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F.C. Baur

Contents

Was There a Historical Apollonius of Tyana?
Robert M. Price 4

Sandwiches and Sources in the Gospel of Mark
David Oliver Smith 41

Jesus Christ and His Associates from India and Isauria
Ranajit Pal 59

A Series of Allusions to Peter and Paul in the Sermon on the Mount
Samuel Zinner 97

Was the New Testament Influenced by Pagan Religions?
A Refutation of Dr. Ronald Nash
Derreck Bennett 123

Higher Critical Review

Paul McGrane, *The Christian Fallacy: The Real Truth about Jesus and the Early History of Christianity*
Reviewed by Robert M. Price 139

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The Journal of Higher Criticism is a forthright attempt to hark back to the bold historical hypotheses and critical interpretations associated with the great names of F. C. Baur and Tübingen — though, of course, not necessarily the same constructions. We welcome articles dealing with historical, literary, and history-of-religion issues from the perspective of higher criticism, as well as studies in the history of biblical criticism and the work of major figures in that tradition — leaving to others such worthy subdisciplines as textual criticism, modern literary hermeneutics, and biblical theology. Our primary focus is on the New Testament and Early Christianity, but studies dealing with the Hebrew Scriptures, Judaism, and the Koran will also receive careful consideration.

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Was There a Historical Apollonius of Tyana?

Robert M. Price

Apollonius of Tyana is a fascinating character in his own right, intrinsically deserving of scholarly attention. But much contemporary discussion of this ancient superhero is due to his possible relevance to the question of the historical Jesus, for his story as we read it in Philostratus' third-century hagiography *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* bears a striking resemblance to that of the Christian Savior at many points. The parallels raise the question of literary genre, possible literary dependence, and euhemerism (whether a legendary superhero may be a magnification of an actual historical figure whose features may be dimly discerned via historical criticism). My focus is narrower still. It is sometimes observed that in Apollonius we have a strong precedent for Jesus as most scholars see him, as a genuine historical figure subsequently embellished by his admirers. After all, if we can discount the miracle stories attached to the sage of Tyana and still believe he existed, why not Jesus? Both figures conform in a whole host of details to the Mythic Hero Archetype,¹ but such figures may result from Man becoming Myth, or from Myth becoming Man. What are the deciding factors? And which was the case with our pair of subjects?

I shall suggest that all signs point to Apollonius having originated as a purely mythical hero, precisely like Asclepius, Hercules, Dionysus, and Theseus. Remember, these ancient heroes were also believed to have walked our earth in mortal form and to have worked wonders among

1 Alan Dundes, Otto Rank, and Lord Raglan, *In Quest of the Hero*. Mythos: The Princeton/Bollingen Series in World Mythology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

the mortals whom they outwardly resembled. They were supposed to have been begotten upon mortal women by deities visiting from heavenly Olympus. When their earthly missions were complete, these demigods returned to heaven themselves. But they never in fact lived on earth. The only real difference between these ancient superheroes and Apollonius is that his (fictive) sojourn among mankind was imagined to have been more recent.

Philostratus informs us that he derived his biographical data on Apollonius from various sources including local legends/folk memories emanating from shrines boasting of visits from the philosopher-thaumaturge (much as tour guides cross their fingers behind their backs while telling visitors to Glastonbury that no less than Joseph of Arimathea, King Arthur, and Queen Guinevere lie buried there). But, he says, his principle source of information was the journal kept by Apollonius' disciple Damis the Assyrian, who carefully recorded every word and every movement of his master. But all this is a pose, a ruse, no more to be believed than Edgar Rice Burroughs when he claims his novel *A Princess of Mars* was recounted to him by Captain John Carter who had astrally traveled to the Red Planet. We do not believe, and of course are not intended to believe, that Carter actually encountered green-skinned, four-armed Tharks on Mars. Are we going to believe that Apollonius and company ran across dragons and humanoid giants? A narrative, as D.F. Strauss warned us, has no more credibility than the least believable parts of it.² And that pretty much poisons the well for Philostratus' hagiography of the man of Tyana.

But even if we did not have these fairy tale elements to contend with, we would still have to regard the whole work as fiction. There is simply no way Damis could have taken

2 David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. Trans. George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans). Lives of Jesus Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. 90-91.

down Apollonius' discourses in such detail and with such eloquence unless the gods had provided him with a tape recorder. As we read, enthralled by the wit and wisdom of the philosopher, we find ourselves suspending disbelief. We look no deeper than the placid surface of the polished narrative, as when we watch a movie or read a novel (which is what we are doing here). It is possible that Philostratus was working from a set of notes taken down by Damis, but what reason is there to think so? Occam's Razor warns us not to posit redundant and superfluous explanations. If it reads like a work of *de novo* fiction, why should we complicate things by positing extra ostensible causes for the effect, which do nothing to make the work more understandable? So fiction it is.

But why the pose that Apollonius was a figure of recent history? Apollonius supposedly lived in the first century CE. Philostratus was writing about him in the third. Others had written of Apollonius, e.g., Moeragenes, whose account did not meet with Philostratus' approval. But does the fact that this character, *as a character*, already existed establish his existence as a historical figure? It only proves that Philostratus was not his inventor.

More simply, it is by no means unlikely that Philostratus and Moeragenes were alike simply taking for granted the result of the process of "euhemerizing" an ancient, mythic hero, distilling a whittled-down, hypothetically historical prototype, just as euhemerists like Herodotus posited a historical Hercules, an ancient Steve Reeves.

Perhaps the strongest argument for a historical Apollonius has been what New Testament scholars like to call the criterion of embarrassment: does a text retain what looks like a loose end, a clue that the story once read differently? Is a text trying to refute a previous understanding that clashes with the author's preferred version? Scholars point to Mark's story of John baptizing Jesus as one of these. The very idea of Jesus needing the ministrations of John proved an embarrassment to

subsequent Christians, and so the other gospels rewrite the scene to make it theologically palatable. Who would have made up such a story? Thus, apologists argue that Jesus' baptism must actually have taken place. But I have argued that this reasoning is fatally flawed. The contrast need not be between original events and later belief. It is just as likely that the embarrassment to later belief is merely *an earlier form of belief*. That is, perhaps Mark saw nothing amiss in his account of the Jordan baptism, which he may have intended as an example for Christian readers to follow.³ And as such the story might have been Mark's invention, not history at all.

In the case of Apollonius, scholars have reasoned that, if Philostratus felt he had to clean up his hero's reputation, making him a sublime philosopher instead of a charlatan conjurer, wouldn't that imply that Apollonius actually *was* a magician? Why would he invent such a strike against Apollonius? But this fails, too. It seems rather that Philostratus was trying to rebut a general disdain of philosophy and philosophers by those who considered them no more than frauds and parasites, just as we read in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles how pagan authorities, baffled at the Encratite celibacy gospel, had its preachers, Paul, Thomas, et. al., arrested as trouble-making wizards.

Nero was opposed to philosophy, because he suspected its devotees to be addicted to magic, and of being diviners in disguise; and at last the philosopher's mantle brought its wearers before the law courts, as if it were a mere cloak of the divining art. I will not mention other names, but Musonius of Babylon, a man only second to Apollonius, was thrown into prison for the crime of being a sage, and there lay in danger of death; and he would have died for all his gaoler cared, if it had not been

3 Charles Guignebert, *Jesus*. Trans. S.H. Hooke (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1956), pp. 147-148.

for the strength of his constitution. (4:35)⁴

I want to start with a form-critical analysis of the miracle stories starring Apollonius in order to determine, if possible, where they came from and what purpose they served. Do they seem to presuppose or imply an origin in a genuine historical figure or only the evolution of a mythic character like Hercules or Asclepius? And what light do they shed on claims for an eyewitness origin of the narratives?

Nativity Stories

To his mother, just before [Apollonius] was born, there came an apparition of Proteus, who changes his form so much in Homer, in the guise of an Egyptian demon. She was in no way frightened but asked what sort of child she would bear. And he answered, "Myself." "And who are you?" she asked. "Proteus," he answered, "the god of Egypt." (1:4)

Does this open the possibility that Apollonius is a fictive historicization of the mythical Proteus? Obviously, this annunciation tale is mythical. No one disputes that. The real question is whether the larger Apollonius narrative of which it forms a tiny part, is of any different character. In one sense, it is, insofar as the Apollonius epic is made the vehicle for huge amounts of philosophical paraenesis aimed (where else?) at the readers for their edification. Apollonius becomes the mouthpiece for Philostratus himself, just as Socrates was for Plato. This becomes blatantly obvious when it comes to the trial of Apollonius. The sage is called before the fiendish emperor Domitian. There is an exchange, but then Apollonius abruptly and literally vanishes into thin air, to reappear across the Mediterranean to the speechless astonishment of his disciples, whom he had sent on ahead.

4 I am using the F.C. Conybeare translation.

But then Philostratus shares with us the speech Apollonius *would* have given had he not so rudely departed. Wait a minute! Which is it? Philostratus has already made it clear (in a passage to be considered presently) that Apollonius planned to teleport away from the courtroom, as he did, so he could not have prepared the speech Philostratus shares with us. And was Apollonius planning to *read* the speech? And how would Philostratus have obtained a copy? He thus reveals himself as the omniscient narrator using his hero as a ventriloquist dummy.

As for the actual “events” of Apollonius’ life, is any of them free from strong suspicion of being entirely fictive and fanciful? I think that the sage of Tyana is here revealed as being fully as mythical as the shape-shifting god Proteus of whom he is the avatar. Traditionally we have supposed these fanciful episodes and anecdotes were merely decorative embellishments to highlight the greatness of his hero for the edification of his original audiences. But if the whole thing looks like a myth-cycle, why should we suppose it rests upon any (in any case indiscernible) historical basis? Let William of Occam again be our conscience: the notion of a more modest, historical Apollonius is a fifth wheel, a redundant and superfluous pseudo-explanation.

One more note: Proteus, like various ancient gods, could assume any form at will, which means he had no true form at all, but only *seemed* to be this or that. Thus Proteus’ announcement of his own impending birth as Apollonius means that the birth itself was a holy sham, as is pretty much made explicit in this passage. My point, here as elsewhere, is that Philostratus is actually presenting his hero as a theophany, not as a wise mortal later rewarded by exaltation to heaven.

The Life of Apollonius of Tyana begins (and continues) by extolling Apollonius as superior to all rivals. But eventually we are surprised to see our author lionizing someone else. When Apollonius betakes himself to India, he gladly defers

to the venerable Gymnosophists, or naked philosophers,⁵ as wiser than himself. He does not presume to teach them aught, but rejoices to sit under their instruction. Apollonius almost becomes a John the Baptist glorifying a greater: "The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:29b-30). It would appear that Philostratus himself greatly admired what he knew of Indian philosophy and used his commission to eulogize Apollonius⁶ as an opportunity to promote exotic Oriental mysticism to his Hellenistic readership.

This may account for the similarities between the annunciation to Apollonius' mother and annunciation/nativity stories of the Buddha. First, here is Apollonius' birth story.

Now he is said to have been born in a meadow... [J]ust as the hour of his birth was approaching, his mother was warned in a dream to walk out into the meadow and pluck the flowers; and in due course she came there and her maids attended to the flowers, scattering themselves over the meadow, while she fell asleep lying on the grass. Thereupon the swans who fed in the meadow set up a dance around her as she slept, and lifting their wings, as they are wont to do, cried out aloud all at once, for there was somewhat of a breeze blowing in the meadow. She then leaped up at the sound of their song and bore her child, for any sudden fright is apt to bring on a premature delivery. But the people of that country say that just at the moment of the birth, a thunderbolt seemed about to fall to earth and then rose up into the air and disappeared

5 The Jainists are divided, still today, between the Digambara ("sky-clad," i.e., naked) faction and the Svetambara ("white-clad," i.e., loincloth-wearers) sects.

6 The Empress Julia Domna hired him to write it.

aloft; and the gods thereby indicated, I think, the great distinction to which the sage was to attain, and hinted in advance how he would transcend all things upon earth and approach the gods. (1:4-5)

Now, two versions of the Buddha's annunciation and birth:

Before she conceived, she saw in her sleep a white lord of elephants entering her body, yet she felt thereby no pain. [...] In that glorious grove the queen perceived that the time of her delivery was at hand. Then... from the side of the queen... a son was born for the weal of the world, without her suffering either pain or illness. [...] When in due course he had issued from the womb, he appeared as if he had descended from the sky, for he did not come into the world through the portal of life; and, since he had purified his being through many aeons, he was born not ignorant but fully conscious. (*Buddhacarita*, i. 4, 8, 9, 11)⁷

Bodhisattva, the foremost in three worlds, worshipped by the world, seeing the (right) season, freed himself from the wonderful Tusita abode⁸... and... became a babywhite elephant with six tusks... the set of tusks made of gold... and entered on the right side, the womb of his mother... Mayadevi, sleeping on a comfortable bed, had this dream: "A lordly elephant the colour of snow or silver, with six tusks... entered my womb." [...] Then Mayadevi... arose from her beautiful bed... descended from the top of the magnificent palace, going into the *asoka* grove, seated [herself] comfortably in the *asoka* grove. [...] Then Mayadevi, entering the Lumbini Park..., walked from tree to tree... until she came

⁷ *The Buddhacarita, or Acts of the Buddha*. Trans. E.H. Johnston (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992), pp. 2-3.

⁸ One of the Buddhist heavens.

gradually to that *plaska* tree, the greatest and most excellent jewel of trees... Then that *plaska* tree, bent by Bodhisattva's glory, bowed down. Then Mayadevi stretched out her right arm like the lightning in the sky... Magically arriving in this fashion, Bodhisattva remained in his mother's womb. At the completion of ten months he issued from the right side of his mother. (*Lalitavistara*, VI. 2, 3, 22; VII.22)⁹

You can see that both Buddhist Nativity stories make clear that the infant to be born (in a purely illusory manner) is an illusion, only outwardly a baby, as he merely uses a woman's womb as a conduit. He is a pre-existent heavenly being, already filled with supernatural wisdom. Furthermore, both the Buddha's mother and Apollonius' mother give birth in a peaceful rustic location, and both births are signaled by either a lightning bolt or a gesture reminiscent of one. It wouldn't surprise me if the Apollonius Nativity has been influenced by its Buddhist counterpart. And of course both are not only equally mythical, but they are part of completely mythical epics. If there was a historical Gautama Buddha, as most assume, whoever and whatever he may have been, he cannot be found in the canonical hagiographies. I side with older scholars who discounted any historical existence of the Buddha. Asian Buddhists (the real thing) by and large take umbrage at the suggestion of Western Indologists that the twenty-four

9 *The Lalitavistara*. Trans. Bijoya Goswami. Bibliotheca Indica Series No. 320 (Kolkata: The Asiatic Society, 2001), pp. 61, 83, 84. Also see Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as History and Legend*. The History of Civilizations (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), Chapter III, "The Birth of Buddha," pp. 27-37; H.W. Schumann, *The Historical Buddha: The Times, Life and Teachings of the Founder of Buddhism*. Trans. M. O'C. Walshe (London: The Penguin Group, 1989), Chapter 1, "Youth, Quest and Enlightenment," section 2, "Siddhattha's origins and birth," pp. 6-9.

previous Buddhas posited by Buddhist mythology were not in fact real individuals, but rather fictive retrojections of the one historical Buddha. All of them, says the doctrine, lived the same life, the same pattern identically, one after another, the familiar story of the Buddha's Nativity, the Three Passing Sights, the Great Renunciation, sitting in the shade of the Bodhi Tree, etc. Western scholars hold that this pattern began with Gautama and was then generalized in order to render Buddhism cyclical throughout eternity. Eastern Buddhists insist the twenty-five Buddhas are all equally historical. And I think they are right in that they all stand or fall together. I think the pattern is entirely mythical, and that Western scholars are just trying to refashion an Eastern religion in the image of a Western "revealed religion" with a historical founder.

Why do I belabor this? My ultimate goal is to disarm the Jesus-historicist argument that, despite the mythical encrustations, Jesus could still have been as (remotely) historical as Apollonius, likewise a historical figure buried beneath six feet of legend. I am arguing that there may well have been no historical Apollonius either. And, lest someone think to defend Apollonius' historical reality by comparing him to a probably historical Buddha clad in a Technicolor Dream Coat of pious fantasy, I mean to cut off such a strategy by suggesting the Buddha is in exactly the same historiographical predicament.

Doctor Shopping

The Hellenistic world witnessed an unprecedented variety of competing cults and sects. Luckily, this competition was largely non-violent. But precisely this tolerant atmosphere occasioned stiffer competition, since it created a free market. Religions advertized, as attested by the inscribed healing testimonies mounted on the walls of the Epidaurus shrine of Asclepius. These (outlandish) healing

miracles were, let's face it, commercials. A popular kind of commercial today compares and contrasts the sponsor's product with its rival, "Brand X." Which one does a better job of cleansing your sink? But these ads are nothing new. John's gospel contains at least two of them. John 3:25-30, already mentioned, juxtaposes John's baptismal ministry with Jesus' (i.e., Christian baptism), at the expense of the former. Two chapters later we witness the superiority of Jesus as a healer to the famous shrine of Bethsaida with its fatal design flaw (John 5:7). Mark 5:25-34 stresses the superiority of Jesus, who can literally heal the sick without even trying, to conventional medicine which has bankrupted the bleeding woman with no results. "Who ya gonna call?" We have a similar commercial on behalf of our Apollonius.

An Assyrian stripling came to [the temple of] Asclepius, and though he was sick, yet he lived the life of luxury... and finding his pleasure in drunkenness took no care to dry up his malady. On this account then Asclepius took no care of him, and did not visit him even in a dream. The youth grumbled at this, and thereupon the god, standing over him, said, "If you were to consult Apollonius you would be easier." He therefore went to Apollonius, and said: "What is there in your wisdom that I can profit by? for Asclepius bids me consult you." And he replied: "I can advise you of what, under the circumstances, will be most valuable to you; for I suppose you want to get well" "Yes, by Zeus," answered the other, "I want the health which Asclepius promises, but never gives." "Hush," said the other, "for he gives to those who desire it, but you do things that irritate and aggravate your disease, for you give yourself up to luxury, and you accumulate delicate viands upon your water-logged and worn-out stomach, and as it were, choke water with a flood of mud." (1:9)

Apollonius is doing his residency at the temple of Asclepius, the healing god. Asclepius is stumped: he cannot help this young epicure, so he refers him to Apollonius. Interestingly, the key to his recovery is the same one Jesus uses at the Pool of Bethesda: “Do you *want* to be healed?” (John 5:6). Apollonius trumps Asclepius. Asclepius thus becomes a John the Baptist for Apollonius’ Jesus. But there is something else here: at first it looks as if we have a contrast between a celestial god and a wise man on earth. But remember who Asclepius was. He was a completely mythical character, a demigod fathered upon the mortal Coronis by the god Apollo. He had adventures on earth among mortals. This lasted until Asclepius crossed the line by raising someone from the dead. Zeus struck down Asclepius for his hubris but then raptured him to heaven, where he continued to live as a god. Henceforth he would appear to seekers in dreams as they passed the night in local Asclepiums (his healing shines), either healing them on the spot or else prescribing some treatment (or weird stunt) that was supposed to effect the desired cure. There never was a mortal, historical Asclepius (as all admit). His earthly career is simply part of his myth cycle that provided the “back story,” the rationale, for the Asclepium franchise. I’m thinking that the career of Apollonius has the same origin and function. Just as the ancients believed Asclepius was a historical character, taking the myth literally, I think the “historical Apollonius” was cut from the same cloth.

Raising the Dead

Probably the best known Apollonius miracle story fits neatly into another category: the rescue from premature burial. Jesus’ raising of the Nain widow’s son (Luke 7:11-11-17), of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:21-24a, 35-43), and even the “resurrection” of Lazarus (John chapter 11) are of

this type. We find others in *The Story of Apollonius, King of Tyre* and in Lucius Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. The stories presuppose the widespread occurrence of premature burials in antiquity, when it was more difficult to distinguish deep coma from real death. The matter was frequently treated in medical texts of the time.¹⁰ It is not unlikely that this story is a cautionary tale, urging physicians to imagine the needless tragedies that might stem from their carelessness. Philostratus almost indicates as much when, at the close of the episode, he suggests Apollonius' feat might be the result of medical acumen rather than divine power.

Here too is a miracle which Apollonius worked: A girl had died just in the hour of her marriage, and the bridegroom was following her bier lamenting as was natural his marriage left unfulfilled, and the whole of Rome was mourning with him, for the maiden belonged to a consular family. Apollonius then witnessing their grief, said: "Put down the bier, for I will stay the tears that you are shedding for this maiden." And withal he asked what was her name. The crowd accordingly thought he was about to deliver such an oration as is commonly delivered as much to grace the funeral as to stir up lamentation; but he did nothing of the kind, but merely touching her and whispering in secret some spell over her, at once woke up the maiden from her seeming death; and the girl spoke out loud, and returned to her father's house, just as Alcestis did when she was brought back to life by Hercules. And the relations of the maiden wanted to present him with the sum of 150,000 sesterces, but he said that he would freely present the money to the young lady by way of a dowry. Now whether he detected

10 J. Duncan M. Derrett, *The Anastasis: The Resurrection of Jesus as an Historical Event* (Shipston-on-Stour: Peter Drinkwater, 1982), Chapter III, "Anastasis in the Ancient World," pp.19-27.

some spark of life in her [obviously Philostratus' preferred theory, given the above reference to "seeming death"], which those who were nursing her had not noticed, - for it is said that although it was raining at the time, a vapour went up from her face - or whether life was really extinct, and he restored it by the warmth of his touch, is a mysterious problem which neither I myself nor those who were present could decide. (4:45)

We must not be too quick to pass by the parallel Philostratus draws between Apollonius and Hercules. Essentially, Apollonius simply repeats Hercules' feat of resurrection. I wonder if this is not because Philostratus has simply borrowed the original Hercules story and loaned it to his hero Apollonius. This speculation may gain substance from our consideration of another story immediately below.

Exorcisms

When the plague began to rage in Ephesus, and no remedy sufficed to check it, they sent a deputation to Apollonius, asking him to become physician of their infirmity; and he thought that he ought not to postpone his journey, but said, "Let us go." And forthwith he was in Ephesus... He therefore called together the Ephesians, and said: "Take courage, for I will to-day put a stop to the course of the disease." And with these words he led the population entire to the theatre, where the image of the Averting god has [since] been set up. And there he saw what seemed an old mendicant artfully blinking his eyes as if blind, and he carried a wallet and a crust of bread in it; and he was clad in rags and was very squalid of countenance. Apollonius therefore ranged the Ephesians around him and said: "Pick up as many stones as you can and hurl them at this enemy of the gods." Now the Ephesians wondered what he

meant, and were shocked at the idea of murdering a stranger so manifestly miserable; for he was begging and praying them to take mercy upon him. Nevertheless Apollonius insisted and egged on the Ephesians to launch themselves on him and not let him go. And as soon as some of them began to take shots and hit him with their stones, the beggar who had seemed to blink and be blind, gave them all a sudden glance and showed that his eyes were full of fire. Then the Ephesians recognised that he was a demon, and they stoned him so thoroughly that their stones were heaped into a great cairn around him. After a little pause Apollonius bade them remove the stones and acquaint themselves with the wild animal they had slain. When therefore they had exposed the object they thought they had thrown their missiles at, they found that he had disappeared and instead of him there was found a hound who resembled in form and look a Molossian dog, but was in size the equal of the largest lion; there he lay before their eyes, pounded to a pulp by their stones and vomiting foam as mad dogs do. Accordingly the statue of the Averting god, namely Hercules, has been set up over the spot where the ghost was slain. (5:10)

Again, is Apollonius Hercules? Otherwise, why not a statue of Apollonius who according to the present narrative, “averted” the plague?¹¹ I think here of Martin Noth’s *redundancy principle*. In his scrutiny of the Moses

11 In his account of Apollonius’ apologia, which the sage never got to deliver, Philostratus has Apollonius say he himself caused the statue of Hercules to be erected in Ephesus, but this sequence reinterprets various earlier episodes, indicating the version in the speech is a redactional rewrite and reinterpretation of the original story. We need not go back to the Ephesus exorcism and read the apologia version into it.

stories in the Pentateuch,¹² Noth asks why some of the tales feature various characters who have no appreciable reason for crowding the stage. Why do the superfluous Nadab and Abihu get to accompany Moses and Aaron to the mountaintop to behold the God of Israel (Exod. 24:9-10)? They have no contribution to make. Again, what is Moses doing passively standing by as Aaron performs this or that miracle before Pharaoh? The answer Noth offers is quite simple as well as perfectly cogent: originally the mountaintop epiphany starred *only* Nadab and Abihu, who had formerly been important characters in Jewish lore. Once their stock had fallen and that of Moses had risen, the central role was transferred to him. Something quite similar occurs when we compare 1 Samuel 17:41-49 with 2 Samuel 21:19. In 2 Samuel we read that the Philistine giant Goliath was slain by the once-celebrated hero Elhanan. But 1 Samuel credits the same deed to the later, more popular hero David. David was not shoe-horned into Elhanan's story, elbowing Elhanan aside but retaining him on the sideline. Both versions were preserved, though separated by a considerable mass of buffer text. But it was the same "redundancy" phenomenon. Similarly, originally it was Moses who wrought all the miracles in the presence of Pharaoh. Aaron had nothing to do with it, until, that is, the priestly faction, for whom Aaron served as figurehead, got their hands on the stories and pretty much replaced Moses with their favorite, Aaron, though they dared not omit Moses altogether. I am suggesting that, in the very same way, the tell-tale mention of Hercules the Averter implies his original role as the one that stymied the Ephesian plague. Philostratus has replaced Hercules with an equally mythical Apollonius.

Remember that, just like Asclepius, Hercules was regarded as a historical individual, albeit a demigod, son

12 Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*. Trans. Bernhard W. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp 186-187.

of Zeus. He was believed to have lived on earth among men and was finally resurrected and assumed into heaven. Just like Apollonius. Again, I think that Apollonius' earthly career was just as mythical, only the credulous belief in his historical existence for some reason outlasted that of his mythical colleagues.

But there is yet another layer to this exorcism story. It is really, at bottom, a *scapegoat* legend as described by Rene Girard.¹³ Such tales, he explains, reflect the ancient means of dealing with major crises, sacrificial crises. Briefly, here is the theory. Society (or a sub-society within it) breaks down, violence erupting between two classes, castes, factions, whatever. Social order disintegrates or is nearly at that point. This condition is recognized as worse than whatever had occasioned the tumult. Both sides seek resolution, but each is equally red-handed, both having partaken of the rampant violence. It no longer matters who started it or why. Neither side will admit (or can remember if) they were the one to start it. So, to get beyond this impasse, they zero in on some socially marginal figure belonging to neither faction, perhaps a foreigner in their midst. Or they finger a culprit from one side or the other by flipping the oracular coin. All ascribe blame to this poor bastard, who is now imagined to be a sorcerer or demon who cast the apple of discord. If they eliminate him, all should return to normal. The execution is carried out, if possible, without anyone physically touching the victim lest the executioner be infected with the uncleanness of the culprit. It may be that no single executioner does the job; everyone must participate so that it is a communal act and no one individual can be specified by the victim's loved ones as a target of escalating vendetta (cf., the execution of Achan by communal stoning in Joshua 7:24-26).

13 René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*. Trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 12-13, 64-65.

Henceforth, this scapegoat gets transformed into a savior figure by virtue of his once-insidious power now having restored peace. The violence that had raged with terrible results is henceforth channeled by means of ritual sacrifice, usually of animals. These sacrifices remind the people of the violence now happily suppressed and again put under control: it is too terrible ever to be let out of the bottle again.

This system is effective even when the people no longer consciously recall (in subsequent generations) the original (and originary) violence; in fact such amnesia is crucial to the system of keeping the lid on. But suppose the culture loses faith in the efficacy of the ritual sacrifices required of them or enacted on their behalf by the authorities? This may happen because the priestly authorities lose credibility or the worshippers become alienated from the animal sacrifices, e.g., because they no longer offer an animal of their own but pay for one on-site. Then the aqueducts of violence shatter and the once-channeled savagery may break out anew.

I just noted the role of suppression and community amnesia. Like a repressed trauma in an individual peeking out of the subconscious in the forms of dreams, hysterical conversion symptoms, and Freudian slips, so the originary violence, the social chaos, lingers in the form of myth, in which everything is superficially transformed. To wit, the two factions become narrative characters, specifically “mimetic twins,” “monstrous doubles.” These may be biological siblings (Cain and Abel, Romulus and Remus) or simply similar characters set against one another. The “war of all against all,” a plague of spreading violence, may be represented as a spreading disease plague.

The Ephesus episode, not exactly an exorcism, is a near-perfect example of the Girardian scapegoat myth. The plague, as in the Oedipus cycle, is represented as a disease outbreak but may conceal originally physical strife. Between whom? Well, who are the rival twins in the Apollonius story?

They are, of course, Apollonius himself and the vagabond beggar, who bears a suspicious resemblance to your typical Cynic philosopher: an itinerant beggar carrying a pouch/purse in which to store the day's receipts, like the begging bowl of the Buddhist mendicant. Ordinarily we do not envision strife between (Neo-)Pythagoreans like Apollonius and the Cynics, but it is not impossible. What might have been the issue? This gets a bit foggy, but there is certainly a "Girardian" clue here. Remember that the decay of sacrifice is integral to the crisis, as the sacred "safety valve" of social violence is rendered nonfunctional. What do we know about the Cynics and Apollonius with regard to sacrifice? The Cynics utterly rejected such mummery, as they viewed it. One's only "religious" duty was to live in accordance with nature by reason, shunning all traditional social convention. What relevance might the Cynic position on sacrifice have on social breakdown? Simply that, if sacrifice kept violence under control, its abolition would sooner or later unleash the beast.

How about the stance of Apollonius? He revered sacrifice but insisted that no animal blood be shed. Naturally, there had always been other options: wave offerings, poured-out drink offerings, etc. Doing away with meat-sacrifice would, obviously, strike many as an evisceration of the sacrificial system (if you'll forgive the pun). Insofar as one counted on animal sacrifice to avert divine wrath, one must have been pretty alarmed at the prospect of putting the gods on an all-vegetarian diet.¹⁴ Here we have all the ingredients of a sacrificial crisis. That this scenario possesses at least narrative verisimilitude is evident from a couple of other ancient texts. In Acts 19:23-41, Paul's men manage narrowly to avoid a bloody riot (in *Ephesus* of all places!), with Artemis worshippers targeting Christians and Jews. The issue is both theological and economical in that these

14 I suspect the gods' reaction would be about like mine. Pass me that pot roast, will you?

particular devotees of the many-breasted goddess happen to be traders in religious souvenirs who fear the loss of income if the Christian preachers succeed in siphoning off worshippers of Artemis. And in Pliny's famous letter to Trajan, Pliny expresses his concern that the local meat markets are losing business because people are abandoning the pagan gods for Christ, hence no sacrifices. The result? Violent persecution. Another sacrificial crisis leading to bloodshed.

What exactly is the function of Apollonius' ratting out the vagrant as a "devil in disguise"?¹⁵ On the story level, of course, the point is to showcase Apollonius' preternatural sensitivity: he sees through the demon's human disguise where others do not and cannot. But the subtext shows us the designation of a socially marginal scapegoat, a man with no family or allies to take vengeance against his executioners, which would only reignite the very cycle of violence the designation of a scapegoat is designed to quell. The significance of Apollonius selecting this pariah is the same: the selection being made via supernatural knowledge removes the one who does the selecting from the danger of reprisals: after all, he was just a channel for the word of god. To punish him must call down the wrath of Nemesis upon oneself. And when Apollonius bids the crowd to stone the victim, he is following the scapegoating tradition of laying no one's hand on the culprit, yet making everyone share in the execution.

As Apollonius, Damis, and the Cowardly Lion head east, they encounter various oddities as one should expect in such exotic regions of the imagination.

Having passed the Caucasus our travelers say they saw men four cubits height, and they were already black, and that when they passed over the river Indus they saw others five cubits high. But on their way to this river our wayfarers found the following

15 "Oh yes you are!"

incidents worthy of notice. For they were traveling by bright moonlight, when the figure of an *empusa* or hobgoblin appeared to them, that changed from one form into another, and sometimes vanished into nothing. And Apollonius realized what it was, and himself heaped abuse on the hobgoblin and instructed his party to do the same, saying that this was the right remedy for such a visitation. And the phantasm fled away shrieking even as ghosts do. (2:4)

Is this an exorcism paradigm, a “how-to” guide for dispatching malevolent spooks? In a sense, yes, once you recall Martin Luther’s dictum, “The devil, proud spirit, cannot endure to be mocked.” The best technique to deal with superstitious fears is laughing them off.

We have to do with a genuine exorcism in the following passage from *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, though, quite surprisingly, it is not performed by Apollonius! The scene is reminiscent of Gurdjieff’s *Meetings with Remarkable Men*. It is set in the Mystic East, with Apollonius soaking up the enlightened wisdom of the naked masters.

This discussion was interrupted by the appearance among the sages of the messenger bringing in certain Indians who were in want of succor. And he brought forward a poor woman who interceded in behalf of her child, who was, she said, a boy of sixteen years of age, but had been for two years possessed by a devil. Now the character of the devil was that of a mocker and a liar. Here one of the sages asked, why she said this, and she replied: “This child of mine is extremely good-looking, and therefore the devil is amorous of him and will not allow him to retain his reason, nor will he permit him to go to school, or to learn archery, nor even to remain at home, but drives him out into desert places. And the boy does not even retain his own voice, but speaks in a deep hollow tone, as men do;

and he looks at you with other eyes rather than with his own. As for myself I weep over all this and I tear my cheeks, and I rebuke my son so far as I well may; but he does not know me. And I made my mind to repair hither, indeed I planned to do so a year ago; only the demon discovered himself using my child as a mask, and what he told me was this, that he was the ghost of a man, who fell long ago in battle, but that at death he was passionately attached to his wife. Now he had been dead for only three days when his wife insulted their union by marrying another man, and the consequence was that he had come to detest the love of women, and had transferred himself wholly into this boy. But he promised, if I would only not denounce him to yourselves, to endow the child with many noble blessings. As for myself, I was influenced by these promises; but he has put me off and off for such a long time now, that he has got sole control of my household, yet has no honest or true intentions." Here the sage [Iarchus] asked afresh, if the boy was at hand; and she said not, for, although she had done all she could to get him to come with her, the demon had threatened her with steep places and precipices and declared that he would kill her son, "in case," she added, "I haled him hither for trial." "Take courage," said the sage, "for he will not slay him when he has read this." And so saying he drew a letter out of his bosom and gave it to the woman; and the letter, it appears, was addressed to the ghost and contained threats of an alarming kind. (3:38)

I venture to suggest that, in effect, the contents of the potent letter are the contents of this very story. The writ of exorcism is the story in which it appears. The story was written to be read aloud as an exorcistic formula. Origen tells us that in his day certain gospel stories were read

for precisely this purpose.¹⁶ Stories of Elijah's defeat of demons were so used by Jewish exorcists in the Middle Ages.¹⁷ It looks like Mark already designed certain healing and exorcism stories with such use in mind, as when he retained Jesus' words in Aramaic, *Ephphatha* ("be opened") in Mark 7:34 and *Talitha cumi* ("Little girl, get up!") in Mark 5:41 on the assumption that what Jesus had said in such cases would be the best magic formula when Christian healers sought to repeat his feats. This is almost explicit in the story of the deaf-mute epileptic which admits an exorcism might not work immediately, requiring perhaps a preliminary regimen of prayer or, in particularly difficult cases, fasting, too (Mark 9:29, some manuscripts of which add "and fasting").

The exorcism is twice removed from Apollonius, being effected via a letter at a distance, and that by Iarchus, not Apollonius. Think of the distance healings in the gospels, where Jesus heals the child (Mark 7:24-30) or servant (Luke 7:1-10) of a Gentile. The point is to legitimate the early church's mission to Gentiles, initially quite controversial among staunch Jewish Christians (see Acts chapters 11-12, 15). Jesus is shown healing *the next generation* and Gentiles at that. In other words, though the Gentile Mission is pictured as commencing after the departure of Jesus, these stories retroject Jesus' approval of it into the time of Jesus. I see the double-distancing of this exorcism from Apollonius as having the same function: it claims Apollonius' endorsement of what a later disciple (Philostratus) favors. Furthermore, Philostratus makes the Gymnosophists as much superior to Apollonius as he made Apollonius superior to Asclepius. Apollonius is used here to endorse the wisdom

16 Stevan L. Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows: The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), pp. 21-27.

17 Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess* (New York: Avon/Discus Books, 1978), pp. 187-189.

of India, which is available to Philostratus' readers through *written documents*, symbolized by this exorcistic letter.

The next two exorcism stories seem to me to be Philostratus' parables teaching the powerful utility of philosophy for combating the dangerous lusts of the flesh.

Now while he was discussing the question of libations, there chanced to be present in his audience a young dandy who bore so evil a reputation for licentiousness that his conduct had long been the subject of coarse street-corner songs. His home was Corcyra, and he traced his pedigree to Alcinous the Phaeacian who entertained Odysseus. Apollonius then was talking about libations, and was urging them not to drink out of a particular cup, but to reserve it for the gods, without ever touching it or drinking out of it. But when he also urged them to have handles on the cup, and to pour the libation over the handle, because that is the part at which men are least likely to drink, the youth burst out into loud and coarse laughter, and quite drowned his voice. Then Apollonius looked up and said: "It is not yourself that perpetrates this insult, but the demon, who drives you without your knowing it." And in fact the youth was, without knowing it, possessed by a devil; for he would laugh at things that no one else laughed at, and then would fall to weeping for no reason at all, and he would talk and sing to himself. Now most people thought that it was boisterous humor of youth which led him into excesses; but he was really the mouthpiece of a devil, though it only seemed a drunken frolic in which on that occasion he was indulging. Now, when Apollonius gazed on him, the ghost in him began to utter cries of fear and rage, such as one hears from people who are being branded or racked; and the ghost swore that he would leave the young man alone and never take possession of any man again. But Apollonius addressed him with anger, as a master might a shifty, rascally,

and shameless slave and so on, and he ordered him to quit the young man and show by a visible sign that he had done so. "I will throw down yonder statue," said the devil, and pointed to one of the images which were there in the king's portico, for there it was that the scene took place. But when the statue began by moving gently, and then fell down, it would defy anyone to describe the hubbub which arose thereat and the way they clapped their hand with wonder. But the young man rubbed his eyes as if he had just woke up, and he looked towards the rays of the sun, and assumed a modest aspect, as all had their attention concentrated on him; for he no longer showed himself licentious, nor did he stare madly about, but he had returned to his own self, as thoroughly as if he had been treated with drugs; and he gave up his dainty dress and summery garments and the rest of his sybaritic way of life, and he fell in love with the austerity of philosophers, and donned their cloak, and stripping off his old self modeled his life and future upon that of Apollonius. (4:20)

Resemblances to both the gospel stories of the Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20) and the Synagogue Heckler (Mark 1:21-28) are readily apparent. The episode has many standard features of miracle stories. The stage is set, Apollonius' presence on the scene explained (cf., Mark 1:21; 5:1-2a). The demoniac draws attention to himself (cf., Mark 1:23-24; 5:2), whereupon Apollonius reveals that the trouble is supernatural, thus signaling (cf., Mark 9:19) that he is going to do something about it. Next comes the "case history": the severity of the predicament (Mark 5:3-5; 9:17-22). Apollonius adjures the demon to release his hold on his victim (cf., Mark 1:25; 5:8; 9:25), whereupon the reality of the possession is confirmed by the hysterical flailing of the demon, then the toppling of the statue as it flees (cf., Mark 5:12-13; 9:20, 26). Relieved of the demonic infestation, the

former victim at once reforms his life, resolving henceforth to make Apollonius his ideal (cf., Mark 5:18). But I can't believe that, by including it, Philostratus intended to convey anything about the subject of demons and exorcisms. Isn't it far more likely that he wanted this (possibly old) story to be read allegorically as extolling philosophy as the remedy for the insolence and debauchery of youth, depicted figuratively as demon possession? Robert Bloch's story "Spawn of the Dark One"¹⁸ is based on the same trope. Bloch writes about the plague of juvenile delinquency and motorcycle thuggery of the 1950s, "explaining" it as the fruit of liaisons between demons and women whose husbands were away fighting World War Two!

Now there was in Corinth at that time a man named Demetrius, who studied philosophy and had embraced in his system all the masculine vigor of the Cynics. Of him Favorinus in several of his works subsequently made the most generous mention, and his attitude towards Apollonius was exactly that which they say Antisthenes took up towards the system of Socrates: for he followed him and was anxious to be his disciple, and was devoted to his doctrines, and converted to the side of Apollonius the more esteemed of his own pupils. Among the latter was Menippus, a Lycian of twenty-five years of age, well endowed with good judgment, and of a physique so beautifully proportioned that in mien he resembled a fine and gentlemanly athlete. Now this Menippus was supposed by most people to be loved by a foreign woman, who was good-looking and extremely dainty, and said that she was rich; although she was really, as it turned out, not one

18 Robert Bloch's "Spawn of the Dark One" appears in anthologies including Peter Haining, ed., *The Satanists* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1972) and *Nightmares* (New York: Belmont Books, 1961), where it appears under the alternate title "Sweet Sixteen."

of these things, but was only so in semblance. For as he was walking all alone along the road towards Cenchraea, he met with an apparition, and it was a woman who clasped his hand and declared that she had been long in love with him, and that she was a Phoenician woman and lived in a suburb of Corinth, and she mentioned the name of the particular suburb, and said: "When you reach the place this evening, you will hear my voice as I sing to you, and you shall have wine such as you never before drank, and there will be no rival to disturb you; and we two beautiful beings will live together." The youth consented to this, for although he was in general a strenuous philosopher, he was nevertheless susceptible to the tender passion; and he visited her in the evening, and for the future constantly sought her company as his darling, for he did not yet realize that she was a mere apparition.

Then Apollonius looked over Menippus as a sculptor might do, and he sketched an outline of the youth and examined him, and having observed his foibles, he said: "You are a fine youth and are hunted by fine women, but in this case you are cherishing a serpent, and a serpent cherishes you." And when Menippus expressed his surprise, he added: "For this lady is of a kind you cannot marry. Why should you? Do you think that she loves you?" "Indeed I do," said the youth, "since she behaves to me as if she loves me." "And would you then marry her?" said Apollonius. "Why, yes, for it would be delightful to marry a woman who loves you." Thereupon Apollonius asked when the wedding was to be. "Perhaps tomorrow," said the other, "for it brooks no delay." Apollonius therefore waited for the occasion of the wedding breakfast, and then, presenting himself before the guests who had just arrived, he said: "Where is the dainty lady at whose instance ye are come?" "Here she is," replied Menippus, and at the same moment he

rose slightly from his seat, blushing. "And to which of you belong the silver and gold and all the rest of the decorations of the banqueting hall?" "To the lady," replied the youth, "for this is all I have of my own," pointing to the philosopher's cloak which he wore.

And Apollonius said: "Have you heard of the gardens of Tantalus, how they exist and yet do not exist?" "Yes," they answered, "in the poems of Homer, for we certainly never went down to Hades." "As such," replied Apollonius, "you must regard this adornment, for it is not reality but the semblance of reality. And that you may realize the truth of what I say, this fine bride is one of the vampires, that is to say of those beings whom the many regard as lamias and hobgoblins. These beings fall in love, and they are devoted to the delights of Aphrodite, but especially to the flesh of human beings, and they decoy with such delights those whom they mean to devour in their feasts." And the lady said: "Cease your ill-omened talk and begone"; and she pretended to be disgusted at what she heard, and in fact she was inclined to rail at philosophers and say that they always talked nonsense. When, however, the goblets of gold and the show of silver were proved as light as air and all fluttered away out of their sight, while the wine-bearers and the cooks and all the retinue of servants vanished before the rebukes of Apollonius, the phantom pretended to weep, and prayed him not to torture her nor to compel her to confess what she really was. But Apollonius insisted and would not let her off, and then she admitted that she was a vampire, and was fattening up Menippus with pleasures before devouring his body, for it was her habit to feed upon young and beautiful bodies, because their blood is pure and strong. I have related at length, because it was necessary to do so, this the best-known story of Apollonius; for many people are aware of it and know that the incident occurred

in the center of Hellas; but they have only heard in a general and vague manner that he once caught and overcame a lamia in Corinth, but they have never learned what she was about, nor that he did it to save Menippus, but I owe my own account to Damis and to the work which he wrote. (4:25)

This one is a cautionary tale for young students of philosophy, warning them to abstain from domestic and romantic entanglements. All women, it seems to say, are in effect vampires. The fine material things they cherish are mere illusions in the sense of being transitory. This one employs popular themes but does not incorporate an older, genuine miracle story. It has too much detail and narrative texture for that. If an original unit of oral tradition is deeply buried here, it has left too little evidence for us to think so.

Here too is a story which they tell of him in Tarsus. A mad dog had attacked a lad, and as a result of the bite the lad behaved exactly like a dog, for he barked and howled and went on all four feet using his hands as such, and ran about in that manner. And he had been ill in this way for thirty days, when Apollonius, who had recently come to Tarsus, met him and ordered a search to be made for the dog which had done the harm. But they said that the dog had not been found, because the youth had been attacked outside the wall when he was practicing with javelins, nor could they learn from the patient what the dog was like, for he did not even know himself any more. Then Apollonius reflected for a moment and said: "O Damis, the dog is a white shaggy sheep-dog, as big as an Amphilocheian hound, and he is standing at a certain fountain trembling all over, for he is longing to drink the water, but at the same time is afraid of it. Bring him to me to the bank of the river, where there are the wrestling grounds, merely telling that it is I who call him." So Damis dragged the dog along,

and it crouched at the feet of Apollonius, crying out as a suppliant might do before an altar. But he quite tamed it by stroking it with his hand, and then he stood the lad close by, holding him with his hand; and in order that the multitude might be cognizant of so great a mystery, he said: "The soul of Telephus of Mysia has been transferred into this boy, and the Fates impose the same things upon him as upon Telephus." And with these words he bade the dog lick the wound all round where he had bitten the boy, so that the agent of the wound might in turn be its physician and healer. After that the boy returned to his father and recognized his mother, and saluted his comrades as before, and drank of the waters of the Cydnus. Nor did the sage neglect the dog either, but after offering a prayer to the river he sent the dog across it; and when the dog had crossed the river, he took his stand on the opposite bank, and began to bark, a thing which mad dogs rarely do, and he folded back his ears and wagged his tail, because he knew that he was all right again, for a draught of water cures a mad dog, if he has only the courage to take it. (6:43)

This tale anticipates Stephen King's *Cujo*, sharing the premise of a dog suffering possession by the wandering soul of a dead villain. Apollonius' superhuman discernment as displayed here is really that of the omniscient narrator. It serves as an etiology, absolving the possessed of responsibility for his aberrant behavior.

Passion and Apotheosis

Apollonius awaits his trial before Domitian, where his disciple expects he will be martyred. No, Apollonius reassures his disciple Damis,

"No one is going to kill us." "And who," said Damis, "is so invulnerable as that? But will you ever be

liberated?” “So far as it rests with the verdict of the court,” said Apollonius, “I shall be set at liberty this day, but so far as depends on my own will, now and here.” And with these words he took his leg out of the fetters and remarked to Damis: “Here is proof positive to you of my freedom, so cheer up.” Damis says that it was then for the first time that he really and truly understood the nature of Apollonius, to wit, that it was divine and superhuman, for without any sacrifice, - and how in prison could he have offered any? - and without a single prayer, without even a word, he quietly laughed at the fetters, and then inserted his leg in them afresh, and behaved like a prisoner once more. (4:44)

All right, then, Apollonius is, surely and simply, a god masquerading as a human sophist. He is only “behaving” like a prisoner, like a mortal, like a human. He is exactly like Dionysus in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, in which that god appears in Thebes playing the role of the apostle of his own expanding new religion. He allows himself to be imprisoned by the blundering authorities, though, like Paul in Acts 16, he soon strolls free of his cell during an earthquake to confront his jailer. Nor is it enough to say that Philostratus’ Apollonius is just like Euripides’ Dionysus. We must recognize that *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* is just like the *Bacchae*, completely a work of fiction starring a completely mythical divine protagonist.

And on the next day he called Damis and said: “My defense has to be pleaded by me on the day appointed, so do you betake yourself in the direction of Dicaearchia, for it is better to go by land; and when you have saluted Demetrius, turn aside to the sea-shore where the island of Calypso lies; for there you shall see me appear to you.” “Alive,” asked Damis, “or how?” Apollonius with a smile replied: “As I myself believe, alive, but as you will believe, risen from the dead.” Accordingly he says that he

went away with much regret, for although he did not quite despair of his master's life, yet he hardly expected him to escape death. And on the third day he arrived at Dicaearchia, where he at once heard news of the great storm which had raged during those days; for a gale with rain had burst over the sea, sinking some of the ships that were sailing thither, and driving out of their course those which were tending to Sicily and the straits of Messina. And then he understood why it was that Apollonius had bidden him to go by land. (7:41)

Apollonius warns that when Damis next sees him, he will suppose his master to have been executed and subsequently resurrected, but that he will be mistaken. Apollonius will evade death, not defeat it. Apollonius' remarks before Domitian

aroused louder applause than beseemed the court of an Emperor; and the latter deeming the audience to have borne witness in favor of the accused, and also not a little impressed himself by the answers he had received, for they were both firm and sensible, said: "I acquit you of the charges; but you must remain here until we have had a private interview." Thereat Apollonius was much encouraged and said: "I thank you indeed, my sovereign, but I would fain tell you that by reason of these miscreants your cities are in ruin, and the islands full of exiles, and the mainland of lamentations, and your armies of cowardice, and the Senate of suspicion. Accord me also, if you will, opportunity to speak; but if not, then send someone to take my body, for my soul you cannot take. Nay, you cannot take even my body, 'For thou shalt not slay me, since—I tell thee—I am not mortal.'"

And with these words he vanished from the court, which was the best thing he could do under the circumstances, for the Emperor clearly intended not to question him sincerely about the

case, but about all sorts of irrelevant matters. For he took great credit to himself for not having put Apollonius to death, nor was the latter anxious to be drawn into such discussions. And he thought that he would best effect his end if he left no one in ignorance of his true nature, but allowed it to be known to all to be such that he had it in him never to be taken prisoner against his own will. Moreover he had no longer any cause for anxiety about his friends; for as the despot had not the courage to ask any questions about them, how could he possibly put them to death with any color of justice upon charges for which no evidence had been presented in court? Such was the account of the proceedings of the trial which I found. (8:5)

Just before he vanishes Apollonius quotes Homer's *Iliad* (22.13) as appropriate to himself in his present circumstances. What is the original, Homeric, context? Apollonius is claiming for his own the words of Apollo speaking to Achilles. Achilles is pursuing one whom he believes to be an enemy soldier, but in fact he is chasing a disguised Apollo, who turns and, with these words, reveals his identity and, therefore, the futility of Achilles' efforts. Apollonius is taunting Domitian: he is equally impotent before one who only seemed to be a man but was actually a god. Keep in mind that Philostratus portrays Apollonius not as a demigod like Theseus and Hercules, who were exalted to godhood after death, but as a straight-up deity who merely chose to enter this world through a womb, part of the docetic charade, precisely as in the Nativity of the Buddha.

Speaking of Homer, in chapter 16 Apollonius repeats Odysseus' pilgrimage to the tomb of Achilles. He calls out, like Jesus to Lazarus,

“O Achilles, ... most of mankind declare you are dead, but I cannot agree with them... show...

yourself to my eyes, if you should be able to use them to attest your existence.” Thereupon a slight earthquake shook the neighborhood of the barrow [cf. Matthew 28:1-2], and a youth issued forth five cubits high, wearing a cloak of Thessalian fashion... but he grew bigger, till he was twice as large and even more than that; at any rate he appeared .. to be twelve cubits high just at that moment when he reached his complete stature, and his beauty grew apace with his length. (4:15)

How, I ask you, is this any different from Odysseus seeking out Achilles in Hades? We are reading fiction in both cases, the one story probably a conscious imitation of the other. Is there any more reason for us to posit a historical Apollonius than a historical Odysseus?

Damis' grief had just broken out afresh, and he had made some such exclamation as the following: “Shall we ever behold, O ye gods, our noble and good companion?” when Apollonius, who had heard him—for as a matter of fact he was already present in the chamber of the nymphs—answered: “Ye shall see him, nay, ye have already seen him.” “Alive?” said Demetrius, “For if you are dead, we have anyhow never ceased to lament you.” Hereupon Apollonius stretched out his hand and said: “Take hold of me, and if I evade you, then I am indeed a ghost come to you from the realm of Persephone, such as the gods of the underworld reveal to those who are dejected with much mourning. But if I resist your touch, then you shall persuade Damis also that I am both alive and that I have not abandoned my body.” They were no longer able to disbelieve, but rose up and threw themselves on his neck and kissed him, and asked him about his defense. For while Demetrius was of the opinion that he had not even made his defense—for he expected him to be destroyed without any wrong being proved against him—Damis thought that he had made

his defense, but perhaps more quickly than was expected; for he never dreamed that he had made it only that day. But Apollonius said: "I have made my defense, gentlemen, and have gained my cause; and my defense took place this very day not so long ago, for it lasted on even to midday." "How then," said Demetrius, "have you accomplished so long a journey in so small a fraction of the day?" And Apollonius replied: "Imagine what you will, flying ram or wings of wax excepted, so long as you ascribe it to the intervention of a divine escort." (8:12)

The memoirs then of Apollonius of Tyana which Damis the Assyrian composed, end with the above story; for with regard to the manner in which he died, if he did actually die, there are many stories. (8:29)

Now there are some who relate that he died in Ephesus [...] Others again say that he (Apollonius) died in Lindus, where he entered the temple of Athene and disappeared within it. Others again say that he died in Crete in a much more remarkable manner than the people of Lindus relate. For they say that he continued to live in Crete, where he became a greater centre of admiration than ever before, and that he came to the temple of Dictynna late at night. Now this temple is guarded by dogs, whose duty is to watch over the wealth deposited in it, and the Cretans claim that they are as good as bears or any other animals equally fierce. Nonetheless, when he came, instead of barking, they approached him and fawned upon him, as they would not have done even with people they knew familiarly. The guardians of the shrine arrested him in consequence, and threw him in bonds as a wizard and a robber, accusing him of having thrown to the dogs some charmed morsel. But about midnight he loosened his bonds, and

after calling those who had bound him, in order that they might witness the spectacle, he ran to the doors of the temple, which opened wide to receive him; and when he had passed within they closed afresh, as they had been shut, and there was heard a chorus of maidens singing from within the temple, and their song was this. "Hasten thou from earth, hasten thou to Heaven, hasten." In other words: "Do thou go upwards from earth." (8:30)

It is by no means hard to guess which of these reports Philostratus prefers. For him, for the sake of his story, Apollonius did not die because, like his namesake Apollo, he *could* not die, being an immortal god. He simply hops aboard the celestial elevator and returns to Olympus. This is not an adoptionistic exaltation. He is simply a god returning to heaven. And who's to say he cannot make occasional descents from there?

There came to Tyana a youth who did not shrink from acrimonious discussions, and who would not accept truth in argument. Now Apollonius had already passed away from among men, but people still wondered at his passing, and no one ventured to dispute that he was immortal. This being so, the discussions were mainly about the soul, for a band of youths were there passionately addicted to wisdom. The young man in question, however, would on no account allow the tenet of the immortality of the soul, and said: "I myself, gentlemen, have done nothing now for nine months but pray to Apollonius that he would reveal to me the truth about the soul; but he is so utterly dead that he will not appear to me in response to my entreaties, nor give me any reason to consider him immortal." Such were the young man's words on that occasion, but on the fifth day following, after discussing the same subject, he fell asleep where he was talking with them, and of the young men

who were studying with him, some were reading books, and others were industriously drawing geometrical figures on the ground, when on a sudden, like one possessed, he leaped up still in a half sleep, streaming with perspiration, and cried out: "I believe thee." And, when those who were present asked him what was the matter; "Do you not see," said he, "Apollonius the sage, how that he is present with us and is listening to our discussion, and is reciting wondrous verses about the soul?" "But where is he?" they asked, "For we cannot see him anywhere, although we would rather do so than possess all the blessings of mankind." And the youth replied: "It would seem that he is come to converse with myself alone concerning the tenets which I would not believe." (8:31)

This episode is strikingly parallel to the "Doubting Thomas" story in John chapter 20, offering readers a vicarious "eyewitness" experience of Apollonius. But don't get excited; you *still* haven't seen him. But there is an even more significant implication: anyone ever saw Apollonius only in private visions, i.e., with the eye of faith, the same way Aelius Aristides "saw" Asclepius and Serapis--in dreams and visions. I should think that belief in the divine healer Asclepius began with dreams in his temples, which in turn led to the stories (myths) of a previous historical existence of this son of Apollo on earth. In like manner, I think "Apolloniusism" began with dreams and trance visions like the one quoted just above, subjective apparitions of the god Proteus-Apollonius, with the notion of his earthly ministry following later. And stories is all they ever were. No, Virginia, there was no historical Apollonius of Tyana.

Sandwiches and Sources in the Gospel of Mark

David Oliver Smith

In a number of passages in his gospel the author of the Gospel of Mark intercalated a second story into another story before the original story was completed. These are typically called “Markan sandwiches.” When Matthew and Luke used those passages in their gospels, sometimes they retained the sandwich and sometimes they did not.¹ Scholars have proposed various theories on why Mark chose to use the sandwich technique in his gospel.² The reasons proposed include a heightened dramatic effect by suspending a story with the interrupting intercalation, making theological points with irony, and making theological points at two different levels. This paper proposes a different theory for Mark’s use of the sandwich technique in his Gospel.

At the outset of an analysis of Markan sandwiches it should be established which Markan passages are sandwiches. Not all scholars are in agreement as to which passages qualify as sandwiches. In Appendix 1 of his book

1 For example, both Matthew and Luke do not use the sandwich technique in their versions of Mark 3:21–35 at Matt 12:24–32 and Luke 11:15–19, but they use the technique in their versions of Mark 5:21–43 at Matt 9:18–25 and Luke 8:40–56.

2 James R. Edwards, “Markan Sandwiches: the Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives.” *Novum Testamentum* vol 31 no 3 (1989), Deppe, Dean B., *The Theological Intentions of Mark’s Literary Devices*, Eugene, OR, Wipf and Stock (2015) 31 et seq., Dewey, Joanna. *Markan Public Debate*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series (Chico, CA: Scholars), 1980. Fowler, Robert M. *Let the Reader Understand*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 1991. Shepperd, Tom. *Markan Sandwich Stories*, (Barrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press), 1993.

The Theological Intentions of Mark's Literary Devices, Dean B. Deppe lists six passages that are universally recognized as sandwiches and three others that are possibly sandwiches.³ Those are as follows:

Six Universally Recognized Sandwiches

The following six sandwiches and their reference identifiers are universally recognized among scholars. The letter "A" denotes the initial story and its conclusion. The letter "B" denotes the intercalated story.

1. Mark 3:20–35 (Family/Beelzebul)

A Jesus's family decides to seize him, vv 20–21

B Scribes accuse Jesus of being in league with Beelzebul, vv 22–30

A Jesus's family comes to see him, vv 31–35

2. Mark 5:21–43 (Jairus's Daughter/Hemorrhaging Woman)

A Jairus pleads with Jesus to save his daughter, vv 21–24

B Woman with a hemorrhage is cured by touching Jesus, vv 25–34

A Jesus raises Jairus's daughter, vv 35–43

3. Mark 6:7–30 (Twelve/Baptizer)

A Jesus sends out the twelve, vv 7–13

B John the Baptizer is killed, vv 14–29

A The twelve return to Jesus, v 30

4. Mark 11:12–21 (Fig Tree/Temple)

3 Deppe, *Theological Intentions*, 479.

A Jesus curses a fig tree, vv 12–14

B Jesus clears the temple, vv 15–19

A Peter discovers the fig tree has withered, vv 20–21

5. Mark 14:1–11 (Plot/Anointing)

A Chief priests and scribes plot to kill Jesus, vv 1–2

B Jesus is anointed by a woman at Bethany,
vv 3–9

A Judas agrees to join the plot, vv 10–11

6. Mark 14:53–72 (Peter's Denial/Council Trial)

A Peter follows Jesus to the courtyard of the high
priest, vv 53–54

B Jesus is interrogated before the council, vv
55–65

A Peter denies being a follower of Jesus, vv 66–72

Three Sandwiches Not Universally Recognized

The following three sandwiches and their reference identifiers are recognized by some but not all scholars. In addition the exact parameters of these sandwiches are not always agreed upon.

7. Mark 4:1–34 (Parables/Explanation)

A Jesus tells the crowd The Parable of the Sower, vv
1–9

B Jesus Explains The Parable of the Sower in
private, vv 10–20

A Jesus tells three more parables to the crowd, vv
20–34

8. Mark 14:17–31 (Betrayal/Last Supper)

A Jesus predicts his betrayal, vv 17–21

B Jesus institutes the Eucharist, vv 22–26

A Jesus predicts Peter's denial, vv 27–31

9. Mark 15:40–16:8 (Women/Burial)

A Women witness Jesus's crucifixion, vv 40–41

B Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus, vv 42–47

A Women enter Jesus's tomb to anoint his body, vv 1–8

Previously Unrecognized Sandwich

There is a tenth previously unrecognized sandwich that is difficult to recognize because the conclusion is so abbreviated.

10. Mark 1:4–14 (Baptism/Temptation)

A. John baptizes in the Jordan, vv 4–11

B. Jesus goes to the wilderness, vv 12–13

A. John is delivered up, vv 14

This sandwich starts with John the Baptizer baptizing people in the Jordan River. He baptizes Jesus, and the Spirit immediately impels him into the wilderness. The story of John is completed with the report that John was delivered up. The reader discovers in a later sandwich that Herod arrested John and killed him. Prior to Jesus's baptism the Gospel had been about John, what he wore, what he ate, what he did in the wilderness. The story switches to Jesus at 1:9, but Mark writes an ending to the John episode by relating that John was arrested, ending his baptizing career.

In Mark's Gospel John's arrest and beheading foreshadow the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, but what is not as clear

is that with John's baptizing of Jesus, John's career as a baptizer is over. In his sermon John predicts that the one coming after him will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John knew that the baptism of water only will no longer be needed. After baptizing Jesus John was arrested by Herod. That is the termination of the story about John baptizing in the wilderness. With Jesus's baptism the Gospel moves to focus on Jesus, his ministry, his crucifixion and resurrection. The baptism of John ceases, and after Jesus's resurrection believers in Jesus were baptized as an initiation into faith in him. At Mark 11:30 Jesus asks the temple authorities about "the baptism of John" implying that it is of a different substance from Christian baptism.

John Meagher in *Clumsy Construction in Mark's Gospel* writes that Mark's reporting of John's arrest is unnecessary and is one of his clumsy constructions.⁴ To the contrary Mark needed to report John's arrest at 1:14 to complete the story of the baptism of John and to complete his first sandwich. In Markan sandwiches the two intertwined stories are usually related, comment on each other and one sometimes presents an ironic view of the other. In this first sandwich the A story has John interacting with Jesus by baptizing him and Jesus is infused with the Spirit. In the B story Satan interacts with Jesus by tempting him, but the reader is not told what occurs between Jesus and Satan. Presumably the Spirit protects Jesus from Satan's temptations, but the reader is kept in the dark as to whether Satan's temptations had an effect on Jesus.

The following chart shows how the sandwiches fit into the structure of Mark's Original Gospel.

4 Meagher, John C., *Clumsy Construction in Mark's Gospel*. (New York: Mellen), 1979, 42-43.

Sandwich

1. Baptism/Temptation (1:4–13)
2. Family/Beelzebul (3:20–35)
3. Parables/Explanation (4:1–34)
4. Jairus's Daughter/Hemorrhaging Woman (5:31–43)
5. Twelve/Baptizer (6:7–31)

6. Fig Tree/Temple (11:12–21)
7. Plot/Anointing (14:1–11)
8. Betrayal/Last Supper (14:17–31)
9. Peter's Denial/Council Trial (14:53–72)
10. Women/Burial (15:40—16:8)

The sandwiches are placed so that there are five in the first half of the gospel and five in the second half. After the first sandwich in the first half there are seventy-nine verses between the first sandwich and the second sandwich. This structure is comparable with respect to the second half sandwiches. After the first sandwich that occurs in the second half (sandwich six) there are ninety-two verses between the sixth sandwich and the seventh sandwich.

Then in the first half the second, third, fourth and fifth sandwiches are bunched up coming fairly rapidly with all four located within one hundred forty nine verses. The same structure presents itself with regard to the second half sandwiches with the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth sandwiches being bunched together and located within one hundred twenty seven verses. The literary distance between the fifth sandwich to the sixth sandwich is quite long, essentially one-third of the gospel. There are five sandwiches in the first third, five in the last third and none in the middle third. It appears Mark deliberately patterned the sandwiches in the gospel structure. The literary reason for this pattern is obscure; however, the pattern of five sandwiches in each half of the gospel, with one early sandwich separated some distance from the following

four in each half, is some corroborating evidence that the previously unidentified first sandwich is indeed an intended literary device by the author.

Mark's Reversed Sources

There appears to be a second structure closely associated with the Markan sandwiches. Other than location in the gospel structure, it is difficult to rationalize a literary or theological motive for this secondary structure by Mark associated with the sandwiches. This secondary structure involves Mark's source material for his Gospel.

The following are the ten instances where Mark reversed his source material in his Gospel narrative:

Mark	Subject	Source
1. 1:9–11	Baptism of Jesus	2 Kgs 2:8–14
1:16–20	Calling the disciples	1 Kgs 19:19–21

In Mark 1:9–11 John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan, Jesus comes up out of the water, the sky parts and the Spirit descends like a dove from heaven into Jesus. In 2 Kgs 2:8–14 Elijah takes Elisha to the Jordan, Elijah parts the water, invests Elisha with a double portion of his spirit, and ascends into heaven in a chariot of fire with a whirlwind. The common elements are master and student, the Jordan, a parting of the water/sky, infusion of a spirit, going up to heaven/coming down from heaven, horses and a dove, and the beginning of Elisha's ministry and the beginning of Jesus's ministry. Also John is the avatar of Elijah, running throughout Mark's Gospel. This is the end of Elisha's apprenticeship.

In Mark 1:16–20 Jesus comes into Galilee and calls Peter, Andrew, and James and John, sons of Zebedee, to be his first disciples as they are fishing and mending their

nets at the Sea of Galilee. All four of them immediately stop what they are doing and follow Jesus. In 1 Kgs 19:19–21 Elijah sees Elisha plowing the field with twelve oxen. He throws his mantle over Elisha, and Elisha says he will follow Elijah after he makes a farewell dinner for his parents and kisses them goodbye. The common elements are master and disciple, the disciple is working at his occupation, a sudden calling, the delayed response by Elisha/immediate response of Jesus's disciples, preparing a feast for parents and leaving father in the boat, and oxen of Elisha and fish of the disciples. This is the beginning of Elisha's apprenticeship.

These reversed sources from First and Second Kings used by Mark at 1:6–19 coincide with the above enumerated first sandwich about the baptism of John, temptation of Jesus, and John's arrest.

2. 3:13–19	Appointing The Twelve	Exod 18:19–25
3:21–35	Who Are My Brothers	Exod 18:1–15

In Mark 3:13–19 Jesus summons his disciples up a mountain and appoints twelve apostles out of his group of disciples. Jesus gives the apostles the authority to preach and cast out demons. Mark specifically names the twelve. In Exod 18:19–25 Moses's father-in-law, Jethro, advises Moses to stop hearing all the disputes that arise among the Israelites and to appoint lesser judges to adjudicate the minor cases. Jethro advises Moses to teach the law to the judges and give them authority to decide the lesser cases sending only the major disputes to Moses. Moses appoints leaders over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens, giving them authority to decide disputes. Presumably he appointed a presiding judge for each of the twelve tribes, but that is not stated in Exodus. The common elements are a leader with too much to do, appointment of representatives, and investing of authority.

In Mark 3:21–35 Jesus's family decides to seize him

because they think he is out of his mind. They go to the house where he is teaching and some there tell him that his mother and brothers are outside. Jesus does not go see them, rather he rejects them by pointing to those around him listening to his teachings and he says that his family are those who do the will of God. In Exod 1:15 Moses learns that his wife and sons are on their way to see him being brought by Jethro. Moses enthusiastically goes out to meet them, he kisses them and excitedly tells them about all the things that had happened to him and the band of Israelites. Common elements are family coming to visit and the reaction of the person visited, i.e., Jesus rejecting and Moses accepting. This is a case, common in Mark's Gospel, where Mark shows a relationship with an ironic opposite.

In this reversal of sources there are consecutive stories in Exod 18 reversed and used in consecutive stories in Mark 3. The reversed sources are used by Mark before the beginning of his second sandwich and ends at the conclusion of the sandwich.

3. 4:14–20	Parable of the Sower	
	Explanation	1 Cor 3:6–8
4:21–25	Revelation	1 Cor 2:7

In Mark 4:14–20 Jesus explains the Parable of the Sower to the disciples. He tells them that the sower is sowing the word and the reactions of those who hear the word. In 1 Cor 3:6–8 Paul says, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” using the planting/sowing metaphor in telling the Corinthians that when he taught them Christianity he was planting a seed. Paul refers to himself as a planter a second and third time in these verses. Paul returns to sowing and seed metaphors later in 1 Cor 15. In 1 Corinthians Paul mentions “sowing” eight times, “planting” four times and “seed” once.

In Mark 4:21–25 Jesus tells the Parable of the Lamp saying that that which has been hidden will be revealed.

Jesus says, "For there is nothing hidden unless it is made manifest. Neither was anything made secret, without it coming to light." In 1 Cor 2:7–10 Paul says, "we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, that has been hidden which God foreordained before the worlds." In other words, Paul is revealing God's mystery that had been heretofore hidden. Paul says that God revealed the mysteries to him. The Parable Discourse (Mark 4:1–35) concerns the coming of the kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians Paul mentions the kingdom of God five times. No other epistle of Paul mentions the kingdom of God more than once. Surely Mark used 1 Corinthians as a source for the Parable Discourse.

Mark's third use of reversed sources, and the only one from Paul's Epistles is found in the center of the third sandwich that encompasses the entire Parable Discourse.

4. 4:36–41	Calming The Sea	Ps 107:23–30
5:1–20	Healing The Gerasene Demoniac	Ps 107:10–16

In Mark 4:36–41 the author makes reference to Ps 107:23–30. The basic story in Mark is taken from Jonah 1, but it is overlaid with the Psalm. In Mark Jesus calms the storm at sea by command. The disciples wake Jesus up alarmed that the boat is going to sink and he commands the sea and wind to be still and silent. Ps 107:23–30 says, "they cried to their Lord in their trouble."⁵ Then, "he made the storm be still and the waves of the sea were hushed."⁶ Common elements are a cry for help by those at sea and the commands of being still and silent.

In Mark 5:1–20 Jesus encounters a demoniac who lives among the tombs, cuts himself with stones and cannot be bound by chains. The demoniac pleads with Jesus to help him. Jesus exorcises the demons and tells the cured man

5 NRSV.

6 Ibid.

to go home and tell others how God cured him. Ps 107:10 says, “Those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death . . . in chains .”⁷ And, “They cried out to the Lord in their trouble and he saved them in their distress.”⁸ And also, “He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death. Let them give thanks to the Lord.”⁹ Common elements are being among tombs, bound with chains, a cry for help, relief from God, and giving thanks to God. Once again consecutive passages in the Old Testament (OT) are reversed and presented as consecutive passages in Mark.

This set of reversed sources from Ps 107 are used in the two pericopae immediately before the beginning of the fourth sandwich, Jairus’s Daughter/Hemorrhaging Woman.

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|------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 5. 6:6b–11 | Sending Out The Twelve | 2 Kgs 5:22–23 |
| 6:30–31 | Return Of The Twelve | 2 Kgs 5:15 |

In Mark 6:6–11 Jesus sends out the apostles to preach and heal. He instructs them to take no bag, no money and do not put on two tunics. In 2 Kgs 5:22 Elisha has cured Naaman of leprosy and Naaman wants to give Elisha a reward. Elisha refuses. Naaman goes away and Elisha’s servant Gehazi runs after Naaman and asks for the reward. He asks for a talent of silver and two changes of clothes. Naaman gives him two talents of silver in bags and two changes of clothes. Common elements are healing, money, bags, and changes of clothes.

In Mark 6:30–31 the twelve who Jesus sent out to preach and heal return and tell him what they did. In 2 Kgs 5:10–13 Elisha sent Naaman away telling him what he needed to do to cure his leprosy. In 2 Kgs 5:15 Naaman returns to Elisha and tries to give him a reward for the cure. Common elements are sending away, healing, and returning.

7 NASB

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

This fifth use of reversed sources by Mark exactly coincides with the fifth sandwich of sending out the twelve, their return, and the killing of John the Baptizer. In the OT source the reversed passages are part of the same story of Naaman's cure as it is in Mark with the twelve.

- | | | |
|------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 6. 11:7-10 | Entering Jerusalem | 1 Macc 13:51 |
| 11:15-19 | Clearing The Temple | 1 Macc 13:47-50 |

In Mark 11:7-10 Jesus triumphantly enters Jerusalem on a donkey. People spread their tunics and palm fronds on the road in Jesus's path. The people shout "Hosanna" and "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." In 1 Macc 13:51 Simon Maccabeus triumphantly enters Jerusalem "with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs."¹⁰ Common elements are entering Jerusalem, palm branches and praise.

In Mark 11:15-19 Jesus clears the temple of corrupting influence. He throws out those buying and selling in the temple. He overturns the table of the moneychangers and the seats of the dove sellers. He prevents anyone from carrying a pitcher through the temple. In 1 Macc 13:47-50 Simon Maccabeus conquers Gazara and the citadel of Jerusalem. He cast out all uncleanness from Gazara and stopped those in the citadel of Jerusalem from buying and selling and prevented them from going out so that they starved. Common elements are an edifice, clearing out polluting influence, buying and selling, and preventing movement.

In this sequence Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly and clears the temple while Simon clears the defenders in the citadel so that he can triumphantly enter Jerusalem. This use of reversed sources is the first one in the second half of Mark's Gospel and begins before the sixth Markan

10 RSV

sandwich is initiated (Fig Tree/Temple), and it ends with the intercalated middle element.

7. 14:3–9	Anointing With Oil In Bethany	1 Sam 9:22—10:1
14:12–16	Finding The Passover Room	1 Sam 9:11–14

In Mark 14:3–9 Jesus is at dinner and a woman breaks a flask and anoints him with oil. In 1 Sam 9:22—10:1 Saul and his servant are invited to dinner by Samuel. After dinner Samuel takes a flask of oil and anoints Saul as the first king of Israel. Common elements are eating dinner, followed by anointing, and a flask of oil.

In Mark 14:12–16 Jesus sends two disciples to find a room where they can eat the Passover meal. Jesus tells the disciples to go into the city and they will see a man carrying a pitcher of water and they should follow him and talk to the master of the house. In 1 Sam 9:11–14 Saul and his servant are looking for Samuel. They go into the city and see women drawing water and the women tell Saul where Samuel is. Common elements are two going into a city, vessels of water, directions to find what is sought.

The seventh reversed sourced passages begins in the middle element of the seventh sandwich (Plot/Anointing). It ends with the pericope after the seventh sandwich has ended.

8. 14:15–27	The Last Supper	2 Sam 16:4
14:29–31	Peter will not deny Jesus	2 Sam 15:19–21

In Mark 14:15–27 Jesus tells two disciples that they will find a room prepared for their Passover supper. The disciples prepare the feast. Jesus eats his last supper with the disciples, institutes the Eucharist, and predicts that one

of the twelve will deliver him up. Jesus says that it would be better for the one who betrays the Son of Man that he were never born. In 2 Sam 16:4 Ziba meets David who with his entourage is on the Mount of Olives fleeing Absalom. Ziba has prepared food and wine for David and company. Ziba is the servant of Mephibosheth and has betrayed his master's son in taking food to David. David rewards him. Common elements are preparing a feast, bread, wine, betrayal, and reward for betrayal.

In Mark 14:29–31 Peter tells Jesus he will not stumble even if the others do. Jesus tells him he will deny Jesus three times before the cock crows twice. Peter insists he will not deny Jesus even if it means death for Peter. In 2 Sam 15:19–21 David is trying to escape from Absalom's army. Ittai tells David he will go with him. David tells him to save himself and his family. Ittai tells David he will stay with him even if it means death for Ittai. Common elements are master warning servant, servant disagreeing with master, servant swearing fealty to death.

This eighth use of reversed sources begins immediately before the beginning of the eighth sandwich of the betrayal of Jesus and institution of the Eucharist, but the ends of both coincide.

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------|
| 9. 14:55–56 | The Sanhedrin Trial | Dan 6:4 |
| 15:16–20a | The Soldiers' Abuse of Jesus | Dan 5:29 |

In Mark 14:55–56 The high priest and entire counsel try to find evidence against Jesus to convict him but they can not find any. They resort to getting false testimony from witnesses. In Dan 6:4–5 the commissioners and satraps try to find evidence against Daniel but they can not find any. They resort to trapping him for worshiping Yahweh. Common elements are two groups of accusers, trying to find evidence, not being able to find evidence, an innocent defendant, and resorting to trickery to obtain a conviction.

In Mark 15:16–20 Roman soldiers dress Jesus in purple,

place a crown of thorns on his head, beat him and mockingly salute him as king of the Jews. In Dan 5:29 Belshazzar has his servants dress Daniel in purple, place a gold chain around his neck and issue a proclamation that Daniel is the third highest ruler in the kingdom. Common elements are dressing in purple, placing an ornament of power on the recipient, naming the recipient a ruler.

The ninth use of reversed sources by Mark begins with the verse immediately after the beginning of the ninth sandwich of Peter's Denial/Council Trial, but it does not end until after the trial before Pilate.

10. 15:29–32	Crowd gloats at Jesus's crucifixion	Ps 41:11
16:6	The Women At The Tomb	Ps 41:10

In Mark 15:29–32 the witnesses to the crucifixion of Jesus mock him, tempting him to come down from the cross to prove he is the Christ. In Ps 41:11 the psalmist says he knows God is pleased with him because his enemies do not shout in triumph over him. Common elements are distress of the subject, God being pleased with the subject (unstated in Mark), and the reaction of the enemies of the subject.

In Mark 16:6 women in Jesus's tomb find a young man who tells them that Jesus has risen from the dead and shows them where his body had been laid. In Ps 41:10 the psalmist pleads with God from his sick bed to raise him up. Common elements are lying dead/ill followed by being raised up by God.

The tenth and last reversed sources begins before the beginning of the tenth sandwich (Women/Burial) and ends two verses before the end of the sandwich.

The following chart shows the location of the ten Markan sandwiches and their associated reversed sources, demonstrating that there is an over lapping or adjacent reversed source sequence for each Markan sandwich.

Markan Sandwich	Associated Reversed Source
1. 1:9–14	1:9–20
2. 3:20–35	3:13–35
3. 4:1–34	4:14–25
4. 5:21–43	4:36—5:20
5. 6:7–30	6:7–30
6. 11:12–21	11:7–19
7. 14:1–11	14:3–16
8. 14:17–31	14:15–31
9. 14:53–72	14:55—15:20
10. 15:40—16:8	15:29—16:6

Relationship Between Sandwiches and Reversed Sources

The realization that the ten reversed sources are associated with ten Markan sandwiches leads to the conclusion that there are, in fact, ten Markan sandwiches, not six as some exegetes hold and not the usual nine that is common among other scholars. It was finding the tenth reversed source sequence in Mark that precipitated the recognition of the tenth sandwich.

It is not immediately clear what Mark's purpose might have been in associating the reversed sources with the sandwiches. There cannot be any question that the association is deliberate. The consecutive or near consecutive use of reversed sources by Mark is powerful evidence that he did not collect oral stories that were circulating about Jesus and cobble them together as a narrative to educate the faithful about Jesus. If Mark had collected oral stories about Jesus and arranged them in a chronological order to tell the story of his ministry, it would be an amazing coincidence if two of the consecutive stories happened to reflect two OT stories in reverse order. For example, there seems to be no relationship between Jesus's appointing

twelve apostles and his spurning his family when they come to collect him. There is no logical reason why these two stories should be consecutive in the Gospel. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that there would be ten of these occurrences in the Gospel. Add to that unlikelihood, that all ten of these occurrences are placed such that they overlap or are adjacent to the ten Markan sandwiches found in the Gospel. The only rational conclusion is that the stories about Jesus were not derived from oral tradition circulating among early followers of Jesus. Rather they appear to be created by the author out of whole cloth using the OT and other sources.

Mark's use of reversed sources would only be obvious to readers who were very familiar with the OT. On the other hand the Markan sandwich technique is immediately obvious even to a casual reader. Perhaps the obvious sandwich structures were designed to call attention to the reversed source structure. That is, the purpose of Mark's sandwich technique is to make the sophisticated reader stop and examine the sandwich more closely and thereby perhaps be more likely to realize that the surrounding text is based on OT stories that have been reversed. Perhaps Mark was deliberately leaving clues that he was using the OT and Paul's epistles to construct his Gospel. The tell-tale clue Mark uses ten times in his Gospel to signal his source material is to reverse the order of his source material in the Gospel narrative. Very often the reversed sources are from consecutive OT stories and are in consecutive Gospel stories. This cannot be coincidental. In addition, eight times Mark reverses the effect of the source story in his gospel story. For example, whereas the source story has Moses enthusiastically greeting his family when they came to see him, Mark would use that as a basis for Jesus refusing to acknowledge his family when they came to seize him.

It does not appear that Mark uses the reversed source technique to obscure the fact that he was getting his

information about Jesus from previously written sources.¹¹ On the contrary, he uses this reversing technique as a signal to his readers that the narrative of Jesus's story had been revealed to him in the OT and Paul's Epistles. Later exegetes misinterpreted Mark's technique of using OT stories as a source for Gospel stories to claim that the OT had prophesied the ministry of Jesus. It may be that Mark was using the sandwich technique to draw attention to the reversed sources.

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11 See Gal 3:1 where "prographē" should be translated as "previously written."

Jesus Christ and His Associates from India and Ísauria

Ranajit Pal

Abstract: This paper suggests that Jesus Christ was Amyntas of Galatia who was the same as Amyntas Nikator of Nagara. His palace at Ísauria reveals his name Ísa. St. Paul, St. Peter and St. Thomas were Asinius Pollio, Publius Petronius and Hermaeus Soter/ Deiotarus Philadelphus. St. Luke, St. Mark, and St. Mathew appear to be Lycomedes, Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus, and Matius. Amyntas adored Mēn, Attis and Mithra. Pomponia Graecina, the earliest known Christian, was related to Pollio/Paul.

A Galatian King, not a ‘peasant from the Nazareth ridge’

Are traditional accounts completely false, deliberately conspiring to keep more scandalous truths out of the public eye?”, asks M. M. Mitchell.¹ How a minor sect of Galilean Jews conquered Rome and eventually turned Christianity into the most numerous religion, remains a major wonder. Jesus was active in Galilee² but the archaeological void in Palestine³ points to ancient errors

1 See R. M. Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, (Louisville, 2004), p. XIII.

2 The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states, “Some critics went so far as to question the very historicity of Jesus, but even those who did not go that far questioned the historicity of some of the sayings and deeds attributed to Jesus in the Gospels”. Among the critics was B. Bauer.

3 This is negative inference, but based on extensive research. Nothing related to Christ has been found from Galilee. There were Nagaras (Nazareth) near Ephesus and in Afghanistan.

in geography and chronology. M. Grant writes about the failure of Jesus in Galilee. Was this because he was not a Galilean? The Crucifixion accounts also suggest that Jesus may have been a Jew of the Diaspora. A. Harnack, A. D. Nock and R. Bultmann noted the influence of Hellenistic religion on Christianity and M. Hengel says that all 1st century Judaism was Hellenistic Judaism. Nock writes;⁴

One topic which to them seemed to call for treatment was the relation of Christianity in the Apostolic age to its non-Jewish environment. For a generation this subject had been actively canvassed, and it was energetically maintained that the idea of a Resurrection on the third day had its origin in Near Eastern myths of dying and rising gods, and that the description of Jesus as Lord and again the sacramental character of baptism and the Eucharist were likewise importations from the Gentile world.

In fact the Diaspora Jews outnumbered those in Judea-Galilee and Herod often chose high priests from the Diaspora. Large Jewish communities existed in Babylon, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome and Asia Minor. The first churches were in Asia Minor which was called '*das Christliche Land*' by A. Harnack.⁵ It is astonishing that *all the Galatian centers where Paul preached, belonged to a namesake of Jesus – Amyntas of Galatia*⁶. Also, the *first Christian Council* was held at Nicaea, not far from *Amyntas' home*. Its silence on

4 A. D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background*, p. vii.

5 The early churches, early Christian movements and Christian-like inscriptions are all from Asia Minor. The main Gospels are in Greek which was the language of Galatia, not Galilee.

6 Rev. iii.14 has ὁ Ἄμην. See <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1383-amen>

him may be due a blackout on Amyntas' history imposed by the Roman Emperor Augustus, who was a rival 'son of god'.

The name *Amen* (Rev. iii.14) holds the key to the Jesus of history. *Amyntas of Galatia*, the greatest hero of Asia Minor, closely fits the Jesus of the gospels. His palace was at *Isauria*⁷ which echoes Jesus' name *Ísa*. He appears to have been born about 58 B.C. near *Pessinus* in Bithynia. It is appalling that in the present history, not only Jesus, no Evangelist or Apostle has any historical trace. The Encyclopedia Britannica states, 'There are no reliable sources for Paul's life outside the New Testament', but Paul was neither a mythical nor minor figure. In fact this is a tacit admission of failure of the present history of Christianity. The disaffection and alienation resulting from the false history of Jesus⁸ has not only adversely affected the Christians but has also impacted on *world peace*.

Christianity could never have evolved had its founder not been a real figure. Jesus, about whom so many Gospels were written, could not be a figure known only to Tacitus and the shady Josephus. In contrast, Amyntas is cited by Strabo, Plutarch, and Dio. The coins of *Amyntas* and *Amyntas Nikator* of India (Nagara)⁹ hint that Jesus may have *survived crucifixion* in 25 B.C. and fled to *India* with St. Thomas who was Deiotarus Philadelphus/Hermaeus Soter. Both took part in the *Battle of Actium*. St. Peter and St. Paul seem to be Publius Petronius and Asinius Pollio. Titus, friend of St. Paul, resembles the historian Livy (Titus Livius). St. Mark and St. Mathew may have been Marcus

7 The walls of Amyntas' Palace at Isauria found by archaeologists may be Christian relics.

8 G. W. Clarke sets aside archaeology and places Jesus in Galilee which inexorably turns him into a mythical figure. 'The Augustan Empire', *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. X, p. 848.

9 Tarn's date of ~50 B.C. for Amyntas Nikator is closer to reality than modern estimates.

Valerius Messalla Corvinus and Matius (the financier of Julius Caesar and probably also Amyntas). St. Barnabas was Pharnabazus who was Darius, son of Pharnaces II¹⁰ and St. Luke may have been the priest-king Lycomedes. Just as Buddhism spread through the *Silk Road*, Christianity spread via the *Persian Royal Road*.¹¹

Christianity was linked to the pagan cults of *Mēn*, *Attis* and *Mitra/Mithra*. Jesus' belief that his martyrdom would save the world was inspired by the Attis myth. E. N. Lane discusses the cult of *Mēn* leaving out Amyntas, the most influential follower.¹² Mary and Joseph offered birds and not a lamb (Luke 2:24) because the cock was a totem animal for *Mēn* (also of the Mithradatids and the Mauryas).¹³ Lane hints at an Indo-Iranian origin of *Mēn* which is true but misses the crucial role of *Antiochus-II*, who was the master and friend of Asoka and a spearhead of the Hellenistic reform that stressed brotherhood. He has been criticized as a weak ruler but this is a prejudiced view; John Hyrcanus II has also been similarly denigrated. Together with Asoka, Antiochus II paved the way for Christianity. Amyntas was a world-citizen and a Hellenized Jew who cherished Indo-Greek religious ideals.

Ísa Amen, A Radiant Figure of History

10 Pharnaces is a contraction of Pharnabazus. The priests of Ephesus were called Megabazus.

11 Gotama Buddha was not born in Nepal. R. Pal, 'Non-Jonesian Indology and Alexander', (N.Delhi, 2002). <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2007/2007-12-39.html>. See www.lumkap.org.uk.

12 'Men: A Neglected Cult of Roman Asia Minor'. In *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt: Gestichte und Kultur Roms in Spiegel der neuen Forschung*, (Berlin, 1990).

13 Strabo wrote that *Mēn*, Anahit and Ma were the important deities in the Pontic region. See Mary Boyce and Franz Grenet, *Zoroastrianism Under Macedonian and Roman Rule*, p. 292.

Amyntas is mentioned by Strabo, Plutarch and others and his palace at *Isauria* may be a monument of great importance. B. M. Levick¹⁴ has a fleeting glimpse of *Amyntas the martyr* and writes that he “had lost his life carrying out the duties of his position” but there is much more. J. D. Crossan captured headlines¹⁵ by claiming that the title ‘*Son of God*’ was used by *Augustus* before Jesus and almost puts Jesus in the dock. F. Carotta¹⁶ has brilliantly taken Jesus Christ closer to Rome, far from the dank Galilean setting which is akin to Nepal¹⁷ in Buddhist history. But his claim that the Gospels grew from the Julius Caesar¹⁸ myth is not quite true. The Imperial cult was centered on the figure of the deified Julius Caesar but was replaced later by the cult of Augustus even before he was deified. In the timeline of Amyntas, the great Asinius Pollio, the deputy of Julius Caesar, echoes Paul. He may have played a role in the formulation of the Roman Imperial cult. Later he switched over to Jesus and this may explain the similarities between the Gospels and the Imperial cult. Caesar and Cleopatra were the forerunners of Jesus but Augustus destroyed

14 B. M. Levick, ‘The Augustan Empire’, *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. X, p. 650.

15 Crossan sees Jesus as a “*Jewish peasant from the Nazareth ridge*” and blames the Gospels. http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/john_dominic_crossan/2006/12/metaphor_is_not_rorschach.html

16 F. Carotta, *Jesus was Caesar: On the Julian Origin of Christianity*, (Soesterberg, 2005).

17 Ranajit Pal, ‘The Dawn of Religions in Afghanistan-Seistan-Gandhara and the Personal Seals of Gotama Buddha and Zoroaster’, *Mithras Reader III*.

18 Shakespeare was duped by Augustan lies and his depiction of Julius Caesar is a complete sham. His depiction of Cleopatra is also grossly untruthful which has influenced historians.

Amyntas' temple of Mēn Askaēnos and *impersonated* him by forcibly installing his own inscriptions which have some similarity with the gospels. The *Res Gestae* has been hailed as the 'queen of inscriptions' by Th. Mommsen but surprisingly no one asked why these were located *precisely at the centers of Amyntas of Galatia*. Sir Ronald Syme saw through Augustus' chicanery. It is important to note that Augustus was countering Paul (Asinius Pollio) who had preached the religion of *Jesus Amyntas*. Augustus writes in the *Res Gestae* that the gates of the Janus temple were kept open in 25 B.C. but is ominously silent on his annexation of Amyntas' territory in that year. R. Syme commented on the silence on Galatia in the *Res Gestae*. Augustus' passion for the title 'son of god' is proved by his murder of Cleopatra's son *Caesarion*, who was a true 'son of god'.

A Colossal Marble Head of Adobogiona, the Holy Mother of Amyntas

The worldwide appeal of Christianity suggests that like Alexander and Asoka,¹⁹ Jesus was also a world-citizen. He was linked to a *holy shrine*; an obscure Galilean rabbi could never have reached out to the world. A familiar cliché is that no relic of Jesus can be dated to 1st century A.D. Bart Ehrman writes:²⁰

When it comes to Jesus, all we have is memories. There are no lifelike portraits from his day, no stenographic notes recorded on the spot, no account of his activities written at the time. Only memories of his life, of what he said and did. Memories written after the fact. Long after the fact.

19 Alexander emulated Ammon and Heracles. O. Amitay wonders why he imitated Hermes and Artemis. Amyntas' Galatian coins depict Heracles' lion as well as Hermes and Artemis.

20 *Jesus Before the Gospels*, p. 3.

This is on a beaten track but is based on a faulty search. A. Schweitzer wrote;

..the Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the kingdom of God, who founded the kingdom of heaven on earth, and died to give His work its final consecration, never had any existence. He is the figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in historical garb.

Schweitzer also ignores the name 'Amen' in his searches. To move forward it is necessary to discard worn out formulae. Was Jesus a poor illiterate peasant of the Nazareth ridge, and was Paul a tent-maker? Jesus knew Aramaic but did he also know Hebrew, Greek or Latin? Greek was the language of the New Testament and the lingua franca of the Roman world. His parents were tax-payers, not poor people. It can be speculated that this 'tax' was linked to temple tithe. The fact that his parents offered bird sacrifices may not have been due to poverty.²¹ Jesus is said to have been brought to Jerusalem as a child to be presented at the temple and to attend festivals. He is also reported to have healed people here. Who was Jesus ben Fabus, the High Priest of the Jerusalem temple? Was he from the Diaspora? 'Christian universalism was in opposition to Jewish particularism', writes M.J. Vermaseren but the Jerusalem temple may also have been influenced by Hellenistic ideals. Ephesus near Nagara was another holy center but *the holiest in the Roman world was the Pessinus temple*, the chief priestess of which

21 Was this 'tax' part of the money collected as temple tithe at Pessinus? The marriage at Cana and the story that a woman came to him with an alabaster jar containing very expensive perfume which she poured on his head, also indicate that they were not destitutes. Where the Magi came is unclear but their gold etc. must also have added to the wealth of the family.

was Adobogiona, Amyntas' mother. 'Ada' corresponds to 'Adya' (primeval), 'Boga' stands for 'god' and 'Ana' is an honorific. Amyntas was a true 'son of god', not Augustus, who was an adopted son of Julius Caesar.

For theological reasons Mary is subordinated to Jesus in the Gospels but in the early stages the reverse may have



Picture courtesy Prof. T. Banchich

been true. The great respect for Adobogiona in antiquity is indicated by a large marble head from Dorylaeum dated to the period of Tiberius. D. M. Robinson²² assigns the bust (0.565 m) to Adobogiona, queen mother of Deiotarus Philadelphus who ruled Paphlagonia (36-31 B.C.), but as Dorylaeum was very near Pessinus (~100 km), it probably depicts Amyntas' mother Adobogiona. Finds from

Pergamon also reveal the adoration for Adobogiona and Brogitarus long before the presently accepted date of birth of Christianity. T. Derks and N. Roymans write;²³

The bust of Adobogiona, the daughter of Deiotaros I and wife of Brogitarus, belonging to her honorific statue in Pergamon, which must be dated between 63 and 58 B.C., shows an individual and consciously non-Greek portrait in contrast to the Greek costume and headdress...

Why did Augustus decide to melt silver statues including those of himself? The only sensible answer appears to be to liquidate statuettes of Cybele/Adobogiona. Cotta Maximus,

22 W. M. Calder, *Anatolian Studies Presented to William Hepburn Buckler*, (Manchester 1939).

23 T. Derks and N. Roymans, *Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity: The Role of Power and Tradition*, p.137.

son of Messalla, made a gift of three silver statuettes of 'divine personages', namely Augustus, Livia and Tiberius for Ovid's domestic shrine. Ovid probably had statues of Cybele/Adobogiona, not those which were a political necessity and Cotta, his friend and well-wisher, wanted to correct that.

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene was a close associate of Jesus and was one of his most celebrated disciples. Jesus is said to have cleansed her of seven demons which may imply that he cured her of physical disabilities rather than the popular belief that he freed her of sins. All the four canonical Gospels state that she witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus and his burial. The learned scholar Nikos Kazantzakis wrote in his book 'The Last Temptation of Christ' that Jesus had married Mary Magdalene. Tantalizing stories about her have been written on the basis of a so-called 'Lost Gospel' that is said to imply that Jesus had married her. She is usually thought to be distinct from the mystical Mary of Bethany, who anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair (John 12:3-7). This episode reminds one of the famous Dipankara Jataka where Sumedha (Smerdis) loosened his plaited hair, and spread it out on the ground²⁴ as a mark of respect.

Like Amyntas, Mary Magdalene may also have been a Diaspora Jew who was active in Judea/Galilee. Mary of Bethany may or may not have been Mary Magdalene but Bethany may allude to Bithynia.²⁵ There was a *Nagara* or Nazareth near Ephesus²⁶ and Bethlehem (Beth-Lahmu)

24 https://www.academia.edu/31512944/Gaumata_and_Smerdis_in_the_Dipankara_Jataka_and_the_Date_of_the_Buddha

25 Origen could not find a Bethany in Galilee.

26 The author of the Book of Revelation mentions Patmos

may echo Bithynia. Magdalene corresponds to *Magadan* (Mat 15:39), an Indo-Iranian name linked to Magadha.²⁷ Biblical Magadan may have been Megdun in Pontus, ruled by the Mithradatic kings who had links with Magadha in Indo-Iran. *Megdun* is about 100 km east of *Amasia*, the city of Strabo²⁸ whose ancestors were officials in the Mithridatic government. He seems to have sympathized with Amyntas.

Jesus Amyntas and the Mithradatids

Why did the Romans hate Jesus so strongly? The answer is Amyntas' links (from his mother's side) with the Mithradatids.²⁹ Jesus' title *Chrestos* echoes the name of *Mithradates Chrestus*. Like the Mithradatids, Amyntas adored *Mithra* and *Mēn*. Jesus' *call for brotherhood* is linked to the *Homonoia* of Alexander and Asoka/Diodotus,³⁰ a Mithradatic king. Will Durant³¹ wrote that Asoka's missionaries to Syria, Egypt and Greece prepared the ground for Christianity. Amyntas' deity *Mēn Askaēnos* (Strab. 12. 8) may be an echo of Asoka. Jesus' fame as a *great healer*

near Ephesus.

27 Although Magadha is usually identified with Bihar in eastern India this is only partly true. The center of Early Magadha was near Rakhigarhi in Haryana. Prof. N.G.L. Hammond agreed with the contention of the present writer that Jones' identification of Palibothra was a mistake.

28 There was a castle at Megdun and ancient tombs and pottery have been found here. A. Bryer and D. Winfield, *The Byzantine monuments and the topography of the Pontos*. P. 43.

29 An older namesake of Amyntas' mother Adobogiona was a companion of Mithradates-VI.

30 Ranajit Pal, 'An Altar of Alexander Now Standing Near Delhi', *Scholia*, vol. 15, p 78-101.

31 W. Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage*, (New York, 1935) vol. 1, p. 449. Asoka's master Antiochus-II also played a major role in the rise of Christianity.

is a Mithradatic trait; Mithradates-VI Eupator was the greatest medical scientist of his age whose expertise must have passed on to Jesus.³² That Mary and Joseph offered bird sacrifice may be linked to the Christmas Turkey and the Mithradatid cock.³³ The Mithradatids were distantly linked to the Mauryas. M. J. Olbrycht warns,³⁴

Most of the political issues concerning Eupator's policy seem to be a well-travelled ground – much scholarly literature exists on Pontos and Roman involvement in Anatolia. But if scholarly perspectives are limited to the interplay between Pontos and Rome, no coherent reconstruction of the period can be achieved. There was another power in western Asia at that time which must be taken into account - the Arsakid Parthian Empire.

Mithradates-II (ὁ κτιστής)³⁵ was *Chandragupta* who ruled the Pontus area and Indo-Iran. 'Dunia' stands for the 'temporal world' and *Mariandynia* ruled by Mithradates-II (ὁ κτιστής)³⁶ was the *Mauryan realm* which included Parthia, Asia Minor and Indo-Iran. Diodorus' account of Mithradates-II shows that he is Chandragupta. In one of

32 According to Pliny he was a greater researcher in biology than any man before him.

33 A. B. Bosworth and P. V. Wheatley do not properly consider the Indian evidence. See "The Origins of the Pontic House," *JHS*, 118, 1998, pp. 155-64.

34 See <http://www.pontos.dk/publications/books/bss-9-files/bss-9-10-olbrycht>

35 Strabo mentions Sandaracurgium (Strab. 12.3. 40) which echoes Sandrocottos. Gangra was the royal residence of *Morzeüs* (Strab. 12.3.41) which echoes *Maurya*. His *Suganga Palace* was on the Ganga (the earlier Ganga was Indus).

36 He is also called Mithradates-I (ὁ κτιστής). M. Boyce and F. Grenet refer to him as 'a certain Mithradates'. *Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman rule, Part 1*, p. 281

his edicts, Asoka, who was Diodotus-I, calls himself the ruler of Parthia (Pathavi). His name Vardhana echoes Vardanes. The first Arsaces³⁷ 'is sometimes a Parthian, sometimes a Bactrian, sometimes even a descendant of the Achaemenids.' wrote Sir George Macdonald.³⁸ Mithradates VI also claimed Greco-Macedonian and Persian (Darius-I) ancestry. He did not rule Parthia but was aligned to the Parthians. Parnaka seems to be the first Mithradates (Data-Mithra). Chandragupta had many names including Assak, Sandrocottos, Sisicottos, Orontobates, Moeris, Orontes and Andragoras.³⁹

15th Year of Augustus Caesar, Not Tiberius Caesar

The presently accepted birth-date of Jesus, i.e. ~0 A.D., is in vogue for about 1700 years yet is false. St. Luke links Jesus' birth to a 'census of the *entire Roman world*', which never happened. R. Syme and many others consider Luke's story to be garbled. Matthew takes Jesus' birth to the reign of Herod the Great (74-4 B.C.). Significantly, this agrees with the fact that Herod the Great was a contemporary of Amyntas. Bishop Irenaeus, (1st - 2nd cent. A.D.) wrote that Jesus' ministry lasted for at least 10 years and that he spent his *last years in Asia*.

Luke 3:1 dates the beginning of John's ministry to the *15th year of Tiberius* but if this is amended to *15th year of Augustus (43 B.C.)*, Jesus Christ turns into a real person. A. T. Olmstead opted for 20 B.C., Robin Lane Fox gives 15 B.C.⁴⁰ but if one goes farther back (~58 B.C.),

37 Chandragupta may have been Arsaces or Assak. Arsaces was a son of Darius-II.

38 *Cambridge History of Ancient India*, ed. E. J. Rapson, p. 394.

39 Ranajit Pal (11).

40 Robin Lane Fox, *The Unauthorized Version: Truth and Fiction in the Bible*, (London, 1991), p. 34.

Jesus and his associates can be seen outside the gospels. Barring Luke 3:1 and Luke 2:1, *all references to Caesar* are without qualification, yet all these have been callously assigned to Tiberius. Of all the Caesars, the most relevant in Christian history was Augustus⁴¹, the ‘son of god’ who annexed Amyntas’ land,⁴² razed his temple to the ground and instituted a *parallel fake Imperial cult*.⁴³ Strabo wrote;

“.... and, on the other side, the Antiocheia near Pisidia, as it is called, the former lying wholly in a plain, whereas the latter is on a hill and has a colony of Romans. The latter was settled by Magnetans who lived near the Maeander River. Here there was also a priesthood of Men Arcaeus, which had a number of temple-slaves and sacred places, but the priesthood was destroyed after the death of Amyntas by those who were sent thither as his inheritors”

Paul gives two crucial chronological clues. In his second letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:32) he mentions how he escaped from the clutches of the ethnarch of Aretas IV in a basket. But this cannot have been earlier than 42 A.D. and this synchronism fails⁴⁴ as Aretas’ reign is given as 9 B.C. to 40 A.D. Paul also mentions Gallio but this also

41 Sir Ronald Syme saw Augustus as a villain. A. B. Bosworth’s reading of the ‘ferocia’ of Pollio is unconvincing. *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol. 21, 1972, pp. 441-473.

42 Strab. XII, 8.14.

43 There is a vast literature on the Imperial cult but the figure of Jesus is in the background.

44 Mommsen writes, ‘The attempt to find a chronological basis for the history of Paul’s life in the sway of the Nabataean king at Damascus, and generally to define the time of Pauls’ abode in this city, must probably be abandoned.’ See *The Provinces of the Roman Empire*, p.149.

does not clinch the issue as there were several Gallios. In fact L. Junius Gallio was close to the junior Gallio. Paul calls himself 'old' which again does not quite fit in with the current notions. On the other hand the date of Asinius Pollio, who is some kind of a ghost of St. Paul in Amyntas' era, is 76 B.C. - 4 A.D. which agrees with Paul's data. This is why such great thinkers such as Bertrand Russell and Bruno Bauer doubted the historicity of Jesus but the problems disappear if Amen is recognized as Jesus.

The Earliest Circle of Christians (Pompeianus)

The first Christians can be traced to the last years of the 1st century B.C. Constantine's conversion in the 4th century A.D. was a decisive moment but the true role of the new religion in the Roman Empire has eluded scholars. The catacomb of Priscilla offers a glimpse of Christian art in the mid-third century A.D. but there was also a political counterpart of this. The earliest supporters of the new religion, who became martyrs, belonged to the families of Augustus and others. Another adherent was the poet Ovid. 'The reasons for Ovid's exile will never be fully known', claims the *Encyclopedia Britannica* which is a dubious prophecy. In the new timeline this can be seen to be due to Ovid's refusal to toe the Augustus/Maecenas line, his praise for Julius Caesar and lastly, his *association with a new religion*. J.C. Thibault stresses the religious aspect;⁴⁵

Today's intellectual climate appears to foster a new type of hypothesis which finds Ovid's real *error* in an attitude and spirit of rationalism and atheism which clashed fatally with the dominant conservative elements in Roman society.

More importantly, J. Carcopino suggested that Ovid

45 J. C. Thibault, *Ovid's Exile*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964).

had associated himself with Neo-Pythagoreans. Neo-Pythagoreanism has been described as “a link in the chain between the old and the new” within Hellenistic philosophy. As such, it is said to have contributed to the doctrine of monotheistic Hellenism which ultimately gave birth to Christianity. Ovid’s link with Christianity, however, is clearly manifest. His friend *Pomponius Graecinus* was the father of Pomponia Graecina, who is thought to be one of the earliest Christians.

Pomponia Graecina⁴⁶ was a Roman noblewoman linked to the Julio-Claudian dynasty. She was the wife of Aulus Plautius, the general who led the Roman conquest of Britain in 43 A.D. She was renowned as one of the few people who dared to publicly mourn the death of Julia, the daughter of Drusus Caesar. Her father Gaius Pomponius Graecinus, who was suffect consul in 16 A.D.⁴⁷, was a friend of Ovid. His wife was Asinia, sister of Asinius Pollio Jr., grandson of Asinius Pollio and through her Pomponia was related to the Imperial family. There were other Christians in Ovid’s circle of friends. Ovid’s patron was Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus who may have been the Evangelist Mark. It is significant that he was probably eliminated at about the same time when Ovid was banished. *In the Augustan era Christians seem to have been called Pompeianus*. The historian Livy, who resembles Titus of the Gospels, was called *Pompeianus* by Augustus.

A 1st Century CE Coin Which Appears to be Related to Christian History

46 Pomponia is identified by some as Lucina, a saint honoured by the Roman Catholic Church.

47 This was during the reign of Tiberius who may have had a love-hate relationship with the Christians. He was once an admirer of the writer Montanus Votienus but later banished him.



Picture courtesy Wildwinds.com

No coins of Asinius Pollio, the Consul of Rome in 40 B.C., seem to be known. However, coins of his grandson (and namesake) appear to be linked to Christian history.

He was a son of C. Asinius Gallus Salonius, (son of Asinius Pollio), and Vipsania, the daughter of Marcus Agrippa and the first wife of Tiberius and was a proconsul of Asia in 23 A.D. The coin was originally a joint issue by Drusus, son of Tiberius, and Germanicus which was restruck by Pollio Jr. The obverse of the coin represents Drusus and Germanicus seated on a curule chair. The Greek legend on the obverse is ΔΡΟΥΣΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΣ ΝΕΟΙ ΘΕΟΙ ΘΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ. Drusus and Germanicus are called Philadelphi because they were brothers by adoption. One reason why Pollio overstruck these coins was that Drusus was his half-brother by the same mother Vipsania. But there may have been more. The legend on the reverse is ΓΑΙΩ ΑΣΙΝΝΙΩ ΠΩΛΛΙΩΝΙ ΑΝΘΥΠΙΑΤΩ, ΚΟΙΝΟΥ ΑΣΙΑΣ around and within wreath. *Koinoy Asias* reminds of Paul's preaching in Konya ~10-5 B.C. Many centuries later, Paul's ideas seem to have inspired Rumi.

Drusus, Germanicus and Paul's Letter to the Philippians

The changing patterns of Roman rule are the context for the ancient world's most influential legacy: Christianity', writes R. Lane Fox, but the context has to be sought in the Augustan era when the patterns changed most rapidly.⁴⁸ In

⁴⁸ R. Lane Fox, *The Classical World*, (London, 2005), p. 533

his letter to the Philippians (4:21-23) Paul writes;

Greet in Christ Jesus every one of God's dedicated people. The brothers who are with me send you their greetings, especially those of Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Who were these brothers in Caesar's household? E. Gibbon overlooked many crucial aspects of Roman history and even great scholars such as Th. Mommsen and A. Toynbee did not properly recognize the impact of the new religion in Rome. William Barclay comments;

In this final section, there is one intensely interesting phrase. Paul sends special greetings from the Christians who are of *Caesar's household*. It is important to understand this phrase correctly. It does not mean those who are of Caesar's family. *Caesar's household* was the usual phrase for what we would call the imperial civil service; it had members all over the world. The palace officials, the secretaries, the people who had charge of the imperial revenues, those who were responsible for the day-to-day administration of the empire- all these were Caesar's household. It is of the greatest importance to note that, even as early as this Christianity had penetrated into the very centre of the Roman government.

This is evasive and skirts the central issue. Long before the time of the younger Seneca Christianity seems to have penetrated into Augustan society. T. R. Glover writes about Rome in the 1st century B.C.;⁴⁹

Everyone felt that a profound change had come

49 T. R. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, (London. 1909), p.2.

over Rome. Attempts had been made in various ways to remedy this change; laws had been passed; citizens had been banished and murdered; armies had been called in to restore ancient principles; and all had resulted in failure.

In particular, the disarray in Augustus' household may have had a religious dimension. The great difficulty he had in choosing his heir may be related to the tensions the new religion had created in his household. Many young princes died under mysterious circumstances. The poet Robert Graves had a keen sense of history and blamed Augustus' cunning wife Livia. The incarceration of Julia, daughter of Drusus Caesar, remains a mystery. Sir Ronald Syme laments;

If more were known, Julia, the daughter of Drusus Caesar might deserve redemption from the general depravity.

It is possible that the two other Julias, both members of *Caesar's household*, were also cruelly and unjustly incriminated for 'sexual offences'. Nothing was heard about the Elder Julia's sexual misconduct when she was in the household of the respected Agrippa. Some of her escapades may have been the outcome of frustration. She was used as a shuttlecock in the game of succession politics. In a sense Tiberius was also a victim. Augustus forced him to divorce Vipsania and thrust Julia upon him though he did not love her. A son of the elder Julia was the exemplary Germanicus who may have been poisoned. Both Tacitus and Suetonius claimed that Drusus was murdered at the instigation of Sejanus. Why was Agrippa Postumus banished? Augustus is said to have secretly met him twice and tried to reconcile him but failed. Tacitus maintains that he was a very decent person and squarely blames Livia. The dominant factor behind all these cases may be a new religion as Paul indicated in his letter to the Philippians.

Virgil's Holy Child and Asinius Pollio

A study of Virgil also points to a chronological error. In the *Eclogues* he shows *great respect to Amyntas* and brackets him with Apollo. Probably influenced by the Magi episode⁵⁰, he speaks of a child who will bring back the Golden Age, banish sin, and restore peace, forty years before the supposed birth of Jesus. The French scholar J. Carcopino restated and sought to reinforce an opinion widely held in late antiquity among commentators on Virgil—the miraculous child of the poem was Saloninus, the son of Asinius Pollio. Pollio, the patron of Virgil, was at that time at Salonae, on the coast of Dalmatia, which city his son's name commemorates. Unmindful of the chronological trap, Virgil has been called a Prophet. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* calls this an 'accident of dates' but this is fanciful. Carcopino, on the other hand, saw an influence of Pythagoreanism in Virgil's writing. The association of Christianity with Platonism is well known. Bertrand Russell writes,⁵¹ 'what appears as Platonism is, when analysed, found to be in essence Pythagoreanism'.

To understand Virgil it is necessary to note that Christianity was linked to Amyntas who was likened to Apollo. The fact that Christianity belongs to the 1st century BC is hinted by R. C. Senior's date of Gondophares Soter (20-10 B.C.). Strabo wrote much about Amyntas but did not use the name Jesus. Tacitus wrote about Augustus' tampering with history but failed to penetrate the formidable barrage of his lies. R. Syme writes that Augustus ordered Roman writers to vilify Julius Caesar, his 'father'. Many

50 A. Mayor points out that the Magi were a Mithridatic institution. The Mithradatids set great store by the Magi and stars. A. Mayor, *The Poison King*, (Princeton, 2010).

51 Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, (London, 1961), 56.

problems in Jesus' chronology are due to the *wily Josephus*, a Roman partisan.

Christian Persecutions, the Lex Petronia and Publius Petronius

Tacitus (Annals, XV, 44) and others have narrated how early Christians were thrown to dogs and lions in the Roman Empire. Underlying the Roman revolution was a class struggle that was linked to the rise of Christianity. Important players in this strife were Julius Caesar and Cleopatra who were slandered by Roman writers at the behest of Augustus and misrepresented by Shakespeare. As F. Carotta highlights, Christianity has close links with Rome. Publius Petronius was an outstanding Roman statesman who empathized with the poor and promulgated a famous Roman Code of law, the *Lex Petronia* which prevented a master from sending his slave to the beasts in the amphitheater without authorization. Although the *Wikipedia* dates it to 61 A.D., this is totally false. A far better guess is the late 1st century B.C. The authoritative *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*⁵² edited by W. Smith places Petronius in an earlier era;

Still, when the Roman national habit had been corrupted by the luxury and brutality of the Empire, it was found necessary to legislate against excessive cruelty. A Lex Petronia, enacted perhaps as early as Augustus, and a number of amending senatusconsulta, forbade the arbitrary sale of slaves for combating wild beasts in the arena, even though they had done some act deserving punishment.

52 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0063%3Aalphabetic+letter%3DS%3Aentry+group%3D2%3Aentry%3Dservus-cn>

The uncertainty in the date is due to a mix-up involving several persons named Petronius. Publius Petronius was the governor of Egypt from 25-21 B.C. Another Petronius was a suffect consul of Rome (19 A.D.). Publius Petronius Turpilianus (Consul 61 A.D.) may be the same as Publius Petronius, Governor of Britain.

The Trail of Jesus Christ From St. Peter's Basilica to Holy Pessinus

The compassion of Petronius clashes with common Roman sensibilities and reminds one of St. Paul who was a Roman yet stressed the equality of all people. But who really was St. Peter and why was he in Rome, of all places? The *Encyclopedia Britannica* points to the problems in the gospel accounts;

The problems surrounding the residence, martyrdom, and burial of Peter are among the most complicated of all those encountered in the study of the New Testament and the early church.

No ancient Christian memorial is known from Galilee but a famous Roman one, the *St. Peter's Basilica* in Vatican has a scent of history. Was St. Peter the same as *Publius Petronius* whose house in Rome is mentioned by Tacitus as an important meeting place?



A silver disk of Sol (3rd Cent. AD) from Pessinus and Jesus in the St. Peter's Basilica.

The pagan cult of Sol Invictus was adored by Constantine and was closely linked to Christ and early Christianity. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states;

Besides, the *Sol Invictus* had been adopted by the Christians in a Christian sense, as demonstrated in the Christ as Apollo-Helios in a mausoleum (c. 250) discovered beneath St. Peter's in the Vatican. Indeed "...from the beginning of the 3rd century 'Sun of Justice' appears as a title of Christ."

The mural of *Sol Invictus* at St. Peter's Basilica which is widely seen as a representation of Jesus Christ reveals the link of Jesus with Amyntas and Pessinus. A silver disk from Pessinus dating from third century A.D. also depicts *Sol Invictus* with a similar two-horse chariot. *Sol Invictus* corresponds to the Greek Helios and the Indo-Iranian Mithra/Mitra, the god of light. The name Pessinus may be linked to fish (Piscis = fish). In the earliest representations Jesus Christ was depicted as a fish.

A Galatian Messiah Behind the Galatian Churches

The earliest Christian churches were in Galatia, not Galilee. Many scholars have challenged the historicity of the Jerusalem Council as related in the Acts. Paul's '*Epistle to the Galatians*' is a rebuke to the Galatians but his exhortation, "O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" has a queer historical ring and casts doubts on the familiar passion narratives. Jesus' chronology hinges on Pontius Pilate who remains a shady figure. The fact that the churches sprang up in Asia Minor is an eye-opener. The Galatian churches at Antioch (Pisidian), Iconium, Lystra and Derbe are said to have been founded by Paul himself, but this may not be true. Paul's *Lord* may have been Amyntas of Galatia as all the churches were at his *centers*. S. Mitchell notes Amyntas' presence at Antioch and its sister cities (ἁδελφῆ) Lystra and Tavium but fails

to make sense of the data. Amyntas' palace was at Ísauria. Due to chronological delusions even such a great scholar as Toynbee⁵³ overlooked that Paul was traveling along the *Royal road* that passed by Amyntas' home;

When Augustus imposed the Roman Peace on Pisidia he was unconsciously paving the way for Saint Paul, on his first missionary journey, to land in Pamphylia and travel unmolested to Antioch-in-Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

Augustus was a rival 'son of god' who annexed Amyntas' territory in 26/25 B.C. and an enemy of Christ,⁵⁴ not a vanguard. Toynbee continues,

And Pompey had swept the pirates off the seas in order that Paul might make his momentous last voyage from Palestinian Caesarea to Italian Puteoli without having to brave man-made perils in addition to the ordeals of tempest and shipwreck.

This is not untrue but Amyntas had also eliminated the pirate king Antipater of Derbe, who was a client of the wily lawyer-philosopher Cicero.

After getting rid of Amyntas, Augustus' installed his own inscriptions at his temple and tried to establish his *rival cult*. He also revived the *Arval Brethren* who comprised *twelve priests* and attempted to enforce his own cult there. This was probably opposed by *Paullus*, husband of his granddaughter Julia and a member of this group.

53 A. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Abridgement of vols. VII-X, (Oxford, 1957) p. 22

54 It is not impossible that Augustus attitude to Amyntas changed after his assumption of a religious role. E. Ferguson writes that his obsession with the title 'son of god' started after 25 B.C. E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, (Michigan, 2003), p. 208.

This *Augustan cult* competed with Christianity and may be the crux of Paul's warning against false preachers (Gal. 1:3). Augustus probably tried to swamp the Christians by founding colonies of legionary veterans in Antioch (Pisidian), Lystra, Cremna, Olbasa, Parlais and Comana and almost miraculously early Christian Churches sprang up in the same places. The *Zeus temple* at Olba in Isauria may have been frequented by Jesus. *Comana* in Cappadocia was the centre of the older *Lycomedes*⁵⁵ who may be *St. Luke*.

Jesus the Fish and Jesus the Lamb

It is important to note that the cross was not an early Christian symbol. In the early ages Jesus was depicted as a fish. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states;

Ancient Jews usually had only one name, and, when greater specificity was needed, it was customary to add the father's name or the place of origin.



This is a mistake.⁵⁶ As Rev. iii. 14 shows, 'Amen' 57 was also a *name of Jesus*. He was depicted by the symbol of the fish in the early era. This may be linked to the fact that in Sumerian, Indian and in many ancient cultures, 'Min' was the word for fish. As 'A' was

55 The Biblical Comana was in Cappadocia. There was another Comana in Pontus.

56 R. Thapar searched for Asoka in the Greek and Roman records using only the keywords 'Asoka' and 'Piadassi' and hastily concluded that Asoka was 'unknown in the West'. The most common name of Asoka in the edicts is Devanampiya which is the same as Devadatta or Diodotus which is a famous name in the Greco-Roman records. See Ranajit Pal (31).

57 'Amen' is generally used at the end of prayers and hymns meaning 'may it be so'.



Jesus as Lamb depicted in the Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome.

often an honorific 'Min' probably became 'Amen' or Amyntas. The name Amyntas may also be linked to Mēn or Amun.

Jesus was also described as a lamb which has a theological aspect.

The sacrifice of lambs played a very important role in the Jewish religious life and sacrificial system. John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). In the frescoes of the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome Jesus is depicted as the lamb. This also seems to have a mundane side and is linked to the history of Amyntas. *Strabo* gives the crucial information that Amyntas was the owner of 300 flocks of sheep. *Strabo's* other data on Amyntas also agree with the Gospels.

Gondophares Soter, Hermaeus Soter and St. Thomas

The problems in early Christian history are partly due to the dreadful mess in the histories of Hermaeus Soter and Gondophares Soter. The date of Gondophares Soter is usually fixed at 19-45 A.D. but R. C. Senior has recently pushed it back to 20-10 B.C. which has a shattering effect on Christian history. Hermaeus' coins exhibit clear Christian traits and the poet *Kenneth Rexroth* paints him as a Christian but sadly the historians have no clue. Both Tarn and Narain were awed by Amyntas and Hermaeus who appear almost as 'Twins' in the coins, yet failed to recognize them due to the chronological hurdle. Tarn dated Hermaeus to ~40-1 B.C. which makes him a contemporary of Gondophares. As he is said to have been converted to

Christianity by St. Thomas, the latter's date must also fall into the same slot. Senior suggests that a later Gondophares was converted by St. Thomas which is unnecessary as the earlier Gondophares who was a 'Soter' or 'saviour' better fits the St. Thomas⁵⁸ of Christian history.

The coins of Gondophares bear close resemblance to those of *Hermaeus Soter* whose greatness is beyond any doubt. Several later kings including Kujula Kadphises issued coins honouring him yet due to false chronology he has no history. Exactly the reverse is true in the case of St. Thomas. He is a great figure of literature, but has no coins. This has a close parallel - Diodotus-I Soter has numerous coins but no inscriptions, whereas Asoka, who was a neighbour and contemporary, has numerous inscriptions but no coins. The problem can be solved⁵⁹ only by assuming that Diodotus-I was Asoka, and in the present case also it is essential to presume that *Hermaeus Soter was the same as St. Thomas*.

The name Hermaeus is linked to Hermes who, like the Egyptian Thoth, was linked to law and the concept of Dharma. Gotama Buddha's name Tathagatha links him with Thoth and Hermes. More importantly, due to the closeness of the sounds, the name Hermaeus may have been transformed into a Dharma-type name by his subjects. Dhamma may be the essence of the names Adam and Thomma. A. K. Narain mentioned a coin of Hermaeus (brought to him by A. D. H. Bivar) with the image of an elephant-headed Zeus⁶⁰ which

58 St. Thomas is reported to have died at Madras. The 3rd-century AD Syriac work 'Acts of Judas Thomas' states that St. Thomas preached in the kingdom of Gondophares and was martyred there. Vincent Smith rejected the martyrdom story. An early writer Heracleon asserts that he ended his days in peace. *The Oxford History of India*, (Oxford, 1958), p. 147.

59 Ranajit Pal (20).

60 Personal communication. He finds the identification of Diodotus-I to be 'very interesting'.

reveals a syncretic approach.

The Glittering Evidence From the Coins of the Indo-Greeks

It is amazing that from the ranks of the Indo-Greeks came not only *Asoka* or *Diodotus-I* but also *Jesus* and *St. Thomas*. Nothing is known about Jesus between his 12th to the 30th years and it is likely that he came to 'India'. It was not only the home of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism,⁶¹ Cleopatra wished to spend her later years in India. Most of the Bactrian Greeks became Buddhists, wrote Tarn, but some opted for Christianity (*Yavugasa Dharma*).⁶² The apparent lack of Jesus' relics is baffling, yet in the new scenario it turns out that he had the unique distinction of issuing the *largest silver double decadrachms* of antiquity. D. R. Bhandarkar writes about the Indo-Greeks;

It is a matter of regret that no numismatist has gone further than where Percy Gardner left this line of enquiry, but what I have said is enough to show you that the Indo-Greeks were by no means slow to be influenced by Indian and other religious beliefs with which they came in contact. The exact character and extent of this influence can be determined only by a critical study of their coins, and the results of such a study, I have no doubt, will form an important contribution to the religious history of India, if not the world.

Indeed the coins of *Hermaeus Soter* (40-1 B.C.)⁶³ and *Amyntas Nikator*, who are 'twins' in the coins (reminiscent of Jesus and St. Thomas), are of great importance in world

61 Ranajit Pal (13).

62 Yavugasa may be linked to Jesus' name Yeho(shua).

63 This is Tarn's date. R. C. Senior places Hermaeus in 95-80 B.C. which appears unsound.



Zeus-Mithra on a coin of Amyntas
Nikator, Picture courtesy O.
Bopearachchi.

history.⁶⁴ *Hermaeus* of the coins has a saintly aura yet he apparently has no literary imprint. Kujula Kadphises and many later kings put his bust on their coins which shows the great respect he enjoyed in antiquity.

Only chronological delusions obscure that *Amyntas Nikator* who issued the *largest silver double decadrachms* of antiquity was *Jesus Amyntas*.⁶⁵

Nazareth is not cited in the OT but it echoes *Nagara*, the name of Amyntas Nikator's city *Alexandria Kapisa*. Bithynia echoes Bethlehem which may have been near Pessinus. J. J. Pollitt⁶⁶ writes about Amyntas without circumspection,

In the 1st century B.C. when the Indo-Greeks were largely cut off from the west and were slowly being engulfed by the 'barbarian' (in the Greek sense) people around them, coins were still flaunted like banners of Hellenism. The most impressive examples are the great silver double decadrachms issued by a king named Amyntas of whom little is known except that he ruled in the Kabul valley somewhere around 85-75 B.C. These are the largest silver coins ever issued in the ancient world. Amyntas' portrait with its crested helmet

64 'The Greeks probably came from the east, Anatolia..', writes John Boardman. See <http://www.helleniccomserve.com/greeksgoingeast.html>

65 Due to fatal errors of Jones and others early Indian dates are mired in great uncertainties.

66 J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, (Cambridge, 1986), p.289.

clearly looks back to, and emulates with pride, the portraits of earlier Bactrian kings. On the reverse an Olympian-looking seated Zeus, with scepter and palm branch, holds in his hand an image of his warrior daughter Athena. Around these figures the Greek letters boldly proclaim, 'of King Amyntas, the Conqueror.' Whom he conquered is not known, and, taking a broad view of Hellenistic history, not important. In a generation or two the Indo-Greeks vanished. But it is typical of their society that, even in this phase, Amyntas wanted the world to think of him, like Seleukos I long before, as a Nikator.

Ironically today the world does think of Amen⁶⁷ through his other name Jesus. 'Nikator' or 'Invictus' was the title of 'Sol'. Amyntas Nikator was linked to Seleucus and the half-Seleucid *Asoka/Diodotus-I*. Barring Tacitus, nearly all the ancient writers such as Strabo, Cassius Dio and Plutarch cite Amyntas. S. Mitchell⁶⁸ also lacks any clue,

The best information comes from Antioch, where commissioners were sent out immediately after Amyntas' death to administer his inheritance. One of their tasks was to break up the possessions of Men Askaenos, that is presumably the land which lay in the broad plain overlooked by the temple itself on top of Karakuyu. If the purpose of this action was to make land available for new settlers, we should expect the colony to have been founded

67 Pollitt writes, 'It is absurd to say that the Indo-Greek kingdom made a contribution to Hellenistic culture equivalent to that of the Attalids', which overlooks that among the 'Indo-Greeks' were Asoka/Diodotus-I, Amyntas Nikator and Hermaeus Soter. In Asokan India, Brotherhood, not the Greek-Barbarian divide was the key theme. Toynbee, on the other hand, noted the similarities between Hellenistic culture and Buddhism.

68 S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, (Oxford, 1995).

very soon after Amyntas' death. Coins issued by Antioch in AD 76, by Cremna and Lystra under Marcus Aurelius between AD 270 and 275, all with legends and types recalling their foundation by Augustus, have been interpreted as centennial issues, reckoned from an original date of 25 BC.

Brogitarus' palace was at Tavium which was a sister city of Antioch (Pisidian), Lystra. The coins may commemorate something far more significant as 25 B.C. was the year of Amyntas' 'death'. Augustus was a crafty forger and R. Syme states that Strabo's information proves that the so-called Amyntas' 'will' on the basis of which he annexed Amyntas' land was a forged document.⁶⁹

Christ, Christianity and Mitra/Mithra

The search for the forgotten history of Christ leads to Galatia and India, not only Judea and Galilee. There is a persistent tradition that he had come to India and this suggests that he may be present in the Indian coins. Paul Johnson writes about the religion of Constantine;⁷⁰

Constantine was almost certainly a Mithraic, and his triumphal arch, built after his 'conversion', testifies to the Sun-god, or 'unconquered sun'. Many Christians did not make a clear distinction between this sun-cult and their own. They referred to Christ 'driving his chariot across the sky'; they held their services on Sunday, knelt towards the East and had their nativity-feast on 25 December, the birthday of the sun at the winter solstice.

69 Mithradates VI Eupator held that the so-called Attalus' will was a Roman forgery. K. Rigby has exposed the Roman lies about Attalus. A. Mayor (46).

70 Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity*, (New York, 1976), p. 56

The Biga (2-horse chariot) and the Sun symbol may serve as guides and the ‘unconquered sun’ or ‘*Sol Invictus*’ may be related to Amyntas’ title ‘*Nikator*’. Franz Grenet writes about the iconography of Mithra;⁷¹

Another Greek source for the iconography of Mithra in eastern Iran is Zeus. In fact the very first attempts to embody the concept of Mithra are an adaptation of the type of Zeus which is displayed on coins of late Greek rulers of Bactria and Kapisa (the Kabul region). This series starts with coins of Heliocles I (ca. 145-130 BCE), where Zeus has his head fitted with rays, an attribute which is not customary for him, and which in the rare cases when it is accorded him indicates assimilation to a local solar god.



A gilded silver plate from Ai Khanoum.

The symbol of Zeus-Mithra, shows Heliocles-I as a precursor of Christ. The title ‘Soter’ or ‘saviour’ has a religious aspect. Gondophares was converted to Christianity by St. Thomas but most important was *Amyntas Nikator* or *Amen* who overstruck the coins of Heliocles II. The link between India and Phrygia is shown by a gilded silver plate (2nd cent.

B.C.?) from Ai Khanoum which depicts the Phrygian Cybele on a chariot drawn by lions. The sun-god with a radiate crown may stand for Attis. Both Cybele and Attis were linked to Pessinus. Mēn was often depicted with a square table for ritual feasts like the ‘last supper’.

71 http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Religions/iranian/Mithraism/mithra_iconography_iran.htm

Jesus and St. Thomas - Scions of the House of Deiotarus

Fortunately in some cases when history becomes uncertain, numismatics shows the way. Priceless data for Amyntas Nikator and Hermaeus Soter comes from a *Pedigree coin* of the latter. They are usually called Indo-Greeks but Percy Gardner and Tarn⁷² noted non-Hellenic elements⁷³ in their coins. Tarn saw a link between *Kapisa* and *Mithradatic Pergamon* and wrote with rare insight;⁷⁴

...Amyntas' rule in Alexandria is attested by the 'Zeus enthroned' on his coins; but who he was is unknown. If we could explain an unexplained coin-type used by him and his son Hermaeus, the head of a god bearded and radiate who wears the Phrygian cap (not the Saca cap with flaps), we might know more about him.

Indeed the Phrygian cap (worn by Mēn) shows that Amyntas and Hermaeus were Phrygians. The obverse



Radiate and draped bust of Zeus-Mithra/Horse standing right; monogram of Deiotarus below. Bopearachchi Série 9B; SNG ANS 1349-50. Picture Courtesy of www.coinarchives.com

⁷² W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p.333. Tarn stressed the link with Asia Minor and wrote that Telephus may not have been a Greek in spite of his name.

⁷³ N. J. Andrade sees Greeks only as colonizers in Anatolia. See "Imitation Greeks": Being Syrian in the Greco-Roman world (175 BCE--275 CE).

⁷⁴ Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

shows a radiate and draped bust of Zeus-Mithra. But does the *Deiotarus' monogram* in the obverse show his links with *Deiotarus* family only or does it also give his personal name? This is exactly the case. The name of Hermaeus Soter was also Deiotarus. B. M. Levick writes;⁷⁵



Deiotarus' monogram and the Galatian shield in his coin. Courtesy of www.galloturca.com.

On Castor's death in 37, Galatia, Lycaonia and the Pamphylian coast were added to Amyntas' domain; Castor's son Deiotarus Philadelphus received Paphlagonia. Polemon, having to surrender Lycaonia to Amyntas and his possessions in Tracheia to Cleopatra, was given in return Pontus beyond the Iris river, Phazemonitis, Armenia Minor and Colchis; while Archelaus, son of the hereditary priest-ruler of Comana, acquired Cappadocia on the departure or death of its king, Ariobarzanes' brother Ariarathes X.

Many of the client kings are *gospel figures*. Deiotarus Philadelphus and Amyntas were fellow client kings from the house of Deiotarus Philoromaios. Philadelphus stands for 'brotherly love'. Both were present in the historic *battle of Actium* and it was St. Thomas/Deiotarus Philadelphus who first crossed over to Augustus. Polemon also participated in the same battle. As Polemo's territory Lycaonia was given to Amyntas, he may have borne a grudge against him. Pontus Polemo may be a faint echo of Pontius Pilate. Tarn wrote that Hermaeus was a son of Amyntas which is near the truth. *Deiotarus Philadelphus* king of Paphlagonia is said to

⁷⁵ *The Augustan Empire*, Cambridge Ancient History, vol. 10, p. 647.

have died in 6 B.C which roughly agrees with Tarn's date of 40-1 B.C. The horse in the reverse was a symbol of nomads and is similar to the stylized Celtic horses.⁷⁶

Gondophares Soter, Amyntas Nikator and Hermaeus Soter (St. Thomas)



Coin of Gondophares Soter who became a Christian. Courtesy of www.wildwinds.com.

Holt but the true nature of the romance appears to be mind-boggling. The present history of Christianity in India is formula-ridden and obtuse. St. Thomas is taken to be a Galilean which hides his family links with Deiotarus, the Mithradatids, the Seleucids and the Mauryas. The reports



Coin of Amyntas Nikator of Nagara. Courtesy www.wildwinds.com

There is still a romance about Hellenistic Bactria all but impossible to resist". The celebrated British historian Sir William W. Tarn felt it when he called this 'a unique chapter in the dealings of Greeks with the peoples of Asia,' and 'the story of a very great adventure'", writes the numismatist F. Holt but the true nature of the romance appears to be mind-boggling. The present history of Christianity in India is formula-ridden and obtuse. St. Thomas is taken to be a Galilean which hides his family links with Deiotarus, the Mithradatids, the Seleucids and the Mauryas. The reports of his visit to Kashmir may not be untrue but are not based on reliable sources; Seistan of Gondophares appears to be a more likely destination. But even a cursory look at the coins of Amyntas Nikator, Hermaeus Soter, Gondophares Soter and Kujula Kadphises reveals that they were

⁷⁶ The horse (epona) was a Celtic goddess. The present author is indebted to Dr. T. Yilmaz of Illinois, USA for this information. See also www.galloturca.com.

contemporaries and were allied to Christianity. As Gondophares Soter became a Christian, his coins can serve as a guide to early Christian iconography. This leads to the dramatic conclusion that *Amyntas Nikator* and *Hermaeus Soter* were,



Coins of Hermaeus Soter display Christian traits. Courtesy of www.wildwinds.com.

in fact, *Jesus Christ* and *St. Thomas*.⁷⁷ R. C. Senior's new date of Gondophares Soter⁷⁸ to 20-10 B.C. has a cascading effect on Christian history for Gondophares was converted to Christianity by St. Thomas. The title 'Soter' designates a saviour; Diodotus Soter was Asoka. The identification of Hermaeus Soter and Deiotarus Philadelphus as St. Thomas drastically changes the history of early Christianity. His proselytizing zeal is proven by the joint coin of Kujula Kadphises and Hermaeus Soter which mentions *Yavugasa Dharma*⁷⁹ or Christianity.

Amyntas of Galatia and Amyntas Nikator

Amyntas of Galatia ruled for a brief period of about twelve years in Galatia and his coins have made almost no impression on numismatists except that a few gold coins have been attributed to him which have been discounted as fakes by some scholars. Wroth however, maintained that two such coins in the British Museum are genuine. Being

⁷⁷ When the present writer suggested to the renowned scholar Prof. A. K. Narain that Hermaeus Soter could be St. Thomas, he became greatly agitated but declined to comment.

⁷⁸ R. C. Senior, "The Final Nail in the Coffin of Azes II", *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, 197, 2008.

⁷⁹ The term Yavugasa has been said to be of Chinese origin which is absurd.



Gold coin of Amyntas of Galatia.
Courtesy www.galloturca.com

only a client king, it was perhaps unusual for Amyntas to issue gold coins but Amyntas was no ordinary figure and may have been backed by financiers such as Matius.

The significance of the simultaneous

presence of two more or less contemporary figures named Amyntas, one from Galatia-Ísauria and another from Kapisa (Nagara) has been lost on all experts. Tarn dated *Amyntas Nikator* to about 40/50 B.C. which makes him a contemporary⁸⁰ of Amyntas of Galatia (37-25 B.C.) who is generally believed to have died in 25 B.C. but his name Amen leads one to suspect this story. The veil of secrecy around his last years is indicated by the two versions of his death given by Strabo.

Jesus Amyntas probably did not die in 25 B.C. but had escaped to India. This seems to be indicated by the coins of Amyntas Nikator in India. The *resurrection* of Jesus is a central theme of Christianity which has been at the centre of much discussion but this seems to have a material basis. Among the associates of Mithradates VI Eupator was Timotheus⁸¹ an expert on *war wounds*. Amyntas and his friends may also have had special knowledge to heal severe wounds.



Hermes and the caduceus staff on Amyntas' Galatian coin. Courtesy of www.galloturca.com.

⁸⁰ This has been pushed back by another half century by unwary modern writers.

⁸¹ Mayor (46).

The gospels narrate⁸² that Paul and Barnabas were seen as Hermes and Zeus by the people of Asia Minor. Amyntas depicted both Hermes and Zeus in his coins. The Caduceus in his coins was a symbol of Hermes and stood for peace and amity. It was also a medical emblem.⁸³ Did it symbolize Jesus the healer? Cleopatra wrote texts on medicine and was famous as a healer.

Like the Egyptian Thoth, Hermes was associated with law and the concept of Dharma. Gotama Buddha (Tathagatha) is also linked to Thoth and Hermes. Thomas' name Didymos in Greek means 'Twin' which has the same meaning as his Aramaic name Te'oma and Thomma. Apart from linguistic considerations, the identification of Hermaeus with Thomas seems to be justified by other relevant data.

A religiously minded king whose coins have close parallels with Amyntas Nikator and who may have influenced him was Heliocles-II 'Dikaios', or 'Just' i.e. an 'upholder of Dhamma' or 'Teacher of Righteousness'. His coins in India do not exclude the possibility of his existence in the Near East.



Copper tri-chalkon of Demetrios-I, c. 200-185 B.C. Courtesy of coinIndia.com.

The Caduceus symbol was used by king Demetrios of Bactria who was never defeated in battle and was

82 Acts 14:12. Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes as he was the chief speaker. The Ephesus priests were called Megabazus which resembles Pharnabazus/Barnabas.

83 The Caduceus is also found on the coins of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, Augustus and Claudius. At one stage Augustus may have partly supported Christianity but later changed his stance. Claudius also defended the rights of Christians but took action against some of them.

posthumously qualified as the Invincible (Aniketos) on the pedigree coins of his successor Agathocles. He was a champion of Buddhism and it is possible that the title of Amyntas Nikator is an echo of Aniketos. Amyntas Nikator was not as great a warrior as Demetrios but in a wider sense he was among the greatest conquerors of history.⁸⁴

84 The author gratefully remembers the Late Prof. Thomas McEvelley for kind encouragement and many discussions.

A Series of Allusions to Peter and Paul in the Sermon on the Mount

Samuel Zinner

It is well known from sources such as Gal 2 that bitter enmity existed between Paul and the Jerusalem pillars, James, Peter, and John. Hans-Joachim Schoeps documents the persistence of this conflict into later times:

This conflict is developed to its full extreme in the presentation of the *Kerygmata Petrou*, which reproduces similarly the point of view of the Judaistic opponents of Paul. Their old enemy, the *homo quidam inimicus* (Rec. 1.70), here appears under the pseudonym "Simon." This "Simon who is also Paul" (*Simon qui et Paulus*) is for them "a certain deceiver" (*planos tis*, II Cor. 6:8), "the enemy" (*ho echthros*, Gal. 4:16), and a "false apostle" (*pseudapostolos*) who taught "apostasy from Moses" (*apostasis apo Mouseos*) and proclaimed a false gospel. As true apostle, Peter opposes him in a debate which exposes him.¹

If we can infer from Gal 4:16 that the Jerusalem authorities called Paul "the enemy," we might suspect they or their ideological descendants would have detected an allusion to Paul in the Parable of the Sower's "the enemy" as well (Matt 13:39; cf. Gos. Thom 57). This paper is concerned, however, not with what Paul's opponents in post-New Testament times may have read eisegetically into gospel texts, but with potentially actual anti-Pauline statements put into Jesus' mouth by one gospel text in

1 Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 50-51.

particular, namely, Matthew. Matthew's gospel is not "Jewish-Christian" in the sense of being Torah-faithful or non-supersessionist. In its earlier portions, it does admittedly contain some Judaic-sounding statements and traditions, but they function strategically only in the service of a larger anti-Jewish program that becomes increasingly explicit and virulent as Matt approaches its denouement.²

Goulder has ably laid out the extensive influence exerted by Paul's thought and writings upon Matthew's gospel.³ Contrary to some impressions, Paul and his theology did not appear *de novo* or *de caelo*. Paul did not "invent Christianity"; he converted to and adopted the basic theology of "the Hellenists" represented by the anti-Torah and anti-Temple faction of the early Jesus movement led most notably by Stephen.⁴ This is not to overlook Paul's distinctive contributions to the doctrine of Abrahamic faith and grace, which does not seem to have been simply inherited by him from the Hellenists. Paul's earliest letter, 1 Thess, completely lacks any doctrine of faith and grace, but it appears fully developed in Gal, authored perhaps two or three years later.

Yet even Paul's doctrine of Abrahamic faith and grace emerged out of an historical context. Reading Philo's *Migration of Abraham* one could get the impression that

2 For this model as well as a discussion with full bibliographies of competing theories, see Herbert W. Bassler with Marsha B. Cohen, *The Gospel of Matthew and Judaic Traditions: A Relevance-based Commentary* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015).

3 Michael D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974).

4 On the Hellenists, see Philip Francis Esler, *Community and gospel in Luke-Acts: The social and political motivations of Lucan theology* (Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); on Paul and his conversion, see Todd Klutz, "Paul and the Development of Gentile Christianity," in Philip F. Esler, ed., *The Early Christian World: Volume I-II* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 168-197.

somehow Paul may have come into contact with Torah-faithful Philonic thought about Abraham, faith, works, and grace. Paul seems possibly to have adopted some of Philo's terminology and thought, but to have reacted against much of it as well, given that Paul did not share Philo's view that the letter of the Torah must be respected together with any allegorical, spiritual, or esoteric interpretation thereof. The best candidate for a mediating link between Philo, most of whose works were not intended for publication, but only for private circulation among Philo's students,⁵ and Paul, would be the Alexandrian Apollos.⁶

Judging from the early chapters of Acts, almost from the beginning this Hellenist wing of the Jesus movement came into conflict with the original Aramaic/Hebrew-speaking members (and leaders) of the movement as a whole.⁷ It was the Hellenist faction of the Jesus movement that was "persecuted" by the Jerusalem Jewish authorities; the early "persecution" was directed solely against the Hellenists, who were driven from Jerusalem, while the original Hebrew/Aramaic-speaking members of the movement were left in peace. The only exception was an early assault against James ben Zebedee and Peter by Agrippa, but we have every reason to suspect political rather than theological concerns

5 See James R. Royse, "Did Philo Publish His Works?" *Studia Philonica* 25 (2013): pp. 75-100.

6 See Folker Siegert, "Philo and the New Testament," in Adam Kamesar, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 175-176.

7 The conflict pertained principally to the issues of Torah, Temple, and *kashrut*. The last item was inextricably linked to the controversy between the Jerusalem pillars and Paul concerning table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile adherents of the Jesus movement, on which see the previously referenced Philip Francis Esler, *Community and gospel in Luke-Acts: The social and political motivations of Lucan theology*, and *idem*, *Galatians* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998).

were Agrippa's motivations; after Agrippa's passing, Peter was back in Jerusalem living at ease.⁸ The Jerusalem authorities were theologically opposed to only the Hellenist wing of the Jesus movement. The Jerusalem pillars of the Jesus movement were also opposed theologically to "the Hellenists" in their midst, and Luke's literary program was to revise actual history and tone down and even erase the traces of this conflict.⁹

If Matthew was pro-Pauline as Goulder argues plausibly enough, then if some of his gospel contains veiled anti-Pauline statements, certainly he would have been unaware of any negative allusions to Paul in the material he incorporated in his gospel. More fundamentally, however, this would mean that Matthew's special material, where I will attempt to show these allusions seem to occur, could not have been created by Matthew, especially not *ex nihilo*; they must have belonged to pre-existing sources collected by Matthew. Their provenance would seem to be the anti-Hellenist wing of the Jerusalem Jesus movement led by the Jerusalem pillars James, Peter, and John. I will address the dating of these traditions later in this essay; suffice it to say here that we are doubtless dealing with a multi-layered tradition process.

Among the clearest possible allusions to Paul that seem to be embedded in Matt occur towards the opening and at

8 See Daniel R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990), pp. 208-216. As Schwartz explains, Acts 12:1 incorrectly confuses Agrippa I with Herod of Chalcis as the result of Luke's misreading Josephus *Ant.* 20.101-104. Schwartz points out that Luke in Acts 5:36-37 similarly misinterprets *Ant.* 20.97-102; Luke reverses the actual chronology of Judas the Galilean and Theudas as the result of Josephus discussing the chronologically later figure before the earlier one. Josephus published his *Ant.* ca. 94 CE, so that Luke's two-volume work must be dated thereafter.

9 See Richard I. Pervo, *The Mystery of Acts: Unraveling Its Story* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2008).

the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount's first apparent allusions to Paul occur in Matt 5:

17 Think not that I have come to abolish (καταλῦσαι) the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them (καταλῦσαι) but to fulfil them (πληρῶσαι).

18 For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass (παρέλθῃ) from the law until all is accomplished (γένηται).

19 Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called (κληθήσεται) least (ἐλάχιστος) in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great (μέγας) in the kingdom of heaven.¹⁰

Matt 5:17-18 is polemically engaged with the claim in Rom 3:31, "Do we then overthrow (καταργοῦμεν) the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary (μὴ γένοιτο), we uphold (ιστάνομεν) the law." The relationship between the two texts is further seen in the Greek behind the RSV's "By no means! On the contrary," namely, μὴ γένοιτο, which literally means "never may it be," which can be lexically correlated with Matt 5:18's γένηται. Matthew (or his source) is not convinced by Paul's claim in Rom 3:31 that the apostle to the Gentiles is not annulling the Torah. Matt 5:19's ἐλάχιστος, "least," accords with Paul's self-description in 1 Cor 15:

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

8 Last of all (ἔσχατον πάντων), as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

9 For I am the least (ὁ ἐλάχιστος) of the apostles,

10 Tanakh and NT citations are RSV unless otherwise noted.

unfit (οὐκ . . . ικανός) to be called (καλεῖσθαι) an apostle. . . .

While 1 Cor 15:9's "the least . . . to be called," ὁ ἐλάχιστος . . . καλεῖσθαι, can be correlated with Matt 5:19's "shall be called (κληθήσεται) least (ἐλάχιστος)," 1 Cor 15:8's "Last of all," ἔσχατον πάντων, can in turn be correlated with Matt 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves (ἄρπαγες λύκοι)."¹¹ The allusion here may be to Paul as a member of the tribe of the patriarch Benjamin as described in Gen 49:27: "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf (LXX, λύκος ἄρπαξ), in the morning devouring the prey, and at even dividing the spoil." As Jacob's last-born, Benjamin was the final child Jacob addressed in his farewell comments in Gen 49. Also relevant for 1 Cor 15:9 is 1 Sam 9:21: "Saul answered, 'Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel?'"

John 10 creatively expands Matt 7:15.¹² The evidence

11 Intriguingly, an extra-canonical tradition about lambs and wolves preserved in 2 Clem. 5:2-4 explicitly introduces Peter into the text: "For the Lord saith, *Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves* [cf. Matthew 10:16]. But Peter answered and said unto Him, *What then, if the wolves should tear the lambs?* Jesus said unto Peter, *Let not the lambs fear the wolves after they are dead; and ye also, fear ye not them that kill you and are not able to do anything to you; but fear Him that after ye are dead hath power over soul and body, to cast them into the Gehenna of fire* [cf. Matthew 10:28; Luke 10:3; 12:4-5]." (Lightfoot)

12 Despite earlier and some more recent claims for John's independence from the synoptic tradition, one example will suffice to suggest the claim's incorrectness, namely, that of John's story of Lazarus, which as Yoder demonstrates is best explained as a creative reworking of Luke's Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. See Keith L. Yoder, "From Luke to John: Lazarus, Mary and Martha in the Fourth Gospel": <<https://www.umass.edu/wsp/project/senior/FromLukeToJohn.pdf>>. Two typical examples of more recent claims for Johannine independence from the synoptic gospels include Stanley E. Porter, *The Origins*

for this is that John 10 integrates Matt 7:13-14's imagery of "the gate/door," πύλης, artistically varying the language (cf. John 10:1 θύρας, 2 θύρας, 3 θυρωρός, "gatekeeper," 7 θύρα, 9 θύρα), and the trope of "destruction," ἀπώλειαν, (John 10:10 ἀπολέση). John 10:1, "a thief and a robber," κλέπτῃς καὶ ληστής, could accord with Gen 49:27's "dividing the spoil," while John 10:12's σκορπίζει, "scatters," could be correlated with Gen 49:50's ἵη, "divide," cf. Gen 49:7 where ἵη is used synonymously with ἵα, "scatter," and in Lam 4:16 ἵη is used with the meaning "scatter": "The LORD himself has scattered them (ἵησεν)."

Matt 7:15's possible allusion to Paul is intriguingly immediately preceded by 7:13-14, verses which quite likely allude to Paul's nemesis Peter:

13 Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

An allusion to Peter in Matt 7:13-14 would be congruent with the much more apparent allusion to Peter in 7:24-25, which deliberately anticipates Matt 16:18-19's declaration about Peter the rock upon which Jesus will build his community.

7:24 Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock;

7:25 and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded (τεθεμελιώτο) on the rock.

of John's Gospel (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015), and Peder Borgen, *The Gospel of John: More Light from Philo, Paul and Archaeology. The Scriptures, Tradition, Exposition, Settings, Meaning* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014).

16:18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock (καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ) I will build (οἰκοδομήσω) my church, and the powers [literally “gates,” πύλαι] of death (ᾄδου) shall not prevail against (οὐ κατισχύσουσιν) it.

16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Matt 16:19’s “keys of the kingdom of heaven” presuppose a door or gate/s to the kingdom, and Peter holds the keys to the gate/s. This implicit gate/s to the kingdom is the opposite of 16:18’s “gates,” πύλαι, of death, ᾄδου. The opposite of death is life. We can now better understand and detect allusions to Peter in Matt 7:13-14’s gate (πύλη) of destruction (ἀπώλειαν; again, cf. John 10:10 ἀπολέση) and gate (πύλη) of life (ζωήν).

There are also anticipatory allusions to the Petrine pericope of Matt 16:18ff. in Matthew 5:17-19. Matt 16:19 declares to Peter that whatever he binds (δήσης) or “looses” (λύσης) on “earth” will be bound in “heaven.” This contrastively hints back at Matt 5:17, where Jesus says that “till heaven and earth passes” the Torah will endure, and to verse 19, “whoever looses (λύση) one of the least of these commandments [of the Torah] and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” We can now understand that Peter in Matt 16 is commissioned authoritatively to interpret the Torah, and to establish *halakhah*, that is, to pronounce what is forbidden (bound) and allowed (loosed) in religious law for spiritual praxis, in addition to admitting or excluding entrance through the gates of the kingdom. Significantly, in a passage I will revisit towards the end of this essay, namely, 2 Peter 1:20, Peter is made to refer to “interpretation” by using a New Testament *hapax legomenon*, ἐπιλύσεως, which

just so happens to overlap etymologically with Matt 16:19's λύσης and 5:17's καταλύσαι.

Matt 16:16-19 itself seems to be constructed out of pro-Paul terminology found in Gal 1, which Matthew polemically reapplies to Peter. However, this does not have to mean that Matt 16:16-19's construction was entirely tendentious. There likely were pre-Pauline traditions about Peter being a foundational rock, and Paul's language in Gal could indeed reflect intentional appropriations of elements of Petrine traditions which Paul applies to himself.¹³

Whereas Matt 7:24-25 allude to Peter the foundation rock (notice 7:24-25 speak of τὴν πέτραν, "the rock," not just any rock in general), 7:26-27 provide a contrasting picture of the opposite scenario:

26 And every one who hears these words of mine
and does not do them will be like a foolish man
(μωρῶ ἄνδρῖ) who built his house upon the sand;
27 and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the
winds blew and beat against that house, and it
fell; and great was the fall of it.

Matt 7:24-27's contrast between the wise man and the foolish man corresponds to Matt 5:19's "least" and "greatest" (μέγας here should be understood in the superlative sense, in accord with the superlative implied by its contrast ἐλάχιστος; cf. the English contrast tallest-smallest): "Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called (κληθήσεται) least (ἐλάχιστος) in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great (μέγας) in the kingdom of heaven."

13 To be as brief as possible, cf. Matt 16:16's σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος, 16:17's σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα οὐκ ἀπεκάλυψέν σοι, and 16:18's μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν and κατισχύσουσιν with Gal 1:12's ἀποκαλύψεως, 1:16's ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί and οὐ . . . σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι, 1:22's ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, and 1:23's ἐπόρθει.

That we have a final allusion to Paul in Matt 7:26-27 is suggested by 1 Cor 3:10-15, which is preceded in 1:12 and followed in 3:22 with references to Cephas, mentioned again (polemically) in 9:5, and lastly in 15:5.

3:10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid (ἐθηκα) a foundation (θεμέλιον), and another man (ἄλλος) is building (ἐποικοδομεῖ) upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it.

3:11 For no other foundation (ἄλλον θεμέλιον) can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

3:12 Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—

3:13 each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

3:14 If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

3:15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

One suspects either a positive allusion to Apollos or a possible polemical allusion to Cephas in 1 Cor 3:10's "another man," ἄλλος, who is building on what Paul founded. If Peter is meant, then Paul would imply he is as an outsider, an intruder. Paul more clearly polemicizes against the notion (encountered in Matt 16:18-19) that Peter is the rock by insisting that Jesus is the only possible foundation.

The Ap. Jas. recognizes the connection between Matt 7:24ff. and Matt 16:18ff. The passage in the Nag Hammadi text curiously imports an allusion to Dan 4:12's sheltering tree alluded to in the gospel Parable of the Mustard Seed, but in the Nag Hammadi text the tree is transformed into

the house Jesus builds. The tree perhaps makes sense in such a context, since the wood of trees is used in house construction.

Ap. Jas. 12.35-13.15

Matt

Blessed will they be . . .
once more I prevail upon you,¹⁴

16:17 Blessed are you And
16:18 And the gates of hell
will not prevail against it¹⁵

for I am revealed to you

16:17 For flesh and blood has
not revealed this to you

building a house . . .

16:18 and on this rock I will
build my church

you find shelter beneath it¹⁶

7:24 who built his house
[Dan 4:12: beasts of the field
found shade under it cf. Matt
13:31ff.]

it will be able to stand . . .

16:18 And the gates of hell
will not prevail against it

14 [ⲓⲛ]ⲟⲩⲉ ⲙⲙ[ⲱ]ⲧⲏ; Harold W. Attridge, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex): Introductions, Texts, Translations, Indices* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), p. 46.

15 ⲛⲏⲟⲩⲱⲕⲉⲙⲗⲟⲛ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ; George William Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect Otherwise Called Memphitic and Bohairic*. Volume I: *The Gospels of S. Matthew and S. Mark* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 140.

16 That this is an allusion to the Parable of the Mustard Seed (itself generally held to allude in part to Dan 4) is recognized in Craig A. Evans, Robert L. Webb, Richard A. Wiebe, *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index* (Leiden/New York: E. J. Brill, 1993), p. 16: “when you find shelter | beneath it. Cf. Mark 4:32.” The Ap. Jas. at 8.3-7 refers to Jesus’ parables of “The Seed and The Building.” The latter is generally identified as referring to Matt 7:24ff., while “The Seed” is often identified as a possible allusion to the Parable of the Mustard Seed; see *ibid.*, pp. 11-12. Because in Ap. Jas. 13.2-6 allusions to Matt 7:24ff. and the Parable of the Mustard Seed occur together, this makes it all the more likely that Ap. Jas. 8.3-7’s “The Seed” refers to the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

when it threatens to fall. . . .	7:25 that house . . . did not fall
blessed will they be who ascend to the Father!	16:17 Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! 16:17 but my Father who is in heaven
I reprove you the kingdom of heaven	16:22 to rebuke him 16:19 the kingdom of heaven

The Ap. of Jas.' combination of elements from Matt 7's two buildings "parable" and the Parable of the Mustard Seed means that the text treats the former's "house" and the latter's "tree" as interchangeable. This is intriguing, given the famous parable of the two trees in *Pirqei Abot* 3.17, which gives us a good parallel to Matt 7:24ff.: "He [Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah] used to say, Whosoever wisdom is in excess of his works, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are abundant, and its roots scanty; and the wind comes, and uproots it, and overturns it. And whosoever works are in excess of his wisdom, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are scanty, and its roots abundant; though all the winds come upon it, they stir it not from its place."¹⁷ Various manuscripts supply Jer 17:6

17 Translation from Charles Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), p. 61. There is a parallel in the Mandaeen Book of John ch. 35 that seems related, albeit distantly, to Matt 7:24ff. and *Pirqei Abot* 3.17. The Mandaeen text presents Meryei (a distant echo of the Virgin Mary) symbolized by a world-tree on the banks of the Euphrates. Her faithful followers appear as birds who take shelter in the tree as a storm hits. On Meryei's connections to the Virgin Mary, see Jorunn Jacobson Buckley "The Mandaeen Appropriation of Jesus' Mother, Miriai," *Novum Testamentum* 35/2 (April, 1993): pp. 181-196. For the text and translation of the Book of John, see Charles G. Häberl, James F. McGrath, eds., *The Mandaeen Book of John: Critical Edition, Translation,*

and 8 (a famous parallel to Ps 1) as respective proof-texts: “For he shall be like a tamarisk in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, a salt land and not inhabited. . . . For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out its roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but its foliage shall be luxuriant; and shall not be anxious in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” (JPS)

On the nearby *Pirqei Abot* 3.15, which begins with “Everything is foreseen,” Taylor refers to one of the “illustrative uses” of “foresee” in rabbinic literature, namely, *Yalqut* 766’s tradition that God *saw* (lit., foresaw) Abraham and decided to build the world upon him as a *petra*, “rock,” a trope applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to Peter in Matt 16:¹⁸

and Commentary (Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming July 2018).

18 I am presently working on an essay demonstrating from Shep. Herm. that this rabbinic tradition is ancient, and not a medieval reaction to Matt 16:16-19. In brief, Shep. Herm.’s Lady Ecclesia who is at first elderly and then rejuvenated is built on the Sarah story, as documented by J. Massingberd-Ford, “Thou art Abraham and upon this Rock . . .,” *The Heythrop Journal* 6 (July 1965): pp. 289-301. However, Massingberd-Ford overlooked not only that Shep. Herm.’s son of God portrayed as an *ancient rock* (situated on the primordial waters of creation, as in the *Yalqut* tradition) with a *young gate* parallels Matt 7’s rock and gate, both cleverly anticipating Peter in 16:16-19, but that the ancient rock and young gate also allude to the story of the elderly Abraham who is made young again. The only difference is that while the rock and gate are the son of God in Shep. Herm., they are identified as Peter in Matt. What is decisive, though, is that Shep. Herm. supplies ancient evidence of a *Yalqut*-like tradition of the cosmic foundation stone being identified with an anthropomorphic figure. Hermas and Matthew either are making independent use of a common Jewish tradition, or one is dependent on the other. If Shep. Herm. is dependent on Matt, Hermas nevertheless must have had direct knowledge of, and made fuller use of, the Jewish *Yalqut*-like tradition presupposed

Parable of a king who wanted to build, and was digging down and trying to lay a foundation, but found only swamp. When at length in one place he found *petra* underneath, *הנוב ינא נאכ רמא* *he said here I build*, and he laid a foundation and built. So when the Holy One wanted to create the world, He passed over the generations of Enoch and of the flood as unsound; but when He saw *הפצ* Abraham who was going to arise He said, Lo, I have discovered a *petra* to build and to found the world upon. Therefore He called Abraham *רוצ rock*, as it is said (Is. li. 1) Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn.¹⁹

There is actually a Qumran parallel to the Ap. Jas.’ combination of elements of Matt 7’s house built on a solid foundation buffeted by waters and wind, Matt 16’s passage about the church being built on a sturdy rock foundation, accompanied by references to the kingdom of heaven and the gates of hell, and the trope of finding “shelter beneath” (alluding to the world-tree of Dan 4:12, “The beasts of the field found shade under it”). I refer to Col. XIV of Hodayot^a, where in line 18 we have an allusion to Daniel’s tree (simultaneously to the tree of Ezek 31:13), “And it will cast shade over all the world.”²⁰ In lines 25-26 the hymnist is buffeted by “raging seas,” “waves,” and “wind” (cf. Matt 7:25, 27, “rains,” “floods,” “winds”). In line 27, the hymnist arrives at “the gates of death” (*ירעש חומ*), which is matched by Matt 16:19’s “gates of hades” (“hades” simply means “death,” and is translated as such in RSV). In lines 28-29

in Matt.

19 Charles Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, p. 160.

20 Translation here and following from Eileen M. Schuller, Carol A. Newsom, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of 1QHa* (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), p. 47.

God “lay[s] the foundation upon rock” (cf. Matt 16:18, “and on this rock I will build my church” and Matt 7:24, “who built his house upon the rock”). In lines 29-30, we read of “a strong building that will not be shaken. All who enter it will not waver, for no stranger will enter into its gates” (cf. Matt 7:25’s sturdy house and 7:14’s teaching about the need to “enter” through the “gate” of life).

1QH^a Col. XIV, 18-30

18. . . . And it will cast shade over all the world,
and its br[anches]

19. will reach to the clouds and its roots as far as the
deep. All the rivers of Eden [make] its [br]an[ches]
m]oist, and it will (extend) to the measure[less]
seas,

20. and they wrap themselves over the world
without end, and as far as Sheol [... and] the spring
of light will become an eternal

21. fountain, without lack. In its bright flames
all the children of [iniquity] will burn, [and it will
become] a fire that burns up all the

22. guilty until they are utterly destroyed. But
they, who had attached themselves to my witness,
were persuaded by [erring] interpre[ters to] bring a
stranger into the service of righteousness.

23. Yet you, O God, have commanded them to seek
profit away from their ways, in the way of holin[ess]
in [which they may walk]; and the uncircumcised
and unclean and violent

24. will not cross over it. But they stagger off from
the way of your heart, and in the destructiveness of
[their] tr[ansgression] they [stumble]. Belial is like
a counselor

25. in their heart, [and so] they [determ]ine upon a
wicked scheme and wallow in guilt. And I [was] like
a sailor on a ship in raging

26. seas. Their waves and all their breakers roared
over me, a whirling wind [with no] respite to restore
the soul nor

27. a path to make a straight course upon the

surface of the water. And the deep roared to the sound of my groaning, and [my life] reached the gates of death. But I became

28. like one who enters into a fortified city and finds refuge behind a high wall until deliverance (comes). And so I re[ly] on your faithfulness, O my God, for you yourself

29. lay the foundation upon rock and the crossbeam according to the correct measure and accu[r]ate level, in order [to ma]ke the tested stones into a strong building

30. that will not be shaken. All who enter it will not waver, for no stranger will enter into its gates. . . .²¹

To return to Matt, if Paul is “the least” mentioned in Matt 5:19, then who is “the greatest” in the same verse? We have already seen evidence that would indicate “the greatest” would be Paul’s nemesis Peter. This seems supported by the lexical connections between Matt 5:17-19, 7:24-27, and 16:18-19. However, there might be a simultaneous allusion not only to Peter, but to the other two Jerusalem pillars as well, namely, James the Righteous and John (cf. Gal 2). According to Wenham and Moses, the three pillars of Jerusalem were called pillars in the literal sense of “standing ones,” an allusion to a tradition that introduces the story of the transfiguration in all three synoptic gospel versions, that is, the promise that some of those then *standing* there would not die before the coming of the kingdom.²² Thus the three Jerusalem leaders were called pillars on account of their having witnessed the transfiguration.

According to the synoptic gospels, the three witnesses

21 Ibid.

22 David Wenham and A. D. A. Moses, “There Are Some Standing Here. . . .’ Did They Become the ‘Reputed Pillars’ of the Jerusalem Church? Some Reflections on Mark 9:1, Galatians 2:9 and the Transfiguration,” *Novum Testamentum* 36/2 (1994): pp. 146-163.

of the transfiguration were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, and Peter. Because Gal 2 counts James the brother of Jesus among the three pillars, indeed as the first among them in preeminence, Wenham and Moses argue that James the brother of Jesus had not been the original first pillar, but that he had inherited the office after the death of James, son of Zebedee. However, this leaves unaddressed the odd detail that James is named first in both the synoptic transfiguration accounts and in Gal 2:9.²³ In the synoptic texts and in early Christian tradition James of Zebedee is much less prominent than Peter and John. Why then would James of Zebedee repeatedly be named before Peter and John in the triad?

The suspicion lies at hand that James the Righteous, brother of Jesus, was originally thought to be a witness to the transfiguration, and that the tradition (which increasingly marginalized James)²⁴ secondarily replaced him in this role with James of Zebedee. This could explain why a “James” always heads the list of the three in the relevant synoptic texts and in Gal 2:9. In favour of this suspicion is not only the evidence in Gal 2, but Gos. Thom. logion 12 as well. The literature has not sufficiently dealt with the fact that logion 12 is a “Last Supper” tradition, which suggests **NO6** that the synoptic gospels may have once again replaced James the Righteous at the Last Supper with **(NO6) J a m e s**

23 In Gal 2:12 James is listed alone, suggesting a supreme leadership role, congruent with Acts 15’s portrayal of James. Gal. 1:18-19, referring to an earlier period, singles out a visit to Cephas and James, in that order. It may be that even then James had the dominant position, and that Paul mentions Cephas first only because the latter may have functioned as James’ representative. That is, to get an audience with James, one had to go through Peter. Also, Cephas may be mentioned first because in the preceding Gal 1 verses we find language that parallels Matt 16:16-19’s statements about Peter the rock.

24 Even in the Acts of the Apostles, which mentions James, the fact that he was Jesus’ brother is not once given expression.

of Zebedee. In Gos. Thom. 12 the disciples are aware of Jesus' imminent departure, a euphemism for death. They ask Jesus, "who will be great (nos) over us," to which Jesus responds that it will be James the Righteous. The Coptic here must be understood in the superlative sense, as in Gos. Thom. logion 107's "largest/greatest" sheep. We should therefore render logion 12 as "who will be greatest over us?" This question is paralleled in Mark 9:34, "But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest," in Matt 18:1, "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'" and in Luke 9:46, "And an argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest." Neither Mark, Matt, nor Luke supplies specific names in these passages. Uniquely, Luke duplicates the saying and places the second incidence of it in his chapter 22 *at the Last Supper's conclusion*:

20 And likewise the cup after supper, saying,
"This cup which is poured out for you is the new
covenant in my blood.

21 But behold the hand of him who betrays me is
with me on the table.

22 For the Son of man goes as it has been
determined; but woe to that man by whom he is
betrayed!"

23 And they began to question one another, which
of them it was that would do this.

24 A dispute also arose among them, which of
them was to be regarded as the greatest.

25 And he said to them, "The kings of the
Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in
authority over them are called benefactors.

26 But not so with you; rather let the greatest
among you become as the youngest, and the
leader as one who serves.

27 For which is the greater, one who sits at table,
or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at
table? But I am among you as one who serves.

28 You are those who have continued with me in my trials;
29 and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom,
30 that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

The parallel to this Lucan passage in Mark 10:35ff. (notice verse 34 foretells Jesus’ death and resurrection) mentions *James* and John of Zebedee; the parallel in Matt 20:20ff. mentions only “the sons of Zebedee,” leaving out the names James and John. When we view the three synoptic versions together, we see that Luke places the incident involving James and John at the Last Supper. Gos. Thom. 12 portrays the incident as involving a discussion about the succession of Jesus, which he decides in favour of his brother James the Righteous. By contrast, the synoptic versions depict Jesus disapproving of the disciples’ question about who will be greatest. Perhaps this reflects later Pauline polemic against James and the Jerusalem authorities.

It may be that Matt 5:19’s “the greatest” refers not only to Peter, but to James as well, perhaps not excluding the third Jerusalem pillar, John. In this context it is intriguing to observe that Matt 7:24-27’s parable about the wise man who hears and does the word in contrast to the foolish man who hears and does not do the word has an overlapping parallel in Jas 1’s parable of the mirror and the Torah:

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror;
24 for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.
25 But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that

forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing.

I have already cited *Pirquei Abot* 3:17 as a parallel to Matt 7:24-27. The Jamesian trope of not forgetting the Torah in turn brings to mind Mishnah 8 of *Pirquei Abot* 3, which cites Deut 4:9's imperative against forgetfulness of the Torah's words:

Rabbi Dosthai ben Rabbi Jannai said in the name of Rabbi Meir: "Whosoever forgets a single word of his study they reckon it unto him as though he had made himself guilty against his own soul, as it is said: 'Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the words which thine eyes have seen.' It might (however) be that his study was (too) hard for him (to remember), therefore learn to say: 'And lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.' Thus, he has not made himself guilty against his own soul unless he sits (idle) and puts them away from his heart."²⁵

Pirquei Abot 3:17's trees and Matt 7:24-27's houses are invoked to make a similar point; not to be overlooked in this connection is that Matt 7:24-27's house imagery is preceded by 7:16-20's tree and fruits imagery. Curiously, Philo in *Cher.* 101-104 similarly employs both the images of a fruit-bearing tree and a house as figures for the soul indwelt by God and the virtues. In the midst of his discussion, Philo also lists the importance of perseverance and memory. This Philonic thematic constellation thus brings to mind *Pirquei Abot* 3:17's tree, Matt 7:24-27's house, and Jas 1:23-25's mirror of remembrance (οὐκ . . . ἐπιλησμονῆς) involving perseverance (παρρησίας).

101 Justly and rightly then shall we say that in the invisible soul the invisible God has His earthly

25 W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers (Pirke Aboth)* (London: SPCK/New York: Macmillan, 1919), pp. 36-37.

dwelling-place (γε οἶκος). And that the house (ὁ οἶκος) may have both strength (βέβαιος) and loveliness, let its foundations be laid (θεμέλιοι μὲν ὑποβεβλήσθωσαν) in natural excellence and good teaching, and let us rear upon them virtues and noble actions (καλῶν πράξεων), and let its external ornaments be the reception of the learning of the schools. 102 The first of these, natural excellence, brings quickness of apprehension, perseverance (ἐπιμονή) and memory (μνήμη). From teaching are borrowed readiness to learn and concentration. They are like the roots of the tree that will bring forth good fruit (ρίζαι δένδρου μέλλοντος ἡμέρους καρποῦς ἀποκυτῆσκαι συνίστανται), and without them the mind (διάνοιαν) cannot be brought to its fullness (τελειουργηθῆναι). 103 Virtues and the good actions (πράξεων) that follow them provide the stability and firmness (τὸ ἐχυρὸν καὶ βέβαιον) that make the structure (ιδρύσεως) secure (ἀσφαλοῦς), so that all that purposes to banish or sever or draw away the soul from good is powerless against such steadfastness and strength (καρτερὰν ἰσχὸν).²⁶ 104 From the study of the introductory learning of the schools come the ornaments of the soul, which are attached to it as to a house (ἐστίας). (Loeb)

Can we narrow down the chronological setting of the traditions collected by Matthew? While they would seem to have roots that go back to the conflicts between Paul and the Jerusalem pillars, can we gain a clue to the dating of their final redacted forms in Matt? A first step in this direction could be a parallel to Matt 5:17ff. in Philo *Mos.* 2:14ff., which I supply here from the Loeb edition:

26 In some respects Yonge's rendering of 103 is a bit more literal: "But by the virtues, and by actions in accordance with them, a firm and strong foundation for a lasting building is secured, in order that anything which may endeavour to separate and alienate the soul from honesty and make it such another haunt, may be powerless against so strong a defence."

14 But Moses is alone in this, that his laws (μόνου), firm (βέβαια), unshaken (ἀσάλευτα), immovable (ἀκράδαντα), stamped, as it were, with the seals of nature herself, remain secure (παγίως) from the day when they were first enacted to now, and we may hope that they will remain for all future ages as though immortal, so long as the sun and moon and the whole heaven and universe exist.

15 Thus, though the nation has undergone so many changes, both to increased prosperity and the reverse, nothing—not even the smallest part (τὸ μικρότατον) of the ordinances—has been disturbed (ἐκινήθη); because all have clearly paid high honour to their venerable and godlike character.

16 But that which no famine nor pestilence nor war nor king nor tyrant, no rebel assault of soul or body or passion or vice, nor any other evil whether of God’s sending or man’s making, could undo (ἔλυσε), must surely be precious beyond what words can describe.

This Philo passage has very likely inspired Josephus’ remark on Moses’ Law in *C. Ap.* 1.42:²⁷ “For, although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured either to add or to remove (ἀφελεῖν), or to alter (μεταθεῖναι) a syllable; and it is an instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard them as the decrees of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to die for them.”²⁸

Deserving comment is Philo *Mos.* 2.14’s description of Moses’ laws (μόνου), as “firm,” βέβαια, as is 2.15’s “not even the smallest part, τὸ μικρότατον, of the ordinances—has been disturbed, ἐκινήθη,” and 2.16’s remark that nothing

27 On the question of Josephus’ access to and use of Philo’s works, especially the latter’s *Mos.*, see Gregory E. Sterling, “A Man of the Highest Repute’: Did Josephus Know the Writings of Philo?” *Studia Philonica* 25 (2013): pp. 101–113.

28 Thackeray translation, Loeb.

can “undo,” ἔλυσε, the Torah. Working in reverse order, *Mos.* 2.16’s ἔλυσε overlaps etymologically with *Matt* 5:17’s καταλῦσαι, usually rendered “abolish,” “destroy.” *Mos.* 2.15’s τὸ μικρότατον brings to mind not only *Matt* 5:18’s “not an iota, not a dot,” but also 5:19’s “least,” ἐλάχιστος. Perhaps we could also compare *Matt* 5:19’s μέγας with *Mos.* 2.17’s μέγα: “Yet, though it may be rightly thought a great (μέγα) matter in itself that the laws should have been guarded securely through all time, we have not reached the true marvel.”

This leaves us with *Mos.* 2.14’s “firm,” βέβαια, Mosaic laws. The same term occurs in 2 *Pet* 1:19, followed in the previously mentioned v. 20 by a reference to ἐπιλύσεως, a unique word for “interpretation” in the NT: “And we have the prophetic word (τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον) made more sure (βεβαιότερον). You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation (ἐπιλύσεως).” Now, it just so happens that “the prophetic word” is a Philonic title for Moses the Lawgiver. In *Leg.* 3:43 Philo calls Moses ὁ προφητικὸς λόγος, “the prophetic word”; in *Congr.* 170 Moses is ὁ προφήτης λόγος, “the prophet-word”; in *Migr.* 151 Philo writes of Moses’ title τοῦ προφήτου λόγου, “the word of prophecy.”

That 2 *Pet* 1:19’s “prophetic word” may actually reflect Philo’s Moses title is indicated first by the same verse’s βεβαιότερον, which agrees with Philo’s description of Moses’ Torah as βέβαια in *Mos.* 2.14. Second, *Migr.* 151’s reference to Moses as τοῦ προφήτου λόγου is preceded in *Migr.* 150 by the following: “For at present he is but a novice in the contemplation and study of things Divine and his principles are unformed (παλαδᾶ, Yonge, ‘solidity’) and wavering (σαλεύει). By and by they will have gained consistency (παγέντα, lit., ‘solidity’) and rest (ἰδρυθῆ, Yonge, ‘are established’) on a firmer foundation (κραταιότερον).”

Both 2 Pet 1:19's βεβαιότερον and Philo's κραταιότερον are comparative forms.

Third, a reference to Moses as "the prophetic word" in 2 Pet 1:19 would be congruent with the context, which alludes to the story of Jesus' transfiguration, which involved an appearance by Moses.²⁹ Fourth, a Mosaic hint may also be present in 2 Pet 1:18's "the holy mountain": "we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain," ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει. In *Leg.* 3.142 Philo calls Mount Sinai, the site of the *matan torah*, "the holy mountain" (Loeb), or "the divine mountain," ἐν τῷ θείῳ ὄρει. Fifth, and more remotely, 2 Pet 1:5-6's list of virtues begins with faith *and virtue*, ἀρετή, a very rare NT term, but profuse in Philo, including in *Migr.* 151. If not direct dependence on *Migr.* 150-151, 2 Pet 1 seems at least to reflect Philonic influence.

To return to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, there are other passages besides 5:17-19 and 7:13-27 that find striking parallels in Philo. Matt 5:29-30 (cf. 18:8-9) parallels Philo, *Det.* 175-176: "And so, to my thinking, those who are not utterly ignorant would choose to be blinded rather than see unfitting things, and to be deprived of hearing rather than listen to harmful words, and to have their tongues cut out to save them from uttering anything that should not be divulged. . . . It is better to be made a eunuch than to be mad after illicit unions. All these things, seeing that they plunge the soul in disasters for which there is no remedy, would properly incur the most extreme vengeance and punishment." Philo's many condemnations of religious hypocrisy and superstition are quite congruent with Matt 6:1-7, as well as the What Defiles a Person Pericope (Mark 7 and parallels).³⁰ Although beyond the scope of this essay,

29 2 Peter's transfiguration account seems to reflect the Matthean version; note well, Matt is the only gospel that contains the saying on Peter and his power to bind and loose. This may help explain 2 Pet 1:20's ἐπιλύσεως.

30 An exhaustive study of the parallels is certainly in order

Matt 6:25-33 is paralleled in another famous Alexandrian source, *Aristeas* 140-141.

If Matthew, like Josephus, had access to Philo's works, then this might suggest a similar timeframe for both authors' access. Josephus' use of Philo's works seems restricted to the period of *Ant.* (ca. 94 CE) and *C. Ap.* (after ca. 94).³¹ It seems almost indisputable that Luke used Josephus' *Ant.*³² It might just be that Matt 5:17ff. reflects access to Philo's *Mos.*, and that the access could perhaps date to sometime in the 90s CE or thereafter.

MacDonald dates Luke's two-volume work to ca. 115 CE.³³ Matt must be dated sometime before Luke. If we date Luke closer to 120 or thereafter, then it may be that the Jewish rebellions of 115-117 CE, the so-called Kitos War, may afford us a likely motivation for Matthew's composition. The brutality of the Roman response to the Trajan-era Jewish uprisings might help explain Matthew's extreme anti-Jewish tone. Since the Jewish tax was still being collected under Trajan,³⁴ Matthew could have been motivated by this as well to present Christians as having left behind Judaism. Luke's gospel is just about as anti-Jewish as Matthew's, and even his attempt in Acts to paint

and would doubtless prove quite instructive.

31 In his comparative study Sterling lists parallels to Philo only in Josephus *Ant.* and *C. Ap.*; Gregory E. Sterling, "A Man of the Highest Repute': Did Josephus Know the Writings of Philo?": pp. 101-113. On the dating of *Ant.* and *C. Ap.*, see John M. G. Barclay, *Against Apion: Translation and Commentary* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. xxvi-xxviii.

32 See Daniel R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea*, pp. 215-216.

33 Dennis R. MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels: The Logoi of Jesus and Papias's Exposition of Logia about the Lord* (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012).

34 See Marius Heemstra, *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), pp. 13-20.

Paul as Torah-faithful to the end has nothing to do with a positive portrayal of Judaism, but is part of his attempt to keep Jewish-inclined members in the larger movement. It arguably makes sense to date Luke's two-volume work to sometime in the 120s CE, in the early years of Hadrian's reign which began in 117 CE, before his post-Bar Kokhba Revolt ban on Judaism, which expired with his death in 138 CE.

In conclusion, as has long been known, evidence indicates Jesus traditions were created that reflected disputes in the early Jesus movement. This includes portions of the Sermon on the Mount, wherein we find a series of careful yet artful allusions to the enmity between Peter and Paul. These and other sections in Matt (especially the Peter's Confession pericope) were constructed partly by borrowing, for polemical purposes of response, wording from the Pauline corpus, especially Rom and Gal. Additionally, it appears as if Philonic traditions and terminologies were thrown into the creative mix as well.³⁵

35 It is known that rabbinic traditions have also been put into Jesus' mouth in the gospels. I will mention only two. As Neusner notes, the Parable of the Marriage Feast in Matt 22:1ff. is paralleled in *bŠabbat* 153a's Yoḥanan ben Zakkai parable; see Jacob Neusner, *A Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai Ca. 1-80 C. E.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), pp. 53-56. Although Neusner avers that Jesus and ben Zakkai independently made use of a common parable, there is evidence that suggests ben Zakkai's parable may instead have been put into Jesus' mouth. Matt 22:1-14's parable is soon followed in 23:3 with "for they preach, but do not practice," which is, however, matched by another ben Zakkai saying preserved in *bḤagigah* 14b, "There are some who preach well but do not act well." The proximity in Matt between the two ben Zakkai parallels is not only striking, but arguably suggests that we are most likely not dealing merely with independent uses of common traditions.

Was the New Testament Influenced by Pagan Religions?

A Refutation of Dr. Ronald Nash

Derreck Bennett

About 10,000 years ago, the last Ice Age came to an end, resulting in the northward migration of wild game that hunter-gatherers had depended upon since time immemorial. In response, man came to settle along the banks of seas and rivers, where they took up fishing and agriculture in order to maintain sustenance. As agriculture became an essential function of both civilization and subsistence, it also became crucial to understand the nature of the seasons and the solar cycles that contribute to seasonal change. Since the scientific method had yet to be conceived, we came to understand the sun and the seasons through ritual and myth—particularly the personification of croplife. From this sprang dying and rising god myths, symbolizing the death and return of vegetation, the waxing and waning of the sun, etc.

Over time, man came to believe that performing certain rituals of initiation could mystically unite him with the fate of the risen god, affecting for him a spiritual rebirth in this life, and, ultimately, a blessed existence in the next. The origins of this soteriology, at least insofar as the earliest evidence shows, appear to lie in the ancient Egyptian cult of Osiris. As one risen from the dead, Osiris became the conduit through which all ancient Egyptians could rise to eternal life, via a process of imitative magic or ritual assimilation with the god.

Similar concepts of salvation began to arise in the Greco-Roman world after Alexander the Great inaugurated the Hellenistic Age—a time of unprecedented sharing of ideas between formerly disparate cultures, resulting in rampant religious syncretism. The salvific components of the Osirian

cult appear to have found their way into the various “mysteries” of Dionysus, Attis, Adonis, etc. Not least among these was Christianity. The inherent mysticism by which the devotee ritually shares in the death and resurrection of the god is featured in such passages as Rom. 6:3-5 and Col. 2:12, where baptismal initiation of the Christian neophyte brings about his metaphorical death and rebirth, culminating in a resurrection to eternal life (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

Critical scholars of ancient religion and Christian origins have long recognized the proverbial strands of mystery religion “DNA” in the New Testament. However, evangelical scholars and apologists, who still exert a massive influence within academia, have fought mightily to distance Christianity from its pagan predecessors. Any external influences are considered a threat to the notion that the Bible is exclusively a product of divine revelation, unsullied by the impure and mundane imaginations of man.

There is perhaps no more comprehensive a case against Christianity’s indebtedness to the ancient mysteries than that found in Dr. Ronald Nash’s 1994 article for the *Christian Research Journal*.¹ Many apologists appeal to this work, carting out a list of Nash’s primary contentions against pagan influences upon Christianity—a list which represents the standard objections raised by nearly all apologists. I shall consolidate this list into the nine essential arguments proffered by Nash, addressing each in turn.

(1) Arguments offered to “prove” a Christian dependence on the mysteries illustrate the logical fallacy of false cause. This fallacy is committed whenever someone reasons that just because two things exist side by side, one of them must have caused the other. As we all should know, mere

1 Ronald Nash, *Was the New Testament Influenced by Pagan Religions?*, <https://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/crj/crj-jrnl/web/crj0169a.html> (1994).

coincidence does not prove causal connection. Nor does similarity prove dependence.

Here, Nash is attempting to accuse scholars of comparative religion of the fallacy known as *cum hoc ergo propter hoc*, which states that correlation is not causation. However, the fallacy would be better stated, "Correlation is not *necessarily* causation." Often times, correlations exist precisely *because* of causation, which is why the fallacy exists to begin with, since we have a tendency to over-infer causation based on the general rule.

As it concerns this case, if scholars of comparative religion were going merely on superficial similarities, positing dependence might well constitute such a fallacy. But, there's a far greater cumulative case at hand: primarily, the soteriological similarities (the homologous principle, or *imitatio dei*, whereby the devotee mystically shares in the god's death and resurrection); the rampant use of mystery cult terminology employed by Paul (e.g. *mysterion*, meaning "mystery" or "secret," and *teleios*, denoting "perfection" or "maturity," all of which held the same religious connotation in the mysteries); the agricultural symbolism involving the death of the planted seed as invoked by the NT authors (1 Cor. 15:35-37; John 12:24, etc.); the likely influence of the Hellenistic mysteries upon Paul and other Hellenized Jews in the Diaspora, and the fact that Christianity ultimately arose from a heavily syncretistic milieu in which the mysteries had reached the height of their popularity. It is also worth noting that none of these similarities have a legitimate home in Judaism, but were certainly prevalent in the mysteries, whence they must have been derived.

Thus, the fallacy here is all Nash's. He has committed a strawman argument by misrepresenting why it is that critical scholars see a connection between Christianity and the mystery religions. It is most decidedly not because of mere, historical coexistence or superficial similarities.

(2) Many alleged similarities between Christianity and the mysteries are either greatly exaggerated or fabricated. Scholars often describe pagan rituals in language they borrow from Christianity. The careless use of language could lead one to speak of a “Last Supper” in Mithraism or a “baptism” in the cult of Isis. It is inexcusable nonsense to take the word “savior” with all of its New Testament connotations and apply it to Osiris or Attis as though they were savior-gods in any similar sense.

No, it is inexcusable nonsense to claim that Christianity has some kind of trademark on words and phrases that are just as apt for describing the mysteries as they are for describing Christianity. For example, Nash suggests the use of the word “resuscitation” for the mystery gods, though “resurrection” is far more appropriate, since the former implies restoration from unconsciousness, from the cessation of breathing, or from a mere “apparent” death, whereas “resurrection” more aptly describes a restoration from a state of absolute death to life, which applies equally to Jesus, Osiris, Dionysus, et al. Nash is merely engaging in special pleading for exclusive ownership of his favored vocabulary, in a desperate attempt to distance Christianity as much as possible from legitimate and noteworthy similarities in the pagan cults.

Nash’s assertion that the word “savior” carries a misleading connotation in reference to the mystery gods is sheer nonsense. All of these figures were essentially saviors. Whether through Jesus Christ or the Egyptian Osiris, one was saved from the cessation of existence, from damnation, whether at the hands of Ammit or Eternal Hellfire, and given the gift of eternal life. In the Hellenistic mysteries, especially, one could attain rebirth already in this life, just as Christian baptism achieves for its initiates.

(3) The chronology is all wrong. Almost all of our sources of information about the pagan religions

alleged to have influenced early Christianity are dated very late. We frequently find writers quoting from documents written 300 years later than Paul in efforts to produce ideas that allegedly influenced Paul. We must reject the assumption that just because a cult had a certain belief or practice in the third or fourth century after Christ, it therefore had the same belief or practice in the first century.

First, as Dr. Robert M. Price notes, “It is a fundamental methodological error to assume that a phenomenon must have arisen just shortly before its earliest attestation.”² Besides, this is an *egregious* error on Nash’s part. We have a multitude of highly informative, pre-Christian and contemporary sources on the mysteries—from ancient pyramidal texts (circa 2600 BCE) to the testimony of such historic figures as Hesiod, Pindar, Sophocles, Herodotus, Plato, Livy, Diodorus Siculus, Julius Caesar, and Plutarch, all of which range from the 8th century BCE to the 1st century CE. Not to mention, ancient burial inscriptions, artifacts, and frescoes. Nash is either woefully ignorant of the facts or lying outright.

No doubt, we get a fuller picture of mystery cult practices in the 2nd-4th centuries CE, but this is to be expected. The mysteries, as their namesake implies, held secrecy in the highest regard; therefore, not until the spread of Christianity do we receive antagonistic commentary from early church fathers, providing the bulk of extant evidence. There would likely be a great deal *more* evidence had it not been for the destructive decrees against paganism by Emperor Theodosius in the 4th century CE.

Nevertheless, we can easily reconstruct the general practices and beliefs of the mystery religions from the collection of both pre- and post-Christian sources, which correspond with each other quite well—in particular,

2 Robert M. Price, *Deconstructing Jesus*, (New York: Prometheus Books, 2000), 91.

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (2nd C. CE) and the sacred texts of ancient Egyptian pyramids and burial inscriptions, which indicate that the salvific components of the Hellenistic mysteries have their conceptual roots in the cult of Osiris, dating as far back as the 3rd millennium BCE. In both Apuleius' account of the mysteries and the coffin texts of ancient Egypt, the mystes is identified with Osiris in death, resulting in new life—whether in this life or the next.³

(4) Paul would never have consciously borrowed from the pagan religions. All of our information about him makes it highly unlikely that he was in any sense influenced by pagan sources. He placed great emphasis on his early training in a strict form of Judaism (Phil. 3:5). He warned the Colossians against the very sort of influence that advocates of Christian syncretism have attributed to him, namely, letting their minds be captured by alien speculations (Col. 2:8).

3 Gwyn Griffiths, *The Isis Book*, (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1997), 315, regarding Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*: "In this cult the initiate can be identified with none other than Osiris, but here, after a ceremony which depicts the visit of the sun-god to the Osirian realm of the dead, the triumph over the dead is fittingly symbolized by an Osiris-figure with solar attributes. An identification with the god is therefore present." Cf. S.G.F. Brandon and E.O. James, ed., "The Ritual Technique of Salvation in the ancient Near East," *The Saviour God: Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), 26: "In the Coffin Texts, which document Egyptian mortuary faith and practice during the Middle Kingdom period (c. 2160-1575), the identification of the deceased with Osiris has become so complete that the earlier parallel formulae disappear and the deceased is directly addressed as Osiris in the various ritual situations involved. Thus the dead person is directly called upon, as Osiris, to resurrect himself: '*Raise thyself to life, (for) thou diest not!*'"

Quite to the contrary, all of our information concerning Paul makes it highly likely that he *was* influenced by pagan sources, particularly the mysteries. There is, according to Acts 9:11, his upbringing in Tarsus, an ancient city that rivaled both Athens and Alexandria in Hellenistic, intellectual culture during Paul's day, not to mention a major cult site of the mystery god Attis, as revealed by archaeological finds from the 1st century BCE. There is, again, the rampant use of mystery cult terminology employed by Paul, as well as the invocation of agricultural symbolism, such as the death of the planted seed and its sprouting to new life. What's more, Paul's rhetoric and theology correspond precisely to that of the Hellenized Jew, Philo of Alexandria, who also spoke of a "firstborn son of God," who was the very "image of God" and God's "agent of creation" (*Conf.* 62-63, 146-47; cf. Ro. 8:29; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Cor. 8:6), able to "procure forgiveness of sins" (*Mos.* 2.134; cf. Ro. 3:23-24). These ideas represent a syncretism of Jewish and Middle Platonic religiosity, i.e., Hellenistic "paganism."

Most importantly, there is the mystery religion soteriology revealed by such passages as Romans 6:3-5, Philippians 3:10-11, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, etc. This is truly the most salient point, as it goes to show that Paul went well beyond the mere use of similar words and phrases to describe the Christian mystery; he incorporated the very mysticism—the underlying salvation scheme—of the Hellenistic mystery cults, whereby the newly initiated sacramentally shared in the death and resurrection of the god.

And there's no use suggesting that Jews from the period would never have succumbed to Hellenistic paganism. 2nd Maccabees informs us that they were forced to engage in Dionysus worship, which may have had lasting consequences, as attested by Plutarch and Tacitus. It also laments "an extreme of Hellenization and increase in the adoption of foreign ways" (4:13). The Dead Sea Scrolls reveal the Jewish embrace of Hellenistic astrology, which

comports with horoscopes found at Qumran.⁴ And Philo of Alexandria was pontificating on Hellenistic religious concepts like rebirth and immortality of the soul—in a disembodied state no less—during the first half of the first century (Cher. 113). Esoteric Jewish movements such as the Essenes and Therapeutae also embraced this Hellenized style of immortality (Cont. 68). While many zealous and conservative Jews resisted Hellenistic culture, others simply did not, as the evidence clearly shows.

(5) Early Christianity was an exclusivistic faith. As J. Machen explains, the mystery cults were nonexclusive. “A man could become initiated into the mysteries of Isis or Mithras without at all giving up his former beliefs; but if he were to be received into the Church, according to the preaching of Paul, he must forsake all other Saviors for the Lord Jesus Christ ... Amid the prevailing syncretism of the Greco-Roman world, the religion of Paul, with the religion of Israel, stands absolutely alone.” This Christian exclusivism should be a starting point for all reflection about the possible relations between Christianity and its pagan competitors. Any hint of syncretism in the New Testament would have caused immediate controversy.

Indeed, Christian exclusivism *is* a starting point for such reflection, and possibly a damning concluding point, to boot. As Price explains in *Deconstructing Jesus*, “previous converts to the inclusivistic faiths of Mithras, Attis, Isis or Dionysus would have come pouring into the ‘open gates’

4 Matthias Albani, “Horoscopes,” *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Volume 1*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. Vanderkam (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 370, regarding Horoscope 4Q186. See also Helen R. Jacobus, 4Q318: *A Jewish Zodiac Calendar at Qumran?* <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:128116&datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PDF> (2010)..

of Christianity, bringing all of their cherished beliefs with them,” and thus “we would be amazed not to find a free flow of older ‘pagan’ myths and rituals into Christianity.” Despite the exclusion of “other faiths as rivals and counterfeits of Christianity ... the barn door was, as usual, shut after the horse had got out (or rather, in!).”⁵ Nash has inadvertently engaged a premise that produces the exact opposite of its intended effect, arguing for a position that makes Christian syncretism with the pagan mysteries all the more viable.

(6) Unlike the mysteries, the religion of Paul was grounded on events that actually happened in history. The mysticism of the mystery cults was essentially nonhistorical. Their myths were dramas, or pictures, of what the initiate went through, not real historical events, as Paul regarded Christ’s death and resurrection to be. The Christian affirmation that the death and resurrection of Christ happened to a historical person at a particular time and place has absolutely no parallel in any pagan mystery religion ... [This] makes absurd any attempt to derive this belief from the mythical, nonhistorical stories of the pagan cults.

To begin with, Nash is begging the question by presuming that Paul’s Christianity, the earliest form we know of, concerns recent events in mundane history. Paul gives no historical context whatsoever for Christ’s crucifixion, but places the blame on the *archons* and *aions*, the demonic rulers of this age (1 Cor. 2:8), much like the apocryphal *Ascension of Isaiah*, where Satan and his angels crucify him prior to his celestial resurrection (9.14). Whether Paul even considered Jesus to have been a recent, historical person is highly debatable. As mentioned above, Paul’s Christ Jesus appears to be an analogue to Philo’s “firstborn son of God,”

5 Robert M. Price, *Deconstructing Jesus*, (New York: Prometheus Books, 2000), 92-3.

a lofty, celestial deity of whom Paul knows only through scripture and revelation (1 Cor. 15:3-4; Gal. 1:11-12), not from any recent, historical source. Even where Paul declares that Jesus was “born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4) and descended from David (Ro. 1:3), he is relying on scriptural peshet, not historical data. And, though Galatians 1:19 mentions a James, “the brother of the Lord,” Paul is using an epithet that was bestowed upon all baptized Christians (1 Cor. 15:1; Phil. 1:14), not a description of an earthly sibling. There is simply nothing of biographical value in Paul’s letters—nothing evincing a recent, historical man, but, rather, a syncretistic confluence of dying and rising gods, Hellenistic heroes, Zoroastrian eschatology, and Greco-Judaic, philosophical prototypes.

But let’s just say, for the sake of argument, that Jesus was a historical person, put to death on the cross under Pontius Pilate as the later Gospels suggest. Even if that were the case, Nash is still foisting a completely dubious non-sequitur. The cognate myths of the mystery religions needn’t have been considered recent, historical events in order to inspire the salvific significance attached to the “historical death and resurrection” of Jesus. Rudolf Bultmann, Geza Vermes, S.G.F. Brandon, Samuel Sandmel, Hyam Maccoby, Richard Reitzenstein, and Marvin Meyer are among many scholars who have understood, perfectly well, that a historically crucified, messianic hopeful could have easily spawned an apocalyptic Jewish movement that, upon Hellenistic soil, absorbed popular mystery cult accoutrements. And besides, as Price explains, “all of these religions thought their saving events happened in some vague and special past. In Crete they presented the tomb of Zeus, killed by a boar yet resurrected.”

(7) Jesus died once and for all (Heb. 7:27; 9:25-28; 10:10-14). In contrast, the mystery gods were vegetation deities whose repeated deaths and resuscitations depict the annual cycle of nature.

A half-truth. Tammuz, Persephone, and Adonis were conceived as undergoing a cyclical journey from the underworld (death) to the land of the living, and so on and so forth. In contrast, the myths of Aleyan Baal, Ishtar, Osiris, Dionysus-Zagreus, and Attis featured a one-time death and resurrection motif, just as that of Christ. Their resurrections may have been celebrated annually, but in a manner no different than Easter is celebrated today. And, that their deaths and resurrections symbolized the annual cycle of nature is another half-truth. They were originally personifications of the death and rebirth of croplife; but, as time went on, they came to represent the hope and yearning of all individual devotees for an immortality like that achieved by their god.⁶

(8) None of the so-called savior-gods died for someone else. Only Jesus died for sin. As Gunter Wagner observes, to none of the pagan gods “has the intention of helping men been attributed. The sort of death that they died is quite different (hunting accident, self-emasculation, etc.).”

This is not entirely accurate, as Plato informs us that “expiations and atonements for sin” were indeed a component of the mysteries (Rep. 2.7). Though, how widely

6 S.G.F. Brandon and E.O. James, ed., “The Ritual Technique of Salvation in the ancient Near East,” *The Saviour God: Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), 17-33. See also Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas: Volume 1*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 290-92; Sarah Iles Johnston and Fritz Graf, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 36-7; and Gary Forsythe, *Time in Roman Religion: One Thousand Years of Religious History* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 89: Ganymede’s apotheosis to heaven via the winged Attis indicates that the savior is bestowing upon Ganymede the salvation and immortality that he himself had achieved.

this applied to the various mystery cults of the ancient world cannot be known, as there is scant evidence for it elsewhere. Regardless, Nash's argument is irrelevant. Christianity is essentially a syncretism of Judaism and Hellenistic mystery religions, a Greco-Judaic hybrid. As such, we should expect to find Jewish elements, e.g., vicarious sacrifice and atonement for sin, that might be absent from the mysteries. Likewise, we should also expect to find mystery religion elements, e.g., sacramental participation in the death and resurrection of the god, and symbolic consumption of the deity's flesh and blood, that are wholly absent from, and even anathema to, Judaism.

As to the specific circumstances of their deaths, that is equally irrelevant, as syncretism entails the appropriation of basic, or key, elements of a particular phenomenon, not the plagiarization of every last detail of a given narrative. And the key element here is what the deaths and resurrections of these gods ultimately achieved for their adherents, regardless of how they are said to have occurred, narratively.

(9) Which mystery gods actually experienced a resurrection from the dead? Certainly no early texts refer to any resurrection of Attis. Nor is the case for a resurrection of Osiris any stronger. One can speak of a "resurrection" in the stories of Osiris, Attis, and Adonis only in the most extended of senses. For example, after Isis gathered together the pieces of Osiris's dismembered body, Osiris became "Lord of the Underworld." This is a poor substitute for a resurrection like that of Jesus Christ.

It is true that, in the earliest myths of Attis, Cybele invokes Zeus to have Attis' body merely preserved, never to rot or decay. But, at some point in the legacy of Attis' myth, the mere preservation of his body morphed into a full-blown resurrection, leading to a "Passion Week" by

the 1st century CE under the reign of Caesar Claudius.⁷ Author G.A. Wells discusses the evidence brought to bear by Maarten J. Vermaseren in his seminal work, *Attis and Cybele: The Myth and the Cult*:

Attis died emasculating himself under a tree; but ancient art includes ‘scenes of the emasculated Attis dancing,’ indicating his resurrection. The oldest evidence is a Hellenistic Greek vase depicting ‘the dancing Attis hilaris ... from the 4th century BC.’ Vermaseren also instances two later statues from Ostia which point to the god’s periodic resurrection. One (from Roman Imperial times) shows ‘another young Attis standing ready to replace the dying one.’ The other statue (dedicated in the second century AD) depicts the ‘lying and triumphant Attis, his entire figure indicating the resurrection which is also shown by the decoration of various kinds of flowers and plants.’⁸

As for Osiris, his destination in the Egyptian afterworld makes him no less resurrected than does Jesus’ destination in the Christian afterworld—Heaven. Both serve as the abode of the hereafter for those deemed worthy and righteous. Regarding the *Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, James P. Allen, Curator at the Department of Egyptian Art, explains:

The ancient Egyptians would not have recognized the title of this book. The texts translated here were given the collective name “Book of the Dead” in modern times because they are usually found in scrolls of papyrus or on other objects that were buried with the deceased in Egyptian tombs ... The modern title “Book of the Dead” is misleading,

7 Gary Forsythe, *Time in Roman Religion: One Thousand Years of Religious History* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 89.

8 G.A. Wells, *Did Jesus Exist?* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1992), 202.

because the texts are not about death but about life: specifically, eternal life which every Egyptian hoped to attain after death.⁹

Granted Osiris becomes king of the afterworld rather than taking up an earthly sojourn, ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs state that Osiris was *initially* raised on earth, *after which* he ascended upon a ladder to heaven.¹⁰ In the earliest New Testament strata, the same was essentially believed of Jesus. Accordingly, “God exalted him to the highest place” following his death on the cross (Phil. 2:8-9). Ephesians makes the resurrection and ascension a synonymous event, declaring “the mighty strength [God] exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms” (1:19-20). If such a brief transition from earth to heaven qualifies as a resurrection for Christ, then it equally qualifies as a resurrection for Osiris.

The resurrection of Dionysus is clearly attested in pre-Christian sources. Philodemus records that, “after his dismemberment by the Titans, Rhea gathered together his limbs and he came to life again” (*On Piety* 44). Plutarch explicitly identifies Dionysus with Osiris, stating, “the tales regarding the Titans and the rites celebrated by night agree with the accounts of the dismemberment of Osiris and his revivification and regensis” (*Is. Os.* 35.364). Given the similarities between their death and resurrection motifs, it appears obvious that Dionysus had been syncretized with Osiris by the 1st century BCE. And although our earliest

9 James P. Allen, Introduction, and Raymond O. Faulkner, trans., *Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Publishing, 2005), 11.

10 Adolf Erman, *A Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, trans. A. S. Griffith (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1907), 96. See also E.A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection: Volume 1*, (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2011), 75-7.

source for the resurrection of Adonis stems from the 2nd century CE, his identification with the Babylonian Tammuz, who is said in very ancient texts to have risen from the dead, should be evidence enough that he was depicted as dying and rising well before the Common Era.¹¹

In all of this, Dr. Ronald Nash's charged rhetoric and invective, accusing "liberal scholars" of absurdities and "inexcusable nonsense," is both hypocritical and beneath contempt. What is truly absurd, amounting to inexcusable nonsense, is to suggest that Christianity somehow arose in an ideological or cultural vacuum, insulated from any outside influences. Every known human convention and institution, including the various faith traditions that permeate this world, is subject to external influences—the inevitable transmission and intermixing of thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Why should Christianity be any different? Alas, it is a case of flagrant special pleading on the part of the apologist, making outrageous claims that simply distort facts and logic in order to defend the indefensible. A shameless shell game that flatly deserves to be exposed for what it is.

The next time an apologist, professional or otherwise, carts out Dr. Nash's failed list of dismissals against the well-founded hypothesis of Christian and pagan syncretism, I would suggest taking apologist William Lane Craig's advice on the topic, though turning it against him and his ilk:

When they say that Christian beliefs about Jesus are [not] derived from pagan mythology, I think you should laugh. Then look at them wide-eyed and with a big grin, and exclaim, "Do you really believe that?" Act as though you've just met a flat earther or Roswell conspirator. You could say something like,

11 S. N. Kramer, *Dumuzi's Annual Resurrection: An Important Correction to 'Inanna's Descent,'* Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 183 (October 1966:31).

“Man, those old theories have [never been debunked in] over a hundred years! Where are you getting this stuff?” Tell them this is just [apologetic] junk, not serious scholarship. If they persist, then ask them to [consider] the actual passages narrating the [legitimate] parallel. They’re the ones who are swimming against the [facts], so make them work hard to save their religion. I think you’ll find that they’ve never even read the primary sources.¹²

12 William Lane Craig, “Jesus and Pagan Mythology,” *Reasonable Faith*, <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/jesus-and-pagan-mythology/> (2009).

Higher Critical Review

Paul McGrane, *The Christian Fallacy: The Real Truth about Jesus and the Early History of Christianity*. Np: RedDoor, 2017. 281 pp. ISBN 978-1-910453-39-1. HC. £25.00. Reviewed by Robert M. Price.

This book is filled with arresting and fascinating observations about Jesus and Christian origins, yet I cannot accept its thesis. Paul McGrane proposes a new paradigm for interpreting many data and seeming anomalies in Josephus' histories as well as the New Testament. He is doing just what Thomas Kuhn described in his great book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. He focuses on oddities that have long stuck out like sore thumbs in conventional theories purporting to explain this or that data, and he asks whether we might find a more comprehensive model if we started with that "leftover" data and reinterpreted everything in light of it, rather than the other way around. The principal data providing the jumping-off point for his speculations is a set of chronological inconsistencies in Josephus and between Josephus and the New Testament. What if Pontius Pilate arrived in Judea in 19 C.E.? What if John the Baptist was executed as late as 36 C.E.? McGrane offers fascinating reasons to think so. He thus proposes a very different historical chronology that entails the events in the Gospels and Acts (at least the very few possessing historical credibility) getting pushed back a decade or so earlier than scholars (and theologians) commonly assume. I'm a bit surprised he doesn't discuss a similar sort of argument, though pointing in the opposite historical direction, by Lena Einhorn (*A Shift in Time: How Historical Documents Reveal the Surprising Truth about*

Jesus, 2016).

Where does Jesus Christ fit into this scenario? Nowhere. There was no such figure, though McGrane insists he rejects Jesus Mythicism. He provides, he thinks, a third alternative to Mythicism and traditional historical Jesus theories. On the basis of passages in the Book of Zechariah, McGrane posits that the early Jesus Movement believed in a messiah named Jesus, who had died and risen from the dead in the early sixth century B.C.E. It was his apocalyptic return that they expected. This would have been the High Priest Joshua ben Jehozedek who worked with Zerubbabel to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple after the return from the Exile. And who propounded such a doctrine (which would soon be distorted into conventional Christian belief)? Why, none other than John the Baptist and Judas the Galilean, he who fomented tax revolt in 6 C.E., eventually giving rise to the revolutionary Zealot party who would spark the Jewish War against Rome (66-73 C.E.).

The “Jesus Christ” character was based on Judas of Galilee. Incidents in his career, McGrane thinks, appear, heavily garbled, attached to Jesus in the gospels. I see three methodological difficulties in all this. The first is the seeming assumption that early Christianity is like a murder mystery novel in which there is a small set of characters, one of which will turn out to be the culprit. We must restrict ourselves to “the usual suspects,” characters mentioned in Josephus or the New Testament. The result is a game of “musical chairs” in which characters with different names and historical or narrative settings, but who are analogous in some respects, are considered fungible, even though no source ever identifies them. Josephus mentions Judas the Galilean and his priestly partner Sadduc as founding “the Fourth Philosophy,” the Zealot Movement as it was later called. Why not (gratuitously) posit that they appear in the gospels as Jesus and John the Baptist? Luigi Cascioli (*The Fable of Christ: Book of Accusation*, 2006) made a similar argument for John of Gamala (Judas the Galilean’s son)

being the historical counterpart to the Christian Jesus. I don't see how this wouldn't amount to Mythicism: "Jesus didn't exist, but somebody else did!"

Second, where does any historical (or even legendary) source say that anybody expected an eschatological return of the sixth-century priest ("anointed") Joshua as a resurrected messiah? Well, nowhere. McGrane explains, quite correctly, how ancient scribes felt entitled to find new, esoteric meanings in ancient scriptures, well beyond the original contexts. It would be one thing if some text from the Midrashim or the Dead Sea Scrolls made the sort of connections McGrane makes, but none does. In fact, McGrane himself is playing midrashist here. Suppose some ancient scribe took Zechariah 3:1-7 to mean that Joshua the priest had died and gone to hell, then been raised from the dead and assigned a second coming? Well, if one did, one would have needed one heck of an imagination to see such a thing in the text! But just because McGrane imagines it possible for some ancient text-twister to come up with these ideas hardly means that any of them did.

Third, *The Christian Fallacy* cherry picks intriguing but highly dubious hypotheses (like Josephine Massyngberde Ford's theory that John the Baptist wrote chapters 4-11 of the Book of Revelation) and cobbles together from them a chain of weak links. Each of these speculations seems somewhat doubtful, but when linked together, their improbability increases exponentially. As F.C. Baur said, anything is *possible*, but the historian wants to know what is *probable*. McGrane suggests (correctly, I think) that the gospel Jesus character is a composite of various disparate ancient historical and mythical characters. But isn't he doing pretty much the same thing when he synthesizes bits and pieces of numerous modern Jesus theories?

There are also a few simple goofs in the book, as when we read that the Gospel of John depicts Jesus cleansing the Temple twice, at the beginning and at the conclusion of his public ministry. Whence this claim? McGrane is thinking of

the harmonization offered by apologists trying to reconcile John's gospel, in which Jesus cleanses the Temple once, at the beginning, and the other gospels, which place the single Temple cleansing at the end. None has two cleansings.

He tells us that Old Testament sacrifices were not supposed to have expiatory value but were merely symbolic, the way Baptists understand Communion. That seems to me a gross misrepresentation. McGrane likes it, though, because he wants to blame Paul for the idea of a sacrificial atonement much later in history.

Our author congratulates Hugh J. Schonfield for his ingenuity in his controversial book *The Passover Plot*, despite his disadvantage of not having access to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Then who wrote Schonfield's book *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Judas of Galilee?

In a hurry to blame orthodox Christian beliefs on Paul, McGrane pegs him as a "passivist" like the Dead Sea Scrolls sect, content to wait for God to make the first move to ignite the apocalypse, and from this he derives the (Lutheran) doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, not works. Similarly, from Paul's claim that, like Jeremiah, he had been singled out for his mission as early as the womb, McGrane derives full-blown Calvinist predestinarianism, though Paul obviously views himself as a special case, and election unto salvation is not in view at all.

Finally, I am puzzled at the title, *The Christian Fallacy*, which seems to me to denote some kind of polemical debunking. By contrast, McGrane is setting forth a new constructive scholarly approach to an academic question, that of Christian origins. And anyone with a genuine interest in that question will find this book well worth the time, my qualms notwithstanding.¹

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