. See chapter three for more in-depth discussion of these issues.

teachings of Jesus and envisioning living forms of Christian faith. Their discovery allowed scholars to actually compare and contrast perspectives previously delineated only in the work of heresiologists and those who opposed the ideas expressed in these works.

As discussed in chapter one, the philosophical ideas of Michel Foucault provide a framework for unraveling some of the threads in the tangles and twists of early Christian histories. In lectures given at the Collège de France shortly before he died, Michel Foucault postulated that truer understanding of Greco-Roman philosophies could be reached by thinking in terms of what the various schools taught not about abstract knowledge but rather about “the care of the soul/self” (indeed using these two terms synonymously).⁷ Often such care involved engaging in therapeutic practices referred to as the “therapy of emotions.” Such disciplines were designed to free one from enslavement to passions such as fear and anger. Emotional stability, or “immovability,” was represented as a chief virtue. Foucault refers to these practices of spiritual transformation as “technologies of the self” which

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.”⁸

Foucault attributed our failure to recognize the importance of the care of the soul in ancient texts to the distorting influence of the medieval separation of theology and spirituality. In the modern period, too, he argued that an emphasis on the rational and

⁷ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 2001.

⁸ See Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 18. Foucault has built on the work of his colleague, Pierre Hadot who discusses ancient philosophy as a “way of life” in which various philosophical schools emphasized diverse “spiritual exercises” to aid in spiritual transformation. These exercises are akin to Foucault’s “technologies of the self.” This point is discussed in chapter one.

empirical has completely eclipsed our understanding of the role that spiritual practices played in ancient Greco-Roman philosophical schools. Nonetheless, he argued for re-conceptualizing our understanding of Greco-Roman philosophies by once again exploring the prominence of these themes in ancient texts.

This dissertation has explored the way in which the history of the period of the early Christianities could be re-conceptualized along the same lines if we were to think not in terms of knowledge or doctrine per se, but in terms of the ways in which various groups were conceiving of the proper way to care for the self. In particular, it has been an inquiry into how our categorization of some groups as proto-orthodox and others as “heretical,” particularly those deemed “Gnostic,” might shift.

The second-century context of the persecution of the Christians by the Romans has proven fertile ground for exploring these questions. By juxtaposing texts from Nag Hammadi (the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Testimony of Truth*), fragments from Basilides and Valentinus, and a text from the Codex Tchacos (the *Gospel of Judas*) with those of the “Apostolic Fathers” which come from a wide variety of genres (epistles, martyr acts, a homily, an apocalypse, a post-resurrection dialogue, dialogues between Jesus and his disciples, and others), in and of itself a Foucauldian practice,⁹ I have argued that key intra-Christian debates involved varying attitudes to the practice of the care of the soul and specifically, to martyrdom.

⁹ Elizabeth Clark also discusses the value of using a wide variety of genres: Elizabeth Clark, *Reading Renunciation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 2.

In particular, chapter two discussed the ways in which the proto-orthodox represented martyrdom as a process of identity-formation¹⁰ and practice in “patient endurance,” in actuality, as a kind of care of the soul which, in some cases, goes hand in hand with the idea of martyrdom as an imitation of Christ’s sacrifice and a belief in a fleshly resurrection as well as notions of apostolic authority. In some cases, the writing by or about the martyrs themselves functioned as a “technology of the self.”¹¹ In a newspaper interview, Foucault once said, “Christian culture has developed the idea that if you want to take care of yourself in the right way you have to sacrifice yourself.”¹² In this respect, the dissertation has built on the work of Judith Perkins, Elizabeth Castelli, Nicola Denzey, Candida Moss, and others who discuss the representation of martyrdom in these philosophical terms (though they seldom invoke the term, the “care of the soul,” specifically) and also in terms of the way in which martyrdom became a discourse which emphasized the ideas mentioned above, representing the meaning of martyrdom in a quite particular way and glorifying it. In particular, the dissertation has explored these themes in *1 Clement*, the *Letters of Ignatius*, the *Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians*, and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

On the other hand, those in a variety of other Christian groups (all too often labeled Gnostic) disrupted the increasingly predominant discourse of the glorification of

¹⁰ The work of Judith Perkins was seminal in stimulating reflection in this way. See Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, 1995.

¹¹ The work of Elizabeth Castelli was crucial in introducing the idea that such writing functioned in this way. See Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 2004). Of course, it is crucial to remember that while the text may represent itself as containing the actual words or writing of a person such as Ignatius, Polycarp, or Perpetua.

¹² See “The Power and Politics of Michel Foucault,” an interview with Michel Foucault in the *Daily Californian* (April 22, 1983): 20, cited in Bernauer, *Michel Foucault’s Force of Flight*, 180, n. 92, 230.

martyrdom while simultaneously arguing for care of the self in terms more consonant with the traditional therapy of emotions (particularly in its Stoic incarnation). Chapter three has examined these texts, specifically the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Testimony of Truth* (both among those found near Nag Hammadi), two fragments preserved only in the writings of Clement of Alexandria—one attributed to Basilides and one attributed to Valentinus, and the *Gospel of Judas* (made accessible to the public by National Geographic only in 2006). These texts urge courage in the face of persecution, but they do not frame the meaning of martyrdom in the same way that the proto-orthodox do. In addition, they do not pose a unified position regarding the significance and function of martyrdom, but rather a variety of responses to the issue of persecution.¹³

As Candida Moss says,

Where fissures appear, they do not, as Clement would have it, break down upon lines of orthodoxy and heresy, or even into tidy geographically bounded models. These texts intersect with one another to make, unmake, and remake early Christianity.¹⁴

Such an examination also leads us to see that the distinction between elite and popular forms of religion is itself a false binary which close reading of the texts elides. The acts of the martyrs are not theological treatises, but we can also read them for the philosophical insights they contain regarding the care of the soul. At the same time, the supposedly elite texts of the “Gnostics” show concern for “the little ones,” an insistence that none be led astray through false interpretations or promises, and an interest in

¹³ There is also variation within the proto-orthodox position. Candida Moss’s books are extremely helpful in highlighting this, her arguments also serving to show the variety across the board within and among various groups of early Christians. She herself states emphatically that texts previously deemed Gnostic are “ripe for reconsideration” (Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 158) and reads them alongside those that have always been a part of the orthodox Christian tradition.

¹⁴ Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 165.

providing moral exhortation helpful to those wishing to utilize the example and the teachings of Christ for the care of the soul. Thus, there is value in reading them in terms of the ways that they complement each other rather than the ways they oppose each other.

Finally, chapter four has compared and contrasted the representations of two important Christian women, Mary Magdalene, the apostle to the apostles, and Perpetua of Carthage, who was martyred in the early third century of the Common Era. Both are represented in terms consonant with those who have successfully engaged in the therapy of emotions. The *Gospel of Mary* represents Mary Magdalene as the one who has successfully negotiated the path of freedom from the passions. She is able to encourage the other disciples to face any persecution boldly while sharing a vision of the final ascent of the soul to a state of rest in the Divine. Moreover, she demonstrates “immovability” in her emotional and spiritual stability. Likewise, the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*, represents Perpetua as facing martyrdom courageously, serving as a leader, and encouraging the other Christians imprisoned at the same time. The portrayal of her death shares much in common with the depictions of Greek heroines who died a “noble death” (although, interestingly, these other cases of noble death serve to reinforce the existing social norms, not to transgress them as Perpetua does by renouncing her family ties).

Perpetua’s bravery, however, is extolled only in the context of willingness, even a desire, to subject her body to violence. Indeed, in the proto-orthodox tradition, women’s leadership in any other way was ultimately prohibited and their voices silenced. Thus, it is crucial to complement the representation of Perpetua’s means of caring for the soul with that of the representation of Mary Magdalene. The latter disrupts a discourse in

which Christian heroines are often those who willingly subject their bodies to violence and represent an ideal in which Christian virtue and suffering must go hand-in-hand.

This dissertation has focused on understanding intra-Christian conflicts and deconstructing a false binary opposition between heresy and orthodoxy primarily in the context of the second century of the Common Era, a period in which conflicts and divisions became quite clear and the labeling of others as “Gnostics” or “heretics” became pronounced. For example, Irenaeus’ lengthy *Adversus Haereses*, or *Against Heresies* (ca. 180 C.E.), dates from this period. However, the implications of the dissertation are also relevant in the context of both intra- and interfaith conversations today. In the postmodern era, many readily acknowledge the insights of Kant’s *First Prolegomena* regarding the limits of idealism and empiricism, the limits of human reason, and the impossibility of achieving certainty regarding the metaphysical. In addition, given the insights of the linguistic turn and the way in which it has shaped historiography, we understand the futility of the dry, dead ends of doctrinal debates. We realize that texts are representations, not documentations. However, the need for a care of the soul which will inform our ethical commitments and our collective solutions to the problems of the twenty-first century may be just as relevant for us as it was for the ancients. If we are willing to read extra-canonical texts which supplement our understanding of the ways in which Christians adapted the notion of the care of the soul to meet the spiritual needs of their own times, both a better understanding of the history of the early Christianities and insights relevant for postmodern spirituality may emerge. James W. Bernauer, one of Foucault’s most insightful interpreters, argues:

While confinements are the central experiences that Foucault's work describes, the ardent desire of his thought was to facilitate flight from them. He certainly recognized the cages within which human life and thought are exercised, and he possessed an acute skepticism about those modern windows of knowledge that promised a way out, but that in fact, by not breaking with the logic of confinement, would always remain windows of prisons. The 'within' that he shows thought to occupy is the decisive moment for the act of thinking itself, for it is to recognize both its prisons and the illusory character of the authorized exits from them. If Foucault is able to imagine the walls of confinement giving way, it is because he envisioned a new horizon for the practice of thought.¹⁵

He then declares, "[t]he distinct experiments in thinking that Foucault fashioned were meant to indicate through very concrete experiences the powerful movement of escape that thought is."¹⁶

Re-thinking the history of the early Christianities by re-conceptualizing them as offering competing, sometimes complementary visions of the care of the soul rather than a history of doctrine characterized by a false binary opposition between heresy and orthodoxy might be a means of escape in a postmodern, pluralistic age. As Bernauer goes on to say,

[In] his methods of historical analysis . . . [Foucault] proposes three . . . directions for the practice of intellectual responsibility, a practice that entails a work we do to ourselves along the axes of discourse, power, and self. There is a shift of focus from what we supposedly do to language to an examination of what language does to us. This line of inquiry stresses our responsibility for the support we lend to the unchallenged dominance of specific discourses, whether this support be shown in our acceptance of fellowships of experts with authoritative control over a discourse, or in our justification of certain institutional patterns for the dissemination of a discourse.¹⁷

¹⁵ Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, 16.

¹⁶ Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, 16.

¹⁷ Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, 19.

Continuing to accept a paradigm in which the history of Christianity is the history of a false binary opposition between “orthodoxy” and “heresy” in which the discrediting of “Gnostics” plays a major role seems in this sense, a failure to exercise responsibility of the kind Foucault urges.

Bernauer also discusses Foucault’s revolt against enslavement to prevailing discourses: “This breath of life or force of resistance, this Foucaultian spirituality, bears witness to the capacity for an ecstatic transcendence of any history that asserts its necessity.”¹⁸ Such a statement exquisitely captures the potential that a juxtaposition of the voices of the Apostolic Fathers, the texts of Nag Hammadi, and others bring to our understanding of the early Christianities. We no longer need to buy into a discourse in which “orthodoxy” and “heresy” are asserted as necessary components of the telling of Christian history. We are free to unravel the twisted threads of our past and knit them together in ways that allow for fuller collaboration among various groups in our own time and place.

¹⁸ Bernauer, *Michel Foucault’s Force of Flight*, 180–81.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Texts and Translations

Where available, the editions used for Greek and Latin texts are from the Loeb Classical Library. Unless otherwise noted, passages from the *Gospel of Mary* are taken from King's publication. The other versions of that gospel are provided for breadth and comparison. Note also the following:

Acts of the Christian Martyrs

Musurillo, Herbert. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Smith, Agnes Lewis. *Select Narratives of Holy Women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai Palimpsest as Written above the Old Syriac Gospels by John the Stylite, of Beth-Mari-Qanūn in A.D. 778*. Studia Sinaitica 10. London: C. J. Clay & Sons/Cambridge University Press, 1900. Repr. Nabu.

Acta Philippi

Bovon, François, Bertrand Bouvier, and Frédéric Amsler, *Acta Philippi*. Vol. 11 of *Corpus Christianorum*. Series Apocryphorum. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1999.

Ante-Nicene Fathers

Roberts, Alexander, and James Donaldson, eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*. American Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition. 10 vols. Edited by A. Cleveland Coxe. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903.

Apocalypse of Peter

Brashler, James, trans. *Apocalypse of Peter (NHC VII, 3)*. Pages 201–47 in the *Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codex VII*. Edited by Birger A. Pearson. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 30. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Brown, S. K. and C. W. Griggs. “The *Apocalypse of Peter*: Introduction and Translation,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 15 (1975): 131–45.

Werner, Andreas. “Die Apokalypse des Petrus: Die dritte Schrift aus Nag Hammadi-Codex VII eingeleitet und übersetzt vom Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften.” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 99 (1974): 575–84.

Apostolic Fathers

Holmes, Michael W., ed. and trans. *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Text and English Translations*. 3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

Lightfoot, Joseph B. *The Apostolic Fathers*. 4 vols. London: Macmillan, 1889.

Aristotle

Barnes, Jonathan, ed. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. 2 vols. Rev. Oxford trans. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Augustine of Hippo

John E. Rotelle, ed. *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: Sermons III/8 (273–305A) on the Saints*. Translated by Edmund Hill. Hyde Park: New York: New City, 1994.

Boethius, Ancius.

Watts, Victor, ed. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Rev. Ed. London: Penguin, 1999.

Clement of Alexandria

John Ferguson, trans. *Stromateis: Books One to Three*. Vol. 85 of *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*. 2d ed. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991.

Stählin, Otto, trans. *Clemens Alexandrinus: Zweiter Band: Stromata Buch I-VI*. 3d ed. Translated by Ludwig Früchtel. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960.

Epiphanius of Salamis

Frank Williams. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book I (Sects 1–46)*. 2d ed. Revised and Expanded. Boston: Brill, 2009. Adapted by Todd Berzon, Columbia University.

Eusebius

Maier, Paul L., trans. *Eusebius: The Church History*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.

Gnostic Texts

Foerster, Werner. *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*. Vol. 1. Patristic Evidence. Edited and translated by R. McL. Wilson; London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1972.

Layton, Bentley. *Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age*. New York: Doubleday, 1987.

Gospel of Judas

Jenott, Lance. *The “Gospel of Judas”: Coptic Text, Translation and Historical Interpretation of the “Betrayal’s Gospel.”* Edited by Christoph Marksches et al. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 64. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

Kasser, Rodolphe, Gregor Wurst, Marvin Meyer, and François Gaudard. *The Gospel of Judas Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and a Book of*

Allogenes from Codex Tchacos: Critical Edition. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2007.

Gospel of Mary

C. H. Rylands Library. “463: *The Gospel of Mary*.” Pages 18–23 in *Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the John Rylands Library*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1938.

King, Karen. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle*. Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2003.

Parsons, P. J. “3525: *Gospel of Mary*.” Pages 12–14 in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Vol. 50. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1983.

Tardieu, Michel. *Écrits gnostiques: Codex de Berlin*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1984.

Till, Walter C., *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502: Zweite, erweiterte Auflage bearbeitet von Hans-Martin Schenke*. Texte und Untersuchungen 60. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972.

Tuckett, Christopher M. *The Gospel of Mary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Wilson, R. McL., and G. W. MacRae. “*The Gospel according to Mary* BG, I:7,I–19,5.” Pages 453–71 in *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2–5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,1 and 4*. Edited by Douglas M. Parrott. Nag Hammadi Studies 11. Leiden: Brill, 1979.

Letters of Ignatius

Cureton, William. *The Ancient Syriac Versions of the Epistles of Saint Ignatius to St. Polycarp, the Ephesians and the Romans*. London: Rivington, 1845.

Ruinart, Therry. *Acta primorum martyrum sincera et selecta*. Paris: Muguet, 1689.

Voss, Isaac. *Epistolae genuinae S. Ignatii martyris; quae nunc primum lucem vident ex bibliotheca Florentina*. Amsterdam: Blaev, 1646.

Marcus Aurelius

Eliot, Charles W., ed. *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. Translated by George Lang. New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1937.

Maximus the Confessor

Stephen J. Shoemaker, trans. *The Life of the Virgin*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012.

Nag Hammadi Scriptures

Meyer, Marvin, ed. *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*. New York: HarperOne, 2007.

New Testament Apocrypha

Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, ed. *New Testament Apocrypha*. English translation edited by Robert McLachlan Wilson. 2 vols. Cambridge: James Clarke; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991–92.

Origen

O'Meara, John J. *Prayer: Exhortation to Martyrdom*. Westminster, Maryland: Newman, 1954.

Pistis Sophia

Schmidt, Carl, ed. Translated by Violet MacDermot. Nag Hammadi Studies 9. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

Passion of Perpetua and Felicity

Amat, Jacqueline. *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité suivi de Actes*. Sources Chrétiennes 417. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996.

Robinson, J. Armitage, ed. *The Passion of S. Perpetua*. Vol. 1, no. 2 of *Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891. Repr., Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967.

Van Beek, C. J. M. J. *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*. Vol. 1. Nijmegen: Van de Vegt, 1936.

Philo

Colson, F. H., and G. H. Whitaker, trans. 10 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Plato

Halliwel, S., trans. *Republic: Book Five*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1993.

Zeyl, Donald J., trans. *Timaeus*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000.

Testimony of Truth

Birger A. Pearson, ed., *Testimony of Truth (NHC IX, 3)*. Pages 122–203 in the *Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*. Translated by Birger A. Pearson and Søren Giversen. Nag Hammadi Studies 25. Leiden: Brill, 1981.

Valentinus

Marschies, Christoph. *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992.

Modern Works

Adler, Mortimer J. and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972.

Ambra, Eve, d'. *Roman Women*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Andersen, Jocelyn E. *Woman Submit! Christians and Domestic Violence*. Auburndale, Fla.: One Way Café, 2007.

Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Atwood, Richard. *Mary Magdalene in the New Testament Gospels and Early Tradition*. European University Studies 457. Bern: Peter Lang, 1993.

Aulén, Gustav Victor. *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*. Translated by A. G. Herbert. London: SPCK, 1931. Repr., New York: Macmillan, 1969.

Aune, David E. "Mastery of the Passions: Philo, 4 Maccabees, and Early Christianity." Pages 125–58 in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within*

- the Greco-Roman World*. Edited by W. E. Helleman. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994.
- Barnes, Timothy D. "The Date of Ignatius." *Expository Times* 120 (2009): 119–30.
- _____. *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.
- _____. "Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*." *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 509–31.
- _____. *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971.
- Barton, Carlin. *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Bashaw, Jennifer Garcia. "Martyrdom and Sacred Violence: Dying for God in Matthew and Ignatius." Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, Center for Advanced Theological Study, 2012.
- Bauer, Walter. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.
- Baumeister, Theofried. *Die Anfänge der Theologie des Martyriums*. Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie 45. Münster: Aschendorff, 1980.
- Bergman, Bettina. Introduction to *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*. Edited by Bettina Bergman and C. Kondoleon. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999.
- Berkowitz, Beth. *Execution and Invention: Death Penalty Discourse in Early Rabbinic and Christian Cultures*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Bernauer, James W. *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Toward an Ethics of Thought*. London: Humanities Press International, 1990.

- _____ and Jeremy R. Carrette, eds. *Michel Foucault and Theology: The Politics of Religious Experience*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Boer, Esther A., de. *The Gospel of Mary: Listening to the Beloved Disciple*. London: Continuum, 2005.
- _____. "A Stoic Reading of the *Gospel of Mary*: The Meaning of 'Matter' and 'Nature' in *Gospel of Mary* 7.1–8.11." Pages 199–219 in *Stoicism in Early Christianity*. Edited by Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Borg, Marcus. *Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power—and How They Can Be Restored*. New York: Harper One, 2011.
- Boughton, Lynne C. "From Pious Legend to Feminist Fantasy." *Journal of Religion* 71 (1991): 362–83.
- Bourgeault, Cynthia. *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene: Discovering the Woman at the Heart of Christianity*. Boston: Shambhala, 2010.
- Bovon, François. "Beyond the Canonical and the Apocryphal Books, the Presence of a Third Category: The Books Useful for the Soul." *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 2 (2012): 125–37.
- _____. "Le privilège pascal de Marie-Madeleine." *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984): 50–62. Translated as "Mary Magdalene's Paschal Privilege." Pages 147–57, 228–35 in *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives*. Translated by Jane Haapiseva-Hunter. Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series 36. Allison Park, Pa.: Pickwick, 1995.

- Bowersock, G. W. *Martyrdom and Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Boyarin, Daniel. *Border Lines: The Partitioning of Judaeo-Christianity*. Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion. Edited by Daniel Boyarin, Virginia Burrus, Charlotte Fonrobert, and Robert Gregg. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- _____. *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Bradley, Rosalind, ed. *A World of Prayer: Spiritual Leaders, Activists, and Humanitarians Share Their Favorite Prayers*. Translated by James Alison. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2012.
- Brakke, David. *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Brankaer, Johanna. "Whose Savior? Salvation, Damnation, and the Race of Adam in the *Gospel of Judas*." Pages 387–412 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Bremmer, Jan N. "Magic, Martyrdom and Women's Liberation in the Acts of Paul and Thecla." Pages 36–59 in *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla*. Edited by Jan N. Bremmer. Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996.
- Brock, Ann Graham. *Mary Magdalene, The First Apostle: The Struggle for Authority*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

- _____. “Setting the Record Straight—The Politics of Identification: Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother in *Pistis Sophia*.” Pages 43–52 in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*. Edited by F. Stanley Jones. SBL Symposium 19. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.
- Brock, Rita Nakashima, and Rebecca A. Parker. *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of this World for Crucifixion and Empire*. Boston: Beacon, 2008.
- Brock, Sebastian, and Susan Ashbrook Harvey. *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient*. 2d ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Brown, Peter. *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. Twentieth-anniversary edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- _____. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- _____. *The Making of Late Antiquity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Brox, Norbert. *Zeuge und Märtyrer: Untersuchungen zur frühchristlichen Zeugnis-Terminologie*. Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 5. Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1961.
- Buck, P. Lorraine. “Voluntary Martyrdom Revisited” *Journal of Theological Studies* 63.1 (April 2012): 125–35.
- Buell, Denise. *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

- Burns, Dylan M. "Sethian Crowns, Sethian Martyrs? Jewish Apocalyptic and Christian Martyrology in a Gnostic Literary Tradition." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, 17 November 2012.
- Burrus, Virginia. "Torture and Travail: Producing the Christian Martyr." Pages 56–71 in *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature*. Edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Maria Mayo Robbins. *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* 12. New York: T&T Clark, 2008.
- Butler, Rex D. *The New Prophecy and "New Visions": Evidence of Montanism in The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006.
- Butterweck, Christel. "*Martyriumssucht*" in der Alten Kirche? *Studien zur Darstellung und Deutung frühchristlicher Martyrien*. Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 87. Tübingen: J. C. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995.
- Cameron, Averil. *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse (Sather Classical Lectures)* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Cardman, Francine. "Acts of the Women Martyrs." Pages 98–104 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.
- Carrette, Jeremy R. *Foucault and Religion: Spiritual Corporality and Political Spirituality*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

- _____. "Prologue to a Confession of the Flesh." Pages 1–47 in Jeremy Carrette, *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- _____, ed. *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Castelli, Elizabeth A. *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture-Making*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Syntactic Structures*. 2d ed. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972.
- Church, F. Forrester. "Sex and Salvation in Tertullian." *Harvard Theological Review* 68 (1975): 83–101. Repr. pages 199–217 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.
- Clark, Elizabeth A. "Foucault, the Fathers, and Sex." Pages 39–56 in *Michel Foucault and Theology: The Politics of Religious Experience*. Edited by James Bernauer and Jeremy Carrette. Aldershot: Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004.
- _____. "Ideology, History, and the Construction of 'Woman' in Late Ancient Christianity." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2.2 (1994): 155–84. Repr. pages 1–30 in *Christianity and Society: The Social World of Early Christianity*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. Vol. 1 of *Recent Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. New York: Garland, 1999.
- _____. *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- _____. "Holy Women, Holy Words: Early Christian Women, Social History, and the 'Linguistic Turn.'" *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998): 413–30.

- _____. “The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the ‘Linguistic Turn.’ ” *Church History* 67.1 (1998): 1–31.
- _____. *Reading Renunciation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Cobb, Stephanie L. *Dying to Be Men: Gender and Language in Early Christian Martyr Texts*. New York: Columbia, 2008.
- Coleman, K. M. “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments.” *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 44–73.
- Corrington, Gail P. “The ‘Divine Woman’? Propaganda and the Power of Celibacy in the New Testament Apocrypha: A Reconsideration.” Pages 169–82 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.
- Coyle, J. Kevin. “The Fathers on Women and Women’s Ordination.” Pages 117–67 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.
- Daly, Robert J. *Christian Sacrifice: The Judaeo-Christian Background Before Origen*. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1978.
- _____. *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.
- Dart, John. *The Jesus of Heresy and History: The Discovery and Meaning of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.
- Daube, David. *Civil Disobedience in Antiquity*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1972.

Davaney, Sheila Greeve. *Pragmatic Historicism: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.

DeConick, April. "Apostles as Archons: The Fight for Authority and the Emergence of Gnosticism in the Codex Tchacos and Other Early Christian Literature." Pages 243–88 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

_____. "Crafting Gnosis: Gnostic Spirituality in the Ancient New Age." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 19, 2012.

_____. "The Mystery of Betrayal. What does the *Gospel of Judas* Really Say?" Pages 239–64 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*. Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

_____. *The Thirteenth Apostle: What the Gospel of Judas Really Says*. New York: Continuum, 2007.

Dehandschutter, Boudewijn. *Martyrium Polycarpi: Ein literair-kritisch studie*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 52. Leuven: Peeters, 2005.

_____ and Johan Leemans, *Polycarpiana: Studies on Martyrdom and Persecution in Early Christianity*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007.

- Denzey, Nicola. “‘The Beauty that Came to Me in the Books’ (*NHC VI.6.54*): Scribal Cultures in the Nag Hammadi Codices.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, San Francisco, November 20, 2011.
- _____. “Facing the Beast: Justin, Christian Martyrdom, and Freedom of the Will.” Pages 176–198 in *Stoicism in Early Christianity*. Edited by Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Desjardins, Michael. “Introduction to *Apocalypse of Peter (NHC VII, 3)*.” Pages 201–16 in *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*. Edited by Birger A. Pearson. Translated by James Brasher. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 30. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Dixon, Sandra. *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres, and Real Life*. London: Duckworth, 2001.
- Doresse, John. *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics: An Introduction to the Gnostic Coptic Manuscripts Discovered at Chenoboskion*. Translated by Philip Mairé. London: Hollis & Carter, 1960.
- Droge, Arthur J., and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1972.
- Dubois, Jean-Daniel. “L’Évangile de Judas et la Tradition Basilidienne.” Pages 145–54 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*. Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Dunderberg, Ismo. *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

- _____. “Judas’ Anger and the Perfect Human.” Pages 201–221 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Edwards, Catharine. *Death in Ancient Rome*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Ehrman, Bart D. *The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot: A New Look at Betrayer and Betrayed*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Emmel, Stephen. “The Presuppositions and the Purpose of the *Gospel of Judas*.” Pages 33–39 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*. Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003.
- Ferguson, John. *Clement of Alexandria*. New York: Twayne, 1974.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Translated by Alan M. Sheridan. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- _____. *The Care of the Self*. Vol. 3 of the History of Sexuality. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1988.

- _____. "L'écriture de soi." *Corps écrit* 5, "L'autoportrait" (February 1983): 3–23.
Translated as "Self Writing" by Paul Rabinow in Foucault, *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*. Vol. 1 of *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, 207–22. New York: New Press, 1994.
- _____. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981–82*. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Picador, 2001.
- _____. *The History of Sexuality: Vol. 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- _____. "The Power and Politics of Michel Foucault." *The Daily Californian* (April 22, 1983): 20. Repr. in James W. Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Toward an Ethics for Thought*. London: Humanities Press International, 1990.
- _____. "Technologies of the Self." Pages 16–49 in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.
- _____. *The Use of Pleasure*. Vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*. Translated by Robert Hurley. London: Penguin, 1984.
- Fox, Robin Lane. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: Knopf, 1987.
- Franzmann, Majella. "Judas as an Abraham Figure in the *Gospel of Judas*." Pages 113–21 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*. Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

- Frend, W. H. C. "Blandina and Perpetua: Two Early Christian Heroines." Pages 87–97 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.
- _____. *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus*. 1965. Repr., Cambridge: James Clarke, 2008.
- Fridh, Åke. *Le problème de la passion des Saintes Perpétue et Félicité*. Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensis 26. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1968.
- Gamble, Harry Y. *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Gathercole, Simon. *The Gospel of Judas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Geffcken, Johannes. "Die christlichen Martyrien." *Hermes* 45 (1910): 481–505.
- Gregory, Andrew. "I Clement: An Introduction." Pages 21–31 in *Writings of the Apostolic Fathers*. Edited by Paul Foster. London: T&T Clark, 2007, 21–31.
- Goehring, James E. "Libertine or Liberated: Women in the So-Called Libertine Gnostic Communities." Pages 329–44 in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*. Edited by Karen L. King. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988. Repr. pages 183–98 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.
- Hadot, Pierre. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Translated by Arnold I. Davidson. Edited by Michael Chase. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

- _____. *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Translated by Michael Chase. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2002.
- The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books.* Edited by Wayne A. Meeks et al. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Harris, William V. *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Hartenstein, Judith. *Die Zweite Lehre: Erscheinungen des Auferstandenen als Rahmenerzählungen frühchristlicher Dialoge.* Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 146. Berlin: Akademie, 2000.
- Haskins, Susan. *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993.
- Hearon, Holly E. *The Mary Magdalene Tradition: Witness and Counter-Witness in Early Christian Communities.* Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004.
- Hegstrom, Paul. *Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them: Breaking the Cycle of Physical and Emotional Abuse.* Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 2004.
- Heitritter, Lynn, and Jeannette Vought. *Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse: A Sensitive Biblical Guide for Counselors, Victims, and Families.* Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2006.
- Heyman, George. *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict.* Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- Holmes, Michael W. "The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* and the New Testament Passion Narratives." Pages 407–32 in *Trajectories Through the New Testament and the*

- Apostolic Fathers*. Edited by Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher Tuckett.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- _____. “Polycarp of Smyrna, Letter to the Philipppians.” *Expository Times* 118.2 (2006):
53–63.
- Holzhausen, Jens. “Gnosis und Martyrium: Zu Valentins viertem Fragment.” *Zeitschrift
für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 85
(1994): 116–131.
- _____. “Valentinus and Valentinians.” Pages 1144–57 in *Dictionary of Gnosis and
Western Esotericism*. Vol. 2. Edited by J. Hanegraaff et al. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Iricinski, Eduard, Lance Jenott, and Philippa Townsend. “The Betrayer’s Gospel”
(review of Rodolphe Kasser and Gregor Wurst, eds., *The Gospel of Judas
Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and a Book of Allogenes from
Codex Tchacos: Critical Edition*), *New York Review of Books*, June 8, 2006.
- Jansen, Katherine L. *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in
the Later Middle Ages*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Jeanes, Gordon. “Baptism Portrayed as Martyrdom in the Early Church.” *SL* 23 (1993):
158–76. Repr. pages 62–80 in *Forms of Devotion: Conversion, Worship,
Spirituality, Asceticism*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. Vol. 5 of *Recent Studies in
Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson.
New York: Garland, 1999.
- Jefford, Clayton N. *Reading the Apostolic Fathers: A Student’s Introduction*. 2d ed.
Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.

- Jenott, Lance. "The *Gospel of Judas* 45, 6–7 and Enoch's Heavenly Temple." Pages 471–77 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Jensen, Anne. *God's Self-Confident Daughters: Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women*. Translated by O. C. Dean. Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 1996.
- Joly, Robert. *Le dossier d'Ignace d'Antioche*. Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1979.
- Jonas, Hans. *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God & the Beginnings of Christianity*. 3d ed. Boston: Beacon, 2001.
- Kasser, Rodolphe. "Introduction: Lost and Found: The History of Codex Tchacos." Pages 1–25 in *The Gospel of Judas Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and a Book of Allogenes from Codex Tchacos: Critical Edition*. Edited by Rodolphe Kasser et al. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2007.
- Kelley, Nicole. "Philosophy as Training for Death: Reading the Ancient Christian Martyr Acts as Spiritual Exercises." *CH* 75:4 (2006): 723–47.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Rev. ed. San Francisco: Harper, 1978.
- Kinder, Donald. "Clement of Alexandria: Conflicting Views on Women." Pages 55–62 in *Christianity and Society: The Social World of Early Christianity*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. Vol. 1 of *Recent Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. New York: Garland, 1999.

- King, Karen L., ed. *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.
- _____. “Gospel of Mary Magdalene.” Pages 601–34 in *A Feminist Commentary*. Vol. 2 of *Searching the Scriptures*. Edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. New York: Crossroad, 1994.
- _____. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle*. Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2003.
- _____. “Martyrdom among the Heretics.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 19, 2012.
- _____. “Martyrdom and Its Discontents in the Tchacos Codex.” Pages 23–42 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- _____. “The Origins of Gnosticism and the Identity of Christianity.” Pages 103–120 in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87). Edited by Antti Marjanen. Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005.
- _____. “Prophetic Power and Women’s Authority: The Case of the *Gospel of Mary Magdalene*.” Pages 21–41 in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*. Edited by Beverly M. Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- _____. *What Is Gnosticism?* Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003.

_____. “Why All the Controversy: Mary in the *Gospel of Mary*.” Pages 53–74 in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*. Edited by F. Stanley Jones. SBL Symposium 19. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.

_____ and Elaine H. Pagels. *Reading Judas: The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Christianity*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2007.

Klawiter, Frederick C. “The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution in Developing the Priestly Authority of Women in Early Christianity: A Case Study of Montanism.” *Church History* 49 (1980): 251–61. Repr. pages 105–15 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.

Koester, Helmut. *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development*. Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990.

_____. *History and Literature of Early Christianity*. 2 vols. New York: DeGruyter, 2000.

_____. *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*. 2 vols. 2d ed. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995.

_____. “The Impact of Walter Bauer’s ‘Orthodoxy and Heresy.’ ” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL. Chicago, November 17, 2012.

Koscheski, Jonathan. “The Earliest Christian War: Second and Third Century Martyrdom and the Creation of Cosmic Warriors” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 39.1 (March 2011): 100–124.

- Koschorke, Klaus. "Die Polemik der Petrusapokalypse (*NHC VII*, 3) gegen das Kirchliche Christentum." Pages 11–90 in *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das Kirchliche Christentum*. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
- _____. "Die Polemik von Testimonium Veritatis (*NHC IX*, 3) gegen die 'Häresien' der Katholiken und Gnostiker." Pages 91–174 in *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das Kirchliche Christentum*. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
- Kraemer, Ross Shepard. *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions Among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Kyle, Donald G. *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Labriolle, P., de. *La crise montaniste*. Paris: 1913.
- Lamberigts, M. and P. Van Deun, eds. *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Memorial Louis Reekmans*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 117. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995.
- Le Boulluec, Alain. *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque*. 2 tomes. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1985.
- Lefkowitz, Mary R. "The Motivations for St. Perpetua's Martyrdom." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44.3 (1976): 417–21.
- _____. *Women in Greek Myth*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- _____ and Maureen B. Fant. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*. 2d ed. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- Lewis, Nicola Denzey. "Fate and the Wandering Stars: The Jewish Apocalyptic Roots of the *Gospel of Judas*." Pages 289–304 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of*

- the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Lieu, Judith M.. *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
- _____. *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Logan, Alastair. “The Tchacos Codex: Another Document of the Gnostics?” Pages 3–21 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Löhr, Winrich A. *Basilides und seine Schule: Eine Studie zur Theologie-und Kirchengeschichte des zweiten Jahrhunderts*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 83. Edited by Martin Hengel und Otfried Hofius. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996.
- Long, A. A., and D. N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Luttikhuisen, G. P. “The Evaluation of the Teaching of Jesus in Christian Gnostic Revelation Dialogues.” *Novum Testamentum* 30 (1988): 158–68.
- Madden, Amy. *Stolen Beauty: Healing the Scars of Childhood Abuse*. Minneapolis: Syren Book, 2007.

- Maier, Harry O. "Purity and Danger in Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians: The Sin of Valens in Social Perspective." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 229–47.
- Maisch, Ingrid. *Between Contempt and Veneration . . . Mary Magdalene: The Image of a Woman Through the Centuries*. Translated by Linda M. Mahoney. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.
- Maltby, Tammy. *Confessions of a Good Christian Girl: The Secrets Women Keep and the Grace That Saves Them*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007.
- Marjanen, Antti. "The Mother of Jesus or the Magdalene? The Identity of Mary in the So-Called Gnostic Christian Texts." Pages 31–41 in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*. Edited by F. Stanley Jones. SBL Symposium 19. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.
- _____, ed. *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87. Edited by Juhana Saukkonen. Helsinki: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005.
- _____. "What is Gnosticism? From the Pastorals to Rudolph." Pages 1–53 in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87. Edited by Antti Marjanen. Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005.
- _____. *The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi and Related Documents*. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 40. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Markschies, Christoph. *Gnosis: An Introduction*. Translated by John Bowden. London: T&T Clark, 2003.

- _____. “Lehrer, Schüler, Schule: Zur Bedeutung einer Institution für das antike Christentum.” Pages 97–120 in *Religiöse Vereine in der römischen Antike. Untersuchungen zu Organization, Ritual und Raumordnung*. Edited by Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser and Alfred Schäfer. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.
- Martin, Dale B. “Epistemologies of the Body in the New Testament.” Lecture presented at the Rocky Mountains Great Plains SBL/AAR/ASOR luncheon at the Iliff School of Theology, March 19, 2011.
- _____ and Patricia Cox Miller. *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography*. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Martin, Luther H., Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton, eds. *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.
- Matthews, Shelly. *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- _____. “Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography.” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 17 (Fall 2001): 39–55.
- McGinn, Bernard, ed. *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*. New York: Random House, 2006.
- McGuckin, John A. “Martyr Devotion in the Alexandrian School: Origen to Athanasius.” Pages 171–81 in *Forms of Devotion: Conversion, Worship, Spirituality, Asceticism*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. Vol. 5 of *Recent Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. New York: Garland, 1999.

- McKechnie, Paul. “‘Women’s Religion’ and Second-Century Christianity.” Pages 31–53 in *Christianity and Society: The Social World of Early Christianity*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. Vol. 1 of *Recent Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. New York: Garland, 1999.
- McNamara, Jo Ann. “Sexual Equality and the Cult of Virginity in Early Christian Thought.” Pages 219–32 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.
- Megill, Alan. *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*. Berkeley: University of California, 1987.
- Meyer, Marvin. *The Gnostic Discoveries: The Impact of the Nag Hammadi Library*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.
- _____. “Interpreting Judas: Ten Passages in the *Gospel of Judas*.” Pages 41–55 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*. Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- _____. “Preface,” xi–xii in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*. New York: HarperOne, 2007.
- _____. “When the Sethians were Young: The *Gospel of Judas* in the Second Century.” Pages 57–73 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March*

- 13–16, 2008. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- _____ and Elaine H. Pagels. “Introduction.” Pages 1–13 in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*. New York: HarperOne, 2007.
- Middleton, Paul. *Martyrdom: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: T&T Clark, 2011.
- _____. *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity*. Edited by Mark Goodacre. Library of New Testament Studies 307. London: T&T Clark, 2006.
- _____. “Sacrifice, Salvation, and Holy War in Maccabean and Early Christian Martyrdom.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 18, 2012.
- Miller, Laura. “‘The Myth of Persecution:’ Early Christians Weren’t Persecuted” (review of Candida R. Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*). *Salon*, February 24, 2013.
- Mohri, Erika. *Maria Magdalena: Frauenbilder in Evangelientexten des 1. bis 3. Jahrhunderts*. Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 2000.
- Moore, Thomas. *The Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
- Moss, Candida R. *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012.
- _____. “The Discourse of Voluntary Martyrdom: Ancient and Modern” *CH* 81.3 (Sept 2012): 531–551.
- _____. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. New York: HarperOne, 2013.

- _____. *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Nason-Clark, Nancy, and Catherine Clark Kroeger. *Refuge from Abuse: Healing and Hope for Abused Christian Women*. Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2004.
- Nussbaum, Martha. "The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions." *Apeiron* 20 (1987): 129–77.
- _____. *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Oden, Thomas C. *Care of the Souls in the Classic Tradition in Theology and Pastoral Care Series*. Edited by Don S. Browning. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- O’Faolain, Julia, and Lauro Martines, eds. *Not in God’s Image: Women in History from the Greeks to the Victorians*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
- Osborn, Eric. *Clement of Alexandria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Pagels, Elaine H. "Baptism in the *Gospel of Judas*: A Preliminary Inquiry." Pages 353–66 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- _____. *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Random House, 1978.
- _____. "Gnostic and Orthodox Views of Christ’s Passion: Paradigms for the Christian’s Response to Persecution?" Pages 262–88 in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven,*

- Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*. Vol 1. Edited by Bentley Layton. Studies in the History of Religions. Supplements to Numen 41. Leiden: Brill, 1980–1981.
- Painchaud, Louis. “Polemical Aspects of the *Gospel of Judas*.” Pages 171–86 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*. Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- _____. ‘You will sacrifice the man who bears me.’ (*Gos. Jud.* 56.19–20). Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, 17 November 2012.
- Pasquier, Anne. “L’eschatologie dans *L’Évangile selon Marie*: étude des notions de nature et d’image.” Pages 390–404 in *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22–25 août 1978)*. Edited by B. Barc. Québec: Les Presses de Université Laval, 1981.
- _____. *L’Évangile selon Marie*. Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section “Textes” 10. Québec: Les Presses de Université Laval, 1983.
- Pearson, Birger A. *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
- _____. “Anti-Heretical Warnings in Codex IX from Nag Hammadi.” Pages 183–93 in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity. New York: Clark International, 2004.
- _____. “Gnostic Interpretation of the Old Testament in the *Testimony of Truth* from Nag Hammadi (CG IX, 3).” *Harvard Theological Review* 71 (1980): 311–19.

- _____. “Gnosticism as a Religion.” Pages 81–101 in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87. Edited by Antti Marjanen. Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005.
- _____. “Introduction to IX:3: *The Testimony of Truth*.” Pages 101–20 in *Testimony of Truth (NHC IX, 3)*. Edited by Birger A. Pearson. Pages 122–203 in the *Coptic Gnostic Library: Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*. Translated by Birger A. Pearson and Søren Giversen. Nag Hammadi Studies 25. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
- _____. “Introduction to *The Testimony of Truth*.” Pages 613–616 in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*. Edited by Marvin Meyer. New York: HarperOne, 2007.
- _____. “Is Gnosticism a Religion?” Pages 105–114 in *The Notion of “Religion” in Comparative Research. Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Rome, 3–8 September 1990*. Edited by Ugo Bianchi. Storia delle Religioni 8. Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1994.
- _____. “Jewish Haggadic Traditions in *The Testimony of Truth* from Nag Hammadi.” Pages 39–51 in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity. New York: Clark International, 2004.
- Perkins, Judith. “Imperial Time Frames.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 19, 2011.
- _____. *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*. Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies. New York: Routledge, 2008.

- _____. *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era*.
New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Perkins, Pheme. *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism*.
New York: Paulist Press, 1980.
- _____. *Gnosticism and the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- _____. *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church*. Columbia: University of South Carolina
Press, 1994.
- Petersen, Silke. “Zerstört die Werke der Weiblichkeit!": *Maria Magdalena, Salome und
andere Jüngerinnen Jesu in christlich-gnostischen Schriften*. Nag Hammadi
Manichaean Studies 48. Edited by S. Emmel and H. J. Klimkeit. Leiden: Brill,
1999.
- Petersen, Tage. “From Perplexity to Salvation: The *Gospel of Judas* Read in Light of
Platonic Didactic Strategies.” Pages 413–434 in *The Codex Judas Papers:
Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice
University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick.
Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar
Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Piovanelli, Pierluigi. “Rabbi Yehuda versus Judas Iscariot: The *Gospel of Judas* and
Apocryphal Passion Stories.” Pages 223–39 in *The Codex Judas Papers:
Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice
University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick.
Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar
Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

- Pomeroy, Sarah B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*.
New York: Schocken Books, 1975.
- Prinzivalli, Emanuela. "Perpetua the Martyr." Pages 118–40, 221–25 in *Roman Women*.
Edited by Augusto Fraschetti. Translated by Linda Lappin. Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 2001.
- Puech, Henri-Charles, and Beate Blatz. "The Gospel of Mary." Pages 391–95 in *Gospels
and Related Writings*. Vol. 1 of *New Testament Apocrypha*. Rev. ed. Edited by
Wilhelm Schneemelcher. Translated and edited by R. McL. Wilson. Cambridge:
James Clarke, 1991.
- Rasimus, Tuomas. "Introduction." Pages 8–10 in *Stoicism in Early Christianity*. Edited
by Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg. Grand
Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Rasimus, Tuomas, Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Ismo Dunderberg, eds. *Stoicism in Early
Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Ricci, Carla. *Mary Magdalene and Many Others: Women Who Followed Jesus*.
Translated by Paul Burns. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
- Riddle, Donald W. *The Martyrs: A Study in Social Control*. Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 1931.
- Riley, Gregory J. *Resurrection Considered: Thomas and John in Controversy*.
Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Rives, J. "Human Sacrifices Among Pagans and Christians." *Journal of Religious
Studies* 85 (1995): 65–85.

Robinson, Gesine Schenke. "The *Gospel of Judas*: Its Protagonist, Its Composition, and Its Community." Pages 75–94 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaeon Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Robinson, James M. "From the Cliff to Cairo: The Story of the Discoverers and Middlemen of the Nag Hammadi Codices." Pages 21–58 in *Colloque International sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22–25 août 1978)*. Edited by Bernard Barc. Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section "Études" 1. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain: Peeters, 1981.

_____. "Nag Hammadi: the First Fifty Years." Pages 3–33 in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration*. Edited by John D. Turner and Anne McGuire. Nag Hammadi and Manichaeon Studies 44. Leiden, Brill, 1997.

_____ and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

Robinson, Thomas A. *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church*. Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen, 1988.

Roukema, Riemer. *Gnosis and Faith in Early Christianity: An Introduction to Gnosticism*. Translated by John Bowden. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999.

Rouselle, Aline. *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity*. Translated by Felicia Pheasant. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988.

- Rowe, Christopher. *An Introduction to Greek Ethics*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1977.
- Rudolph, Kurt. *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*. Translation edited by Robert McLachlan Wilson. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984.
- Ruether, Rosemary R. "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Early Church." Pages 150–83 in *Religion and Sexism*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974. Repr. 262–95 in *Women in Early Christianity*. Edited by David M. Scholer. Vol. 14 of *Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson, David M. Scholer, and Paul C. Finney. New York: Garland, 1993.
- Salisbury, Joyce E. *The Blood of Martyrs: Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- _____. *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Schaberg, Jane. "How Mary Magdalene Became a Whore: Mary Magdalene Is in Fact the Primary Witness to the Fundamental Data of Early Christian Faith." *Bible Review* 8 (1992): 30–37, 51–52.
- _____. *The Resurrection of Mary Magdalene: Legends, Apocrypha, and the Christian Testament*. New York: Continuum, 2002.
- Schmid, Renate. *Maria Magdalena in Gnostischen Schriften*. Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Religions – und Weltanschauungsfragen: München, 1990.
- Schoedel, William R. "Are the *Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* Authentic?" *Religious Studies Review* 6 (1980) 196–201.

- _____. *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*.
Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Edited by Helmut
Koester. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Scholer, David M., ed. *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1948–69*. Nag Hammadi Studies 1.
Edited by Martin Krause, James M. Robinson, and Frederik Wisse. Leiden: Brill,
1971.
- _____. *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1970–1994*. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 32.
Edited by J. M. Robinson and H. J. Klimkeit. Leiden, Brill, 1997.
- _____. *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1995–2006*. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 65.
Edited by Einar Thomassen and Johannes van Oort. Leiden, Brill, 2009.
- Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction
of Christian Origins*. Tenth-anniversary edition. New York: Crossroad, 2004.
- Scott, James. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven,
Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Shaw, Brent D. “Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs.” *J ECS* 4.3 (1996): 269–
312.
- _____. “The *Passion of Perpetua*—Christian Women Martyred in Carthage in A.D. 203.”
Past and Present 139 (May 1993): 3–45.
- Shelton, Jo-Ann. *As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History*. Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Shoemaker, Stephen. “A Case of Mistaken Identity? Naming the Gnostic Mary.” Pages
5–30 in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*. Edited by F.
Stanley Jones. SBL Symposium 19. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.

- Smart, Ninian. *The Religious Experience*. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1996.
- Smith, Lacey Baldwin. *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.
- Smith, Morton. "The History of the Term Gnostikos." Pages 796–807 in vol. 2 of *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*. Edited by Bentley Layton. *Studies in the History of Religions (Supplements to Numen)* 41. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
- Ste. Croix, G. E. M., de. *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy*. Edited by Michael Whitby and Joseph Streeter. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Sterling, Gregory E. "Mors philosophi: The Death of Jesus in Luke." *Harvard Theological Review* 94.4 (2001): 383–402.
- Stowers, Stanley K. *Letter-Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.
- Straw, Carole. "'A Very Special Death': Christian Martyrdom in its Classical Context." Pages 39–57 in *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion*. Edited by Margaret Cormack. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Streete, Gail P. C. *Redeemed Bodies: Women Martyrs in Early Christianity*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2009.
- Stirewalt, M. Luther. "The Form and Function of the Greek Letter-Essay." Pages 175–206 in Karl Donfried, ed. *The Romans Debate*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing

- House, 1977; Pages 147–71 in Revised and Expanded Edition. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991.
- Sweeney, Marvin A., ed. *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography*. SBL Resources for Biblical Study 27. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Tardieu, Michel. *Écrits gnostiques: Codex de Berlin*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1984.
- Thomassen, Einar. “Is Judas Really the Hero of the *Gospel of Judas*?” Pages 157–70 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*. Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Till, W. C. *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502: Zweite, erweiterte Auflage bearbeitet von Hans-Martin Schenke*. Texte und Untersuchungen 60. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972.
- Tilley, Maureen A. “The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity.” Pages 829–58 in *A Feminist Commentary*. Vol. 2 of *Searching the Scriptures*. Edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. New York: Crossroad, 1994.
- Tite, Philip L. “*Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse: Determining the Social Function of Moral Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity*.” Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2005.
- _____. “Voluntary Martyrdom and Gnosticism.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 17, 2012.

- Torjesen, Karen, and Virginia Burrus. "Household Management and Women's Authority." Pages 53–87 of *When Women Were Priests*. Edited by Karen Torjesen. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.
- Trammell, Franklin. "The God of Jerusalem as the Pole Dragon: The Conceptual Background of the Cosmic Axis in James." Pages 337–49 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Tran, Jonathan. *Foucault and Theology*. London: T&T Clark, 2011.
- Trites, Allison. *The New Testament Concept of Witness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- _____. "μαρτύς and Martyrdom in the Apocalypse." *Novum Testamentum* 15 (1973): 72–80.
- Tuana, Nancy. *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman's Nature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Tuckett, Christopher M. *The Gospel of Mary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Tuckett, Christopher M. *Nag Hammadi and the Gospel Tradition: Synoptic Tradition in the Nag Hammadi Library*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986.
- Turner, John D. "The Place of the *Gospel of Judas* in Sethian Tradition." Pages 187–237 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*.

- Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- _____. “The Sethian Myth in the *Gospel of Judas*: Soteriology or Demonology?” Pages 95–133 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Ullucci, Daniel C. *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Van den Hoek, Annewies. “The ‘Catechetical’ School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage” *HTR* 90.1 (1997): 59–87. Repr. 19–47 in *Forms of Devotion: Conversion, Worship, Spirituality, Asceticism*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. Vol. 5 of *Recent Studies in Early Christianity: A Collection of Scholarly Essays*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. New York: Garland, 1999.
- _____. *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model*. Leiden: Brill, 1988.
- Van den Kerchove, Anna. “La Maison, l’Autel et les Sacrifices: Quelques Remarques sur la Polémique dans l’Évangile des Judas.” Pages 311–29 in *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris, Sorbonne, October 27th–28th, 2006*. Edited by Madeleine Scopello. Nag Hammadi Manichaean Studies 26. Edited by Stephen Emmel and Johannes van Oort. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

- Van Oort, Johannes. "Irenaeus on the *Gospel of Judas*: An Analysis of the Evidence in Context." Pages 43–56 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaeic Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Van Os, Bas. "The *Testimony of Truth* Reconsidered." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 17, 2012.
- _____. "Stop Sacrificing! The metaphor of sacrifice in the *Gospel of Judas*." Pages 367–86 in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Nag Hammadi Manichaeic Studies 71. Edited by Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Voeltzel, Thierry. "On religion (1978)." Pages 106–09 in *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*. Edited by Jeremy R. Carrette. Translated by Richard Townsend. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Von Campenhausen, Hans. "Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polykarp Martyrium." Pages 253–301 in *Aus der Frühzeit des Christentums: Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des ersten und zweiten Jahrhunderts*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963.
- _____. *Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1936.

- Walker Bynum, Caroline. *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.
- Walzer, Richard. *Galen on Jews and Christians*. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.
- Weiner, Eugene and Anita Weiner. *The Martyr's Conviction: A Sociological Analysis*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.
- Werner, Andreas. "The Coptic gnostic Apocalypse of Peter." Pages 700–05 in *Writings Relating to the Apostles, Apocalypses, and Related Subjects*. Vol. 2 of *New Testament Apocrypha*. Rev. ed. Edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher. Translated and edited by R. McL. Wilson. Cambridge: James Clarke, 1991.
- White, Michael L. "Moral Pathology, Passions, Progress, and Protreptic in Clement of Alexandria." Pages 284–321 in *Passions and Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*. Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald. London: Taylor and Francis, 2007.
- Wilken, Robert L. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. 2d ed. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003.
- _____. *The Myth of Christian Beginnings: History's Impact on Belief*. Garden City, New York: Anchor, 1982.
- _____. *Remembering the Christian Past*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Willem van Henten, Jan. *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism. Vol. 57. Edited by John J. Collins; Leiden: Brill, 1997.

- Willem Van Henten, Jan and Friedrich Avemarie. *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Williams, Michael A. *The Immovable Race: A Gnostic Designation and the Theme of Stability in Late Antiquity*. Nag Hammadi Studies 29. Leiden: Brill, 1985.
- _____. "The Nature and Origin of the Gnostic Concept of Stability." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1977.
- _____. *"Rethinking Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- _____. "Stability as a Soteriological Theme in Gnosticism." Pages 819–29 in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Vol 2: Sethian Gnosticism*. Edited by Bentley Layton. Studies in the History of Religions (supplement to *Numen*) 41. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
- _____. "Was There a Gnostic Religion? Strategies for a Clearer Analysis." Pages 55–79 in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 87. Edited by Antti Marjanen. Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005.
- Wilson, Emily R. *The Death of Socrates*. London: Profile, 2007.
- Wilson, R. McL. "The New Testament and the Gnostic *Gospel of Mary*." *New Testament Studies* 3 (1957): 236–43.
- Winston, David. "Philo of Alexandria on the Rational and Irrational Emotions." Pages 201–220 in *Passions and Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*. Routledge

- Monographs in Classical Studies. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald. London: Taylor and Francis, 2007.
- Wisse, Frederik. "The Nag Hammadi Library and the Heresiologists." *Vigiliae Christianae* 25 (1971): 205–223.
- _____. "The 'Opponents' in the New Testament in Light of the Nag Hammadi Writings." Pages 99–120 in *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi* (Québec, 22–25 août 1978). Edited by Bernard Barc. BCNH, Section "Études." Québec and Louvain: Les presses de l'Université Laval and Éditions Peeters, 1980.
- _____. "The Use of Early Christian Literature as Evidence for Inner Diversity and Conflict. Pages 177–190 in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*. Edited by Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, Jr. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1986.
- Young, Frances M. *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975.
- _____. *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom*. Patristic Monograph Series 5. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979.
- Young, Robin Darling. *In Procession Before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001.
- Zahn, Theodor. *Ignatius von Antiochien*. Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1873.