

THE ANCIENT MARTYRDOM ACCOUNTS
OF PETER AND PAUL

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THE ANCIENT MARTYRDOM ACCOUNTS
OF PETER AND PAUL

David L. Eastman

SBL Press

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an enthusiastic supporter of this project
who was taken from us before its completion

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ABBREVIATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCES

<i>1 Apol.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Apologia i</i>
<i>Act. apost.</i>	Arator, <i>De actibus apostolorum</i>
<i>Acta mart. Scillit.</i>	Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs
<i>Acta Phil.</i>	Acta Phileae
<i>Acts Paul</i>	Acts of Paul
<i>Acts Paul Thec.</i>	Acts of Paul and Thecla
<i>Acts Pet.</i>	Acts of Peter
<i>Acts Pet. Paul</i>	Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (ch. 10b)
<i>Acts Phil. Mart.</i>	Acts of Philip, Martyrdom
<i>Acts Pil.</i>	Acts of Pilate
<i>Adv. Donat.</i>	Optatus of Milev, <i>Adversus Donatistas</i>
<i>Adv. Marc.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Adversus Marcionem</i>
<i>Adv. nat.</i>	Arnobius of Sicca, <i>Adversus nationes</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Agricola</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i>
<i>Ap. John</i>	Apocryphon of John
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologia/Apologeticum</i> (various authors)
<i>Apos. Con.</i>	Constitutiones apostolicae
<i>Aux.</i>	Ambrose, <i>Sermo contra Auxentium de basilicis tradendis</i>
<i>Bapt.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De baptismo</i>
<i>Car.</i>	Theodoret of Cyrus, <i>De caritate</i>
<i>Carm.</i>	<i>Carmina</i> (various authors)
<i>CD</i>	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document
<i>Chron.</i>	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Chronicon</i>
<i>Civ.</i>	Augustine, <i>De civitate Dei</i>
<i>Cod. Bern.</i>	<i>Martyrology of Jerome</i> , Codex of Berne

<i>Comm. Gen.</i>	Origen, <i>Commentarii in Genesim</i>
<i>Comm. Jo.</i>	Origen, <i>Commentarii in evangelium Joannis</i>
<i>Comm. ser. Matt.</i>	Origen, <i>Commentarium series in evangelium Matthaei</i>
Dial. Sav.	Dialogue of the Savior
Doct. Apost.	Doctrine of the Apostles (ch. 14)
<i>Ennarat. Ps.</i>	Augustine, <i>Ennarationes in Psalmos</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i> (various authors)
<i>Ep. Demet.</i>	Pelagius, <i>Epistle to Demetrius</i>
<i>Ep. Tim.</i>	Pseudo-Dionysius, <i>Epistle to Timothy on the Death of the Apostles Peter and Paul</i> (ch. 12)
<i>Exc. Hier.</i>	Pseudo-Hegesippus, <i>De excidio urbis Hierosolymitanae</i>
<i>Fast.</i>	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i>
<i>Galba</i>	<i>Vita Galbae</i> (Suetonius and Plutarch)
<i>Glor. mart.</i>	Gregory of Tours, <i>De gloria martyrum</i>
Gos. Thom.	Gospel of Thomas
<i>Gyn.</i>	Soranus of Ephesus, <i>Gynecology</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Adversus haereses</i> (various authors)
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historia</i> (various authors)
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> (various authors)
<i>Hist. laus.</i>	Palladius, <i>Historia Lausiaca</i>
Hist. Paul	History of the Holy Apostle My Lord Paul (ch. 8)
Hist. Shim.	History of Shimeon Kepha the Chief of the Apostles (ch. 4)
<i>Hom.</i>	Pseudo-Clementine <i>Homilies</i>
Ignatius Rom.	Ignatius of Antioch, <i>Epistle to the Romans</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	Lactantius, <i>Divinae institutiones</i>
<i>Instr</i>	Commodian, <i>Instructions</i>
IP	Instrumenta Patristica
Itiner. Salz.	Salzburg Itinerary
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
<i>Job</i>	Ambrose, <i>De interpellatione Job et David</i>
<i>Laps.</i>	Cyprian, <i>On the Lapsed</i>
<i>Leg. aur.</i>	Jacobus de Voragine, <i>The Golden Legend</i>
<i>Lib. apis</i>	Solomon of Basra, <i>Book of the Bee (Liber apis)</i>
Lib. pontif.	Liber pontificalis
Mart. Ascen. Isa.	Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah
<i>Mart. Paul</i>	Pseudo-Linus, <i>Martyrdom of the Blessed Apostle Paul</i> (ch. 6)

Mart. Paul	Martyrdom of the Holy Apostle Paul in Rome [from Acts of Paul] (ch. 5)
Mart. Paul Head	Martyrdom of Paul the Apostle and the Discovery of His Severed Head (ch. 9)
<i>Mart. Pet.</i>	Pseudo-Linus, <i>Martyrdom of Blessed Peter the Apostle</i> (ch. 2)
Mart. Pet.	Martyrdom of the Holy Apostle Peter [from Acts of Peter] (ch. 1)
Mart. Pol.	Martyrium Polycarpi
Menaḥ.	Menaḥot Treatise
MT	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible
<i>Nat.</i>	Pliny the Elder, <i>Naturalis historia</i>
<i>Nero</i>	Suetonius, <i>Vita neronis (De vita caesarum)</i>
Pass. Apost.	Passion of the Apostles Peter and Paul (ch. 11)
<i>Pass. Holy</i>	Pseudo-Marcellus, <i>Passion of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul</i> (ch. 10a)
<i>Pass. Paul</i>	Pseudo-Abdias, <i>Passion of Saint Paul</i> (ch. 7)
<i>Pass. Pet.</i>	Pseudo-Abdias, <i>Passion of Saint Peter</i> (ch. 3)
Pass. Sebast.	Passio Sebastiani
<i>Perist.</i>	Prudentius, <i>Peristephanon (De coronis martyrum)</i>
Pist. soph.	Pistis Sophia
<i>Praep. ev.</i>	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Praepartio evangelica</i>
<i>Praescr.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De praescriptione haereticorum</i>
<i>Prax.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Adversus Praxean</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	Origen, <i>De principiis (Peri archōn)</i>
<i>Pulchr.</i>	Dio Chrysostom, <i>De pulchritudine (Or. 21)</i>
<i>Recog.</i>	Pseudo-Clementine <i>Recognitions</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Vita Romuli (Vitae parallelae)</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	Horace, <i>Satirae</i>
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermones</i> (various authors)
Teach. Shim.	Teaching of Shimeon Kepha in the City of Rome (ch. 13)
<i>Theb.</i>	Caecilius Statius, <i>Thebaid</i>
<i>Tract. Ps.</i>	Jerome, <i>Tractatus sive homiliae in psalmos</i>
<i>Unit. eccl.</i>	Cyprian, <i>De unitate ecclesiae</i>
<i>Var.</i>	Cassiodorus, <i>Variae</i>
<i>Vir. ill.</i>	Jerome, <i>De viris illustribus</i>
<i>Virginit.</i>	Ambrose of Milan, <i>De virginitate</i>
Vita Ad. Ev.	Vita Adae et Evae

SECONDARY SOURCES

AASS	<i>Acta sanctorum</i>
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AMS	<i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum Syriace</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
AnBoll	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
ANCL	Ante-Nicene Christian Library
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> . Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. New York: Christian Literature Publishing, 1886.
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i>
AnTard	<i>Antiquité tardive</i>
ANZJOG	Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology
BARIS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BegC	<i>The Beginnings of Christianity</i> . Part 1: <i>The Acts of the Apostles</i> . Edited by Frederick J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. 5 vols. London: Macmillan, 1922.
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovanien-sium
BHG	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i>
BHL	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i>
BHO	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis</i>
BIFCS	<i>Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting</i> . Edited by Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
BMRP	British Museum Research Publication
ca.	circa
CANT	Clavis Apocryphum Novi Testamenti
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CFHB.SB	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Berolin-ensis
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
ClQ	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>

CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
esp.	especially
FontC	Fontes Christiani
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
GSAT	<i>Giornale della Società asiatica italiana</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JAJ	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSAH	<i>Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods: Supplement Series
MACr	Monumenti di antichità cristiana
MATS	Miscellanea Agostiniana Testi e studi
MEFR	<i>Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'école française de Rome</i>
MGH.AA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores antiquissimi
MGH.SRM	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum merovingicarum
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
OAF	Oxford Apostolic Fathers
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983.
PG	Patrologia graeca. Edited by J. P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.
PL	Patrologia latina. Edited by J. P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–1864.
PPSD	Pauline and Patristic Scholars in Debate
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
REAug	<i>Revue des études augustiniennes</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World

RHE	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
ROC	<i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SECA	Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha
SPM	Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TT	Textes et Traditions
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
UALG	Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>VetChr</i>	<i>Vetera Christianorum</i>
VOHDSupp	Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland Supplementband
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
WGRWSup	Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal of Ancient Christianity</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

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Introduction

According to Gal 2:9, an important deal was struck in Antioch that was to determine the shape of early Christian missionary activity. Peter would focus his efforts on evangelizing “the circumcised,” while Paul would go and preach to the gentiles. As a result, Peter is remembered as the *apostle to the Jews*,¹ while Paul is remembered as the *apostle to everyone else*. This vision of the apostles as the two pillars of the church is witnessed as early as the Acts of the Apostles, in which act 1 (Acts 1–12) features Peter in Jerusalem and its vicinity, and act 2 (Acts 13–28) recounts Paul’s missionary journeys all the way to Rome, the capital of the gentile world. And yet, Luke’s rendition of these early stages of the spread of the gospel omits many important details. His narrative leaves Peter rather abruptly and does not go on to tell what happens subsequently. Is Peter successful in his further evangelistic endeavors? And if so, where does he go? Or does he meet with resistance and even violence?² And what about Paul? The author of Acts specifies that Paul spends two years in custody in Rome. If he knows how long Paul’s incarceration lasted, then presumably he knows what happened after it ended. Why does he not provide these details? And what eventually happened to both Peter and Paul? Where and when did they die?

1. A lively scholarly debate has been going on for some time concerning the translation of *Ioudaios* as “Jew” or “Judean” when speaking about the ancient world. I have been strongly influenced by recent work by Jewish scholars favoring the translation “Jew” and will follow that convention throughout this volume. See Daniel R. Schwartz, “‘Judaean’ or ‘Jew’? How Should We Translate *Ioudaios* in Josephus?” in *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World/Jüdische Identität in Der Griechisch-Römischen Welt*, ed. Jörg Frey, Daniel R. Schwartz, and Stephanie Gripenrog (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 3–27; Seth Schwartz, “How Many Judaisms Were There? A Critique of Neusner and Smith on Definition and Mason and Boyarin on Categorization,” *JAJ* 2 (2011): 208–38; Adele Reinhartz, “The Vanishing Jews of Antiquity,” *Marginalia*, <http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/vanishing-jews-antiquity-adele-reinhartz/>.

2. The author of 1 Clement, writing at the very end of the first century or in the early years of the second century, suggests this latter experience. See ch. 15, Text 1 in this volume.

Scholars have spilled considerable amounts of ink speculating on what happened “after Acts,” but this is not a new phenomenon. As early as the second century, authors began filling in the gaps in the apostolic stories. They recounted the sometimes extraordinary adventures of not just Paul and Peter, but also the apostles John, Thomas, and Andrew. In later centuries the subjects and scope of these stories grew exponentially, and almost any figure associated with the apostles, even if mentioned only in passing in the canonical writings, could become the subject of such an account.

The Role of “Apocryphal” Literature

These writings are known collectively as the apocryphal acts of the apostles, yet this is a misnomer. The word *apocryphos* in Greek means “hidden” or “secret,” and these texts were anything but hidden. The fact that they were not eventually included in the canon did not mean they were unknown or even suppressed. Rather, they served important functions in early Christian identity formation, liturgical and cultic development, and competing claims to ecclesiastical authority. If we consider even just the texts included in this volume, we find evidence of all three of these dynamics.

(1) *Identity formation.* What did it mean to be a Christian, a *true* Christian, among the early followers of Jesus? The evidence suggests that a key element in this definition was *suffering*. A true Christian followed the example of Jesus to suffering and even death, and Peter and Paul were models for this. The Acts of Peter and Acts of Paul recount the many trials and persecutions that the apostles endured during their later careers. Often challenged and threatened, they eventually suffered martyrdom for bearing witness to the faith. The base meaning of the Greek word *martyros* is “witness,” so dying for the faith was their final and ultimate act of evangelism. As a result of these actions, Paul and Peter became idealized models for later Christians. We see this, for example, in the Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs, which dates from 180 CE and purports to be the trial transcript for a group of Christians in North Africa. They are from a village called Scillium but are brought to Carthage for trial, likely some of the last victims of the sporadic persecutions that occurred during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 CE). Most of the text consists of verbal sparring between the proconsul Saturninus and the Christians, led by a certain Speratus. Speratus proclaims that the Christians do not recognize earthly authority, but only God’s authority: “I do not know the emperor of this age, but I serve instead that God whom no man sees nor is able to see with these eyes” (Acta mart.

Scillit. 18–20). This is a paraphrase of a passage in the Pauline corpus, where God is described as dwelling “in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see” (1 Tim 6:16, NRSV). Threatened with death, Speratus appeals to Pauline language to express the Christian position. There is yet another reference to Paul at the climax of the text. The proconsul asks what the Christians have in a box they are carrying, and Speratus responds, “Books and epistles of Paul, a just man.” I have demonstrated elsewhere that this reference to Paul, which seems strikingly out of place within the narrative, is actually the focal point of a chiasm.³ That is, this entire section of the martyrdom account is constructed in order to bring attention to this reference to Paul. Immediately after this exchange about Paul’s letters, the Christians are sentenced to death by the sword, just as Paul had been. Behind this narrative lies the image of Paul as a model martyr. Paul is prominent in the story even in his absence, for these Christians quote Paul, carry Paul with them in the form of his letters, and by standing firm for their faith end up dying in the same manner as the apostle. They effectively become “new Pauls.” Thus, the account of Paul’s death in the Acts of Paul has influenced the way in which the Scillitan martyrs are remembered and their martyrdom account is constructed.⁴

(2) *Liturgical and cultic development.* The apocryphal acts also served as foundation stories for the development of various apostolic cults, thereby contributing to the construction and adaptation of Christian time and space. The stories about Peter and Paul led to the establishment of a joint apostolic festival day (at least in the West) on June 29. Although this date is not mentioned in the earliest martyrdom accounts (i.e., the Acts of Peter and Acts of Paul) it is attested by the middle of the third century CE⁵ and becomes an important detail in the liturgical calendar and in many of the later renditions of their deaths. It is also a detail picked up by other authors, such as Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and the Christian poet Prudentius.⁶

3. The term comes from the Greek letter Chi, which resembles a capital X. In a chiasm, the main point sits at the center of the Chi and is surrounded by parallel phrases as you move toward and then back away from that point.

4. See David L. Eastman, *Paul the Martyr: The Cult of the Apostle in the Latin West*, WGRWSup 4 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 156–63.

5. The Burying of the Martyrs assigns the celebration of a joint apostolic festival on June 29 to 258 CE.

6. See e.g., Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 5; *Tract. Ps.* 96.10), Ambrose (*Virginit.* 19.124), Augustine (*Serm.* 295.7; 381.1), Prudentius (*Perist.* 12).

Just as the Romans prior to Christianity had ordered their year around a series of festivals, so did the Christians of Rome construct a liturgical calendar based at least in part on dates designated in apocryphal literature. Sources confirm that in the case of Paul and Peter, readings from their writings and from the writings about them, in particular their martyrdom accounts, were part and parcel of the celebration of their annual feast.

The precise locations of the apostolic deaths and burials as given in the apocryphal acts also served as justification for cultic sites in Rome. In the case of Peter, references to the Vatican hill (near the Naumachia) appear frequently in texts after the time of Constantine, who had constructed a large basilica at the Vatican in honor of the chief of the apostles. It is difficult to establish the original reason for the location of the Petrine cult site, but its inclusion in the later apocryphal accounts confirmed and reinforced cultic practice and justified in the minds of Roman Christians their particular association with the apostle. Similarly, the Pauline apocryphal stories after Constantine are typically careful to specify that the apostle died along the Ostian Road outside the walls of Rome. These narratives justify the foundation of the cult at this particular location and the basilicas built there in the fourth century.⁷

(3) *Competing claims to ecclesiastical authority.* Rome began its rise to ecclesiastical prominence at a distinct disadvantage, for its apostolic associations in the New Testament are rather meager. Yes, Paul writes to the Romans, and the author of Acts states that Paul spent two years preaching in Rome, but this does not compare with cities like Jerusalem, Antioch, and Corinth, where both Pauline and Petrine traditions are witnessed in the canonical sources. Rome was a latecomer, a city whose church was divided by internal strife and by controversies between various expressions of Christianity, especially during the second century (e.g., Justin Martyr, Marcion, and Valentinus, to name a few). If Rome was to rise to a position of authority, it needed a trump card to play, and that card came in the form of the claim that Peter (the apostle to the Jews) and Paul (the apostle to everyone else) had preached and died in Rome as martyrs. In these two apostles, then, the entire Christian world was represented and placed under Rome.

7. I have noted elsewhere, however, the existence of one apocryphal account (ch. 10, text 10b in this volume) that places Paul's death at a different location along the Laurentian Road (Aquaе Salviae), thus bearing witness to cultic competition between multiple sites. See Eastman, *Paul the Martyr*, 62–69.

The utilization of this claim as political capital became particularly important beginning in the fourth century. Constantine established his new capital of Constantinople in the Greek East, and the first “ecumenical” council took place in nearby Nicaea in 325 CE. Of the 314 bishops reportedly at the council, only two represented Rome and Bishop Sylvester I, and they seem to have had no impact on the proceedings. In 341 CE, a gathering of bishops at Antioch sent a letter to Bishop Julius of Rome reminding him that Peter and Paul had been in Antioch before they had gone to Rome. The implication was clear. Because Paul and Peter preached in Antioch before going to Rome, the Syrian city enjoyed preeminence. This letter marked a direct challenge to any Roman claim to primacy over the Eastern cities based on an association with the apostles. A few decades later, the First Council of Constantinople took place in 381 without the presence or influence of Damasus of Rome, and his attempts to summon the Eastern bishops to Rome the subsequent year were ignored. Damasus was facing the reality that the balance of theological and ecclesiastical influence had clearly shifted East, and he responded by reasserting the Roman claim to Peter and Paul. In a hymn reportedly placed on the Appian Road at a shared cult site for the apostles, he claimed them as Rome’s “own citizens,” even if no one in the East was listening to his plea.⁸

The apocryphal acts, however, presented another opportunity to restate and perpetuate the Roman claims to the two greatest apostles. On one level there was no novelty in the martyrdom accounts of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, which placed the apostolic deaths in Rome. Yet at the same time, the stakes riding on this claim had grown higher. If the churches of the East were tempted to ignore or claim greater authority than Rome, then they needed to be reminded where the blood of Peter and Paul had flowed on behalf of the faith. After Christ himself, these were the two greatest martyrs of Christianity. They had died on Roman soil, and their bodies still lay in Roman soil. In the minds of Roman Christians, and especially their bishops, this fact bestowed special authority on the Roman church. The popularity of the apocryphal accounts of the martyrdoms of Paul and Peter, therefore, made these texts powerful political tools of pro-Roman propaganda.

Far from being “hidden,” then, the apocryphal acts served important functions in early Christianity. They served a critical role in the overall

8. *Ibid.*, 97–107.

construction of Christian identity, in the development of Christian cultic practices, and in the relative balance of power among various Christian centers. Indeed, many key components in Christianity in antiquity owe their form and development to the apocryphal acts.

The Importance of This Volume for the Study of Peter and Paul

My research for *Paul the Martyr* involved careful analysis of the various literary accounts of Paul's death, and it became apparent to me that there is a noticeable gap in the scholarship on not only the Pauline martyrdom accounts, but also the Petrine ones. A brief survey of the most recent scholarship on the deaths of Peter and Paul demonstrates this point, for scholars have continued to draw almost exclusively on the Acts of Peter (text 1 in the current volume) and the Acts of Paul (text 5 in the current volume). References to the other accounts are rare and cursory, or simply nonexistent. In 1992 Richard Bauckham published "The Martyrdom of Peter in Early Christian Literature," the most important treatment to date of the literary traditions concerning Peter's martyrdom.⁹ In this lengthy article Bauckham gathers references to the event from a number of patristic authors, but the only actual martyrdom account that he cites is the Acts of Peter. More recently, Marcus Bockmuehl has produced two volumes on the memory and reception of Peter in early Christianity: *The Remembered Peter* and *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory*.¹⁰ Both volumes include extensive citations from scriptural, rabbinic, and early Christian sources, yet only the Acts of Peter is discussed from among the available corpus of Petrine acts. George Demacopoulos's *The Invention of Peter*¹¹ stands out in this regard, for he at least includes two brief references to the Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul.¹²

9. Richard Bauckham, "The Martyrdom of Peter in Early Christian Literature," ANRW 26.1:539–95.

10. Marcus Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate*, WUNT 1/262 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); idem, *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory: The New Testament Apostle in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

11. George Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter: Apostolic Discourse and Papal Authority in Late Antiquity*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

12. This is text 10b in this volume, which Demacopoulos refers to as the Acts of Peter and Paul.

The picture is similar as it relates to Paul. In Dennis R. MacDonald's "Apocryphal and Canonical Narratives about Paul,"¹³ the Acts of Paul is central but is accompanied by only a passing reference to another text, again the Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (text 10b in the current volume). In 2007 Wayne Meeks and John T. Fitzgerald published an updated edition of *The Writings of St. Paul*, a collection of textual excerpts by and about the apostle from antiquity to the present.¹⁴ However, the references to his death in this volume are confined to the Acts of Paul and a brief citation from 1 Clement. Harry W. Tajra's *The Martyrdom of St. Paul* is notable for its inclusion of references from a wider variety of apocryphal texts,¹⁵ yet the excerpts are brief and presented out of context, such that it is difficult to use them to draw any wider conclusions.

The hegemony of the Acts of Peter and Acts of Paul is seen in other ways, as well. Collections of New Testament apocrypha, such as Hennecke-Schneemelcher's *New Testament Apocrypha* and J. K. Elliott's *The Apocryphal New Testament*, include full versions of the two primary texts but only summary paragraphs or even less for the other apostolic martyrdom accounts.¹⁶

A few exceptions are worth noting. Otto Zwierlein's *Petrus in Rom*¹⁷ makes an important contribution in that it provides updated critical editions of the Acts of Peter and Acts of Paul, and elsewhere in the volume he discusses a handful of references to the *Martyrdom of Blessed Peter the Apostle* of Pseudo-Linus (text 2 in this volume) and the Passion of the Apostles Peter and Paul (text 11 in the current volume). Even here, though, these texts receive little treatment. A wider selection of the Pauline and Petrine martyrdom accounts appears in two Italian collections from the last century: Mario Erbetta's *Gli apocrifi del nuovo testamento: Atti e leggende*

13. Dennis R. MacDonald, "Apocryphal and Canonical Narratives about Paul," in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, ed. William S. Babcock (Dallas, Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 55–70.

14. Wayne Meeks and John T. Fitzgerald, eds., *The Writings of St. Paul*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2007).

15. Harry W. Tajra, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul: Historical and Judicial Context, Traditions, and Legends*, WUNT 2/67 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994).

16. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. McL. Wilson, 5th ed., vol. 2 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992); J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

17. Otto Zwierlein, *Petrus in Rom: Die literarischen Zeugnisse*, 2nd ed., UALG 96 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010).

and Luigi Moraldi's *Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*.¹⁸ Also significant is the two-volume set *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, which provides updated introductions and translations of nearly half of these texts for a Francophone audience.¹⁹ However, even these more inclusive collections of martyrdom accounts are incomplete; in particular they tend to ignore the Syriac texts.

Thus, our picture of the early church's reception and conceptualization of the apostles has been hampered by a kind of myopia that focuses primarily on two texts and interprets them as exemplary for Christian antiquity, to the exclusion of other, sometimes variant voices, especially if those voices are not in Latin or Greek.

This volume brings together all these texts for the first time, in nearly every case providing the first English translation of the most updated edition. The volume is divided into four parts. Part 1 includes four martyrdom accounts that focus on Peter. In part 2 there are five accounts of Paul's martyrdom. Part 3 features six accounts of the joint martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, while part 4 includes more than forty references to the apostolic martyrdoms from early Christian literature. Each chapter is accompanied by an introduction that provides historical and literary background, and the commentary in the footnotes to the translations highlights important features and allusions to scriptural or other literature, including other texts within this volume.

The translations were produced to be accessible to a broad audience, so I have privileged readability (dynamic equivalence) over formal adherence to the grammar of the original languages (formal equivalence). Those with reading knowledge of the original languages will benefit from the presentation of the ancient texts on facing pages, which will facilitate more detailed analysis when desired. My general practice has been to reproduce the texts as they appear in the critical editions, but in some cases I have standardized the spelling and punctuation in order to aid the reader. In addition, many of these texts use masculine terms (e.g., *man*, *men*, *brothers*, *sons*) to refer to humanity in general or to mixed groups of (especially) Christians. I

18. Mario Erbetta, *Gli apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento: Atti e leggende*, 2nd ed. (Turin: Marietti, 1978); Luigi Moraldi, *Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. 2 (Turin: Unione, 1971).

19. François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 1, Pléiade 442 (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 2, Pléiade 516 (Paris: Gallimard, 2005).

have employed inclusive language where appropriate but have maintained masculine terms in cases in which the context dictates it.

My next monograph will be dedicated to a detailed analysis of these texts. The goal of this volume, however, is to make these texts available to a broader audience, in hopes that our discussions about Paul and Peter in the early centuries of Christianity may be informed by a more complete picture of the memory, veneration, and reimagination of the apostles. In particular, I hope that more attention will be given to the role of the stories of their deaths in establishing Peter and Paul as Christianity's two greatest martyrs and the alleged twin founders of the Roman church.

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