

**THE THREE LIVES OF JAMES:
FROM JEWISH-CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS TO A VALENTINIAN
REVELATION, PRESERVED IN TWO LATE ANTIQUE
ATTESTATIONS**

BY

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Abstract

Though discovered in 1945, the *First Apocalypse of James* from Nag Hammadi Codex V, 3 has received very little attention from the scholarly community. This is primarily due to the fragmentary condition of the text. Previous scholarly engagements with the text have led to the conclusion that the purpose of such a revelatory dialogue was to impart instructions for the ascent of the soul to one about to be martyred. The recent discovery of a second copy of the text simply titled “James” as part of the Tchacos Codex has led to not only a greater amount of scholarly interest, but also to different possible interpretations. From NHC V, 3 it was possible to ascertain a pre- and post- martyrdom revelation of Jesus to James, however, the text from Al Minya clearly shows a third revelatory section wherein the martyrdom of James is used as a means of revelation to Addai, the legendary founder of Eastern Syrian Christianity. Chapters one and two answer the question of why James was chosen as the protagonist of the narrative. In chapter one I look in detail at the literary construction of the martyrdom of James and problematize the development of the traditions. Chapter two then turns to a discussion of the figure of James as an authority in the developing Christian community. Chapters three and four are concerned with the literary classification of the text. Chapter three situates the *First Apocalypse of James* within the overarching genre of apocalyptic literature, and the specific sub-genre of gnostic apocalypses. Chapter four discusses how the text might be understood as a commission narrative while interrogating the lineage of descent beginning with the transmission of the revelation from James to Addai. Following this in chapter five I explore the cosmology of the text with particular attention to the ascent of the soul.

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Abbreviations

<i>AH</i>	Irenaeus of Lyons: <i>Adversus Haereses</i>
<i>ALD</i>	<i>Aramaic Levi Document</i>
<i>Ant</i>	Josephus: <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>1 Apoc. Jas.</i>	<i>First Apocalypse of James</i> (NHC V, 3//AMC 2)
AMC	Al Minya (Tchacos) Codex
BCNH	Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi
<i>HE</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSPS</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codex
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
NIV	Bible, New International Version

NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>War</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Introduction

Though discovered in 1945, the *First Apocalypse of James* from Nag Hammadi Codex V, 3 has received very little attention from the scholarly community. This is primarily due to the fragmentary condition of the text. Previous scholarly engagements with the text have led to the conclusion that the purpose of such a revelatory dialogue was to impart instructions for the ascent of the soul to one about to be martyred. The recent discovery of a second copy of the text simply titled “James” as part of the Tchacos Codex has led to not only a greater amount of scholarly interest, but also to different possible interpretations. From NHC V, 3 it was possible to ascertain a pre- and post- martyrdom revelation of Jesus to James, however, the text from Al Minya clearly shows a third revelatory section wherein the martyrdom of James is used as a means of revelation to Addai, the legendary founder of Eastern Syrian Christianity.

Both extant texts, named as *James* and *I Apoc. Jas.*, take the form of a revelatory dialogue very intimately held between Jesus and James. The text itself is composed of three distinct sections: a pre-passion revelation, a post-resurrection revelation, and the martyrdom of James.

The first section is made up of the pre-passion revelation (NHC V, 3 24, 10-30, 15 // AMC 2 10, 1-16, 27), and provides the basic cosmologic speculations of the text. It begins with a statement concerning the natures of James (the spiritual brother of Jesus), the “One Who Is” (the transcendent god), Jesus (preexistent, but second), and Femaleness (not named, and not pre-existent). The present study explores the limited nature of the cosmological material that is found in the text. Following the initial speculations, Jesus foretells both his and James’ impending martyrdom, effectively identifying James and Jesus with the Pre-existent “One Who

Is” and showing his worth to receive revelation. The conclusion of this section is found in NHC V, 30, 12-13 // AMC 16, 26-27 with the departure of Jesus to prepare for his passion. Surprisingly, the text does not give an account of Jesus’ death, but only hints at what occurred in the second revelatory section. The second revelation can be separated into four parts clarifying: 1) the nature of Jesus’ passion (AMC 16, 27-19, 20); 2) the narrative of ascent and cosmological expansion (NHC V, 32, 28-36, 14 // AMC 19, 21-23, 15); 3) commission and continuing revelation (NHC V, 36, 20-38, 10 // AMC 23, 13-25, 14); and 4) the role of the spirits and female disciples of Jesus (AMC 25, 17-29, 15). Following the ascent narrative in the post-resurrection revelation, the text extant in the Al Minya codex includes a third major section of the treatise wherein the circumstances leading up to the martyrdom of James are described. The Nag Hammadi version of the text probably also included this section, but the text is far too fragmentary at this point to discern the exact content.

The Nag Hammadi and Al Minya Codices

The two extant copies of the *First Apocalypse of James* are respectively in Nag Hammadi Codex V (tractate 3) and the Al Minya Codex (tractate 2). The circumstances surrounding the two discoveries have been discussed at length in many publications, and as such do not merit any more than cursory discussion at this time. A useful introduction to the Nag Hammadi discovery can be found in Marvin Meyer’s *The Gnostic Discoveries*,¹ though the usually accepted version of the events surrounding the find has recently been challenged by

¹ Marvin Meyer, *The Gnostic Discoveries: The Impact of the Nag Hammadi Library* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2005).

Nicola Denzey Lewis as being colonialist and orientalizing.² The English translation and commentary on the Nag Hammadi texts has been carried under the heading of “Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies.” This series, published by Brill, now includes 88 volumes, including extensive commentaries on primary source material. The German publication of the Nag Hammadi material is entitled *Nag Hammadi Deutsch* and is published by de Gruyter. The final important scholarly publication of the Nag Hammadi material is undertaken by scholars at Laval University in Québec. Their publication, produced by the Presses de L’Université Laval is entitled “La bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi.”

To date, there have been three noteworthy English publications of the Nag Hammadi material that are marketed to a non-specialist audience. The first of these is Bentley Layton’s *The Gnostic Scriptures*, released in 1987, which offers an introduction not only to the primary sources, but also the particular schools of thought and religious trends in antiquity which are represented by the texts. James M. Robinson’s (ed.) *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* is in many ways an offshoot of the “Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies” series, but designed to reach a wider audience. It is significant for including translations and commentary on all of the Nag Hammadi texts by renowned scholars. We should also make note of Marvin Meyer’s recently published volume, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*. The final collection that should be included is the French translation in the Bibliothèque de la pléiade

² Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine Ariel Blount, “Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi codices,” *JBL* 133 (2014) 399-419 at 403-4. Denzey Lewis and Blount are operating on the principle that the previously held view that the discoverers of the codices were ignorantly digging for fertilizer is a derogatory western conception of the “peasants” who have made such discoveries. Instead they argue that it is more likely that the people who discovered the codices were involved in some type of clandestine activity such as grave robbing.

series, *Écrits gnostiques: la bibliothèque de Nag Hammadi*, edited by Jean-Pierre Mahé and Paul-Hubert Poirier.³

Scholarly engagement with the Nag Hammadi edition of *I Apoc. Jas.* has been fairly limited. Important introductions to the text include William R. Schoedel's introduction to the NHMS publication of Codex V,⁴ as well as Armand Veilleux's edition in the BCNH series.⁵ As well, reference should be made to the important articles by William R. Schoedel⁶ and the monograph of Alexander Böhlig.⁷

The importance of the 1970s discovery of the Al Minya Codex to our understanding of gnostic thought cannot be overstated.⁸ This is particularly true with respect to its relationship to the volumes discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945. In particular the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, which corresponds to NHC VII, 2, and the text entitled *James*, which is a second attestation of the *First Apocalypse of James*, NHC V, 3. The most well-known and publicized of the texts

³ Jean-Pierre Mahé and Paul-Hubert Poirier eds., *Écrits gnostiques: la bibliothèque de Nag Hammadi* (Bibliothèque de la pléiade 538; Paris: Gallimard, 2007).

⁴ William R. Schoedel, "NHC V, 3 The First Apocalypse of James," in *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2-5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4* (ed. Douglas M. Parrott; NHMS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 65-104.

⁵ Armand Veilleux, *La première apocalypse de Jacques (NH V,3). La seconde apocalypse de Jacques (NH V,4)* (BCNH Section Textes 17; Québec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1986), 22-23.

⁶ William R. Schoedel, "Scripture and the Seventy-Two Heavens of the First Apocalypse of James," *NT* 12 (1970): 118-29; idem, "A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem: The First Apocalypse of James," *NT* 33 (1991): 153-78.

⁷ Alexander Böhlig, *Mysterion und Wahrheit* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des späteren Judentums und des Urchristentums 6; Leiden: Brill, 1968).

⁸ The history of this codex is well and commonly known and, as a consequence, I will not discuss it at this time.

included in the Al Minya codex is the *Gospel of Judas*, which has dramatically polarized contemporary scholarship. The original reading of the text given by its first editors, Rodolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer, and Gregor Wurst, was of a good or rehabilitated Judas.⁹ This understanding was, however, quickly and decisively challenged by Louis Painchaud, April D. DeConick, and other specialists.¹⁰ Due to choices in translation, DeConick reached a different understanding of the purpose and fate of Judas within the text. In her reading, Judas is a demon who does the worst possible thing by betraying Jesus. In 2007, Kasser and Wurst released a critical edition of the text that smoothed the textual ambiguities of the previous edition.¹¹

It is not necessary to describe the history of the Al Minya Codex, ancient and modern, as many prominent scholars penned both articles and monographs in the wake of its publication. The initial English publication of the Al Minya Codex was carried out by National Geographic and released as *The Gospel of Judas, Critical Edition*.¹² A German translation and commentary has been release by Johanna Brankaer and Hans-Gebhard Bethge under the title *Codex Tchacos: Texte und Analysen*.¹³ To date, there have been three prominent conferences on the Al Minya

⁹ Rodolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer and Gregor Wurst, eds., *The Gospel of Judas From Codex Tchacos* (Washington D.C.: National Geographic, 2006). This perspective is prevalent in the essay of Bart Ehrman, “Christianity Turned on Its Head,” *ibid.*, 77-120.

¹⁰ Louis Painchaud, “À Propos de la (re)découverte de l'Évangile de Judas,” *Laval théologique et philosophique* 62 (2006): 553-68; April D. DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle: What the Gospel of Judas Really Says* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

¹¹ Rodolphe Kasser et al., eds., *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).

¹² Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas*.

¹³ Johanna Brankaer and Hans-Gebhard Bethge, *Codex Tchacos: Texte und Analysen* (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 161; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007).

Codex with corresponding publications. The first of these took place at the Sorbonne in Paris in 2006, and was focussed exclusively on the *Gospel of Judas*. The proceedings have been published in the NHMS volume *The Gospel of Judas in Context*, edited by Madeleine Scopello.¹⁴ The second major conference, held at Rice University in Houston Texas, touched on larger codicological issues while maintaining a focus on the *Gospel of Judas*. The proceedings of the Rice conference have been published in the volume entitled, *The Codex Judas Papers*, edited by April DeConick.¹⁵ This volume yielded two important papers on *1 Apoc. Jas.* by Wolf-Peter Funk¹⁶ and Antti Marjanen.¹⁷ Finally, the third important conference on the Al Minya Codex was convened in Munich, in 2008. The proceedings are published in the volume, *Judasevangelium und Codex Tchacos*, edited by Enno Edzard Popkes and Gregor Wurst.¹⁸

¹⁴ Madeleine Scopello, ed., *The Gospel of Judas in Context: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Gospel of Judas, Paris Sorbonne, October 27th-28th, 2006* (NHMS 62; Leiden: Brill, 2008).

¹⁵ April DeConick, ed., *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex Held at Rice University, Houston Texas, March 13-16, 2008* (NHMS 71; Leiden: Brill, 2009).

¹⁶ Wolf-Peter Funk, "The Significance of the Tchacos Codex for Understanding the *First Apocalypse of James*," in *The Codex Judas Papers*, 509-34.

¹⁷ Antti Marjanen, "The Seven Women Disciples In the Two Versions of the *First Apocalypse of James*," in *The Codex Judas Papers*, 535-46.

¹⁸ Enno Edzard Popkes, and Gregor Wurst, eds., *Judasevangelium und Codex Tchacos. Studien zur religionsgeschichtlichen Verortung einer gnostischen Schriftensammlung* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1/297; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

The Gnostic Question

One of the limitations of earlier scholarship has been the tendency to assume that there was a monolithic structure that could be termed “Gnosticism”. Recent scholarship has moved away from the generalized use of the term and has embraced the understanding of Gnosticism as an umbrella term that includes a number of different trends. Current scholarship has been affected by two important works on the gnostic question. The first of these is Karen L. King’s *What is Gnosticism?*, published in 2003. King’s argument is relatively dense but can be boiled down to three main issues. The first of these is a matter of definition. King argues that a rhetorical term used polemically has been confused with a historical entity. The second issue is that “Gnosticism has been primarily concerned with the normative identity of Christianity.”¹⁹ Here King is arguing that Gnosticism has been constructed largely as the heretical other in relation to diverse and fluctuating understandings of orthodox Christianity. The third issue for King is the fact that scholars have not clearly articulated what it is that they want to know when studying Gnosticism. What King is attempting to do in her work is challenge long held notions of identity formation within early Christianity, and open scholarship to a broader understanding of how normative culture is defined.

The second groundbreaking work is Michael A. Williams’ *Rethinking Gnosticism*.²⁰ In contrast to King, who argues for better use and understanding of the term, Williams argues in

¹⁹ Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 2.

²⁰ Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

favor of abandoning the term altogether as outdated and insufficient for describing the myriad groups that it is often used in reference to. Williams explains that

“Gnosticism” as a typological category has increasingly proven to be unreliable as a tool for truly illuminating analysis and more often has begun to function as a labor saving device conducive to anachronism, caricature, and eisegesis.²¹

Much of this unreliability is based on the fact that no single definition has been proposed that covers the wide spectrum of material that is referenced within the term. Instead of the modern construct that defines our use of the word Gnosticism, Williams suggests using the term “Biblical Demiurgy,” a proposal that has not always been well received by the scholarly community.²²

Building on the work of Williams and King, Ismo Dunderberg, in his monograph, *Beyond Gnosticism*, offers the following reflections on the “Gnostic Problem,” particularly with respect to the school of Valentinus:

One consequence of the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library has been that the term “Gnosticism” itself has become problematic. The library offers such a diversity of opinions that most features by which Gnosticism has thus far been defined have proved one-sided. Moreover, the discussion has moved from essentialist definitions of Gnosticism (“what Gnosticism is”) to a critical appraisal of how this term functions as a category. In using the term

²¹ Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 51.

²² In particular this has been questioned by Christoph Marksches, *Gnosis: An Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), who says in the preface that “ ‘Gnosis’ always seems to be topical. Yet hardly anyone knows precisely what is meant by it, and many wise people understand quite different things by it. Some radically restrict the term to a small group of ancient Jews, Christians and pagans, while others interpret ‘gnosis’ as a world religion or secret ‘undercurrent’ throughout religious history and the history of ideas; and yet others take the term to denote a particular sort of philosophy of religion. Recently a book on ‘gnosis’ even appeared, the purported aim of which was ‘to make a dubious term unusable’: it claimed to be ‘Rethinking “Gnosticism” ’ (p. ix).

“Gnosticism,” scholars have often perpetuated positions characteristic of the discourse of orthodoxy and heresy. Michael Williams and Karen King have clearly shown these problems with the use of this term. In light of their work, it is no longer tenable to try to explain Valentinian teaching as arising from a distinct “Gnostic” spirit. What we need in the present situation is an alternate approach that takes the school of Valentinus beyond Gnosticism.²³

Dunderberg argues, in relation to the particular debate over Valentinus’ relationship to Gnosticism, that

the discussion about whether Valentinus was a Gnostic is largely self-generating, since assessments about this issue are entirely dependent on how the scholars define “Gnosticism.” Once you have a definition, you have the answer to the question of whether Valentinus was or was not a Gnostic.²⁴

In relation to the larger question of Gnostic thought the 2010 monograph *The Gnostics* by David Brakke offers a further update on the state of scholarship. Brakke notes that “‘Gnosticism’ is an outstanding example of a scholarly category that, thanks to confusion about what it is supposed to do, has lost its utility and must be either abandoned or reformed.”²⁵ Instead of dismantling the overall category, Brakke argues in some senses for a reification of the

²³ Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 10-11.

²⁴ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 15. Leading up to this he notes that “one of the most hotly debated issues in present scholarship on Valentinianism is Valentinus’s relationship to Gnosticism. The basic alternatives are (1) that he was not a Gnostic (Christoph Marksches), (2) that he was a Gnostic (e.g. Jens Holshausen, Paul Schüngel, Gilles Quispel), and (3) that he was not a Gnostic in the proper sense but “a Christian reformer of the classic Gnostic tradition” (Bentley Layton)” (pp. 14-15).

²⁵ David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) 19.

category based on the discourse that survives from antiquity, though with the understanding that the polemical arguments of opponents such as Irenaeus betray a bias of polemical distortion.²⁶

The subject of the present study, the *First Apocalypse of James*, has been most closely identified with the Valentinian school of Gnostic thought. Important work in this area has been published by Christoph Marksches in his 1992 monograph *Valentinus Gnosticus?*, wherein he portrays Valentinus as a decidedly Egyptian Christian, and somewhat separates him from other gnosticizing trends.²⁷ The second contribution that has redefined our understanding of Valentinian Christianity is Einar Thomassen's comprehensive volume *The Spiritual Seed*.²⁸ Currently, this is the most complete study in English on Valentinus and Valentinianism. As well, the previously mentioned monograph by Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, should be included among these contributions.

Throughout this dissertation I am simply taking it as a given that the text is representative of what we might refer to as a variety of Gnostic thought, and that it has affinities for some form of Valentinianism. With respect to the Gnostic question, I am operating within the bounds of the following working definition: texts and traditions that interpret salvation, in relation to escaping the lower material realm, as being a product of knowledge and acquaintance with the divinity, obtained thanks to a special revelation imparted to the elect individual by a divine being or intermediary.

²⁶ Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 50.

²⁷ Christoph Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den fragmenten Valentinus* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1/65; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

²⁸ Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the Valentinians* (NHMS 60; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

Jewish Christianity

Throughout my research I employ the category of “Jewish Christianity” in order to delineate threads of tradition, whether overt or subtextual, which can be found in the *First Apocalypse of James* and related works. The use of this categorization has come under intense scrutiny and debate recently, as its validity for describing and defining movements in late antiquity has been questioned. Daniel Boyarin argues vehemently against the continued use of the term based on three premises:

- 1) there is never in premodern times a term that non-Christian Jews use to refer to their “religion,” that Ioudaismos is, indeed, not a religion..., and that consequently it cannot be hyphenated in any meaningful way;
- 2) the self-understanding of Christians of Christianity as a religion was slow developing as well and that a term such as “Jewish Christian” (or rather its ancient equivalents, Nazorean, Ebionite) was part and parcel of that development itself and thus *eo ipso*, and not merely factitiously, a heresiological term of art;
- 3) even the most critical, modern, and best-willed usages of the term in scholarship devolve willy-nilly to heresiology.²⁹

Within the bounds of his first premise, Boyarin’s argument is based on the fact that there is no “religion” prior to modern times that can be referenced as self-defining byway of the word Judaism. Instead, Boyarin argues that the concept of Judaism as a religion is a consequence of constructions on the part of the developing Christian church who used the term in order to further their own goals with respect to identity formation. What he describes is essentially a process of

²⁹ Daniel Boyarin, “Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to Which is Appended a Correction of my *Border Lines*),” *JQR* 99 (2009): 7–36 at 8.

“othering” on the part of those who identified as Christians. He notes particularly that the use of the terms *Ioudaismos/Iudaismus* as they develop up to the council of Niceaea reflects Christian meanings that should not be confused with terminology that would have been employed by Jews.³⁰ He bases his argument on the fact that there is a shift in definition of affiliation with respect to identity formation, wherein self-definition on the basis of religion alliance or affiliation gradually replaced the concept of self definition with respect to the traditional markers of kinship, nationality, and geographic ties.³¹ Finally, Boyarin’s overall argument can be tied back to the fact that at the foundational level of Christianity we are not discussing an entity that could be referred to as a separate religion, but instead a subclass of Jews who happen to believe in Jesus.³² In essence, Boyarin shows that the terminology being employed is really the product of a heresiological discourse that does not take into account the constructed identities that it is referencing, particularly with respect to fact that Judaism as a “religion” did not exist as an entity that could be separated from the realm of geography, tradition, and culture in antiquity.

The lack of sources using the term ‘Jewish Christian’ has been explored, as well, by James Carleton Paget. He notes that “the term ‘Jewish-Christian’ or ‘Jewish-Christianity’ is a neologism. In the ancient sources no one refers to himself, or is referred to, as a Jewish

³⁰ Boyarin, “Rethinking Jewish Christianity,” 8. The development and use of these terms is explored at length by Steve Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457-512.

³¹ Boyarin, “Rethinking Jewish Christianity,” 12.

³² Boyarin, “Rethinking Jewish Christianity,” 28-29.

Christian.”³³ Instead, he shows that the term is applied to various groups – Ebionite, Nazarene, Elchasite – who are interpreted by modern scholars as Jewish Christian.³⁴ Unlike Boyarin, Paget argues in favour of a praxis-based working definition of the term.³⁵ He argues that this type of definition, based on the practice rather than the theology of Judaism, is sufficiently narrow in scope to provide meaningful clarification of the subject matter.³⁶ Even so, he adds the qualification that “when we use the term Jewish Christianity, we should do so provisionally, with full recognition that it is a modern description of people who would probably not themselves have chosen this name.”³⁷

While the larger debate needs to be further explored in relation to questions of self-definition, particularly as Judaism relates to Gnosticism, throughout the course of my dissertation I continue to employ the terminology Jewish Christian/Jewish Christianity. My reasoning is that, much like our use of the terms Gnostic/Gnosticism, even if there are ambiguities with respect to definitional construction and validity within the larger discourse, the terms continue to hold meaning with respect to the acknowledgement of their generally understood use. As such, I will qualify my use of the term based on a working definition that suits the needs of my research, while allowing for the fact that the overall validity of the term

³³ James Carleton Paget, “Jewish Christianity,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3: *The Early Roman Period* (ed. W. Horbury, W.D. Davies and J. Sturdy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 731–75 at 733.

³⁴ Paget, “Jewish Christianity,” 733.

³⁵ Paget, “Jewish Christianity,” 740.

³⁶ Paget, “Jewish Christianity,” 740.

³⁷ Paget, “Jewish Christianity,” 742.

needs further exploration in the context of its use in defining elements of Gnostic texts that show an overt affinity with Jewish texts, practices, and traditions. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will define a Jewish Christian community as one in which Christ is worshipped either by ethnic Jews or god-fearers who have adopted Jewish customs and traditions such as Sabbath observance and circumcision.

Methodological Considerations

I began this study with the intention of rooting my dissertation work in the methodology put forth by Vernon Robbins, first in his commentary on Mark, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark*, and then later elaborated upon in his monograph *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*.³⁸ The methodology pioneered by Robbins has been given the name socio-rhetorical analysis.

The goal of this type of study is to move beyond the limitations imposed by the history of biblical scholarship in the form of source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism. One of the main obstacles that I encountered with respect to my particular topic is simply that very little research has been done up to this point. The vast majority of scholarship employing socio-rhetorical criticism is centered on the study of the New Testament, an area that has been the locus of extensive scholarly work.

³⁸ Vernon Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); idem, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 1996)

The original goal of this study was to take account of the following: Inner Texture,³⁹ Inter-Texture,⁴⁰ Social and Cultural Texture,⁴¹ and Ideological Texture,⁴² though without explicit use of these terms. However, the limited scope of previous research led me to focus more narrowly on a series of historical, cultural, and textual traditions that had not been sufficiently explored by earlier scholarship. With this in mind, my research employs a synchronic analysis of the text, which looks at the two levels on which it can be understood as a text with affinities for Valentinianism, and a text that makes extensive use of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic traditions, possibly within the setting of a Jewish-Christian community. In addition, my dissertation focusses strongly on how the text can be interpreted on an inter-textual level. In the former case, my work is concerned with analysis of the context in which extant texts were found and used, while in the latter, the concern is placed on a determination of the origins and background of the text as it relates to the larger thoughtworld of late antiquity. In this regard, I am interested in situating the text within a plausible authorial setting, at least so far as it is possible to do so. In essence then, the overall goal of the study is to create context.

³⁹ Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 27-29, 44-93.

⁴⁰ Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 30-33, 96-143.

⁴¹ Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 33-36, 144-191.

⁴² Robbins, *Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 36-39, 192-236.

Plan of the Dissertation

The overall goal of the study is to prove that the text can be read on multiform levels none of which negate one another. This being said, I will show throughout the course of this research that the *First Apocalypse of James* is at first to be read as being closely tied to the Valentinian tradition. Additionally, I will demonstrate that a deeper reading of the text, in light of the themes that are present and the choice of James of Jerusalem as protagonist, betrays a strong bias toward Jewish Christianity.

Chapter 1: Why James?

Chapter 1 is concerned with the overarching question of why James was chosen as the protagonist by the author of *1 Apoc. Jas.* The figure of James is chosen very deliberately by the author of the tractate and betrays an agenda that is explored throughout this dissertation. As such, in this chapter I explore the different ways in which James the brother of Jesus has been portrayed and interpreted within a late antique Christian context. The chapter begins with an overview and assessment of the various legends depicting the martyrdom of James, looking in close detail at why he would have been put to death. This part of the study is concerned with establishing the created, or historical, identity of James as portrayed in early sources. In this regard I focus on elements of his established identity which include: his relationship to Jesus; his association with the temple; his reputation for righteousness and purity; and the varying accounts of his death.

Chapter 2: Community Concerns, the Episcopate of James, and the Brothers of Jesus

Chapter two continues the interrogation of the figure of James and the author's choice of him as protagonist in *I Apoc. Jas.* This includes an exploration of the "episcopal" role of James, his relationship with the apostles, and his succession as leader following his brother Jesus. Here the larger question has to do with the authority of James as a leader. In order to demonstrate how the use of James underscores a theme of counter-apostolic authority, I will be looking at the extant early Christian and late antique material describing the figure and role of James. There is a large body of tradition about James that would have been available to the author of the text, including historical sources such as Josephus, Hegesippus, and Eusebius, as well as canonical sources, in particular the descriptions of the Jerusalem community in the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul, apocryphal literature (*Infancy Gospel of Thomas, Protoevangelium of James*), and, of course, texts from Nag Hammadi that are associated with Gnosticism (*Gospel of Thomas, Apocryphon of James, Second Apocalypse of James*).

As well, in this chapter I also briefly discuss how we might view James in relation to other "brothers" of Jesus and how this affects our interpretation of the text. To that end, I argue that the interplay and juxtaposition of James and the figure of Thomas as we see in the *Gospel of Thomas* and Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* betray an association within the early church and the successive centuries between James and Thomas Didymus (the twin).

Chapter 3: Gnostic Apocalyptic and the *First Apocalypse of James*

The third chapter is concerned with situating *I Apoc. Jas.* within the larger debate over the question of genres within Gnostic literature. Throughout this chapter I operate on the assumption that the text can be understood within a number of possible genres, including late antique question and answer literature, but is clearly associated with the specific genre of

Gnostic apocalypses. The discovery of the second attestation of the text with the shorter title “James” has led to questions concerning the suitability of classifying *1 Apoc. Jas.* as an apocalypse. Keeping this in mind, I demonstrate how the text is constructed based on, and makes use of, apocalyptic imagery and conventions, while meeting the necessary criteria for inclusion within the Gnostic apocalyptic genre.

Chapter 4: Authority, Commission, and Apostolic Descent

The fourth chapter explores how, in addition to being representative of the Gnostic apocalyptic genre, the text acts as a commission narrative. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the commission serves to reinforce the underlying theme of authority that is, through the use of the figure of James, related to an alternative form of apostolic succession. This is shown through an analysis of the succession narrative in relation to the specifically named figures (James, Addai, Manaël, Levi, and Levi’s second son). I show conclusively that the commission narrative is carefully crafted by the author, making use of Eastern Christian (Armenian and Syrian), Jewish-Christian, and specifically Jewish apocalyptic material in order to present a line of counter-apostolic descent legitimating the authority of the intended group of readers.

Chapter 5: Cosmology, Ascent, and the Role of Women in the *First Apocalypse of James*

Chapter 5 attempts to classify the cosmology of the text within the larger thought world that exists under the umbrella heading of Gnosticism. Originally understood as being aligned with Marcosian Valentinian thought, the cosmology of the text has become a matter of some debate, particularly in light of the discovery of the text from Al Minya. In my discussion of the

cosmology I delve deeply into the pre- and post-passion revelatory structure of the text, situating the cosmological speculations within the corpus of material that would have been extant at the time of composition. This includes a thorough discussion of the post-mortem ascent of the soul which has been understood as a defining element in the narrative. In relation to the ascent I build on and interrogate the work of Einar Thomassen, who has come out firmly against a Valentinian classification based on the presence of Orphic elements.⁴³ I show that, while the formula for ascent found in the text is Orphic, the particular invocation of formulas and the overall cosmological speculations are being used in a syncretic manner.⁴⁴ In this chapter I am arguing that, even though we find the presence of elements in the cosmology from other systems, this neither precludes nor affirms a Valentinian classification.

⁴³ Einar Thomassen, “Gnostics and Orphics,” in *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer* (ed. Jitse Dijkstra, Justin Kroesen and Yme Kuiper; Studies in the History of Religions 127; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 463-74.

⁴⁴ Throughout this dissertation I am defining syncretic thought or syncretism with respect to the reuse, incorporation, and appropriation of practices and traditions. In essence, syncretism is being defined in opposition to the concept of a “unique” expression of religious thought in the text. On the question of borrowing and the concept of what can be defined as “unique,” see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 14; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Syncretism, specifically in the context of Nag Hammadi is explored by Douglas M. Parrott, “Evidence of Religious Syncretism in Gnostic Texts from Nag Hammadi,” in *Religious Syncretism in Antiquity: Essays in Conversation with Geo Widengren* (ed. Birger A. Pearson; Series on Formative Contemporary Thinkers 1; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 173-190. A useful survey of religious syncretism can be found in Eric Maroney, *Religious Syncretism* (London: SCM, 2006).

Conclusions

In conclusion, this dissertation will establish the variant levels upon which the text can be read and interpreted. In this regard I will prove that the text can be interpreted as Valentinian while betraying a prominent Jewish Christian subtext upon which it can also authentically be interpreted.

Chapter 1: Why James?

NHC V, 3 opens with a statement on the relationship between Jesus and the protagonist and recipient of revelation in the text:

ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ Ν̄ΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ ΠΧΟΕΙC ΔΕ
 ΠΕΝΤΑΨΑΧΕ Ν̄ΜΜΑΪ ΧΕ ΕΝΑΥ ΒΕΠΧΩΚ Ν̄ΤΕ
 ΠΑΣΩΤΕ ΑΪϜ ΜΑΕΙΝ ΝΑΚ ΕΝΑΪ ΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ ΠΑΣΟΝ ·
 ΕΙΚΗ ΓΑΡ ΑΝ ΑΪΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΚ ΧΕ ΠΑΣΟΝ · ΕΝΤΟΚ
 ΠΑΣΟΝ ΖΡΑΪ Ζ̄Ν ΘΥΛΗ ΑΝ · (NHC V, 3 24, 10-24, 16)

The Apocalypse of Jacobos (James). The Lord spoke to me, saying: “See now the end (perfection) of my salvation. I have given to you a sign of these things Jacobos (James) my brother. For it is not without reason that I have called you my brother. You are not my brother in matter.”⁴⁵

Though there is a qualification of the nature of their relationship, there is no doubt that the Jacobos in question is James the brother of Jesus. At the outset of my research, the figure presented by James of Jerusalem, also known as James the Just, appeared to represent a relatively simple subject. This seemed especially true when compared to the study of the historical Jesus for whom we have ample sources, though all removed historically from the figure that they interpret. In contrast, there are relatively few sources about James and at least one of these, Paul, was writing during James’ lifetime. Also, to be contrasted with Jesus who left no primary written sources, is the fact that many scholars still attribute the authorship of the

⁴⁵ My translation in consultation with the work of Schoedel, “The First Apocalypse of James,” 65-104, and the edition of Veilleux, *La première apocalypse de Jacques*, 22-23. Schoedel gives the alternative translation “I have shown you these things” as a possibility in the NMHC edition of the text (p. 68 n. 13).

Epistle of James to James the brother of Jesus. Even so, as Adele Reinhartz remarks in her monograph on the high priest Caiaphas:

Caiaphas's clear and distinct portrait in twentieth- and twenty-first century scholarship made me optimistic that the historical Caiaphas could be found quite simply... Alas, my hopes were quickly dashed... Upon closer examination... the powerful image drawn by histories and commentaries began to blur... beyond the fact of the high priesthood, Caiaphas's personality and activities were far more difficult to discern than the scholarship implied.⁴⁶

A simple question that needs to be asked in relation to NHC V, 3 and AMC 2 is: why was James chosen as the protagonist and recipient of the revelation from Jesus? In many ways this chapter is a reaction to the statement of William Schoedel, who says:

Although the figure of James the Just was originally the property of Jewish Christianity, it has become little more in our apocalypse than a convenient peg on which to hang Gnostic doctrine.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, in this case Schoedel's arguments serve to continue a process of diminishment and conflation of the figure of James that began from an early period and led to his being often being referred to as "the less" in contrast to the brother of John. Contrary to Schoedel, I argue that the figure of James is used very deliberately by the author of the text to further a specific agenda and not as a matter of convenience. As such, in this chapter I explore the different ways in which James the brother of Jesus has been portrayed and interpreted within

⁴⁶ Adele Reinhartz, *Caiaphas the High Priest* (Studies on Personalities of the New Testament; Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 2-3.

⁴⁷ William R. Schoedel, "A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem: The First Apocalypse of James," *NT* 33 (1991): 153-78 at 166.

an early Christian context. In particular I assert that the use of James as protagonist within the text is based on two factors. The first is that the martyrdom of James as constructed within the text is based on fairly reliable historical accounts, which were subject eventually to legendary embellishment but would have been authoritative at the time of composition. The second assertion that I make is that the use of James is based on an association with his role as the leader of the Jerusalem community, his association with the temple and the priesthood. I assert that by showing James in direct revelatory succession to Jesus, the text establishes a line of counter-apostolic authority and a true priesthood that is justified through the link to temple worship in Jerusalem. This will be further argued in relation to the commission of Addai on the part of James discussed in chapter four.⁴⁸

In order to demonstrate how the use of James underscores a theme of counter-apostolic authority, I explore the extant early Christian and late antique material describing the figure and role of James. There is a large body of tradition that the author of the *First Apocalypse of James* could have had available to draw upon. We find relevant material on James in a number of historical sources. For the purpose of this study I will focus on the work of Josephus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hegesippus, and Eusebius.⁴⁹

In the canonical sources, James is named specifically as the brother of Jesus at a number of points (Mark 6:1-6; Matthew 13:54-58). He would likely also be included in the other

⁴⁸ See Robert M. Edwards, "Jewish Christianity Revisited," in *La croisée des chemins revisitée. Quand l'Église et la Synagogue se sont-elles distinguées?* (ed. S.C. Mimouni and B. Pouderon; Patrimoines, Judaïsme antique; Paris: Cerf, 2012), 321-37.

⁴⁹ The references to James in Jerome will not be discussed at this time as they are fifth century and, while likely being subject to the same reception history as *I Ap. Jas*, do not necessarily affect our interpretation of James.

mentions of unnamed brothers in the gospel accounts (Mark 3:31-35; Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21; John 7:1-9). James takes on a more prominent role in the Acts of the Apostles and is central to our understanding of the Jerusalem community in that text (specific references to James include 12:17; 15:13-20; and 21:17-26). We also see James mentioned prominently in the work of Paul, in particular Galatians where Paul describes among other things a delegation being sent from James (2:11-14), meeting with James the brother of the Lord (1:19), and Peter, James, and John as the pillars of the community in Jerusalem (2:9-10). As well, the canonical corpus includes mentions of our protagonist in the Epistle of James (1:1) and the Epistle of Jude (1:1).

Outside of the canonical and historical sources we find a large body of apocryphal literature which focusses on the figure of James. Of particular interest are the apocryphal *Gospel of the Hebrews*, which accords primary revelation to James, and the *Protoevangelium of James*, which contains rationalizations for the references to James and others as siblings of Jesus. Added to the list of apocryphal sources referencing James are, of course, texts which fall under the umbrella heading of Gnosticism, including the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Apocryphon of James*, and the *Second Apocalypse of James*.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ James the Just has not necessarily received the scholarly attention that he has deserved. Even so, there are a number of important monographs which survey the relevant material. Notable among these are John Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Studies on Personalities of the New Testament; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), and Patrick Hartin, *James of Jerusalem: Heir to Jesus of Nazareth* (Interfaces; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004), as well as the edited volume by Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *James the Just and Christian Origins* (NovTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 1999). To this list I would add, with a great deal of hesitation, the often refuted work of Robert Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus: The Key to*

1.1. An Impure Death? The Martyrdom of James and the Destruction of Jerusalem

The works of the Jewish Roman historian Flavius Josephus (37-ca.100 CE) provide scant, though important, evidence concerning the figure of James and the early Christian community.⁵¹ Josephus' contribution to the study of James, in particular, is isolated to a passage in his *Antiquities of the Jews* 20.9.1:

Upon learning of the death of Festus, Caesar sent Albinus to Judaea as procurator. The king removed Joseph from the high priesthood and bestowed the succession to this office upon the son of Ananus who was likewise called Ananus. It is said tht the elder Ananus was extremely fortunate. For he had five sons, all of whom, after he himself had previously enjoyed the office for a very long period, became high priests of God – a thing that had never happened to any other of our high priests. The younger Ananus, who, as we have said, had been appointed to the high priesthood, was rash in his temper and unusually daring. He followed the school of the Sadducees, who are indeed more heartless than any of the other Jews, as I have already explained, when they sit in judgement. Possessed of such a character Ananus thought that he had a favourable opportunity because Festus was dead and Albinus was still on the way. And so he convened the judges of the Sanhedrin and brought

Unlocking the Secrets of Early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: Viking, 1997), which, though it advocates an untenable thesis, is by far the largest available commentary on the material associated with James.

⁵¹ For a large scale discussion of Josephus' writings in relation to the early Christian community, see the work of Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992). Also see the introductions to Josephus by Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983), and Per Bilde, *Flavius Josephus: Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome. His Life, His Works, and Their Importance* (JSPS 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988). One of the best summaries of the life of Josephus is to be found in the introduction to the 1999 edition of Whiston's translation, where Paul L. Maier states that "Josephus was a first century Jew whose life as a diplomat, general, and historian was crammed with contradictions. He studied in the desert but wrote in the city. He was a pacifist who went to war, a military commander who (to our knowledge) had no training in the martial arts but fought as is he had. He battled the Romans, yet was befriended by them. He joined a suicide pact but survived, while thirty-nine lay dead around him. He was the mortal foe of a future emperor – who later brought him into the family! Schooled in Aramaic, he wrote a massive history in Greek for a Roman audience, writings which have either been disdained or called next to the Bible in importance" (William Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus: Revised and Expanded Edition* [ed. Paul L. Maier; Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999], 7).

before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned. Those of the inhabitants of the city who were considered the most fair-minded and who were strict in observance of the law were offended at this. They therefore secretly sent to King Agrippa urging him, for Ananus had not even been correct in his first step, to order him to desist from any further such actions. Certain of them even went to meet Albinus, who was on his way from Alexandria, and informed him that Ananus had no authority to convene the Sanhedrin without his consent. Convinced by these words, Albinus angrily wrote to Ananus threatening to take vengeance upon him. King Agrippa, because of Ananus' action, deposed him from the high priesthood which he had held for only three months and replaced him with Jesus the son of Damnaeus.⁵²

As we see in the above passage, by the time that Josephus is writing in the late first century there is a tradition circulating outside of the immediate realm of Christian groups that asserts both that Jesus had a brother named James and that James was put to death by the Jewish authorities. The above passage quoted in its entirety is useful for our evaluation of Josephus as a source. It has been noted that in his earlier work he is silent on the figure of Jesus and the early Christian movement. In this passage we can see what is really more of a passing reference made in relation to an explanation concerning the succession of the high priesthood that questions the legitimacy of not only the calling together of the Sanhedrin, but of the high priesthood of Ananus. This view is reinforced by Steve Mason's interrogation of the differing pictures of the high priesthood that Josephus introduces in his *War* and *Antiquities*. Mason tells us that Josephus was most concerned with demonstrating "that violation of Jewish laws leads to disaster."⁵³ According to Mason,

⁵² Josephus, *Ant.* 20.9.1 (trans. Louis H. Feldman, LCL).

⁵³ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 124.

most revealing are *Antiquities*' revisions of *War*'s portraits of the high priests in the years before the revolt. Ananus whom *War* had praised as a moderate and virtuous man, over against the violent rebels, is introduced in *Antiquities* 20.199 as "rash and conspicuously bold in manner".⁵⁴

The argument being made by Mason is that while Josephus put forth a positive view of the high priesthood in *War*, representing "the normal establishment over against the rebels," *Antiquities*, on the other hand, "intends to demonstrate the efficacy of Jewish laws by proving that transgressors are invariably punished."⁵⁵ In this sense, we might posit, somewhat echoing Schoedel's pronouncement on the figure of James as a tool of the "Gnostics" in the *First Apocalypse of James*, that the reference to James is being used conveniently by Josephus as an illustration of his perspective on the younger Ananus rather than as an intended discussion of the Christian movement, let alone Jesus or James.

Josephus' intention to critique the high priesthood is underscored by an overall inclination within the *Antiquities* to demonstrate the flawed nature of the ruling powers in Judea. This is especially evident in Josephus' treatment of the Herodian dynasty which is shown to be opposed by the Jewish people.⁵⁶ There is also a repeated theme of unjust politically motivated executions that culminates in the death of James. Of these, those of John the Baptist and Jesus are the closest parallels, though Archelaus' killing of three thousand people during a revolt (*Ant.* 17.9.3) may also be worth noting. Even so, Richard Bauckham is convinced that "while

⁵⁴ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 124.

⁵⁵ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 124.

⁵⁶ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 93.

Josephus' own purposes no doubt determine what he has chosen to include and what he knew but has not reported, there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the account so far as it goes."⁵⁷

According to Bauckham, with respect to the account of Josephus among the other descriptions of the martyrdom of James,

that of Josephus (*Ant.* 20.9.1) is commonly acknowledged to be the most historically reliable. Though a few scholars have held this passage to be a Christian interpolation, the vast majority have considered it to be authentic.⁵⁸

This question of authenticity is of great importance to the study of the transmission of traditions concerning the figure of James. There are a number of reasons for this assertion. The first is simply that it is the earliest tradition of the death of James to which we have access. While Josephus was certainly of a later generation than James, they are historical contemporaries whose lifetimes overlap. In addition, the work of Josephus, at least in the extant texts, is somewhat without ornament. It does not go deeply into detail concerning the manner of James' death but rather states it matter of factly. Finally, we also know that the account as portrayed in Josephus is used by "proto-orthodox" authors. In relation to James, the work of Josephus is directly quoted by Origen (*Commentary on Matthew* 10. 17; *Contra Celsum* 1.35-36; 1:47) and Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.11). As well, we see quotations of Josephus in relation to James in the sixth century work of Cassiodorus (*Hist. Tripartit.*, taken from

⁵⁷ Richard Bauckham, "For What Offence Was James Put to Death?" in *James the Just and Christian Origins*, 199-232 at 199.

⁵⁸ Bauckham ("For What Offence Was James Put to Death?" 199 n. 2) points to the work of Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937-1980)* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1984), for a discussion focusing on the authenticity of the passage, while Rajak (*Josephus*, 131) continues to consider it as an interpolation by Christian editors.

Sozomen), as well as the eighth century work of Georgius Syncellus (*Chronicles*).⁵⁹ It is well known that the works of Josephus were employed by Christian writers other than those that I have mentioned, but as John Painter points out, “Origen is the first to refer to them in a way relevant to our discussion.”⁶⁰ As we see in his *Contra Celsum* (1.47) and his *Commentary on Matthew* (10.17), Origen was aware of the reference to James made by Josephus; however, as Painter observes, “it seems not to have been in the form now found in all extant texts.”⁶¹ While Eusebius, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.23.21-24, includes the full passage with some minor variations that might be accounted for by different manuscript traditions, Hegesippus and Origen expand upon the tradition providing detail that likely originates in the ongoing process of mythmaking that surrounds the major figures of early Christianity.

In order to understand this enigmatic figure, we must ask the central question of the importance of the reference to James in the work of Josephus. One important element is articulated in Origen’s *Commentary on Matthew* 10. 17, where he states, in relation to Josephus’ account of the death of James and the subsequent fall of Jerusalem,

and the wonderful thing is, that, though he did not accept Jesus as Christ, he yet gave testimony that the righteousness of James was so great; and he says that the people thought that they had suffered these things because of James.⁶²

⁵⁹ For a compilation of references to the work of Josephus in relation to the figures of Jesus, John the Baptist, and James the Just, see the commentary in Appendix, Dissertation I, of Paul L. Maier in Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, 987-97.

⁶⁰ Painter, *Just James*, 134.

⁶¹ Painter, *Just James*, 134.

⁶² Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10. 17 (*ANF* 9:425).

As Patrick Hartin observes, “the significance of this account is that a Jewish writer, Josephus, supports the historicity of the person James. Josephus shows that James was known as ‘the brother of Jesus’ and that he was well respected in Jerusalem, in both Christian and Jewish circles.”⁶³ More importantly than simply showing that James was respected, the reference in Josephus – particularly the fact that, while it is clear that a number of people are executed, only James is named, while Jesus is referenced solely in order to confirm the identity of James – leads to the conclusion that Josephus understood James to be in a position of authority. As such, we fall back on the fact that “one of this anonymous group is significant enough to be named.”⁶⁴

Ben Witherington III underscores three main points concerning James that might be taken away from this reference. The first is that James is referred to as the “brother” (ἀδελφός) of Jesus with no qualification. He states that “Josephus calls Jesus the so-called...Christ but does not call James the so-called brother of Jesus. Thus, it was not just early Christian writers who called James the brother of Jesus.”⁶⁵ Secondly, according to Witherington “the passage emphasizes that James was a Torah-true, faithfully observant Jew,” and that “it seems clear that Josephus definitely agrees an injustice was done to James.”⁶⁶ On this point, however, I feel that Witherington is reading too much into the text. He implies that the reference to the offence taken by observant members of the population is evidence of James’ standing as an observant Jew when this is neither stated nor implied within the text. Witherington’s argument is that

⁶³ Hartin, *James of Jerusalem*, 119.

⁶⁴ Painter, *Just James*, 137.

⁶⁵ Hershel Shanks and Ben Witherington III, *The Brother of Jesus: The Dramatic Story and Meaning of the First Archaeological Link to Jesus & His Family* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2003), 169.

⁶⁶ Shanks and Witherington, *The Brother of Jesus*, 169.

“James commanded respect not only within his own Jewish Christian constituency but also among other Jews in Jerusalem as well...This could hardly have been the case if James had not been a pious and observant Jew himself.”⁶⁷ This argument is flawed as the text makes no statement concerning his piety or observance. I should note that a similar perspective to that put forth by Witherington is explored by Painter who allows for the possibility that the fair-minded citizens who object in Josephus’ account were actually Pharisees. He makes this assertion based on an interpretation of Josephus’ own biases. In Painter’s view it is likely that Josephus is using this opportunity to show the Pharisees in a favourable light. He comes back to the point that “the objection was simply that the proceedings in this condemnation and execution were technically illegal.”⁶⁸ Thus, instead of the objection to the execution of James being made on the grounds that there is a sense of like-minded piety, the perception of offence should be based solely on the transgression of the law on the part of Ananus. Thirdly, Witherington rightly states that “stoning was...a possible punishment for law-breaking in the form of blasphemy, false teaching, or being a trouble maker and seducer of the Jewish people.”⁶⁹ This punishment is taken directly from Leviticus 24:10-23 where the penalty for blasphemy is laid out by Moses.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Shanks and Witherington, *The Brother of Jesus*, 169.

⁶⁸ Painter, *Just James*, 139.

⁶⁹ Shanks and Witherington, *The Brother of Jesus*, 169.

⁷⁰ Bauckham has noted that the question of legality with respect to the execution of James might also be looked at in relation to the severity of punishment. Noting the division in Josephus’ account between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, Bauckham (“For What Offence Was James Put to Death?” 218-23) has noted that the Pharisees, while still considering that James may have committed an offence, were possibly motivated to object to his execution based on the interpretation that the offence was only worthy of a lesser punishment.

The overall value that we find in the work of Josephus, with respect to James, can then be summed up in three points. The first is, again, that he provides a historical perspective (though with a particular aim) that is outside of the sphere of Christian thought. Secondly, he offers the earliest historical report of the martyrdom of James and gives insight, though limited at best, into the primacy of James within the Jerusalem community. And thirdly, he provides the basis upon which later accounts of the role of James and his martyrdom are built.

1.2. James in Hegesippus: Priest, Nazirite, and Martyr

The work of Hegesippus is somewhat problematic for the modern scholar. This is due to the fact that no independent attestations are extant outside of the work of Eusebius,⁷¹ where the quotations are presented as part of a large-scale history of the early church. This is a point that has been questioned for over a century, notably by Hugh Jackson Lawlor in 1912:

We may thus defend Hegesippus from the charges which have been made against him, of want of method and arrangement. It is true that our defence obliges us to

⁷¹ Concerning the relationship of the tradition of James in Hegesippus to other ancient material, see F. Stanley Jones, "The Martyrdom of James in Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, and Christian Apocrypha, Including Nag Hammadi: A Study of Textual Relations," in *Society of Biblical Literature: 1990 Seminar Papers* (ed. David J. Lull; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1990), 322-35. It is possible, and likely, that the references to Hegesippus that we find attested in the work of Jerome and Epiphanius are based on a reading of Eusebius and not a consequence of first-hand knowledge of the work of Hegesippus. This was explored by Jones who states that "though a number of notable scholars both before and after Lawlor have supported the view that Epiphanius drew on Hegesippus, the evidence seems rather to indicate that Epiphanius did not have a copy of Hegesippus but rather drew on Eusebius for similar material. Further, no real explanation has ever been given for why Epiphanius would have used Hegesippus but have never mentioned him by name" (pp. 326-27). Based on these arguments, we are focused primarily on the text of Hegesippus as it appears in *HE* rather than looking at the extra material found in Epiphanius at this time.

give up speaking of him as a historian, and as the ‘Father of Church History’; but to do this is only to cease calling him what he did not...claim to be.⁷²

Lawlor’s claim is that the vast majority of Hegesippus’ *Hypomnemata* (“Memoirs”) dealt primarily with theological and doctrinal issues rather than the history of the church. Lawlor’s view finds corroboration in the work of Robert M. Grant, who states that “Hegesippus gave him (Eusebius) historical materials, but Hegesippus was no historian...and Hegesippus was concerned with problems of heresy and orthodoxy, not historical fact.”⁷³ As such, the elements included in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, were “inserted where it suited him...and which include all the extant fragments of the writings of our author which have a direct bearing on Ecclesiastical History.”⁷⁴

Moving beyond the question of the genre of his work that Eusebius made use of, we can say that the quotation of Hegesippus, as preserved in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, provides the largest single body of traditions upon which our understanding of the figure of James is based. John Painter has noted the emphasis placed on the account of Hegesippus, which even supercedes that of Josephus in the Church History. He reasons that this is because “it makes the points that are important for Eusebius concerning the righteousness of James, and his courageous witness to Jesus in the face of martyrdom.”⁷⁵ From a historical perspective, though,

⁷² Hugh Jackson Lawlor, *Eusebiana: Essays on the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 3-4.

⁷³ Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 40.

⁷⁴ Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 40.

⁷⁵ John Painter, “Who Was James?” in *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission* (ed. Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 10-65 at 50.

it is still problematic that the vast majority of material comes from a source unconcerned with history, which instead shows a pre-occupation with the portrayal of a particular view of orthodoxy. Due to the amount of material in question, this study will examine the quotations in small sections rather than as a whole unit.

At the beginning of the quotation from *Hypomnemata*, Eusebius qualifies the fact that while the death of James has been discussed in Clement, it is also recorded by Hegesippus who is thought to have lived close to the time of the events being described:

The manner of James's death has been shown by the words of Clement already quoted, narrating that he was thrown from the battlement and beaten to death with a club, but Hegesippus, who belongs to the generation after the Apostles, gives the most accurate account of him speaking as follows in his fifth book: "The charge of the Church passed to James the brother of the Lord, together with the Apostles. He was called the 'Just' by all men from the Lord's time to ours, since many are called James" (*HE* 2.23.3-4).⁷⁶

For Eusebius, the work of Hegesippus is considered authoritative based on his estimation that it dates to the first generation after the apostles. Painter tells us thusly that "[a] straightforward reading of Eusebius's introduction to Hegesippus's account of the martyrdom of James places him in the first century."⁷⁷ However, it is more likely, when looking at the development of tradition, that Hegesippus would belong in the early second-century.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Trans. Paul L. Maier, *Eusebius: The Church History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999).

⁷⁷ Painter, "Who Was James?" 34.

⁷⁸ As evidence of the second-century character of Hegesippus' work, Hartin cites the way that the vow of the Nazir is described. He notes that it conforms not to first century Palestinian practice but to the second-century. See Hartin, *James of Jerusalem*, 121-23. As we see though, when looking at the figures that the tradition is based upon (i.e.,

Of note, is the fact that Hegesippus refers to the governance of James, but in conjunction with the apostles. As we will see, when looking at the passages from Clement's *Hypotyposes*, this is later interpreted as meaning that James is either on equal footing with the apostles, or that in some way his authority as leader is subject to the apostles. However, there is no real assertion that his authority is qualified or from any source other than Jesus. As well, we should make note of the epithet "the Just" which is used to distinguish James from others bearing the same name. This may imply, though this is only conjecture, that there was already a trend toward conflation that Hegesippus is attempting to counteract, particularly in order to distinguish our James from the son of Zebedee. This use of the term "the Just," though early, is not the earliest and is already found prior to this in both the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.⁷⁹ Even so, we do not find the term in the earliest writings from the first century, and while Hegesippus implies that the term was applied during James' lifetime, there is no "evidence that 'the Just' was used of James before his martyrdom."⁸⁰ Instead, the earliest accounts – the gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul, James, and Jude – refer to James as the brother of the Lord or refer to the brothers and sisters of Jesus.⁸¹

Samson, Samuel, and especially John the Baptist), it is not impossible that Hartin's view is incorrect, and Hegesippus focused his understanding on a conflation of traditions relating to the aforementioned figures.

⁷⁹ *Gospel of Thomas*, logion 12; *Gospel of the Hebrews*, fragment 7 in Jerome, *de Viris Illustribus* 2. See the discussion in Hartin, *James of Jerusalem*, 121.

⁸⁰ Painter, "Who Was James?" 11.

⁸¹ Painter, "Who Was James?" 11-12. A discussion of the other relatives of Jesus as portrayed in the early Christian sources can be found in section 2.6 below.

Following this, Hegesippus further explores the figure of James, describing him in terms which would mark him as both a Nazirite and a priest.⁸²

He was holy from his mother's womb. He drank no wine or strong drink, nor did he eat flesh; no razor went upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil, and he did not go to the baths. He alone was allowed to enter into the sanctuary, for he did not wear wool but linen, and he used to enter alone into the temple and be found kneeling and praying for forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel's because of his constant worship of God, kneeling and asking forgiveness for the people. (*HE* 2.23.5-6).

We see two potentially conflicting pictures of James presented together here. The text describes a James who appears to have undergone the vow of the Nazir which is described in Numbers 6:1-21. The pertinent restrictions placed upon one who has undertaken the vow are as follows:

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of dedication to the Lord as a Nazirite, they must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. As long as they remain under their Nazirite vow, they must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins. During the entire period of their Nazirite vow, no razor may be used on their head. They must be holy until the period of their dedication to the Lord is over; they must let their hair grow long. Throughout the period of their dedication to the Lord, the Nazirite must not go near a dead body. Even if their own father or mother or brother or sister dies, they must not make

⁸² It should be noted that the description of James as a Nazirite is absent from the account in Epiphanius. This omission has led numerous scholars to question whether or not the reference is authentic to Hegesippus or possibly an interpolation into the text that was used by Eusebius. According to Painter, *Just James*, 126, "On the grounds that Epiphanius (*Pan.* 29.4) did not know of any Nazirite connection for James it has been suggested that the Nazirite elements were interpolated into the text of Hegesippus used by Eusebius. But the evidence is inconclusive, and it is more likely that such elements would be removed in a non-Jewish context." For the argument in favor of interpolation, see Ernst Zuchschwerdt, "Das Naziräat des Herrenbruders Jacobus nach Hegesipp (Euseb, h.e. II.23.5-6)," *ZNW* 68 (1977): 276-87.

themselves ceremonially unclean on account of them, because the symbol of their dedication to God is on their head. Throughout the period of their dedication, they are consecrated to the Lord” (Numbers 6:1-8, NIV).

In referring to James as being under a Nazirite vow from birth, Hegesippus is creating a sense of continuity with key people in the history of both Israel/Judah and the emerging Christian church. While it is true that there were many people who undertook the Nazirite vow for a set period in first century Palestine,⁸³ the key element with respect to James is the fact that he is said to be a Nazirite/holy from birth. In Judaic tradition this formulation of the vow is very infrequent and usually marks the individual placed under the vow as having been set apart to perform a specific function, generally involving a role of leadership.

The Hebrew Bible only presents the birth narratives of two figures who are considered to be “permanent” Nazirites, Samson (Judges 13:1-6)⁸⁴ and Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11).⁸⁵ Both are

⁸³ For a useful discussion of how vows and, in particular, Nazirites, may have understood in first century Palestine, see Jacob Neusner, “Vow-Taking, the Nazirites, and the Law: Does James’ Advice to Paul Accord with Halakhah?” in *James the Just and Christian Origins*, 59-82.

⁸⁴ “Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, ‘You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines.’ Then the woman went to her husband and told him, ‘A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn’t ask him where he came from, and he didn’t tell me his name’ ” (Judges 13:1-6, NIV).

⁸⁵ “There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none. Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the

portrayed within the cycle of Deuteronomistic history and are key figures in the establishment of the people of Israel within the land. In these birth narratives we see the repeated pattern of a devout man who is married to an aging woman who cannot conceive a child. In the case of Samson, the parents receive a visitation from a divine messenger who promises that they will conceive, while in 1 Samuel we are told that the Lord had closed her womb (1:6) and later that the Lord had remembered her (1:19). As such, there is a stated pattern of devout people who cannot conceive, who then following divine intercession are able to have a son.⁸⁶ In both cases, these children are marked from birth as Nazirites but also as Judges over Israel, with Samuel being the last and the one to establish the monarchy.⁸⁷

We see a similar pattern in the birth narrative of the one permanent Nazirite featured in the New Testament, John the Baptist. The birth narrative as portrayed by Luke draws on

two sons of Eli, were priests of the Lord. Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb. Because the Lord had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah would say to her, 'Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?' Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord's house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, 'Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head' " (1 Samuel 1:1-11, NIV).

⁸⁶ We see similar patterns of divine intervention in relation to the births of patriarchal figures such as Isaac (Genesis 21) and Joseph (Genesis 30:22-24). With respect to the birth of Joseph, we see not only the idea of God closing and opening the womb, but also the idea that God "remembers" Rachel before doing so.

⁸⁷ An obvious difference lies in the fact that the Nazirite vow is a matter of divine instruction in the case of Samson, while it is the initiative of Samuel's mother. Even so, in both cases it is the defining factor for God to allow conception.

elements from the births of both Samson and Samuel, following the same pattern of devout parents, barren and aging mother, and divine intervention with (as in the case of Samson) an angelic instruction that the child be dedicated to God. What we find in Luke's account of the birth of John is a blending of the births of Samson and Samuel. Specifically, Luke incorporates the divine visitation which foretells the birth of Samson with the prayer of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10), which is varied and expanded upon in the songs of Mary (Luke 1:46-55) and Zechariah (Luke 1:67-79).⁸⁸

We can see that, at least some of the attributes of James in Hegesippus' depiction are based on the aforementioned figures. These include the obvious elements of the vow such as abstaining from wine and not using a razor. As well, the depiction of James incorporates the requisite element relating to the other figures of being holy from the womb. The other elements of abstention do create certain problems for scholars, specifically, not eating flesh, anointing oneself with oil, or bathing.⁸⁹ However, this can be explained if Hegesippus was making

⁸⁸ We should note that Jaroslav Rindoš has drawn six main points of comparison between the birth narratives of John the Baptist and Samuel in relation to Luke's recalling of the barrenness of Hannah: 1) spatial setting: in both accounts the announcement of impending conception occurs in a sanctuary; 2) both accentuate the priestly line of Aaron; 3) ending of episodes with conception following a return from the sanctuary is similar; 4) active use of Samuel in the narrative (Luke 1:46-51 // 1 Sam. 2:1-10; Luke 1:48 // 1 Sam. 1:11); 5) both show that the future prophet will supply what is expected of the religious leaders who fail to do so (1 Sam 2:27-36; Luke 7:30); 6) Samuel and John both call for repentance and perform a ritual with water (1 Sam 7:2-6; Luke 3), and 7) joy at the birth of both figures is linked to the joy that erupts from the horn of David. In this case a direct comparison is being drawn between the words of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10) and Zechariah (Luke 1:69). See Jaroslav Rindoš, *He of Whom It Is Written: John the Baptist and Elijah in Luke* (Österreichische biblische Studien 38; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010), 44-45.

⁸⁹ The abstention in particular from anointing and bathing brings to the fore a question of purity, especially in relation to the temple. Craig Evans has offered an interesting explanation for the avoidance of oil and meat based

specific allusions to the figure of John the Baptist.⁹⁰ In this case, we can assert that Hegesippus would have been drawing upon material in Luke-Acts (as well as Josephus) to construct his version of James. Luke is the only one of the gospel narratives to specifically allude to John being a permanent Nazirite (within the birth narrative, Luke 1:15).⁹¹ Even so, the fact that John was an ascetic is attested throughout the synoptic gospels (Matthew 3:1-6; Mark 1:1-6; Luke 3:1-6). All three of these accounts show him preaching in the wilderness, while Matthew and Mark also give descriptions of his dietary restrictions (nothing but locusts and honey), as well as

on an extremely stringent approach to the Nazirite vow, “the additional notice, that he avoided oil, is consistent with the especial concern for purity among Nazirites. They were to avoid any contact with death (Num. 6:6-12), and the avoidance of all uncleanness – which is incompatible with sanctity – follows naturally. The avoidance of oil is also attributed by Josephus to the Essenes (*Jewish War* 2.8.3/123), and the reason seems plain: oil, as a fluid pressed from fruit, was considered to absorb impurity to such an extent that extreme care in its preparation was vital... James’ vegetarianism also comports with a concern to avoid contact with any kind of corpse.” See Craig A. Evans, “James, Peter, Paul, and the Formation of the Gospels” in *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul: Tensions in Early Christianity* (ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; NovTSup 115; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 3-28 at 13. Unfortunately, in the same article Evans oversteps what is plausible with the assertion that Jesus was also a Nazirite, citing as evidence the use of the term “Nazarene.” Following on the identification of Jesus as the Nazarene in Mark 1:24 Evans assumes that “[f]or James and those who were associated with him, Jesus’ true identity was his status as a Nazirite” (p. 25). Even allowing for the fact that the nazirite vow may have been open to variation and qualification based on circumstance, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that this is a possible argument or a way to link the Nazirite vow of James to a practice of Jesus.

⁹⁰ Richard Bauckham has also made a convincing argument equating Hegesippus’ description of James as a Nazirite and righteous man who is able to enter the sanctuary of the temple by referring to Psalm 118 (arguing that the reference to the gates of righteousness is being interpreted to refer to James) and Ezekiel 44:15-17, where he interprets the reference to the sons of Zadok being allowed to enter the sanctuary, wearing only linen and no wool, with James (particularly with respect to the epithets concerning righteousness). Bauckham (“For What Offense Was James Put to Death?” 213-214) goes on to show intertextual connections between the account of James’ righteousness and asceticism in Hegesippus and Ezekiel 44, Numbers 6, and Judges 13 arguing that they “account for most of Hegesippus’ opening description of James the ascetic intercessor.”

⁹¹ “He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth” (Luke 1:15, NIV).

ascetic clothing (camel hair shirt). John the Baptist's diet has been an object of considerable debate from an early point in Christian history.⁹² Technically, his diet is correct and allowed according to Leviticus 11:20-23:

All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be regarded as unclean by you. There are, however, some flying insects that walk on all fours that you may eat: those that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground. Of these you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket or grasshopper. But all other flying insects that have four legs you are to regard as unclean (NIV).

Whether or not it was correct, many interpreters have striven to either justify or remove the locusts from John's diet. Kelhoffer notes that "other developments in many Greek, Latin and Syriac patristic interpretations concerns the notion that John did not eat actual locusts/grasshoppers," and goes on to show that "examples of a 'vegetarian' Baptist appear in the second-century *Gospel of the Ebionites* and several later witnesses to Tatian's gospel harmony, the *Diatessaron*."⁹³ It is possible, but not conclusive, that Hegesippus may have come into contact with one of the early traditions that substituted milk or plants in their interpretation of John's diet.⁹⁴ To say then that James did not eat flesh, nor did he anoint himself or bath, is to

⁹² For an overview of scholarship and traditions relating to John the Baptist's diet, see the work of James A. Kelhoffer, *The Diet of John the Baptist* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 176; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

⁹³ Kelhoffer, *The Diet of John the Baptist*, 135.

⁹⁴ The *Gospel of the Ebionites* relates a tradition that John only ate wild honey that tasted like manna, while a later commentary on Tatian's *Diatessaron* substitutes milk for Locusts. See Kelhoffer, *The Diet of John the Baptist*, 139-143.

associate him with the type of asceticism practiced by John the Baptist.⁹⁵ To take this a step further, I would argue that the depiction of James, which would have echoed the other permanent Nazirites, is a deliberate construct to underscore points of conflict. Specifically, any contact with the traditions surrounding Samson, Samuel, and even John the Baptist, alludes to a status of either prophet or judge over Israel for James. In all three of the aforementioned cases, the figures act in an intercessory capacity with the people of Israel with respect to either conflict with, or domination by, foreign rulers.⁹⁶ The narrative concerning James in Hegesippus was written during a period when Israel was once again under foreign domination without even a pretense of rule by a client king. As such, I would put forth the possibility that James might be interpreted through the lens of Samuel, who acted in his capacity fulfilling the three key intercessory roles in Israel as priest, prophet, and judge.⁹⁷

Immediately following the description of James as a Nazirite in 2.23.5, Hegesippus describes James praying in the temple and even entering the holy of holies. It is commonly understood that only the high priest could enter the room of the temple that had previously contained the ark. We will return to the question of whether or not James may have been a priest within the discussion of the portrayal of his martyrdom. For now however, we turn to the requisite question of whether or not the description of James' asceticism would render him

⁹⁵ Most scholars have taken the passage to mean that James adopted a vegetarian diet. This is the view of Painter (*Just James*, 126), who points out that “Irenaeus (*AH* 1.24.2; 1.28.1) and Epiphanius (*Pan.* 30.15) associate such dietary practice with deviant Jewish sects.”

⁹⁶ James also acts in an intercessory capacity praying for the people of Israel immediately prior to his martyrdom.

⁹⁷ We should also note, as Painter (*Just James*, 126) does, that “what is emphasized is his intercessory role which is based on the pattern of Jesus (and Stephen), who before him had prayed for those who killed them.”

unable to pray in the temple as described. The key point of transgression lies in the fact that, according to Hegesippus, he did not bathe. A pious Jew in the first century, or at any time, would strive to remain in a state of ritual purity as per the instructions in Leviticus 15:31.⁹⁸ There is a fair amount of archaeological evidence for the presence of *mikva'ot* in first century Palestine,⁹⁹ and we find references to ritual purification through bathing throughout the Hebrew Bible (in particular Lev. 8:6; Numbers 8:7, 19:11).¹⁰⁰ Even so, the various strictures that we have access to concerning this type of ritual purification, are found in Rabbinic literature, in particular the Mishna tractate *Miqva'ot*, and as a consequence post-date the life of James and the fall of Jerusalem.¹⁰¹ Regardless of the normative functions of bathing for ritual purity within contemporary Judaism, there are two possibilities implied by the text that must be briefly addressed. The first is that James is said to be holy from birth. It is possible, though unlikely, to infer that he is meant to be understood as always having been in a state of ritual purity and therefore had no need to perform any sort of ritual cleansing. Another possibility is that James

⁹⁸ “You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.” (Lev. 15:31 NIV).

⁹⁹ For a discussion of the history and archaeology of ritual baths in Palestine see chapter 5 in Jonathan D. Lawrence, *Washing in Water: Trajectories in Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (Academia Biblica 23; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 155-183.

¹⁰⁰ With respect to the question of bathing for purification Jonathan D. Lawrence shows different traditions and scope of purification based on three distinctions in the Hebrew Bible and the second temple period: “1) “General” washing, or ritual purification of impurities which affect all people; 2) “Priestly” washing, or ritual purification that applies only to the priests or Levites; and 3)...washing for “Theophanies,” ritual washing of the entire people in preparation for a theophany or other public event.” With respect to the diversity of Judaisms present in the second temple period, Lawrence adds an extra category of washing for initiation. Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 26, 71.

¹⁰¹ For a full commentary and translation see Jacob Neusner, *The Judaic Law of Baptism: Tractate Miqvaot in the Mishnah and the Tosefta, A Form-Analytical Translation and Commentary, and a Legal and Religious History* (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 112; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

did perform ritual immersion in a *miqveh*, but that he did not defile himself by visiting the Roman baths. The rejection of the use of Roman baths would accord with an apologetic stance concerning James within the work of Hegesippus. According to Painter, the manner of life ascribed to James by Hegesippus is based in

terms which in part suggest the Nazirite rules of Num 4:1-5 (cf. Luke 1:15) and also indicate a rejection of Graeco-Roman ways, consistent with one who was a pillar of the mission to the circumcision. He did not smear himself with oil, he took no baths. Rejection of the Roman baths is what is at issue, not rejection of the Jewish rites of purification.¹⁰²

Hartin agrees that “[q]uite likely Hegesippus has in mind the rejection of the Roman baths (the reference to the use of oil and bathing, etc.) in order to distance James from the world of Greece and Rome rather than the Jewish rites of Purification.”¹⁰³

Allowing then, for the fact that the question of James’ ritual purity would not have been at issue, we can postulate that Hegesippus’s assertion concerning James being the only one to enter the sanctuary and his wearing only linen garments (as well as his other ascetic practices) finds its root in Ezekiel 44. While I have argued that much of the tradition is based on an attempt to relate James to John the Baptist and other permanent Nazirites, Bauckham’s argument is also valid that Hegesippus draws an intertextual connection with the special circumstances surrounding the Levites in Ezekiel 44, particularly the strictures that God places on them (linen garments, not using a razor, abstention from wine) with respect to service in the temple. The

¹⁰² Painter, *Just James*, 125.

¹⁰³ Hartin, *James of Jerusalem*, 123. This same point is made by Bauckham, “For What Offence Was James Put to Death?” 214: “Though apparently not attested elsewhere for Jews, abstention from bathing (the baths here are not those for ritual purification, but the public baths for washing and relaxing) was a common ascetic practice. Like abstention from wine and meat it was a common ascetic practice.”

problem lies in the fact that the Greek text of Eusebius refers to the holy place and the temple.

Bauckham is correct in pointing out that:

From any knowledge of what occurred in the Temple or even of what the Torah prescribed, it would be incomprehensible that James alone could be admitted to the Temple building, the holy place, which all priests could enter. But the account in Hegesippus, dating from long after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, was concerned not with historical plausibility, but with exegetical deductions. James alone fulfilled the conditions Ezekiel 44 lays down for entering the gates of the inner court of the Temple, as James himself in Ps 118:19 says that he does!¹⁰⁴

The intertextual connections continue with Hegesippus' attribution of epithets in *HE*

2.23.7.

So from his excessive righteousness he was called the Just and Oblias, that is in Greek, "Rampart of the people and righteousness," as the prophets declare concerning him.¹⁰⁵

As stated above, the epithet "the Just" may be associated with Ezekiel 44, and the term **קדש**, and most likely accords with the understanding among his contemporaries and later commentators that he was pious. The term "Oblias" has however, been a source of frustration for many scholars. While the text translates the term as "Bulwark of the people," there is no

¹⁰⁴ Bauckham, "For What Offence Was James Put To Death?" 215. Bauckham notes that there is a discrepancy between the Greek of Eusebius, which says that James was allowed to enter the "Holy Place," while "the Latin and the Syriac correct this to 'the holy of holies,' which many modern scholars have assumed must be intended." Eduard Schwartz ("Zu Eusebius Kirchengeschichte," *ZNW* 4 [1903]: 48-66) refuses to use this reading considering it as a very old correction. Jones ("The Martyrdom of James," 327), however, agreeing with Bauckham, finds deficiency in Schwartz's refusal to acknowledge the Latin and Syriac variants.

¹⁰⁵ Alternate translations give "Bulwark" and "Justice."

actual word in Hebrew or Aramaic that can be transliterated directly with that meaning.¹⁰⁶ Bauckham is quick to note that, though there have been many attempts to formulate a correct identification of the word, “none has provided a wholly satisfactory explanation which does justice to what Hegesippus says the term means in Greek.”¹⁰⁷ Bauckham is of the opinion that the term, whether a bastardization of a Semitic term or not, should be understood within the context of building imagery that was employed within the early church, particularly in relation to how members of the early community understood themselves and their leaders to constitute the structures of a metaphorical temple.¹⁰⁸

Christians in general were the stones of which the Temple is constructed (1 Pet. 2:5; *Hermas*, *Vis.* 3; *Sim.* 9); the apostles and Christian prophets were the foundation (Eph 2:20); Peter was the rock on which the Temple is built (Matt 16:18); Jesus Christ was the foundation (1 Cor 3:11) or the cornerstone/keystone (Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4, 6-7). That this kind of imagery goes back to the early Jerusalem church can be seen from the designation of James, Peter and John as pillars (Gal 2:9), i.e. supports on which the messianic temple rests.¹⁰⁹

A simpler, though complementary, explanation is that James acts as the bulwark, protecting the people from the impending destruction of Jerusalem in 2.23.19. In Painter’s opinion, “The question of how James attracted the name ‘bulwark of the people’ finds a

¹⁰⁶ Numerous attempts have been made to explain this title. Of them, one of the more interesting, in relation to the overall context of Hegesippus’ text is that of Charles C. Torrey, who argues that there is a corruption in the Greek text and that it should properly be rendered as ΩΒΔΙΑΣ, namely Obadiah. He argues this based on the protective capacity that he sees James acting with respect to the people of Israel, which he sees as reminiscent of Obadiah’s role in 1 Kings 18:3-15 where he acts as a guardian to the prophets of Israel. See Charles C. Torrey, “James the Just and His Name ‘Oblias’,” *JBL* 63 (1944): 93-98.

¹⁰⁷ Bauckham, “For What Offence Was James Put To Death?” 207.

¹⁰⁸ Bauckham, “For What Offence Was James Put To Death?” 207.

¹⁰⁹ Bauckham, “For What Offence Was James Put To Death?” 207.

suggestive answer in a later passage (3.7.8), in which the presence in Jerusalem of James and the other apostles is said to afford a strong protection (bulwark) to that place.”¹¹⁰

The designation of James as just and righteous sets the stage for what follows in Hegesippus’ account, where we see James being questioned by representatives of the Jews and with his answers gaining many followers (*HE* 2.23.8-13).

Thus some of the seven sects among the people, who were described before by me (in the Commentaries), inquired of him what was the “gate of Jesus,” and he said that he was the Saviour. Owing to this some believed that Jesus was the Christ. The sects mentioned above did not believe either in resurrection or in one who shall come to reward each according to his deeds, but as many as believed did so because of James. Now, since many even of the rulers believed, there was a tumult of the Jews and the Scribes and Pharisees saying that the whole people was in danger of looking for Jesus as the Christ. So they assembled and said to James, “We beseech you to restrain the people since they are straying after Jesus as though he were the Messiah. We beseech you to persuade concerning Jesus all who come for the day of the Passover, for all obey you. For we and the whole people testify to you that you are righteous and do not respect persons. So do you persuade the crowd not to err concerning Jesus, for the whole people and we all obey you. Therefore stand on the battlement of the temple that you may be clearly visible on high, and that your words may be audible to all the people, for because of the Passover all the tribes, with the Gentiles also, have come together.” So the Scribes and Pharisees mentioned before made James stand on the battlement of the temple, and they cried out to him and said, “Oh, just one, to whom we all owe obedience, since the people are straying after Jesus, who was crucified, tell us what is the gate of Jesus?” And he answered with a loud voice, “Why do you ask me concerning the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven on the right hand of the great power, and he will come on the clouds of heaven.”

The description of the Jews in this passage has led some commentators to question Hegesippus’ Jewish (prior to conversion) background, as he seems to make fundamental errors

¹¹⁰ Painter, *Just James*, 127.

with respect to the beliefs of the Jews in the first century.¹¹¹ The two most prominent among these concern the number of sects present in Jerusalem and the question of resurrection. Here, Hegesippus is at odds with Josephus, who describes at length the dominant groups within Palestine in the first century, namely the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, as well as the Zealots which he describes as the fourth philosophy.¹¹² While it is not impossible to assume that there may have been other Jewish groups active in the first century (the followers of John the Baptist might be considered one such group), we have to question whether or not they would have been of great enough significance to be remembered in a general sense by the time of Hegesippus' writing. In addition to the number of Jewish sects, Hegesippus also conveys the fact that none of them believed in the resurrection of the dead. Again, this is at odds with Josephus' account. Discussing the beliefs of the various sects, Josephus relates the following about the Pharisees,

¹¹¹ William Telfer ("Was Hegesippus a Jew?" *HTR* 53 [1960]: 143-53), comes to the conclusion that Hegesippus cannot, upon investigation, be placed within either Palestine or a Jewish background. Gerd Luedemann, in his investigation of the material, specifically in relation to Eusebius' assertion that Hegesippus was converted from "among the Hebrews" (*HE* 4.22.8), shows that while it is plausible that Hegesippus makes use of material connected with Jewish Christian traditions, "our consideration of this point must end with the insight that the issue of whether or not Hegesippus was a Jewish Christian or not probably cannot be decided on the basis of our present sources. It has only been established that (a) he belonged to a non-Catholic stream of Christianity that was characterized by the three features discussed above (...), (b) he repeatedly used traditions probably of Jewish-Christian origin, and (c) he had a canon already antiquated in his time, which consisted of the Law, the Prophets, and the Words of the Lord." See Gerd Luedemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 167. Painter (*Just James*, 127) argues that Luedemann makes too much of a generalization concerning whether or not there is adequate evidence particularly based on the confusion over the translation of Oblias. Painter goes on to say that "The fact that Oblias may be an inaccurate transliteration of the Hebrew for 'bulwark of the people' does not demonstrate that Hegesippus was not a Jewish Christian. If it did, we would have to conclude that Philo's misuse of Hebrew proved that he was not a Jew either."

¹¹² *Ant.* 13.5.9; 18.1.2; *War* 2.8.2.

They believe that souls have power to survive death and that there are rewards and punishments under the earth for those who have led lives of virtue or vice: eternal imprisonment is the lot of evil souls, while the good souls receive an easy passage to a new life (*Ant.* 18.1.3).

While Hegesippus mentions the Pharisees directly, he does not appear to know their beliefs. While the question of Hegesippus' background may or may not have a bearing on his interpretation of James, what is at stake is his historical reliability in relation to events in the first century and especially prior to 70 CE. Again, we return to the thesis of Bauckham that we have to look at the exegetical deductions in Hegesippus' work rather than seeing it as a purely historical document.¹¹³

Concerning the repeated questioning of James, we see that the question concerning "the gate of Jesus" is used by Hegesippus polemically against the Jewish authorities whom he interprets as being in error and responsible for the death of James. James' dialogue with the Jewish authorities (first the seven sects and then the scribes and Pharisees) sets up an opposition between the Jews and the Christians within the narratives that serves to place the blame for the fall of Jerusalem on the actions of the Jews. The specific content of the question may be related to the gates of righteousness referred to in Psalm 118:19-20, with James himself the righteous one, being the means by which many were turned to Jesus.¹¹⁴ The reference to the events taking place at the Passover acts as a link between the martyrdom of James and that of Jesus (and

¹¹³ Bauckham, "For What Offence Was James put to Death?" 215.

¹¹⁴ Bauckham, "For What Offence Was James put to Death?" 213.

Stephen), while his statements on the Son of Man, particularly with respect to Jesus' enthronement, echo those of Stephen.¹¹⁵

The quotation from Hegesippus concludes with the account of James' death at the hands of the Jewish authorities in *HE* 2.23.14-19.

And many were convinced and confessed at the testimony of James and said, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Then again the same Scribes and Pharisees said to one another, "We did wrong to provide Jesus with such testimony, but let us go up and throw him down that they may be afraid and not believe him." And they cried out saying, "Oh, oh, even the just one erred." And they fulfilled the Scripture written in Isaiah, "Let us take the just man for he is unprofitable to us. Yet they shall eat the fruit of their works." So they went up and threw down the Just, and they said to one another, "Let us stone James the Just," and they began to stone him since the fall had not killed him, but he turned and knelt saying, "I beseech thee, O Lord, God and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And while they were thus stoning him one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, the son of Rechabim, to whom Jeremiah the prophet bore witness, cried out saying "Stop! what are you doing? The Just is praying for you." And a certain young man among them, one of the laudrymen, took the club with which he used to beat out the clothes, and hit the Just on the head, and so he suffered martyrdom. And they buried him on the spot by the temple. He became a true witness both to Jews and to Greeks that Jesus is the Christ, and at once Vespasian began to besiege them." This account is given at length by Hegesippus but in agreement with Clement. Thus it seems that James was indeed a remarkable man and famous among all for his righteousness, so that the wise even of the Jews thought that this was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem immediately after his martyrdom, and that it happened for no other reason than the crime which they had committed against him.

¹¹⁵ According to Painter (*Just James*, 128), "the wording suggests a combination of Jesus' response to Caiaphas and the council (Matt 26:64) and Stephen's response at his martyrdom (Acts 7:56)." In contrast, Martin (*James*, li) has suggested that the relationship to Jesus and Stephen is of lesser importance than references to the prophets and Jewish Wisdom Literature. In his opinion, "quotations from the Old Testament and the later Jewish literature indicate how these earlier contexts influenced the account of James' death. The prophet Isaiah (3:10 ff.) pronounces judgement upon the leaders of the people for their evil counsel against the righteous (3:9)... In the Wisdom of Solomon, the righteous man is killed because he opposes the works of the ungodly (2:12; cf. 1:16)."

What is striking about this passage is that the martyrdom of James is more than a simple affair, employing, not one, but three different methods of execution.¹¹⁶ Of particular note is the reference to the final cause of James' death, the fuller's club. A number of explanations have been offered concerning its presence in the narrative. One is that it provides a link to the death of Jesus through wood as a means of execution.¹¹⁷ It is also possible to draw a link between the use of a fuller's club and the proscription in Bavli Sanhedrin 81b, which calls for the execution of a priest who has defiled the temple by way of clubbing.¹¹⁸ Thus, some scholars have taken this as proof of the fact that James at least acted in a priestly capacity, and that he transgressed some boundary within the temple. The transgression is often interpreted in relation to the portrayal of James as one who does not anoint himself or visit the baths, and hence performs temple service in an impure state.¹¹⁹ However, as we have ascertained, the description of the lifestyle of James as recounted by Hegesippus does not necessarily imply that he transgressed any boundary with respect to purity rules and the temple. We see a reinforcement also of James'

¹¹⁶ One is reminded of the legendary circumstances surrounding the death of Grigori Rasputin (1869-1916) who is said to have been unsuccessfully poisoned, following which he was shot before overpowering his assassins and escaping before ultimately drowning. Obviously this is where the comparisons end between these two legendary figures.

¹¹⁷ Bauckham draws a comparison with Isaiah being sawn in half with a wooden saw in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, a motif which aligns his death with that of Jesus through the use of a wooden instrument in the martyrdom narrative. Bauckham posits that this it is possible that the club fulfills the requisite condition of being made of wood. Bauckham, "For What Offence Was James put to Death?" 217-218. See also Eyal Regev, "Temple Concerns and High-Priestly Prosecutions from Peter to James: Between Narrative and History," *NTS* 56 (2009): 64-89 at 81.

¹¹⁸ "If a priest performed the Temple service whilst unclean, his brother priests do not charge him therewith at Beth Din, but the young priests take him out of the Temple court and split his skull with clubs" (trans. http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_81.html).

¹¹⁹ Painter, *Just James*, 116; Martin, *James* lii.

righteousness in 2.23.18 with the mention of the priests of the Rechabites who are lauded by God as examples of correct obedience and practice in Jeremiah 25.¹²⁰ As such, his ascetic practices can, and should, be interpreted as correct and not transgressive, at least insofar as they are portrayed by Hegesippus.

The problem again lies in distinguishing the historical kernel apart from legendary attribution and apologetic and polemical discourse.¹²¹ Hence, with respect to the manner of execution in particular, Martin states, “Multiple attempts at killing James (a fall, stoning, being beaten over the head) suggest that this is a legendary combination of motifs.”¹²² Thus we return to question of why, and not how, with the possibility that James was executed on a charge of blasphemy. A charge of blasphemy being brought against James by a high priest would find definite echoes in traditions surrounding the death of Jesus. We should also see links between their deaths in relation to the temple, on site for James, and following disruption (“cleansing”) within the temple for Jesus.¹²³ Bauckham is likely correct, at least insofar as we can discern

¹²⁰ The reference to the Rechabites is important as it reinforces the correct practice of James with respect to abstention in particular, while also underscoring the theme of obedience to God that is being transgressed by those who bring about his wrath and the destruction of Jerusalem.

¹²¹ Bauckham has argued that the real cause of the death of James may be linked to his Christological interpretation of the gate of Jesus in relation to Psalm 118. He sees this as possibly being authentic historical tradition, a claim that I would cast some doubt upon as it too conveniently fits within the constructed narrative. Bauckham, “For What Offence was James put to Death?” 218.

¹²² Martin, *James*, lii.

¹²³ See the article of Craig A. Evans, “Jesus and James Martyrs of the Temple” in *James the Just and Christian Origins* (; ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; NovTSup 96, Leiden: Brill, 1999) 233-249. Eyal Regev has put forth the argument that the persecutions of Peter, Paul, and Stephen as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles are representative of the perception that they held an anti-temple stance by the Jewish authorities. This is illustrated throughout the narrative of Luke-Acts with actions such as the aforementioned cleansing of the temple. Regev

from available sources, that the death of James occurred based on two possible charges: “that he was executed as a blasphemer or as a *maddiah*.”¹²⁴ Bauckham notes that there is no explicit reference to a formal charge in the account given by Hegesippus.¹²⁵ However, Hegesippus shows that James convinced more and more people to embrace the worship of Christ leading up to the martyrdom account. As such it is likely that, if there was a charge, it would be based on James being a *maddiah*, or one who leads the people astray or to worship other gods. This is, of course, contravened in Deuteronomy 13, which condemns those who lead others to the worship of other gods to death by stoning.¹²⁶

With all of this in mind, we can safely argue that the account given by Hegesippus either contributes or reinforces the following elements of tradition concerning James: 1) firstly, he is a permanent Nazirite who can be associated with Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist; 2) he is associated with the temple and the priesthood through the Levites in relation to links with Ezekiel 44 implied through his wearing only linen clothing and his Nazirite lifestyle; 3) the epithet “the Just” underscores a reputation for righteousness that is seen to have been accepted outside of his immediate circle of followers; 4) James acts in an intercessory capacity, praying for the people of Jerusalem and keeping the eventual destruction at bay during his lifetime; 5) if interpreted with respect to John the Baptist, his lifestyle does not contravene regulations on

shows a link between the anti-temple perception and the eventual martyrdom of James as portrayed in Josephus. Regev notes the locus of the temple in all of the major traditions following Josephus with respect to the martyrdom of James (Hegesippus, Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius). Regev, “Temple Concerns and High-Priestly Prosecutions,” 79.

¹²⁴ Bauckham, “For What Offence was James put to Death?” 229.

¹²⁵ Bauckham, “For What Offence Was James put to Death?” 230.

¹²⁶ Bauckham’s argument (“For What Offence was James put to Death?” 231) to this effect is convincing.

purity; and finally, 6) if there was a charge against James, the only possible interpretation is that he is a *maddiah*, an apostate who leads the people astray, which is illustrated in the above account.

The account of Hegesippus is closely mirrored in the *Second Apocalypse of James* (NHC V, 4). Again, we see James addressing a crowd and giving instruction, presumably within the temple complex. In contrast to *HE* 2.23.8-11, this account shows that James is unsuccessful in persuading the people with his message – “on that day all the [people] and the crowd were disturbed, and they showed that they had not been persuaded” (NHC V, 3 61, 1-4).¹²⁷ This is followed by a passage (61, 13-14), “Come, let us stone the Just One,” which directly reflects *HE* 2.23.16, “Let us stone James the Just.” The parallels in the martyrdom narrative continue:

And they were there and found him standing beside the columns of the temple beside the mighty corner stone. And they decided to throw him down from the height and they cast him down. And they [...] they [...]. They seized him and [struck] him as they dragged him upon the ground. They stretched him out, and placed a stone on his abdomen. They all placed their feet on him, saying, “You have erred!” Again they raised him up since he was alive, and made him dig a hole. They made him stand in it. After having covered him up to his abdomen, they stoned him in this manner (NHC V, 61, 1-61, 12).¹²⁸

The reference to James having erred is also found in *HE* 2.23.15, where the Pharisees declare that “the just man is also in error.” As well, the tradition of James being cast down from a height is paralleled in the two accounts, though in Hegesippus it is the pinnacle of the temple,

¹²⁷ Trans. Charles W. Hedrick, “The Second Apocalypse of James (V,4),” in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (ed. James M. Robinson; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 269-78. We see a similar theme of the people not being persuaded by the speech of the righteous man in the account of the death of Jeremiah in *4 Baruch*.

¹²⁸ Bauckham has noted ten points of comparison between the two accounts showing a literary relationship, though not necessarily dependence. See Bauckham, “For What Offence Was James Put To Death?” 203-4.

while in this account he is on the steps beside the cornerstone of the temple. The final manner of death changes in this account (recall that a fuller's club is used in Hegesippus) to stoning with James being placed in a pit and buried with his torso exposed.¹²⁹ Regev has shown that the portrayal of James' death finds a correlate in Mishna Sanhedrin 6.4, where "someone condemned to be stoned must be pushed down from a place that is twice the height of a man. If that does not kill him, a witness must drop a large stone on his chest..., and if that does not kill him, he must be literally stoned to death."¹³⁰ For Bauckham, the procedure marks a point of departure from the Hegesippian account and acts as evidence for a common Jewish-Christian source for the two texts: "It is much easier to believe that a source common to Hegesippus and the *Second Apocalypse of James* was informed about the proper procedure in stoning than that these details were added to the account of Hegesippus by the author of the *Apocalypse*, who shows no other sign of familiarity with Jewish practice."¹³¹ F. Stanley Jones argues contrarily that there is no real evidence to suggest an independent source, and that it is likely, and by far the simplest explanation, that the *Second Apocalypse of James* was dependent on Hegesippus.¹³²

¹²⁹ This procedure, as described, is probably accurate in the ancient world. Stoning in this manner is still practiced in certain countries, including Iran and Yemen.

¹³⁰ Regev, "Temple Concerns and High-Priestly Prosecutions," 81.

¹³¹ Richard Bauckham, "James and Jesus," in *The Brother of Jesus*, 100-37.

¹³² Jones wonders "if the theory of a common source for Hegesippus and the *Second Apocalypse of James* is not just an outmoded thesis that has been passed along unquestioned for too long?" Jones is arguing specifically against the view of Pratscher, who has argued for independent sources based partly on the parallel mentions of "stairs" in relation to the martyrdom accounts in Hegesippus and the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions 1*, which is not present in the martyrdom narrative of the *Apocalypse*. Even so, Jones argues that this is not sufficient evidence for independent source material as there is a reference to "stairs" earlier in the *Apocalypse*. See Jones, "The Martyrdom of James," 332-33. See also Wilhelm Pratscher, *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobstradition* (Forschungen

A related tradition is likely also found in the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*, where we see a similar motif of James being angrily interrupted while speaking and then thrown from a set of stairs (1.70.8-1.71.1). Here we see that it is Saul, as representative of the Jewish people, who creates the uproar that leads to James being attacked:

“Much blood is shed; there is confused flight, in the midst of which that enemy attacked James, and threw him headlong from the top of the steps; and supposing him to be dead, he cared not to inflict further violence upon him. But our friends lifted him up, for they were both more numerous and more powerful than the others.”¹³³

In this account, however, James only appears to be dead and is thus subsequently saved from martyrdom. Even with these divergences in the narrative, Jones has shown that it is probably also based on the Hegesippan account.¹³⁴ Jones’ argument in relation to the dependence of the *Recognitions* and the *Second Apocalypse of James* on Hegesippus is convincing as it removes any necessity of an idealized lost source and leaves us with a simple explanation.

As was the case with Hegesippus, the evidence on James reported by Clement is problematic in that the works in question are no longer extant except as quoted in Eusebius’ *Historia Ecclesiastica* (2.1.2-5).¹³⁵ In this section of his work Eusebius quotes, one directly after

zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 139; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 252-55.

¹³³ Translation taken from *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; 8 vols.; Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1885-1886), 8:95-96.

¹³⁴ Jones, “The Martyrdom of James,” 329-30.

¹³⁵ The lost works of Clement are a source of frustration for some scholars. John Ferguson devotes a chapter to them in his monograph, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York: Twayne, 1974), 179-91. For an introduction to the life and work of Clement, see Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), as

the other, two passages of a work by Clement known as *Hypotyposes* (“Outlines”). The reference to the martyrdom of James is very short and occurs at 2.1.5 where Eusebius tells us

Now there were two Jameses, one, James the Just, who was thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple and beaten to death with a fuller’s club, and the other, he who was beheaded.¹³⁶

The quotation of book seven, though relatively brief, gives an account echoing that of Hegesippus, concerning the martyrdom of James. It is interesting that in Clement’s account there is no reference to James being stoned as we saw in Josephus and Hegesippus. Instead there is simply the reference to him being thrown from the parapet and then beaten with the fuller’s club which we find in Hegesippus. The elements common to Clement and Hegesippus would seem to suggest a common source tradition. This is soundly stated by F. Stanley Jones, who points out that while “Eusebius seems to think that Clement is independent of Hegesippus... most modern scholars believe that Clement is, in fact, dependent on Hegesippus.”¹³⁷ For Jones, “[p]articularly the shared mention of James being thrown down from the pinnacle points to dependency,” while “further evidence is found in the common reference to the fuller’s club and to the plurality of Jameses.”¹³⁸ There is however, a certain amount of disagreement over these points. Martin makes it clear that there are different dimensions to the type of death being

well as Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford Theological Monographs; London: Oxford University Press, 1971). Concerning Clement’s understanding of the terms of familial relationships, particularly with respect to the transmission of knowledge among Christians and intra-Christian polemics, see Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

¹³⁶ The above passage is quoted from Clement’s Book 7.

¹³⁷ Jones, “The Martyrdom of James,” 328.

¹³⁸ Jones, “The Martyrdom of James,” 328.

portrayed in the two accounts: “Hegesippus portrays it as a single blow,” which is contrasted with Clement who “leaves the reader with the impression of a prolonged beating.”¹³⁹ This leads to the conclusion for Martin that “Clement probably does not draw on Hegesippus,” though he suggests that they had access to a common tradition.¹⁴⁰ This position is softened somewhat by Painter, who says that “good case can be made for the independence of both Hegesippus and Josephus,” while adding that “it could be that he was dependent on an earlier and simpler form of tradition now found in Hegesippus.”¹⁴¹ Regardless of the possibilities of independence, I am inclined to agree with Jones that the traditions concerning the martyrdom of James, as it is transmitted by Clement and the majority of Christian literature from the second century onward, are likely to be understood as dependent on Hegesippus.¹⁴²

1.3. The Death of James and the Fall of Jerusalem in Origen, Eusebius, and 4 *Baruch*

Following directly on Clement (in both locale and chronology), the work of Origen, who was writing in the early third century, includes important references to James in *Contra Celsum*

¹³⁹ Martin, *James*, lv. This point is also made by Hartin (*James of Jerusalem*, 121), who states that “The impression given by Clement is that James’ death did not occur swiftly: ‘He was beaten to death’... which implies that he endured a long beating.”

¹⁴⁰ Martin, *James*, lv.

¹⁴¹ Painter, *Just James*, 117.

¹⁴² This is further explored when looking at the martyrdom accounts in the two apocalypses of James from Nag Hammadi Codex V.

(1.47; 2:13) and the *Commentary on Matthew* (10.17; 13.55).¹⁴³ In *Contra Celsum* 1.47 we find that Origen expands upon and clarifies the work of Josephus with respect to his reference to

James:

I would like to have told Celsus, when he represented the Jew as in some way accepting John as a Baptist in baptizing Jesus, that a man who lived not long after John and Jesus recorded that John was a Baptist who baptized for the remission of sins. For Josephus in the eighteenth book of the Jewish antiquities bears witness that John was a Baptist and promised purification to people who were baptized. The same author although he did not believe in Jesus as Christ, sought for the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. He ought to have said that the plot against Jesus was the reason why these catastrophes came upon the people, because they had killed the prophesied Christ; however, although unconscious of it, he is not far from the truth when he says that these disasters befell the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was a brother of 'Jesus the so-called Christ', since they had killed him who was a very righteous man. This is the James whom Paul, the true disciple of Jesus, says that he saw, describing him as the Lord's brother, not referring so much to their blood relationship or common upbringing as to his moral life and understanding. If therefore he says that the destruction of Jerusalem happened because of James, would it not be more reasonable to say that this happened on account of Jesus the Christ? His divinity is testified by great numbers of churches, which consist of men converted from the flood of sins and who are dependent on the Creator and refer every decision to His pleasure.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ For an excellent commentary on the life and work of Origen, see the work of Henri Crouzel, *Origen* (A.S. Worrall trans.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989). A good collection of essays has also been published by Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (eds.), *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy* (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 1; Notre Dame, In.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988). A brief, though informative, commentary can also be found in the work of John Anthony McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004). For an overview of Origen's understanding and interpretation of scripture and theology, see Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture According to Origen* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁴ Translation taken from Henry Chadwick (trans.) *Origen: Contra Celsum* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

Read at face value, this passage seems to be an interrogation of the work of Josephus in response to Celsus. We see a similar reference to the work of Josephus in Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17, which interrogates Matthew 13:55.

And James is he whom Paul says in the Epistle to the Galatians that he saw, "But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." And to so great a reputation among the people for righteousness did this James rise, that Flavius Josephus, who wrote the *Antiquities of the Jews* in twenty books, when wishing to exhibit the cause why the people suffered so great misfortunes that even the temple was razed to the ground, said, that these things happened to them in accordance with the wrath of God in consequence of the things which they had dared to do against James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ. And the wonderful thing is, that, though he did not accept Jesus as Christ, he yet gave testimony that the righteousness of James was so great; and he says that the people thought that they had suffered these things because of James. And Jude, who wrote a letter of few lines, it is true, but filled with the healthful words of heavenly grace, said in the preface, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James." With regard to Joseph and Simon we have nothing to tell.¹⁴⁵

As we can see, referring back to our discussion of Josephus, there is no reference in *Antiquities* relating James to the destruction of Jerusalem.¹⁴⁶ In fact, in *The Jewish War* Josephus gives a number of rationalizations for the destruction of Jerusalem that deny the

¹⁴⁵ Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10. 17 (ANF 9:425).

¹⁴⁶ Pierre-Antoine Bernheim has noted three scholarly rationalizations explaining the absence of the attribution of the fall of Jerusalem to the death of James in the extant work of Josephus: "either Origen is wrong, or he has read a manuscript interpolated by a scribe, or Josephus in fact connected the death of James with the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple." Bernheim argues based on the evidence that it is likely that the text of Josephus did in fact at one point consider the death of James to be at least one of the factors which provoked divine wrath and the fall of Jerusalem. He bases this on the idea that James was held in high esteem, even by Josephus himself, and that the "death of such a figure was prejudicial to the opponents of the struggle against Rome." See Pierre-Antoine Bernheim, *James, Brother of Jesus* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1997), 250, 252. We should note that Bernheim's account is a thorough and fair reading of the material, especially when considering that it is written from the perspective of a non-specialist of early Christianity.

possibility of the Jews being abandoned by their God while legitimizing the occupation on the part of the Romans. This is plain to see with respect to the following passages.

In *War* 4.5.2.318 Josephus tells us:

I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her wall, and the ruin of her affairs, whereon they saw their high priest, and the procurer of their preservation, slain in the midst of their city. He was on other accounts also a venerable, and a very just man; and besides the grandeur of that nobility, and dignity, and honor of which he was possessed, he had been a lover of a kind of parity, even with regard to the meanest of the people; he was a prodigious lover of liberty, and an admirer of a democracy in government; and did ever prefer the public welfare before his own advantage, and preferred peace above all things; for he was thoroughly sensible that the Romans were not to be conquered.¹⁴⁷

Here we see an obvious contrast to the manner in which the Jewish authorities are portrayed in *Antiquities*, particularly the figure of the younger Ananus, whose legitimacy as high priest is questioned in that text. Here though, Ananus is being touted as a figure of high esteem.

We see further evidence of Josephus' view on the causes of the destruction of Jerusalem in *War* 4.5.2.323:

I cannot but think that it was because God had doomed this city to destruction, as a polluted city, and was resolved to purge his sanctuary by fire, that he cut off these their great defenders and well-wishers, while those that a little before had worn the sacred garments, and had presided over the public worship, and had been esteemed venerable by those that dwelt on the whole habitable earth when they came into our city, were cast out naked, and seen to be the food of dogs and wild beasts.

¹⁴⁷ Translations of Josephus' *Jewish War* taken from Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*.

Here it is clearly stated that God has decided to destroy the city due to its being polluted. Of interest is the fact that the pollution seems to be both religious and political. What we are really seeing in the work of Josephus is a multi-levelled critique that encompasses both the ruling elite and the rebellious factions that instigated the conflict with the Romans. The pollution being referred to in the above passage is referenced in the speech of Jesus and Ananus (*War* 1.163) and is compounded by the violation of Jewish laws concerning the treatment of corpses (*War* 4.316-317). Mason argues that “the aristocratic priest Josephus claims that these outrages against temple and priestly tradition were the causes of God’s punishment.”¹⁴⁸

With respect to the two sides of Ananus that we see portrayed in *War* and *Antiquities*, we have to keep in mind the factors that were motivating Josephus. The most important of these being to show the Roman occupation of Judea as positive and legitimate. As such, says Mason, in *War* “Ananus functions as a mouthpiece for Josephus’ own views on the revolt. In this way, the high priests serve to establish *War*’s thesis concerning the non-traditional, un-Jewish character of the rebels.”¹⁴⁹ Returning to the portrayal of Ananus in *Antiquities* again, we see a demonstration of Josephus’ “thesis that violation of Jewish laws leads to disaster.”¹⁵⁰

The two passages cited above as examples could also include *War* 5.1.4 where Josephus laments the fall of Jerusalem, as well as 4.5.1.305-313 which describes the killing of the temple guards by the zealots. The overall message that we have to take away from the rationalizations given for the destruction of Jerusalem by Josephus, is that it was due to corruption within

¹⁴⁸ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 122.

¹⁴⁹ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 122.

¹⁵⁰ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 124.

official positions, rebelliousness by a number of factions, and primarily based on violations of Jewish law. For all intents and purposes, Josephus is establishing the first century fall of Jerusalem within the pattern of exile and return that became the dominant theodicy concerning the defeat of the Jewish army and its God during the Babylonian exile of the sixth century BCE. What we do not find is any reference to the death of James as a catalyst for God to allow the destruction of Jerusalem.

The passages from *Contra Celsum* (1.47) and the *Commentary on Matthew* (10.17), which are quoted again in the work of Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica* II.23.20), while reliant on Josephus, are possibly taken from a manuscript source that is no longer extant. If that is the case, the text used by Origen may have been subject to some Christian interpolation. This view is put forth by Emile Schürer, in whose opinion “it is extremely probable that Origen did not read this passage in his text of Josephus; for just where one would have expected it, he betrays no knowledge of it.”¹⁵¹ Schürer goes on to dispute whether or not any of the passages in Josephus concerning Jesus or James could be genuine. For Schürer,

the very statements that we have in reference to James prove that Josephus has been interpolated by Christian hands. For Origen, in his text of Josephus, read a passage about James which is to be found in none of our manuscripts, which therefore, without doubt, was a single instance of a Christian interpolation not carried over into the vulgar text of Josephus.¹⁵²

Schürer’s thesis is, thus, that any of these references, whether in the extant texts of Josephus or interrogated by Origen, are the work of Christian editors. We see a different view

¹⁵¹ Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, 2nd Ed.* (trans. John MacPherson et al.; 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1891), 2:146.

¹⁵² Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, 2:149.

on the question of interpolation of the passage expressed in the work of Robert Eisenman. He posits that there were in fact two versions of the “notice of the circumstances surrounding James’ death,” and goes on to claim that there were two versions of the death of James in the work of Josephus that Eusebius and Origen would have been familiar with.¹⁵³ Since Eusebius only quotes the version in *Antiquities* that is extant in the surviving manuscripts, Eisenman believes that,

this leaves the version of the *Jewish War* which Origen, Eusebius and possibly Jerome must have seen in the library at Caesarea. Origen was outraged by what he saw and hastened to correct Josephus’ version of the facts, insisting that he should have said Jerusalem fell on account of the death of Jesus. This in itself would probably explain the ultimate disappearance of this passage from all extant versions of Josephus’ works.¹⁵⁴

Eisenman’s chief error with respect to this material is the assumption that the references are authentic to Josephus. If in fact there was a version of either *War* or *Antiquities* that included a direct reference to the death of James as the cause of the fall of Jerusalem, then it was almost definitely inserted in transmission by Christian editors. The theory of Christian interpolation of the work of Josephus is widely accepted with respect to *Antiquities* 18.3.3, which, in the extant versions, describes Jesus in terms that would not have been employed by a Pharisaic Roman Jew like Josephus.¹⁵⁵ In this respect we should make particular note of John P. Meier’s

¹⁵³ Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus*, 65.

¹⁵⁴ Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus*, 65.

¹⁵⁵ “About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up

reconstruction, which attempts to remove any language that does not seem to come from the authentic pen of Josephus.¹⁵⁶ With respect to the reference to James in *Antiquities*, there does not seem to be any evidence of a Christian hand working on the text. This is evidenced by the

thei affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvellous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called, after him, has still to this day not disappeared” (*Ant.* 18.3.3). We see variations in the tenth century transmission of Agapius, titled *Kitab al-'Unwan*, which reads: “At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.”

¹⁵⁶ At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who receive the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. He was the Messiah. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life. For the prophets of God had prophesied these and myriads of other marvelous things about him. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians (named after him) has not died out (*Ant.* 18.3.3). In Meier’s reconstruction, we can see what he considers as the authentic words of Josephus underlined, while the remaining text is determined to be the product of Christian interpolation. See John P. Meier, “Jesus in Josephus: A Modest Proposal,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 76-103. The idea of Jesus as a wise man who is killed unjustly and whose death is understood as the cause of the fall of Jerusalem is also found in some non-Christian sources. Of note is the letter written by Mara Bar Serapion to his son in the years following the destruction of Jerusalem where he states, “For what else have we to say, when wise men are forcibly dragged by the hands of tyrants, and their wisdom is taken captive by calumny, and they are oppressed in their intelligence without defence? For what advantage did the Athenians gain by the murder of Socrates, the recompense of which they received in famine and pestilence? Or the people of Samos by the burning of Pythagoras, because in one hour their country was entirely covered with sand? Or the Jews by the death of their wise king, because from that same time their kingdom was taken away?” (translation from William Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum: Containing Remains of Bardesan, Meliton, Ambrose and Mara Bar Serapion* [London: Rivingtons, 1855], 73-74). Unfortunately we cannot accurately date this letter except to state that it shows a tradition outside of either Judaism or Christianity sometime after the fall of the temple. For a discussion of the letter and pertinent scholarship, see David Rensberger, “Reconsidering the Letter of Mara Bar Serapion,” in *Aramaic in Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Eric M. Meyers and Paul V.M. Flesher; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 3-22. The interest in this letter for our present study lies in the fact that it is likely an early pagan source attributing the cause of the fall of Jerusalem to the execution of Jesus rather than of James.

manner in which Josephus refers to Jesus as the “one who was called Christ.” A Christian interpolator would likely have modified the text removing the qualification, and simply referring to Jesus as the messiah while adding a qualification about the relationship between James and Jesus, thus rendering James as “the one who is called the brother of Jesus.”

Returning to the text, as we find it in Origen’s work and later quoted in Eusebius, there are some important elements that require discussion. As mentioned, there is no reference to James as the cause of the fall of Jerusalem in the extant work of Josephus. Even so, Origen is reacting to what he read and interpreted in this manner. In his discussion of this material H. St. John Thackeray problematizes Origen’s reading of Josephus:

Now we have a fuller, and less probably, Christian account of the martyrdom of James the Just given us by the second century writer Hegesippus; the victim is there represented as being hurled from the roof of the temple before being stoned and beaten to death, and the story ends with the words “And immediately Vespasian besieged them.” Origen, it seems, has blundered and attributed to Josephus what was really written by Hegesippus.¹⁵⁷

Viewed in this manner, it would be possible to assume that Origen was drawing a conclusion based on the assertion that “first the death of James and then, *immediately*, the siege, might be thought to imply a causal relationship.”¹⁵⁸ Painter goes on to ask the obvious question, “But how could a scholar as careful as Origen mistake Hegesippus for Josephus?” In Painter’s view it seems likely that Origen based the interpretation on other passages in Josephus that draw a causal link between the death of a righteous person and retribution on the part of God. Regardless, for Origen, in his interpretation, Josephus is correct in the attribution of retribution

¹⁵⁷ H. St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1967), 135.

¹⁵⁸ Painter, *Just James*, 207.

for a crime but misstates whose death was the real catalyst. We see this echoed and expanded upon in Eusebius' quotation (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.7.7-9; 3.11.1), where "he argued that the siege of Jerusalem was delayed (following the death of Jesus) because of the presence of James and the other apostles in Jerusalem." Hence, we see the viewpoints reconciled, allowing for the death of James to act as a catalyst while preserving the death of Jesus as the cause.¹⁵⁹

While Origen's argument in response to Josephus is fierce and indignant, he was not alone in reinterpreting Josephus' account of the fall of Jerusalem in relation to the death of a righteous man. Another notable example exists in the *Paralipomena of Jeremiah (4 Baruch)*, written in the second century, possibly around the time of the Bar Kochba revolt, wherein we see a restatement of themes from the accounts of Josephus and Hegesippus surrounding the destruction of the city.¹⁶⁰ In this case, however, the text is written pseudonymously with the themes of conflict and divine intervention being retro-projected back into the period of the Babylonian exile. The text of *4 Baruch* is generally understood to be written from a Jewish perspective, making use of traditions found throughout the Hebrew bible. Even so, there is strong evidence of Christian redaction, particularly in 9.10-32,¹⁶¹ and at this point in its transmission history should be considered as a Christian text. The parallels between the

¹⁵⁹ Painter, *Just James*, 207.

¹⁶⁰ Jens Herzer notes the various difficulties associated with dating the text. He places the text, based on factors including messianism, and the repetition of the number 66 (taken as the number of years following the destruction of the temple) around the year 136 CE, though he allows for a fairly wide span of time due to the number of traditions taken from *2 Baruch*, which leads to the conclusion that the text cannot have been composed earlier than 70 CE. See Jens Herzer, *4 Baruch (Paraleipomena Jeremiou)* (Writing from the Greco-Roman World 22; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), xxx-xxxvi.

¹⁶¹ Herzer, *4 Baruch*, xxix.

portrayal of Jeremiah and the first destruction of Jerusalem in the text, and the accounts of the martyrdom of James and the second destruction in Josephus and Hegesippus are striking. The concerns put forth in *4 Baruch* are tied closely to the destruction of 70 CE and show according to Jones that “a main concern of *4 Baruch* is the corrosive effect of contact with Rome on the Jewish people and the consequent need for radical separation from the conquerors in order to preserve the holiness of God’s chosen people.”¹⁶² Even so, Jones has noted that, in relation to *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* (both of which share traditions or act as sources), “*4 Baruch* is perhaps the least confrontational of all the texts vis-à-vis Rome.”¹⁶³ In fact, while the other texts are very concerned with the eventual punishment of the conquerors,¹⁶⁴ *4 Baruch* is more concerned with the question of why God chose to punish his chosen people. The opening chapters of the text show the familiar exile and return motif wherein the chosen people are to be punished for their sins. The text reads:

It came to pass, when the children of Israel were taken captive by the king of the Chaldeans, (that) God spoke to Jeremiah, “Jeremiah, my chosen one, get up (and) depart from this city, you and Baruch, since I am going to destroy it because of the multitude of the sins of those who dwell in it. For your prayers are like a solid pillar in its midst and like an iron wall surrounding it. Now, then, get up and depart before the host of the Chaldeans surrounds it!” And Jeremiah answered, saying, “I beseech you, O Lord, permit me, your servant, to speak in your presence.” And the Lord said to him, “Speak, my chosen one, Jeremiah.” And Jeremiah spoke, saying, “O Lord Almighty, would you hand over the chosen city into the hands of the Chaldeans so that the king with the multitude of his people will boast and say, ‘I gained power over God’s holy city!’? No, my Lord, but if it is your will, let it be done away with by your (own) hands!” And the Lord said to Jeremiah, “Because you are my chosen one: get up and depart from this city, you

¹⁶² Kenneth R. Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: Apocalypses and Related Pseudepigrapha* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 151; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 155.

¹⁶³ Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 154.

¹⁶⁴ Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 154.

and Baruch, for I am going to destroy it because of the multitude of the sins of those who dwell in it. For neither the king nor his host will be able to enter it unless I first open its gates (1.1-8).¹⁶⁵

Interpretations of the text have tended to focus on the dynamic that existed between Rome and the various Jewish authorities, who either stressed accommodation with the Romans in the face of destruction, such as Josephus (as with the original reading of Jeremiah), or acted against accommodation, which seems to be stressed in the text at hand. Jones has noted that Josephus drew a link between his contemporary circumstances and those presented in Jeremiah.¹⁶⁶ Josephus, in his attempts to promote a policy of loyalty to Rome in a Jeremianic sense, was also met with hostility by listeners.¹⁶⁷ As we have seen, Josephus blames the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple firmly on corruption, lawlessness, and rebelliousness on the part of the Jewish people themselves. Thus, there is a likely link between the figure of Jeremiah in *4 Baruch* and the discourse circulating at the time and in the writings of Josephus.

Taking a step outside of a strictly Jewish background, we might also posit that the figure of Jeremiah and the destruction of Jerusalem have been reconfigured through a Christian lens, specifically relating to the martyrdom of James. The text shows that God did not allow Jerusalem to be destroyed until Jeremiah had left. We can draw a direct parallel to the destruction of Jerusalem as discussed by Origen (*Commentary on Mathew X. 17*) and the ending

¹⁶⁵ Trans. Herzer, *4 Baruch*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Specifically, the destruction of Jerusalem that comes about due to the weakness of Zedekiah, who does not follow the path of accommodation encouraged by Jeremiah (Jer. 27:8-11, 12-22; 38:17-23). See Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 158.

¹⁶⁷ Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 158-159.

of Hegesippus' account in *HE* 2.23.19. In these accounts we are told that the destruction of Jerusalem follows immediately upon the death of James, whose presence has kept God from destroying the city. In this sense Jeremiah acts as a bulwark against the destruction on the part of the Chaldeans, a term that Jens Herzer employs in order to characterize the role of Jeremiah.¹⁶⁸ Thus, in 1:2 "it is not the prayers, but the prophet himself who becomes the bulwark against the rebellious people and its leadership."¹⁶⁹ This strongly correlates with the prayers of James, which act in an intercessory capacity on behalf of the people in *HE* 2.23.6.

Of particular note in the text of *4 Baruch* is the fact that Jeremiah dies not once, but twice in the narrative, only remaining dead for three days the first time. Of interest for our present study is the second death recorded in the text. Following his resurrection, Jeremiah speaks to the people of Jerusalem telling them to glorify God and Christ. In the midst of this (9:19-21) the people turn on Jeremiah and call for him to be stoned. The stoning of the priest and prophet parallels the account in Hegesippus (*HE* 2.23.16-17). Again, we see that the people of Jerusalem are portrayed as stoning a righteous man during his ministry. The interesting reversal that we see in the text is that in this case the one who acts as a bulwark, whose departure is related to the destruction of the temple, is only stoned during the period of restoration. Now, looking at the parallels and the various traditions of the martyrdom of James, we have to ask a simple question of whether or not it is possible that the Hegesippian account, which is the likely source of later

¹⁶⁸ Herzer, *4 Baruch*, 47. Herzer shows that the reference to a wall and an iron pillar can be seen in the Masoretic text of Jeremiah 1:18.

¹⁶⁹ Herzer, *4 Baruch*, 47-48.

accounts of the martyrdom of James, might be based, at least in part, on the text of *4 Baruch*. Dependence in this case is largely a question of how we date the two texts.

The dating of *4 Baruch* has been the source of considerable debate. Many scholars have adopted the view that it was written circa 136 CE, based on the motif of Abimelech sleeping for 66 years that is then added to the date 70 CE for the destruction of the temple.¹⁷⁰ Herzer has argued for a slightly earlier date, noting that Abimelech's inability to recognize the Jerusalem that he encounters may be an allusion to the architectural work and changes made by Hadrian following the renaming of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina in the wake of the diaspora revolt under Trajan (115-117 CE). Herzer shows that this would have been in the consciousness of the author in the years leading up to the Bar Kochba revolt of 132-135 CE, and as such he places the text around 130 CE.¹⁷¹ Stepping away from a precise dating, Jones argues that "none of the theories positing a compositional date in the years around the Bar Kokhba revolt is convincing. Such precision is impossible to attain from the evidence in the text."¹⁷² Instead he argues that it is sufficient to show a composition in the wake of the destruction of the temple and during the Roman period.¹⁷³ For our purposes it will suffice to place the composition of the text within the early part of the second century and likely prior to, or at 136 at the latest. If Hegesippus can be

¹⁷⁰ See Rendell J. Harris, *The Rest of the Words of Baruch: A Christian Apocalypse of the Year 136 AD* (London: Clay, 1889), 12-15. See also George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishna* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 315. Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 149 n.10, notes that Nickelsburg does not necessarily commit to the dating.

¹⁷¹ Herzer, *4 Baruch*, xxxii-xxxiv.

¹⁷² Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 155.

¹⁷³ Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 155.

dated to the late second century (Telfer argues around 180 CE and contemporary with Irenaeus),¹⁷⁴ then it is possible, knowing that Christian interaction with *4 Baruch* occurred very early, to posit the possibility that Hegesippus may have used the Christian text as the basis for his account of the martyrdom of James the Just.

Conclusions:

Throughout the course of this chapter I have explored the dominant portrayals of James and, in particular, the question of how one might interpret his martyrdom. I have shown that the death of James cannot be attributed to any question of his purity, at least not with respect to his portrayal in the sources that we have available to us. Instead, when looking at the account in Hegesippus, it becomes apparent that the identity of James as a permanent Nazirite is constructed in relation to important figures in the history of Judaism who acted in an intercessory capacity as judges over Israel: John the Baptist, Samson, and Samuel. In addition, I have noted that while the martyrdom as described in Hegesippus is in accordance with the penalty for a priest who defiles the temple as described in Bavli Sanhedin 81b (specifically the beating with the fuller's club), it is unlikely that James can be interpreted as having ever been in a state of ritual impurity. Instead, I have concluded that the martyrdom of James would likely have been due to his leading the people astray as a maddiah which would necessitate his death by stoning according to Deuteronomy 13. Finally, I have come to the conclusion that the death of James in Hegesippus should be understood as based on the martyrdom of Jeremiah in *4*

¹⁷⁴ Telfer, "Was Hegesippus a Jew?" 153.

Baruch, a text where we see a similar association between the death of the prophet and the destruction of Jerusalem as punishment of the Jewish people.

Chapter 2: Community Concerns, the Episcopate of James, and the Brothers of Jesus

In this chapter I continue my interrogation of how the early sources have constructed the figure of James and the author's choice of him as protagonist in *I Apoc. Jas.* that I began in chapter one. This includes an exploration of the "episcopal" role of James, his relationship with the apostles, and his succession as leader following his brother Jesus. Here the larger question has to do with the authority of James as a leader. In order to demonstrate how the use of James underscores a theme of counter-apostolic authority, I look at the extant early Christian and late antique material describing the figure and role of James. There is a large body of tradition about James that would have been available to the author of the text, including historical sources such as Josephus, Hegesippus, and Eusebius, as well as canonical sources, in particular the descriptions of the Jerusalem community in the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul, apocryphal literature (*Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, *Protoevangelium of James*), and, of course, texts from Nag Hammadi that are associated with Gnosticism (*Gospel of Thomas*, *Apocryphon of James*, *Second Apocalypse of James*).

The present chapter also includes a brief discussion of how we might view James in relation to other "brothers" of Jesus and how this affects our interpretation of the text. To that end, I argue that the interplay and juxtaposition of James and the figure of Thomas as we see in the *Gospel of Thomas* and Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* betray an association within the early church and the successive centuries between James and Thomas Didymus (the twin).

2.1. The Episcopate of James in Jerusalem

Unlike many of the sources already mentioned, such as Josephus, whose work gives us invaluable insight into the recent history of his own time, Eusebius' major contribution to our present study lies not in his skill as a historian, but rather in his role as a compiler.¹⁷⁵ *Historia Ecclesiastica* is our best source for the earlier (2nd and 3rd century) work of Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, while also including a fair amount of material gleaned from the work of Josephus. In the former cases, though, the work in question is only preserved in the work of Eusebius. We have already discussed, at length in chapter one, what Eusebius recounts concerning the portrayals of James by Hegesippus, Clement, and Origen. As such, we will turn to the elements that have no clear provenance or expand on material known from other extant sources. With respect to the material surrounding the Jerusalem church and in particular, the figure of James, Eusebius made use of the work of at least six authors and one anonymous list of bishops.¹⁷⁶ The authors include Paul, Luke (Acts), Aristo of Pella,¹⁷⁷ Hegesippus, Clement of

¹⁷⁵ This is certainly the argument of Ernst Schwartz, "Eusebios," *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 6 (1907): 1395, a view against which Robert M. Grant (*Eusebius as Church Historian*, 23) argues, "Schwartz claimed that 'history' meant just a compilation of traditional material. Sometimes this is the case, but in Eusebius' *History* it involves something more. One can turn back to it after discussing something else... the importance of the narrative is clear when we consider that one of Eusebius' favourite words in relation to history is διήγησις. A διήγημα, wrote the rhetorician Hermogenes, is an account of just one event, whereas a διήγησις is concerned with many events, not just one."

¹⁷⁶ Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 48.

¹⁷⁷ Aristo of Pella is, according to Grant, the source for the account of the flight to Pella (*HE* 3.4.3). This is possible, although Eusebius does not credit Aristo at that point, only making reference to his work in *HE* 4.6.4, and specifically with respect to the Bar Kochba revolt and the renaming of Jerusalem. However, Grant (*Eusebius as Church Historian*, 48) is probably correct in stating that the flight to Pella cannot necessarily be connected with source material in Hegesippus.

Alexandria, and Julius Africanus. To this we add a list of bishops of Jerusalem beginning with James the brother of Jesus and containing 116 names.¹⁷⁸

Overall, in Eusebius' work we see that the early discourse on the church accords a sense of primacy to the episcopate of Jerusalem, even over against that of Rome. It is simply the case that, as we will see when looking at Acts, the Jerusalem community was the core, or headquarters, for the earliest missions. As such, all of the sources for James material included in Eusebius that we have discussed accord primacy to the figure of James as the first bishop of the central community at Jerusalem. We should note, however, that these references are not necessarily explicit, but instead portray an exalted status, wherein he is accorded deference by the Apostles. In discussing Eusebius' *Chronicle 2*, Martin has noted the earliest extant reference to James as bishop of Jerusalem as well as the use of ἀδελφὸς θεοῦ (“brother of God”) that confers an exalted status upon James.¹⁷⁹ Painter has shown that this may be related to a fragment from Hippolytus which refers to James as both ἀδελφὸς θεοῦ and bishop of Jerusalem.¹⁸⁰ This is somewhat at odds with Eusebius' agenda which attempts (not always successfully) to create a sense of continuity between episcopal authority and apostolic succession/authority. We should note that James is not referred to explicitly as the “bishop” of Jerusalem in the work of Josephus, Hegesippus, or Origen. It is assumed that he was the leader of the community due to the position of prominence that these authors place him in. The quotation from Clement does

¹⁷⁸ Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 48-50. The list of bishops is found in *HE* 4.5.1-5.

¹⁷⁹ Martin, *James*, lviii. For a commentary on the *Chronicle* of Eusebius, see Alden A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1979).

¹⁸⁰ Painter, *Just James*, 106 n. 2.

refer to the episcopacy of James, but qualifies it based on the authority of the apostles (Peter, James of Zebedee, and John), leading to a conclusion allowing for a type of equilibrium between apostolic authority and episcopal authority. In Eusebius' account the idea that the episcopate is somehow beholden to the apostles (particularly the triumvirate of Peter, James, and John) is assumed in *HE 2.1.2*.

At the same time also James, who was called the brother of the Lord, inasmuch as the latter too was styled the child of Joseph, and Joseph was called the father of Christ, for the Virgin was betrothed to him when, before they came together, she was discovered to have conceived by the Holy Spirit, as the sacred writing of the Gospels teaches – this same James, to whom the men of old had also given the surname of Just for his excellence of virtue, is narrated to have been the first elected to the throne of the bishopric of the Church in Jerusalem.

This follows immediately upon the martyrdom of Stephen in the narrative, a device which serves to separate James' ascension to the episcopacy from possible appointment by Jesus himself. This is followed by the quotation from the work of Clement, which, while it only refers to James becoming leader following the ascension, shows that he is invested with authority by the apostles (*HE 2.1.3*).¹⁸¹ We see a similar statement underscoring apostolic authority with respect to the election of James in 2.23.1 where, again, this time leading into the account of Hegesippus, Eusebius refers to “James, the brother of the Lord, to whom the episcopal seat at Jerusalem had been entrusted by the apostles.” However, 3.4.2 simply states that James was “the first that had attained the episcopal seat in Jerusalem after the ascension of our Saviour,” without the qualification of apostolic intervention. The line between the apostles and James

¹⁸¹ Painter, *Just James*, 106; Martin, *James*, lviii-lix

becomes somewhat blurred in Eusebius' account as he refers to Paul in Galatians 1:19 saying "Other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother" (*HE* 2.1.4).

With respect to the traditions surrounding the fall of Jerusalem, Eusebius recounts the reports of earlier authors faithfully, but from the Origenist perspective that the fall must be based on the death of Christ not as divine retribution for the martyrdom of James. We see this illustrated in 3.7.7-9.

It would be right to add a possible confirmation of the kindness of beneficent Providence. For forty whole years it suspended their destruction, after their crime against the Christ, and during all of them many of the apostles and disciples and James himself, who is called the Lord's brother, the first bishop of the city, still survived in this world. By their dwelling in Jerusalem, they afforded, as it were, a strong protection to the place.

It is not surprising that Eusebius would take this perspective as he was highly influenced by the work of Origen, particularly through his teacher Pamphilus.¹⁸² The above passage gives insight into Eusebius' motives by reinforcing the perspective of Origen, whose works he had attempted to rehabilitate with Pamphilus, as well as restating that James and the apostles acted as a bulwark against the destruction, referring back to his quote of Hegesippus. We should note that there is no qualification concerning James' episcopal authority, although there is an implied question about the fraternal relationship between James and Jesus.

The succession of the episcopal authority is shown following the death of James and the fall of Jerusalem in 3.11.1, where the question arises as to who is worthy to succeed James.

¹⁸² We know that Eusebius was involved in the composition of Pamphilus' *Defence of Origen*. See the "Introduction" to G.A. Williamson (trans.), *Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (New York: New York University Press, 1966), 11-12.

Again, we see that Eusebius does not show succession to be either automatic or predetermined.

He states:

After the martyrdom of James and the capture of Jerusalem which immediately followed, the story goes that those of the Apostles and of the disciple of the Lord who were still alive came together from every place with those who were, humanly speaking of the family of the Lord, or many of them were then still alive, and they all took counsel together as to whom they ought to adjudge worthy to succeed James, and all unanimously decided that Simeon the son of Clopas, whom the scripture of the Gospel also mentions, was worthy of the throne of the diocese there. He was, so it is said, a cousin of the Saviour, for Hegesippus relates that Clopas was the brother of Joseph.

While we will look at the question of episcopal succession by relatives of Jesus in section 2.3, it is important to note that Eusebius feels it necessary to qualify the relationship between James and Symeon.¹⁸³ In doing so he distances Symeon from James, which has the effect of further subsuming the episcopacy under apostolic authority, again showing the influence of Clement and Origen. We see a further expansion on the succession in 4.5.1-5, where Eusebius tells us that there were fifteen bishops of Jerusalem leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and that (not surprisingly) they were all short lived. The most important element that Eusebius relates with respect to the list of bishops is that “the bishops of the circumcision ceased at this time” (*HE* 4.5.3). Underscored throughout the narrative, is the fact that the Jews were at fault for the destruction of Jerusalem, the death of Jesus, the martyrdom of Stephen, and the death of James. By referring to this as the end of the episcopate of the circumcision,

¹⁸³ The differing theories on the relationship between Jesus and those referred to as brothers and sisters is discussed in section 2.4 below. We see the same formulation of succession and qualification of election and lineage in *HE* 4.22.4: “After James the Just had suffered martyrdom for the same reason as the Lord, Symeon, his cousin, the son of Clopas was appointed bishop, whom they all proposed because he was another cousin of the Lord.” Here Eusebius informs us that he is quoting the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians.

Eusebius distances succession and authority within the Church from the Jerusalem community and particularly from the figure of James, further reinforcing that direct authority in the Church of his time is derived through apostolic succession (an element that he has attempted to establish even within the Jerusalem community).¹⁸⁴

The idea of direct apostolic succession is reinforced by the Clementine material used by Eusebius in *HE* 2.1.2-5. In this section of his work Eusebius quotes Clement's *Hypotyposes*.

Clement in the sixth book of the *Hypotyposes* adduces the following: "For," he says, "Peter and James and John after the ascension of the Saviour did not struggle for glory, because they had previously been given honour by the Saviour, but chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem." The same writer in the seventh book of the same work says in addition this about him, "After the resurrection the Lord gave the tradition of knowledge to James the Just and John and Peter, these gave it to the other Apostles and the other Apostles to the seventy, of whom Barnabas also was one. Now there were two Jameses, one James the Just who was thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple and beaten to death with a fuller's club, and the other he who was beheaded."

In the above cited passages, we see that Clement (as quoted in Eusebius) attributes the naming of James as bishop to what Painter describes as a triumvirate consisting of Peter, James (the son of Zebedee), and John. As a consequence, "the authority of James...is brought under

¹⁸⁴ There is an apparent contradiction concerning the episcopacy at 7.19.1 which states, "The chair of James, who first received the episcopate of the church at Jerusalem from the Saviour himself and the apostles, and who, as the divine records show, was called a brother of Christ, has been preserved until now, the brethren who have followed him in succession there exhibiting clearly to all the reverence which both those of old times and those of our own day maintained and do maintain for holy men on account of their piety." It seems as though Eusebius is referring literally to a physical chair that has been preserved. Even so, the question of those who succeeded him is unclear, particularly as he earlier referred to the end of the episcopacy of the circumcision with the fall of Jerusalem.

the overarching authority of Peter, James, and John.”¹⁸⁵ There is no question of the authority of James, or his having been named as first bishop of Jerusalem.¹⁸⁶ Since Eusebius is quoting Clement, there is no reason to assume a redaction of the passage on his part.¹⁸⁷ As we will see when examining the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, there is a tradition of direct appointment of James by Jesus that is being brought into opposition in this passage.¹⁸⁸ Even so, “there is no tradition in which the risen Jesus authorizes a successor other than James.”¹⁸⁹ As such, if we understand, as put forth by Painter, that the passage of Clement is unredacted by Eusebius, then we have clear evidence of an attempt on the part of proto-Orthodox Christians to harmonize the succession of James, who becomes associated with Torah observant Christianity, with the emerging Church’s conception of direct apostolic succession.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Painter, *Just James*, 114. The triumvirate that we see in Clement is likely an attempt on his part to reconcile apostolic authority with the pillars of the Jerusalem community referred to by Paul in Galatians 2:8. For Clement, these pillars (which are understood to include James the brother of Jesus) would consist of Peter and the sons of Zebedee James and John.

¹⁸⁶ We should note that Eusebius also makes use of a traditional list of bishops in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* at 4.5.1-5. We should also make it clear, as it is pointed out by Martin (*James*, liv), that “James is first called ‘bishop’ ... by Clement.”

¹⁸⁷ Painter (*Just James*, 114) argues this convincingly in contrast to Luedemann (*Opposition to Paul*, 162), who prefers to think that this the references to election on the part of the apostles betray tendencies of Eusebian redaction.

¹⁸⁸ Painter, *Just James*, 114.

¹⁸⁹ Painter, *Just James*, 114.

¹⁹⁰ This idea is further explored in chapter four, which looks at the genre of the *First Apocalypse of James* as a commission narrative.

Martin also asserts the possibility that the election by the apostles may be a consequence of “an anti-Gnostic reaction.”¹⁹¹

Returning to Eusebius, a number of things should be plainly obvious looking at the traditions concerning James that he recorded: 1) James is referred to repeatedly by the epithet, “the Just”; 2) the martyrdom of James, and later that of Symeon, is equated with the deaths of Jesus and Stephen; 3) there is never any point at which James is not referred to as the first bishop of Jerusalem; 4) there is a bias, possibly Origenist, toward apostolic succession and an attempt to legitimize subsuming the episcopate of Jerusalem under the authority of the apostles; 5) this Origenist approach (shown by Eusebius in the work of Clement) is underscored in the qualification that while the fall of Jerusalem is linked to the death of James, his martyrdom was a catalyst but not the cause; 6) the attempt to distance Church authority from the Jerusalem episcopate and the Christian Jews likely lies, at least in part, with the repeated argument that the Jews were responsible for the deaths of the earliest martyrs.¹⁹²

Returning briefly to the influence of Origen, there are two additional points to be gleaned from the aforementioned passages in *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17 and *Contra Celsum* 1.47. The first is simply a restatement of the righteousness of James which is found in both passages,

¹⁹¹ Martin, *James*, liv.

¹⁹² With respect to the above cited passages in Eusebius, Painter comments, “Much in these sections deals with the leadership of James and the succession of leadership within the family of Jesus. Nowhere does Eusebius suggest that Peter was the first leader of the Jerusalem church. Indeed, in spite of the modern fashion of reading the initial Petrine leadership of the Jerusalem church out of Acts, support for this view is lacking in the early church. This should warn modern readers to look again at Acts to see if the conclusion of Petrine leadership is not a misreading of Acts.” See John Painter, “James and Peter: Models of Leadership and Mission,” in *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul*, 143-210 at 154-55.

but with the epithet “the Just” being emphasized particularly in *Contra Celsum*. Secondly, both passages engage the question of Jesus’ siblings. In the *Commentary on Matthew* (10.17), there is a discussion of the brothers and sisters of Jesus, along with a statement that Jesus “was, as they supposed, the son of Joseph and Mary, the brother of four, and of the others – the women – as well,” while in *Contra Celsum* (1.47) it is explicitly stated by Origen that “Paul, the true disciple of Jesus, says that he saw him, describing him as the Lord’s brother, not referring so much to their blood-relationship, or common upbringing, as to his moral life and understanding.”

This question of the relationship between James, the brothers, and Jesus was a hot topic among the church fathers, particularly with regard to the conflicts surrounding the ideal of perpetual virginity that was being progressively applied to Mary. Origen’s approach to the family of Jesus may have been influenced by the *Protoevangelium of James*, likely written in the second half of the second century, which is concerned primarily with the preservation of the virginity of Mary. For this reason Painter posits that “there are no grounds for thinking that traditions asserting that Mary bore no other children after Jesus are historically reliable.”¹⁹³ This tradition takes a step away from the infancy stories as portrayed in Matthew and Luke, asserting instead that there is no blood relationship between Jesus and his siblings, who are instead the children of Joseph by a previous marriage. Hence, step-brothers and sisters. This is the view of Epiphanius (*Panarion* 78.7.1-78.8.2), and was popular until its rejection by Jerome based on the view that it was not supported by the gospel accounts. In order to preserve the virginity of Mary, and likely based on the account in the *Protoevangelium*, Epiphanius first “stresses Joseph’s advanced age at the time Mary was allotted to him. Second he asserts that the relationship was

¹⁹³ Painter, *Just James*, 199.

not intended to be a consummated marriage.”¹⁹⁴ Again, this entire approach is a rationalization intended only to preserve the emerging tradition of the perpetual virginity of Mary.¹⁹⁵ Jerome’s argument, which is taken up also by Augustine, attempts to separate Jesus further from those who might be interpreted as half-brothers. Jerome, advocating asceticism, particularly with respect to virginity, was also opposed to the possibility that Mary may have had sexual relations following the birth of Jesus. In order to accomplish this, he argued that all of the figures referred to as siblings were actually first cousins and that any repetition of names referred to the same people.¹⁹⁶ The most plausible of the theories put forth within the early history of the church is that of Helvidius. Unfortunately the work of Helvidius was suppressed, largely due to the efforts of Jerome. As such, all of our information concerning the work of Helvidius comes from polemical reports.¹⁹⁷ The most important point made by Helvidius is that the gospel accounts imply that Joseph and Mary had other children (Matthew 1:18, 25; Luke 2:7) and that it is not necessary for Mary to have remained a virgin following the birth of Jesus.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Painter, *Just James*, 210-211. Epiphanius’ view is largely a retort to those who would argue that Mary had sexual relations with Joseph after the birth of Jesus.

¹⁹⁵ See Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 25-30; Painter, *Just James*, 208-13; idem, “Who Was James?” 13-16.

¹⁹⁶ Painter (“Who Was James?” 18) rightly points out that Jerome fails to take into account “the small number of Jewish names in use in Judea in this period and the popularity of certain names like Jacob and Mary, Judas, Joseph, and Symeon.”

¹⁹⁷ Jerome, *Against Helvidius*.

¹⁹⁸ Painter (*Just James*, 214-15) has discerned five main points in the work of Helvidius: “1) He argued that Matt 1:18, 25 imply that subsequent to the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary had other children... 2) He appealed to Luke 2:7 which refers to Jesus as Mary’s “firstborn son”... arguing that it implied subsequent children. 3) He listed the various passages in which the evangelists mention and sometimes name the brothers and sisters of Jesus. 4) He

With minor exceptions, there is little material available within the the canon that we can use to formulate an image of James. The exception lies, of course, in the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul. The gospel accounts themselves provide only very brief glimpses into interactions between Jesus and his family, and have generally been interpreted in a negative light. There is also a sense of confusion in the gospel narratives as to which figures are meant at various times based on the limited and common nature of many of the names of members of the early Christian community.¹⁹⁹ The main problem of the confusion of names in the texts lies in the fact that it leads to conflation of characters who should otherwise have been distinct, for example the conflation that we see between Mary Magdalene and the woman with the alabaster jar (Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3; Luke 7:37). In the case of James the Just, this conflation of characters has led to him being identified with the son of Alphaeus and James “the less.”

appealed to older Western tradition in which the brothers and sisters of Jesus had been mentioned in a way consistent with his views and specified Tertullian and Victorinus of Pettau. 5) He argued that was no dishonor that Mary was a real wife to Joseph since all the patriarchs had been married men and that child-bearing was a participation in the divine creativity.” Painter also elucidates these same points in “Who Was James?” 21.

¹⁹⁹ Howard Clark Kee has noted that “the Greek version of the name, *Iakobos*, is obviously a transliteration from the Hebrew, Jacob, and is used in the New Testament with reference to at least five different men: (1) James, a disciple of Jesus, the son of Zebedee and brother of the disciple John (Mark 1:19-20; 3:17); (2) James, the son of Alphaeus and a disciple of Jesus (Mark 3:18; Acts 1:13); (3) James, the father of Jesus’ disciple, Judas (Luke 6:18); (4) James, the brother of Jesus, who was initially hostile to him and his message (Mark 3:21, 31-35), but who became a follower of Jesus, a witness to his resurrection (1 Cor 15:7), and a leader in the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:1-12); (5) the author of the letter of James (James 1:1).” See Howard Clark Kee, *The Beginnings of Christianity: An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 321. To this list I would add the references to James as Jude’s brother in the Epistle of Jude 1:1, the reference to a James known as “the less,” “the little,” or possibly “the younger” in Mark 15:40, and a reference to James who is simply referred to in relation to his mother Mary in Luke 24:10.

Within the gospel narratives we see a number of references to the brothers of Jesus (without qualification), but only two specific references to James as the brother of Jesus (Mark 6:1-6; Matthew 13:54-58).²⁰⁰ These passages have generally been taken as proof that James (and the rest of Jesus' family) did not follow him during his ministry. Chilton says that "the Gospels, when they refer to James at all, do so with no great sympathy. He is listed at the head of Jesus' brothers in the Synoptic Gospels, but in a statement of a crowd at Nazareth which is skeptical that one whose family they know can be responsible for wonders."²⁰¹ Chilton draws the conclusion from the accounts of James and the brothers in the synoptics that Jesus and James were at odds with one another during this period, and that the gospel accounts seem to marginalize and distance the brothers of Jesus.²⁰² This must be viewed, particularly in the Markan account, in light of how the other followers of Jesus are portrayed. With respect to Mark (3:31-35), Bernheim argues that "it cannot in fact be denied that Mark emphasizes the scepticism, not to say the opposition, of Jesus' family, who think that he has lost his mind."²⁰³

²⁰⁰ The parallel passage in Luke (4:16-30) mentions Joseph as Jesus' father, but does not include James.

²⁰¹ Bruce Chilton, "Introduction," in *James the Just and Christian Origins*, 3-15 at 7-8.

²⁰² Chilton, "Introduction," 8.

²⁰³ Bernheim, *James, Brother of Jesus*, 74. Crossan offers a counterpoint regarding the possibility of Markan redaction in relation to the portrayal of Jesus and his family. According to Crossan, "Mark has redacted the tradition in iii 21-35 and vi 1-6 and possibly in xiii 40,47; xvi 1 as well so that there is severe opposition between Jesus and his relatives: they have blasphemed against the holy Spirit; they have dishonored Jesus and are without faith in him; and they are directly involved in the failure of the Jerusalem community to receive his resurrectional summons to Galilee. The Markan condemnation reflects the polemic of the Markan community against the Jerusalem mother-church not only as a doctrinal debate (against the relatives) but also as a jurisdictional debate (against the relatives) as well." See John Dominic Crossan, "Mark and the Relatives of Jesus," in *The Composition of Mark's Gospel: Selected Studies from Novum Testamentum* (ed. David E. Orton; Brill Readers in Biblical Studies 3; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 52-84 at 84. In an article responding to Crossan, Jan Lambrecht interrogates the

Thompson argues that “there seems no possible reason for the inclusion of this passage in this narrative than to stress the failure of Jesus to influence his family and his family’s total failure to understand him.”²⁰⁴ The familial accusation is only found in the Markan narrative, underscoring the possibility that the difficult reading of the text may show it to be authentic early material. The view of Jesus’ family as portrayed in Mark may however simply be in accordance with Mark’s portrayal of the disciples of Jesus in general, who are shown repeatedly to be confused concerning Jesus. Witherington draws a similar conclusion about the unbelief of the family from the fourth gospel, particularly John 7, where he says that “is it quite plain that Jesus’ brothers did not fully believe in or follow him before his death.”²⁰⁵ Witherington further reinforces the motif of estrangement between Jesus and his brothers by highlighting their absence at the time of the crucifixion.²⁰⁶ In response I would argue that John is representative of a relatively late tradition with respect to the canonical gospels, and that due to its sense of elevated Christology, there is a tendency to try to distance Jesus (as the Christ) from his earthly family with the exception of Mary. With respect to the conspicuous absence of brothers at the time of his death and burial, we need only posit the possibility (especially in the case of James) that the

same material but arriving at different conclusions. For Lambrecht, the unbelief of the relatives acts as a narrative device inserted into the text by the author of Mark and should not be regarded as historical. As for the reason, he argues that the disciples were always the first followers in the view of the Markan community. “The relatives of Jesus, however, do not stand on the side of the disciples; they belong to the unbelieving Israel whom Jesus had to invite and to call first (f. vii 27) before salvation was offered to the Gentiles. They neither understood nor accepted Jesus. And Mark did not want his readers to identify themselves with these relatives.” See Jan Lambrecht S.J., “The Relatives of Jesus in Mark,” in *The Composition of Mark’s Gospel*, 85-102 at 100-101.

²⁰⁴ Mary R. Thompson, *The Role of Disbelief in Mark: A New Approach to the Second Gospel* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989) 124.

²⁰⁵ Shanks and Witherington, *The Brother of Jesus*, 98.

²⁰⁶ Shanks and Witherington, *The Brother of Jesus*, 105.

restrictions concerning contact with corpses (or anything deemed unclean) for those under the vow of the Nazir may have played a part. We have discussed the various legends concerning James' Nazirite vow; to take a step further, it is not impossible to posit the possibility that the other brothers of Jesus could conceivably have been under a similar vow at the time of his execution. This issue of estrangement is taken up by Bauckham, who shows that the portrayal of the family in John can be read both to signify that they were unbelievers and to show that they were early followers of Jesus.²⁰⁷ Bauckham cites John 2:12 as a natural point from which to assume that the brothers of Jesus were among the disciples who accompanied him to Jerusalem. Leading into John 7, then we can assume that it was expected that Jesus would travel with his brothers. While there is some question in 7:5 about whether or not they were believers, "John has given us to understand that the *brothers* of Jesus have been among his followers, at least from time to time, for the greater part of the ministry."²⁰⁸

Following the gospel narratives in the Acts of the Apostles we see that the brothers of Jesus are numbered among those present in Jerusalem immediately following the ascension (1:14).²⁰⁹ This passage presents a problem if one assumes that the brothers of Jesus were not

²⁰⁷ Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 108.

²⁰⁸ Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 108. Bauckham's argument concerning the possible unbelief of the brothers in 7:5, is to show that while they were followers, they might be equated with those that Jesus laments in 4:48 need to see signs and wonders to believe. As such, "from the evangelist's perspective they seriously misunderstand Jesus and lack adequate faith in him. But this does not mean that from their own perspective they are not among Jesus' followers" (p. 107).

²⁰⁹ The brothers are not named, though it has been posited that one of the Jameses named in 1:13 could be James the Just. In his commentary on Acts, Lüdemann simply states, "The tradition that brothers of Jesus were members of the earliest community cannot be made more specific. It is part of Luke's general knowledge." See Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989),

followers prior to the resurrection. Witherington has proposed a solution based on the formula of resurrection appearances in 1 Corinthians, where Paul recounts the ordering of appearances by the risen Christ in apparent chronological order: first to Peter, then the twelve, followed by five hundred others, and only then James, and afterward Paul. According to Witherington,

if the list is in chronological order, then it is possible that the appearance to James came later, possibly in Galilee. Then again, if James was in Jerusalem for Passover, more likely it happened in Jerusalem. We do not know. But it is noteworthy that James is distinguished from both the Twelve and the apostles when it comes to appearances, which suggests that he was not originally part of either group... It appears that James, like Paul, was a convert to the Jesus movement because at some juncture he saw the risen Jesus, for nothing prior to Easter can explain his having become such a follower of Jesus, much less a leader of Jesus' followers.²¹⁰

In this instance Witherington makes a well-reasoned argument, but one that is flawed on two counts. The first is that it operates on the assumption that the brothers of Jesus were not part of the movement prior to Easter. This, as we have discussed, is open to debate. Secondly, Witherington assumes that Paul is narrating the correct sequence of appearances rather than laying out the sequence in a manner that emphasizes the named figures (Peter, James, and Paul). This also assumes that Paul knew the correct ordering, or when James became a follower, which is impossible to determine. In contrast, the more likely, and simple, explanation is that the brothers of Jesus (including James) were followers during his ministry. There is no evidence that James or the brothers underwent any type of radical conversion experience that we can

29. Also of note should be Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1979), and Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955).

²¹⁰ Shanks and Witherington, *The Brother of Jesus*, 107-8.

equate with Paul.²¹¹ Along this line of reasoning Scott McKnight also argues for an inclusive interpretation of the brothers of Jesus from an early period.

From Acts 1:14 and 12:17 we can infer that the brothers of Jesus were both at the chronological basis of the Jerusalem churches as well as the core leaders of that movement. If this is the case, it seems highly unlikely that the brothers of Jesus did not believe until after the resurrection unless, at the same time, one accords the Jerusalem believers a capacity to grant them both immediate forgiveness and authority!²¹²

Thus, it is only logical to assume that James and the brothers were members of the community who were held in high standing prior to the Easter events.²¹³

In Acts not only do we see evidence that the brothers were followers of Jesus, but also that they rose to a level of prominence within the fledgling Christian community. The question of James' interaction with gentiles is often the focus of discussions concerning his role in Acts, particularly with regard to the circumcisionist faction. At this point, however, our concern lies with the question of ultimate authority within the Jerusalem community. We see James mentioned by name three times in Acts (12:17; 15:13; 21:18). In each of these instances he is portrayed, in contrast to Peter, as being in the position of overall leadership of the community. In fact, we see on two of the aforementioned occasions that Peter acts in a subordinate fashion toward James. The first instance in 12:17, which narrates the events following Peter's arrest and miraculous release (12:1-11), shows that Peter's concern is to tell James and the brothers of

²¹¹ Painter, "James and Peter," 155.

²¹² Scott McKnight, "A Parting Within the Way: Jesus and James on Israel and Purity," in *James the Just and Christian Origins*, 83-129 at 99.

²¹³ It is likely that they were not included among the twelve, but instead held a different status due to familial relations. This does not suggest that they were of lesser status, in fact, the opposite would more probable.

what has occurred. What is essential here is that Peter is reporting back to them concerning his experience, as a subordinate to his superiors.²¹⁴ In 15:1-21, there is a restatement of the authority of James (not called the brother of Jesus, but whose identity can be assumed), who presides over the counsel of Jerusalem. Following the arguments of the gentile and circumcisionist factions it is James who pronounces judgement concerning the “gentile problem” in 15:19.²¹⁵ Within this account we see Peter arguing his case before James (15:6-11) as a subordinate of high standing rather than one who is of equal status.²¹⁶ Finally, 21:17-19

²¹⁴ Painter (“James and Peter,” 156) discusses the question of leadership at a point that many have concluded marks the passing of leadership from Peter to James. His argument, as follows, is convincing and betrays a common sense approach to the narrative. “The transition of authority from Peter to James is often taken to be implied by Acts 12:17. It is understood as a message to James telling him to take over the leadership. Yet if James were already the leader, nothing would be more natural than for Peter to report back to him. This reading is at least as plausible as the one that takes Peter’s message to be a passing on of the authority of leadership. If this is what Luke meant to convey, why does Peter not resume leadership on his return to Jerusalem? In Acts 15 James is portrayed as the leader of the Jerusalem Church even though Peter was then present again.”

²¹⁵ Chilton argues that the judgment of James is meant to show that gentile believers do not flagrantly ignore the law (Torah) which is well known and wide spread. They are put into a very direct juxtaposition with their surrounding environment with respect to prohibitions against eating blood, food set before idols, fornication, etc., in order to underscore the fact that they are “similar to Israel and supportive of Israel in their distinction from the Hellenistic world at large... Because the Mosaic law is well known, James insists that believers, even gentile believers, are not to live in flagrant violation of what Moses enjoined.” He goes on to say that “James’ prohibitions as presented in Acts are designed to show that believing gentiles honor the law, which is commonly read, without actually changing their status as gentiles.” See Bruce Chilton, “James in Relation to Peter, Paul, and the Remembrance of Jesus,” in *The Brother of Jesus*, 138-159 at 144-45.

²¹⁶ His status is underscored as equal to Paul and Barnabas as the only named figures to offer testimony. For a discussion of the politics surrounding the various factions, particularly in opposition to Paul, see Richard J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), particularly Chapter 5, “The Non Roman Opponents of Paul,” 70-82. Bauckham offers an analysis of traditions surrounding the speech of James (Acts 15:16-18) with a focus on the quotation of Amos (9:11-12) and the variations that James employs. He draws the conclusion that the speech is likely authentic to James or draws directly on traditions that can be linked back to James. See Richard Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles (Acts 15:13-21)” in *History*,

describing the arrival of Paul (and presumably Luke, since it is narrated in the first person at this point) in Jerusalem. The text states clearly that “the next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present” (Acts 21:18). The apostles are not mentioned at this point (not even Peter), though they may be among the unnamed elders who are present. Instead, the status of Paul and his missionary work is underscored by Luke through the presence of James, the leader of the community. Painter has noted that there has been a tendency to try to show a transition in leadership within the Jerusalem church wherein Peter, due to his seemingly high status, would have originally been in the position of leadership. In this reading, we would see a transition in leadership following Peter’s arrest (Acts 12:17).²¹⁷ However, there is nothing in the narrative to suggest that Peter ever held a position of leadership. Again, the narrative serves continually to reinforce, over against the view of Clement, that the earliest leader of the developing Christian community was James.²¹⁸

Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts (ed. Ben Witherington III; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 154-84. The argument that Peter acts in a subordinate capacity to James can also be stated in relation to the incident at Antioch which is related by Paul in Galatians 2:11-13. In this instance, Peter’s act of separating himself from the gentiles might be understood as showing deference to James through his representatives. For a discussion of the differences between Acts and Paul’s account of the same events, see Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 172.

²¹⁷ Painter, *Just James*, 43. We see evidence of this tradition, as we have discussed, in *HE* 3.19.1-20.7.

²¹⁸ Painter (*Just James*, 44) makes the argument that Peter, as with Paul, should be identified with missionary activity rather than placed in a leadership role. He goes on to say that “Acts explicitly names no single leader of the Jerusalem church. The conclusion that Peter was the leader at first is the consequence of the influence of an interpretive tradition that has no support in relation to Jerusalem. Nothing in Acts supports this view. Peter’s prominence is in terms of his missionary activity in relation to the community at large rather than as leader of the church community. Indeed the notion that Peter was the leader runs contrary to tradition concerning the Jerusalem church.”

There has been a tendency in scholarship (and theological reflection) to construct a division or opposition between the figures of James and Paul based on their respective roles and affiliations concerning the question of mission to Jews or gentiles. As a consequence, the expectation would be that Paul might downplay the role of James as leader of the developing church.²¹⁹ In his letters, there are only four instances where Paul makes reference to James, either explicitly or as one of the brothers of Jesus. These are found in Galatians (1:19; 2:9-13) and 1 Corinthians (9:5; 15:3-8). Even though there are only a very few references, each one underscores James' position of authority in the community, though without an explicit statement of leadership.

The statements in 1 Corinthians add very little to the discourse about James. In 9:5 there is a reference to the brothers of Jesus, the context of which has to do with the rights of apostles, though there is very little actually stated about the brothers themselves. This is followed in 15:3-8 with a list of those who received resurrection appearances. Of those included in the list, only

²¹⁹ James D.G. Dunn offers an interesting view of the varying dynamic of leadership, with a particular emphasis on the development of the canon and building bridges between the different forms of early Christianity. "If bridge building is a central reason for the canonicity of many of the New Testament writings, then perhaps this explains more fully why it was Peter who became the focal point of unity in the great church. For Peter was probably in fact and effect the bridge-man (pontifex maximus!) who did more than any other to hold together the diversity of first century Christianity. James the brother of Jesus and Paul, the two other most prominent leading figures in first century Christianity, were too much identified with their respective 'brands' of Christianity, at least in the eyes of Christians at the opposite ends of this particular spectrum. But Peter, as shown particularly by the Antioch episode in Gal 2, had both a care to hold firm to his Jewish heritage, which Paul lacked, and an openness to the demands of developing Christianity, which James lacked." See James D.G. Dunn, "Has the Canon a Continuing Function?" in *The Canon Debate* (ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 558-79 at 577. In this regard, Dunn is placing too much emphasis on the role of Peter who the evidence shows clearly was not the leader of the emerging Christian church during the lifetime of James. The incident at Antioch should be read as acquiescence rather than a concerted effort to unify disputing factions.

James and Peter are explicitly named. This serves to place them in positions of prominence based on Paul's own identification with apostolic authority and his criteria for apostleship which hinges upon having seen the risen Christ.

The mentions of James in Galatians shed more light on how he was perceived by Paul and offer insight into the narrative of Acts. In Gal 1:19 Paul describes going to Jerusalem to meet with Peter. Of this period, he says that he saw none of the other apostles with the exception of James the brother of the Lord. The important element is that he refers to James as Jesus' brother without qualification, and considers him as an apostle. We can take from this that at an early period, at least in Paul's view, there was no distinction being drawn between James and the apostles. In fact, he is being counted among them. At this point James is not mentioned as being the leader of the community (something that may have simply been assumed) and the focus was a visit to Peter.²²⁰ This does not necessarily imply that Peter was the leader of the community, although it has been interpreted in this manner. Instead, the focus on Peter can be explained in terms of Paul's own missionary activity. James was the leader in Jerusalem, but Peter was central to the concerted efforts at missionizing and expanding the movement. Painter explains the ambiguity as such, "Cephas might have been chosen as the person to be seen because he was perceived to be more sympathetic to his cause and Paul considered him to be the leading exponent of the Jerusalem 'mission.' James, as the leader, was too important to be missed and Cephas may have effected an introduction for Paul."²²¹ Thus, since Paul understood his role as

²²⁰ See Painter, "James and Peter," 166.

²²¹ Painter, "James and Peter," 167.

serving in a missionary capacity, it stands to reason that he would be concerned with interacting with Peter who was at the center of such activity.²²²

In Gal 2:9-13 we see a restatement of the incident at Antioch which led to a pronouncement on the gentile question at the council of Jerusalem by James (Acts 15:1-21). It has been noted that there are various inconsistencies between the Pauline and Lukan accounts of the material in question (related to issues of chronology among other things).²²³ These issues are less important for our picture of James than simply looking at how Paul himself perceives and portrays his interactions with James (and Peter).²²⁴ Acts 2:9 refers explicitly to James, Peter, and John as the pillars of the community. It is notable that James, and not Peter, is named first in this list. The placement of James over against Peter can be rationalized on two levels. The first is that, as we see in the previous verse (2:8), Paul equates Peter as being his counterpart

²²² Lüdemann (*Opposition to Paul*, 42-43) would disagree with this assertion. In discussing Paul's assertion of apostleship and the association with Jerusalem in Gal. 1:17-19 he shows that Paul is "making clear his relationship to Jerusalem, and that means in particular to those who were apostles before him (v. 17). When he adds the final clause in v. 19 it is thus readily understandable that in addition to the apostle Peter he had also seen James, the context making it more likely that James is here considered an apostle than the opposite. For all that, Peter still seems to have been the leading authority among the apostles at the time of Paul's first visit to Jerusalem. That is suggested in the first place by his role as the reorganizer of the circle of the Twelve which in part became the group of apostles... In the next place the above conclusion can be drawn from the purpose of Paul's trip which understandably was to get acquainted with the leading figure of the earliest church." Contrast this with Gal 2:8, "For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles" (NIV). There can really be no question that Paul understood Peter as holding a position equivalent to his own among the Jews.

²²³ For a discussion of common elements and historical reliability of core traditions in the two accounts of the incident at Antioch, Acts 15 and Galatians 2, see Gerd Lüdemann and Tom Hall, *The Acts of the Apostles: What Really Happened in the Earliest Days of the Church* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2005), 190-91.

²²⁴ Concerning the various roles of Peter, James, and Paul, as well as their interactions, see Painter, "James and Peter."

missionizing to the Jews. It may also be a deliberate denigration of Peter, against whom Paul writes polemically in 2:10-13.

Paul's account of the incident at Antioch wherein Peter turns his back on table fellowship with gentile converts following the arrival of some men from James tells us a lot about the dynamic between these three figures. Already in the epistle, Paul has shown his interaction with and acceptance by the prominent figures in the Christian community. Then in 2:8 he places himself on an equal level with Peter. Finally in 2:10-13 we see that Paul offers a comparison between himself and Peter, something that could not be done without the establishment of the fact that they were on equal terms. It is notable that while the men are said to be from James, Paul does not openly oppose James in the narrative, instead attacking Peter for his actions. This would seem to imply that Paul and James do not share an equal status.²²⁵ The actions of Peter are also telling. Though it is conjecture, I would argue that Peter's actions denote an effort to avoid conflict with James through his representatives. That these representatives of James are concerned with the question of purity is useful in identifying a trend toward a law (Torah) based Christian observance associated with James.²²⁶ With this in mind, we can surmise that Peter was motivated to abandon table fellowship that would not have been acceptable for observant Jews

²²⁵ For a discussion of the honor/shame dynamic between Peter and Paul in Gal 2:11-13, see Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of Ancient Personality* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 48-50. Malina and Neyrey posit that Paul is progressively showing first inclusion among the elites of the community, followed by equal status with a prominent member (Peter), and finally a comparison wherein he is seen to be the superior and more honorable person.

²²⁶ McKnight, "A Parting Within the Way," 98-111.

due to the status of James as leader of the community and one who was of a greater status than himself.²²⁷

The epistle of Jude does not represent a rich source of traditions concerning James. However, the opening of the letter reads “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James” (Jude 1:1, NIV). There is no doubt among scholars that the James being referred to is James the Just (the brother of Jesus), and that Jude is then the same that is included among the brothers of Jesus in Mark 6:3; Matthew 13:55-56.²²⁸ The opening denotes that Jude is a servant (slave) to Jesus, thus placing himself in a prominent position relative to the one holding the greatest amount of honor in early Christian society.²²⁹ The mention that he is the brother of James is an indication of both his status and that of James. James would not be mentioned if he were not both recognizable and considered honorable and authoritative for the intended readers of the letter. As such, this is no mere passing reference, but rather a deliberate attempt to link the

²²⁷ With respect to the questions of status and honor/shame in first century Palestine, see the work of Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), particularly chapter 4, “The Perception of Limited Good: Maintaining One’s Social Status,” where he argues that honor can be equated with other commodities that are only available in limited quantities. In this approach it is necessary to work toward the accumulation of honor in much the same way that one would accumulate wealth. As with wealth, one can also lose honor or have it taken away by other individuals who would then see their status increased.

²²⁸ The authorship of Jude is hotly debated. Traditionally the text was thought to have been written by the “half-brother” of Jesus, Jude (Judas). Scholarly debates concerning the authorship have been centered around dating (second-century) and the fact that the Greek is too sophisticated to have been written by a rural Galilean. As well, the uncertainty surrounding the acceptance of the text as canonical has fuelled the debate. See Ruth Ann Reese, *2 Peter & Jude* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 17-19. Reese argues that the overall concerns of the text lead to a tentative dating in the late first century.

²²⁹ Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 30-31.

authority of the author's teaching to the two figures who are understood to have the greatest authority in the early church.²³⁰

The letter of James presents some of the same difficulties and a similar tone, at least from an introductory standpoint, as Jude.²³¹ It opens with the appropriate epistolary address, identifying the (ideal) author and the (ideal) audience: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings" (James 1:1, NIV). The identification of authorship with the historical James cannot be confirmed, though it is likely that the text is pseudepigraphical.²³² As with Jude, the identification with James is intended to undergird the authority of the teachings contained in the epistle. As well, Martin has noted that the designation of the author as a servant (slave) of God places him in a position of prestige within Judaism, as the epithet has been associated traditionally with figure such as Moses and David. This is an important distinction, as the designation of servitude has been used in some instances to simply refer to believers (1 Cor. 7:22; Eph. 6:6; 1 Pet. 2:16). According to Martin, "the writer is not associating himself with his readers...but distinguishing himself from them as

²³⁰ Stephen J. Kraftchick (*Jude – 2 Peter* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002], 26), has noted that "any teaching gleaned from James would have found wide acceptance. As his brother, Jude is identified with a leading authority of the foundational church, a status the opposition cannot claim."

²³¹ We see many of the same arguments levelled against authorship by James as we saw concerning the authorship of Jude. These include the style of Greek, cultural elements that might only be understood in a Hellenistic context. Martin (*James*, lxx) concludes that the text, whether or not there is a connection to James traditions, betrays too much of an affinity for Roman culture to be considered as authored by the brother of the Lord.

²³² The authenticity of both the letters of James and Jude was addressed by Eusebius (*HE* 2.23.24-25). Painter (*Just James*, 234-35) argues strongly against the authenticity of the letter based on the earliest references found in the work of Irenaeus in the late second-century.

a figure of authority.”²³³ Of note is the fact that, as with the letter of Jude, there is no mention of James’ familial relationship to Jesus. Adamson has argued that “if the document had been forged we would expect a more sophisticated effort to stress his authority.”²³⁴ Painter offers the counter-argument that “the assumption that only James the brother of Jesus had no need of anything but a simple form of address leads to a conclusion unforeseen by Adamson, that a pseudepigraphical work attributed to James might well adopt a straightforward form of address.”²³⁵ Without going in depth into the theology and interpretations of Jude and James, we can safely posit that the two texts, regardless of the authorship, hold James in a position of high authority, subservient and second only to Jesus within their sphere of influence.²³⁶

2.2. Primary Revelation and Unorthodox Authority

The traditions concerning James are further developed in the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, a non-canonical gospel account, likely known to Hegesippus and thus dated tentatively to the

²³³ Painter, *Just James*, 4. Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell (*Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: James* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 48) offer the simpler reading that James is associating himself with the larger community of believers. Within their reading they argue against the pseudonymity implied by a lack of qualification of the author as the brother of Jesus. Instead they posit that “[m]ost likely...James is implying that his familial relationship to Jesus gives him no extra authority, while his addressees would have already known of his role as chief elder in Jerusalem.”

²³⁴ James B. Adamson, *James: the Man and His Message* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 39.

²³⁵ Painter, *Just James*, 237.

²³⁶ On the letter of James, its theology and reception within the early church, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother of Jesus, Friend of God: Studies in the Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). Of note is the fact that Johnson sees the letter as being authored by James of Jerusalem (though possibly the victim of second century redaction).

early second-century,²³⁷ fragments of which are preserved in the work of Cyril of Jerusalem,²³⁸ Clement of Alexandria,²³⁹ Origen,²⁴⁰ and Jerome.²⁴¹ Of these, only fragment seven quoted by Jerome mentions James the Just. This text presents a departure from the traditions and assumptions that have been made concerning James' part in the foundational Jesus movement. While the trend was, as we have discussed, to assume that James only became a follower in the wake of the resurrection, the *Gospel of the Hebrews* introduces an alternative tradition placing James in a central role prior to Jesus' arrest. The Fragment in Jerome reads:

The Gospel called according to the Hebrews which was recently translated by me into Greek and Latin, which Origen frequently uses, records after the resurrection of the Saviour: And when the Lord had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, he went to James and appeared to him. For James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour in which he had drunk the cup of the Lord until he should see him risen from among them that sleep. And shortly thereafter the Lord said: Bring a table and bread! An immediately it is added: he took the bread,

²³⁷ For dating and an introduction to the three texts (*Gospel of the Nazoreans*, *Gospel of the Ebionites*, and the *Gospel of the Hebrews*) that are listed under the heading of "Jewish Gospels," see Philip Vielhauer and Georg Strecker, "Jewish-Christian Gospels," in *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher; trans. Robert McL. Wilson; 2 vols.; rev. ed.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 1:134-178 at 176.

²³⁸ Fragment 1, from a discourse assigned to the authorship of Cyril by E.A. Wallis Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), 60 (Coptic text), 637 (English translation).

²³⁹ Fragments 4A, from *Stromateis* II 9.45 and 4B *Stromateis* V 14.96. The material from 4B is also to be found in the *Gospel of Thomas* (NHC II, 2) and a fragment of the same text from Oxyrhynchus (POxy. 654).

²⁴⁰ Fragment 3, from *Commentary on John* 2.12; *Homily on Jeremiah* 15.4.

²⁴¹ Fragment 3, from *Commentary on Micah* 7:6; *Commentary on Isaiah* 40:9; *Commentary on Ezekiel* 16:13. Fragment 5, from *Commentary on Ephesians* 5:4. Fragment 6, from *Commentary on Ezekiel* 18:7. Fragment 7, from *de Viris Illustribus* 2. We should note that there is some uncertainty concerning the reliability of transmission by Jerome. See Vielhauer and Strecker, "Jewish-Christian Gospels," 142-49.

blessed it and broke it and gave it to James the Just and said to him: My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from among them that sleep.²⁴²

Obviously, the above passage strays from the canonical accounts in a number of ways, the two most striking being the inclusion of James at the last supper and the primacy of the resurrection appearance to James. There is no indication in the fragment that we possess to indicate that the *Gospel of the Hebrews* was written with an awareness of the later conception “that James and the brothers were unbelievers at this time.”²⁴³ We also see that the text (though somewhat awkwardly) “provides evidence for the view that James was the first witness of the risen Jesus.”²⁴⁴ This can be contrasted with the list of resurrection appearances given by Paul (1 Cor. 15:3-8) who shows Peter as first, and the gospel accounts which give varying testimony,²⁴⁵ none of which credits any of the male apostles with an individual resurrection appearance.

²⁴² *De Viris Illustribus* 2 (trans. Vielhauer and Strecker, “Jewish-Christian Gospels,” 178).

²⁴³ Painter, “James and Peter,” 148-49.

²⁴⁴ Painter, “James and Peter,” 149. The servant of the priest who Jesus hands the burial cloth to is not named and cannot be considered as a witness to the resurrection in this context. His role is to act relay the burial cloth to the high priest as proof of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Contrast with the guards’ report in Matthew 28:11-15.

²⁴⁵ Matthew 28:16 shows the initial appearance as being to all of the disciples, while Mary Magdalene and another Mary are the first witnesses to the empty tomb. Mark’s resurrection appearances only occur in the disputed final section of the gospel which may be the product of a later scribal emendation. Even so, it is striking that the first person that Jesus appears to in the account is Mary Magdalene (16:9-10), and that the text does not list an individual appearance to any of the male disciples. Luke’s account shows that the empty tomb is first seen by a group of women, all of whom immediately believe in the resurrection, though their account is disregarded when related to the men (24:1-10). At this point, Peter is not given an appearance but is bewildered by the empty tomb (24:12). The first actual appearance of the risen Christ is given to two men (one named Cleopas and the other unnamed) on the road to Emmaus (24:13-33). This passage acts as a rebuke to the unbelief of the disciples in general, and in particular the two who receive the appearance, as they do not immediately perceive who Jesus is. Again, there is no individual appearance to Peter or any of the other disciples. John’s account shows Mary

Painter notes that the wording and sequence of events portrayed in this post-resurrection supper presided over by Jesus mimic or echo the last supper prior to the crucifixion:

Jesus sought out James because James had vowed not to eat until he had seen the Lord risen from the dead. Jesus addresses him, “My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep.” “My brother,” leaves no doubt as to which James is in view. The narrator makes this doubly clear by identifying him as James the Just.²⁴⁶

For Painter this acts as an authorization of the leadership of James due to his having received the foundational resurrection appearance. Of particular note is the fact that Jesus gives the bread to James.

Keeping in mind the parallels to the last supper, the bread being handed to James post-resurrection can be interpreted in relation to John 13:26.

Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him (NIV).

Magdalene as the first to receive an appearance of the risen Christ (20:10-18). As with the Lukan account, Peter runs to the empty tomb. (John 20:3-9), but it is ambiguous as to whether or not he believes at this point. It is worth noting that in all of the empty tomb accounts there are enough women present to satisfy the requirement for testimony with the exception of the Johannine account. The Markan account, however, while showing enough witnesses at the tomb itself, underscores the lack of credibility given to a sole female witness with the statement concerning Mary’s recounting the appearance in 16:10-11, “She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it” (NIV). In contrast to Mark, there is no disbelief on the part of the disciples when told by Mary in John. The idea of Mary receiving the initial resurrection appearance and the question of authority will be discussed later in relation to the parallel ascent report found in the *Gospel of Mary*, wherein we see a variant on apostolic authority.

²⁴⁶ Painter, “James and Peter,” 149.

Unfortunately, because the *Gospel of the Hebrews* exists in such a fragmentary and selective state it is impossible to determine what may have existed in the original form. We can, however, posit that the act of handing bread to James commissions him in the same, though opposing, manner to what we see in John 13:26.²⁴⁷ The giving of bread to James acts as an end point for the period of fasting that commenced at the last supper, showing a conclusion to the passion drama with the first post-resurrection meal, and acts as a point of commission wherein Jesus passes earthly authority to James.

The *Gospel of Thomas* presents a confusing picture of the relationship between Jesus, his brother James, and Thomas, who is purported to be the recipient of revelation in the text. The sole reference to James in the text occurs in logion 12, which reads:

The disciples said to Jesus, “We know that you will depart from us. Who is to be our leader?” Jesus said to them, “Wherever you are, you are to go to James the righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.”²⁴⁸

This passage has been the source of much debate. We have to ask, why a gospel which purports to give primacy of revelation to Thomas shows James as the figure of leadership? Painter takes it as showing the importance and reverence given to James: “The *Gospel of Thomas* surprisingly makes Jesus the initiator of the leadership of James. Given that Thomas is given an intimate relationship to Jesus in this work, the leadership of James indicated in log. 12

²⁴⁷ By handing the bread to Judas, Jesus is marking him out as the one who is to betray him. This also seems to act as a catalyst allowing Satan, who is ultimately viewed as responsible, to enter Judas and effect the betrayal.

²⁴⁸ Trans. Thomas O. Lambdin, “The Gospel of Thomas,” in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 126-38 at 127.

is the more impressive.”²⁴⁹ This may be too simple of an approach to the material. April DeConick has argued that the juxtaposition of the material found in logia 12 and 13, which in turn state the leadership of James and then the correct revelation to Thomas, signifies an early crisis point in the Thomasine community wherein the leadership of James, based in Jerusalem, was questioned.²⁵⁰ The question of leadership may cut somewhat deeper in the text. It is also possible that the two logions are referring in both instances to brothers of Jesus. In the first case, obviously James, while in the second Judas Thomas (the twin). There is evidence to suggest this possibility. Stephen J. Patterson argues that it is possible, even likely, that the Thomasine protagonist is not in fact the doubting Thomas of the Johannine tradition. Instead, he has put forth that this is really Judas Thomas, known also from the *Acts of Thomas* 1 as “Judas of James” (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), who is a brother of Jesus as seen also in the Johannine tradition referred to as “Judas, not the Iscariot” (John 14:22). He argues that the placing of these two logia together in the text is deliberately based on the fact that the two figures being represented are brothers of Jesus underscoring the (pseudepigraphic) claim that the text was composed by a

²⁴⁹ Painter, “James and Peter,” 149.

²⁵⁰ April DeConick, *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and Its Growth* (Library of New Testament studies 286; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 94-95.

brother of Jesus.²⁵¹ As such, it could be inferred that the text is looking to the authority of James to bolster the authority of the teachings being transmitted.²⁵²

As a counterpoint, it is possible to illuminate the interplay between logia 12 and 13 with respect to logia 11 and 111. Both of these logia refer to the world passing away. When compared with the idea that the heavens and the earth came into being for James the Just as stated in logion 12, it is not impossible to assume that the author is making a polemical statement against the authority of James.²⁵³ If we understand the text to underscore an anti-Jewish bias, which Claudio Gianotto argues is present in a number of logia which problematize Jewish piety, ritual practices, and purity rules, then it is possible that the reference to James in logion 12 could almost be taken in an ironic manner.²⁵⁴ This view might be softened somewhat

²⁵¹ See Stephen J. Patterson, “Understanding the Gospel of Thomas Today,” in *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age* (eds. Stephen J. Patterson, Hans-Gebhard Bethge and James Robinson; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 26-66 at 31-32. With respect to the identification of Thomas as the literal “twin” brother of Jesus in the *Acts of Thomas* and the *Book of Thomas*, as well as the implied twin-ship in the *Gospel of Thomas* as a means of modelling Christian self-understanding, see Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 33-34.

²⁵² Helmut Koester (*Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* [London: SCM Press, 1990], 80), in contrast, does not see any familial link in the text between Jesus, James, and Thomas: “In the *Gospel of Thomas* there is a connection between James the Righteous (i.e. Jesus’ brother), who is designated as the leader of the church (*Gos. Thom. 12*), and (Judas) Thomas, as the apostle who knows the secret wisdom (*Gos. Thom. 13*); but no family relationship between Jesus, James, and Thomas is established. Thomas is important because he guarantees the reliability of the wisdom sayings, not because of his family ties to Jesus.”

²⁵³ This idea was mentioned to me by André Gagné of Concordia University at the meeting of the Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism Network, held at Laval University (Québec), in March 2014. Professor Gagné argues that the *Gospel of Thomas* betrays strongly anti-Jewish elements and that in this context the reference to James following a statement about the world passing away must serve to associate him with the lower, material world.

²⁵⁴ For a discussion of the anti-Jewish polemical elements in the text, see Claudio Gianotto, “Quelques aspects de la polémique anti-juive dans *L’Évangile selon Thomas*,” in *Colloque international “L’Évangile selon Thomas et les*

to the position put forth by Antti Marjanen, who sees the interplay of James and Thomas as representing two levels of discipleship. Marjanen argues that the ideal of the text is a “masterless” or “Jesus-like” discipleship.²⁵⁵ He underscores this in relation to logion 13 where Jesus tells Thomas that he is not his master, and logion 108 which encourages the disciples to become like Jesus. In this view then, we can see the authority of James as being relevant prior to the conversion to a Jesus-like state and unnecessary afterward, a vague position that shows necessity, but not necessarily animosity, clearly establishing authority, but not necessarily tradition.

Finally, we must also briefly consider how James is portrayed in the Pseudo-Clementine literature. I have already mentioned in chapter one how the (apparent) martyrdom of James is depicted in the *Recognitions* (1.70-71). The Pseudo-Clementine corpus is composed of two extant texts, the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*, which in their present form are generally dated to the fourth century CE.²⁵⁶ Within the Pseudo-Clementine literature we find an overarching theme of establishing correct authority and teaching. The text is primarily concerned with the opposition between Peter and false teachers, particularly Simon Magus, who is likely to be

textes de Nag Hammadi.” *Québec, 29-31 mai 2003* (eds. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier; BCNH, Études 8; Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2007), 157-73.

²⁵⁵ Antti Marjanen, “The Portrait of Jesus in the *Gospel of Thomas*,” in *Thomasine Traditions in Antiquity: The Social and Cultural World of the Gospel of Thomas* (ed. Jon MA. Asgeirsson, April D. DeConick and Risto Uro; NHMS 59; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 209-19 at 216.

²⁵⁶ Johann Irmscher and Georg Strecker, “The Pseudo-Clementines,” in *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher; trans. Robert McL. Wilson; 2 vols.; rev. ed.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 2:483-541 at 485.

understood in relation to Paul.²⁵⁷ While the Pseudo-Clementines are most concerned with the correct teaching of Peter, there are a number of places where James is shown to play a central authoritative role in the community. In a number of places within the *Recognitions*, there is an acknowledgement of James as the first bishop of Jerusalem. We see this in 1.66-71 where James is referred to as “our James” and “James the bishop”. With respect to the question of succession, one of the most important statements is found in 1.43 where the text states concerning an invitation to by Caiaphus to contest the issue of true prophecy:

But while they often made such requests to us, and we sought for a fitting opportunity, a week of years was completed from the passion of the Lord, the Church of the Lord which was constituted in Jerusalem was most plentifully multiplied and grew, being governed with most righteous ordinances by James, who was ordained bishop in it by the Lord.²⁵⁸

James is also the one who is shown in 4.35 to have final say on what is considered to be authoritative discourse:

Wherefore observe the greatest caution, that you believe no teacher, unless he bring from Jerusalem the testimonial of James the Lord’s brother, or of whosoever may come after him. For no one, unless he has gone up thither, and there has been approved as a fit and faithful teacher for preaching the word of Christ,—unless, I say, he brings a testimonial thence, is by any means to be received.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ On the question of authority and knowledge with respect to Peter in the Pseudo-Clementine literature see Nicole Kelley, *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 213; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums 14; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988).

²⁵⁸ *Recognitions* 1.43 (*ANF* 8.132).

²⁵⁹ *Recognitions* 4.35 (*ANF* 8. 387).

The value of the James material in the *Recognitions* is open to a certain amount of debate. While it is true that the main focus of the text is on establishing correct and authoritative teaching through the figure of Peter and thus the episcopate of Rome, we cannot discount the fact that it is James who Peter seems to be ultimately accountable to in this material. Even so, the traditions are relatively late with respect to the historical James (late second-early third century) and post-date the account of Hegesippus. Thus, the value for our purposes lies in the fact that they maintain the tradition of James as first bishop of Jerusalem and the one who held ultimate authority over the correct teaching.

2.3. Family Ties?

While I will not be adopting the idea that the succession through James reflects a caliphate (“succession” in Arabic) within the family of Jesus as put forth by scholars such as Adolf von Harnack and James D. Tabor,²⁶⁰ I will argue that the interplay and juxtaposition of James and the figure of Thomas as we see in the *Gospel of Thomas* betrays an association within the early church and the successive centuries between James and Thomas Didymus (the twin). I have argued, previously, that there are overt parallels presented within the text between James and Thomas with respect to the transmission of authority (which will be discussed in chapter 4, with

²⁶⁰ James D. Tabor, *The Jesus Dynasty: The Hidden History of Jesus, His Royal Family, and the Birth of Christianity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006). In a scathing review, which can be read on the website http://www.robertmprice.mindvendor.com/reviews/tabor_dynasty.htm, Robert M. Price notes that “this book reads too much like those by Baigent, Lincoln, and Leigh.”

respect to the text as a commission narrative).²⁶¹ This interplay, which again, Schoedel dismisses as convenient,²⁶² betrays a possible connection to Edessan Christianity within the text that was assumed but not proven by previous scholarship, and as such should not be dismissed when discussing themes related to the brother of Jesus within the text.

An overarching concern for establishing the origin of the episcopate of James is whether or not he was a follower of Jesus during his lifetime. We have established that this is the most likely scenario, as his authority, and that of the other siblings of Jesus would not be assured due to family ties, but rather on the basis of early and ongoing work within the ministry and community founded by Jesus.

The authority of James is understood, then, to originate with Jesus, as no other form of succession can be interpreted as plausible. And, as such, we can dismiss the attempts by Clement and Eusebius to establish apostolic authority over James. That being the case, the importance of James within the early Christian sphere can be established based solely on his place as first “bishop” of Jerusalem, commissioned to that position directly by Jesus. This alone is an answer to Schoedel’s assertion that there was no deeper meaning in the choice of James as protagonist.

²⁶¹ Edwards, “Jewish Christianity Revisited.”

²⁶² “James...recommends himself to the author of our apocalypse in part because he was the Lord’s (spiritual) brother. Similarly Thomas Didymus (the “twin”) fascinated gnostics who regarded him as the (spiritual) brother of Jesus. Under the circumstances it would perhaps not have been difficult to contemplate the transference of Addai from the sphere of Thomas to the sphere of James. In short, an interest in the Syrian Christian world does not necessarily indicate deep theological roots in that world” (Schoedel, “A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem,” 164-65).

However, the repetition of the martyrdom narrative in the *First Apocalypse*, coupled with the reference in NHC V, 36, 16-18 to the land being immediately at war following his departure, situates the martyrdom account firmly within the traditions laid down by Josephus and Hegesippus (and possibly *4 Baruch*). The author of the *Apocalypse* was fully aware of the wealth of traditions concerning James that were extant at the time of composition, including not only the martyrdom narrative, but also the place of prominence held by James and the other brothers of Jesus, as well as the rationalizations that developed in unison with christological speculations and the elevation of Mary's position as the mother of the messiah. As such, it is not by accident that James was accorded the position of primary receiver of a revelation within the *First Apocalypse*. Rather, it is an expansion upon firmly rooted and well attested tradition that would have been both recognizable and authoritative to the intended reader.

Conclusions:

Throughout this chapter I have explored the traditions relating to the authority of James as first bishop of Jerusalem and the successor to Jesus within the early Christian movement. As we have seen, there is very little material on the subject that is available within the canonical books of the New Testament. The most explicit material describing the role of James is found in the Acts of the Apostles (12:17, 15:13, 21:18) where James is depicted in a capacity of leadership even in relation to the figures of Peter and Paul. One of the debated questions has been at what point he and the other brothers of Jesus become associated with the Christian movement. I have shown that there is no evidence to suggest that James, or any of the brothers, were converted post-passion and instead that they were most likely followers of Jesus during his lifetime.

Outside of the canonical material we see a certain amount of tension between James traditions and those establishing direct apostolic authority. Regardless, I have shown that there is no point at which there is a tradition wherein Jesus appoints anyone other than James as his direct successor and first bishop of Jerusalem. Again returning to the question of why James was chosen as the protagonist for the *First Apocalypse of James*, the dominant understanding in early traditions was, as we see in the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*, that James was the direct successor to Jesus, first bishop of Jerusalem, held authority over the other apostles, and governed over the interpretation of correct teaching.

Chapter 3: Gnostic Apocalyptic and the *First Apocalypse of James*

The present chapter engages with the larger debate over the question of a “Gnostic” genre, while narrowing the focus to concentrate on the gnostic apocalyptic literary form that was present in late antiquity. Throughout the course of this chapter I am concerned primarily with exploring the designation of the *First Apocalypse of James* as an apocalypse and how it is situated within the genre. In order to accomplish this I begin with a survey of relevant theories and typologies concerning the overall heading of apocalypse/apocalyptic/apocalypticism. From there I also problematize the association of the text in relation to other question and answer (*erotapokriseis*) literature in late antiquity, as well as the sub-genre of gnostic apocalypses.

In addition to situating the text with respect to genre, this chapter continues with an analysis of the dominant apocalyptic elements that are present within the narrative. In particular I focus on the references to wars, the command to not return to Jerusalem, and the imagery of the bitter cup that are found in the text. I show that the text is strongly influenced by Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic traditions, particularly those related to the prophet Jeremiah and the post-exilic concept of exile and return.

3.1. The Question of Apocalypticism

The *First Apocalypse of James* takes the form of a very intimate revelatory dialogue between Jesus and James. Prior to the discovery of the Al Minya codex, the *First Apocalypse of James* was simply understood as an apocalypse. The term apocalypse itself can be somewhat troublesome due to a lack of consistency concerning its use. The most commonly used definition, based on common core elements of apocalypses, is that set out by John Collins in *Semeia* 14, and revised by Adela Yarbro Collins in *Semeia* 36. As such,

Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world²⁶³...intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority.²⁶⁴

This definition can be further clarified by looking at the elements elucidated by Vielhauer and Strecker. From a literary standpoint they cite: pseudonymity, the text being written in the name of an authoritative figure from the past; account of the vision; surveys of history in future form; forms and combinations of forms.²⁶⁵ In the world of ideas Vielhauer and Strecker offer up the following motifs as represented strongly within the genre: the doctrine of the two ages;²⁶⁶

²⁶³ John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 1-20 at 9.

²⁶⁴ Adela Yarbro Collins, "Introduction: Early Christian Apocalypticism," *Semeia* 36 (1986): 1-12 at 7. A.Y. Collins' addition to the definition from *Semeia* 14 is based largely on the contributions of David Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John," *Semeia* 36 (1986): 13-64 (esp. 18), and David E. Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre," *Semeia* 36 (1986): pp. 65-97 (esp.87). For a survey of the apocalyptic texts and genre, see Martha Himmelfarb, *The Apocalypse: A Brief History* (Malden Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). For an interesting and enlightening discussion concerning apocalyptic terminology in the ancient world, see Morton Smith, "On the History of ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΙΣ," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979* (ed. David Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 9-20. A survey of scholarship on apocalyptic thought can be found in Adela Yarbro Collins, "Apocalypse Now: The State of Apocalyptic Studies Near the End of the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century," *HTR* 104 (2011): 447-57.

²⁶⁵ Philip Vielhauer and Georg Strecker, "Apocalypses and Related Subjects," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2:542-638 at 545-49.

²⁶⁶ Vielhauer and Strecker (Apocalypses and Related Subjects," 549-50) note that in this mode of thought "this age is temporary and perishable, the age to come is imperishable and eternal." This is essentially to say that apocalyptic texts show a form of temporal dualism.

pessimism and hope of the beyond;²⁶⁷ universalism and individualism;²⁶⁸ determinism and imminent expectation; and lack of uniformity.²⁶⁹ What we see then, in the definitions that we are making use of, is an emphasis on divinely mediated revelation with a strong eschatological element that is precipitated by tensions (religious/political) in the community that the text concerns.

In relation to the classification of the text as an apocalypse we must be cognizant of the fact that the Al Minya version does not include the term “apocalypse.” Also, when looking at the Nag Hammadi copy, it appears as though the title **ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΝΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ** is tightly squeezed into the space, making it possible, and likely, that the addition of the term apocalypse was an afterthought, possibly on the part of the compiler of the codex, meant to harmonize the title with the other apocalypses present in the volume.²⁷⁰ This does not change our understanding of the text, however, as Collins in his definition of the apocalyptic genre allows for the fact that not all texts which can be considered as apocalypses necessarily contain this designation in the title, and the *First Apocalypse of James* appears to fulfill the necessary criteria for inclusion in the larger genre, while also displaying the characteristics common to

²⁶⁷ Apocalyptic pessimism, characterized by rule on the part of evil powers and societal degeneration. “In this degeneration the basic thought of apocalyptic dualism is clearly expressed: it indicates the radical discontinuity between this Age and the Age to come” (Vielhauer and Strecker, “Apocalypses and Related Subjects,” 550-51).

²⁶⁸ Apocalyptic eschatology is seen to be universal. While it is centered on Jerusalem, national eschatology is not the defining element.

²⁶⁹ Vielhauer and Strecker, “Apocalypses and Related Subjects,” 553-54.

²⁷⁰ It is also entirely possible that we are witnessing an attempt to correct the omission of the title on the part of the scribe who might simply have not allowed enough space for any title to be inserted. I will return to the question of how the text fits in to the codex when discussing the editorial intention of the two codices in the appendix.

gnostic apocalypses (revelation dialogues) such as the emphasis on the salvific nature of knowledge.²⁷¹ As we will see in chapters four and five, the *First Apocalypse of James* shows salvation to be directly connected not only to knowledge but to the ongoing transmission of knowledge. Collins also notes that those texts called apocalypses in the ancient world may at times cross over and represent more than one genre. He adds that the concept is “complicated by the fact that some of these works are composite in character and have affinities with more than one genre.”²⁷² The idea of apocalyptic as a composite genre was also put forth by Gerhard von Rad, who referred to it as a “mixtum compositum,”²⁷³ while Vielhauer and Strecker make it clear that the elements of the literary genre are not absolute and, as such, one might encounter “apocalypses” that do not contain certain elements of the literary form that might be considered essential.²⁷⁴

With respect to the idea of a specific genre of “gnostic apocalypses,” the work of Francis Fallon provides perhaps the most comprehensive analysis. Fallon builds upon the definition provided by Collins in the introduction to *Semeia 14*, noting that in relation to Collins’ understanding of apocalypses falling into two basic categories, type I those with heavenly journeys, and type II those without, as well as the subsets involving either cosmic or personal

²⁷¹ Collins, “Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” 13.

²⁷² John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, : Eerdmans, 1998), 4. He uses the two forms present in *Daniel* 1-6 (tales) and 7-12 (visions) as an example.

²⁷³ Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (6th ed.; 2 vols.; Munich: C. Kaiser, 1975), 2:331. A useful survey of some of the problems associated with the concept of genre and apocalyptic specifically can be found in Lars Hartman, “Survey of the Problem of Apocalyptic Genre,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, 329-43.

²⁷⁴ Vielhauer and Strecker, “Apocalypses and Related Subjects,” 545-49.

eschatology, those apocalypses falling under the rubric of gnostic thought fulfill the necessary requirements.²⁷⁵ Fallon goes on to further qualify the genre of gnostic apocalypses with the following elements:

In addition, these apocalypses show forth the gnostic specifics of an emphasis on present salvation through knowledge and a cosmic dualism in which the lower heavens and/or their rulers are evil and only the transcendent realm is good. We have divided these gnostic apocalypses into two main types—those which do not have an otherworldly journey (I) and those which do (II). Of the sub-types, we note that, strictly speaking, there are no examples of the historical apocalypses either without (Ia) or with (IIa) an otherworldly journey. As we pointed out in the discussion, ApocAd, Melch (I) and ParaShem (II) do have phenomena that should be related to the historical type of Jewish apocalypses; but they cannot be considered, strictly speaking, historical apocalypses. There are representatives of the sub-type of cosmic apocalypses in the gnostic writings in that there are some references to the judgment of the world and/or evil cosmic powers both I those without (Ib: Melch, 2 ApocJas, GMary, NatArch, PS I-III) and those with (IIb: ParaShem) an otherworldly journey. The remainder of the gnostic apocalypses show an interest only in personal afterlife and can be considered representative of the sub-type of mystical apocalypses (Ic: ApocAd, Allog, SJC, ApocryJn, 1 ApocJas, ApocPet, PetPhil, PS IV; IIc: Zost, ApocPaul). Even those with a reference to the theme of judgment (Ib and IIb) should be associated here (Ic and IIc), since their view of salvation involves not a cosmic transformation but merely personal afterlife. In our presentation we have further distinguished those

²⁷⁵ Francis Fallon, “The Gnostic Apocalypses,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 123-48 at 125. Another survey and analysis of “gnostic” apocalypses can be found in the work of Martin Krause, “Die literarischen Gattungen der Apokalypsen von Nag Hammadi,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, 621-37. The relationship between apocalyptic texts found at both Nag Hammadi and Qumran is discussed by Glen J. Fairen, *As Above, So Below: Apocalypticism, Gnosticism, and the Scribes of Qumran and Nag Hammadi* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2008). Concerning the relationship between Jewish mystical and apocalyptic thought and the texts from Nag Hammadi, see Ithamar Gruenwald, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism: Studies in Apocalypticism, Merkavah Mysticism and Gnosticism* (Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums 14; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988). The issue of defining gnostic apocalyptic is also taken up by George McRae, “Apocalyptic Eschatology in Gnosticism,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, 317-25. Unfortunately, McRae’s essay focuses too closely on the eschatological elements associated with apocalyptic and not on the actual revelatory genre. Additionally, the article is somewhat dated as it assumes a unified “gnostic” movement.

apocalypses with discourse from those with dialogue, and lastly we also noted a few examples of mixed types (Allog, I Jeu, PS IV).²⁷⁶

While I will agree with Fallon that the text appears to only have interest in personal elements of the afterlife, and may, thus be representative of a “mystical” apocalypse, his classification as type I is problematic. As we will see, the text clearly, in the second revelatory section, contains an ascent narrative. Fallon, in placing the text in category I, is arguing for a distinction wherein the ascent, as described in the *First Apocalypse of James*, does not constitute a heavenly journey. The mistake may be in drawing too much of a distinction between the texts that explicitly show the ascent of the protagonist, such as in the Gnostic *Apocalypse of Paul* NHC V, 2), and those that have the journey and method of ascent described by a mediating figure, such as Jesus in the *Gospel of Mary*. In both cases the goal is the same: the transmission of hidden knowledge. Also, it is understood in these texts that the protagonist will at some future time undergo the same heavenly journey. A better distinction might be made on the basis of the terms elevation and ascent. Thus, we might term those texts which contain a revelation wherein the protagonist is raised up through the power of the mediating figure as elevation narratives, and those wherein the protagonist ascends through their own devices as ascent narratives. The major distinction that we are then drawing is between those apocalypses wherein the celestial journey is undertaken passively and those where the one ascending is an active participant in the process. We might then act on a sub-classification based on whether or not the journey is bodily or visionary. A further distinction, particularly within the sphere of Nag Hammadi studies

²⁷⁶ McRae, “Apocalyptic Eschatology in Gnosticism,” 138-39.

should be made based on whether or not the journey is intended to be performed by a living individual or in a post- mortem setting.²⁷⁷

David Frankfurter shows continuity between apocalyptic and gnosticism: “Like apocalypses, many Gnostic revelatory texts appeal to the authoritative tradition of legendary seers.”²⁷⁸ Frankfurter goes on to note that “in Christian Gnosticism the predominant shift in authority from archaic seers – Enoch, Moses, Ezra – to gospel figures like Mary, Thomas, James, and Paul may have asserted the particular authority of those revelations that began with Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances.”²⁷⁹ This does not, however, take into account the large number of texts wherein either the protagonist receiving the revelation, or the revealer, are named as figures from the archaic past such as is seen in the *Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V, 5), the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC VII, 2), *Melchizedek* (NHC IX, 1), or the *Three Steles of Seth* (NHC VII, 5), not to mention Christianized Jewish texts such as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. When looking at the commission narrative in the *First Apocalypse of James*, we can see the particular interaction that these texts have, in this case, with the *Testament of Levi* and the *Aramaic Levi document*. Instead, then, of looking at the idea of gnostic apocalypses as being supercessionist with respect to the figures given revelatory authority, we should consider the texts as presenting a global view wherein the Christian figures

²⁷⁷ The typology of the ascent narrative is further explored in chapter five.

²⁷⁸ David Frankfurter, “The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses in Early Christianity: Regional Trajectories,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (eds. James C. VanderKam and William Adler; Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature 4; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 129-200 at 151.

²⁷⁹ Frankfurter, “The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses,” 151-52.

are often added to, interpreted in light of, and conflated with the traditions of pre-Christian Judaism.

One of the problems associated with much of the scholarship on “gnostic” apocalypses, even with respect to Nag Hammadi specifically, is that it does not take into account the multiplicity of traditions present within the corpus of literature. The texts in question are preserved in collections which may appear to be homogeneous with respect to common elements. Even so, they are representative of authorial action that takes place in a number of locales, and show differing cosmologies, and varying reactions to community needs and concerns. As such, a distinction needs to be made, at least between the Valentinian and Sethian apocalypses which are present within the Nag Hammadi library. Harold Attridge further problematizes the concept of gnostic apocalypses by drawing a distinction between these two (Valentinian and Sethian) groups of texts.²⁸⁰ It is specifically his discourse on the area of Valentinian apocalypses that is relevant to our discussion, as I maintain that *I Apoc. Jas.* betrays elements that are strongly linked with Valentianianism within the narrative.²⁸¹ Attridge says that his argument can be

distilled in two complex propositions... (1) Valentinian teachers eschewed the literary trappings of Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic literature; although occasionally interested in “visions,” they presumed that the major “ascent” was eschatological. In their eschatology, while disposed to interpret apocalyptic scenarios in an allegorical or “realized” sense, they maintained a philosophically respectable view of the consummation of history but could occasionally draw upon apocalyptic descriptions of the end, particularly from early Christian texts that had achieved some authoritative status, to give expression to their belief. (2)

²⁸⁰ Harold W. Attridge, “Valentinian and Sethian Apocalyptic Traditions,” *J ECS* 8 (2000): 173-211.

²⁸¹ Even though there is only a very limited cosmology and numerous cosmological variants from what we know of Valentinian Christianity within the text.

“Sethians,” much closer to their Jewish literary roots, used apocalyptic literary conventions and apparently did engage in practices designed to provide revelatory experience. Nonetheless, they distanced themselves from their Jewish roots, particularly in texts with evidence of a ritual setting for revelatory experience. Although, like the Valentinians, their eschatology focuses on the fate of the soul and they use eschatological categories metaphorically, their interest in cosmic or historical eschatology remains and perhaps serves as one basis for several of the late apocalypses from Nag Hammadi.²⁸²

Attridge notes that within the texts which can be situated as likely of Valentinian origin,²⁸³ only the *First Apocalypse of James* can be positively determined to fit within the framework of what might constitute an apocalypse.

The literary form of apocalypse is largely absent from these Valentinian texts. The corpus consists of sermons (*Gospel of Truth*), dogmatic treatises (*Tripartite Tractate*, *Valentinian Exposition*, *Treatise on Resurrection*, *Authoritative Teaching*), and an exegetical exposition (*Exegesis on the Soul*); nary an apocalypse among them. The two main surveys of the formal apocalyptic literary elements in the corpus, by Francis Fallon and Martin Krause, confirm that observation. The only text with any Valentinian elements presented in some form of apocalypse is the *First Apocalypse of James* (5, 3).²⁸⁴

²⁸² Attridge, “Valentinian and Sethian Apocalyptic Traditions,” 178-79.

²⁸³ Attridge makes a listing largely based on the work of Einar Thomassen, “Notes pour la délimitation d’un corpus valentinien à Nag Hammadi,” in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification. Actes du colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 Septembre 1993* (ed. Louis Painchaud and Anne Pasquier; BCNH, Études 3; Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1995), 243-59. Though he originally considered the *First Apocalypse of James* to be a Valentinian text, Thomassen has since come out against the designation. See Thomassen, “Gnostics and Orphics,” 466-67.

²⁸⁴ Attridge, “Valentinian and Sethian Apocalyptic Traditions,” 182. Obviously, this assertion discounts the *Apocalypse of Paul*, also included in NHC V (2) and containing some similar apocalyptic elements to the *First Apocalypse of James*, from being counted among the Valentinian texts. The *Second Apocalypse of James* (NHC V, 4) is also conspicuously absent from this list. Thomassen (“Notes pour la délimitation d’un corpus valentinien”) argues against the inclusion of these two texts based on their not meeting necessary criteria. In the case of the *Second Apocalypse of James* he cites the negative understanding of the Jewish God as not corresponding to Valentinian cosmology (p. 246). On this point I disagree with Thomassen, for, while there is a figure within the ascent narrative who might be equated with the God of the Old Testament, there is simply too much of an

In a recent contribution, Dylan Burns has added further to the discourse on gnostic apocalyptic thought and literature.²⁸⁵ Moving toward an integration of our discourse on the genres of gnostic and apocalyptic literature, he notes that,

instead of diagnosing the constructs “Gnosticism” and “apocalypticism,” it is productive to compare the Gnostic apocalypses – that is, texts that handle the Gnostic myth and use the genre “apocalypse” – with their Jewish and Christian counterparts. That such an enterprise might be worthwhile is indicated by the fact that there are indeed many apocalypses among the texts associated with the ancient Gnostics.²⁸⁶

He goes on to assert that “if one regards the genre of the ‘revelation discourse’ (featuring a post-resurrection Jesus Christ as the revelator) as a ‘this-worldly apocalypse,’ one counts twenty-six extant apocalypses associated with Gnosticism, the bulk of which were preserved at Nag Hammadi.”²⁸⁷ With respect to the apocalyptic genre within Valentinian circles (an association that I maintain for the *First Apocalypse of James* and discuss in chapter five), Burns

intertextual connection to Jewish literature for the text to be disqualified on this basis. We see this in relation to both the apocalyptic elements as discussed below, and in regard to the lineage discussed in chapter four. With respect to the *Apocalypse of Paul*, Thomassen states that “la courte *ApocPaul* n’est probablement pas non plus valentinienne. L’ascension de Paul aux neuvième et dixième ciel (24,3 et suiv.) ne correspond pas à la terminologie eschatologique valentinienne telle que nous la connaissons: *EvTh*, *LivTh*, *DialSauv* et *Bronté*” (p. 247). In this he is in disagreement with Armand Veilleux and Michael Kaler, who respectively understand the *Second Apocalypse of James* and the *Apocalypse of Paul* to be representative of Valentinianism. See Veilleux, *La première apocalypse de Jacques*, 13, and Jean-Marc Rosenstiehl and Michael Kaler, *L’Apocalypse de Paul (NH V, 2)* (BCNH, Textes 31; Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2005), 155-58.

²⁸⁵ Dylan M. Burns, “Apocalypses Among Gnostics and Manichaeans,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* (ed. John J. Collins; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 358-72.

²⁸⁶ Burns, “Apocalypses Among Gnostics and Manichaeans,” 359.

²⁸⁷ Burns, “Apocalypses Among Gnostics and Manichaeans,” 360.

interrogates the assertions of Attridge, who argues that the apocalyptic genre is effectively absent from the Valentinian corpus.²⁸⁸ While accepting that there is a valid point of opposition between the two groups, Burns notes that the primary point of differentiation between Valentinian and Sethian texts lies in the question of authority.

Sethian and Valentinian authors, esteemed different authorities: transmitters of Sethian traditions, produced pseudepigraphical texts – nearly all in the genre of “apocalypse” – assigned to ante-diluvian seers and imbued with literary themes and traditions that would have seemed authoritative and persuasive to readers familiar with Jewish and Christian apocrypha. Valentinian authors appear to have been less interested in the apocalyptic genre and its literary trappings particularly pseudepigraphy, instead penning anonymous texts...or simply asserting their own authority as living teachers. Thus the cliché that Gnostics did not rely on living authorities, but only “figures from the primordial times or from the apostolic generation” (Perkins 1980:175) is true with regard to Sethian literature, but not Valentinian literature²⁸⁹

This is an important point of distinction between the two dominant representations of “Gnosticism” from late antiquity, and one that is often overlooked. Essentially, it can be boiled down to the fact that “Valentinian literary tradition and the kind of authority figures it invokes is much closer to non-Gnostic Christianity than it is to Gnosticism.”²⁹⁰

3.2. The Gnostic Question and Answer Dialogue

Within the boundaries imposed by a discussion of “gnostic” apocalyptic it is then useful to look at how the concept of late antique question and answer literature has been applied to our

²⁸⁸ Burns, “Apocalypses Among Gnostics and Manichaeans,” 364.

²⁸⁹ Burns, “Apocalypses Among Gnostics and Manichaeans,” 365.

²⁹⁰ Burns, “Apocalypses Among Gnostics and Manichaeans,” 365.

text. When looking at the dialogue between Jesus (whether pre or post passion) and James, we should notice that it is not necessarily representative of our concept of *erotapokriseis*. The dialogue is not intended to be didactic, nor does it stand as an exegetical document. We are not shown a one-sided conversation wherein the teacher responds to conveniently posed questions by his students while they silently absorb his/her teaching. Instead, Jesus and James are engaged in a true dialogue where James is not only being taught by Jesus, but also adding his own perspective to the narrative. As we will see when discussing the commission of James in chapter four (section 4.2), James interjects not only his own lack of worth to receive the true teaching, but also extols the attributes of Jesus, whom he declares to be above him (AMC 2 14, 21-15, 7 // NHC V, 3 20, 8-19). With this in mind, instead of putting forth the teachings of a particular group, the *First Apocalypse of James* should be taken as reinforcing community identity, but should not be understood as having an association with the strict question and answer formula represented, e.g., by Eusebius' *Questiones ad Stephanum et Marinum*.

Scholars such as PHEME PERKINS, FRANCIS FALLON, and KURT RUDOLPH have all discussed how gnostic revelation dialogues relate to the question and answer genre.²⁹¹ Scholarly interactions

²⁹¹ See Fallon, "The Gnostic Apocalypses," 126-48; PHEME PERKINS, *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism* (Theological Inquiries; New York: Paulist Press, 1980). PERKINS understands the Gnostic dialogue to make use of "the teacher-pupil model of *erotapokriseis*" (p. 25), a concept earlier discussed, though questioned, by KURT RUDOLPH, "Der gnostische Dialog als literarische Genus," in *Probleme der koptischen Literatur* (ed. Peter Nagel; Wittenburg: Halle, 1968), 85-107. See also the edited volume by Marie-Pierre Bussières, ed., *De l'enseignement à l'exégèse: La littérature des questions et réponses dans l'Antiquité païenne et chrétienne. Actes du colloque tenu à l'Université d'Ottawa les 25 et 26 septembre 2009* (Instrumenta patristica et mediaevalia 64; Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), and in particular the contributions of Michael Kaler, "Just how Close Are the Gnostic Revelation Dialogues to *erotapokriseis* Literature, Anyway?" 37-50, and Pierluigi Piovanelli,

with the question and answer genre in relation to Gnosticism have, however, been problematic as there does not seem to be a consensus concerning whether or not we can consider gnostic texts to be included under the rubric of *erotapokriseis*.²⁹²

The use of *erotapokriseis* as the model for gnostic dialogues was rejected by Rudolph as too simplistic, instead asserting that they were one of the influential components of the revelatory dialogue.²⁹³ Perkins also questions the reliance of gnostic authors on the *erotapokriseis* model. In her opinion, “[m]ost Gnostic revelation dialogues invoke New Testament stories to provide a setting for the dialogue. Thus, they are not simply *erotapokriseis*, though some of their question/answer content may derive from such a source.”²⁹⁴ Perkins goes on to show us that the gnostic apocalyptic dialogue is a unique genre incorporating, but not defined by, these elements.²⁹⁵ Pierluigi Piovanelli echoes Perkins, showing that these are in fact traditions that are in transition and therefore not subject to a static classification.²⁹⁶ The idea that

“Entre oralité et (ré)écriture: le modèle des *erotapokriseis* dans les dialogues apocryphes de Nag Hammadi,” 93-104.

²⁹² Part of the confusion over genre may lie in the same type of misconception that pervades “gnostic” scholarship. Simply put, we are attempting to artificially place specific labels on texts that do not cleanly fit into any accepted or properly defined category. The misconception is further reinforced by various fallacies about the very text that the genre of *erotapokriseis* is thought to be associated with. With respect to the apologetic nature of Eusebius’ *Quaestiones ad Stephanum et Marinum*, see Rajiv Bholā, “Dating Eusebius’ *Quaestiones ad Stephanum*,” in *De l’enseignement à l’exégèse*, 153-76.

²⁹³ Rudolph, “Der gnostische Dialog als literarische Genus,” 89.

²⁹⁴ Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue*, 20.

²⁹⁵ Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue*, 25-26.

²⁹⁶ Piovanelli (“Entre oralité et (ré)écriture”) shows that it would be more prudent to move away from a discussion surrounding the various influences of Hermetism, Gnosticism, and *erotapokriseis* literature one upon the other, and instead look at the influence of the pedagogical and narrative traditions of Judaism and Christianity.

a text may be both *erotapokriseis* and something else was explored by Claudio Zamagni, who also states that most experts can only truly agree on the fact that the genre itself is elastic and not easily definable.²⁹⁷ This last statement underscores the problem with approaching ancient texts from a genre based perspective. *Erotapokriseis*, a concept understood primarily in relation to Eusebius's *Quaestiones ad Stephanum et Marinum*, is often credited as the model upon which Christian dialogue is based. The problem lies in a lack of strict and accepted terms through which to define the concept. It becomes a matter of saying that we cannot define it, but we know it when we see it. Without an accepted working definition of the concept we cannot say for certain whether or not a particular text is or is not an example of *erotapokriseis*. As such, I am hesitant to attempt a definition of the genres employed within a text such as the *First Apocalypse of James*. This is not, however, simply due to the fact that *erotapokriseis* does not lend itself to a clear definition (even though the didactic emphasis would preclude an association with the *First Apocalypse of James*),²⁹⁸ but also due to the fact that we are still in the process of developing a clear working understanding through which to study those texts that we refer to as Gnostic.

²⁹⁷ Claudio. Zamagni, "Une introduction méthodologique à la littérature patristique des questions et réponses: le cas d'Eusèbe de Césarée," in *Erotapokriseis: Early Christian Question and Answer Literature in Context. Proceedings of the Utrecht Colloquium, 13-14 October 2003* (ed. Annelie Volgers and Claudio Zamagni; Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 37; Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 10.

²⁹⁸ I maintain that the actual teaching of traditions is secondary to the text's uses as a commission narrative (legitimizing an alternative apostolic authority, which is discussed in chapter four), and its possible use as an amulet with respect to the ascent of the soul (discussed in part two of the conclusions).

3.3. The Tripartite Revelatory Structure of the *First Apocalypse of James*

The *First Apocalypse of James* is composed of three distinct sections: a pre-passion revelation, a post-resurrection revelation, and the martyrdom of James. The importance of the final section to the structure of the *First Apocalypse of James* has only become apparent through its second attestation, as it was too fragmentary in the Nag Hammadi text.

The first section is made up of the pre-passion revelation (NHC V, 3 24,10-30,15 // AMC 2 10, 1-16, 27). This provides the basic cosmological speculations of the text. It begins with a statement concerning the natures of James (the spiritual brother of Jesus), the “One Who Is” (the transcendent god), Jesus (pre-existent, but second), and Femaleness (not named, and not pre-existent). Then Jesus foretells not only his martyrdom, but that of James as well. The primary purpose of this first dialogue is to identify James and Jesus with the pre-existent “One Who Is” and to create a tension between them and the archons, who are personified in the form of the twelve hebdomads and the seventy-two inferior heavens.²⁹⁹ Though the reader might gain a limited understanding of the mythology of the text in this section, the main purpose of the narrative seems to be to establish the worth of James to be martyred and the process by which this can occur (see AMC 2 14, 21-25, where James is told to throw off the blindness in his heart and the bonds of the flesh to attain to the One Who Is).

²⁹⁹ It is likely that the reference to the hebdomads is meant to signify the twelve apostles. If this is the case, then the intended point of tension is not simply between Jesus, James, and the archons, but also in relation to the accepted norms of apostolic Christianity. The subject of the hebdomads in the *First Apocalypse of James* is explored in relation to the larger Christian and Jewish contexts by Schoedel, “Scripture and the Seventy-Two Heavens.” The cosmology hinted at here is further discussed in chapter five.

The conclusion to this section is found in NHC V, 3 30,12-13 // AMC 2 16, 26-27 with the departure of Jesus to prepare for his passion. Surprisingly, the text does not give an account of Jesus' death, but only hints at what occurred in the second revelatory section.

The second revelation can be separated into four parts. The first part (AMC 2 16, 27-19, 20) clarifies the nature of Jesus' passion, as well as being concerned with establishing the worth of James to be martyred. The second section of the second revelation can aptly be described as the redemption of James. This section of the narrative contains Jesus' description of the ascent of the soul (NHC V, 3 32, 28-36, 14 // AMC 2 19, 21-23, 15). The ascent of the soul serves two purposes within the narrative. The first purpose is to act as a recapitulation and expansion on the earlier cosmology. More importantly, however, is the fact that this part of the narrative serves to impart instructions to the dying person on successfully navigating in the afterlife. In this context we might go so far as to assert that these instructions are intended for the believers about to be martyred. Unfortunately, this section was extremely fragmentary in the Nag Hammadi manuscript, but what we find in the Al Minya codex is virtually complete with a few lacunae. Jesus teaches James a question and answer formula that will help him bypass first a guardian and second a group of three toll collectors (τελῶναι) who steal souls.³⁰⁰

The third section of the second revelation (NHC V, 3 36, 20-38, 10 // AMC 2 23, 13-25, 14) is concerned with the transmission of tradition, knowledge and authority. James is charged with this as a task to be completed following his departure from the flesh. This type of

³⁰⁰ This is discussed further in chapter five.

commission is common to apocalyptic texts, but is generally a concluding element.³⁰¹ This section also contains a lineage of descent from James through a figure named as Addai.³⁰² The final section of the second revelation discusses the role of the female disciples of Jesus, including seven who are equated with seven spirits (possibly the seven spirits of God in Revelation 1:4) and six (or seven) women who are named in the text.

In the Al Minya codex we are able to discern a third major section of the treatise, wherein the circumstances leading up to the martyrdom of James are described. The structure of the text as we have thus far discussed it is an example of the gnostic revelation dialogue, which Perkins describes as a special separate form of apocalypticism unique to the gnostic context which, while it may contain elements of *erotapokriseis*, should not be considered wholly such.³⁰³ From the revelatory content, we can discern that the purpose of the apocalyptic discourse was likely to encourage or reassure those in danger of being martyred, while at the same time imparting instructions for the dead to safely ascend.³⁰⁴ I should clarify, however, that while the text imparts instruction, its main purpose does not seem to be catechetical, didactic, or

³⁰¹ See Collins, "Towards the Morphology of a Genre," 5-9.

³⁰² We should note that Eusebius refers to this figure as "Thaddaeus" (*HE* I,13), while in the fifth century *Doctrine of Addai* the name is rendered as "Addai." The possibility of conflation of two figures into one eventually simply known as Addai is suggested by Schoedel, "Scripture and the Seventy-Two Heavens," 120. On the significance of the lineage of Addai, see Edwards "Jewish Christianity Revisited," and chapter four of the present dissertation.

³⁰³ Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue*, 25-26.

³⁰⁴ The focus on martyrdom is an assumption reinforced within the Al Minya codex, based on the overarching concern for, and positive attitude toward martyrdom displayed in the other texts copied in the codex. Concerning the *Gospel of Judas*, see April Deconick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 125-39. The question of martyrdom is also explored by Elaine Pagels and Karen King, *Reading Judas: The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Christianity* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 49-50, 56-60.

exegetical, but is more likely liturgical in nature with a strong emphasis on the establishment of community norms and identity.

3.4. Apocalyptic Elements in the *First Apocalypse of James*

The first revelatory section opens with Jesus asserting that he will reveal hidden knowledge to James and qualifying their relationship.

ΕΙΝΕΥ ΔΕ ΕΘΑΗ Μ̄ΠΑΣΩΤΕ †ΝΑΤΑΜΟΚ ΕΝΑΪ
 ΪΑΚΚΩΒΕ ΠΑΣΟΝ ΕΙΚΗ ΓΑΡ Δ[Ν] ΕΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΚ ΧΕ
 ΟΝ ΑΛΛΑ Ν[ΤΚ̄] ΟΥΟΝ ΑΝ ΖΝ ΘΥΛΗ : ΚΟ ΔΕ
 ΝΑΤΣΟΟΥΝΕ ΕΡΑΚ ΧΕΚΑ[ΑΣ] ΕΞ[Ι]ΝΑΤΑΜΟΚ ΧΕ
 ΑΝΟΚ ΝΙΜ (AMC 10, 1-7).

“Since, I now see the end of my salvation, I will tell you these things James, my brother. For it is not without reason that you are called brother, although you are not a brother materially. But because you do not know yourself I will tell you who I am.”³⁰⁵

The text from Al Minya shows that the revelation is initiated by Jesus with no framing.

There are minor differences in the Nag Hammadi copy.

ΠΧΟΕΙΟ ΔΕ ΠΕΝΤΑΨΑΧΕ Ν̄ΜΜΑΪ ΧΕ ΕΝΑΥ ΒΕ
 ΕΠΧΩΚ Ν̄ΤΕ ΠΑΣΩΤΕ ΑΪ† ΜΑΕΙΝ ΝΑΚ ΕΝΑΪ
 ΪΑΚΩΒΟΟ ΠΑΣΟΝ • ΕΙΚΗ ΓΑΡ ΑΝ ΑΪΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΡΟΚ ΧΕ
 ΠΑΣΟΝ • ΕΝΤΟΚ ΠΑΣΟΝ ΖΡΑΪ Ζ̄Ν ΘΥΛΗ ΑΝ • ΟΥΤΕ

³⁰⁵ My translation, with reference to translation by Marvin Meyer and François Gaudard, “James,” in *The Gospel of Judas... Critical Edition*, 119-162 at 121.

Ν̄†Ε Ν̄ΝΑΤ'ΕΙΜΕ ΕΡΟΚ ΑΝ • ΧΕΚΑΑΣ ΕΙ ΨΑΝ† ΜΑΕΙΝ
 ΝΑΚ ΕΙΜΕ ΑΥΩ ΩΤΜ (NHC V, 24, 11-19).

The Lord spoke with me. “See then that my salvation is complete. I have given a sign of these things to you James, my brother. For it is not without reason that I have called you my brother, since you are not my brother in materiality. I am not ignorant concerning you, so that I will give to you a sign. Know and hear.”³⁰⁶

While there are minor differences in tone between the two texts at the outset, particularly with respect to the narrator’s voice, the most important difference lies in the commandment “know and hear.” We see a very similar command in *4 Ezra* 16:35 which reads: “Listen now to these things, and understand them, O servants of the Lord.”³⁰⁷ This short inclusion may also be a reference to a combination of passages from Isaiah, particularly Isaiah 1:2 (“Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the Lord has spoken,” NIV). The opening passage of Isaiah concerns the vision of Judah and Jerusalem as seen by Isaiah. There may also be a reference to Isaiah 52:6 (“Therefore my people will know my name,” NIV). Both of these passages make reference to knowledge of God’s identity in relation to Jerusalem. The connection is further evidenced by the repeated references to Jerusalem that occur in the revelatory sequences of the *First Apocalypse*

³⁰⁶ My translation, with reference to the translation of Schoedel, “NHC V, 3 The First Apocalypse of James,” 69, and the edition of Veilleux, *La première apocalypse de Jacques*, 22-23.

³⁰⁷ Translation by Bruce M. Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra (Late First Century A.D.) with the Four Additional Chapters: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2009), 517-560 at 558. For an analysis of *4 Ezra*, see Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 39-78.

of *James*.³⁰⁸ There are five references to Jerusalem in the Al Minya codex and three extant in the Nag Hammadi version.³⁰⁹ These serve to set the stage for the battle between the forces of light and darkness that the text envisions. In many ways this is reminiscent of the type of eschatology envisioned in texts like the *War Scroll* (1QM; 4Q 491-497) from Qumran. The *War Scroll* describes the final battle between the sons of light (the Levites) and the sons of darkness (everyone else). The *First Apocalypse of James* uses similar imagery to describe the conflict between its intended readership, in this case **Ν[Ι]ΨΗΡΕ ΝΤΕ ΠΕΤΨ[ΟΟΠ]** (“the sons of the One Who Is,” NHC 25, 3)³¹⁰ and the rulers of the lower realm. The parallel “children of light” imagery is found shortly after this: **Ν̄Ν̄ΨΗΡΕ Ν̄ΤΕ ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ** (NHC 25, 17-18).³¹¹ These references are being made in relation to the fall of Jerusalem, which is alluded to in the text. Of interest for our discussion is the fact that, while the text offers a dichotomy between the pleroma, represented by Jesus as the image of the transcendent “One Who Is,” and the material world, represented by the archons, the imagery is in many ways very close to what we see in the larger apocalyptic genre. Instead of the text only being concerned with the cosmic (and often internal) spiritual battle, the *First Apocalypse of James* describes conflicts that have either been fought or will be fought in a real manner in the material world, affecting a larger portion of the population, and not necessarily just the individual receiving the revelation. In this

³⁰⁸ For a discussion of the Jewish apocalyptic responses to the fall of the Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, particularly *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, see George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishna* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 263-94.

³⁰⁹ NHC 25, 15-19; 36, 16-19; 37, 10-12 // AMC 11, 23-12, 3; 23, 13-19; 24, 10-11; 24, 16; 25, 1-2.

³¹⁰ **ΝΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ** (AMC 11, 5-6).

³¹¹ **Ν̄Ν̄ΨΗΡΕ Μ̄ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ** (AMC 12, 1-2).

way, we step outside of the specific understanding of gnostic apocalypses set out by Fallon who sees the ultimate tension as being between the Pleroma and creation, without any concern for physical or material transformation.³¹² Over against the assertion of Fallon that the text is only concerned with the personal eschatology of the recipient of the revelation, Jesus explicitly says

Α̅Ι̅Ι̅Ν̅Ε Δ̅Ε ΕΒΟΛ̅ Ν̅Τ̅Ζ̅ΙΚ̅Ω̅Ν Ν̅Τ̅Ε[Ϟ] Χ̅ΕΚΑΔ̅Α̅C
 ΕΡ̅ΕΝ̅[Ι]̅Ω̅Η̅Ρ̅Ε Ν̅Τ̅Ε Π̅ΕΤ̅Ω̅[Ο̅Ο̅Π] Χ̅Ε ΕΥ̅Ε̅Ι̅Μ̅Ε Χ̅Ε Α̅Ω̅
 Ν̅Ε Ν̅ΕΤ̅Ε Ν̅Ω̅ΟΥ Α̅Υ̅Ω Χ̅Ε Α̅Ω̅ Ν̅Ε Ν̅Ω̅Μ̅Μ̅Ο (NHC 25, 2-5).

But I have brought forth the image of him (the One Who Is) so that the sons of the One Who Is may know what things are their own and what is alien.

We see similar imagery in the AMC version of the text, but with the variation that Jesus is showing James **ΕΦ̅ΙΚ̅Ω̅Ν Ν̅Ν̅Β̅Ο̅Μ**, an “image of the powers” (AMC 11, 4). This is somewhat ambiguous as the powers might refer to either the aeons of the pleroma or the archons of the lower realm. Regardless, there is a larger sense of a universal eschatology rather than a limitation to the seer.

The first reference to the fall of Jerusalem occurs at NHC 25, 15-19, which reads

Α̅Λ̅Λ̅Α Π̅Ω̅Ρ̅Χ̅ ΕΒΟΛ̅ Ν̅Θ̅Ι̅Η̅Μ̅. Τ̅Α̅Ι̅ Γ̅Α̅Ρ Τ̅Ε̅Τ̅Ψ̅
 Μ̅Π̅Α̅Π̅Ο̅Τ̅ Μ̅Π̅C̅Ι̅Ω̅ Ε̅ Ν̅Ο̅Υ̅Ο̅Ε̅Ι̅Ω̅ Ν̅Ι̅Μ̅ Ν̅Ν̅Ω̅Ε̅Ρ̅Ε Ν̅Τ̅Ε
 Π̅Ο̅Υ̅Ο̅Ε̅Ι̅Ν̅. Ο̅Υ̅Μ̅Α Ν̅Ω̅Ω̅Π̅Τ̅Ε Π̅Ε Ν̅Ν̅Ο̅Υ̅Η̅Τ̅Ε Ν̅Ν̅Α̅Ρ̅Χ̅Ω̅Ν

But separate from (i.e., leave) Jerusalem. For she is always the one that gives the cup of bitterness (gall) to the children of the light. It is a place where a great number of archons dwell.

³¹² Fallon, “The Gnostic Apocalypses,” 126.

The same passage is found in AMC 11, 23-12, 3, but with the major difference that James is told **ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς τὰ : τεζῆν εἰς Ἰερουσαλὴμ**, “but do not go back to Jerusalem,” thus somewhat changing the setting and the tone of the discourse. This passage has been the subject of various interpretations, the most notable being those of Alexander Bohlig and William Schoedel. Bohlig’s interpretation is understandable, but probably faulty. He asserts that the command of Jesus to James, that he must leave Jerusalem, is meant to represent the flight to Pella on the part of the Christian community of Jerusalem in the wake of the fall of the temple.³¹³ Schoedel argues vehemently against this.

If there is a reference to that withdrawal, it is curious that James would be pictured leading it. In the tradition, it takes place after James is martyred (cf. Eusebius, *HE* 3.5.3). It is more likely that the Lord’s advice has limited geographical and temporal significance within the framework of the narrative, and withdrawal from Jerusalem in this context is probably presented basically as a symbolic act of dissociation from a center dominated by the power of ‘a great number of archons.’³¹⁴

Unfortunately, both of these approaches are flawed. The reference to Jerusalem is a deliberate attempt to situate the text within the framework of traditions surrounding the fall of the city in the wake of the death of James. Later in the same article Schoedel correctly notes that the martyrdom of James and the destruction follow the pattern set out in Hegesippus.

The First Apocalypse of James...has a hostile attitude towards Jerusalem. She always gives “the cup of bitterness to the sons of light” and is “a dwelling place of a great number of archons” (25.16-19). Consequently the people associated with her will be destroyed by the very archons of which they are a type (31.23-

³¹³ Bohlig, *Mysterion und Wahrheit*, 102-11.

³¹⁴ Schoedel, “A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem,” 161-62.

26). And this destruction is explicitly linked with the martyrdom of James in the manner of Hegesippus.³¹⁵

There is, however, more to be implied by the imagery of the cup than a simple attitude of hostility toward Jerusalem or the Jewish people. The obvious Christian references to a bitter cup are to be found in Matthew 20:20-23:

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father (NIV).

In this passage the cup represents the martyrdom of Jesus, which is followed in the year 49 by James the son of Zebedee. We see a repetition of this imagery in Matthew 26:39, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will," repeated in 26:42. In the earliest Christian context, the cup imagery is not clearly associated with Jerusalem. Rather, it refers to the imminent martyrdom of Jesus, which would then be shared by some of his closest associates.

The destruction of Jerusalem as it is referenced in the text should be understood in relation to narratives of exile and return, with respect to the sins of the Jewish people, whom God chooses to punish by allowing them to be conquered and exiled. While the author of the text was no doubt aware of the Matthean verses, the reference to the "cup of bitterness" is most likely a direct reference to God's punishment for the sins of the Jewish people in the cyclical

³¹⁵ Schoedel, "A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem," 175.

pattern of exile and return. In a Christian context the idea of the people being led astray to worship foreign gods is perhaps best noted in Revelations 14:9-10, “A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been full strength into the cup of his wrath’ ” (NIV).

Though not present in the Nag Hammadi version, the AMC version contains a second reference to the cup at 23, 17-19.

ΑΥΩ ΣΝΑΩ ΜΠΕΣΠΟΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΑΣ† ΝΟΥΒ̄ ΓΑΡ
Μ̄ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΤΟΥΗΖ Ν̄ΘΙΑΗΜ

And she will drink of her cup for she has angered (irritated) the God that dwells in Jerusalem.³¹⁶

We find a similar formulation in Jeremiah 25:15, where the prophet is relaying the words of God, “Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it” (NIV). This line appears as part of the revelation to Jeremiah that God will hand Jerusalem over to Babylon. Even though many nations are referenced, the first to drink of the cup of wrath is “Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a ruin and an object of horror and scorn and cursing as they are today” (25:18, NIV).³¹⁷

We also see a reference to being filled with bitterness in Lamentations 3:15. In these instances the reference to being drunk with bitterness or a cup of wrath are all connected to God’s

³¹⁶ The NHC version, at 36, 18-19, says instead “Weep then for him who dwells in Jerusalem.”

³¹⁷ The parallels to the Hegesippan account of the death of James and the fall of Jerusalem are further evidenced in Jeremiah chapters 26 and 38, where his testimony incites the officials present to call for his death.

punishment of the sinners in Jerusalem. We also see the reference to a bitter cup in recension A of the *Testament of Abraham* 16:25, where the angel of death who has come for Abraham declares, **ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ πικρὸν τοῦ θανάτου ποτήριον** (“I am the bitter cup of death”).³¹⁸

The exilic/post-exilic use of the cup imagery is also seen in Isaiah 51:17-

Awake, awake! Rise up, O Jerusalem you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes men stagger. Of all the sons she bore there was none to guide her; of all the sons she reared there was none to take her by the hand. These double calamities have come upon you – who can comfort you? – ruin and destruction, famine and sword – who can console you? Your sons have fainted they lie at the head of every street, like antelope caught in a net. They are filled with the wrath of the Lord and the rebuke of God. Therefore hear this, you afflicted one, made drunk, but not with wine. This is what your Sovereign Lord says, your God, who defends his people: “See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger; from that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again. I will put it in the hands of your tormentors, who said to you, ‘fall prostrate that we may walk over you. And you made your back like the ground, like a street to be walked over’ ” (NIV).

We see similar use of cup imagery in Ezekiel 23:32 (“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘You will drink your sister's cup, a cup large and deep; it will bring scorn and derision, for it holds so much’,” NIV), as well as Job 21:20 (“Let their own eyes see their destruction; let them drink the cup of the wrath of the Almighty,” NIV).

For our purposes in discussing the imagery of the cup in *1 Apoc. Jas.*, the most apt reference can be found in Zechariah 12:1-2,

This is the word of the Lord concerning Israel. The Lord, who stretched out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man

³¹⁸ Trans. Michael E. Stone, *The Testament of Abraham: The Greek Recensions* (Missoula, Mo.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 43.

within him declares: “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares the Lord. “I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the Lord Almighty is their God’ ” (NIV).

It is here that we see a shift from a simple reference to the cup as a symbol of either prosperity (abundance) or wrath to a direct identification of the cup itself with Jerusalem as it appears in the *First Apocalypse of James*. The correct context for interpreting the image of the cup is then to be found in the narratives of the Hebrew Prophets. In this larger context, the cup in its wrathful form, always related to transgression on the part of the Jews, followed with punishment by God and then corrective action. The cup of wrath, as we have seen, is then either directed at the Jews who are to be punished or at the oppressing nations in the form restitutive action on the part of God. In the only instance where we see that Jerusalem itself becomes the cup (Zech. 12:2), it is as part of this post-exilic action of restoration. Hence, as I have previously mentioned, the image of the bitter cup cannot be considered outside of the cyclical concept of exile and return, particularly with reference to the repeated destruction of the temple and the question of domination by foreign powers. In the context of the *First Apocalypse of James*, the additional consideration is whether or not to assume that the presentation of a cup of wrath or bitterness is justified with respect to the identity of the god in question (whether the just God of the Hebrew Bible or the demiurge, who is essentially one of the created archons).

The error on the part of both Schoedel and Bohlig is based on a dependence on the traditions relayed by Eusebius in relation to their interpretation of how the identity and character

of James is constructed in the text. It is understandable that the reference in NHC 36, 16-18 // AMC 23, 14-16 might be interpreted in this manner.

ΕΨΩΠΤΕ ΕΚ[Ν]ΑΞ̄[Ι] Ε]ΒΟΛ ΑΥΩ Ν̄ΤΕΥΝΟΥ
ΕΥΝΑ[Ρ̄]Π[Ο]ΛΕΜΙ Μ̄Ν ΠΕΪΚΑΖ (NHC 36, 16-18).

when you go away (i.e., leave) and immediately war will be made with this land.

ΖΟΤΑΝ ΕΚΨΑΝΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΤΣΑΡΑΞ ΝΑΔΔΑΪ ΑΥΩ
Ν̄Τ[Ε]ΥΝΟΥ ΦΝΑΜΙΨΕ Ν̄ΒΙ ΠΚΕΖΙ [Ε]Τ̄Ε ΠΑΪ ΠΕ (AMC
23, 14-16).

When you cease to be in the flesh (i.e., depart from the flesh) and immediately he will attack this land (this land will be at war).

While the destruction of Jerusalem in the text may echo either the account of Hegesippus as related in *HE 2.23.19* or Pseudo-Josephus as related in *HE 2.23.20-21*, and Origen *Contra Celsum* (1.47; 2:13); *Commentary on Matthew* (10.17; 13.55), with respect to the destruction occurring after the martyrdom of James, it is not congruent when taken together with the initial command to either leave, or not return to, Jerusalem in the text. None of the accounts of the martyrdom of James in the historical and patristic literature contain a command to leave Jerusalem nor an indication by a revelatory figure that the destruction will occur following his departure, whether physical or post-mortem. Instead, we can find the inspiration for this formulation in the source for Hegesippus' account that we discussed in chapter two. As such, we look to the opening lines of the *Paraleipomena Jeremiou (4 Baruch)*, which relate the revelation to Jeremiah concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

It came to pass, when the children of Israel were taken captive by the king of the Chaldeans, (that) God spoke to Jeremiah, “Jeremiah, my chosen one, get up (and) depart from this city, you and Baruch, since I am going to destroy it because of the multitude of the sins of those who dwell in it. Because your prayers are like a solid pillar in its midst and like an iron wall surrounding it. Now, then, get up and depart before the host of the Chaldeans surrounds it!” And Jeremiah answered, saying, “I beseech you, O Lord, permit me, your servant, to speak in your presence.” And the Lord said to him, “Speak my chosen one, Jeremiah.” And Jeremiah spoke, saying, “O Lord Almighty, would you hand over the chosen city into the hands of the Chaldeans so that the king of the multitude of his people will boast and say, ‘I gained power over God’s holy city!’? No, my Lord, but if it is your will, let it be done away with by your (own) hands!” And the Lord said to Jeremiah, “Because you are my chosen one: get up and depart from this city, you and Baruch, for I am going to destroy it because of the multitude of the sins of those who dwell in it. For neither the king nor his host will be able to enter it unless I first open the gates. Get up, then, and go to Baruch and tell him these words. And when you have arisen at the sixth hour of the night, go onto the city walls and I will show you: unless I first destroy the city, they cannot enter it.” When the Lord had said these things he departed from Jeremiah (*4 Baruch* 1:1-11).³¹⁹

The recommendation to leave Jerusalem is also conveyed to Zedekiah by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 21:8-10.

Furthermore, tell the people, “This is what the Lord says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; they will escape with their lives. I have determined to do this city harm and not good, declares the Lord. It will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will destroy it with fire” (NIV).

In addition to the aforementioned references, we should also note that Jesus warns James with respect to the implications of relaying the material that he has revealed. The revelation passed on by James is the catalyst for his being seized by the agents of the archons. It becomes

³¹⁹ Translations of *4 Baruch* are from Herzer, *4 Baruch*, 2-5.

somewhat unclear in the text as to whether or not the revelation of James is post-martyrdom and spiritual, or if James returns in the same way as Jesus to present the revelation to Addai (NHC 36, 15- 38, 11 // AMC 23, 12-25, 14). Within the context of the ascent narrative, the formula that James recites in order to pass the “toll collectors” leads to the statement that **ΑΥΩ ΤΟΤΕ ΕΥΕΨΤΟΡΤΡ̄** (“and then they will be disturbed,” NHC 35, 19-20),³²⁰ or **ΑΥΩ ΤΟΤΕ ΣΕΝΑΨΤΑΡΤΡ̄ ΤΗΡΟΥ** (“and then all of them will be disturbed,” AMC 22, 17-18). A similar pattern is seen in relation to the prophecies of Jeremiah in *4 Baruch* and Jeremiah 38. In both of these cases the prophecy concerning the sins of the people and the destruction of Jerusalem leads to the persecution of the prophet. Similarly, in the *First Apocalypse of James* it is the revelatory discourse that leads to the archons being armed against the protagonist. In the narrative of *4 Baruch* we see a curious account of Jeremiah falling dead and being raised, literally having his spirit return to his body three days later.

While Jeremiah was saying this and was standing with Baruch and Abimelech at the altar, he became like one of those who had died.³²¹ And Baruch and Abimelech kept weeping and crying out in a loud voice, “Our father Jeremiah, the priest of God, has left us behind and gone away.” And all the people heard their lamentation, and they all ran to them and saw Jeremiah lying dead on the ground. And they tore their garments and put dust on their heads and wept bitterly. And after this they prepared themselves in order to bury him. And, behold, there came a voice saying, “Do not bury the one who is still alive, for his soul is entering his body again.” And when they heard the voice, they did not bury him but stayed around his tent for three days, talking and being at a loss as

³²⁰ Schoedel (“The *First Apocalypse of James*,” 91) translates this as “and the they will fall into confusion.” The concept of disturbance among the powers is also a key theme with respect to Irenaeus’ depiction of the Marcosians’ rituals for the dead in *Adversus Haeresis* I.21.5.

³²¹ Herzer, *4 Baruch*, 35 n.12, notes that he “delivered his soul.”

to when he would arise. And after three days his soul entered his body (*4 Baruch* 9:7-13).

In this passage Jeremiah's soul departs from his flesh, possibly implying an otherworldly ascent. The important element is that his revelation to Baruch and Abimelech takes place following this. We are told in the *First Apocalypse of James* that the revelation to Addai will take place "when you depart from the flesh" (AMC 23, 13-15). In both the *First Apocalypse of James* and *4 Baruch*, then, we see a pattern of multiple revelations with a second (or third) revelation being imparted following the departure of the protagonist's soul from their body. There is also a curious detail in both of these texts wherein another figure stands in for the protagonist at the point of their persecution. In *4 Baruch* 9:22-31, in the midst of his revelation to Abimelech and Baruch, Jeremiah is in danger of being killed for what he has said.

At this frenzy Baruch and Abimelech became very grieved because they wanted to hear in full all the secrets he had seen. But Jeremiah said to them, "Be silent and stop your weeping, for they surely will not kill me until I have told you all I saw." And he said to them, "Bring me a stone!" and he set it up and said, "Light of the ages, cause this stone to take on my appearance!" and the stone took on the appearance of Jeremiah. And they stoned the stone, thinking it to be Jeremiah. But Jeremiah shared with Baruch and Abimelech all the secrets he had seen. And after this he stood in this manner in the midst of the people wanting to fulfill his ministry. But the stone cried out, saying "O, foolish children of Israel, why are you stoning me supposing that I am Jeremiah? Behold, Jeremiah is standing in your midst." And when they saw him, they immediately ran to him with many stones and (so) his ministry was completed. And Baruch and Abimelech came and buried him, and taking the stone they put it on his tomb and wrote on it the following, "This is the stone, the ally of Jeremiah."³²²

³²² The parallels between the episode in *4 Baruch* and what is depicted in the text concerning the crucifixion of Jesus and the martyrdom of James are an issue that should be further explored at a later date.

In this case, the continuing revelation is aided by a transfigured stone which stands in for Jeremiah. In the Al Minya codex beginning at 30:4 we see that there is another figure named James that is introduced. It is unclear, but possible that it is in fact this figure who is stoned to death instead of James. If that is the case, then it is possible that the revelation to Addai does not occur post-martyrdom, though this is only speculation. In both of the texts, then, we see that the continuing revelation – in the *First Apocalypse of James* first to James, and then to the lineage of Addai, and in *4 Baruch* from Jeremiah to Baruch and Abimelech – is effected through a pattern which can be laid out as 1) initial revelation; 2) departure/return of the soul of the revealer; 3) continued revelation; and 4) in both cases the departure of the soul of the protagonist (presumably in the case of James) through an act of martyrdom by stoning.

Conclusions:

We conclude, then, that the author of the apocalypse was probably aware of the Hegesippan account and, as we have discussed in chapter two, that *4 Baruch* is the likely source for the motifs employed in the construction of the Hegesippan James. Even so, knowledge of the Hegesippan narrative alone does not account for the particular commandment to leave Jerusalem, nor is it the source for the cup of bitterness found in the text. As such, we conclude that the references to the fall of Jerusalem in the *First Apocalypse of James* reflect the use of traditions found in Hegesippus, Pseudo-Josephus, and Origen, but that the original kernel of tradition is to be found in traditions associated with the prophet Jeremiah, in particular, the books of Jeremiah, Lamentations, and *4 Baruch*. We have seen that the text of *4 Baruch* is particularly important to our understanding of the narrative, as it is the only other text that was extant during the correct time period that included the command to leave Jerusalem, while also

including a parallel revelatory structure to what we see in the *First Apocalypse of James*. All of these elements and connections serve to situate the narrative within the Jewish, post-exilic cycle of exile and return.

To conclude the discussion of apocalyptic elements and conventions: the *First Apocalypse of James* makes extensive use of apocalyptic conventions and intertextual connections. Regarding the aforementioned varying conventions of what we refer to as apocalyptic, we can say that the *First Apocalypse of James* is an apocalyptic text displaying the many commonly held characteristics that demand inclusion within the genre. It is a revelatory dialogue mediated by a divine figure, with specifically eschatological elements such as the repeated references to the destruction of Jerusalem and the land being at war. Returning to the typology of Fallon, we can conclude by arguing that the *First Apocalypse of James* is a gnostic apocalypse which includes a heavenly journey (though recounted to the recipient of the revelation), and as a consequence should be considered as belonging to type I.³²³ Additionally, we must conclude that the type of revelation should not be understood as being solely concerned with personal salvation, as Fallon asserted, but rather that the revelation (and in particular the continuing revelation in the lineage of Addai, as discussed in chapter four) should denote a universal soteriology. Of special interest is that, as we have seen, the text makes extensive references to Jewish apocalyptic texts and traditions, an element that helps us to situate the text within a Valentinian context.

³²³ Fallon, "The Gnostic Apocalypses," 138-39.

Chapter 4: Authority, Commission, and Apostolic Descent

The present chapter explores how, in addition to being representative of the Gnostic apocalyptic genre, the text acts as a commission narrative. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the commission serves to reinforce the underlying theme of authority that is, through the use of the figure of James, related to an alternative form of apostolic succession. This is shown through an analysis of the succession narrative in relation to the specifically named figures (James, Addai, Manael, Levi, and Levi's second son). Through an analysis of the timeline and names represented in the commission narrative I show conclusively that this element of the text is carefully crafted by the author, making use of Eastern Christian (Armenian and Syrian), Jewish-Christian, and specifically Jewish apocalyptic material in order to present a line of counter-apostolic descent legitimating the authority of the intended group of readers.

4.1. The *First Apocalypse of James* as a Commission Narrative

Previous scholarly engagements with *I Apoc. Jas.* have been relatively limited. They have generally led to the conclusion that the purpose of the revelatory dialogue in the text was to impart instructions for the ascent of the soul to one about to be martyred.³²⁴ The recent

³²⁴ See Karen L. King, "Martyrdom and Its Discontents in the Tchacos Codex," in *The Codex Judas Papers*, 23-42. In King's view the Al Minya Codex shows an overarching concern with the question of martyrdom and sacrifice. She states that "not only the Gospel of Judas, however, but also the first two texts included in the Tchacos Codex, The Letter of Peter to Philip and The First Apocalypse of James, are concerned with persecution and death" (p. 23). Overall, she sees the three extant texts in the codex as offering preparation for martyrdom (p. 24). We will further

discovery of a second copy of the text as part of the Al Minya Codex has led to a different possibility. In the previous chapter we discussed the inclusion of the text within the genres of apocalyptic, specifically Gnostic apocalyptic literature. On another level, the text of the *First Apocalypse of James* can be understood as a commission narrative. The genre of commission narratives has been explored at some length by Istvan Czachesz. According to Czachesz, the following are constant elements of commission narratives: 1) introduction; 2) confrontation; 3) reaction; 4) commission; 5) protest; 6) reassurance; 7) description of the task; 8) inauguration; and 9) conclusion,³²⁵ all of which are present in the narrative of the *First Apocalypse of James*.

In our text, the overall structure of the commission narrative serves to establish a chain of authority. In particular, it establishes the authority of an unknown community which may be linked to Eastern Syrian Christianity through James and the lineage from Addai to the second son of Levi.³²⁶ The element of authority is easily overlooked in the Nag Hammadi text due to a large number of missing passages at critical points in the text where names are given and their connections are clarified. The establishment of authority is extant throughout both revelatory sections, as well as the final part of the text which might be termed as James's "passion" narrative. In discussing the question of authority it is necessary to refer primarily to the text from the Al Minya codex, since it contains far more of the narrative.

discuss the question of martyrdom in relation to the codex as whole when we look at editorial intention in the appendix.

³²⁵ See Istvan Czachesz, *Commission Narratives: A Comparative Study of the Canonical and Apocryphal Acts* (Studies in Early Christian Apocrypha 8; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 1-2.

³²⁶ On the lineage of Addai, see Edwards, "Jewish Christianity Revisited," 331-34.

4.2. Initial Commission of James (Pre-Passion Revelation)

The transmission of authority through the commissioning of James is alluded to early in the text when Jesus first foretells his own martyrdom (AMC 2 11, 8-26) and then immediately announces James's martyrdom as well, showing how James will succeed him after he departs. The purpose is to demonstrate that, while Jesus is a reflection of the "One Who Is," somehow the same and also second, the same dynamic exists between Jesus and James. This is further explored in AMC 2 14, 21-15, 7 (// NHC V, 3 27, 7-20), where James recites a list of Jesus' attributes and triumphs. The text reads:

ʒ̄ṙ̄ābbēi : akēi ǧār [ʒ̄n̄] oūcooūne : eχ̄pio n̄toū
 m̄ntat̄cooūne : aγ̄w n̄takei ʒ̄n̄ oūp̄ p̄meoūe :
 eχ̄pio n̄teγ̄b̄ce>>>>--alla n̄t̄qī rooūcȳ an
 ʒ̄ārok akēi ǧār et̄m̄ntat̄cooūne aγ̄w
 [m̄]pk̄t̄w̄l̄m̄ laoūe ʒ̄rh̄ī n̄z̄ht̄c̄ akēi et̄b̄cē aγ̄w
 p̄r̄ p̄meoūe n̄z̄ht̄k̄ ak̄mōcē ʒ̄m̄ p̄omē m̄pk̄t̄w̄l̄m̄ :
 m̄p̄oū̄ tāzō m̄pek̄k̄ba

“For Rabbi, you have come [with] knowledge to rebuke their ignorance. And you have come with remembrance to rebuke their forgetfulness. But I am not worried about you. For you have come to ignorance and you have not been defiled at all by it. You have come to forgetfulness, and remembrance was in you. You have walked in mud, and you have not gotten dirty. They did not arouse your vengeance.”

James immediately follows this with a description of himself as lesser than Jesus in these areas.

ano[k̄ Δ]e n̄t̄z̄ē an̄ alla b̄cē nim̄ eβ̄ol
 [ʒ̄it̄oo]t̄oū̄ te tāī et̄z̄īw̄[t̄] [aγ̄w] n̄t̄p̄ [p̄me]oū̄e
 an̄ : n̄[ε]tē [no]γ̄eī̄ ceō nāt̄cooūne n̄z̄ht̄ [aγ̄w]
 an̄k̄ ō[γ̄]t̄ēlioc̄ a[n̄ n̄]c̄[o]oū̄ne : aγ̄[w] n̄c̄mēlē[i]

ΝΑΙ ΑΝ [?]Δ ΝΒΑCΑΝ[Ο]C ΕΤΖΝ ΠΕCΙΜΑ :[ΑΛΛΑ]
 ΕΤΒΕ [Π]ΕΥΑΜΑΖ[ΤΕ] (AMC 2 15, 7-15).

“Now, I am not of this type. But the forgetfulness that is upon me comes from them. And I have no memory. Those who belong to me are ignorant. And I am not complete in knowledge. And I am not concerned about the torments that are in this place, but about their power.”

This passage may reflect an intertextual connection to Hosea 4:6 (“My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children,” NIV), where God blames destruction on the people having rejected knowledge, saying that his people are ignorant of him. This is also reflective of the lamentation for Judah in Jeremiah 4:22: “For My people are foolish, They know Me not; They are stupid children and have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know” (NIV).

The reference to a lack of knowledge, or the ignorance of those who belonged to Jesus or James may also find its genesis in the gospel narratives, wherein there is an established pattern showing that the disciples do not fully understand Jesus’ role and identity. We see this in Mark 8:17-18 (“Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember,” NIV), where the disciples, witnessing the miracle of the feeding of the multitudes, are unable to grasp its meaning. We see a similar theme surrounding the lack of understanding on the part of the disciples in relation to the martyrdom of Jesus in Luke 18:34 (“But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said,” NIV). In our text, then, we see that the author is using the previously established lack of understanding and ignorance on the part of the other disciples

to create a separation between them and James. James is voicing an admission of his own ignorance which will then be remedied through the revelation that ensues within the discourse. This passage also serves to establish James as the successor to Jesus through an illustration of the gradation in their relationship. Much as Jesus sets himself as second to the “One Who Is,” James is now establishing himself as lesser than Jesus.

4.3. Transference of Authority to James and Timeline of the Lineage (Post-Passion Revelation)

The second revelation (AMC 2, 16, 27-29,15) further clarifies the claim of authority. The opening sequence shows James acting as a comforter to his disciples prior to the return of Jesus. The important element to note is that they are specifically referred to as **ΝΕΨΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ**, “his (i.e. James’s) disciples” (AMC 2 17, 11 // NHC V, 3 30, 21-22). This is necessary for the establishment of the chain of authority in the text as it signals an immediate transition of authority within the group. This is further stated in AMC 17, 14-15, where the disciples refer to James as **ΠΜΕΖCΑΖ CNEY**, “the Second master.”

In the second revelatory sequence the worth of James and his designation as successor have already been established. The main goal then seems to be to establish how authority is transferred from James to Addai and his successors. In AMC 23, 13-15 Jesus says to James, **ΚΝΑΒΟΛΠΟΥ ΔΕ Ε[Β]ΟΛ: ΖΟΤΑΝ ΕΚΨΑΝΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΤCΑΡΑΞ**
ΝΑΔΔΑΙ, “but you will reveal them to Addai when you leave the flesh.” It should be noted that the reference to departing from the flesh is unique to the Al Minya narrative. It is possible that this is a scribal omission, or that a piece of text has been lost in Nag Hammadi Codex V. It

is crucial, however, to our understanding of the transmission of knowledge from James to Addai. In much the same way that Paul never met Jesus, it is possible that the text considers the passing of revelation to Addai to occur after James' martyrdom.³²⁷ The pattern and understanding of authority and apostleship in the text fits with the Pauline apostolic criteria expressed in 1 Cor. 15:1-11.³²⁸ As such, the natural progression in our understanding of the

³²⁷ For a discussion of the transmission of apostolic authority and its impact on both Gnostic and orthodox Christian groups, see Ann G. Brock, *Mary Magdalene, the First Apostle: The Struggle for Authority* (Harvard Theological Studies 51; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Divinity School, 2003). Paul's understanding of apostleship was based on the experience of a post-resurrection experience of the risen Christ. As such, the revelation to James as a means of transmitting apostolic authority fits the Pauline model.

³²⁸ "Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed" (NIV). Though I cannot yet prove a strong Pauline influence on the construction of the text, it is worth noting that Peter and James are the only witnesses named specifically by Paul. We find this same attestation in the *Gospel According to the Hebrews* that is quoted by Jerome in *De viris illustribus* 2. It is significant that in Jerome's attestation James is referred to by Jesus as "his brother." Paul's claim to authority has commonly been understood to rest on his understanding that he was granted apostolic status through his experience of the risen Jesus. This is problematized by John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series 26; London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 109-11, who claims that the resurrection appearance itself is not enough to justify a claim to authority, which he underscores with the statement that "not everyone who saw the resurrected Jesus was an apostle" (p. 109). The problem with this statement is that, as we can infer from 1 Cor. 15:1-11, Paul himself understood the resurrection appearance to be the defining element of apostolicity.

revelation is for James to appear post-martyrdom to Addai, in order to reveal the knowledge imparted to him by Jesus.

There seems to be justification in the text for a transference of authority from the Jerusalem church to Addai in Syria. In AMC 2 23, 15-19 it is stated that **ΑΥΩ**

ΝΤ[Ε]ΥΝΟΥ ΦΝΑΜΙΩΕ ΝΒΙ ΠΚΕΖΙ [Ε]ΤΕ ΠΑΪ ΠΕ : ΑΥΩ ΣΝΑΩ

ΜΠΕΣΠΟΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΑΣ† ΝΟΥΒ̄C ΓΑΡ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΤΟΥΗΖ ΝΘΙΛΗΜ,

“and immediately this land will struggle (be at war). And she (i.e., the land) will drink of her cup, for she has angered the God who dwells in Jerusalem.” This passage is most likely a reference to the war of 66-70 CE that culminated in the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. The war followed relatively closely behind the martyrdom of James in 62 CE.³²⁹ Transmission of authority through James could (and this is only speculation) be seen as a justification for authority lying in Syria, rather than elsewhere, following the end of the Jerusalem church.

What follows in 23.19-24.26 is a lineage of the descent of authority within the Syrian church beginning with Addai.

**ΑΔΔΑΙΟΣ : ΔΕ ΜΑΡΕΦΧΠΟ ΝΕΦ ΝΝΕΙC[Ε] ΧΕ ΝΖΤ̄Q
 ΜΜΗΤΕ ΝΡΟΜΠΕ ΑΥΩ ΤΟΤΕ : ΦΝΑΤΟΛΜΑ ΕΖΜΟCΤ`
 ΕΖΡΗΪ ΕCΑΖΟΥ ΑΥΩ ΤΟΤΕ ΕΦΩΑΝCΑΖΟΥ
 CΕΝΑΦΙΤΟΥ ΝΤΟΟΤ̄Q ΝCΕΤΑΑΥ ΜΜΑΝΔΗΛ ΠΑΪ
 ΟΥΡΑΝ ΕΦΟΥΕΕΒ ΠΕ ΟΥΝΤΕΦ ΔΕ ΜΜΑΥ
 ΜΠΕΦΤΟΝΤ̄Ν ΕΜΑCΦΗΛ ΠΑΪ ΜΑΡΕΦΚΩ ΝΑΦ
 ΜΠΕΕΙΧΩΜΕ ΕΤΕ ΠΔΕΙ ΠΕ ΕΥΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΙΑ**

³²⁹ For a full exploration of the traditions surrounding James and his martyrdom, see chapter 1.

ΝῆΨΗΡΕ ΨΗΝΟ ΔΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΖΗΤῶ ΝῆΒΙ ΟΥΣΠΕΡΜΑ
 ΕΦΟΥΕΕΒ : ΑΥΩ ΕΨΜΠΨΑ Νῆ ΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΙ ΝΝ[Αῖ]
 ΝΤΑῖΧΟΟΥ ΖΟΤΑΝ ΔΕ ΕΡ[Ε]ΨΑΝΠΕΨΨΗΡΕ ΚΟΥῖ ῆ
 Ν[Οῦ] [..]. ΨΜ [.] .-. ΕΤΟΝΖ ΨΝΑΧ[Ι] Ν[Ο]ΥΡΕΝ ΧΕ
 ΛΕΥΕΙ : ΤΟΤΕ ΟΝ ΨΝΑῆ ΠΟΛΕΜΙ ΝῆΒΙ ΠΚΕΖῆ ΛΕΥ[Ε]Ι
 ΔΕ ΨΝΑΖΩΠῆ ΜῆΜΑΥ ΕΦΟ ΝΨΗΡΕ ΚΟΥῖ ΑΥΩ Μῆ
 ΟΥΨΑΧΕ ΝΗΥ ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ ΝΕΨΨΟΤΟΥ [.] ΕΒΟΛ Ζῆ
 ΝΑΕΙ ΝΤΑΕΙ ΧΟΟΥ : ΨΝΑΧΙ ΔΕ ΝΟΥΨΖΙΜ[Ε]
 ΝῆΜῆΙΛΗΜ ΖΜ ΠΕΨΓΕΝΟΨ ΑΥΩ ΝΨΧΠΟ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΖΗΤῶ
 ΝΨΗΡΕ ΨΝΑΥ : ΑΥΩ ΠΜΝΤΨΝ[.] ΝΑΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΙ ΝΝΑΕΙ
 ΦΗΤ ΜΠΝΟῦ ΝΑΤΩΜ : ΑΥΩ ΝΑῖ ΨΕΝΑΨΙΤΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ
 Ζῆ ΠΕΨΖΗΤ ΠΚΟΥῖ ΔΕ ΨΝΑῆ ΑΥΞΑΝΕ ΝΖΗΤΟΥ : ΑΥΩ
 ΝΑῖ ΨΝΑΚΑΑΥ ΕΥΖΗΤῆ ΨΑΝΤΕΨΨΩΠΕ Ζῆ ΠΨΙΒΕ
 ΜῆΝΤῆΖ ΝΡΟΜΠΕ>>>

Let Addai keep these things in his heart for ten years. And then he will be seated to write them out. And then when he has written them out, they will be taken away from him and given to Manaël. This is a name that is holy and has the likeness of Masphele. Let this person keep this book that is an inheritance for the children. There will come from him a seed that is holy and that is worthy to inherit these things that I have said. And when this small child becomes big (great, i.e., grows up). He will receive the name Levi. Then the land will be at war again. But Levi, as a small child will hide there and no words will pass from his lips that I have said. He will marry a woman from Jerusalem that is of his line.³³⁰ And he will have two sons, and the second will inherit these things. The heart of the older one will be closed and these words will be taken from his mind. The smaller (i.e., younger) one will grow up with them. And he will keep these things hidden until he reaches seventeen years.

Addai passed the knowledge to Manaël, and Manaël passed this on to his son Levi. The text states that during Levi's childhood the land will be at war again. Following the conflict Levi

³³⁰ Meyer and Gaudard translate this as "generation." In this case, however, it makes more sense that it is a commandment toward endogamous marriage and as such **ΓΕΝΟΨ** should almost certainly refer to lineage or kinship.

marries a woman from Jerusalem and has two sons, the second of whom is the greater. The fact that Levi marries a woman from Jerusalem further establishes a link between his son, who is the culmination of the lineage, and the authority invested in the Jerusalem church. It should also be noted that in the lifetime of Levi's son there is yet another war mentioned in the narrative. With respect to the three wars mentioned in the narrative extant in the Al Minya version, we have to conclude that the conflicts in question are not simply fictional devices being used by the author. Instead, it is more likely that we are considering conflicts involving the Jewish communities, in both Palestine and the diaspora, that are historical in nature, and that the ideal readers of the text would have been aware of. We should also note that the conflicts would have been between Jewish forces and those of the Roman hegemonic empire. In the text we are told that James will reveal the teachings to Addaios when he departs from the flesh, which would correlate with his martyrdom in the year 62 CE. The reference to the land being at war which follows in 23,16, should refer to the Jewish revolt that culminated in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in the year 70 CE. We are then told that Addaios keeps the revelation secret for ten years before writing it out and having it passed to Manael. When Manael's son Levi is older, the land is said to be at war again in 24.11. Finally, at the point when Levi's second son reaches the age of seventeen, the land will again go to war as seen in 25.1.

The obvious points of conflict between the Jews and Rome are the war of 66-73, the revolt under Trajan in 115-117, and the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132-135. It is likely that the author of the text was attempting to make the genealogy match up to the timeline of the revolts against Rome. Working backward, we can see that if we start with the second son of Levi reaching the age of seventeen in 132 CE, at the start of the Bar Kokhba revolt, then we can show that he would have been born in 115 CE, at the beginning of the revolt under Trajan, at the point when the

revelation would have been passed to Levi. Moving back 17 years would then place it in the year 98 CE, where we would assume that the revelation would be passed from Addaios to Manael. To make the chronology work in relation to the age of seventeen with respect to the passing of revelation, we have to take into account the fact that the child born in 115 was Levi's second son. This allows us to push the revelation to Manael back to the year 97 CE. This is possible if Levi's first son is born in 114 CE, when he was seventeen. If Manael received the revelation at the age of seventeen in 97, then we can say that the codification of the revelation would have occurred in the year 80 CE. This would then be ten years after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. It is stipulated that Addaios keeps the revelation secret for a ten year period before writing it down. It is possible, then, that he writes it down at the point of the birth of Manael. As such, we can postulate that the revelation from James to Addaios for the purposes of the author of the text would have taken place in the year 70, and coincided with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. This is possible since we are only told that the revelation to Addaios takes place after James departs from the flesh (without a time period being given), and that it coincides with a conflict in the land. Thus, we can argue that the timeline for revelation would be: James (death in 62 CE) → Addaios (70-80 CE) → Manael (97 CE) → Levi (115 CE) → second son of Levi (132 CE).

We might also consider an alternative timeline based on the recognition of the triumph of Titus. If we place the birth of Levi in the year 98 CE, seventeen years prior to the beginning of the conflict under Trajan, then there are two other dates that are plausible in the timeline. If we place the birth of Manael seventeen years prior to the year 98 CE, then it coincides with the construction of the Arch of Titus in Rome, which commemorated the destruction of Jerusalem and the defeat of the Jewish forces. An association with the year 81 CE would necessitate the

codification of the revelation to have occurred in the year 71 CE, which does not correlate with the destruction of the temple. It does, however, coincide with the awarding of the triumph over the Jews to Titus and the parading of the Jewish prisoners and the temple treasures through the streets of Rome.

Finally, we have to ask why the age of seventeen would be significant to the narrative. Within either Judaism or Christianity there is no known significance attached to the age of seventeen, with one exception. Seventeen is the age given for the patriarch Joseph when, in Genesis 37:2-10, he is shown to be the favoured son of Jacob. We are told that “now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him” (37:3, NIV). This is also the age at which Joseph begins to have prophetic dreams (Gen. 37:5-10). The age of seventeen given in our text may then be a veiled reference to Joseph, who was not only the favoured son of Jacob and a prophet, but also the one who initially ensured the survival of the patriarchs and their families when famine forced them into Egypt (Gen. 42-43).

4.4. The Revelation to Addai

The timeline given (cryptically) in the text is surely not accidental; neither are the names of the recipients of the revelation that are specified by the author of the text. Obviously we know which James is being referred to in the text. The other names (Addaios, Manael, Levi, Levi’s second son) however, all require some clarification with respect to their purpose and importance.

The identity and role of Addai can be expanded on intertextually. Addai, or a character based on a shared tradition, appears in two texts that are pertinent to this discussion. In an Edessan context, Addai is the focus of the fifth century *Doctrine of Addai*, and is represented under the name of Thaddaeus in the *Legend of Abgar* recounted by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (I.13).³³¹ It is the reference by Eusebius that is essential to our understanding of how Addai is represented in our text. Eusebius recounts the story of the evangelization of Edessa by Thaddaeus, a disciple of Jesus. The Abgar narrative gives the account of a fictional correspondence between King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus. At the opening of the narrative Abgar is suffering from a terrible disease and, having heard of Jesus' miraculous healing power, urges him to come to Edessa with the dual purpose of healing and escaping the danger presented by the Jews in Jerusalem (*HE* I.13,10). Jesus declines his invitation, instead promising to send one of his disciples to the king (*HE* I.13,11). Once he arrives in Edessa, Thaddaeus is summoned by Abgar who sees a great vision upon the face of the apostle and, as such, pays reverence to him (*HE* I.13, 14-15). Seeing the king's faith, Thaddaeus cures him of his disease, after which he performs a number of other miraculous healings. The next day Thaddaeus preaches to an assembly of citizens and recounts the crucifixion, descent into Hades, and ascension of Jesus (*HE* I. 13, 19-21).

According to Eusebius' account, he discovered the document in the archives of Edessa, and then translated it from Syriac. This has been met with some skepticism on the part of the

³³¹ The name Addai also appears in the thirteenth century *Book of the Bee* (notable for also including the name Manael), as well as in the *Acts of Pilate* (Adda, 14:1). On the Manichaean missionary called Addā, see below, n. 333.

scholarly community. In his *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, Walter Bauer raises serious doubts about this possibility, stating that he chooses to “proceed from the following assumption: Eusebius has not fabricated this himself, but has been deceived by someone else.”³³² With this in mind, Bauer does not call into question whether or not Eusebius has reliably transmitted what he has read, but rather asserts that the church historian was given the documents with the assurance that they came from the archives of Edessa instead of having retrieved them himself.³³³ In Bauer’s estimation, it is likely that Eusebius was given the documents by Bishop Qune of Edessa, who had a vested interest in legitimating his own authority through recourse to direct apostolic succession and commission. Agreeing with Bauer, though not stating it overtly, is Alain Desreumaux, who, in his introduction to the historical circumstances behind Eusebius’ discovery, states:

Eusèbe date l’événement de l’an 340 des Grecs, soit 28-29 de notre ère. Il prétend que le document syriaque qui le raconte a été conservé dans les archives de la ville royale d’Édesse et il déclare en donner la traduction littérale. Le caractère légendaire du récit n’implique pas nécessairement qu’Eusèbe ait commis un faux. Le premier historien de l’Église a puisé dans quantité de documents rassemblés avant lui, entre autres par Origène, puis par lui-même. Il n’est pas invraisemblable qu’un récit ancien ait existé qui racontait les *Actes* de l’apôtre Thaddée envoyé à Abgar d’Édesse; Jules l’Africain, ami d’Origène et de Septime Sévère, auteur des *Broderies* qui décrivent la vie à la cour d’Abgar VIII au début du III^e siècle, aurait mentionné dans sa *Chronique* la mission de Thaddée à Édesse.³³⁴

³³² Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (trans. and ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 10.

³³³ See Walter Bauer, “The Abgar Legend,” in *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher; trans. Robert McL. Wilson; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 1:437-44.

³³⁴ Alain Desreumaux, *Histoire du roi Abgar et de Jésus* (Apocryphes 3; Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), 14-15.

Thus, at a basic level, Bauer's theory continues to be plausible.

The Abgar legend as presented by Eusebius is important to our discussion in terms of its representation of an alternative process of revelation and transmission of authority. We can interpret the text of the *First Apocalypse of James* and the Abgar story as presenting parallel, though divergent, accounts of the establishment of Christianity in a (possibly) Syrian and Northern Mesopotamian context, which are both constructed in order to reinforce a particular understanding of apostolic authority. The most important parallel is the method of revelation in the two texts. In the *Legend of Abgar* (and the *Doctrine of Addai*) we find a pattern – Jesus → Judas Thomas → Thaddaeus (Addai) → Abgar – similar to that of the *First Apocalypse of James*. In both texts, Jesus, in a post-passion appearance, instructs one of his disciples to transmit a special revelation to an individual called Addai/Thaddaeus. In Eusebius' account this is done by the apostle Thomas (*HE* I.13,11), who eventually becomes associated with the church in Edessa, while in the *First Apocalypse of James* this role is fulfilled by James, the brother of Jesus. In both cases, Addai is not charged with his mission directly by Jesus, but rather is sent through an intermediary under whose authority he acts. The use of Thomas, in this case, creates a sense of direct apostolic succession, while the link with James acts to create a connection, not only with the Jerusalem community (and hence a claim to apostolicity), but also with the Jewish roots of Christianity.³³⁵ This is an important point of difference between the two texts. While the *First Apocalypse of James* embraces the connection with Judaism, the Abgar legend betrays

³³⁵ Schoedel ("A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem," 165) briefly discusses the relationship between James and Thomas as described in the two accounts. He feels, however, that this parallel does not necessarily signal an origin, or even more than a passing contact with Syrian Christianity. This view is not surprising as Schoedel would not yet have had access to the better preserved account of the lineage which is seen in AMC 2.

strong anti-Jewish tendencies, particularly when Abgar declares that “I have such belief in him as to have wished to take force and destroy the Jews who crucified him, had I not been prevented from this by the Roman empire” (*HE* I.13, 16). This difference in the relationship to Judaism is further evidence that the two texts, while employing a parallel form of the revelation and transmission of authority, are using these tools in order to reinforce their association with an idealized line of succession.³³⁶

We should also note that the name Addai features prominently in early Manichaeism. According to Han J. W. Drijvers, “[i]n the Manichaean tradition Addai or Adda is one of the best-known missionaries, who belongs to the inner circle around Mani himself; his greatest activity was set in the Syrian area, and he possessed the same miraculous power of healing as Mani himself.”³³⁷ The traditions about the two men named Addai thus show a certain analogy, which points to the conclusion put forth by Drijvers that the Christian Addai is a borrowing from Manichaeism. While it is true that the Manichaean Addai predates the account of Eusebius, it is possible that the traditions contained in our text point to an earlier, possibly second-century tradition. If this is the case, then, the argument that the Christian Addai was based on the Manichaean apostle would be easily refuted, and we could point to the *First Apocalypse of James* as containing the earliest known attestation of this form of the name Addai.

³³⁶ To the list of relatively early references to the apostle Addai, we must also add the sixth century *Chronicle of Arbela*, which traces the history of the bishops of Adiabene up to the sixth century. In this text we are told that the first bishop was consecrated by the apostle who laid hands upon him.

³³⁷ Han J.W. Drijvers, “The Abgar Legend” in *New Testament Apocrypha* (rev. ed.), 1:492-500 at 494.

4.5. The Transmission to Manael

Following in the lineage is the figure known as Manael, who proves to be somewhat of an enigma. In an accessible context, which is contemporary to the *First Apocalypse of James*, there is only one reference to the name Manael. It is a Syriac variant of the Manaen “who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch” and is listed among the prophets and teachers of Antioch in Acts 13:1, along with “Barnabas and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene [...] and Saul” (NIV). There is little said of this figure in early Christian literature, aside from the reference in Acts that associates him with the court of Herod Antipas. The variant Manael is only extant in the Syriac translation of the New Testament included in the Peshitta. This is easy to overlook when looking at translations, as the name has generally been harmonized by translators to agree with the name as it appears in the dominant versions from the Greek. Of the English translations available then, only that of George M. Lamsa transcribes Manael as it appears in the Serto text of the Peshitta.³³⁸

The name Manael as it appears in the text presents a couple of other possibilities that are worth exploring. The Al Minya text reads: **ḲḲḲḲḲḲḲḲ ḲḲḲḲ ḲḲḲḲ ḲḲḲḲḲḲḲḲ**

³³⁸ See George M. Lamsa, ed., *Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985). The translation as “Manael” can be contrasted with other translations such as The Way International Research Team, *Aramaic-English Interlinear New Testament* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1988-1989), which clearly has the name Manael in the Syriac text of Acts, but still harmonizes the translation and thus renders the name as “Manaen.” We should note that while the Peshitta New Testament was completed at the beginning of the fifth century, it is a revision of an Old Syriac version from which the book of Acts is no longer extant. The Old Syriac was thought to have been translated in the third century. Of the fully extant Syriac Christian books, the Peshitta is the earliest, predating both the Philoxenian (508 CE) and the Harklean (616 CE) versions. For further details see Sebastian Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2006).

ΠΕ ΟΥΝΤΕϚ ΔΕ Μ̄ΜΑΥ Μ̄ΠΕΦΤΟΝΤ̄Ν ΕΜ̄ᾹΣΦΗΛ̄ (AMC 2 23, 25-24,

1). Meyer and Gaudard give the translation as “Manael – this is a holy name, and it has the same meaning as Masphelel.”³³⁹ Kasser, gives an alternative translation in French that somewhat changes the meaning of the passage: “Manael, dont le nom est saint – et il a là son (*alter ego*) similaire en ‘Masphelel’.”³⁴⁰ Obviously, there is a point of discrepancy between the two interpretations given in these translations. To say that the names have the same meaning is not to say that they have a similar sound. Both interpretations rest on translational choices with respect to the word **ΤΟΝΤ̄Ν**, which strictly speaking should mean “likeness,” “to be like,” or “to compare.”³⁴¹ The passage itself is somewhat unclear, though it makes more sense in translation to say that the holy name can be compared to Masphelel.

The specific name Manael appears as an angel in the work of the thirteenth-century Kabbalist Joseph Gikatilla, who gives it as מנהיאל.³⁴² Unfortunately, this is too late of a reference to act as corroboration for my opinion that the two names being given, Manael and Masphelel, may have an angelic origin. The view of Manael as an angelic name is also put forth

³³⁹ *The Gospel of Judas... Critical Edition*, 147 and 149.

³⁴⁰ *The Gospel of Judas... Critical Edition*, 172.

³⁴¹ See Richard Smith, *A Concise Coptic-English Lexicon, Second Edition* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 33.

³⁴² For the exact reference, see Moïse Schwab, *Vocabulaire de l'angéologie, d'après les manuscrits hébreux de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1897), 175 (B.N., n. 770, f. 126a).

by Johanna Brankaer, who suggests that it could be an explanation for why it is considered to be a holy name but, again, without any specific reference.³⁴³

The interpretation of the names is further complicated by the fact that, as they are written in the manuscript, they may not lend themselves to the dominant transliteration as Manael and Masphel. Both of the names only contain the superlinear stroke over the final four letters, leading to the possibility that the names as they are written may be prefixed with the letters which do not contain the stroke. If this is the case, then we can parse the words as **ΜΜΑ** **ΝΑΗΛ** and **ΕΜ** **ΑCΦΗΛ**. It might be possible then to posit that instead of Manael, the text may actually be using an abbreviation for the name Nathanael. Of interest here is that both names mean roughly “gift of God.” With respect to the idea of it being a “holy name,” we might then conclude that it is here intended as the name of a saint or a holy figure.

Nathanael is only mentioned twice, in the Gospel of John, but was from an early point equated with the apostle Bartholomew. Our connection here lies in the fact that Bartholomew is closely connected with Thaddaeus as one of the founders of Christianity in Armenia, and is also credited with converting the Armenian king Polymius to Christianity. This strengthens our

³⁴³ See Brankaer and Bethge, *Codex Tchacos*, 230. Another possibility to consider with respect to the names is that they may be seen as being numerologically equivalent. There are possible links in the text to the Valentinian group known as the Marcosians. The founder of the group, Marcus, based much of his theology on numerological interpretation which was based not only on the letters found in individual words, but also on the letters that made up the names of individual letters. In this case, counting up the letters leaves us with a value of 27 for Manael and 26 for Masphel. It is notable that both of the names are made up of six characters and share the first two (**ΜΑ**) and final two (**ΗΛ**). The variation in number value seen in the two names as they appear in this manuscript may be attributable to a change in either transmission or translation. Regardless, this is a relatively tenuous explanation and is simply offered as a possibility that could be explored at further length.

understanding of the lineage as proposing an alternative form of the descent of apostolic authority. The story of how Thaddaeus was martyred in Armenia, closely followed by Bartholomew (Nathanael) is related in the fifth century *History of Armenia* by Moses of Khoren. In Moses' account of the Abgar legend, Abgar is depicted as being king not only of Edessa (as in the Eusebius account) but also of Armenia. The kingdom is then said to be divided following his death between his son, who reigns in Edessa, and his nephew Sanadroug, who reigns in Armenia. Attaeus (i.e., Thaddaeus), following his preaching in Edessa, is sent to Abgar's nephew Sanadroug, who becomes the king of Armenia (chapter 8). The key element of association between Attaeus/Thaddaeus and Bartholomew is found in chapter 9.

The prince who reigned after the death of his father, did not inherit his father's virtues: he opened the temples of the idol, and embraced the religion of the heathen. He sent word to Attaeus: "Makes me a head-dress of cloth interwoven with gold, like those you formerly used to make for my father." He received this answer from Attaeus: "My hands shall not make a head-dress for an unworthy prince, who does not worship Christ the living God." Immediately the king ordered one of his armed men to cut off Attaeus' feet. The soldier went and, seeing the holy man seated in the chair of the teacher, cut off his legs with his sword, and immediately the saint gave up the ghost. We mention cursorily, as a fact related to others a long while ago. There came then into Armenia the Apostle Bartholomew, who suffered martyrdom among us in the town of Arepan.³⁴⁴

In addition to Moses' account, Thaddaeus is strongly associated with Armenia in the Armenian *Martyrdom of Thaddaeus*, which again recounts an expanded account of the Abgar legend including the account of Thaddaeus' martyrdom by the sword.³⁴⁵ We should also make

³⁴⁴ Translation taken from *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; 8 vols.; Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1885-1886), 7:706.

³⁴⁵ The dating of this Armenian text is disputed. Valentina Calzolari ("Martyre de Thaddée arménien," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (ed. François Bovon, Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestly; 2 vols.; Bibliothèque de la

note of the account of the martyrdom of Bartholomew which is recorded in chapter 8 of Pseudo-Abdias, where Bartholomew, prior to his execution, casts out a demon infesting the daughter of Polymius, and subsequently converts the Armenian king to Christianity. The problem is, of course, that the Pseudo-Abdias account, probably compiled in the sixth century, is relatively late.³⁴⁶ It is obviously an issue that all of the accounts that form the basis for claims of an association between these two figures in the founding of Armenian Christianity are of a later date than the extant versions of our text.

Valentina Calzolari argues that the association between these two figures is the result of a certain amount of upheaval within the Armenian church starting in the seventh century with the separation from the Byzantine church, leading to a crisis with respect to apostolic authority, particularly since the figure of Thaddaeus is variously associated with the twelve and the seventy. As a consequence, she argues that,

le label d’apostolicité assuré par les deux figures conjointes de Thaddée et Barthélemy devait permettre aux Arméniens de se protéger des ingérences d’une Église grecque encore trop envahissante. Il faut par ailleurs rapeller que les traditions sur la mission arménienne des deux apôtres ne sont pas présentées comme concurrentielles dans les anciens textes apocryphes arméniens.³⁴⁷

Pléiade 442 and 516; Paris: Gallimard, 1997-2005), 2: 661-96 at 666) notes that the Armenian *Martyrdom of Thaddaeus* has been dated variously from the fifth to the seventh centuries of the common era.

³⁴⁶ According to M.B. Riddle (“Introductory Notice to Apocrypha of the New Testament,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 8:355), the stories in question “exist also in a Latin form in the ten books of the Acts of the Apostles, compiled probably in the sixth century, and falsely attributed to Abdias, the first bishop of Babylon, by whom it was, of course, written in Hebrew.”

³⁴⁷ Calzolari, “Martyre de Thaddée arménien,” 666.

Due to the relatively complex textual history that we are discussing, it is likely too simplistic to say that an association between the two figures must be late and the consequence of political maneuvering. Instead, it might be more apt to argue that the two traditions concerning Thaddaeus and Bartholomew may have circulated at an earlier period independently of one another but in the same thought-world of traditions concerning the foundation of Christianity, particularly with respect to the conversion of the royal family in an Armenian context. Returning to the overall question of competing forms of legitimacy with respect to a Thomasine or Jamesian lineage, it is an interesting side note that both Thomas and Bartholomew are associated in the varying traditions, with both the missionizing of the greater area around Armenia (and Edessa) and India.³⁴⁸

With respect to the overall question of context, it has long been supposed that there is a connection to eastern Syrian Christianity on the basis of the presence of the name Addai in the *First Apocalypse of James*. This was certainly the opinion given by previous commentators on the Nag Hammadi text, such as William Schoedel, who notes:

Another significant item in determining the historical context of this document are the references to Addai (36,15; 36,22), the reputed founder of Syrian Christianity. Eusebius refers to him as Thaddaeus in connection with an exchange of apocryphal letters between Jesus and Abgar, King of Edessa (*Hist. Eccl.* I.13). The name also occurs in later Syrian documents, the *Doctrine of Addai* and the *Chronicle of Arbela*. The connection here between James and Addai may reflect a strong Jewish element in the earliest Christianity of eastern Syria... To what degree Syria was also the home of gnostic or semi-gnostic forms of religion is difficult to say, although a syncretistic Syrian Christianity embracing gnostic elements would come as a surprise to no one. Perhaps *I Apo. Jas.* may be best

³⁴⁸ The question of some form of influence between the Latin *Martyrdom of Bartholomew* (Pseudo-Abdias VIII) and the *Acts of Thomas* is discussed briefly by Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction* (trans. Brian McNeil; Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2008) 177.

understood as a product of Syrian Jewish Christianity penetrated by a variety of forms of Gnosticism.³⁴⁹

While it is not possible to have the final word in relation to the location for composition of the text – as there are too many factors to consider, not the least of which are the locations in which the extant manuscripts were discovered – we can say with some certainty that there is a high likelihood that the text incorporates elements of an alternative apostolic tradition centered around eastern Syria and possibly Armenia.³⁵⁰

4.6. The transmission to Levi and the Second Son of Levi

Following the transmission to Manael/Nathanael/Masphele the lineage continues with Levi and his second son. These two figures are likely meant to be understood symbolically within the text and do not relate directly to any late antique historiography. As such, the move from the earlier part of the lineage, which included James, Addai, and Manael (possibly Nathanael), to the second part of the lineage, Levi and his second son, should be seen in light of the two main purposes of the lineage. In the first part, we see an argument for authority based on direct apostolic succession. In the second part, we see a symbolic continuation of the lineage that is meant to underscore the purity of the line and associate the text/community with the ideal priesthood.

³⁴⁹ Schoedel, “The (First) Apocalypse of James,” 67.

³⁵⁰ For an introduction to the history and traditions of the Armenian church, see Vrej Nerses Nersessian, “Armenian Christianity,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* (ed. Ken Parry; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007), 23-46.

In AMC 24, 4-7 we see Levi, who is the son of Manael, being referred to as follows,

ϸΝΕΥ ΔΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΖΗΤῪ ΝΒΙ ΟΥΣΠΕΡΜΑ ΕΦΟΥΕΕΒ :
 ΑΥΩ ΕΦΜΠΩΑ ΝΡ ΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΙ ΝΝ[ΑΙ] ΝΤΑΪΧΟΟΥ

“It will come from him, a seed that is holy and that is worthy to inherit these things that I have said.”

The idea of the lineage containing a “holy seed” leads to some interesting possibilities. It does not appear to be an explicit reference to the “gnostic” concepts associated with seeds, such as the “seed of Seth” or the “spiritual seed.” Instead, it is likely that the idea of a holy seed in the land is a prophetic reference that is tied to an exilic context. The commission of Isaiah in Isaiah 6:13 refers to a holy seed in relation to the land being forsaken saying, “And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land” (NIV). The reference to a holy seed in this context follows immediately on Isaiah’s vision of the throne of God where he is told in 6:9-10,

Go and tell this people: Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing but never perceiving. Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn and be healed (NIV).

We see echoes of this in the original commission of James and the repeated references to the ignorance of the people throughout our text. We should also note that the idea of a seed linked to inheritance is seen in Zechariah 8:12 where, following God’s promise to return to dwell in Jerusalem (Zech. 8:3) and a declaration that the Lord will return the people from exile (Zech. 8:6-7), we have the following statement; “The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these

things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people” (NIV). Specifically linking the concept of a holy seed to the concept of an inheritance, which is related to a soteriological revelation in our text, may be understood as alluding to the two aforementioned passages. In this case, an allusion to Isaiah 6 would act as justification and explanation for the initial destruction of Jerusalem and an answer to why the land is again at war in the text. If we can also read an allusion to Zechariah 8:12 into the text, then we can argue that it serves to show a return to Jerusalem following the destruction within the land. Hence, it is possible that the idea of a holy seed may act as a further link to the cycle of exile and return that is echoed within the text.

There are very few figures named Levi that figure prominently in early Christian literature and discourse. It is possible that the Levi in question is meant to allude to the apostle Levi known from Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27. While, as we have seen with respect to the previous names in the lineage, an apostolic connection is not an impossibility, it is not likely that the Levi being referenced here is meant to provide further evidence of direct apostolicity. Even in an idealized sense, the Levi in question would simply be seen as too far removed from the apostolic period to be considered as one of the immediate followers of Jesus.

It is more likely that the Levi in question is meant to represent the patriarch Levi, who was the son of Jacob. We see this represented in a number of ways. In our text, we are told repeatedly that there will be periods of secrecy wherein the revelation will be kept by each member of the lineage before being passed. In AMC 23, 19-20 Jesus says **ΑΔΔΑΙΟC** : **ΔΕ ΜΑΡΕCΧΠΟ ΝΕC ΝΝΕΙC[Ε] ΧΕ ΝΖΗΤC ΜΜΗΤΕ ΝΡΟΜΠΕ**, “Let Addai keep these things in his heart for ten years.” We see similar restrictions for each of the following members of the lineage (24, 1-4; 24, 12-16). Although the cosmology of the

revelation is different, we find a direct parallel in the *Testament of Levi* 6, “And when I was going to my father I found a brass shield, therefore also the name of the mountain is Aspis (i.e., shield), which is near Gebal, on the right of Abila; and I kept these words in my heart.”³⁵¹ This statement occurs immediately following the revelation to Levi where, while in a sleeping state, he is shown the seven heavens by an angel of God. Again, in this context we see an association with a mountain in relation to the revelatory sequence (as in NHC V, 30, 18-31, 4 // AMC 17, 6—22). More importantly, though, we see a link between our Levi and the Christianized Levi of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. While it is possible that the author of our text knew the *Testament of Levi*, it is more likely that he/she was aware of the various traditions concerning Levi that were circulating in the second-century.

We can draw a further link to the traditions concerning the patriarch Levi in the *Aramaic Levi Document* (4Q 213-214; 1Q21). *ALD* chapter six contains the priestly teaching being passed from Isaac to Levi and is concerned primarily with the question of purity. There is a clear parallel with the *First Apocalypse of James* in that Levi is told to marry a woman from Isaac’s family. The same request on the part of Isaac (“Take, therefore, to thyself a wife without blemish or pollution, while yet thou are young, and not of the race of strange nations”) is also found in the *Testament of Levi* 3:28. We see further examples of a commandment toward

³⁵¹ Trans. H.W. Hollander and M. De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 8; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 143. For additional commentary on this text, see Robert A. Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest: The Levi-Priestly Tradition From Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi* (Society of Biblical Literature, Early Judaism and Its Literature 9; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1996); idem, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). The concept of a messianic figure coming from the line of Levi is explored by G.R. Beasley-Murray, “The Two Messiahs in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,” *JTS* 48 (1947): 1-12.

endogamous marriage for the patriarchal line in *Jubilees* 25:9 (4Q222 Frag. 1), where Jacob responds to his mother:

All the days of my life I will not take a wife for myself from any of the daughters of Canaan and I will not act wickedly as my brother Esau has done. Fear not, my mother. Be assured that I will do your will and will walk uprightly and will not ever corrupt my ways.³⁵²

Of particular interest is that this statement is followed immediately by Jacob's mother praising God and saying, "Blessed is Lord God and blessed is his name forever and ever who has given me Jacob, a pure son and holy seed" (25:11-12). Relating back to our text's reference to Levi as a "holy seed," it is likely that we are seeing a conflation of patriarchal themes. A further Levitical association with endogamous marriage can be found in the lineage of Moses, which is contained in Exodus 2 where we are told that his father Amram, who is purported to be the grandson of Levi, marries a Levite woman.

With reference to patriarchal traditions, we could then name the second son of Levi as Kohath, known through Genesis 46:11 and the genealogy of the family of Moses in Exodus 6:16. Looking at the portrayal of Kohath in both canonical and apocryphal texts we can observe that, among the Levites, the Kohathites were further separated and appointed to work for God based on their righteousness, which led to them being charged with the care of the vessels of the tent of meeting (Numbers 4:1-4). In essence, what we are seeing in this lineage, is a continuum of purity that can be contrasted then with apostolic succession.

Concerning the pattern of descent in the *Aramaic Levi Document*, Henryk Drawnell notes:

³⁵² Translations of *Jubilees* taken from Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg Jr. and Edward M. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1996), 327.

The genealogical interest of the document corresponds to the preoccupations of the post-exilic community to trace its roots to the forefathers. The genealogies of 1 Chronicles may serve here as an example. In Neh 7:63-65 a group of priests is excluded from the priesthood as unclean...because their names have not been found written in their family records. A.L.D. 62-81 constitutes such a record for Levi and his descendants to justify the priestly origin for future priestly generations. It also reinterprets biblical data to justify the document's claim to scribal hierocracy in the post-exilic Judean community.³⁵³

The purity of the other figures in the lineage is the key element. The patriarch Levi is important to our discussion of the *First Apocalypse of James* due to the larger cultural cues associated with his name as well as the other patriarchal figures in Judaism. Levi in particular was understood as the ideal priest in both canonical and pseudepigraphal literature (see for example Malachi 2:4-7). The question of purity rests on the fact that the Levites were considered to be the holiest of the tribes, and those set apart by God in Numbers (3:12). In *ALD* 6 we see a restatement of the purity of Levi which mirrors the legendary purity of James.

Concerning the second son of Levi, whom we have tentatively identified with Kohath, the progenitor of the Kohathites, we have to note where else in antiquity he features prominently. As we have mentioned above, the Kohathites were charged with special duties concerning the temple vessels which were not accorded to other groups of Levites. Also, the birth of Kohath to a woman from Jerusalem is a reminder of the reforms toward endogamous marriage that are alluded to in the deuteronomistic history and the book of Ezra.³⁵⁴ The name Kohath is significant with respect to his role in our text as one who will rally the people together

³⁵³ Henryk Drawnell, *An Aramaic Wisdom Text from Qumran: A New Interpretation of the Levi Document* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 86; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 302-303.

³⁵⁴ Drawnell, *An Aramaic Wisdom Text*, 63-70.

as it means roughly “assembly,” coming from a verb meaning “to assemble,” and according to Letitia Jeffreys, “is probably the same word as the gathering of the people (Gen. xlix.10).”³⁵⁵ We see this played out in the *Testament of Levi*, where Kohath’s birth is accompanied by a vision, wherein Levi sees Kohath sitting on high in the midst of all of the congregation (3:52). In our text, we are told that the second son of Levi will rule over many provinces when he comes of age (AMC 25, 2-8). With respect to the question of purity and righteousness, in a Rabbinic context, Kohath is credited within the *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* (1.1) as having acquired enough merit for the Shekhinah to descend from the third to the second heaven.³⁵⁶ Our connection to the second heaven may be further reinforced with respect to the occurrence of the name Masphelel, which appeared earlier in the lineage. One explanation for this odd name with no other known correlate is that it is an adaptation or misspelling of another similar name. It is possible that it is a derivative of the name Masphelel. This is significant as Masphelel is one of the angels that is said to guard the second heaven in the *Hekhalot Rabbati* (chapter 15). While the connection is somewhat tenuous, it would offer an explanation for the name Masphelel in a context that connects, at least tangentially, to the final figure of the lineage. More importantly, however, is the fact that these varied connections underscore the association with purity and righteousness on the part of the patriarchs Levi and Kohath that was prominent in Second Temple Judaism.

³⁵⁵ Letitia D. Jeffreys, *Ancient Hebrew Names* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1906), 98.

³⁵⁶ See William G. (Gershon Zev) Braude and Israel J. Kapstein, *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana: R. Kahana’s Compilation of Discourses for Sabbaths and Festal Days* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975), 5-8. Also see Jacob Neusner, *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana: An Analytical Translation, Volume One: Psqaot One Through Fourteen* (Brown Judaic Studies 122; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987).

Coming back to the overall question of purity and righteousness in the lineage, we have suggested that the final two figures are representative of the patriarchs Levi and Kohath. We then have to ask if the text is using these figures, also in reference to Jesus and James, in a veiled reference to the Aaronid priesthood. By showing a succession through Levi and Kohath, there is an implication that we are discussing the true priesthood. Moses and Aaron were both Levites and Kohathites through their father Amram according to Exodus 6:18-20. Symbolically, then, Jesus could be understood by the text as representing the new Moses, a motif that is seen in the canonical gospels (a simple example being the account of the flight to Egypt in Matthew 2 due to the killing of babies on the part of Herod that echoes the same act on Pharaoh's order in Exodus 1), while James would then be understood as the new Aaron. Allowing for the association with a representation of Moses and Aaron, we see an interesting dynamic between the sets of brothers that we are referencing. In the patriarchal narratives there is a pattern wherein it is the younger son who inherits (whether by intervention or guile). We see this particularly in relation to Isaac (second son of Abraham) and Jacob (second son of Isaac).³⁵⁷ In the Exodus narrative, we see a continuation of this pattern as Moses is the younger of the two brothers (Exodus 7:7 tells us that Moses was eighty and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to

³⁵⁷ On the subject of the association between the age seventeen with the patriarch Joseph, it is interesting to note that Joseph was a younger son who was celebrated above his brothers. This same pattern is also explicit with respect to the sons of Joseph who are blessed by Jacob in Genesis 48:17-19: "When he saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to him, 'No my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.' But his father refused and said 'I know my son I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations'"(NIV). Again, a repetition of the dominant theme in Genesis of the younger brother being placed, or placing himself, above his brothers.

Pharoah). Again, we see the same pattern with Jesus and James. It was commonly understood that James was the older of the two brothers, and yet, Jesus would be considered the greater while James is second to him. With this in mind, it is not surprising that it is the younger son of Levi who is supposed to receive the revelation and then act in a salvific (possibly messianic) capacity.

With respect to the overall lineage, Veilleux notes in relation to the transmission of knowledge through James and Addai:

La révélation faite à Jacques n'est donc pas pour lui uniquement, mais il doit la transmettre. C'est évidemment le but de toute apocalypse! L'auteur veut montrer que les enseignements de son école gnostique viennent directement du Sauveur ressuscité à travers Jacques et Addai à qui il les a transmis. Mais, comme dans plusieurs autres systèmes gnostiques, et sans doute pour bien montrer que la tradition gnostique ne vient pas des Apôtres, celle-ci doit être gardée secrète un long temps avant d'être finalement rendue publique. Addai devra de même porter ces choses en lui (36,20-21) et ne les écrire que dans la dixième année (i.e. neuf ans plus tard) (36,21-22). Il les transmettra à un certain Lévi qui s'unira à une femme de Jérusalem dont il aura deux fils. Et, dans la mesure où l'on peut reconstituer le texte extrêmement lacuneux, Lévi transmettra ces choses à son fils mineur (37,19-20), qui devra aussi les cacher en lui jusqu'à ce qu'il parvienne à l'âge de dix-sept ans (37,20-24). La relation étroite entre les deux concepts: cacher et révéler se retrouve ailleurs; par exemple dans la préface à l'*Évangile selon Thomas* et dans l'*Épître apocryphe de Jacques* (NH I,1:1,16-25).³⁵⁸

While Veilleux is correct in noting that the lineage is used to show the legitimacy of the revelation and transmission of authority over against that of the apostles, he makes one important mistake. He assumes that keeping the revelation secret is solely a device to show that the revelation was guarded and true. Instead, it serves another function and is intertextually related to the figure of Levi. The idea of secrecy serves to situate the revelation in a setting

³⁵⁸ Veilleux, *La première apocalypse de Jacques*, 92-93.

contemporary with the community for whom the apocalypse has been written. By keeping that revelation secret, the author is answering the question of why this revelation was not known to the earlier followers of Jesus and only comes to light in this relatively late text. With respect to the issue of secrecy, *Testament of Levi* 3:2 describes Levi as waking from a vision as an angel leaves him, and that he hides the matter in his heart.

Returning to the overall question of the intention of the lineage, we know that *Toledot* (“lineages” in Hebrew) were a commonly used device in Jewish literature, from a very early point, to prove legitimacy and show a concrete connection to figures from the distant past. The lineage of James, Addai, etc., as presented in this text seems to serve more than one purpose. It acts as a legitimization of authority through James and the subsequent figures; however, as we have seen, the names used all have a deeper meaning within both Judaism and the Christianity that was developing at the time of its composition. Each character represents a figure who is understood to be holy and pure. This is underscored by the emphasis on Manaël being treated as a holy name. We also see that Manaël has more than one name, and that these names may in fact be derived from the names of angels. The names of Levi and his second son are also deserving of another look. It is from Levi, son of the patriarch Jacob, that the Levites are descended. We can then posit that the text is making an association between the lineage of James and the Levitical priesthood, but more importantly, the Kohathites. According to the *Toledot* of Exodus 6:13-25, the direct descendants of Kohath were Amram, followed by his sons Moses and Aaron. In the *First Apocalypse of James*, then, we are confronted with a continuum of purity where each succeeding generation is seen becoming more pure. The true culmination of the lineage in Exodus is found in the figures of Moses and Aaron. I would posit then, that the figures of Jesus and James as they are represented in the text, might be understood as being equated with Moses

and Aaron. Using James, in relation to the figures of Levi and Kohath, to evoke the image of Aaron underscores not only the concept of purity, but also the idea that the lineage represents the true priesthood. Granted, there is no longer a sacrificial cult by the time that this text was composed. This is not necessarily a deterrent to our associating the figures with the priesthood, however. By associating James' lineage with the tribe of the Levites, the author ensured that one could make the connection not only to the temple cult, but also to the larger tribal context wherein the Levites were understood to act in an itinerant priestly capacity. In this priestly capacity we can draw a further link to the traditions concerning James, who was associated with the temple, but not necessarily as a priest. Regardless of whether we assume a strict association with the sacrificial cult of the temple (which would have been the case for the historical James), or whether we choose to understand the lineage as justifying a sense of diasporic priestly authority, it still has to be understood as being idealized and symbolic. As such, it exists within a thought-world shaped by its own symbolism and does not necessarily have to correspond to the historical realities of cultic structure and observance.

4.7. The Location of the Commission

Finally, we have to briefly explore what impact is created by the choice of location for the commissioning of James. As we have discussed, the commission alludes strongly to the commissioning of Moses and Aaron and the foundation of the priesthood. Locating the revelation on a mountaintop serves to reinforce the link with the foundational event of Judaism and the handing down of the law on Sinai. In this context, the mountain is ΓΑΛΓΗ[ΛΑ]Μ̄ (AMC 17, 9), which is possibly located in Syria, but would not be associated with the area

surrounding Jerusalem. Also we should note that this further establishes James as the successor to Jesus, who is handing down the revelation in much the same manner that it was handed down to Moses and subsequently to Aaron. The character of the commission is interesting as **ΓΑΛΓΗ[ΛΑ]Μ̄** does not find a ready cognate with respect to mountains in the direct vicinity of Jerusalem. Another possibility that we must then explore is that the name of the mountain is being used symbolically. In the Nag Hammadi copy of the text, at 30.20-21, that name is spelled differently as **ΓΑΥΓΗΛΑΝ**. In the notes to the edition of the Nag Hammadi text, Schoedel asserts the likelihood that the word is a variation on the Syriac feminine plural absolute of Golgotha (Gāgūlhā/Gāgūlān).³⁵⁹ He also notes that,

there may also be a link with Gaugal, a mountain near Amida, mentioned by Syriac writers... and the church historian Sozomen (*Hist. Eccl.* III. 14.30). From the fourth century, monks and ascetics lived about it. Sozomen calls it Gaugaios. Could the name of a Syrian holy mountain have migrated?... It is possible that our apocalypse knew a Greek form of the name with a feminine ending (Gaugala) and that we have the accusative in the text.³⁶⁰

In making the assertion that the word could be referencing a Syriac mountain, Schoedel is citing the *Thesaurus Syriacus* of Robert Payne Smith, which does indeed list it as “montis juxta Amidam.”³⁶¹ More context can be gained by situating the reference in the Nag Hammadi codex in relation to the Beth Gaugal mentioned by Philoxenus in his *First Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gaugal*. While Philoxenus is writing later than the dating of the codices containing our text, it is useful to note that the Beth-Gaugal that he mentions can be situated in the Tur Abdin

³⁵⁹Schoedel, “NHC V, 3 The First Apocalypse of James,” 80.

³⁶⁰Schoedel, “NHC V, 3 The First Apocalypse of James,” 80-81.

³⁶¹ Robert Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus: Volume I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), 673.

region north of Nisibis (Nusaybin), in modern Turkey. In the ancient world this would have been just inside the region that at one point was known as Armenia Major that sits just north of modern Syria.³⁶² If we take Schoedel's position, we can say that this would substantiate the long held idea that the text must have some Syriac connection, beyond the simple statement that Addai was known in a Syriac context. Moreover, moving beyond that, locating the mountain being referenced in Armenia Major would lend weight to the idea that the Addai and Manael found in the lineage are to be equated with the Thaddaeus and Nathanael (Bartholomew), who have a strong association with the founding of Armenian Christianity.

4.8 The Martyrdom of James as the Final Act of Commission

The final section of the text also serves to reinforce the link of authority between Jesus and James as his successor. This part of the Nag Hammadi text is missing large sections which has made interpretation difficult. Scholars had speculated that the text would end with the martyrdom of James and this is now confirmed in the Al Minya Codex. The martyrdom of James is necessary to show that he has left the flesh and gone on with his task of the revelation to Addai. More importantly, the martyrdom of James is meant to echo or reflect that of Jesus, reinforcing his role as the second master and successor to Jesus. The parallels obviously cannot be found in the text of the *First Apocalypse of James*, since the martyrdom of Jesus is not explicitly described. We can, however, find parallels in the New Testament passion narratives. In AMC 2 30, 8-10 we have an account of James being condemned.

³⁶² See Thomas A. Carlson and David A. Michelson, "Gawgal — ܩܘܘܟܐܢܐ," entry published January 14, 2014, in *The Syriac Gazetteer*, available at Syriaca.org: The Syriac Reference Portal.

Ν̄Ν̄ΚΡΙΤΗΣ ΑΥΝΕΥ Ε[ΡΟ]Υ ΕΜ̄Ν̄ ΝΟΒΕ Ε[ΡΟ]Υ ΑΥΚ[Α]
 [ΑΥ ΕΒΟ]Λ̄ ΑΥΩ Π̄Κ̄ΕΣΕΠΕ Μ̄Ν̄ Π̄Λ̄Α[ΟC Τ]ΗΡΥ
 ΑΥΩΖΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΠΕ> [Χ̄ΑΥ Χ̄]Ε ΦΙΤ̄Υ ΖΙΧ̄Ν̄ ΠΚΑ[Ζ] Ν̄Φ̄Μ̄
 [ΠΩΑ Μ̄ΠΩ]Ν̄Ζ̄ ΑΝ

Most of the judges saw that he did not sin and they set him free. But the rest and all of the people stood, they stood there and said, “Send him from the earth; he is not worthy of life.”

Unfortunately, the next few lines are fragmentary, but they can be completed by the Nag Hammadi version:

Μ̄ΜΟC Χ̄Ε Τ̄Ν̄ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙ ΕΠ̄ΙCΝΟΥ ΑΝ · ΟΥΡΟΜΕ ΓΑΡ
 Ν̄ΙΔΙΚΑΙΟC ΕΦ̄ΝΑΤΑΚΟ Ζ̄ΝΝ̄ ΟΥΜ̄[ΝΤ]ΑΔΙΚΟC (NHC V, 3
 43, 17-21).

“We have no part in this blood. For, a just man will die through injustice.”

The condemnation of James by a crowd thus echoes the gospel accounts of Jesus being condemned but not found guilty by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate (Matt 27:11-26; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-19:16). The reference to Pilate can be found in the mention of the judges who attempt to let James go because they have found him innocent. It is further implied by the reference to the judges having no part in James’s blood, which echoes Pilate famously washing his hands (Matt 24:25). As we can see, the martyrdom of James in the text further reinforces his role as the second master, and his association with Jesus. In a sense he becomes like Jesus at the point of his martyrdom, which allows him to continue the revelatory process of transmission to his own successors.

Conclusions:

Throughout the course of this chapter I have established the importance of the lineage, beginning with James and then succeeding through the figure of Addai, Manael, Levi, and Levi's second son (who should be identified with Kohath). In exploring the possible interpretations of the lineage I have shown that the timeline and choice of names was the result of very careful construction on the part of the author of the tractate. The exploration of the timeline has allowed me to establish a possible timeframe for composition of the text in the mid-late second century. Analysis of the names included in the lineage has opened up further possibilities with respect to situating the text geographically, as well as within a political and symbolic thought world wherein the author was attempting to establish an alternative and legitimate line of apostolic descent that would also be associated with a particular understanding of the true priesthood. In this case the alternative line is associated with the historical figures of James, Addai, and Manael (Nathanael/Bartholomew), and the symbolic figures of Levi and Kohath. In addition, I have shown possible connections, through the figures of Addai and Manael, and the location of the mountain of revelation in Armenia Major, to suggest some association with an eastern Syrian context, beyond simple supposition based solely on the presence of the name Addai. This does not necessarily imply a compositional setting, but instead, the possibility that the author had contact with commonly held traditions that would have circulated in late antique Syria and possibly Armenia.

Chapter 5: Cosmology, Ascent, and the Role of Women in the

First Apocalypse of James

In the previous chapters we have looked at how the text can be understood in a number of contexts, including the choice of James as protagonist, the genre of gnostic apocalypses, and the structure of the commission narrative that is present within the discourse.

In this chapter I look at the cosmology of the text and its classification under the umbrella heading of Gnosticism and, intertextually, within the larger overarching thought-world of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. *I Apoc. Jas.* presents a number of difficulties in this regard as it displays a cosmology undergirded by what we could call religious syncretism. The cosmology of the text has been a matter of some debate over the past few years, particularly in light of the discovery of the second attestation. Originally, the text was classified by the majority of scholars as belonging to Valentinian Christianity, a tradition falling under the heading of Gnosticism.³⁶³ More recently Birger Pearson has grouped *I Apoc. Jas.* under the heading of “texts of uncertain affiliation.”³⁶⁴ Even so, he allows for the dominant presence of Valentinian elements within the text. Einar Thomassen, considered along with Ismo Dunderberg and Christoph Marksches, to be one of the leading experts on Valentinian Christianity, has come out firmly against the classification of the text as Valentinian in an article entitled “Orphics and Gnostics,” published in 2010. In this chapter I am arguing that, even though we

³⁶³ See in particular Thomassen, “Notes pour la délimitation,” 244. *I Apoc. Jas.* is also included as part of the core corpus of Valentinian texts by Philip T. Tite, *Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse: Determining the Social Function of Moral Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity* (NHMS 67; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 16.

³⁶⁴ Birger Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007), 230-31.

find the presence of cosmological elements from other systems, in particular what Thomassen refers to as an Orphic ascent,³⁶⁵ used syncretistically in the text, these elements do not preclude a Valentinian classification. As I will argue, this is particularly true in light of the number of Valentinian elements that are to be found in the text.

As well, this chapter takes into account the earlier assertion of Alexander Bohlig, argued in 1967, that there is a strong association between *I Apoc. Jas.* and Jewish Christianity.³⁶⁶ This assertion is built upon by John Painter,³⁶⁷ while being denounced by William Schoedel.³⁶⁸ Building on the points in favour of a Jewish Christian setting for the text put forth by Bohlig and my own work,³⁶⁹ I will demonstrate how the text is best understood within a context that is heavily informed by the “religious marketplace” of late second- or early third-century Egypt, while being undergirded with a strong relationship to Jewish texts and traditions. This section builds on the discussion of the choice of James as protagonist that we saw in chapters one and two. In addition to the Jewish-Christian elements which comprise much of the text’s inner thought-world, I also draw upon the deeper meanings implied intertextually through an analysis of traditions that the author would likely have had access to in the way of texts or oral traditions. We see parallel elements, particularly in relation to the commission of James’ successors, within

³⁶⁵ Thomassen, “Orphics and Gnostics,” 466-67.

³⁶⁶ Alexander Bohlig, “Der Jüdische und Judenchristlichen Hintergrund in Gnostischen Texten von Nag Hammadi,” in *Le origini dello Gnosticismo. Colloquio di Messina, 13-18 aprile 1966* (ed. Ugo Bianchi; Studies in the History of Religions 12; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 109-40.

³⁶⁷ Painter, *Just James*, 168-73.

³⁶⁸ Schoedel, “A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem.”

³⁶⁹ Edwards, “Jewish Christianity Revisited.”

both Christian apocryphal texts which appropriate Jewish traditions, such as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, in particular *The Testament of Levi*, and Jewish sectarian or pseudepigraphal texts, including the *Aramaic Levi Document* and *Jubilees*. In the end, I will conclusively show that the text, whether it be a Jewish Christian text upon which Valentinian elements have been superimposed, or vice versa, can be read authentically as representative of communities with ties to either traditions.

5.1. Pre-passion Revelation: The One Who Is, Jesus, and Femaleness

The cosmological speculations of the text begin with the statement concerning the powers.

Ν ΕΜΝ̄ ΛΑΑΥ ΨΟΟΠ̄ Ν̄CΑ ΠΕΤ΄ΨΟΟΠ̄ ΟΥΑΤ΄† ΡΑΝ
 ΕΡΟQ Μ̄ΝΝ̄ ΟΥΑΤ΄ΨΑΧΕ Μ̄ΜΟQ ΠΕ· ΑΝΟΚ ΖΩ ΑΝΟΚ
 ΟΥΑΤ΄† ΡΑΝ ΕΡΟQ ΕΒΟΛ Ζ̄Μ̄ ΠΕΤ΄ΨΟΟΠ̄· Ν̄ΘΕ
 ΕΤΑΥ [† Ν̄ΟΥ]ΗΠΤΕ Ν̄ΡΑΝ ΕΡΟΕΙ Ζ̄Ν̄CΝΑΥ [ΕΒ]ΟΛ Ζ̄Μ̄
 ΠΕΤ ΄ΨΟΟΠ̄· ΑΝΟΚ ΔΕ [†]ΨΟΟΠ̄ ΖΑΤΕΚΖΗ· ΕΠΙΔΗ
 ΑΚΨΙ[Ν]Ε Ν̄CΑ †Μ̄ΝΤ΄C̄ΖΙΜΕ· ΝΕCΨΟΟΠ̄ [Ν̄]ΒΙ
 †Μ̄ΝΤ΄C̄ΖΙΜΕ· ΑΛΛΑ ΝΕCΡ̄ ΨΟ[Ρ̄Π̄ Ν̄ΒΙ] †Μ̄ΝΤ΄C̄ΖΙΜΕ
 ΑΝ· ΑΥΩ [ΑC]ÇΟΒΤΕ ΝΑC Ν̄Ζ[Ε]Ν̄ΒΟΜ Μ̄Ν ΝΟΥΤΕ
 [Ν]Ε[C]ΨΟΟΠ̄ ΔΕ ΑΝ [Ε]Δ̄Ε̄Ι ΕΒΟΛ ΕΑΝΟΚ΄ ΟΥΖ̄ΙΚΩΝ
 Ν̄ΤΕ ΠΕΤ΄ΨΟ[ΟΠ̄] Δ̄ΙΕΙΝΕ ΔΕ ΕΒΟΛ Ν̄†Ζ̄ΙΚΩΝ ΝΤΕ[Q]
 ΧΕΚΑΑΣ ΕΡΕΝ[Ι]ΨΗΡΕ Ν̄ΤΕ ΠΕΤ΄Ψ[ΟΟΠ̄] ΧΕ
 ΕΥΕΕΙΜΕ ΧΕ ΑΨ ΝΕ ΝΕΤΕ ΝΨΟΥ ΑΥΩ ΧΕ ΑΨ ΝΕ
 Ν̄ΨΥΜΜΟ· ΕΙC ΖΗΤΕ †ΝΑΒΩΛΠ̄ ΝΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ Ν̄ΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ
 Μ̄ΠΙΜΥCΤΗΡΙΟΝ · (NHC V, 3 24, 19-25, 6).

There was nothing except for the “One Who Is.” He cannot be named and he is ineffable. As for me, I also cannot be named from the “One Who Is.” In the manner that I have been given a number of names – two from the “One Who Is.” I am before you. Because you have asked concerning “Femaleness.” She existed, “Femaleness,” but “Femaleness” was not first. And, she created powers and gods

for herself. But she did not exist when I came forth from the image of the “One Who Is.” And I have brought forth his image in order that the sons of the “One Who Is” may know what is theirs and what is alien. Look, I have revealed to you everything of this mystery.

ΝΕΜΝ ΛΑΟΥΕ ΨΟΟΠ [ΕΙ]ΜΗΤΙ ΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ` Ο[ΥΑΤ]
 [†]ΡΑΝ ΕΡΟϞ ΠΕ [ΑΥΩ ΟΥΑΤ] ΨΑΧ[Ε Ε]ΡΟϞ ΠΕ [ΖΝ
 ΝΑΕΙ ΕΤ] ΨΟΟ[Π] Η ΝΕΤΝΑΨΩ[ΠΕ] ΑΝΟϞ ΔΕ ΑΝΚ
 ΟΥΕΒΟΛ ΖΜ ΠΕ[Τ]ΨΟΟΠ` ΑΥΩ ΟΥΑΤ† ΡΑΝ ΕΡΟϞ
 Π[Ε] ΕΑΥΜΟΥΤΕ ΔΕ Ε[ΡΟ]Ϊ [Ν]Ο[ΥΗΠΕ Ν]ΡΑΝ
 ΕΝΝΟ[Υ]ΕΙ ΑΝ ΝΕ [ΖΝΩΜ]ΜΟ ΕΡΟΪ ΝΕ : ΕΕΪΟ ΔΕ
 ΝΨ[ΟΡΠ ΑΝ] ΕΑΝΚ ΟΥΜΕΖCΝΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ
 [Ζ]ΜΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ ΕΠΕΙΔΗ [Α]ΚΩ[Ι]ΝΕ ΕΤΒΕ
 ΤΜΝΤCΖΙΜΕ : CΩΤ[Μ] ΤΜΝΤCΖΙΜΕ ΝΕCΨΟΟΠ` [ΠΕ]
 ΑΛΛΑ ΝΕCΨΟΟΠ` ΑΝ ΠΕ ΧΝ ΝΨΟΡΠ ΑCΤΑΜΙΟ ΝΑC
 ΝΖΝΘ[ΟΜ] ΜΝ ΖΝΝΟΥΤΕ : ΠΕΤΨΟ[ΟΠ] ΒΕ ΕΨΟΟΠ
 ΧΝ ΝΨΟΡ[Π] ΤΜΝΤCΖΙΜΕ ΖΩΩC CΨΟΟΠ ΜΕΝ ΑΛΛΑ
 ΧΝ ΝΨΟΡΠ ΑΝ ΑΝΟΚ` ΔΕ ΝΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΘΙΚΩΝ
 ΜΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ` ΕΤΑΜΩΤΝ ΕΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ` ΕΤΑΜΩΤΝ
 ΕΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ` ΝΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΔΕ ΟΝ Ε[Τ]ΑΜ[ΩΤ]Ν ΕΘΙΚΩΝ
 ΝΝΘΟΜ ΧΕΚΑΑC ΕΡΕ ΝΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ ΕΥΝΑΜΜΕ
 ΕΝΟΥΟΥ : ΑΥΩ ΝΕΤΕ ΝΟΥΟΥ ΑΝ Ν[Ε>]>>> ΕΙC ΖΗΤΕ
 ΑΪΒΩΛΠ ΝΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΜΥCΤΗΡΙΟΝ : (AMC 2, 10, 8-11, 7).

Nothing existed except for the “One Who Is.” It cannot be named and it is ineffable among those who exist or will exist. As for me, I am from the “One Who Is” and cannot be named, and I have been called by many names that do not belong to me. They are foreign to me. And I am not first. I am second from the “One Who Is.” Because you have asked about “Femaleness.” “Femaleness,” she did exist. But, she did not pre-exist. She created powers and gods for herself. “The One Who Is” pre-exists and “Femaleness” exists, but does not pre-exist. As for me, I have come forth from the image of the “One Who Is” in order to show you the “One Who Is.” And I have come to show you the image of the powers so that the children of the “One Who Is” will know what is their and what is not theirs. Look, I have revealed the mystery to you.

The cosmology, as it is presented in this opening statement, is obviously very limited. We are told that everything comes from the pre-existent one, ΠΕΤΩΟΠ (NHC V, 3 24, 19-20 // AMC 2 10, 9), the “One Who Is.” Jesus tells James concerning the “One Who Is” that ΟΥΑΤ΄ Ἰ ΡΑΝ ΕΡΟϞ Μ̄ΝΝ ΟΥΤ΄ΩΑΧΕ Μ̄ΜΟϞ ΠΕ, “he cannot be named and he cannot be spoken of” (NHC V, 3 24, 20-21).³⁷⁰ We see very much the same statement being made in the Al Minya text. It would seem that the deity being named as unnameable and indescribable (ineffable) should be taken as an adaptation of the Valentinian myth recounted by Irenaeus in *AHI.11.1*.

We see the further statement of the One Who Is being “Innumerable” and “Immeasurable” in AMC 12, 23-13, 1.

ΑΝΟΚ ΔΕ †ΝΑΒΩΛΠ [N]ΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ : ΜΠΕΝΤΑΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ
 2̄Ν ΠΑΤΗΠΕ ΑϞ̄Ρ ΜΗΝΕΥΕ Ν̄ΤΕϞΗΠ̄Σ : ΠΕΝΤΑΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ
 2̄Ν ΠΑΤΩΙΤϞ̄ ΑϞ̄Ρ ΜΗΝΕΥΕ Μ̄ΠΕΥΩΙ

I will reveal to you what has come from the one who is innumerable and has made his number known, what has come from the one who is immeasurable and has made their measure known.

The Nag Hammadi version, again, is slightly different at this point, having Jesus who makes known the number and the measure of the “One Who Is.” At NHC 26, 10-13, we should also note that Jesus will give James a sign (**ΜΛΕΙΝ**) of these things. This may be a reference to the Johannine use of *semeion/ semeia*, but with respect to the revelatory process rather than miracles. The overall idea of the divinity being “unnameable,” “unmeasurable,” “innumerable,”

³⁷⁰ Schoedel, “The *First Apocalypse of James*,”” 69, translates as “He is unnameable and ineffable.”

and “ineffable” belies a cosmology wherein the deity can only be understood through the concept of negative attribution. Essentially this means that the “One Who Is” can be understood in our text only through recourse to what he is not.³⁷¹

Following the establishment of the priority of the pre-existent deity, the two manuscripts make slightly varying statements about the existence of Jesus, specifically in relation to “femaleness.” In the Nag Hammadi version, we see that Jesus, like the pre-existent one, is also unnameable. In the AMC copy, though, this is followed with the statement by Jesus in AMC 10, 17-18 that: **ΕΕΙΘ ΔΕ ΝΨ[ΟΡΤ ΔΑ] ΕΑΝΚ ΟΥΜΕΖCΝΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ [Ζ]ΜΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ**, “I am not first. As for me I am second from the One Who Is.” We see a discrepancy between the two extant texts with respect to how Jesus is to be understood in relation to the pre-existent one. The AMC text reads, **ΔΝΟΚ` ΔΕ ΝΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΘΙΚΩΝ ΜΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ`**, “As for me, I have come from the image of the One Who Is,” while the Nag Hammadi text reads, **ΕΑΝΟΚ ΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ ΝΤΕ ΠΕΤΨΟ[ΟΠ]**, “as for me, I am an image of the One Who Is.” This changes our basic understanding of the nature of Jesus in the text. For the reader of AMC, Jesus would be seen to emanate from the image of the pre-existent one, while in NHC he is the image of the pre-existent one. The above statement is preceded in the NHC text by the comment **[Ν]Ε[Σ]ΨΟΟΠ` ΔΕ ΔΑ**

³⁷¹ For an overview of scholarship on negative theology in the ancient Mediterranean see Knut Alfsvåg, *What no Mind has Conceived: On the Significance of Christological Apophaticism* (Studies in Philosophical Theology 45; Leuven: Peeters, 2010). Also see the edited volume of Oliver Davies and Denys Turner, *Silence and the Word: Negative Theology and Incarnation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[Ε]ΑΪΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ, “She (femaleness) did not exist when I came forth,” showing that Jeus emanated from the “One Who Is.” It is possible that the scribe made a mistake in copying and changed one or the other copy. The AMC text is the earlier of the two, and as a consequence, I would operate on the assumption that it takes precedence. While this is a minor semantic difference between the two versions, the idea that Jesus is the image of the pre-existent one reinforces the idea that he is second to this creative force in much the same way that we have discussed James as being second to Jesus.

One troublesome element of the initial cosmology has to do with the figure of femaleness. In AMC 10, 21-27 we have an initial discourse on “femaleness”:³⁷²

ΤΜΝΤΣΖΙΜΕ ΝΕΣΨΟΟΠ` [ΠΕ] ΑΛΛΑ ΝΕΣΨΟΟΠ` ΑΝ
 ΠΕ ΧΝ̄ ΝΨΟΡΠ̄ ΑΣΤΑΜΙΟ ΝΑΣ ΝΖΝΘ[ΟΜ] ΜΝ̄
 ΖΝ̄ΝΟΥΤΕ : ΠΕΤΨΟ[ΟΠ] ΒΕ ΕΨΟΟΠ ΧΝ̄ ΝΨΟΡ[Π]
 ΤΜΝΤΣΖΙΜΕ ΖΩΩΣ ΨΟΟΠ ΜΕΝ ΑΛΛΑ ΧΝ̄ ΝΨΟΡΠ̄
 ΑΝ

“Femaleness,” she did exist. But, she did not pre-exist. She created powers and gods for herself. The “One Who Is” pre-exists and femaleness exists but does not pre-exist.

There are minor variations in the parallel text from Nag Hammadi that change and recontextualize the relationship between Femaleness and Jesus. We see this in NHC 24, 27-31,

³⁷² We should note that the idea of Jesus explaining about Femaleness due to an inquiry on the part of James is similar to the opening of the *Hypostasis of the Archons* (NHC II, 4 86, 26), “I have sent this because you inquire about the reality of the authorities.” In 87.11 we also see a reference to the image of the incorruptible one which is projected onto the waters.

ΝΕΣΨΟΟΠ' [N]ΒΙ †MNT'CZIME· ΑΛΛΑ ΝΕCΡ̄ ΨΟ[ΡΠ̄
 NΒΙ] †MNT'CZIME ΑΝ · ΑΥΩ [ΑC]ϞΟΒΤΕ ΝΑC
 NΖ[Ε]NΒΟΜ MN ΝΟΥΤΕ [·] [N]Ε[C]ΨΟΟΠ' ΔΕ ΑΝ [Ε]ΑΙΕΙ
 ΕΒΟΛ ΕΑΝΟΚ' ΟΥΖΙΚΩΝ NΤΕ ΠΕΤ'ΨΟ[ΟΠ']

She existed, “Femaleness.” But “Femaleness” was not first. And she created powers and gods for herself. But she did not exist when I came forth from the image of the “One Who Is.”

Wolf-Peter Funk has briefly explored the feminine element presented in the text, including the reference later in the tractate to the seven women disciples (AMC 26, 4-7).

That the theme of “femininity” (or “femaleness”) plays an important part in the Apocalypse of James has always been recognized; it marks indeed a kind of thematic “trajectory” that can be traced all along the tractate.³⁷³

In a sense...“Femaleness” appears not only as an ontological category but also as a hermeneutic principle of preliminary, imperfect revelation. Instead of simply rejecting Old Testament prophecies, Jesus assigns to it a positive value in carrying hidden messages. This line of thought culminates, after a brief deviation into narrative about Jesus’ encounter with Adonaios during his descent to the earth, in the explicit appropriation of the prophecy, stating that these seven spirits were already there when he himself came down, among the people where “no prophet spoke without these seven spirits, and those are the seven spirits who proclaimed about me through the mouth of humans” (Tchacos 26:21-27). One may suspect a certain link here to the typically Jewish-Christian motif of “female prophecy” (as it occurs in the Pseudo-Clementines).³⁷⁴

With respect to the question of pre-existence, if one takes the text to imply that Jesus is pre-existent with the “One Who Is,” then we can ascertain a relationship to the Johannine understanding of Christology as seen in the Gospel of John 1, where the nature of Jesus is described as “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

³⁷³ Funk, “The Significance of the Tchacos Codex,” 523.

³⁷⁴ Funk, “The Significance of the Tchacos Codex,” 524.

God. He was with God in the beginning” (NIV). In this context we can argue that the pre-existence of Jesus is likely implied, and as with the Johannine Christology,³⁷⁵ there is the implication that the female element, which would possibly be equated with the Holy Spirit, would come into later existence.

Another possibility to consider with respect to the figures of Jesus, Femaleness, and the concept of the image of God, is that the text, within a limited scope of cosmological speculation, is making a veiled reference to the Jahwist and Elohist creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2. The cosmology appears to conflate Genesis 1:27 (“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them,” NIV) with the second account of the creation of humanity in Genesis 2:4-27, which shows the initial creation of Adam (2:7) followed by the creation of Eve (2:20-22). In this case, the first people created by the “One Who Is” inhabit the spiritual realm rather than the created garden. This would explain the insistence that Jesus was already in existence prior to the creation of femaleness.³⁷⁶

The necessity of the incarnation is explained in AMC 11, 1-3 with the statements :

³⁷⁵ See D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). A fairly thorough, though older, investigation of Johannine Christology can be found in the work of T.E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church* (Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series 13; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

³⁷⁶ The question of how femaleness is to be understood in the text has been explored at length in the recent dissertation of Mikael Haxby, “The First Apocalypse of James: Martyrdom and Sexual Difference” (Ph.D. Diss.; Harvard University, 2013). Haxby is most concerned with demonstrating the issue of sexual disparity as evidenced within the *First Apocalypse of James*. While it is true that the text shows the female element as being in some sense responsible for the creation of the archons of the lower realm, I do not believe that this text in particular displays any greater sexual difference than any other “gnostic” work which presupposes the attempted deficient creation on the part of Sophia as the basis for the material realm.

ΑΝΟΚ' ΔΕ Ν̄ΑΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΘΙΚΩΝ Μ̄ΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ'
 ΕΤΑΜΩΤ̄Ν̄ ΕΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ' Ν̄ΤΑΕΙΕΙ ΔΕ ΟΝ
 Ε[Τ]ΑΜ[ΩΤ]̄Ν̄ ΕΘΙΚΩΝ Ν̄Ν̄ΒΟΜ ΧΕΚΑΔΣ ΕΡΕ Ν̄ΨΗΡΕ
 Μ̄ΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ ΕΥΝΑΜ̄ΜΕ ΕΝΟΥΟΥ : ΑΥΩ ΝΕΤΕ ΝΟΥΟΥ
 ΑΝ Ν[Ε>]>>>

As for me, I have come from the image of the One Who Is, to show to you the One Who Is. But I have also come to show you the image of the powers in order that the children of the One Who Is should understand what belongs to them and what does not belong to them.

This statement, though limited in its explanation, encapsulates the soteriological outlook of the text that the purpose of the incarnation is to provide the necessary revelation (knowledge) for the elect to find salvation. The limited cosmology of this opening section hints at, but does not fully associate the mythology of our text with any particular system. The cosmology of the text that is revealed in the initial discussion of the “One Who Is,” Jesus and Femaleness, does not constitute a complete exposition of a cosmological system. With this in mind, we can say that the presence of the elements describing the “One Who Is” in terms of negative theology, serves to associate the text with a number of “Gnostic” systems. In particular, we might argue that the particular negatively attributed elements point in the direction of a Valentinian provenance for the text. This is further reinforced by the references to the “One Who Is” being innumerable in AMC 12, 23-24, particularly with respect to the statement by Jesus that he has made this number known. Numerology is an important element of the Marcosian Valentinian system. Looking at the report in Irenaeus’ *AH* I,13,5, Jannes Reiling observes that this “gnosis is imbued with a curious symbolism of letters, syllables and numbers which, to my knowledge, are not found with other Gnostics. The origin of this symbolism has not yet been explained in a

satisfactory way, indeed, it had not been thoroughly investigated either.”³⁷⁷ The important element that pertains to our discussion is actually found in *AH* I.14.1, where Irenaeus elucidates the Marcosian numerological understanding of God. It is here that we see an explanation of the original emanation within Marcosian cosmology.

This Marcus, therefore, claimed that he alone is the matrix and receptacle of Silence of Colorbasis, inasuch as he is Only-begotten. The seed that was deposited in him he brought forth in the following manner. The most exalted Tetrad came down to him from the invisible and unnameable regions in the shape of a woman, since, as he says, the world could not have endured her masculine nature. She revealed who she was and also the origin of all things. This she had never before revealed to anyone whether of the gods or of men. To Marcus alone she explained it as follows. When Father, who is without a father, unthinkable and immaterial in substance, who is neither male nor female, first wished that the unspeakable be spoken and the invisible be given form, he opened his mouth and brought forth Word similar to himself. Word stood beside him and manifested to him who he was, since he had appeared as the form of the invisible. The enunciation of the name developed in the following manner. He [the Father] pronounced the first word of his name, which is Beginning [Arkhē]; it was a combination of four characters. He joined a second to it which was also a combination of four characters. Next he pronounced the third; this consisted of ten characters. And the combination that he pronounced after these had twelve characters, so the pronunciation of the whole name consisted of thirty letters, but four combinations. Each of the characters had its own letters, its own impressions, its own pronunciation, shape, and images; and not one of them [characters] perceives the form of that [combination] of which itself is a character. Moreover, none knows its own [combination], nor does it know the pronunciation even of its neighbor's name. On the contrary, what it pronounces, it does so as if it were pronouncing the whole; it believes that it names the whole. For each of them, since it is a member of the whole, names its own sound as if it were the whole; and they do not cease sounding until they come to the last letter of the last character that pronounces itself alone. The restoration of all things will take place, he said, whenever all have descended upon the one letter, and sound one and the same pronunciation. He supposes the Amen, which we pray in unison, to be the image of this pronunciation. But the sounds, he claims, are those

³⁷⁷ Jannes Reiling, “Marcus Gnosticus and the New Testament: Eucharist and Prophecy,” in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica. Studia ad Novum Testamentum praesertim pertinentia a sociis Sodalicii Batavi C.N. Studiosorum Novi Testamenti conventus anno MCMLXXVI quintum lustrum feliciter complentis suscepta* (ed. T. Baarda, A.F.J. Klijn and W.C. Van Unnik; 2 vols.; NovTSup 47-48, Leiden: Brill, 1978), 1:161-180 at 162.

which formed the Aeon that is immaterial and ingenerate. They are likewise the forms which see the fact Father unceasingly, which the Lord calls angels.³⁷⁸

There are obvious parallels to *I Apoc. Jas.* that can be drawn from the account of Irenaeus. We note that the Father is described as “unthinkable” and “immaterial,” while the Word is described as “unspeakable” and “invisible.” As we have seen, the cosmology of *I Apoc. Jas.* employs similar terms of negative attribution in describing the “One Who Is.” With respect to the idea of the “One Who Is” being innumerable in AMC 12, 23-24, Irenaeus’ account of the Marcosian cosmology shows a clear concern for the expression of the deity within a numerological system. *I Apoc. Jas.* presents a very limited version of its cosmology, possibly due to its use by adherents who were already familiar with the larger cosmological speculations. As a consequence, it is possible that the references in our text to the attributes and number of the “One Who Is” may in fact refer to the Marcosian Father, though in a form that does not need to be explicitly stated.

5.2. The Twelve and Seventy-Two Hebdomads

The description of the archons and the related hebdomads begins at AMC 12, 8-12, a section of the text that is extremely fragmentary and virtually lost in the NHC text.

CΩTM NAĪ N̄TAΕΙΝΤΟΥ ΝΕΜΑĪ Ϸ̄M Π̄ [---] Ϸ̄ΡᾹĪ -----
 ----ΑΡ]ΧΩ[N-----ΠΟΥΑ] ΠΟΥ[Α] Ε[Χ̄N̄
 Τ]ΕϞϷ̄ΕΒΔΟΜΑϸ]

³⁷⁸ Translation from Dominic J. Unger, *St Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies* (Ancient Christian Writers, The Works of the Father in Translation 55; New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 59-60.

Listen, the ones that I have brought with me from in [----] downward [-----]
rulers [-----] each one upon their own hebdomad

As a rare exception, the Nag Hammadi text is more complete throughout the description
of the twelve and seventy-two hebdomads.

ΠΕΧΕ ΙΑΚΚΩΒΟΣ ΧΕ ΑΡΑ ΟΥΝ ΖΡΑΒΒΕΙ
ΜΝΤCΝΟΟΥC ΝΖΕΒΔΟΜΑC ΝΕ ΑΥΩ CΑΨΥΦΕ ΕΝ ΒΕ
ΝΕ ΝΘΕ ΕΤΟΥΨΟΟΠ' ΖΝ ΝΕΓΡΑΦΗ · ΠΕΧΕ ΠΧΟΕΙC
ΧΕ ΙΑΚΚΩΒΟΣ ΠΕΤ'Α'ΨΥΑΧΕ ΖΑ ΤΕΙΓΡΑΦΗ
ΝΤΑΨCΟΟΥΝ ΨΑΠΕΙΜΑ · ΑΝΟΚ ΔΕ †ΝΑΒΩΛΠ ΝΑΚ
ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΗ ΕΤΑΨΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΜ ΠΙΑΤ'† ΗΨΕ ΕΡΟΨ ·
†ΝΑ† ΜΑΕΙΝ ΖΑ ΤΕΥΗΠΕ · ΠΕΝΤΑΨΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΜ
ΠΙΑΤ'† ΨΙ ΕΡΟΨ · †ΝΑ† ΜΑΕΙΝ ΖΑ ΠΕΥ† ΨΙ ·
ΠΕΧΕ ΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ ΧΕ ΑΡΑ ΟΥΝ ΖΡΑΒΒΙ · ΕΙC ΖΗΗΤΕ
ΑΪΧΙ ΝΤΕΥΗΠΕ ΨΒΕCΝΟΟΥC ΝΨΑΨΟΥ ΝΕ · ΠΕΧΕ
ΠΧΟΕΙC ΧΕ ΝΑΪ ΝΕ †ΨΒΕCΝΟΟΥC ΜΠΕ ΕΤΕ
ΝΚΟΥΕΙ ΝΤΕΥ ΝΕΪ' ΝΕ ΝΙΒΑΜ ΝΤΕ ΠΤΕΥΑΜΑΖΤΕ
ΤΗΡΟΥ · ΑΥΩ ΑΥΩΖΕ ΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΟΟΤΟΥ ·
ΑΥΩ ΝΑΪ ΝΕ ΝΗ ΕΤΑΨΠΩΨ ΖΜ ΜΑ ΝΙΜ · ΕΥΨΟΟΠ'
ΖΑ ΤΕ[ΞΟΥCΙ]Α ΜΠΙΜΝΤCΝΟΟΥC ΝΑΡ[Χ]ΨΝ · †ΚΟΥΕΙ
ΝΒΟΜ ΕΤΝΖΗΤΟΥ [ΑCΤΑΜΙ]Ο ΝΑC ΝΖΕΝΑΓΓΕΛΟC [ΜΝ
ΝΕΕΙCΤ]ΡΑΤΙΑ ΝΝΑΤ'† ΗΠΕ (NHC 25, 2-26, 26).

James said, “Rabbi, are there twelve Hebdomads and not seven as it exists in the scripture?” The Lord said, “James, the one who spoke in the Scripture had an understanding that was limited. But, as for me, I will reveal to you that which has come forth from the one who has no number. I will give a sign concerning their number. Concerning what has come forth from the one who has no measure. I will give a sign concerning their measure.” James said, “Rabbi, I have received their number. They are seventy-two measures.” The Lord said, “These ones are the seventy-two heavens that are inferior (subordinate). These are the powers of all their strength (might), and they have been established by them. And these are the ones who were dispersed in (sent to) every place. They exist under the authority of the twelve archons. The small (inferior) power among them brought forth for herself angels and hosts without number.”

Schoedel makes an argument for an interpretation of this passage based on his reading of Leviticus 25:8 (LXX).

Only here does the expression “seven Hebdomads” occur in “Scripture.” This passage is part of the discussion that has to do with the Sabbath years and the year of Jubilee. It is, of course, impossible to say how a Gnostic may have read this text in detail. But especially since the seventh year is regarded as a “year of rest,” the connection with the days of creation would have been obvious, and the prominence of the term “rest” in both contexts would have been suggestive to any Gnostic who interpreted the final restoration of man in terms of “rest.” It is probable, then, that the seven years were taken to symbolize the seven heavens and that the “seven Hebdomads” of years were taken by some as subdivisions within the Hebdomad.³⁷⁹

With respect to the twelve hebdomads mentioned in the text, Schoedel goes on to say that

Since there is in this connection a reference to the “twelve,” who apparently have something to do with the Hebdomad, we may conjecture that they constitute twelve archons. This number was reached by multiplying six times two – that is, there is a male-female pair in each of the six lower heavens. The fact that these are twelve in number may have suggested the replacement of the seven by the twelve so that each heaven might mirror the configuration of the six heavens as a whole.³⁸⁰

Part of Schoedel’s argument for the six hebdomad model is based on a reading, which we have mentioned, of Leviticus 25:8. He notes that this is the only place in Scripture where the wording of “seven hebdomads” occurs. An initial problem with Schoedel’s argument has been pointed out by Wolf-Peter Funk:

³⁷⁹ Schoedel, “Scripture and the Seventy-Two Heavens,” 122. Leviticus 25:8 reads: “And you shall count off for yourself seven rests of years, seven times seven years, and they shall be for you seven weeks of years – forty-nine years” (NETS). Schoedel understands this as being unacceptable on some level to the gnostic writer who, then, looking for some sense of symmetry reinterprets it in relation to the number seventy-two.

³⁸⁰ Schoedel, “Scripture and the Seventy-Two Heavens,” 123.

Schoedel (...) mistakenly claimed that “only here [*i.e.* Lev. 25:8] does the expression ‘seven hebdomads’ occur in ‘Scripture’.” As can be gathered from any LXX concordance the expression also occurs in Lev 23:15 and Deut 16:9 [*bis*], without counting more marginal spaces such as Tob 2:1 and Theodotian’s version of Dan 9:25. Apart from Daniel (messianic usage), all these passages refer to the seven weeks leading up to the “Festival of Weeks,” with the Pentateuch verses representing its foundation in the Law and the Tobit occurrence a more fictional application of it.³⁸¹

Disregarding the accuracy of Schoedel’s statement concerning the presence of seven Hebdomads in “Scripture,” his argument is based on the fact that the passage in question is concerned with the Jubilee year. As such, he understands the seventy-two hebdomads in our text to be the result of the twelve being multiplied by six, meaning the six active years and not counting the jubilee year (he also notes the six active days of creation).³⁸² Additionally, Shoedel notes that in Marcosian practice,

Marcus regards the number six as “a power of creation and regeneration” (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I.14.6), because man was created on the sixth day and because Jesus was crucified in the sixth hour of the sixth day, bringing about a regeneration of the first man. All this is taken to support the thesis that Jesus himself was “six” (for Jesus went up to the mount of transfiguration “after six days” and became “six” when two other – Moses and Elijah – were added to Jesus himself along with Peter, James and John).³⁸³

It is likely, in my estimation, that Schoedel is overcomplicating the interpretation of the “twelve” and “seventy-two” based on various numerological and astrological calculations. Instead, I would posit, given that the text has a strong association with Jewish apocalyptic and

³⁸¹ Funk, “The Significance of the Tchacos Codex,” 529 n. 50.

³⁸² Schoedel, “Scripture and the Seventy-Two Heavens,” 124

³⁸³ Schoedel, “Scripture and the Seventy-Two Heavens,” 124.

pseudepigraphal literature, as well as a grounding in apostolic tradition (as argued in chapters three and four), that there is a somewhat simpler solution that can be arrived at intertextually. It is more likely that the author of our text is basing the numbers in question on human beings rather than on a complex numerological calculation (though that is not necessarily an impossibility). With this in mind, the numbers twelve and seventy-two have obvious cognates that would have been known in both the Judaism and the Christianity of the time.

The use of twelve is not necessarily a product of six pairings within the heavens as Schoedel has argued.³⁸⁴ Instead, the number twelve is probably meant to signify a combination of the twelve apostles and either the twelve patriarchs of Israel or the twelve eponymous tribes of Israel. The number seventy-two requires somewhat more explanation. It is directly related to the context of the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. In a Jewish context we know that Moses appointed seventy elders to help with matters of administration in Numbers 11:16-25.

The Lord said to Moses: “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone. “Tell the people: ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, when you will eat meat. The Lord heard you when you wailed, “If only we had meat to eat! We were better off in Egypt!” Now the Lord will give you meat, and you will eat it. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it—because you have rejected the Lord, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?”’ But Moses said, “Here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot, and you say, ‘I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!’ Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in

³⁸⁴ Schoedel, “Scripture and the Seventy-Two Heavens,” 123.

the sea were caught for them?” The Lord answered Moses, “Is the Lord’s arm too short? Now you will see whether or not what I say will come true for you.” So Moses went out and told the people what the Lord had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied—but did not do so again (NIV).

We should note though, that the true number of those appointed, or in this case chosen by God, is not seventy. Following the above passage, in Numbers 11:26-30 we read:

However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, “Moses, my lord, stop them!” But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!” Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp (NIV).

The true number of elders appointed by God is seventy-two, which corresponds with the number of Hebdomads present in our text.

In the Gospel of Luke we see a direct parallel to this in the appointing of the seventy in a missionary capacity. In a number of early variants, which have been taken up in translations such as the NIV, the number given is actually seventy-two. James M. Scott has explored the confusion over the numbers seventy and seventy-two at some length, noting that in the Gospel of Luke, “there is a strong possibility that, as in manuscript N (sixth century CE) and Irenaeus (ca.130-202 CE), the original Lukan genealogy contained exclusively only 72 names from Jesus to Adam.”³⁸⁵ What this means is that the appointing of the twelve and the seventy-two by Jesus

³⁸⁵ James M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees* (Society for New Testament Studies 113; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 48. Part of his argument rests on Irenaeus’

should be understood as showing a parallel to the twelve tribes and the appointing of the seventy-two elders by Moses in Numbers.³⁸⁶ Funk argues in favour of categorizing the twelve and seventy-two in relation to the apostles and disciples, noting that the text emphasizes that the number refers to “twin partners”:

“[T]he seventy-two twin partners” can only refer to the group of “lesser disciples” sent out by Jesus according to Luke 10:1, where “seventy-two” was a wide-spread textual variant beside “seventy,” both in the transmission of the Luke text and in Patristic literature. Since these “lesser disciples” are said to be sent out “two by two” in the gospel text, they can aptly be designated as “twins” or “consorts.” Both groups together can be seen to symbolize the entirety of the Christian mission effort as authorized by the pre-Easter Jesus in the canonical literature. And “mission” easily translates into “transmission” of the revelation – right and wrong – in the context of a writing where this gradually unfolds as one of the central issues.³⁸⁷

While I agree with Funk, particularly with respect to the question of revelation in relation to these figures, due to the over-arching concern with Judaism that is evidenced within the text, I would argue that we have to take into account both the apostolic and Mosaic understanding of the twelve and seventy-two.

The division between the twelve and the seventy-two is further emphasized in AMC 13, 4-9.

interpretation of the lineage which he understands to show a continuity between the generations to Jesus and the nations of the world. That being said, Scott argues for the possibility that Luke shows seventy-two disciples being commissioned to correspond to the table of the nations.

³⁸⁶ We should note that the appointing of the seventy-two immediately follows Jesus dispatching the twelve in Luke 9. Another remote possibility is that the reference to the number seventy-two refers to the number of translators who are said to have worked on the Septuagint.

³⁸⁷ Funk, “The Significance of the Tchacos Codex,” 527.

ΠΕΧΑϞ ΧΕ . Ε ΠΕΨ ΟΒ̄ ΝΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ ΝΨΗΜ
 Ε[Τ]Ν̄ΖΗΤΟΥ : ΝΕΤΝΑΑΥ [ΔΕ] ΕΡΟΥ ΝΕ Ν̄ΟΜ
 ΕΤ̄ΜΠ[Ψ]ΩΪ ΝΑΪ ΕΤΕΡΕ Π̄ΠΟΛΟΣ ΤΗΡ[Ϟ>>>] Ω[Ζ]Ε
 ΡΑΤ̄Ϟ Ζ̄ΙΤΟΥΤΟΥ

He said, “These are³⁸⁸ the seventy-two small (inferior) heavens that are amongst them. But the ones that are greater (larger) than them are the powers that are above. The ones through which the axis of everything (i.e., the universe) is established.

We must also consider the possibility that the text is literally referring to heavens and not to human beings. In our text James asks about the Hebdomads in AMC 12, 14-17, saying:

Ζ̄ΡΑΒΒΕΙ] ΜΝΤ[ΙΒ] Ν̄ΖΕΒ[ΔΟΜΑΣ ΝΕ ΑΥΩ] ΣΑΨϞΕ ΔΝ
 ΝΕ : Κ[ΑΤΑ ΘΕ Ε]ΤΕ ΟΥΝΤΑΝ̄Ϟ Ζ̄Ν ΤΕΓΡΑΦΗ

Rabbi, so there are twelve hebdomads and not seven as in the Scripture?

Jesus replies in AMC 12, 18-21,

ΠΕΧΑϞ ΝΒ̄Ι ῙΗ̄Σ : ΧΕ ΠΕΝΤΑΨΑΧΕ ΕΤΕΕΙΓΡΑΦΗ
 ΕΤ̄Ε ΤΑΕΙ ΤΕ : ΑΨΜΗΝΕΥΕ ΨΑΠΜΑ Ν̄ΤΑϞΒ̄Μ̄ΟΜ
 ΕΣΟΟΥΝΕ

Jesus said: “The one who spoke through this scripture reported only that which he was able to know.”

³⁸⁸ Here I am using the translational choice of Meyer and Gaudard as the meaning of ΠΕΨ is unclear. It is possible that it could be used as a prefix and imply a division in the number 72 which immediately follows.

Ptolemy's version of the gnostic myth known from Irenaeus *AH* 1.1.1-1.8.5 includes both the lower Sophia Achamoth and a cosmology of seven heavens.³⁸⁹ In Ptolemy's myth it is the craftsman, the demiurge who creates the seven heavens and resides above them. It is possible that our text is representative of the differing factions within Valentinianism, and thus exposes a critique of the myth put forth by the teacher Ptolemy.

The numbers seven and twelve find ready cognates in native Egyptian post-mortem mythology. In fact, there is a long history of post-mortem journeys involving the use of necessary formulas and knowledge found among Egyptian texts that both predate and are contemporaneous with Jewish and Christian ascent narratives. E.A. Wallis Budge, in his discussion of the *Story of Khāmūas and His Son Sa-Asar*, which is preserved on two papyri dated to the years 46-47 CE (year seven of the reign of Claudius), shows that the protagonist and his miraculously born son pass through seven halls, the seventh of which contains the throne of Osiris.³⁹⁰ This seven-fold division is also seen in the *Book of the Dead*, chapter 144, and parallels the division seen in the aforementioned tale.³⁹¹ We also see a twelve-fold division of the underworld that Ra travels through at night in the *Book of Am-Tuat* and the *Book of the Gates*. In both of these instances Ra (or another traveller) passes through a twelve-fold underworld that is equated with twelve hours. We see a primary difference in that the *Book of*

³⁸⁹ The presence of Sophia-Achamoth in the text is interpreted as belonging to the current of Valentinian thought by Veilleux, *La première apocalypse de Jacques*, 22-23.

³⁹⁰ E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Tales and Romances: Pagan, Christian and Muslim*, (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1931), 170-89.

³⁹¹ Budge, *Egyptian Tales and Legends*, 172-73.

the Gates includes a serpent guardian at each gate.³⁹² We should be careful to remember, though, that this is a descent through the underworld rather than an ascent. While this is not an exhaustive overview of the possibly relevant Egyptian mythology, it is enough to say that the division of the spiritual realm as seen in our text is not alien to Egyptian culture and mythology and, as such, the possible influence of native Egyptian mythology should not be dismissed.³⁹³

In a context more closely associated with Judaism, we see the concept of seven heavens as dominant in late antiquity.³⁹⁴ The seven heaven typology, as it appears in Judaism and Christianity, is extensively problematized by Adela Yarbro Collins.³⁹⁵ She argues, fairly conclusively, that the use of the seven heavens finds its genesis in relation to interactions with Babylonian culture. However, due to the heavens not being strictly, or predominantly, associated with the planets, she argues that the most important association would be with Babylonian magic.³⁹⁶ The seven-fold division of the heavens can be found within a number of

³⁹² For a discussion and comparison between the *Book Am-Tuat* and the *Book of the Gates*, see E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Heaven and Hell* (3 vols.; Books on Egypt and Chaldea 20-23; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1905), 3:96-147.

³⁹³ I mention this as a line of questioning that might be worth pursuing in the future.

³⁹⁴ In fact, we can see that the concept of a seven level afterlife is supported in a number of ancient near eastern cultures. Generally in these cases, it is a seven tiered descent to the underworld rather than an ascent that is normative. In a Mesopotamian context, *Inanna's Descent to the Underworld* shows a passage through seven gates in the underworld. In an Egyptian context, we can look to the *Story of Setme and His Son Si-Osiris* where the god incarnate takes his father on a tour of the seven-tiered underworld. For a discussion of the Mediterranean, Persian, and ancient near eastern concepts of the underworld, see Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (NovTSup 93; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 9-48.

³⁹⁵ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 50; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 21-54.

³⁹⁶ Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology*, 46, 54.

texts, including the *Ascension of Isaiah* (chapters 7 and 8), which shows an ascent through the seven heavens, as well as recension A (short) of *2 Enoch*. Daniel Harlow has noted that “the earliest evidence in Judaism and Christianity for the idea of seven heavens comes from the *Testament of Levi* and the *Ascension of Isaiah*,”³⁹⁷ while Philip Alexander reminds us that the “tradition of seven heavens is almost universal in classic rabbinic literature... in the Merkabah texts... and in texts of the *Ma‘aseh Bere’sit* tradition.”³⁹⁸ Even so, Jan Bremmer notes that

in the Jewish writings from the turn of the Christian era the number of heavens was not fixed. We find three, five, and seven in the well-known apocalypses, from *2 Enoch* to the *Testament of Abraham*... and such layering must have been familiar enough for Paul to refer to it in his Second Letter to the Corinthians (12.1-4) without further explanation.³⁹⁹

This is also noted by Daniel Harlow who is arguing against a five heaven cosmology in 3

Baruch:

There is indeed great variety in the number of heavens envisaged in early Jewish and Christian texts, but nowhere does this variety accommodate the number five. The number varies from one, three, seven, eight, ten, seventy-two, 365, to the incredibly high 955.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁷ Daniel C. Harlow, *The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (3 Baruch) in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Studia in Veteris Pseudepigrapha 12; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 47.

³⁹⁸ Philip Alexander, “3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch (Fifth-Sixth Century A.D.) A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume One: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1983), 223-302 at 239.

³⁹⁹ Jan Bremmer, “Descents to Hell and Ascents to Heaven in Apocalyptic Literature,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, 340-357 at 349-350.

⁴⁰⁰ Harlow, *The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, 46-47.

This is echoed by Alexander who, while supporting the dominance of the seven heaven cosmology, does allow that

other views are occasionally found. Thus Hagigah 12b records an opinion that there are only 2 heavens, while *Midraš Tehillim* 114:2...states that some held that there are three. Within the Merkabah tradition itself speculation arose as to the possibility of heavens beyond the seventh. An eighth was postulated on the basis of the reference in Ezekiel 1:22 to a firmament above the heads of the creatures (b. Hag 13a). Most extreme was the view that there are 955 heavens above the seventh.

The seven heaven typology is clearly shown in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, in particular the *Testament of Levi*, which in chapter one shows a cosmology of seven heavens (followed in chapter three with the parallel of seven angels).⁴⁰¹ The seven heaven cosmology is further explored in *3 Enoch*. The cosmology attested in *3 Enoch* is complex and the final redaction of the text is late for our purposes (fifth-sixth century CE).⁴⁰² Even so, it contains traditions that far predate its final redaction. Of particular importance is a reference to the seventy-two princes of kingdoms (18:3; 30:2), who are shown to exist in the angelic hierarchy. This is a prime example of the use of the seven and seventy-two in relation to the divine powers in late antiquity. While it is impossible to show a correlation between this text and *1 Apoc. Jas.*, it will suffice to say that they existed in the same larger world of ideas. The importance lies in the fact that while our text shows a shift from seven to twelve, coupled with the number

⁴⁰¹ The cosmology of the *Testament of Levi* in relation to the seven heavens is discussed at length by Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 30-37. A useful discussion of the background of eight and ten heavens cosmologies can be found in the work of Kaler and Rosenstiehl, *L'Apocalypse de Paul (NH V, 2)*, 38-43. See also Harlow, *The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, 50.

⁴⁰² See the discussion by Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," 225-29.

seventy-two, there is sufficient precedent in other texts and traditions to necessitate an explanation for this shift.

Looking forward to the post-passion revelatory sequence, the Al Minya version solidifies our association between the twelve hebdomads and the twelve apostles.

ΕΙΣ ΖΗΗΤΕ ΙΑΚΚΩΒΕ ΔΕΙΘΩΛΠ̄ ΝΑΚ' ΕΒΟΛ ΧΕ :
 ΑΝΟΚ' ΟΥΕΥ ΑΥΩ ΠΕΤΨΟΟΠ' Χ̄Ν̄ ΝΨΟΡΠ' ΑΥΩ
 ΠΤΥΠΟC Μ̄ΠΜΝΤCΝΑΟΥC Μ̄ΜΘΗΤΗC ΑΥΩ ΠΨΩΒ̄
 Ν̄CΟΕΙΩ ΑΥΩ ΑΧΑΜΩΘ̄ ΤΕCΖΙΜΕ ΤΑΙ ΕΨΑΥΡ̄
 ΖΕΡΜΕΝΕΥΕ ΜΜΑC ΧΕ ΤCΟΦΙΑ (AMC 22, 23-23, 4).

Look James, I have revealed to you, who myself and the Pre-Existent One are, and the type of the twelve disciples, and the seventy-two companions, and Achamoth, the female, who is interpreted as Sophia (Wisdom).

In this passage, we see definitively that the text understands the twelve and seventy-two to be associated with the apostles and other disciples, who act in a missionary capacity, as enumerated in Luke (9:1-6; 10:1-17). In consideration of the relevance of apostolic authority in the text and the likely association of the figures in the lineage of descent with Thaddaeus and Nathanael, it is possible that the text is not really disparaging the twelve and seventy-two Hebdomads. Both copies of the text are somewhat unclear at this point in the narrative, and previous interpretations of the Hebdomads have been speculative at best. The association shown within the text between the archons and the twelve and seventy-two Hebdomads makes it likely that they are meant to represent figures who were considered to be authoritative, and yet whose authority is being questioned or overturned in the text. As we have seen with respect to the lineage in chapter four, the text embraces certain figures who have a connection to apostolic Christianity. Thus, a negative characterization of the apostles does not necessarily preclude the text from positing authority based on an alternative line of apostolicity.

At this point, it is important to note the contrast that we perceive in the text between the number of Hebdomads referred to in the pre-passion revelation and the cosmology of ascent that is elucidated in the post-passion revelation. In the pre-passion revelation we have a cosmology of twelve and seventy-two Hebdomads, which are likely to be understood symbolically. The only critique of this is that the clarification of twelve versus seven heavens leads to the conclusion that the author did understand the universe to be tiered in its ordering. This is not explicitly supported by the post-passion revelation, where the soul ascends through the toll collectors but does not seem to be shown any other type of tiering within the cosmos.

Returning to the overall question of whether or not the cosmology can be understood as Valentinian, we have to remember that what we refer to as the Valentinian movement was by no means unified. The available sources tell us that there were many different Valentinian teachers who each had their own views and theological understanding. Pearson makes the relevant point that “it should be added that there is evidence of intra-Valentinian discussions and debates, and Valentinian teachers often disagreed with one another on various points in terms of doctrine and practice.”⁴⁰³ The above cited cosmology includes elements of a variety of differing Valentinian systems used in a syncretic manner. These include, at the very least, elements of the teachings of groups associated with Ptolemy and Marcus. This being said, it would be short-sighted to preclude an association with a basic Valentinian worldview based on the limitations of a syncretic cosmology that may have been established based on the teachings of more than one Valentinian movement.

⁴⁰³ Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 188.

5.3. Post-Passion Revelation – Ascent Narrative

The post-mortem ascent narrative is extremely fragmentary in NHC V, but is virtually complete with some lacunae in the AMC version of the text. Some important work has been done on the various elements present within the ascent narrative by Einar Thomassen,⁴⁰⁴ as well as Antti Marjanen.⁴⁰⁵ Thomassen's work, in particular, has changed how we view the material by positing that the ascent narrative uses a formula for ascent previously thought to have come from Valentinian sources, but that can be shown to find its origins in Orphism. As such, for Thomassen the text presents an Orphic ascent. I will counter and expand upon Thomassen's argument, instead showing that, yes, the formula is Orphic in origin, but that its form, circumstances, and purpose are perfectly typical of Jewish, Christian, and even Egyptian texts that were circulating in antiquity and late antiquity, including the Valentinian ones.

In order to properly contextualize the ascent narrative within the larger thought world presented by Jewish and Christian texts, I look at the intertextual relationship between the ascent pattern presented in the text and other Jewish and Christian literature that incorporated in their narratives both ascension and elevation. I should clarify that I draw a distinction between the two terms "ascension" and "elevation" in this context. The term "ascension" I refer to an ascent wherein the individual ascends through their own devices. In contrast, the term "elevation" implies a passive ascension wherein the individual (whether in or out of the body) is elevated by another power. We see very similar patterns of ascent in other "gnostic" texts such as the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Gospel of Mary*, which show a clear intertextual relationship with

⁴⁰⁴ Thomassen, "Orphics and Gnostics."

⁴⁰⁵ Marjanen, "The Seven Women Disciples."

the *First Apocalypse of James* in relation to a number of elements, including the invocation of formulas on the part of the soul and the presence of menacing figures who try to thwart the advance of the individual to the upper realm. To this we must also add the traditions of elevation such as that described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12, and the elevation and deification of Enoch in *1 and 2 Enoch*.

Jesus teaches James a question and answer formula that will help him bypass, first, a guardian and, second, a group of three toll collectors (τελῶνται) who steal souls. This kind of question and answer formula can be found in Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.21,5, and Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 36.3,4-5. Irenaeus refers to this formula as part of a Marcosian (Valentinian) ritual for the dying. The ritual also involves pouring oil and water over the head of the dying persons and saying invocations over them.⁴⁰⁶

The presence of the toll collectors in the text has led Einar Thomassen to question whether or not the text is Valentinian.⁴⁰⁷ There are, however, similar ascents and question and answer formulas found in other “Gnostic” texts. The *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V, 2) is particularly significant to our understanding of how the ascent was understood by the readers of the *First Apocalypse of James* in Nag Hammadi Codex V, as it contains a similar ascent narrative and immediately precedes our text in the codex.⁴⁰⁸ The *Gospel of Mary* (BG 8502 1)

⁴⁰⁶ See Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 406, as well as Nicola Denzey Lewis, “Apolytrosis as Ritual and Sacrament: Determining a Ritual Context for Death in Second-Century Marcosian Valentinianism,” *JECS* 17 (2009): 525-61.

⁴⁰⁷ Thomassen, “Orphics and Gnostics,” 466-67.

⁴⁰⁸ See Michael Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story: The Apocalypse of Paul and Its Contexts* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 19; Waterloo, On.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2008), 168-71.

also contains an ascent and instructions for how the soul might escape from the archons who attempt to trap the soul in matter. Unfortunately, the *Gospel of Mary* is very fragmentary and cannot help us determine a classification for *James*, except to say that both of these texts may be termed as either anti-Petrine or counter-apostolic in the sense that they present an alternative to the orthodox myth of a monolithic church founded by Peter or Paul.⁴⁰⁹ The *Gospel of Mary* should not be discounted in relation to the ascent narrative itself though. In relation to our earlier discussion of the twelve versus seven hebdomads, it is important to note that the ascent in the *Gospel of Mary* shows the invocation of formulas to pass three guardian figures, one of whom is given seven names and attributes. In addition to the aforementioned texts, Pierluigi Piovanelli has noted that the newly published fragments of the *Book of Allogenes* from the Al Minya Codex contain an ascent that parallels the narrative in the *Gospel of Mary*.⁴¹⁰

The ascent as described in *1 Apoc. Jas.* and the *Gospel of Mary* is not typical of the “proto-orthodox” communities of the period, which, from canonical sources, appear to place more emphasis on mystical visionary ascent prior to death,⁴¹¹ nor does the pattern fit cleanly

⁴⁰⁹ The *Gospel of Mary* is known from two Greek fragments and a larger Coptic fragment. See, in general, Karen L. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 2003).

⁴¹⁰ See Pierluigi Piovanelli, “Why Mary and Peter? From the Early Christian *Gospel of Mary* to the Late Antique *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* in *Rediscovering the Apocryphal Continent: New Perspectives on Early Christian and Late Antique Apocryphal Texts and Traditions* (ed. Pierluigi Piovanelli and Tony Burke; Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, Forthcoming), n. 32.

⁴¹¹ As it is the case in the Apocalypse of John, Paul’s visionary ascent in 2 Corinthians 12:1-5, or Perpetua’s vision in the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*.

within what we know of Valentinian theology.⁴¹² Thomassen has put forth the alternate possibility that the ascent contained in the text might have been influenced by the Orphic mystery cults.⁴¹³ A possible link can be found between the type of instructions found in this text and the Orphic gold tablets, documents placed in tombs to serve as instructions for the deceased in the afterlife.⁴¹⁴ For example, one of these tablets reads

I am a child of Earth and Starry Sky, but my race is heavenly. You yourselves know this. I am parched with thirst and am dying, but quickly grant me cold water flowing from the lake of memory.⁴¹⁵

Though the mythology is quite different, Thomassen has argued that the instructions for the deceased displayed in *I Apoc. Jas.* quite possibly come from an independently circulated source, possibly a text whose funerary function was similar to that of the Orphic tablets.⁴¹⁶ Dunderberg agrees with the Orphic provenance of the formula that appears as Marcosian in the work of Irenaeus and as part of the instructions for ascent in *I Apoc. Jas.* In Dunderberg's view, though,

⁴¹² The possible exception is the *Apocalypse of Paul*, over which scholars continue to disagree (see above, n. 278).

⁴¹³ Thomassen, "Orphics and Gnostics," 466-67.

⁴¹⁴ On the Orphic gold tablets see Alberto Bernabé and Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Instructions for the Netherworld: The Orphic Gold Tablets* (trans. Michael Chase, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World Volume 162; Leiden: Brill, 2008.); Radcliffe G. Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the "Orphic" Gold Tablets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Radcliffe G. Edmonds, ed., *The "Orphic" Gold Tablets and Greek Religion : Further along the Path* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Gábor Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus : Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁴¹⁵ Translation taken from Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 112.

⁴¹⁶ Thomassen, "Orphics and Gnostics" 466-67.

the formula may also be linked to a sequence that is present in the *Gospel of Thomas* 50. He notes that

it is possible that the Valentinian instruction in the *(First) Apocalypse of James* and Irenaeus are based upon this tradition of Jesus' sayings. This possibility, however, is impossible to confirm, since there are also other similar instructions, above all those of Orphic origin.⁴¹⁷

Regardless of the ultimate origin, Dunderberg views the formula in question, as well as the similar attestation on the epitaph of Flavia Sophe, which Thomassen discusses, as undoubtedly Valentinian, to be associated with the Marcosian ritual of redemption.⁴¹⁸

In addition to the Orphic material, the concept of guardians who steal or subvert ascending souls is also extant in a number of other texts and contexts. A very similar type of question and response formula is related by Epiphanius in *Panarion* I.26.13,2.

They cite a fictitious Gospel in the name of the holy disciple Philip, as follows. "The Lord hath shown me what my soul must say on its ascent to heaven, and how it must answer each of the powers on high. 'I have recognized myself,' it saith, 'and gathered myself from every quarter, and have sown no children for the archon. But I have pulled up his roots, and gathered my scattered members, and I know who thou art. For I,' it saith, 'am of those on high'" and so, they say, it is set free. But if it turns out to have fathered a son, it is detained below until it can take its own children up and restore them to itself.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁷ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 115.

⁴¹⁸ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 115-16.

⁴¹⁹ Translation from Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis Book I (Sects 1-46)* (NHMS 35; Leiden: Brill, 1987), 94. It is interesting that the archon is personified in female demonic form in the passage following in 13,6: "And their silly fictions are so crude that they even dare to blaspheme the holy Elijah, and say he was cast back down into the world when he was taken up. For they say that one she-demon came and caught hold of him and said, 'Whither goest thou? For I have children of thee, and thou canst not ascend and leave thy children here.' And he replied, 'Whence hast thou children of me, seeing I lived in continence?' and she answered, 'Yea,

As with the Orphic ascent and the ascent in *I Apoc. Jas.*, this formula is based largely on the soul's recognition of its own nature and a declaration of purity/righteousness. The exact formula that we see in this passage is not extant in the *Gospel of Philip* (NHC II, 3)⁴²⁰ from Nag Hammadi. Even so, the overarching theme of transgressive sexuality that Ephiphanius cites, though in a distorted manner, is a concern of the text. This is particularly evident with respect to the question of subversion on the part of both male and female demons who cannot act against men and women who are married. This element appears in the midst of discourse on marriage in the *Gospel of Philip* at 65.2-66.4.

The forms of evil spirit include male ones and female ones. The males are they that unite with the souls which inhabit a female form, but the females are they which are mingled with those in a male form, through one who was disobedient. And none shall be able to escape them since they detain him if he does not receive a male power or a female power, the bridegroom and the bride. – One receives them from the mirrored bridal chamber. – When the wanton women see a male sitting alone, they leap down on him and play with him and defile him. So also the lecherous men, when they see a beautiful woman sitting alone, they persuade her and compel her, wishing to defile her. But if they see the man and his wife sitting beside one another, the female cannot come in to the man, nor can the male come in to the woman. So if the image and the angel are united with one another, neither can any venture to go in to the man or the woman. He who comes out of the world and so can no longer be detained on the grounds that he was in the world evidently is above the desire of the [...] and fear. He is master over [...]. He is superior to envy. If [...] comes, they sieze him and throttle [him]. And how will [this one] be able to escape the [great...] powers? How will he be able to [...] There are some [who say], “We are faithful,” in order that [...the

for when oft, in dreaming dreams, thou wert voided by the discharge usual of bodies, it was I that received the seeds of thee and bare thee sons.’ ”

⁴²⁰ We should note, however, the presence of Achamoth (60.11) in the text of the *Gospel of Philip*.

unclean spirits] and the demons. For if they had the holy spirit, no unclean spirit would cleave to them.⁴²¹

What we do see in the text, while not an explicit formula, is a threat to those who are ascending, but in this case, a threat that is concretely based on the text's understanding of sexual immorality. Even without the formula, the *Gospel of Philip* shows similar pre-requisites for the ascent of the soul, which are based on control of what would be interpreted as baser inclinations. None of this shows a conclusive relationship between *1 Apoc. Jas.* and the *Gospel of Philip*, though both share strong affinities with Valentinianism. It is possible that Ephiphanius might have known an independent attestation of the *Gospel of Philip* that included an expansion on the ascent that is closer to what we see in *1 Apoc. Jas.*

2 Enoch, both shorter and longer recensions, shows in chapter 10 (the ascent to the "Northern" or the "third Heaven") a place which has been prepared for those who do not glorify God. Of particular note is 10:5 which describes the inhabitants thusly:

This place, Enoch, has been prepared for those who practice godless uncleanness on the earth, who perform witchcraft and enchantments, and who boast about their deeds. They steal souls secretly.⁴²²

We also see a parallel to the toll collectors of our text in *3 Enoch*, specifically with respect to the inaccessible nature of divinity. According to Alexander,

⁴²¹ Translation from Wesley W. Isenberg, "The *Gospel According to Philip*," in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7 Together with XIII, 2, Brit. Lib. OR.4926(1), and P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655* (ed. Bentley Layton; NHMS 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 142-215 at 171-173.

⁴²² Translation from F.I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume One*, 91-222 at 119.

God is represented as being well-nigh inaccessible to man. His throne stands in the innermost of the seven concentric palaces and the way to it is barred by fierce guardian angels at the gate of each palace. Not only the gatekeepers but the angels in general are opposed to man (3En 1:6-7; 2:2; 5:10; 6:2; 15B:2). These hostile angels form a protective circle round God's throne; in a sense they are hypostatizations of his holiness.⁴²³

The idea of angels or divine beings who abduct souls and cast them down can also be seen in chapter four (1-10) of the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*.

Then I walked with the angel of the Lord. I looked before me and I saw a place there. Thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of angels entered through it. Their faces were like a leopard, their tusks being outside their mouth like the wild boars. Their eyes were mixed with blood. Their hair was loose like the hair of women, and fiery scourges were in their hands. When I saw them, I was afraid. I said to that angel who walked with me. "Of what sort are these?" He said to me, "These are the servants of all creation who come to the souls of ungodly men and bring them and leave them in this place. They spend three days going around with them in the air before they bring them and cast them into their eternal punishment." I said, "I beseech you, O Lord, don't give them authority to come to me." The angel said, "Don't fear. I will not permit them to come to you because you are pure before the Lord. I will not permit them to come to you because the Lord Almighty sent me to you because you are pure before him." Then he beckoned to them, and they withdrew themselves and they ran from me.⁴²⁴

There are obvious differences between this passage and the type of ascent that we have been discussing. We should notice that unlike the ascent in *I Apoc Jas.*, the interaction with the angels is mediated by the angel of the Lord who accompanies Zephaniah. As well, there is no formula for bypassing these figures that is expressed within the text. There are, however, a number of soteriological constants that come into play. The most important of these is the

⁴²³ Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," 241.

⁴²⁴ Translation from O.S. Wintermute, "The Apocalypse of Zephaniah," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume One*, 508-515 at 511.

assurance that Zephaniah will not be harmed on account of his being pure and righteous. In addition, we see something that is reminiscent of the toll collectors becoming disturbed in *I Apoc. Jas.* (NHC V, 3 35, 18-24), in the last line of the passage (4, 10), which tells us that “they withdrew themselves and they ran from me,” implying that the angels were afraid of someone who was pure. The idea of the angels acting as guardians of the higher realm is shown preceding this at the end of chapter 3 (vv. 5-9), which describes the angels who guard the gate of Heaven and who write down people’s sins. O.S. Wintermute has posited, based on internal evidence, that the text should be dated prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.⁴²⁵ Wintermute also argues that there is no Christian evidence in the text and, as a consequence, the author was Jewish.⁴²⁶ For our purposes, this text helps us situate the elements of the toll collectors, and the issue of purity for the ascending soul, within *I Apoc. Jas.*, as being, if not normative, then at least, present and attested within the Judaism of the first centuries of the common era.

The concept of judgment and peril of the soul is also native within an Egyptian context and, as such, should not be understood as anomalous within our text. The *Book of the Dead (Coming Forth By Day)*, a magical text used in a funerary context, contains explicit and lengthy instructions for what the soul is to say to the gods. Of particular interest is chapter 125, which begins with a declaration of the innocence of the soul, followed by a list of sins that the soul has not committed, and an address to the gods. Following this declaration and address, the text shows that the soul will undergo two interrogations and gives the necessary formula of responses that the soul must invoke.

⁴²⁵ Wintermute, “The Apocalypse of Zephaniah,” 500.

⁴²⁶ Wintermute, “Introduction to the Apocalypse of Zephaniah,” 501.

The First Interrogation. “Let him come,” they say to me, “Who are you?” they say to me, “What is your name?” they say to me. “I am the stalk of the papyrus, He-who-is-in-the-moringa is my name.” “Where have you passed by?” they say to me, “I have passed by the town north of the moringa.” “What have you seen there?” “The leg and the thigh.” “What did you say to them?” “I have witnessed the acclaim in the land of the Fenkhu.” “What did they give you?” “A firebrand and a faience column.” “What did you do with them?” “I buried them on the shore of the pool Maaty, at the time of the evening meal.” “What did you find there on the shore of the pool Maaty?” “A scepter of flint whose name is ‘Breath-giver’.” “What did you do to the firebrand and the faience column, when you had buried them?” “I lamented over them, I took them up, I extinguished the fire, I broke the column, threw it in the pool.” Come then, enter the gate of this hall of the Two Truths, for you know us.”

The Second Interrogation. “I shall not let you enter through me,” Says the beam of this gate “Unless you tell my name.” “‘Plummet-of-the-Place-of-Truth’ is your name.” “I shall not let you enter through me,” says the right leaf of this gate. “Unless you tell my name.” “‘Scale-pan-that-carries-maat’ is your name.” “I shall not let you enter through me,” Says the left leaf of this gate, “Unless you tell my name.” “‘Scale-pan-of-wine’ is your name.” “I shall not let you pass over me,” Says the threshold of this gate, “Unless you tell my name.” “‘Ox-of-Geb’ is your name.” “I shall not open for you,” Says the bolt of this gate, “Unless you tell my name.” “‘Toe-of-his-mother’ is your name.” “I shall not open for you” says the bolt-clasp of this gate, “Unless you tell my name.” “‘Eye-of-Sobk-Lord-of-Bakhu’ is your name.” “I shall not open for you, I shall not let you enter by me,” says the keeper of this gate, “Unless you tell my name.” “‘Breast-of-Shy-given-him-to-guard-Osiris’ is your name.” “We shall not let you pass over us,” say the cross timbers, “unless you tell our name.” “‘Offspring-of-Renenutet’ is your name.” “You know us, pass over us.” “You shall not tread upon me,” says the floor of this hall. “Why not, since I am pure?” “Because we do not know your feet, with which you will tread on us; Tell them to me.” “‘Who-enters-before-Min; is the name of my right foot.’” “‘Wnpt-of-Nephthys’ is the name of my left foot.” “Tread upon us, since you know us.” “I shall not announce you,” says the guard of the hall, “unless you tell my name.” “‘Knower-of-hearts Examiner-of-bellies’ is your name.” “To which god present shall I announce you?” “Tell it to the Interpreter of the Two-Lands.” “Who is the Interpreter of the Two Lands?” “It is Thoth.” “Come,” says Thoth, “why have you come?” “I have come here to report.” “What is your condition?” “I am free of all wrongdoing, I avoided the strife of those in their day, I am not one of them.” “To whom shall I announce you?” “To him whose roof is on fire, whose walls are living cobras, the floor of whose house is in the flood.” “Who is he?” “He is Osiris.” “Proceed, you are

announced, the Eye is your bread, the Eye is your beer, the Eye is your offering on earth,” So says he to me.⁴²⁷

While there are obvious differences, primarily with respect to the overall aspect of the guardians, who in this passage do not seem to be openly hostile, there are nonetheless important points of contact. The most important element is that there exists in Egypt, prior to the development of Christianity, a tradition of formulaic invocations within a post-mortem setting. These include familiar elements, such as the negation of wrongdoing, a declaration of purity, and the requirement of knowledge in order to pass the guardians. In its extant Egyptian context, the ascent narrative in the text, particularly the recitation of formulas for successful transition in the afterlife, is not an anomaly. Regardless of the source of our text’s formulas, we see that in the *Book of the Dead* the deceased does speak a formula so as not to have his soul devoured.

Returning to the *Gospel of Mary*, we note that there are four figures to be passed in the ascent with a formula being recited that is similar in meaning, if not exact form, to that which is present in the *First Apocalypse of James*. The ascent of the soul is only found in the extant portions of BG 8502 (9.1-29).

And Desire said, ‘I did not see you go down, yet now I see you go up. So why do you lie since you belong to me?’ The soul answered, ‘I saw you. You did not see me nor did you know me. You mistook the garment I wore for my true self. And you did not recognize me.’ “After it had said these things, it left rejoicing greatly.” “Again, it came to the third Power, which is called ‘Ignorance.’ It examined the soul closely, saying, ‘Where are you going? You are bound by wickedness. Indeed you are bound! Do not judge!’ “And the soul said, ‘Why do you judge me, since I have not passed judgement? I have been bound, but I have not bound anything. They did not recognize me, but I have recognized that the

⁴²⁷ Translation from Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006), 129-31.

universe is to be dissolved, both the things of earth and those of heaven.’ “When the soul had brought the third Power to naught, it went upward and saw the fourth Power. It had seven forms. The first form is darkness; the second is desire; the third is ignorance; the fourth is zeal for death; the fifth is the realm of the flesh; the sixth is the foolish wisdom of the flesh; the seventh is the wisdom of the wrathful person. There are the seven Powers of Wrath. They interrogated the soul, ‘Where are you coming from, human-killer, and where are you going, space-conquerer?’ The soul replied, saying, ‘What binds me has been slain and what surrounds me has been destroyed, and my desire has been brought to an end, and ignorance has died. In a world, I was set loose from a world and in a type, from a type which is above, and from the chain of forgetfulness which exists in time. From this hour on, for the time of the due season of the aeon I will receive rest in silence.’⁴²⁸

As with many of the other texts in question, the powers are associated with negative elements of transgressive sexuality, purity, and self-knowledge.

In the end, what sets our formula for ascent apart from those present in the other texts that we have discussed is the expectation placed upon the soul by the powers that it encounters. In most of the texts in question there is an expectation that the soul is allowed, or is able, to ascend based on the verbalization of some internalized knowledge of their own identity and that of the various powers encountered. Most of these texts also operate on the underlying soteriological condition that the soul is pure or without sin. We have seen that this is the case in the Egyptian (the *Book of the Dead*), as well as the Jewish pseudepigraphal (*2 Enoch*, *Testament of Abraham*) and Gnostic (*Apocalypse of Paul*, *Gospel of Mary*) contexts. At first glance, what appears to set our text apart is the fact that there is no overt statement concerning the purity of the soul, nor does there appear to be a sense of judgment.

With respect to the formula, King argues that

⁴²⁸ Translation from King, *The Gospel of Mary*, 16.

here the toll-collectors are clearly malevolent thieves who steal souls. But the questions they ask only demand that James know his true identity and place of origin. Knowledge is sufficient to escape their attacks. His moral condition is not an issue, and there is no hint of judgment for sins.⁴²⁹

This is, however, a too impressionistic conclusion, as the purity and worth of James have already been established throughout the text. It might be considered superfluous to make further comments since, as we have established, one of the reasons that James would have been chosen as protagonist is based on his purity and righteousness. Hence, judgement in the text takes place, but James is deemed as being fit for ascent by Jesus.

Overall, in the texts and related material that we have discussed concerning the ascent and guardians/toll collectors, we can say that *I Apoc. Jas.* is relatively normative within the contexts that we would most readily associate it with. The concept of divine beings who hinder, thwart, or question souls, while guarding passage through the afterlife, is intertextually widespread in Hellenistic (particularly Hermetic), Egyptian, and Judeo-Christian contexts. While the use of knowledge, or a formula, for bypassing the guardians is not always present, it is not anomalous within *I Apoc. Jas.* Moreover, *I Apoc. Jas.* contains the element of purity, or righteousness, which, while not a factor in the Orphic formula, acts as a constant in Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian texts containing the “guardian” angels. Knowing the diversity that is attested within Valentinian systems, it would be short-sighted to exclude our text. Rather, we should consider the possibility that the earlier understanding of the text as containing Marcosian elements might stand if only because we cannot conclusively separate the text from that context. Thomassen has argued for the exclusion of the text based on the lack of characteristic

⁴²⁹ King, *The Gospel of Mary*, 75.

Valentinian elements and the inclusion of elements which he understands as being overtly tied to Orphism. We have seen, however, that the cosmology of the text is very limited (probably intended for those already initiated) and biased toward a particular argument. We have also noted that, while the particular formula is related to Orphic thought, the underlying elements with respect to the ascending soul and the guardians are common within a number of settings which would have been extant to, and contemporary with, the author(s) of the text.⁴³⁰ As well, the seemingly overarching acceptance and appropriation of particularly Jewish textual traditions does fit within a Valentinian context which does not betray the anti-Jewish bias characteristic of Sethian Gnosticism. Keeping this in mind we cannot make a feasible argument from absentia and as such the group provenance of the text remains ambiguous.

⁴³⁰ It is useful to keep in mind that the use of Orphic imagery was not unheard of in either late Judaism or early Christianity. Jaś Elsner notes two mosaic panels which depict David in the form of Orpheus, one from the synagogue at Dura-Europas and the other found in 1965 within the Gaza synagogue. In both cases the association between David and Orpheus is an easy step as the images often include the figure in question playing a lyre. Elsner, however, questions the identification of a mosaic housed in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum as depicting Christ in the form Orpheus. See Jaś Elsner, "Double Identity: Orpheus as David. Orpheus as Christ?" *BAR* 35.2 (2009): 34-45 at 40, 42-43. Sarah K. Yeomans, while allowing for the fact that the mosaic in Istanbul is simply an image of Orpheus and not Christ, does note that, "the mythological figure of Orpheus, who enchanted all of nature with his poetry and music, is another example of a pagan artistic type that was used in both early Christian as well as Jewish iconography. For the early Jews, the association of music and poetry with Orpheus likely led to the same image being used to represent King David, who famously sang his praises to God. Indeed, instances of David depicted with Orpheus imagery are well and firmly documented. Equally well documented are images of Christ as Orpheus, particularly in the catacombs of Rome." See Sarah K. Yeomans, "Borrowing from the Neighbors: Pagan Imagery in Christian Art," n.p. [cited 12 December 2014]. Online: <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/ancient-near-eastern-world/borrowing-from-the-neighbors/>.

5.4. The Seven Spirits, and the Six Women who are Disciples

The final element present in the ascent narrative and the discussion of the cosmology that we need to scrutinize are the spirits and women whom James inquires about. Following directly on the lineage of Addai in the second main revelatory sequence, James enquires concerning seven women who have become the disciples of Jesus.

ΕΤΙ †ΝΑΨΙΝΕ ΜΜΟΚ' ΕΠΑΪ : ΝΙΜ ΝΕ †CZ̄QE NCZIME
 ΝΤΑΡ ΜΑΘΗΤΕΥΕ ΝΕΚ' ΑΥΩ ΝΑΪ CΕΡ̄ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΖΕ
 ΜΜΑΥ Ν̄ΒΙ Γ̄ΕΝΕΑ ΤΗΡΟΥ : ΑΥΩ ΑΝΟΚ †Ρ̄ ΜΟΪΖΕ ΧΕ
 ΕΥΖ̄Ν ΝΑΓ̄ΒΙΟΝ Ν̄ΩΒ ΑΥΩ ΑῩΒΙΝΕ ΝΖΝ̄ΟΜ ΜΝ Ζ̄ΝΑΙ
 CΘΗCIC (AMC 25, 17-21).

Yet I will ask you concerning this thing. Who are the seven women who have come to be your disciples and who are blessed by all of the generations? And I am amazed that they are in weak vessels and have found powers and perceptions.

Jesus goes on to describe these seven women as “seven spirits” in AMC 26, 7-11.

ΟΥΠ̄ΝΑ ΝCΟΦΙΑ Ζ[Ι] Μ[ΝΤ]CΑΒΕ : ΟΥΠ̄ΝΑ ΝCΟΧ̄Ν[Ε]
 [ΖΙ] Β[Ο]Μ : ΟΥΠ̄ΝΑ [Ν]ΝΟΥC ΖΙ CΟΟ[ΥΝΕ] ΟΥΠ̄ΝΑ
 ΝΖΟΤΕ

A spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of understanding and knowledge, a spirit of fear.

Another important point of comparison can now be made to the ascent narrative in the *Gospel of Mary*. In that text we see that the spirit ascends past three archons before arriving at a fourth power in seven forms. We see a parallel form to the ascent in our narrative in that Jesus describes three toll collectors before James initiates the discussion of the seven women. Here we encounter a reversal, as the *Gospel of Mary* describes the seven as the powers of wrath who are named as: darkness, desire, ignorance, excitement of death, kingdom of the flesh, foolish

wisdom, and wrathful wisdom. All of these represent baser tendencies or desires that are associated with the physical/material realm. In contrast, the seven in *I Apoc. Jas.* are shown to represent the positive attributes of the ideal candidate for ascension.⁴³¹

Most commentators have assumed that these spirits should be associated with the women who are named later in the text as being either ideal disciples (AMC 27, 25-28, 2), or examples of ones who will perish (AMC 28, 26-29, 6). The ideal female disciples are named as **ΣΑΛΩΜΗ ΜΝ ΜΑΡΙΖΑΜΜΗΝ ΑΥΩ ΑΡCΙΝΟΗ** (Salome, Mary, and Arsinoe), while the ones who perish are **[C]ΑΠΠΙΡΑ ΜΝ CΟΥCΑΝΝΑ ΜΝ [I]ΩΑΝΝΑ** (Sapphira, Susanna, and Joanna). In Marjanen's opinion,

after Jesus has informed James of the way the revelation he has imparted to James is to be passed on to later generations of witnesses, James wants to know how Jesus himself characterizes his seven female disciples. James' question suggests that the women do not belong to the chain of transmitters of Jesus' revelation but rather they are James' own contemporaries.⁴³²

The problem with this perspective is simply that the numbers do not add up. There are only six women mentioned. It is true that page 29 of the AMC is badly damaged; even so the three names given are clear, and there is not enough of the text in lacuna at the appropriate place to posit a fourth name. Nor would it be possible for a fourth name to appear in the list on page 27. As such, the women who are named should be understood as examples of discipleship, but

⁴³¹ We might interpret fear negatively, but it is likely that the text is showing fear as an attribute that can be used positively to temper ones actions and emotions.

⁴³² Marjanen, "The Seven Women Disciples," 536.

should be considered separately from the seven spirits in the text.⁴³³ We might consider the women who are named to be contemporaries of James, but they are not the seven spirits.

Instead of being the disciples, it is possible that the women in question are being used syncretically to show the validity, though in an incomplete manner, of prophetic traditions outside of either Christianity or Judaism. Marjanen has noted a relationship to the prophetic tradition in relation to the six spirits mentioned in Isaiah 11:2-3, with the observation that there is a change to a seven-dimensional understanding of the spirits in the second and third centuries.⁴³⁴ In this regard, the use of the seven women might be best understood in relation to Justin Martyr's understanding that pre-Christian Greek prophetic traditions contained elements of truth, though in incomplete form. Justin Martyr's *First Apology* 46 contains an argument for pre-Christian revelation.

We have been taught that Christ is the First-born of God, and we have suggested above that He is the logos of whom every race of men and women were partakers. And they who lived with the logos are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and people like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, and Ananias, and Asarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others whose actions and names we now decline to recount, because we know it would be tedious. So that even they who lived before Christ, and lived without logos, were wicked and hostile to Christ, and slew those who lived with the logos. But for what reason He, through the power of logos and according to the will of God the Father and Lord of all, was born a of virgin as a man, and was named Jesus, and was crucified, and died, and rose

⁴³³ Marjanen, "The Seven Women Disciples," 540-41, is operating on the assumption that the Nag Hammadi version of the text originally contained seven names, one of which – another Mary – was excluded by the copyist of the Al Minya codex. I would contrarily argue that there was an expectation of a seventh name based on the mention of the seven spirits. and that this is not supported by the text. On the topic of the seven women also see Silke Petersen, " 'Die sieben Frauen – sieben Geistkräfte sind sie'. Frauen und Weiblichkeit in der Schrift 'Jakobus' (CT 2) und der (ersten) Apokalypse des Jakobus (NHC V,3)," in *Judasevangelium und Codex Tchacos*, 189-211

⁴³⁴ Marjanen, "The Seven Women Disciples," 537-38.

again, and ascended into heaven, an intelligent person will be able to comprehend from what has been already so largely said.⁴³⁵

With this in mind we can postulate that the seven spirits, while being associated in some form with femaleness, are not to understood literally as women within a community or the ongoing chain of revelation. This is reinforced by Jesus' statement at AMC 26, 19-27, 2:

ΑΥΩ ΑΝΟΚ ΖΑ ΤΕΖΗ ΕΜΠΑΪΟΥΩΝΖ̄ ΕΒΟΛ Ν̄ΝΕΕΙΜΑ
 : ΑΡΑ ΝΕΥΩΟΠ' Ν̄ΟΙ ΝΑΕΙ Ζ̄Μ ΠΙΛΑΟΣ ΕΤΕ ΠΑΕΙ ΠΕ
 ΠΜΑ ΕΤΕ ΜΠΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΨΑΧΕ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΠΙΣΑΨ̄
 Μ̄ΠΝΑ ΑΥΩ ΝΑΕΙ ΝΕ ΠΙΣΑΨ̄ Μ̄ΠΝΑ Ν̄ΤΑΥΤΑΨΕ
 ΟΕΙΩ ΕΤΒΗΤ' > - Ζ̄ΙΤ̄Ν ΤΤΑΠΡΟ Ν̄ΝΡΩΜΕ : ΚΑΤΑ ΘΕ
 Ν̄ΤΑΥΘ̄Μ̄ΟΜ ΕΧΟΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΧΕ Μ̄ΠΙΧΩ Ν̄Τ̄ΟΜ
 ΤΗΡ̄

And before I did appear in these places, these spirits were already with these people, where the prophets did not speak without these seven spirits. And these are the seven spirits who has spoken about me through the mouths of people in the manner that they were able to speak because I had not yet spoken with all strength.

Based on this reading, the seven spirits must not be associated with the named women, nor the ongoing chain of revelation. Instead, the seven spirits should conclusively be associated with pre-Christian revelation that could be associated with Jewish prophecy (likely), or even Greek prophets or oracles.

⁴³⁵ Translation taken from Leslie William Barnard, *St. Justin Martyr: The First and Second Apologies* (Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation 56; New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 55.

As for the inclusion of the women in the text, any conclusion would be strictly speculative. It is possible that the female element, as we see it in the text, is being associated with the imperfect creation of the material realm. Hence, in a prophetic capacity they contain the seeds of the revelation of the Logos, but not the full revelation. It is also possible that the women can be seen to act as a link to Marcosian Valentinian thought. We know that he was closely associated with women within his movement. It is even stated by Marcus, in the account of his revelation that is conveyed by Irenaeus (*AH* I.14.1), that the revelatory intermediary appeared in female form. It is not impossible to imagine the inclusion of women in a narrative such as this one, particularly with respect to questions of prophecy and discipleship, if the text was intended for a group that strongly encouraged the participation of female adherents. Regardless, this again is purely speculation.

Conclusions:

As discussed in this chapter, the text presents a limited cosmology and is probably intended for a reader who was already initiated into the basic teachings of the group. That being said, I have shown that the use of negative attribution in the terms describing the “One Who Is”, is consistent with descriptions of the Marcosian system. This represents one level on which to understand the cosmology of the text.

In addition, I have explored how the cosmology of the text, including the typology of the hebdomads and the other worldly journey, can be situated just as clearly within the context of late antique Judaism and Jewish-Christianity. With respect to the twelve and seventy-two hebdomads that are present in the text, I have shown that there is no set number of heavens during the period in question and that their number should be taken as symbolic of 1) the twelve

apostles and the seventy-two disciples in the Christian tradition; and 2) as representative of the twelve tribes and the seventy plus two elders who are appointed by Moses in Number 11:16-30.

A central concern of this chapter has been to address the conclusion by Einar Thomassen that the text cannot be classified as Valentinian based on the presence of the Orphic ascent and the lack of certain specifically Valentinian elements.⁴³⁶ I have demonstrated that the text is at home in a variety of settings, and could be understood as representative of any number of traditions that are present in late antique Egypt, including Judaism, Jewish-Christianity, native Egyptian cosmological speculations, and even Marcosian Valentinianism. In this regard, I conclude that the combination of negative theology with the formula for ascent and the presence of the lower Sophia Achamoth is ample evidence for the possibility that the text is Valentinian. In this case, the available evidence outweighs any argument in relation to what is missing in the text.

⁴³⁶ Thomassen, "Orphics and Gnostics."

General Conclusions

The text of the *First Apocalypse of James* betrays a complex narrative structure. In chapters one and two I looked at the complex interweaving of various traditions that were used to construct the identity of James within the developing traditions of early Christianity. I have shown that James, as we know him from extant sources, was seen as a thoroughly righteous figure, who was associated strongly with the traditional figures of the prophet, priest, and judge within a Jewish context, while also being seen as the successor to Jesus within the fledgling Christian community. This has been demonstrated through a careful analysis of the extant traditions pertaining to the figure of James. With this in mind, I have shown conclusively that James was chosen as the protagonist of *I Apoc. Jas.* very deliberately in order to establish an argument for an alternative form of apostolic authority through the association with traditions concerning his life, authority, and martyrdom.

In chapter one I explored the various depictions of the martyrdom of James. Of particular note is the depiction in Hegesippus' *Hypomnemata* which gives the fullest account of the life and martyrdom of James. I have come to the conclusion that the James who is depicted in Hegesippus' account should be considered to be a permanent Nazirite (from birth) and understood in relation to the other permanent Nazirites depicted prominently in Jewish and Christian traditions: John the Baptist, Samson, and Samuel. In relation to this I have shown that James is specifically portrayed in relation to the asceticism of John the Baptist. Allowing for this, his ascetic tendencies are not without precedent, nor are they in contravention of purity regulations. As such, I come to the ultimate conclusion that the martyrdom of James is not based on any transgression of purity laws with respect to worship in the temple but instead that he is

killed because he leads the people astray to worship Christ. Finally, I show that the account of Hegesippus is most likely based on the martyrdom of Jeremiah in *4 Baruch*.

Chapter two continued with the discussion of traditions concerning the “historical” James. In this chapter I looked at the overall question of leadership within the early church. In all of the extant sources I have shown that there is never any question concerning James’ position as the first bishop of Jerusalem. The confusion has tended to lie in the accounts given by Eusebius who has been influenced by the Origenist perspective through his teacher Pamphilus. Even so, I have shown that there is never any in the earliest sources, Josephus, the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters of Paul, wherein the authority of James is subsumed to the apostles.

Throughout chapters three and four I have shown that it is possible to read and interpret the text on a number of levels, each of which can be understood as being valid within a given context. For our purposes, the association with the gnostic apocalyptic genre (as discussed in chapter three) and the concept of commission narratives (discussed in chapter four) stand out as the two dominant avenues for understanding the compositional setting and purpose of the text.

My exploration and analysis of the apocalyptic elements in chapter three shows that the author of the text felt a strong connection to Jewish post-exilic prophetic themes. We see this particularly with respect to the associations between Jerusalem and the bitter cup which signifies God’s wrath as well as the interdiction against returning to Jerusalem which indicates a strong association with traditions associated with the prophet Jeremiah, both canonical and apocryphal. Moreover, this use of Jewish prophetic material serves to further reinforce an association with Valentinianism.

Chapter four is devoted entirely to situating the text in relation to the ongoing commission that begins with James and then transmits to Addai, Manael, Levi, and Levi's second son. My analysis of the names present in the lineage has shown that it can be broken down into two sections. The first comprising the revelation to Addai and Manael can be understood as reinforcing the theme of direct apostolic succession through figures that were associated with the spread of Christianity in an eastern Syrian (possibly Armenian) context. The second half of the lineage is best understood as reinforcing a continuum of purity, drawing a connection to the Levitical priesthood, the tribe of the Levites, and in particular the Kohathites who were charged with special duties pertaining to the vessels of the temple, through the use of Levi and his second son who I have identified as Kohath. I have also shown that the timeline of the lineage can only be understood with respect to the age of seventeen that is given for Levi's second son in the text. Based on this I developed a plausible timeline from James to Levi's second son that takes account of the three wars mentioned in the text, thus helping to situate the composition of the text in a community that would have had a memory of the conflicts in question.

The combined elements of the intertextual connections with canonical and pseudepigraphical apocalyptic literature, as well as explicit references to historical traditions (concerning the Jewish wars), and literature that is situated in a first-second century context, suggest that the text may have been composed during either the late second or early third century, in a context where the question of apostolic succession was being contested. As such, due to the explicit references to the Jewish wars of the late first and early second century, I would posit that the text was written for a community wherein the effects, or memories, of these conflicts were still at the forefront. This suggests that it would have been composed within a

generation of the final conflict mentioned in the text (i.e., the Bar Kokhba's war, 132-135 CE). Also, if I am correct and the martyrdom narrative of Hegesippus is based on the account in *4 Baruch* (as discussed in chapter one), then the tradition of the martyrdom of James as recounted can be no earlier than 136 CE. Bearing this in mind, we can conservatively state that the original Greek text would have been composed in the mid-late second-century, possibly as early as 150 CE. With respect to compositional setting, then I would conservatively say that there is a connection to the traditions surrounding the foundation of Christianity in Syria/Armenia, but that this cannot positively act as a concrete locus for identification.

As discussed in chapter five, the overall cosmology of *1 Apoc. Jas.* belies a syncretic tendency that makes situating it within the identifiable boundaries of a particular group difficult. I have noted that the text is equally at home in the mythological thought worlds which are representative of a number of different traditions and religious trajectories that were present in both antique Egypt and the larger context of the Mediterranean and near east, including: Orphism, native Egyptian mythology, Judaism (apocalyptic and Rabbinic traditions), and Christianity. By analysing the mythic elements in the narrative, I have concluded that they are not representative of one particular system, but can be proven to be intertextually linked to a disparate number of traditions, all with a certain amount of validity. This means that the text presents a cosmology that is not necessarily atypical in the elements that it includes, but that is novel in the manner in which they are combined in the narrative. In the end, then, we can argue that it is possible to understand the text of *1 Apoc. Jas.* within the thought world of Marcosian Valentinianism. This is particularly true in light of the variety of expressions represented in the work of the followers and hiers to Valentinus. One can easily imagine a teacher associated with the Marcosian school adapting and incorporating mythological elements in order to meet

changing needs within a given community, or in order to suit an evolving religious system. On the other hand, it is also possible to view the text as the product of an authorial setting outside of a Valentinian context, wherein the author took advantage of the variety of material present within the “religious marketplace” in order to create a work based on his or her own unique understanding of the cosmos.

Appendix: Some Brief Remarks on Rhetorical Units as an Interpretive Tool

Generally when Nag Hammadi and related texts are discussed, it is in isolation. This does not necessarily mean that intertextuality is ignored, but rather that the tractates are not discussed as part of a larger unit. In recent years there has been an attempt on the part of scholars to classify groupings of texts within the Nag Hammadi corpus. Generally, however, this has been based on philological work that was more concerned with the determination of scribal hands within the codices than content. A recent article by Louis Painchaud and Michael Kaler has taken a step further in discussing groupings of texts that are related on a philological level, while also looking at how they might have been read in conjunction with one another, even though they presented seemingly disparate material at first glance. Their work, however, was limited to codices I, VII, and XI. A full, though limited, thematic study of the codices was undertaken by Michael Williams in 1995.⁴³⁷ According to Williams,

Nag Hammadi illustrates the degree to which intertextual relationships effected by codex production encouraged hermeneutical perspectives in terms of which works that to us seem theologically conflicting could come to be read as reflecting the same concerns.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁷ Michael A. Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as 'Collections' in the History of Gnosticism," in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification. Actes du Colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 septembre 1993* (eds. Louis Painchaud and Anne Pasquier; BCNH, Études 3; Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995), 1-50.

⁴³⁸ Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as 'Collections'," 1.

Our understanding of the narrative is in many ways determined by the larger context in which it can be viewed. With this in mind, I would argue that the scope of the rhetorical unit has directly affected scholarly views on the themes which are dominant in *I Apoc. Jas.* As such, at the moment I am not concerned with authorial intention, nor with the intended audience of the tractate. Instead, I am concerned solely with the intention of the compiler of the codex in the choice of texts and the overall theme that their interaction with one another creates.

NHC V

Codex V from Nag Hammadi is composed of five tractates. These include *Eugnostos the Blessed*, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, the *Second Apocalypse of James*, and the *Apocalypse of Adam*. All of these texts, save for *Eugnostos*, take the form of an apocalypse or revelation dialogue, with the inclusion of the term within the title. As a consequence, we often find *Eugnostos* excluded from the larger discussion of codex V. I would argue that it is not the designation of the texts as apocalypses that served as a determinant for the grouping of texts. As Michael Kaler has stated, “The first text in the codex, *Eugnostos*, is not an apocalypse, but in its description of the divine realms it serves as an introduction to the codex as a whole.”⁴³⁹ Keeping this in mind, I would argue that these texts were likely chosen and

⁴³⁹ Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story*, 36.

arranged based on common elements that include a reuse and reinterpretation of Jewish apocalyptic tradition and/or mysticism.⁴⁴⁰

Beginning with *Eugnostos* (NHC V, 1), we encounter a text that unlike the others in the codex takes the form of an epistle rather than a revelation dialogue.⁴⁴¹ The text serves in a similar capacity, as the epistolary form is used as the medium through which to transmit revealed knowledge. The text of *Eugnostos*, though not explicitly Jewish in character, betrays some elements common to Jewish mystical traditions, including a developed angelology.⁴⁴²

This is followed by the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V, 2) which takes the form of a revelatory dialogue in which the protagonist Paul undergoes an ascent similar to that found in *I Apoc. Jas.*, including a recited formula associated with the ascent of the soul. The text is clearly Christian and expands on Paul's mystical experience described in 2 Corinthians 12, wherein Paul details a journey to the third heaven. This Christian element is, however, situated within a reinterpreted Jewish apocalyptic context. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to 22, 23-23, 28, the description of the seventh heaven where Paul encounters an old man in white

⁴⁴⁰ The idea of an overarching concern with Judaism in *I Apoc. Jas.* was first put forth by Bohlig, *Mysterion und Wahrheit*. This has been strongly refuted by Schoedel, "A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem."

⁴⁴¹ Though it is not necessarily relevant to our understanding of the theme of Judaism throughout the codex, we can further link *Eugnostos* to the *First Apocalypse of James* through a Syrian context. According to Madeleine Scopello ("Eugnostos the Blessed (NH III,3; V,1)," in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*, 274), "From Egypt this tractate circulated in Syria, and it was known in the school of Bardaisan in the beginning of the third century." If we accept that the *First Apocalypse of James* is a Valentinian text with a link to a Syrian Christian or Valentinian context, then we can hypothesize the use of these texts together may not be unique, though this is not possible to prove.

⁴⁴² See Michel Tardieu, *Écrits gnostiques: Codex de Berlin* (Sources gnostiques et manichéennes 1; Paris: Cerf, 1984), 65-67. This element is also discussed briefly by Scopello, "Eugnostos the Blessed," 273.

clothing who is sitting on a throne. This is an obvious reference to the Ancient of Days from Daniel 7:13, but reinterpreted in a Gnosticizing context wherein the old man questions Paul and attempts to trap him in matter.

The fourth tractate in codex V is the *Second Apocalypse of James*, a text in which James recounts a revelation imparted to him by Jesus. As with the first apocalypse, this text also concludes with the martyrdom of James. Though the mere presence of James in the text suggests a link to a more Jewish form of Christianity, Charles Hedrick points out that the links are quite deeply embedded in the text.⁴⁴³ One of the key elements concerns the martyrdom of James, which according to Hedrick “follows exactly the Jewish legal regulations for execution as described in the Mishnah (Sanh. 6.6).”⁴⁴⁴ Because of these factors, the text has generally been seen as a product of Jewish Christianity.⁴⁴⁵ With respect to the editorial context Hedrick notes that

the presence and order of the two James apocalypses in codex V may be attributed to deliberate scribal organization. The two apocalypses stress different aspects of the James tradition and actually complement on another. The setting of *1 Apoc. Jas.* emphasizes the period prior to the suffering of James, while *2 Apoc. Jas.* describes his suffering and death in line with the predictions in *1 Apoc. Jas.*⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ Hedrick, “The (Second) Apocalypse of James,” 105-49.

⁴⁴⁴ Hedrick, “The (Second) Apocalypse of James,” 108.

⁴⁴⁵ As with *Eugnostos* and the *First Apocalypse of James*, the *Second Apocalypse of James* can be tentatively linked to Syrian Christianity. According to Wolf-Peter Funk, “Although there is nothing in the *Second Revelation of James* to indicate the precise time and place of its composition, the claim it lays to the James tradition makes it likely that the writing originated in a portion of the exiled Jerusalem community, most likely in some part of Syria.” See Wolf-Peter Funk, “The Second Revelation of James: NHC V, 4” in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*, 331-42, esp. 332.

⁴⁴⁶ Hedrick, “The (Second) Apocalypse of James,” 109.

The final tractate of codex five, the *Apocalypse of Adam*, is a reinterpretation of Genesis. The text appears to have a Sethian cosmology wherein the seed of Seth represents the elect, and is passed down through the line of Noah and his sons. The use of Jewish traditions in a text of this sort is obvious. According to George W. McRae, “the most notable feature of this work is the absence of any explicit or clear borrowings from the Christian tradition.”⁴⁴⁷

As we have seen, there is an underlying knowledge of Jewish apocalyptic traditions present throughout the tractates of codex V. Within this rhetorical context the *First Apocalypse of James* can be understood as an apocalyptic text which is representative of Jewish-Christian concerns being interpreted within a gnostic context. Even so, this is not conclusive proof that the codex was used in a context betraying a strong association, whether positive or critical, with Judaism or Jewish Christianity, but merely an indicator of the possibility. With respect to the overall intention of the codex, there is one other possibility that I have not addressed. Michael Williams has argued for the intentional ordering of the tractates based on a cycle showing: 1) an initial overview of the divine realm in *Eugnostos*; followed by 2) Paul’s journey to the heavenly realms in the *Apocalypse of Paul*; 3) instructions for final ascent in the *First Apocalypse of James*; 4) death and martyrdom in the *Second Apocalypse of James*; and 4) an exposition on the

⁴⁴⁷ George W. McRae, “The Apocalypse of Adam V, 5: 64. 1-85, 32,” in *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,1 and 4*, (ed. Martin Krause, James M. Robinson and Fredrik Wisse; NHMS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 151-202, esp. 152. McRae goes on to say that “this has led several interpreters to see in it a witness to a non-Christian gnosticism which contains an already well developed redeemer myth. On the other hand, its close dependence on Jewish apocalyptic tradition suggests that it may represent a transitional stage in an evolution from Jewish to gnostic apocalyptic” (p. 152).

history of salvation, and eschatology in the *Apocalypse of Adam*.⁴⁴⁸ Williams' understanding of the intention of the codex is echoed in the work of Francoise Morard, who argues convincingly that the patterning of the texts in the codex shows that it could have been used as a manual for initiation.⁴⁴⁹ This interpretation is thought provoking as it ties in well with my understanding of the concerns of the Al Minya Codex.

Al Minya Codex

The compilation of texts in the Al Minya codex betrays a different objective. The first tractate of the Al Minya codex is the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, which is also attested in NHC VIII, 2. In this text Peter conveys the teaching that he received from Jesus. Although the text is very fragmentary, there is an explicit reference and endorsement of martyrdom in 7.2-3, which says, "He died for us; we ourselves are to die for humanity."⁴⁵⁰ This goes beyond a simple endorsement of the concept of martyrdom and equates the death of the apostles with the soteriological context of the text. The text also leads the reader toward a sympathy for martyrdom in other places, such as 6.1-10, where Jesus tells the elect how to fight.

⁴⁴⁸ Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as 'Collections,'" 33.

⁴⁴⁹ Francoise Morard, "Les Apocalypses du Codex V de Nag Hammadi," in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification. Actes du Colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 septembre 1993* (eds. Louis Painchaud and Anne Pasquier; BCNH, Études 3; Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995), 341-358, at 342.

⁴⁵⁰ Note that the translations of the tractates other than "James" found in the Al Minya codex are taken from Kasser, *The Gospel of Judas*.

As for you, fight like this, for the rulers fight against the inner person. So fight like this: gather together and teach the salvation of the world. And arm yourselves with the power of my father and express your prayer.

Karen King groups the *Letter of Peter to Philip* thematically with “James” as works aimed at preparation for martyrdom. She states that “both the *Letter of Peter to Philip* and the *First Apocalypse of James* demonstrate strategies that would prepare Christians to face persecution.”⁴⁵¹ Through the various strategies presented, “the disciples themselves become models for Christian readers.”⁴⁵²

The third tractate of the Al Minya codex is the famous *Gospel of Judas*. This tractate has been discussed at length by much of the community involved in Nag Hammadi scholarship, including the recent monograph by Lance Jenott.⁴⁵³ I will risk offering one brief possibility concerning the inclusion of the *Gospel of Judas* as part of the Al Minya codex. Most of the specialists studying the text have been doing so in relative rhetorical isolation. Taken apart from the rest of the codex, the arguments concerning whether or not Judas was the chosen disciple, or a demon are valid attempts at understanding a difficult text. Within the context of the codex, however, it is possible that it was being interpreted as a pro-martyrdom revelation wherein Judas

⁴⁵¹ King, “Martyrdom and Its Discontents,” 33-34. King goes on to list the strategies, “Each offers models for imitation, both in the figure of Jesus and in his disciples. Jesus provides teaching, especially about the nature of God and the world, that corrects erroneous views and allows the disciples to see Jesus’s death – and their own – in a very specific cosmological drama” (pp. 33-35).

⁴⁵² King, “Martyrdom and its Discontents,” 35.

⁴⁵³ Lance Jenott, *The Gospel of Judas: Coptic Text, Translation, and Historical Interpretation of “the Betrayer’s Gospel”* (Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity 64; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

was fulfilling a necessary soteriological function.⁴⁵⁴ I should clarify that I am not implying that this is representative of the original authorial intention of the text; rather, I am positing a possible reinterpretation of the text on the part of the compiler of the codex.

The final, though fragmentary, tractate from the Al Minya codex is the *Book of Allogenes*. I should clarify, however, that this text is not related to the text named *Allogenes* that is attested in NHC XI, 3. Instead, the attribution of the name Allogenes to this text is based on the name of the protagonist. Unfortunately, this tractate is very badly preserved. As a consequence it is impossible to draw any concrete conclusions based on its inclusion within the codex. There are, however, two elements that we can draw out of the text that support the cohesiveness of the codex. First, in this text the protagonist, Allogenes, is tempted by Satan whom he appears to vanquish (AMC 59, 25-61, 16). This explicitly Christian image serves to equate Allogenes with the figure of Jesus. The second element is a point of glorification wherein Allogenes is surrounded by a bright light. This bright light echoes the transfiguration from the synoptic gospels (Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36).⁴⁵⁵ In the synoptic gospels this signals a point of elevation and glorification prior to the passion of Jesus. Now, with the newly

⁴⁵⁴ Many prominent scholars would disagree. Karen King (*Martyrdom and its Discontents*, 38) says that while it “exhibits two of the common strategies: like other Christian gospels, it offers correct teaching that resignifies Jesus’s death, and it asks readers to focus on the immortal realm above as their final goal. On the other hand, it offers no real models for imitation, nor does it teach readers to overcome fear and grief.”

⁴⁵⁵ See Meyer, *Critical Edition*, 257.

published fragments of the text, we can see that the glorification is followed by an ascent on the part of Allogenes.⁴⁵⁶

Taken as a whole, the extant tractates of the Al Minya codex present a cohesive unit that betrays a strong editorial inclination toward martyrdom either in practice or as an ideal to be emulated whether literally or symbolically. In this context, the narrative of the *First Apocalypse of James* is best understood as presenting the manner through which someone might ascend to the upper realm, while also assuaging the concerns of the dying.

Finally, in relation to the Al Minya codex we should mention that there is a fragment of an additional text that is presumed to have been part of the codex. This fragment has been identified as part of Corpus Hermeticum XIII or *The Secret Dialogue of Hermes Trismegistus on the Mountain: On Being Born Again and the Promise to be Silent*. This dialogue between Tat and his father, the thrice greatest Hermes, is at first glance a strange addition to the Al Minya codex, since it is not representative of one of the groups that we have predominantly classified as “gnostic.” The dialogue presented in the text is not without precedent in otherwise gnostic codices. The Nag Hammadi library includes three hermetic texts: the *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* (NHC VI, 6), the *Prayer of Thanksgiving* (NHC VI, 7), and the *Excerpt from the Perfect Discourse* (NHC VI, 8). While this collection does not include *Corpus Hermeticum XIII*, Jean-Pierre Mahé has argued that “in both form and content, the *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* is most similar to the *Secret Dialogue of Hermes Trismegistus on the Mountain: On*

⁴⁵⁶ Gregor Wurst, “Weitere neue Fragmente aus Codex Tchacos. Zum ‘Buch des Allogenes’ und zu Corpus Hermeticum XIII, 1-12,” *Judasevangelium und Codex Tchacos*, 1-12

*Being Born Again and on the Promise to be Silent (Corpus Hermeticum XIII).*⁴⁵⁷ While what exists in the Al Minya codex is only a small fragment, this text would serve to reinforce the pro-martyrdom interpretation of the codex. *Corpus Hermeticum XIII* contains the teachings of Hermes to his son on the subject of rebirth and how this is to be accomplished. In *Corpus Hermeticum XIII* rebirth is accomplished through gnosis (knowledge), which is to be revealed by god. Hermes says “This race...is never taught; but when he willeth it, its memory is restored by god.” (CH XIII, 2).⁴⁵⁸ Upon the point of rebirth, Hermes tells his son that they will pass into a body that is not subject to death or suffering (CHXIII, 8). As such, it is understood in the text that the physical body must die but that death cannot touch the reborn body (CH XIII, 14). While there is not an explicit reference to martyrdom in this text, I would argue that it is not necessary and does not detract from a pro-martyrdom editorial intention. Rather, the emphasis on rebirth and the indestructibility of the reborn body buttresses the argument toward martyrdom and might be seen as strengthening the resolve of the reader.

With the inclusion of *Corpus Hermeticum XIII* I would argue that the Al Minya Codex presents a martyrological textual cycle. The *Letter of Peter to Philip* presents a call to action and a justification for martyrdom in opposition to the archons who rule the lower realm; the *First Apocalypse of James* provides the initiate/martyr with post-mortem instruction regarding ascension past the guardians of the lower realm; the *Gospel of Judas* highlights the necessity of sacrifice in relation to Jesus’ sacrifice; *Allogenes* shows the protagonist transfigured in a

⁴⁵⁷ Jean-Pierre Mahé, “The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth (NHC VI, 6),” in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*, 409-12 at 409.

⁴⁵⁸ Translation from G.R.S. Mead, *The Corpus Hermeticum* (London: J.M. Watkins, 1949) 221.

luminous cloud of glorification; and finally, *Corpus Hermeticum XIII* shows the point of resurrection through the concept of rebirth in an indestructible body. With this in mind, the inclusion of *Corpus Hermeticum XIII* in the codex is logical as it serves to complete the cycle.

Looking at the two codices in question, NHC V and the Al Minya codex, we are confronted with the interpretational choices of the compiler and editor, rather than those of the author. Within the context of codex V, *I Apoc. Jas.* can be easily understood as an apocalypse with strong ties to a gnosticizing Judaism. On the other hand, the context presented within the Al Minya codex leads to a conclusion that the purpose of the revelatory discourse was likely to encourage or reassure those in danger of being martyred, while at the same time imparting instructions for the dead to safely ascend.

Stepping away from the larger unit of the codex, isolating the text of *I Ap. Jas.* brings about interpretive possibilities that do not negate either of those shown above, but rather highlight the reuse and recontextualization of traditions that occurs within its two extant contexts. However, regardless of the interpretational possibilities of a single tractate, when looking at a codex with seemingly disparate texts and traditions represented Michael Williams is correct in asserting that “the very ordering of the material [has] resolved...theological diversity among the writings. Each writing had its own function, and could be interpreted in relation to the other works in the codex.”⁴⁵⁹ As such we can argue that our interpretation of texts extant within the context of a collection must, if we are to understand its function, be read as part of a unit that betrays the intent not only of the author, but also the volume compiler.

⁴⁵⁹ Williams, “Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library,” 40.

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