The Rise And Fall Of The Afterlife
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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2002

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):

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APPENDIX 1

WHY DID JESUS' FOLLOWERS CALL THEMSELVES 'CHRISTIANS'?

Recent investigations by ancient historians hardly pay any attention to the figure and role of Christ in the Christianisation of the Roman Empire. This neglect is not only modern: Gibbon too disregarded him in his famous analysis of the rise of Christianity. This omission has something curious about it, since studies of the rise of early Christianity might naturally have been expected to say something about the relevance of the founder of the faith to his followers. It is therefore the aim of this appendix to show that (section 1) early Christianity had an affective relationship with Christ, (section 2) that a proper evaluation of the position of Christ in early Christian belief is a precondition for the understanding of the meteoric rise of early Christianity and (section 3) that this relationship played a major role in the self-designation of the early followers of Christ as 'Christians'.

1. The importance of Christ

It is certainly true that in certain sectors of early Christian literature Christ did not figure very clearly as an identifiable human being, who had been crucified on Golgotha. Second-century apologetics, which tried to make the Christian faith respectable in the eyes of educated pagans, portrayed Christ as the incarnation of the Logos – hardly a figure to be very intimate with. And in the contemporaneous apocryphal Acts of the Apostles Jesus is not pictured as really human but as God; in these Acts Jesus remains 'invisible' and the apostles have taken his place as the person to imitate. However, a rather different picture emerges when we look at the early Christian Acta martyrum.

We will take as our point of departure the martyrdom of Polycarp. When the Roman governor asked Polycarp to curse Christ, he answered: 'For eighty-six years I have been his slave (cf. below) and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme against my king and saviour?' (Polycarp 9.3), while the account of his death states, in reaction to Jewish agitation, 'little did they know that we could never abandon Christ, for it was he who suffered for the redemption of those who are saved in the entire world, the innocent one dying on behalf of sinners. Nor could we worship anyone else' (17.2); Carpus cried
out when the fire was set beneath his cross 'Lord Jesus Christ, you know that we suffer this for your name’s sake' (Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonice [Latin version] 5); Perpetua walked to the arena ‘as a matrona of Christ’ (Perpetua 18.2); Maximilian has ‘the sign of Christ’ and is therefore unable to accept ‘the seal of the world’ (Maximilian 2.4); Marcellus can serve only ‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, the almighty Father’ (Marcellus 2.2); Euplus has received the holy Gospels ‘from my Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God’ (Euplus 1.5) and Gallonius is Christi devotus.5

The presence of Christ in the martyr even assumed mystical colours in some of the Acta. When the Lyonese martyr Sanctus was cruelly tortured, ‘Christ suffering in him achieved great deeds of glory’ (Martyrs of Lyons 23), and when Felicitas, labouring in the pains of childbirth, was asked how she would endure the terrors of the arena, she answered ‘then there will be another one in me who will suffer for me, just as I shall be suffering for him’ (Perpetua 15).6 The mystical presence may also explain the state of ecstasy which helped martyrs bear their tortures. In its account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, the Smyrnean church relates that ‘some indeed attained to such courage that they would utter not a sound of a cry, showing to all of us that in the hour of their torment these witnesses of Christ were not present in the flesh, or rather that the Lord was there present holding converse with them. Fixing their eyes on the favour of Christ, they despised the tortures of this world, in one hour buying themselves an exemption from eternal fire’ (Polycarp 2.2). And after Blandina was being tossed a good deal by a bull, ‘she no longer perceived what was happening because of the hope and possession of all she believed in and because of her intimacy with Christ’ (Martyrs of Lyons 56).

These quotations demonstrate that the early Christians had an affective relationship with Christ.’ They also show that students of early Christianity have to be attentive to the mode of discourse in that literature. Schematically we could say, using a favourite distinction of modern French historiography, that early Christian apologetic, theological and fictional literature shows Christianity conjus, whereas the Acta martyrum more illustrate how it was vécu. A proper evaluation of early Christianity has to take into account both these aspects.

2. Christian and pagan adhesion to one god

Ancient historians’ misjudgement of the position of Christ also precludes a proper understanding of the rise of early Christianity.8 Naturally we cannot analyse here the whole of this complicated issue, as a proper understanding has to account for the various ways Christianity fulfilled the religious, social, moral and intellectual needs of its time. Here I want to limit myself to some observations as to how the love for Christ fitted into the religious climate of the Roman empire. The close relationship between Jesus and his followers is regularly characterised in Paul (Romans 1.1, Philippians 1.1, Titus 1.1),9 the
Apostolic Fathers (1 Clement 60.2; Ignace, Magn. 2), the apocryphal A m of the Apostles (Acta Petri 30, 41) and the Artn martyrnum (Polyarp 9.3) by the term "doulos." This self-designation of Jesus' followers as his 'slaves' has its counterpart in the designation of Jesus himself as the Kyrios, the 'Master' or 'Lord', a title occurring 184 times in the New Testament." A. D. Nock, like W. Bousset and A. Deissmann before him, has rightly connected this title of Christ with a development in Hellenistic piety, in which gods are represented as absolute rulers and addressed by such titles as kyrios, despotes and tyrannos. According to Nock, in Christianity the title kyrios 'implies a belief in the divine overruling of the individual, who receives commands from on high'. This is certainly a too one-sided view, as Nock paid insufficient attention to the correlation between the title kyrios and the self-designation of the faithful as slaves of god so-and-so. It is this self-designation which has been studied in an important contribution by my compatriot Pleket, who has demonstrated that even before the Hellenistic–Roman period we can find traces of a close affective relationship between deity and worshipper. This dependency was strengthened and disseminated in the Hellenistic–Roman period under oriental influence and in connection with the rise of autocratic political systems. As Nock before him, Pleket noted that 'these elements acted as a sort of praeparatio evangelica for the common man whose head was not crammed with theological dogma, and facilitated the transition to a structurally subservient religion [Christianity]."

The shift from polytheism to adhesion to one god first manifested itself in the so-called oriental cults of the later classical era, but in the Roman period its spirit also pervaded established pagan religion." However, in early Christianity this adhesion to only one god seems to have assumed more intense forms than in competing, pagan cults.' Consequently, a neglect of Christ overlooks an important aspect of early Christianity.

3. Jesus' followers as 'Christians'

An additional argument for the importance of Christ can be found in the name 'Christian', since the early Christians not infrequently connected their name with Christ. For example, in his Scorpiae (9.8–9) Tertullian observes that whoever confesses to be a Christian also testifies to belong to Christ (Christi se esse), and a similar connection between 'Christian' and 'Christ' occurs in the Greek version of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonic (5). The connection looks only natural to us: surely, the followers of Christ called themselves 'Christians'! Yet this was not the case in early Christianity. Other names, such as 'the way', 'the faithful', 'the catholics' or 'God's people', were more frequent in the first two centuries."

It is strikingly only the Antiochene (cf. below) church father Ignace who regularly uses the term, but it is lacking in 1 Clement and Tatian and rare in Irenaeus and Hippolytus; Athenagoras even speaks of the 'so-called Christians'."
Which factor(s), then, helped to get the name established? Various solutions have been proposed, of which the one by Von Harnack has been the most influential: 'er [i.e., the name 'Christian'] allein war gegen jede Verwechslung geschützt'. However, his very practical solution insufficiently takes into account the fact that at one particular occasion the pronunciation of the name 'Christian' was not only normal but virtually obligatory.

Before studying this occasion we will first look at the origin of the term 'Christian'. In Acts (11.26), Luke relates that Jesus' followers were called 'Christians' first in Antioch. This is the usual translation, but Elias Bickerman has argued that the Greek usage of chrēmatizō obliges us to accept a translation which lets these followers style themselves Christians. Moreover, he sees in the choice of the word 'Christian' the wish of the Christians to avoid the term dunlos sounding too much like the terminology of oriental gods. Instead, so Bickerman claims, they styled themselves Christiani as, 'agents, representatives of the Messiah'. Both views of Bickerman are unpersuasive. First, Karpp has noted that the use of chrēmatizō does allow the traditional translation. We may add that it would indeed be hard to understand why it took so long for 'Christian' to become the accepted self-designation of the early followers of Christ, if the followers themselves had coined the term. Second, Bickerman's translation of 'Christian' will hardly do, since the ending -ιανι (as in Caesariani, Agrippiani, Herodiani or Pisoniani) also indicates a clientele of basically dependent people. Moreover, various passages in the New Testament show that early Christians called themselves 'slaves of Christ' (section 2). We really have no sufficient information to solve the problem, but Peterson's hypothesis that Jesus' followers received their designation from the Roman authorities at least explains the fact that the Jewish–Hellenistic followers of Christ eventually adopted a Roman word-formation."

If the precise origin of the term 'Christian' is still obscure, we can perhaps be more certain about the way the name became the accepted self-designation of the followers of Jesus. Once again we take our point of departure in a passage from the Martyrdom of Polycarp. After the proconsul had insisted that Polycarp should swear by the emperor's Genius, the bishop answered: 'If you delude yourself into thinking that I will swear by the emperor's Genius, as you say, and if you pretend not to know who I am, listen and I will tell you plainly: Chrīstinŏs eït/i'(10). This straightforward statement did not deter the proconsul from continuing his attempts to persuade, but finally he sent his herald to the centre of the arena to announce: 'Three times Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian.'"

Evidently, this was the essential information which had been gathered in the course of the interrogation and it firmly established Polycarp's guilt. In its direct or indirect form, this formula of 'I am a Christian' occurs in virtually all the Acta which have been recognised as authentic; it is only lacking in the reports of the martyrdoms of Montanus and Lucius and of Felix. Usually, the confession is placed right at the beginning of the proceedings, but in some
cases the declamation is the climax of the hearing, following the refusal to partake in pagan ritual. The Christians even volunteered this confession without being asked, as Euplus well illustrates: 'In the consulship of our lords Diocletian (for the ninth time) and Maximian (for the eighth time) on the 29th of April (304), in the most famous city of Catana, in the court room, in front of the curtain, Euplus shouted out: "I wish to die, Christianos gar eimi."' (1).

The statement 'I am a Christian' clearly is the answer to the simple question 'Are you a Christian?', which question enabled the Roman magistrates to minimise the rather embarrassing situation that they were trying people who were not really guilty of any obvious crimes. As the Christian Lucius said to the urban prefect Urbicus after he had ordered Ptolemaeus to be executed: 'What is the charge? He has not been convicted of adultery, fornication, murder, clothes-stealing, robbery, or of any crime whatsoever; yet you have punished this man because he confesses the name of Christian' (Ptolomaus and Lucius 15–16). The magistrates' embarrassment with the situation clearly appears from their hesitation in putting martyrs to death. In order to reach their goal, which was apostasy and not destruction, they offered the martyrs delays ranging from three hours to three months...'

The magistrates' embarrassment is shared by many a modern ancient historian. Why, indeed, were the Christians persecuted? In the best modern analysis of the problem, De Ste Croix has summarised his views on the reasons for the condemnation of the Christians by quoting with approval the following words of E.G. Hardy (1852–1925): 'The Christians subsequently to, as before my italics mine, the rescript of Trajan were punished generally for the name, i.e.,... for the inherent disloyalty to the state involved in their atheotés [atheism], and manifested in the obstinatio with which they clung to it.' It must be stressed that these reasons are hard to find in early reports of martyrs' processes, and Brunt has therefore rightly questioned the validity of this view for the second century. As the latter observes, it leaves unexplained the reason why Trajan did not order the tracking down of these elements so dangerous to the state: all he did was to require that the Christians sacrificed to the gods."

This approach was indeed slavishly followed by all Roman magistrates whose behaviour we can observe in the earliest Acta martyrum. By making sure of the fact that the persons in front of them were guilty of being Christian, they could cut short the unpleasant task of interrogating and torturing civilised people. Lane Fox has well noted that this conclusion risks 'becoming circular, as if Christians were persecuted because they were Christian'. His own solution is that with the conviction of Paul 'The Emperor's justice had distinguished Christians from Jews, a point which was not lost on senators, the provincial governors of the future.' This may be doubted. Would the Roman elite have had any interest in the execution of a Jew of modest status?"

However this may be, it is in any case certain that the only occasion where the followers of Jesus publicly used the self-designation 'Christian' was in confrontation with Roman magistrates. The inference seems therefore justified
that the affirmative response 'I am a Christian' to the question of the Roman magistrates 'Are you a Christian?' became the main factor in the self-designation of Jesus' followers as 'Christians'. The importance of the persecutions in promoting the name 'Christian' seems to be confirmed by the non-literary evidence. In papyri the term first appears in the earlier third century but becomes more popular only after AD 250. This is also the case with inscriptions, in which, perhaps not surprisingly, the term first turn up in Phrygia, an area where the difference in religiosity between pagans, Christians and Jews was much less pronounced than elsewhere in the Roman empire. Surely, these dates can hardly be separated from the empire-wide persecution of Decius. It was only now that the term 'Christian' would come to everybody's attention and would be adopted by the followers of Jesus in defiance of the Roman government. What probably originated as a term of derision, now became a term of honour, legitimised by the blood of those women and men who preferred to die for their faith instead of sacrificing to the Roman emperor.
APPENDIX 2

THE BIRTH OF THE TERM
PARADISE

The first chapters of Genesis mention a landscaped, enclosed park, full of fruit-trees, planted by God himself, with a river running through it and possibilities for walking. The translators of the Septuagint have called this park paradisos. The enormous impact of the Biblical description of Paradise has been often studied and its main lines are now well known. Less familiar is the development of the term 'paradise' itself. Recent studies are not really very informative in this respect. According to Joachim Jeremias, paradisos is an Old Iranian ('Altiranisches') loan word which first means 'tree garden', 'park' and is subsequently used to denote the Garden of Eden as 'Gottesgarten' in order to distinguish it from profane parks. Although his explanation, which is representative for most modern approaches to the problem, is not totally wrong, it is not really fully right either. In order to provide a more exact answer to this question I will look at the term in the early Achaemenid period (section 1), the later Achaemenid period (section 2) and at its development in the post-Achaemenid era (section 3), and conclude with a discussion as to why the translators of Genesis opted for this specific word to translate the Hebrew term Gan Eden (section 4).

1. The early Achaemenid era

The etymology of Greek paradisos is not disputed. It most likely derives from Median *paridaeza, 'enclosure', *pari being 'around' and *daeza 'wall'. As more often, the Greeks took their words from the Medes rather than from the Persians, just as, e.g., Greek satrapēs is the Median form of this Iranian title. Like its Old Persian equivalent *paridaida, the Median form is not attested in the few surviving Old Persian cexrs and it is unlikely that it will ever turn up in Median writings, since the Medes never seem to have developed a script; however, the Median form does recur in the later Avestan Videvdad as paridaeza (3.18).

The occurrence of such a Median term as loanword in Greek, and, as we soon shall see, Akkadian, Hebrew and Aramaic, is one more testimony to the influence of the enigmatic Medes. The tribe itself has left very little traces and
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its early history is hard to reconstruct, but the fact that the Greeks called their formidable Eastern opponents first Medes and only later Persians, attests to their former importance; similarly, the Jews speak of Medes in Isaiah (13.17, 21.2) and Jeremiah (51.1, 28), but of Medes and Persians only in the post-exilic books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and Daniel. The increasing attention to linguistic derivations, which has become possible with the growing insight into the Median and Persian dialects, will perhaps shed more light on this problem in the future.

If its linguistic and etymological background is clear, the precise semantics of the term are more problematic. Given the absence of early Iranian material we will have to take recourse to its use as loanword in more or less contemporary Akkadian and Elamite texts in order to reconstruct its meaning in the oldest period of the Persian, multicultural empire. We start with the Babylonian texts. Virtually immediately after the Persian capture of Babylon in 539 we find three Babylonian documents of the last decades of the sixth century, in which temple authorities are responsible for maintaining and establishing pars. One of these is a vineyard, another is associated with planting date-palms and making bricks, and a loan document of 46514 BC mentions an 'upper pars' (i.e. at the upper side).

We find more information in only slightly later Elamite texts. After the fall of the Elamite empire in the seventh century, the Persians settled on its former territory and kept Elamite as the official language of their bureaucracy in Persis until about 460. In the 1930s excavators found hundreds of clay tablets in Elamite in Persepolis which, depending on their place of finding, were published as Persepolis Treasury Tablets (PTT) and Persepolis Fortification Tablets (PFT). The former, 114 in all, can be dated to the period between 492 and 460 BC, when clay was probably given up in favour of parchment. From the latter more than 2000 have now been published, belonging to the years between 510 and 494 BC. It is especially in the PFT, which have been identified as tax-receipts, that we regularly find mention of something called partetas, which the authoritative Elamite dictionary considers as corresponding to Old Persian *parātātā*. From the texts there emerge the following meanings. Partetas figure as storage places for natural produce, such as figs, dates, peaches, apricots, pomegranates and 'royal grain', mostly fairly close to Persepolis. It could also be the place in which a food-product, knr-, was made. Although the size of a partetas was rather modest, it was large enough to contain sheep for a celebration of a religious ceremony, perhaps a sacrifice to Ahuramazda. Finally, there is a clear connection with trees. One tablet inventories 6166 seedlings at five places, including three partetas, in which there are also 4931 trees. The prominence of trees may be surprising, but the Persians attached great value to trees. This is already illustrated by a letter from Darius I to Gadatas, probably the overseer of a local 'paradise', the paradeisarios, a term which recurs in Syrian as pardayspana, in the oldest Armenian texts as partizpan and in the
New Persian epic *Shanameh as palezhan*.\(^{16}\) In the letter the king praises Gadatas for cultivating in Western Asia Minor the fruit trees of Syria and berates him for taxing the sacred gardeners of Apollo and ordering them to till profane soil." A certain Pythios, perhaps the grandson of Croesus, gave Darius a golden vine and plane-tree, which remained very famous until they were melted down by Antigonus in 316 BC.\(^{18}\) When finding a fine plane tree a day east of Sardis, Xerxes decorated it with gold and appointed a perpetual guardian.\(^{19}\) Cyrus the Younger showed Lysander the *paradeisos* at Sardis and claimed to have personally planted some trees (section 2). Strabo (15.3.18), who probably goes back to fourth-century sources, even mentions that during their education the Persian boys 'late in the afternoon are trained in the planting of trees'. It is surely this great concern with trees which made Plutarch relate that Artaxerxes II once gave permission to his soldiers, when they were very cold, to fell trees in *paradeisos* (section 2) 'without saving pines or cypresses', while he himself felled the largest and most attractive tree (*Life of Artaxerxes* 25).\(^{20}\)

We can now draw our first conclusions. In the early Persian Empire two closely related words were current for 'paradise': Median *paridaeza* and Old Persian *paridaida*. The latter was adopted in the Elamite *Kanzlesprache*, the former by Babylonians, Greeks and Jews (section 2). Secondly, early Iranian 'paradise' had no fixed meaning. It could be a storage-place, vineyard, orchard, stable, forest or nursery of trees. Evidently, it was a kind of *vox medii* of which the most prominent element was the enclosure. Thirdly, none of these descriptions closely fits the Garden of Eden yet.

### 2. The later Achaemenid period

Having looked at the earliest occurrences of the word, let us now turn to its examples in the later Achaemenid era. The connection between trees and 'paradise', which we noted in the Elamite *paratetas*, recurs in the Old Testament, where in Nehemiah (2.8) the homonymous protagonist requests building wood 'to make beams for gates of the palace' from the overseer of the king's *pardes*. The passage seems to derive from Nehemiah's original memoir, which dates from the second half of the fifth century, and thus is a valuable testimony to the presence of Persian 'paradises' not only in Anatolia but also elsewhere in the Persian empire. Nehemiah does not mention the location of his 'paradise', but it may have been situated in Lebanon." King Solomon imported cedars from Lebanon for the building of the temple (1 Kings 5); carpenters from the region are already well attested in Babylon in the early sixth century, and in 538 BC the royal administration ordered the Sidonians and Tyrians to bring cedars from Lebanon.\(^{22}\) Trees also figure in the Song of Songs (4.13–14), which was perhaps written in Jerusalem around 400 BC.\(^{23}\) Here we find a *pardes* of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense'.
There is a chance that *paradeisos* already appeared in Greek literature in the later fifth century. According to the Aristotelian pupil Clearchus, the sixth-century Samian tyrant Polycrates of Samos used to imitate the luxury of the Lydians and even had 'constructed in the city the famous "(Red-light) Quarter" of Samos to rival the park at Sardis called Sweet Embrace'. The passage probably derives from Clearchus' *Lives* where he relates: 'The Lydians in their luxury laid out *paradeisoi*, making them like parks and so lived in the shade... they would gather the wives and maiden daughters of other men into the place called, because of this action, Place of Chastity, and there outrage them.' As Clearchus elsewhere in this passage must have used the Lydian historian Xantlius," an older contemporary of Herodotus, it seems not unlikely that Clearchus also derived his information about Polycrates from Xanthus. If this is true, it means that Xanthus was perhaps the first Greek to use the term *paradeisos* in writing. This would not be unlikely, since being a Lydian he may well have known the Sardian *paradeisoi* (below) personally.

Unfortunately, the passage is not crystal clear. The most likely interpretation seems to be that in order to enjoy the shade the Sardians laid out *paradeisoi*. As befitted *paradeisoi* (section 1 and below), they consisted of trees, but the Sardians apparently had transformed them into a more cultivated environment than the normal Persian ones (below), with perhaps pavilions to receive their 'guests'. In any case, there was a house and a place with a canopied bed in the Babylonian *paradeisos* where Alexander the Great died," and pavilions long remained a characteristic feature of Persian parks. At first sight it may be surprising that Clearchus speaks of *paradeisoi* in the plural, but the texts frequently speak of multiple *paradeisoi*. Some earlier examples are, presumably, the *paradeisoi* in Susa (Ael. *NA* 7.1), the wild parks (below) of Pharnabazus (Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.15, 33), the hunting *paradeisoi* given to Demetrius Poliorcetes in his place of exile (Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius* 50) and the Syrian cypress-*paradeisoi* mentioned by Theophrastus (HP 5.8.1).

We move on firmer ground in the fourth century when we find the first certain occurrences of the term *paradeisos* in the works of Xenophon." Unfortunately, the chronology of his works is not very clear, but it seems reasonable to start with the *Cyropaedia*, a novel-like book in which Xenophon displays much of his knowledge of the Persian empire. Here he lets Astyages tell his grandson, the future Cyrus the Great: 'I will give you all the game present in the *paradeisos* and collect many more, which you, as soon as you have learnt to ride, may pursue' (1.3.14). In fact, Cyrus proved to be such an enthusiastic hunter in the *paradeisoi* that his grandfather was unable to collect enough animals for him (1.4.5): not surprisingly, since it was only a small one (1.4.11). Astyages' insistence on the hunt had evidently left a big impression on Cyrus, for he ordered his satraps to 'lay out *paradeisoi* and breed game' (8.6.12), and when he had acceded to the throne 'he would lead those nobles, whom he thought in need of it, out to the hunt in order to train them in the art of war, since he considered the hunt by far the best preparation for war... and
whenever he was bound to stay at home, he would hunt game reared in the *paradeisos* (8.1.34–8).

We receive a more detailed picture of a specific *paradeisos* in the *Oeconomicus* through an anecdote which goes back to Lysander’s own report according to Xenophon. When Cyrus the Younger showed the Spartan Lysander his *paradeisos* in Sardis, Lysander admired ‘the grandeur of the trees, the uniform distances at which they were planted, the straightness of the rows of the trees, the beautiful regularity of all the angles and the number and sweetness of the odours that accompanied them as they walked around’. Cyrus was not the only one to have *paradeisos* in Sardis. Tissaphernes, the satrap of Sardis during Xenophon’s Persian service, had a *paradeisos* in the same region, which he called Alcibiades because of the latter’s charm. His *paradeisos* contained a river and had been laid out at great expense with plants, meadows and ‘all other things that contribute to luxury and peaceful pleasure’. A Sardian third-century tax inscription also mentions the gift of two *paradeisos*, which had once been given by King Antioch, to a temple. Tissaphernes had another house in Tralles and recently published evidence suggests that he there also owned a *paradeisos* – in any case, epigraphical evidence attests to a place called Paradeisos in the third century BC.

Xenophon supplies additional information about specific *paradeisos* in the *Anabasis*, the report of his wanderings as a mercenary in the Anatolian part of the Achaemenid Empire, which dates from the first decades of the fourth century. In Kelainai, the capital of Greater Phrygia, he saw the palace of Cyrus the Younger and ‘a large *paradeisos* full of wild animals, which he [Cyrus] hunted on horseback whenever he wanted to exercise himself and his horses.’ The Maeander River flows through the middle of the *paradeisos* (1.2.7). Further to the west Cyrus’ army found the ‘very large and fine *paradeisos* with everything which the seasons produce’ of Belesys, the satrap of Syria, which Cyrus had ‘chopped down’; the term clearly suggests the presence of trees (1.4.10). A similar type of *paradeisos*, ‘large, fine, and thick with all kind of trees’, was situated in Babylon near the Tigris (2.4.14, 16).

Finally, in the work of his old age, the *Hellenica*, Xenophon lets us meet Pharnabazus, the hereditary satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, in his capital Daskyleion. Here the Persian liad his palace and ‘very fine wild animals, some in enclosed *paradeisos*, some in the open country. A river full of all kinds of fish ran past the place’ (4.1.15–16). However, this idyllic area had not escaped the ravages of war, but, as Pharnabazus complains, ‘my father left me fine buildings and *paradeisos* full with trees and wild animals, in which I delighted, but I see all of that cut down and burned down’ (4.1.33).

Our last example comes from the Roman antiquarian Gellius. When discussing the word *vivarium* he quotes Varro, the most learned Roman of the Late Republic, that *vivaria*, the term now used for certain enclosures in which wild animals are kept alive and fed, were once called *leporaria*. Of these *vivaria* Gellius (2.20.1, 4) adds that the Greeks call them *paradeisos*. We have
no idea as to how Gellius acquired this knowledge, but given the paucity of references to wild animals in *paradeisoi* in the post-Achaemenid period he will have derived his information, directly or indirectly, from a Hellenistic, perhaps historiographical source.

What have we learned so far about these 'paradises'? First, the passages in *Nehemia* and the Songs of Songs seem to suggest that, in addition to the hunting *paradeisoi* attested by Xenophon, other meanings of Persian 'paradise', such as orchard and place to grow trees, remained alive. Second, the early Greek *paradeisoi* are related to the Iranian ones only to a limited extent. They are not orchards, vineyards or storage-places – phenomena for which the Greeks of course had words of their own. On the other hand, as is stated explicitly in *Hellenica* 4.1.15, they were enclosed and in this respect they reflect their Iranian origin. Thirdly, they seem to be a relatively unknown phenomenon to the Greeks, since in his *Oeconomicus* Xenophon effectively glosses the term by saying that 'there are parks, the so-called *paradeisoi*' wherever the king goes; in other passages the description sufficiently indicates the meaning of *paradeisoi*. Fourthly, these particular 'paradises' were characterised by a modest size, vicinity to other ones, the presence of animals, water (be it a river or a lake), the prominence of trees and, in general, by lush vegetation. Although such 'paradises' have not yet turned up in Babylonian and Elamite texts, they were not absent from the Persian heartland, since the *paradeisoi* in Susa was irrigated (Ctesias *FGrH* 688 F 34), and Cyrus' tomb in Pasargadae was situated in a *paradeisos* with a grove 'with all sorts of trees and irrigated, and deep grass had grown in the meadow'. Fifthly, these *paradeisoi* were the possession of the highest Persian aristocracy. Although lie does not mention the term, Curtius Rufus (7.2.22) clearly alludes to the *paradeisoi* when he calls the *magnus recessus amorosque memoribus manu consitis* of Media the *praecipua regum satraparumque voluptas*. They may therefore have become emblematic of Persian authority, as the choice by the Phoenicians in their revolt of 351 BC of the 'royal *paradeisoi*' for their first target seems to suggest. Sixthly and finally, unlike the 'paradise' in *Genesis*, the hunting *paradeisoi* were tilled with wild animals and served the Persians to keep themselves into condition for war via hunting.

3. The post-Achaemenid era

After the fall of the Achaemenid empire the hunting *paradeisoi* quickly disappeared, since the hunt did not play the same role in the life of Alexander the Great and his successors as it did among the Persian magnates. Only the already quoted *paradeisoi* of Demetrius Poliorcetes in the immediate post-Achaemenid era still remind us of the traditional hunting *paradeisoi*. However, other *paradeisoi* continued to exist, but without the wild animals. We can note this change already fairly early in the third century, since in 246 BC the small Cretan polis of Itanos dedicated a 'holy *temenos*' near the gate,
presumably a kind of public garden, as \textit{paradeisos} to Ptolemy III (246–221).\textsuperscript{45} This surely was not a hunting park. Neither, presumably, were the \textit{paradeisoi} attached to royal residences, which are mentioned in a late third-century papyrus from Tebtunis;\textsuperscript{46} other combinations of palaces and parks, as listed below, clearly suggest that these \textit{paradeisoi} were parks as well. In the third- and second-century \textit{Septuagint},\textsuperscript{47} \textit{paradeisos} is connected with water (\textit{Numeri} 24.6; \textit{Isaiah} 1.30) and trees (Ezekiel 31.8, 9), strongly contrasted with the desert (\textit{Isaiah} 51.3) and other desolate places (Joel 2.3),\textsuperscript{48} and a sign of great wealth (Ezekiel 28.13), but nowhere do we hear about animals. In Ecclesiastes, which seems to date from the third century BC, Solomon says: 'I have made me gardens and \textit{paradesim}, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits' (2.5). As in the already-mentioned case of the \textit{Song of Songs}, modern translations use 'orchard', and indeed, in modern Hebrew the word for 'orchard' is \textit{parades}.

Early examples of 'paradisiac' orchards probably occur in a demotic Egyptian text, which is a translation of a lost Greek original. In this comprehensive survey of Egypt under Ptolemy II (308–246) in 258 BC a census was ordered of 'the embankments that are ploughed and cultivated, specifying orchard by orchard the trees with their fruits', that is, presumably, the various \textit{paradeisoi}.\textsuperscript{49} More orchards can be found in later documentary papyri from Egypt, which contain numerous references to \textit{paradeisoi}.\textsuperscript{50} These 'paradises' will have been utilitarian gardens, since their average size is extremely small, mostly less than a hectare. It is therefore not surprising that we occasionally hear about them being sold or bought, such as the \textit{paradeisos} bought 'from the state' (\textit{P.Tebt.} I.5.99; 118 BC) or the 'royal \textit{paradeisos}' bought by an Apollonius in 235 BC (\textit{P.Tebt.} III.1.701.175f). Although these \textit{paradeisoi} can supply a considerable amount of bricks,\textsuperscript{51} they often contain various kinds of trees, from fig-trees to conifers, in addition to the fruit-trees. Olives and palms must have been common, since we regularly find an \textit{elaionoparadeisos}, a \textit{phoinikoparadeisos} and, perhaps inevitably, an \textit{elaionophoinikoparadeisos}. These Egyptian \textit{paradeisoi} normally also have basins and wells. The \textit{Wisdom of Ben-Sira}, which was written in Egypt in the early second century BC and translated into Greek towards the end of the same century, well illustrates their irrigation by actually mentioning 'a water channel into a \textit{paradeisos}' (24.30). Although these smaller Egyptian \textit{paradeisoi} do not contain rivers or possibilities for walking, they must have been attractive enough for \textit{Ben-Sira} to state that 'kindness' and 'fear of the Lord' are 'like a \textit{paradeisos}' (40.17, 27).\textsuperscript{52}

The connection of Solomon with \textit{paradeisoi} in the \textit{Song of Songs} and Ecclesiastes may have helped later generations to identify certain \textit{paradeisoi} with those of famous kings. In any case, \textit{Josephus} mentions that Solomon's \textit{paradeisos} at Etan contained flowing streams (\textit{AJ} 8.186) and near Jerusalem there was a spring in King David's \textit{paradeisos} (\textit{AJ} 7.347), which was perhaps different from the royal 'paradise' four stades from Jerusalem (\textit{AJ} 9.225). Hyrcanus (135–104 BC) followed his royal 'predecessors' or Ptolemaic contemporaries by constructing a \textit{paradeisos} 17 kilometres west of Amman, the present Araqel
Emir (AJ 12.233). Near Jericho there were also 'very dense and beautiful paradisei' spread throughout an area of some 45 square kilometres with many nice trees, palms, cypresses and, especially, balsam.' And just as Xenophon enhanced the beauty of Pharnabazus' paradisei by letting him bewail its loss, so Josephus illustrates the desolation of Judaea after the Jewish revolt by mentioning the Roman destruction of the paradisei (BJ 6.6).

Paradeis also recurs in some Aramaic fragments of the Dead Sea scrolls. In an early second-century fragment of Enoch (4Q206 3 21 = 1 Enoch 32.3, also mentioned in 4Q209 23 9) we read about the 'Parades of Justice', a place with many trees, including the Tree of Wisdom as we can read in the more fuller preserved Ethiopian version. And in a very fragmentary text from the Book of Giants (6Q8 2 3), which dates of the time of the beginning of the first century, there survives only a reference to 'this paradeis, all of it, and', shortly before preceded by 'its three roots', presumably of the one tree that survived the angelic cutting down of all the others. However, none of these texts suggests the picture of a park with water, pavilions and walking amenities.

The latter possibility must have been a feature of at least some paradeis in the Hellenistic era, since the learned Byzantine bishop Photius (Lexicon 583.2) defines paradeis as: 'a place for walking [peripatos] with trees and water,' which comes very close to the description of Genesis. As we have seen (section 3) Lysander walked with Cyrus the Younger in his paradeis; in the book Susanna, which is perhaps to be dated to the later second century BC, Susanna also walks in her husband's paradeis (7, 36), which was enclosed (17, 20) and even contained a place to bathe (15, 17). The presence of walking possibilities probably explains why Lucian (VH 2.23) called the Platonic Academy a paradeis and why the Rhegion paradeis, which had been planted by the tyrant Dionysius I of Syracuse, was turned into a gymnasium. Photius adds that comic authors (PCG Adespota 523 Kassel-Austin) even used the term paradeis for highly insensible individuals – people one could trample on. Unfortunately, he does not specify them, but we probably have to think of New Comedy, that is of post-Achaemenid times, since such walking possibilities are mentioned only once regarding the Xenophontic wild parks. Trees, as we have seen, were already an outstanding feature of the Persian paradeis and they would remain so all through ancient history, from Xenophon to the Historia monachorum in Aegypto andProcopius. Even the talking trees met by Alexander in India were situated, naturally, in a paradisei.

In Roman times the paradisei became even more cultivated, as appears from the paradisei in the second-century Greek novels of Longus and Achilles Tatius. There are still springs and trees, both barren and fertile ones, but the landscape has become much more artificial. We now notice the presence of meadows and flowers planted in beds: roses, daffodils and hyacinths; instead of the wild animals of earlier times the 'paradise' is now inhabited by swans, parrots and peacocks. However attractive these parks had become, in Roman times the word remained a loanword for the Greeks and it was avoided by fanatic purists.
Admittedly, in the Roman period the Persian royal hunts were still remembered, but, interestingly, they were now quoted in a negative way. Apollonius of Tyana (1.37) declined to join the Persian king in hunting in his paradeisoi, since it gave him no pleasure 'to attack animals that have been ill-treated and enslaved against their nature'. Dio Chrysostom (3.135–7) even lets the good king abhor the 'Persian hunt', although he considers hunting an excellent preparation for war: 'those people (the Persians) would enclose the game in paradeisoi and then, whenever they wanted to, killed the game as if it were in a pen, showing that they neither sought physical exercise or danger, since their game was weak and broken in spirit'. The thought is perhaps far-fetched, but is it totally impossible that in these protests against killing enslaved animals there is something of a hint at contemporary Roman venationes?

It cannot even be excluded that the detractors of the 'Persian hunt' had heard about contemporary hunting paradeisoi further to the East, since an event in the Persian expedition of Julian the Apostate demonstrates that these had continued to exist. The historian Zosimus (3.23.1–4) relates that in the neighbourhood of Meinias Sabatha, a city near the Naarmalcha canal which runs between the Euphrates and the Tigris, the Roman army came 'to an enclosure which they called the "King's Chase". This was a large area enclosed by a small wall and planted with all kinds of trees, in which all sorts of wild animals were locked up. These received more than plenty of food and offered the king very easy opportunities for hunting whenever he wanted.' From the parallel notice in Libanius (18.243) we gather that the 'paradeisoi' was situated close by the palace. In fact, this is perhaps the best description of what a hunting paradeisoi will have looked like with the obligatory elements of the enclosure, trees and wild animals, which Ammianus (24.5.1–2) specifies as lions, bears and boars. The vicinity of the palace is already well attested in Xenophon (section 2), in Chronicles (the case of Manasseh: section 4), in Ptolemaic Tebtunis (above), and in Susanna (4: Susanna's very wealthy husband's paradeisoi is adjacent to his house). The vicinity remained a feature of Persian grandees in the novel, where the combination of palace and paradeisoi already points to the courtly parks of later Persian, Islamic and Byzantine magnates (n. 28).”

Let us conclude our observations on Persian hunting with a few more observations. When the Persians started to conquer Greece, they occupied the islands of Chios, Lesbos and Tenedos, one after the other, and caught the people as with drag-nets in the following manner according to Herodorus: 'having joined hands, the men stretch right across the island from north to south and then move over the whole of the island, hunting everybody out'.” In this case the prey were people, but the great Swiss scholar Karl Meuli adduced a number of examples from early to early modern Chinese and medieval Mongolian sources to show that indeed Oriental rulers used their armies as enormous battues in order to surround large animals and kill them. By analogy we may presuppose similar battues for the Persians, since in a source
neglected by Meuli, the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, we are told that Abba Milesius met two sons of the Persian king who had gone hunting 'according to their custom. They spread nets around a wide area; at least forty miles, so as to be able to hunt and shoot everything that was found inside the nets." The story has no need for beaters, but surely behind the two royal princes there must have been an army of Persians to chase the game into the nets. Herodotus uses the verb *saganetan* for the Persian tactic and the noun *saganet* is also used for the Greek hunt on the tunafish, again a tactic to catch as large a group of prey in the nets as possible. In fact, hunting with nets was so important for the Persian aristocracy that the art of net making was part of their education (Scrabo 15.3.18).

Meuli also observed that some of these Oriental rulers made wild parks in order to hunt more at ease — unclerstandably, since their 'army hunts' could last up to four months. Consequently, he suggests that the Persians, too, had constructed their *paradeiso* in connection with their battues. This conclusion is attractive but probably goes too far. The Oriental wild parks are only attested for the Middle Ages and were very large (the one of the son of Dzenbish Khan, Ögdöä, had a circumference of two clay journeys), whereas the evidence we have strongly suggests that the average Persian *paradeisos* was much smaller and, at least to some degree, landscaped (section 2).

It may be sufficient to draw only a few conclusions from this section. First, *paradeiso* occurred mainly in areas once dominated by the Persian empire. Secondly, the variety of usage of the Iranian 'paradise' survived the fall of the Achaemenid empire. Thirdly, with the disappearance of the Persian elite their hunting *paradeiso* had vanished as well, except for the more eastern parts of the former empire. Fourthly, in the course of time the Graeco-Roman *paradeisos* became more and more artificial.

4. Conclusion

Before answering the question as to why the translator(s) of the *Septuagint*, in the third century BC, chose *paradeisos* to render the Hebrew *Gan Eden*, we have to solve one other problem. Why did the translators not prefer the equally possible Greek term *képos*, 'garden' Like the *paradeisos*, the *képos* is connected with water (*Isaiah* 1.29), but it is clearly simpler than the majestic *paradeisos* and only the place of 'herbs' (*Deuteronomy* 11.10; 1 *Kings* 20.2). This is perhaps the reason that, as apparently David (*Nehemiah* 3.16LXX), King Manasseh was buried in his *képos* in 2 *Kings* (21.18) but in the third-century 2 *Chronicles* (33.20) in his *paradeisos*, a version followed by Josephus (*AJ* 10.46).

This impression of greater simplicity is confirmed by what we know about the *képos* from other sources. Admittedly, Greek gardens have long been neglected, but recent investigations have considerably clarified their picture. These gardens were primarily wanted for their productivity and closely connected with residential housing. They were small, walled, intensely cultivated and
loved for their vegetables and flowers; moreover, their luxuriant growth often 
evoked sexual associations." In other words, for the Jewish translators the 
word kēpos will have hardly conjured up the image of a royal park worthy of 
Jahweh. That is probably also the reason that Alcinoos' Utopian garden in 
the Odyssey (7.114–31) is compared with paradise only once in the whole of 
early Christian literature." Still, in some places the difference between kēpos 
and paradeisos may have been relatively small, and in first-century Tebtunis we 
actually find a kēposparadeisos.22

But if the translators preferred paradeisos, which 'paradise' did they have in 
mind: the Persian one (section 1), the early Greek one (section 2), or those in 
Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt or contemporary Palestine (section 3)? We can 
most certainly discard the old Persian meanings of storage room or vineyard 
and the usage attested in Xenophon, since neither God nor Adam display any 
interest in hunting nor do they drink alcohol. We can almost certainly also 
neglect the paradeisi of later Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, since they were 
too small, too simple and too utilitarian to be worthy of Jahweh. This leaves us 
the contemporary royal paradeisi in Hellenistic times, as they are somewhat 
dimly visible in various descriptions: royal parks with many trees, suitable for 
walking, less wild than their Persian predecessors but more foresty than their 
later Roman descendants.23

Such parks of course fit the time of the Septuagint, which started to be 
translated in Alexandria in the second quarter of the third century BC.24 Our 
knowledge of early Alexandria is sketchy, but it has increasingly been 
recognised that the royal palace of Ptolemy II was inspired by the Persian 
palaces with their paradeisi; his paradeisos actually seems to be reflected in the 
description of King Aeetes' palace in Colchis by Apollonius Rhodius 
(Argonautica 3.219–29).25 There is also a clear indication for an association of 
Jahweh's paradeisos with the world of the Ptolemies. Just over a decade ago the 
papyrologist Geneviève Husson drew attention to the translacion of Ga7z 
Ellen in Getziric (3.2.3) as paradoxai.26 As she pointed out, tryphê was a term 
much used by the Ptolemaic monarchy to characterise its leisurely life with its 
prosperity and magnificence. Three kings were surnamed Tryphon and 
various princesses Tryphaena; in Roman times, tryphê even became synony- 
mous with the 'good life'.27 Clearly, the time of the Ptolemies was no longer 
the era of Cyrus with its physical hardship and sweat, but the world of wealth, 
leisure and luxury. Behind the paradeisos of the heavenly king in the Septuagint 
version of Genesis, there loom the cultivated paradeisi of the all too earthly 
rulers of contemporary Egypt.

EXCURSUS 1: 'PARADISE' IN CYPRUS

According to the Etymologicum Magnum, the Cypriots had their own term for a 
'paradise': ganos; paradeisos hypo de Kypriôn (223.47). The lemma (223.42ff)
derives from the *Etymologicum Gudianum* (300.16–20 De Stefani), which in turn derives from the Middle Byzantine *Lexicon aimōdein* (γ 3 b–8 Dyck), which explains Agathias, *Hist.* 2.28, although this passage does not contain the 'Cypriot' information. On Cyprus, the term perhaps occurs in ICS 309.12 (*ka-no-se*), another possibility may be an inscription from Mytilene (IG XII.2.58.(a) 17). Traces of the same lemma occur in Hesychius, s.v. *ganos: paradisios*, which Kurt Latte, its most recent editor, assigned to Diogenianus, on the basis of the occurrence of the same explanation in the *Etymologicum Magnum* (223.47) and the indication of the dialect. Although such a conclusion is valid for some cases, it is not correct in this particular one, since the lemma in the *Etymologicum Magnum* certainly derives from the *Etymologicum Gudianum* and the lemma in Hesychius must derive from Cyril's glossary. We may also note Hesychius s.v. *ganeta: kêpous* and *Etymologicum genuine* s.v. *ganos*, where the term is paraphrased with *gê*, 'earth' (= *Etymologicum Magnum* 221.18ff.).

The conclusion seems to be that the Cypriots had derived their term *ganos*, like some other words, from their long Phoenician association. Its meaning was evidently glossed by some lexicographers from a context (contexts?) which now escapes us.

**EXCURSUS 2: PARADISES IN THE ORACULA SIBYLLINA**

When Jesus told the criminal on the cross that he would be in Paradise on that very same day, both of them undoubtedly would have thought of the *Urzzeit* Garden of Eden, which in the intertestamentary period became increasingly identified with the *Endzeit* Paradise. But how exactly did they envision this Paradise! We will never know, but the *Oracula Sibyllina* may provide some clue. This very heterogeneous collection contains several pictures of (kinds of) Paradise, the oldest of which goes back to the second century BC. Let us look at three Sibyline oracles that all are basically Jewish, even though they may derive from different periods. It is well known that the precise nature of these oracles and the chronology of the individual books of the *Oracula* is highly debated, but we will not be bogged down in those discussions and stick to the most reasonable dates.

1. *Oracula Sibyllina III*

We start with the descriptions in the oldest Sibylline book, *Oracula III*. In his authoritative discussion, John Collins considers this book to derive from Egyptian Judaism around 163–145 BC, but recent discussions are more reticent and less sure of themselves. One can now hardly state a very specific date with extreme confidence, and it seems safer to say that the oracles
APPENDIX 2

originated in the first century BC, in any case before Vergil and Horace made use of them.** However this may be, the first picture of a kind of Paradise in this world is told after the prophecy of the destruction of the Macedonians by a 'great king from Asia' (611):88

And then God will give great joy to men,**
for earth and trees and countless flocks of sheep
will give to men the true fruit
of wine, sweet honey and white milk
and corn, which is best of all for mortals.

(619 – 23, tr. Collins)

At first sight the connection of honey with trees may surprise, but hollow trees as suppliers of honey already figure in Hesiod’s Works and Days (233).89 The combined mention of milk, honey and wine is traditional in descriptions of the Golden Age.** From where did the author derive this triad of natural fluids (with honey admittedly less fluid than the other two)? He certainly must have known the biblical expression ‘a land of milk and honey’, which occurs several times in the Old Testament and is usually connected with the land that God has promised to his people.92 It is symbolic of a rich country, but also of a country where the products of the land come naturally without any effort by the farmer’s hand. As it is so often mentioned in a promise, it was only natural to use the expression also in a characterisation of the earth after the defeat of God’s enemies, as in Oracula V (282–3), a Jewish oracle from about AD 100. In fact, our author could have easily referred to this biblical pairing only, but why did he add wine instead?

In his seminal study of the place of milk, honey and wine in ancient ritual Fritz Graf has noted that milk and honey are constitutive for ‘Selige Vergangenheit, Gegenwart oder Zukunft’, with wine usually being absent in these descriptions.” The Italian classicist Casadio has taken him to task for these words, since according to him ‘nel repertorio dionisiaco (come è abbastanza ovvio) sia in quello sibillino il vino è tutt’altro che assente’.” At first sight, this is indeed ‘obvious’. But things are rarely what they seem to be, certainly not in the Dionysiac sphere. When we look at the available evidence, we can only note that Dionysus indeed manifests himself with milk, honey and wine, but not necessarily with all of these three fluids. Well known are of course the verses in which Dionysus manifests his power in Euripides’ Bacchne: ‘the ground flows with milk, it flows with wine, it flows with the nectar of bees’ (142–3); similarly, in the report about the maenads we hear that: ‘for her the god sent up a spring of wine. Those who had a longing for the white drink scraped at the earth with their finger-tips and had streams of milk; and from the ivy thyrsoi dripped sweet honey’ (707 – 11, tr. R. Seafood).95 The connection with the maenads recurs in Horace (Od. 2.19.9–12), but Seneca (Oedipus 491 – 6) slightly varies the triad by replacing honey with thyme, a
plant much loved by bees. Finally, from this Dionysiac or Sibylline tradition, milk, honey and wine also occur in the picture of the heavenly Jerusalem in Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* 7.24.7).

On the other hand, Plato (*Ion* 534A), Aeschines (fr. 11 Dittmar) and Antoninus Liberalis (10) mention only milk and honey, as Claudian still does in his description of the wedding of Stilicho (*Cons. Stil.* 1.85), whereas Euphorius (*Suppl. Hell.* 430 ii 24 Lloyd-Jones/Parsons) even seems to mention only milk in connection with the maenads. Finally, Callixinus (*FGrH* 627 F2.31) mentions the combination of wine and milk in his famous description of the Dionysiac procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus, as do Philostratus (*Im.* 1.14) and Claudian (*Rapt. Pros.* 2.351–3) in his description of another wedding, that of Hades and Persephone. We may conclude, then, that Graf wrongly supposed wine to be absent in pictures of a 'selige Gegenwart', but Casadio is equally wrong in supposing that wine is always present in Dionysos' epiphany. Depending on the context, it was evidently possible for authors to vary their picture of a blissful situation. In any case, it seems certain that our author eventually derived the mention of wine from a Dionysiac context.

It is rather striking, though, that the traditional occurrence of the three fluids in such a Utopian context is undercut by the mention of grain, 'the best of all for mortals'. Now the role of grain had become extremely important in Greek ideology since the Sophists, in particular Prodicus. However, given the Egyptian origin of the oracle it is hard not to also think of the pre-eminent position of Isis in Egypt as protectress of fertility. Herodotus (2.59, 156) had already identified her with Demeter, and in true Euhemerist fashion Diodorus Siculus (1.14.1–j) had made her the inventress of arable farming. Lack of further information, though, prevents us from drawing any clear conclusion.

It is stated somewhat later in *Oracula III*, after the coming of the Last Judgement (741–4) but before the eternal Kingdom (767–95), that there will come to the people 'a great judgement and beginning':

For the all-bearing earth will give the most excellent unlimited fruit to mortals, of grain, wine, and oil
and a delightful drink of sweet honey from heaven,
trees, fruit of the top branchies, and rich flocks
and herds and lambs of sheep and kids of goats.
And it will break forth sweet fountains of white milk.
The cities will be full of good things and the fields will be rich. There will be no sword on earth or din of battle, and the earth will no longer be shaken, groaning deeply.
There will no longer be war or drought on earth, no famine or hail, damaging to fruits,
but there will be great peace throughout the whole earth.
King will be friend to king to the end of the age.
The Immortal in the starry heaven will put in effect
a common law for men throughout the whole earth
for all that is done among wretched mortals.
For he himself alone is God and there is no other,
and he himself will burn with fire a race of grievous men.

(744–61, tr. Collins)

Geffcken, who is followed by Gauger, bracketed 746–8, whereas Lactantius (Div. Inst. 7.20) ascribes these three verses to the Erythraean Sibyl, the oldest of the many Sibyls that populated the imagination of the Roman empire and probably the most famous. There is indeed no Jewish or Christian touch in these verses, except of course for the mention of the uniqueness of God (760).

Once again, we are confronted with the gift of grain, wine but now also oil, which is rather unusual in this context. We meet oil only once more in a description of the 'good old times' in Onesicritus' (FGrH 134 F 17) report on the gymnosophists. According to one of them, Calanus, there were fountains with milk, wine, honey, water, wine and olive oil 'in olden times'. This was of course before man became unhappy with this kind of simplicity. Oil, then, may well have come from such a 'culture-critical' kind of literature. It is indeed more natural that 749 follows now with the milk than the intervening verses, which look very much inspired by the absence of honey in the classic enumeration of the fluids of the Golden Age. The detailed report on herd-animals, in particular, is hardly part of the original prophecy.

The absence of war is of course another standing topic in such descriptions. It is already part of the picture of the Golden Age in Teleclides (F 1 K.-A.), and a recurring feature of the Golden Age in Roman literature. It is rather interesting that the Sibyl uses here the word *kudōn*os, which seems to be the *terminus technicus* in descriptions of the absence of war; witness its presence in Empedocles' (B 128 DK) description of the era without Ares and in Aratus' description of the Golden Age in his *Phaenomena* (109). In Hellenistic literature, though, the theme became refined by the mention of the introduction of the sword, which we find first in Aratus' description of the Bronze Age (131). It was taken up by Cicero in his translation of Aratus (fr. 17 Buescu) and from there made its way into Vergil (G. 2.539–40), Tibullus (1.3.47) and Ovid (Met. 1.99).

Very unusual, if not unique, is the mention of the absence of earthquakes. Now it was common knowledge among the Greeks and Romans of the time that they occurred very rarely in Egypt, although the locals told Strabo (17.1.46) that an earthquake had caused the partial collapse of one of the *kálosoi* of Memnon. In any case, this is such a strange item in these traditional descriptions that I would be inclined to correlate its mention with the memory of a recent earthquake.

The absence of war finds its counterpart in the presence of peace, which is expressed by the friendship among kings and the presence of a general law for all. In the friendship between kings we may see the wish to see an end to the warring Hellenistic kings of the period. Although Dike already figured in
Aratus' Golden Age (Phaen. 113), the notion of a common law is probably derived from the Stoics. As v. 768–9 shows, 'he who once gave the holy Law to the pious', the law is the Mosaic law, a fairly rare idea."" However, such a Jewish interpretation is perhaps to be expected in the Sibylline Oracles.

A last picture of heavenly bliss is given after the establishment of the eternal Kingdom and the coming into being of a peaceful situation where the prophets are kings and wealth is honestly gained:

Rejoice, maiden, and be glad, for to you the one who created heaven and earth has given the joy of the age. He will dwell in you. You will have immortal light.
Wolves and lambs will eat grass together with kids. Roving bears will spend the night with calves. The flesh-eating lion will eat husks at the manger like an ox, and mere infant children will lead them with ropes. For he will make the beasts on earth harmless. Serpents and asps will sleep with babies and will not harm them, for the hand of God will be upon them.

(785–95, tr. Collins)

As Norden already noticed, in such prophecies the mention of joy is a traditional theme, which is not absent from the New Testament (Luke 2.10) either."" The announcement of lux perpetua is equally traditional. There is a continuous fascination with light from the moment that the Orphics started to elaborate an attractive afterlife."" Light also features in Vergil's (Aen. 6.641) and Valerius Flaccus' Elysium (1.842); even Claudian's Hades promises Proserpina lumen purius (Rapt. Pros. 2.283–4). This aspect will become the striking characteristic of heaven for the Christian faithful.""

Peace in the animal kingdom and peace between ferocious animals and humans are two different motifs, which are harmoniously united here. The first is once again ascribed to the Erythraean Sibyl by Lactantius (Div. Inst. 7.24.12), and of course, like the second motif, is an adaptation of the famous prophecy from Isaiah (11.6–8). This is a rare purely Jewish contribution in this connection, which also influenced the author of Baruch (73.6) and Philo (de praem. 85–90). It should moreover be noticed that the author of the Oracula could not have found the motifs in his Greek literature, since they are absent there. As even the references to animal peace in Vergil (Ecl. 4.22) and Horace (Ep. 16.51) point rather to the absence of wild animals, the uniqueness of the passage is the more striking.""

2. Oracula Sibyllina II

We now turn to Book II, which is commonly dated to AD 100–150 and is considered by John Collins to be of Jewish origin but possibly modified by
a Christian author. After a detailed picture of the fate of the unjust, it is said that

the others, as many as were concerned with justice and noble deeds, and piety and most righteous thoughts, angels will lift them through the blazing river and bring them to light and to life without care, in which is the immortal path of the great God and three springs of wine, honey and milk. The earth will belong equally to all, undivided by walls or fences. It will then bear more abundant fruits spontaneously. Lives will be in common and wealth will have no division.

For there will be no poor man there, no rich, no tyrant, no slave. Further no one will be either great or small any more. No kings, no leaders. All will be on a par together. No longer will anyone say at all 'night has come' or 'tomorrow' or 'it happened yesterday', or worry about many days. No spring, no summer, no winter, no autumn, no marriage, no death, no sales, no purchases, no sunset, no sunrise. For he will make a long day.

(313–29, tr. Collins)

Subsequently we find here the following motifs:

a. Sources of wine, milk and honey (318). We have already studied the motif, which the poet of Oracula II clearly derived from the Dionysiac sphere. We may note, however, that he innovated by letting milk and honey come from wells, which in classical literature we do not find before Seneca's Oedipus (495).

b. Communal ownership of land and the absence of any walls or hedges (319–20). It is rather strange that this theme seems to be attested only in Roman literature where it enjoyed a great popularity in descriptions of the Golden Age or the Saturnina regna. The theme comes to the fore in Vergil's Georgica (1.126–7). Franz Bomer (on Ovid, Met. 1.135) suggests that it belongs to the 'hellenistische Topik', but he does not supply any parallels nor have I been able to find any. In any case, such an origin would not explain the sudden popularity of the theme in Roman poetry of the second half of the first century BC, which can hardly be dissociated from the traumatic experiences of the civil wars when property was anything but safe.

c. Food grows without agriculture (320–1). Although only touched upon, the theme is stressed by the enjambement of automatē (321). It is perhaps not chance that the poet pays very little attention to the theme, since it had often been described in the Greek poetical tradition, starting from Hesiod
(Op. 118) and culminating in Old Comedy, where descriptions of food growing automatically or being limitlessly available were highly popular.\textsuperscript{108}

d. \textit{No social hierarchy and thus no slavery} (322–4). The theme of 'automatic' food unsurprisingly leads to a description of a non-hierarchical, slaveless society, since the combination of both themes was well established in Old Comedy, as appears from Crates' \textit{Wild animals} (F 16 K.-A.), Cratinus' \textit{Ploutoi} (F 176 K.-A.) and Teleclides' \textit{Amphictyones} (F 1 K.-A.), which Lucian (\textit{Sat. 7}) probably had in mind in his picture of the Saturnalia. In Old Comedy, though, slaves never had the upper hand and there was clearly a limit to the imagination of reversals.\textsuperscript{109} However, our author goes much further. He not only 'abolished' slavery but also had no place for tyrants, kings and rulers. It seems that he had 'updated' the old motifs by reference to his own age with its powerful rulers. Unlike one might have expected, this did not make him into an anarchist \textit{avant la lettre}, since the vision did not envision an acephalous society. On the contrary. All human rulers will be replaced by the \textit{pantokrator} (330) god, a popular epithet of God from the Jewish tradition.\textsuperscript{110}

e. \textit{Eternal light and the abolition of seasons} (325–9). In this paradise there will be no more night or day, but there will be light for ever. We have already commented upon the importance of light (section 1) and we will add here only that our passage reminds us of \textit{Revelation} (21.23, 22.5), where it is said that there will be no more sun or moon, since the splendour of the Lord will give light. In turn, \textit{Revelation} may well have been influenced by the prophecy in Zechariah (14.6–7) that 'it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light.' The \textit{Septuagint} slightly modified verse 6 by translating 'on that day there shall be no light nor cold or frost'. This clearly hints at the abolition of seasons and may well be in the background of our passage.

The disappearance of all seasons is somewhat surprising, since in Roman times eternal spring becomes a recurrent feature of the Golden Age and the \textit{locus amoenus}.\textsuperscript{111} In the afterlife, too, the all too short Mediterranean spring can be found among both pagans and Christians (Ch. 5.2). Yet the absence of seasons is not completely absent from Greek utopian tradition, since, in a description of life in the reign of Kronos, Plato (\textit{Politikos} 272A) already mentions that the seasons had been tempered so as to cause primeval man no grief. Similarly, in the Utopian picture of Horace's \textit{Epode} 16 (56), Jupiter is said \textit{utrumque rege temperante caelitum}, 'moderating each of the two [extremes of climate]'. The disappearance of the seasons probably reached its finest expression in a hymn (9) of Ephraem the Syrian (ca. 306–73 AD), in whose Paradise the souls of the blessed are even depicted as living in trees which offer shelter, fruit and perfume (Ch. 5.2). In all these cases, the phenomenon is a good thing. However, it
could also appear as a perversion of nature. According to Lactantius (Inst. Ep. 66.5), the time of the senectus mundi is also the time of biene atque aetate confusis.\textsuperscript{11}2

3. \textit{Oracula Sibyllina} VIII

As Norden observed, 'Die judaeischen Sibyllinen strotzen von pobelhaften Ausfällen gegen Rom' (\textit{sic}).\textsuperscript{11}3 Anti-Roman prophecies indeed fill the first half of \textit{Oracula} VIII, which is commonly dated to the later second century AD. Among its oracles is an eschatological prophecy, which may be of Jewish origin but which seems to have been revised in a Christian key:

\begin{quote}
There will be a resurrection of the dead
and most swift racing of the lame, and the deaf will hear
and blind will see, those who cannot speak will speak,
and life and wealth will be common to all.
The earth will equally belong to all, not divided
by walls or fences, and will then bear more abundant fruits.
It will give fountains of sweet wine and white milk
and honey.
\end{quote}

(205–12, tr. Collins)

The Christian character of these verses seems clear through the reference to the resurrection, which until now had been absent from depictions of a blissful paradise and Jewish images.\textsuperscript{11}4 The following beneficent reversal of physical defects looks very much like \textit{Matthew} 11.5, which, in turn, draws upon the many similar pictures from Isaiah.\textsuperscript{11}5 The passage is closed by verses taken from \textit{Oracula} II (318–21), which we have already discussed and which do not add anything new.

4. The \textit{Oracula Sibyllina}: a fusion of traditions

Having looked at the individual motifs we can conclude that the various Jewish authors hardly made use of their own tradition but mainly drew on pagan literature for their elaboration of Paradise. Perhaps only the disappearance of the seasons is a new motif, but even here we cannot be certain of the authors' originality, considering the loss of so much ancient literature. The reception of pagan material is not as strange as it looks. Once the Hellenising Jews of the intertestamentary period elaborated their eschatology, what else could they do but have recourse to pagan descriptions of similar places? These pagan \textit{topoi} were perfectly appropriate and helped to fill the void of their own tradition. And they were not alone in this procedure, since the Christian imagination of the afterlife drew equally heavily on pagan culture (Ch. 5.2). In this respect, Judaeo-Christian traditions were more indebted to their pagan environment than many of their later followers have realised.\textsuperscript{11}6
APPENDIX 3

GOD'S HEAVENLY PALACE AS A MILITARY COURT

The Vision of Dorotheus

Some years after the Second World War a number of papyri were discovered a few miles to the northeast of Nag Hammadi, which subsequently were named Bodmer Papyri after their owner, the Swiss collector Martin Bodmer. Although they thus were found in the same region as the famous collection of Coptic Gnostic manuscripts, they do not seem to have been part of that library.1 In 1984, a team from Geneva published the first nine pages of a codex from the Bodmer Papyri, a poem of 343 epic hexameters, called The Vision of Dorotheus.2 The edition was not a philological or historical milestone, but the editors deserve our gratitude for their decision to prefer a speedy publication over a lengthy delay. Fortunately, in 1987 my compatriots Kessels and Van der Horst published a revised text with an English translation and a short commentary, the best to date.3 The Vision gives a highly idiosyncratic picture of God's heavenly palace and therefore deserves some attention in our study. In this appendix I shall first summarise the vision (section 1), then briefly discuss its date and the name of the author (section 2), and conclude with his milieu and intention (section 3).

1. The Vision of Dorotheus

After the protagonist of the vision, Dorotheus (section 2), has thanked God (1–3), he relates how he received a vision when he was sitting in the imperial palace at noon – the time for an epiphany in antiquity.4 He sees himself standing in the forecourt of the palace of God, whom he views in full glory (10–16). Very abruptly the picture changes. Dorotheus relates how he was sitting as ostiarius (gatekeeper) in the middle of the praepositi (commanders) of the divine bodyguard, in the company of a (the?) domesticus (administrator) of God (16–18). In the following, very fragmentary passage Christ appears (19) with Gabriel (24), the only angel who is mentioned by name. The protagonist receives a great privilege, as he is changed 'in form and in stature' (19–41). He now becomes a tiro (recruit) near the biarchoi, a lower rank in the imperial bodyguard (42–52).

Again, there follows a damaged passage, in which the protagonist three
times commits an offence. Firstly he fails to pay the honour due to God, at which he is again reduced to the ranks of *ostiarius* (56, 120, 131), a function he does not carry out as he should (61, 132); in addition, he seems to be back in his old body. Secondly, he slanders the *domesticus*, and, finally, he tries to mislead Christ in the presence of his Father (53–95). These trespasses are followed by a moment of regret and self-reflection (96–109), but he receives short shrift from Christ, who has him thrown into prison (96–142).

Here an enraged Christ orders him to be whipped until his bones become visible. But Dorotheus perseveres and, despite it all, he is restored to his function of *ostiarius* (143–67). For this severe beating, God thanks Christ and Gabriel (168–81), both of whom now call on Dorotheus to appear before God's face. At first, God wants to send him away, but Christ and Gabriel put in a word for him and maintain him in his position (182–97). Dorotheus has another, unfortunately unclear, request, which results in his washing himself. Then God asks him whether he really wants to stand near the gate. When Dorotheus assents, he has to choose a patron and he chooses *Andreas* (198–226).

He is now called Andrew and is baptised by Jesus in order to put the seal upon his new name. Immediately, he assumes a new, much larger and younger figure. Christ addresses him in an encouraging way and points out that now, when exercising his duty, he has to demonstrate restrained courage (227–77). While the fragmentary state of the papyrus allows no certainty, it seems that his courage is now being put to the test. When Dorotheus has proved himself, Christ positions him near the gate after having inspired him with courage. He is dressed in the uniform of the scholae *palatinae* of which he is clearly proud (297–337). Then he awakens from his vision and writes finally: 'I prayed to be a messenger in the service of God Most High of all the things that he laid upon me. And in my heart he has laid songs of various kinds so as to keep guard and sing about the deeds of the righteous and also of Christ the Lord, year after year ever more delightful for a singer' (339–43).

### 2. Author and date

When was this poem written and who was the author? Unfortunately, the date of the codex with the Vision is not completely clear, and it has been assigned both to the second half of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth century. Although the personal hand of the Vision makes the dating difficult, the earlier period seems more attractive.' The *editio princeps*, followed by Kessels and Van der Horst (n. 4), suggests that the actual poem was written around the turn of the third and fourth century. Their dating is based on two pieces of evidence: the name of the poet, Dorotheus son of Quintus 'the poet' (l. 300 and the *subscriptio*), whom the first editors tentatively identify with Quintus Smyrnæus, and the mention of a Dorotheus who was martyred under Diocletian (Eus. *HE* 8.1.4). Van Berchem seems to put the date a little later, as he compares the outfit of Dorotheus (cf. below) with that of the soldiers on
Appendix 3

Galerius' arch at Thessalonika.8 Finally, Enrico Livrea (n. 3, 692) proposes a dace between 342–62 on the basis of an eighth-century tradition that a 107-pear-old (!) Christian bishop of Tyre, Dorotheus, was martyred under Julian the Apostle.

The publication of the rest of the codex has now confirmed that the author of the vision was indeed called Dorotheus son of Quintus.9 This Quintus could conceivably be the poet Quintus of Smyrna, whom various indications put between the mid-third century and the early fourth century.10 However, an analysis of the military terms in the vision can put the dating on a much more solid basis. Admittedly, in his extensive review of the editio princeps, Livrea (n. 3, 687) has called the many functionaries mentioned in the Vision 'misteriosi personaggi', as if they were beings from a different planet. Yet, it is these functionaries who provide us with an important key towards the dating, since they can help establish a terminus post quem.

Given the presence of many soldiers in a military organisation close to God in his heavenly palace, it seems a reasonable working hypothesis that Dorotheus has transferred the organisation of the imperial guards to God's palace.11 If the poem dates from the period of Diocletian, we would expect to find a reflection of the contemporary organisation of praetorian guards. On the other hand, if the poem is of a later date, we may expect to find the cavalry units which Constantine introduced after he disbanded the praetorians in 312.12 And indeed, cavalry ranks are exactly what we find here, witness a well-known passage from Jerome in which they are enumerated.13 Jerome's pamphlet dates from 396, which still leaves a chronological gap of about 50 years. Can we be more precise?

The presence of the biarchos (43) in the imperial schola is first attested in 327.14 The domesticus (18, 86–7), who is closely connected with the praepositus (86–7), is most likely one of the tribuni of the schola. This domesticus, who is rarely found in our sources, is first mentioned in 355 but only under Valentinian I (364–75) did the rank become firmly institutionalised. The 'primicerius of the Lord' (49) is perhaps modelled on the primicerius notariorum, who is first attested in 381. Ammianus (25.8.18), though, mentions a primus inter notarios omnes as early as 363, and Libanius' correspondence with Bassus suggests that the latter was primicerius notariorum in 358. However, the fact that those members of the schola notariorum, who were above the grade of domestici et notarii, became clarissimi after 367 points rather to the time of Valentinian I; the more so as Julian had greatly reduced the number of notarii. Finally, the end of the Vision mentions the orarium (322), a kind of cravat, which in its military meaning is mentioned only in a papyrus dated to the period 360–450 AD. All indications, then, point to a date for Dorotheus somewhere in the second half of the fourth century. Consequently, the tradition of a martyr called Dorotheus under Julian the Apostle, as quoted by Livrea, would be possible in theory. However, this can hardly be his aged bishop. Studies of the martyrs under Julian the Apostle do not accept the
authenticity of this tradition," and the qualification of Dorotheus' literary activity as 'outstanding with words' certainly does not fit our amateur poet."

A mid-seventh century papyrus does indeed mention a martyr Dorotheus, but its fragmentary state prevents us from knowing anything more." The identity of our Dorotheus, then, has to remain an enigma, but the connection with Quintus of Smyrna remains possible."

3. Milieu and social position

Despite our ignorance of the identity of the author, can we still infer something about his milieu and social position? It is evident that the author knows Homer; one could even say that the poem is a Homeric cento; he also quotes Hesiod and, in the last line, the end of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica - the main three school authors of the time." Although, then, he is not without culture, he also allows himself much licence and makes many prosodic mistakes, which we do not find in Quintus Smyrnaeus. The author also quotes a number of rare and unusual words, which are found in Hesychius, and uses uncommon forms of verbs. It is typical of this culture which likes to show off its erudition, that Dorotheus also employs some philosophical terms."

Can we say more about his spiritual background? The American papyrologist MacCoull has argued for agnostic influence, since two epithets of God in the Vision, autophyês (12) and pantaktos (11), twice occur in the Nag Hammadi writings, the latter in the form agennêtos. However, autophyês similarly occurs as an epithet of God in the well-known oracle of Klaros, which has now been found again in slightly expanded form in an inscription on the wall of Oenoanda (SEG 27.933); this epithet has a clear Stoic background. Pantaktos may be compared with amêtôr, 'without mother', as an epithet of God in the same inscription." Moreover, its occurrence in Lactantius (Div. Inst. 1.7) shows that the oracle must have been well known outside Oenoanda. The vocabulary of the oracle, then, can hardly be used to demonstrate gnostic influence in the Vision.

Livrea goes even farther and suggests that Dorotheus is the author of a profound, gnostic allegory. For this interpretation he adduces four main arguments:"

(1) At the end of the vision Dorotheus receives a new outfit (328–35):

From afar the men looked at me in astonishment, seeing how big I was and that I did not have simple clothing, but a cloak, when I was standing at the gate as before, was I wearing, made for me from two different sorts of linen (?). I stood with an orarium wrapped around my neck and round my legs I wore breeches rising on high. And I also wore a glittering girdle. As before I appeared standing at the gate.
This passage Livrea wants to interpret in the light of Proclus' statement that myths customarily take clothes as symbols of incorporeal lives."

(2) He finds a similar initiation through assuming a new garment in the Orphic fragment no. 238 (Kern = Macr. Sat. 1.18.22).

(3) He compares the splendid robe of the son of the king in the Hymn of the Acts of Thomas, which symbolizes immortality or the image of God, and which man regains when he is dressed with his heavenly double, his twin brother Jesus, with the soldier's cloak in the just quoted passage of the Vision. This cloak, according to Livrea, is the eikōn, the heavenly double of the Spirit, and the two kinds of linen are a representation of the nous and the psyche, united after christening.

(4) Another connection between the Vision and the Hymn Livrea sees in the name Andreas, which Dorotheus assumes before being baptised (226–7), and which recurs, so Livrea suggests, in the (Greek) words spoken in the Hymn (91–2): 'I belong to the most valiant servant, for whom they reared me before my father'.

Unfortunately, Livrea's interpretation is completely unconvincing, as a closer inspection of his arguments will show. As regards the final passage of the Vision, his interpretation finds no support in the text and fails to take into account the realistic background of this passage. Normally, soldiers had only a linen undergarment, the camisia, but the members of the schola palatina also possessed an overgarment of white linen, which gave them the name of candidati. Other details mentioned in the text, such as the breeches and the cravat, also fit a soldier's outfit but hardly Livrea's allegorical interpretation; not surprisingly, he fails to take them into account in his analysis and thus overlooks an important aspect of fourth-century Roman culture: the love of uniforms." Livrea's Orphic fragment is not persuasive either, as it mentions the nebris, a piece of clothing which we know to have been actually worn by Dionysos' followers.

As regards the Hymn of the Pearl and the Acts of Thomas, it is doubtful whether we can really call these works gnostic. In his introduction to the most recent edition of the English standard translation, Han Drijvers has stressed that they lack all typical gnostic traits and are marked by a soteriological character."

Finally, Livrea's interpretation of the name Andreas passes over other indications in the text. Dorotheus chooses his name, as courage failed him: immediately after he had received his new name, Jesus prayed to God for faith and courage (andreian: 229). At the end of the Vision (306–7) he also states that he used to be a coward but now feels himself to be a hero, who even wants to be sent out to foreign places. To conclude, Livrea's gnostic interpretation is built on sand and lacks a solid basis."

It would of course be much more satisfactory if, after having declined Livrea's interpretation, we could offer a convincing, new view of the Vision. This is not the case. We do not even know the purpose of the Vision's codex.
There are some indications that it has been used for a school exercise, but this has also been contested. We may observe, though, that Dorotheus heavily stresses poetic inspiration. Right at the beginning, in lines 1–3, he states that God has put in his heart 'the desire for graceful song'. The theme recurs after his flogging, when he thanks Gabriel for 'putting graceful song into my heart' (173–4). Finally, he concludes his vision with the hope that he will 'sing about the deeds of the righteous and also of Christ the Lord, year after year ever more delightful for a singer' (342–3).

Yet, this emphasis on poetic inspiration does not help us reach a closer understanding of the author's poetic purpose. His poem is rather unusual in early-Christian literature, where hexametric poetry is not found that often: before Dorotheus we only have the Oracula Sibyllina VI–VIII and the poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus. What does this mean? And what is the precise theological background of the vision? A grim, cruel Christ, as appearing in this poem, is rather unique in early Christian theology; the closest parallel occurs in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (3, 5), a document whose tradition is so complicated that it cannot be dated easily. Is it significant that visions of God in heaven are typical of the Jewish Hekhalot-literature and that the whipping by angels also occurs in the Babylonian Talmud (Chagiga 15a)? But then, whipping angels also occur both in the third-century Visio Pauli (2) and the much later Martyrium Petri (17) of Pseudo-Linus. Does the vision perhaps have a hidden meaning, in so far that Dorotheus has only penetrated half way into the Kingdom of God, in other words, only into His forecourt? Or does it have a connection with his forthcoming martyrdom? The Vision of Dorotheus still poses many problems.