

## NOTIUNCULAE MARTYROLOGICAE IV

BY

JAN DEN BOEFT and JAN BREMMER

A.A.R. Bastiaensen *et al*, *Atti e Passioni dei Martiri*. Milan, Arnaldo Mondadori Editore, 1987. XLIX, 620 pages.

For the study of the 'authentic' or 'genuine' *Acta Martyrum* scholars nowadays have three modern editions at their disposal: R. Knopf-G. Krüger-G. Ruhbach, *Ausgewählte Märtyrerakten* (Tübingen 1964<sup>4</sup>), H. Musurillo. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford 1972) and G. Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri come documenti processuali* (Milan 1973). From these editions Knopf lacks a proper introduction and notes. Lanata undoubtedly contains the most reliable texts and the most up-to-date commentaries, but unfortunately she keeps to the narrow scope formulated in her title, which is a definite drawback for a more general use. Musurillo, on the other hand, contains a full selection, a good introduction, a useful translation and ample notes. The popularity of this edition should, however, not conceal the fact that its overall execution leaves much to be desired, not in the last place its editorial activities. For example, in constituting the text of the *Martyrdom of Agape* Musurillo evidently did not want to bow to Franchi de' Cavalieri's authority: an independent but imprudent judgment.

Apart from the editions mentioned there have also been editions of individual *Acts*. Van Beek's edition of the *Passio Perpetuae* (Nijmegen 1936) is a classic example. Other good specimina are Siniscalco's elegant edition of the *Passio Maximiliani* (Turin 1974) and Dehandschutter's thorough study of the *Martyrium Polycarpi* (Louvain 1979). Then there are the translations. The Italian patristic cornucopia has yielded some recent fruits in this field too: Allegro (Rome 1974), Saxer (Padova 1984), and Caldarelli (Milan 1985). The obvious interest in the subject in Italy has now made possible the publication of a collection of 12 scholarly edited, translated and amply commented documents. We cannot hide our satisfaction that Dutch scholars are responsible for the

bulk of this fine piece of work, which will prove very helpful for those interested in the subject.

The selection of the texts does not give reason for grave objections. It is, however, somewhat surprising that one of Prudentius' *Peristephanon*, which is devoted to Agnes, has been preferred to, for example, the *Passions* of Fructuosus, Marcellus or Agape, the last mentioned being an excellent testimony to the Great Persecution in the eastern half of the empire. This is not to deny the brilliance of the poet or, for that matter, the value of the expert comments on the text in question.

The general introduction (IX-XLIX) has been written by A.A.R. Bastiaansen, whose expertise has resulted in a well-considered survey of the various aspects of the subject. Only in a few cases our judgment tends to be somewhat different. In the 5th section B. deals with the idea that the martyr is a "continuatore della figura di Gesù Cristo sacrificato". He gives vent to his reserves concerning "un legame tra eucaristia ed acta" (XXI), stressing the relation with the "liturgia della Parola", but he does not quite bring out the fundamental personal relationship of the martyrs with Christ, which cannot at all be summed up by the term 'imitation'. In our view this deeply felt relationship is one of the essentials of authentic Christian martyrdom. Whichever the precise origin and the further implications of the term '*Christianus*', for the martyrs themselves the confession '*Christianus sum*' implies this individual bond. "I have been his servant for 86 years and he has done me no injustice. How could I utter blasphemies against my king, who has saved me?", thus Polycarp's answer to the governor's invitation to curse Christ (*Mart.Pol.* 9.3). The martyr's testimony to this bond during an official interrogation by a Roman magistrate is the heart of the matter; it is quite comparable to Jesus' trial at the hands of Pilatus,<sup>1</sup>

B. has also very little to say about the enigmatic title μάρτυς (*martyr*), leaving this subject to an unsatisfactory note on *Mart.Pol* 1.1. Now it is true that in the collection under review the documents (*acta*) take prime place, but some discussion of the ecclesiastical title of the protagonists could have been expected by the reader.

In the treatment of the individual pieces there is a certain quantitative unevenness. The notes on the *Acta martyrum Scilitanorum* take the same space (some seven pages) as those on the long Lyonnese letter. Now with all due respect for one of the oldest documents of Christian Latin there is clearly something wrong with proportions here. The

Lyonnese letter is a fascinating document of paramount importance, which definitely asks for a less jejune treatment than is offered here. The fine collection of papers *Les martyrs de Lyon* (177) (Paris 1978) is neither used nor mentioned in the “Bibliografia essenziale” for the piece (p. 60). Curiously enough it figures in the “Bibliografia generale” (p. XLVII) for the whole book.

Generally speaking, the editorial part of the book (text and comments), undertaken by Dutch scholars, and the translating of the texts, done by their Italian colleagues, make an impression of soundness and reliability. The great learning demonstrated in the treatment of the *Acta Phileae* inspires awe, but the comments on the *Passio Perpetuae* and the *Martyrium Pionii* are perhaps the most admirable sections of the book. Here and there a critical remark is possible. Some examples: Dehandschutter’s study in our view has not received its due share in the pages allotted to the *Martyrium Polycarpi*. The rendering of λόγοι by “principi” in *Mart. Just.* 2.3-4 is less convincing than Lanata’s “dottrine” or Caldarelli’s “concezioni filosofiche”. The expression *mysterium simplicitatis* (*Act. mart. Scil.* 4) is explained as “il mistero della vera semplicità”, which apart from the unwarranted addition of ‘vera’ is hard to understand. We venture to refer to a discussion of the phrase in this journal 35.45-7. The curious resemblance of the urgent plea by Perpetua’s father to stereotyped formula’s of prayer (*Pass. Perp.* 5.2-3) is not noticed (see this journal 36.388-9). In the notes on *Mart. Pion.* 17.3, where some pagan ‘saints’ are mentioned, a reference to comparable passages (e.g. *Cic. Tusc.* 2.52, *Tert. Apol.* 50.5 sqq., *Orig. Cels.* 7.53) would have been opportune.

However, instead of continuing with such ‘minuta’, we rather prefer to demonstrate our appreciation by presenting another small collection of *notiunculae*,<sup>2</sup> which were inspired by the study of this book.

*Martyrium Polycarpi*: date and ‘couleur locale’. In general, the commentaries in this collection are more interested in philological and theological aspects of the *Acts* than in the historical questions they pose. The section on the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is a typical case in point. It lacks a discussion of the date and pays virtually no attention to local institutions. Yet there is certainly room for some observations on both these aspects.

We will start with the date of the martyrdom which has long been disputed due to the differences between Eusebius, who states that

Polycarp died in 167, and chapter 21 of the martyrdom, which implies a date around 155. Already Jean Bolland observed *quod anni ac diei* (of Polycarp's death) *varii a veteribus characteres non congruant*.<sup>3</sup> However, in 1980 the *Analecta Bollandiana* published a study by P. Brind d'Amour, who once again argued for 167 as the year of Polycarp's death. The author displayed such great and convincing astronomical learning in his article that in reviewing the *Atti* in *Analecta* 107 (1989) 210 sqq.) P. Devos criticized the authors of the comments on *Mart. Pol.* and *Mart. Pionii* for having failed to accept this convincing solution. But how convincing is it?

The Canadian ancient historian starts from the observation that the 'great sabbath', mentioned in c. 21, actually was a Sunday. This day would indeed fit in perfectly with Eusebius' notice that the year was 167, a notice confirmed by the astronomical data. Yet the thesis is in flagrant contradiction with the text of the martyrdom. It is explicitly observed in c. 7 that the *diogmitae* (below) started their pursuit of Polycarp on a Friday. Later in the evening of the same day they found the martyr on the estate where he was staying with a few friends. On the next day, 'the great sabbath' (c. 8), they brought him back into the city. There is nothing in our text which suggests that a whole day was spent on Polycarp's estate before returning to the city. On the contrary, Polycarp asked for only one hour respite before they were to conduct him back.

It is true that the exact meaning of the expression 'the great sabbath' is still obscure. Rordorf has recently suggested that it refers to the *Terminalia*, a festival which 'noch bis ins 5 Jahrhundert hinein beliebt war', adducing Prudentius (*Contra Symmachum* 2.1009) and Augustine (*civ.* 7.7) in order to illustrate its popularity.<sup>4</sup> Prudentius, though, comments that Terminus no longer receives offerings and Augustine clearly derives his knowledge of Terminus from Varro; moreover, the *Terminalia* are not attested outside Rome itself.<sup>5</sup> This solution evidently will not do. But whatever the origin of the expression may be, the sabbath certainly was a Saturday. Brind d'Amour evidently overlooked the fact that Pionius, too, was arrested on a Saturday, explicitly called a "great sabbath" (c. 2 and 3). Unfortunately, then, we have to accept that the precise date of Polycarp's death will remain disputed until more information turns up about the various persons mentioned in this martyrdom.

Regarding local luminaries and institutions,<sup>6</sup> the martyrium is much less informative than the *Martyrium Pionii* but not without value, as the



following examples may show. In c. 6f it is described how Polycarp is hunted down by the local police—the *eirenarchos*, and the ‘*diogmitae* and *hippeis* with their usual weapons’—as if he was a bandit. The comparison is revealing. The rural hinterland of Smyrna was of course ideally suited for brigandage, a phenomenon widely spread in Asia Minor,<sup>7</sup> and tracking down robbers must have been a routine job for the local police. The *eirenarchos* was usually a person from the highest classes, as apparently also was the case in Smyrna, as is shown by the fact that Herodes meets Polycarp in a stately carriage (8.2). In various inscriptions he is associated with the youth of the higher classes and they may well have constituted the cavalry accompanying the *diogmitae*.<sup>8</sup> The latter functioned as the local police, who not only had to trace suspects but also acted as prisonguards; in addition, in a number of cities they had to police the hinterland.<sup>9</sup> Contrary to the Roman soldiers, they were normally only provided with light arms, as presumably was the case during the hunt for Polycarp.

After Polycarp had been brought to the amphitheatre, the crowd, including the Jews,<sup>10</sup> asked the Asiarch Philippus to have a lion loosed on Polycarp. He refused, however, saying ἐπειδὴ πεπληρώκει τὰ κυνηγέσια, which is translated by Ronchey, the Italian translator of this martyrrium, as ‘i ludi gladiatorii essendosi già conclusi’ (12.2). The translation is incorrect. The κυνηγέσια, the Latin *venationes*, were the fights against animals, one of the munera of the Asiarchs.<sup>11</sup> These fights were so costly, however, that already at an early moment the Roman emperors had decided to limit the number of days and animals.<sup>12</sup> That is why Philip had to condemn Polycarp to be burned. On the stake, though, Polycarp did not burn as the fire had assumed the shape of a καμάρα, which Ronchey translates with ‘volta’. This is not necessarily incorrect, but it hides the fact that in Ionia, Lydia and Lycia the term was typical for vaulted tombs, an until now neglected indication in the debate about the authenticity of the martyrrium.<sup>13</sup>

*Martyrium Polycarpi* 2.3 οἵπερ μηκέτι ἄνθρωποι, ἀλλ’ ἤδη ἄγγελοι ἦσαν. In this passage it is told that the martyrs unwaveringly bore their tortures, having set their hearts’ eyes on the heavenly goods, shown to them by the Lord. They ‘were no longer men, but already angels’. This remarkable phrase has not received much attention. Dehandschutter refers to Mc 12.25 par. and especially to Acts 6.15. This last reference seems to be more relevant as it concerns the ‘protomartyr’ Stephen. During his interrogation by the council the participants εἶδον τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὥσει

πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου. Luke obviously means that those present perceived an unmistakable change in Stephen's countenance, which showed that somehow he was partaking of heavenly life. Because of the author's discreet wording the precise implications are difficult to ascertain.

The text under discussion is far more direct. In his well-known study of early martyrdom<sup>14</sup> Th. Baumeister deals rather cautiously with it. He speaks about a "Vergleich der Märtyrer mit Engeln in *Mart. Pol.* 2,3" (301) and calls the martyrs "schon mehr Engel als Menschen" (305). On the other hand, he can also express himself more clearly: "Die Märtyrer sind in ihrem Leiden schon Engel" (303), which does more justice to the remarkable contents of the text, for which there seem to be no exact martyrological parallels.

These are also lacking in the vast domain of texts which deal with the ἀγγελικός βίος, the way of life pursued by the different types of ascetics. Indeed the terminology at times is quite bold, but in his relevant study Frank stresses "dass Mensch—also auch Mönch—und Engel verschiedenen Seinsordnungen angehören. Eine Angleichung zwischen beiden kann deshalb nie den Bereich der Analogie überschreiten. Alle gegenseitigen Beziehungen können eigentlich immer nur in der Weise des Bildes und des Vergleichs ausgesagt werden. Insofern ist das Wort vom engelgleichen Leben immer nur Metapher".<sup>15</sup> Indeed, when Gregory of Nyssa describes his sister Macrina's disposition in the face of death, he goes no further than this phrase: οἷον ἀγγέλου τινὸς οἰκονομικῶς ἀνθρωπίνην ὑπελθόντος μορφήν (GNO VIII 1. 396.2-3). The great Macrina, as he calls her more than once, exceeded her 'nature', but she remained a human being.

The two vast thesauri of references to angels in patristic texts, Michl in *RAC* 5, 109-200 (Engel IV (christlich)) and Lampe, *PGL* s.v., do not yield anything fully comparable either. A passage like Or. *Hom. in Lev.* 9.11 (*sive ergo spiritalis effectus unus cum Domino spiritus fiat, sive per resurrectionis gloriam in angelorum ordinem transeat, recte iam non erit homo*) testifies to Origen's theological speculation and breathes a spirit which wholly differs from the straightforward statement in the lemma. Its unique character provokes further research.<sup>16</sup>

*Martyrium Polycarpi* 14.3 Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ περὶ πάντων σε αἰνῶ κτλ. Having been tied to the stake, Polycarp sends up a prayer of thanks, which he concludes with a eulogy, praising God περὶ πάντων. This phrase has not been interpreted in a uniform manner. Musurillo renders "above all" and Ronchey in the collection under review agrees with this: "al di sopra

di tutto”. Rauschen (BKV 14, 304) has “für alles”, a translation which can be paralleled by “pour toutes choses” (Camelot, SC 10bis, 263), “om alles” (Dehandschutter), “per tutte le cose” (Allegro).

It is not easy to decide which interpretation is correct. The phrase occurs only once in the NT, viz. 3Joh 2 *περὶ πάντων εὐχομαί σε εὐδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν* and here too it is differently explained. The *Vetus Latina* versions provide *per omnia*, *de omnibus* and *in omnibus*. Bauer s.v. *περί* proposes “in allen Stücken”, “in jeder Hinsicht” with a reference to Plato, *Gorg.* 467D, where the context, however, is completely different and the expression is rather used to shorten the discussion (‘in all such cases’). Zerwick-Grosvenor ad loc. have “in every way”. Blass-Debrunner-Rehkopf § 229 n.4, however, assume an equivalence with *πρὸ πάντων* in papyri (“vor allem”), “obwohl sonst *περὶ πάντων* in dieser Bed. nicht belegt zu sein scheint”. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* p. 63 remarks that such a rendering “seems improbable unless clear parallels are found”.

The restriction last mentioned indeed hits the nail on the head. Of course *περί* “im Sinne der Überlegenheit...des Übermasses oder hohen Grades” (Schwyzer-Debrunner II 500) is a well-known phenomenon in Homer, e.g. *Il.* 2.831-2 *ὅς περὶ πάντων / ἦδε μαντοσύνας*, and as a preverb it has sometimes kept such a sense (e.g. *περιγίγνεσθαι*), but the most usual function of *περί* c. gen. is “to denote the object *about* or *for which* one does something” (*LSJ* s.v. A II). This tallies quite well with the text of the lemma. Polycarp thanks God for the knowledge of Him which he has received from Christ and for the fact that he is deemed worthy of the sacrifice of martyrdom. These are the most important things he can think of, the fulfilment of his entire life, so that he can praise God ‘in every respect’.

*Martyrium Carpi* 9-20. Both the Greek (§ 9-20) and the Latin (§ 2-8) versions of these *Acts* contain a debate about religion between Carpus and the proconsul. At first the two versions are fairly similar, but gradually they begin to diverge, leaving only small traces of resemblance between § 14-15 (G) and § 7 (L). Subsequently, the Greek text continues with a further development about the pagan gods (§ 16-20), in which Von Harnack detects “ein philosophisches Gepräge” and which Lietzmann calls an “apologetischer Exkurs”. Lanata, whose parallel presentation of the two texts is most enlightening and helpful, follows the footsteps of Franchi de’ Cavalieri<sup>17</sup> by concluding that this passage is “certamente tardiva e rimaneggiata”.

This verdict can hardly be challenged, but before commenting on this part some attention has to be given to the first half of the debate. As regards its authenticity Lanata is less sceptical than Franchi and probably rightly so. Carpus' quotation of Jer. 10.11 cannot be regarded as a fully unlikely element. it occurs in other *Acts* too and is listed as one of the biblical testimonia *de idolis quae gentiles deos putant* by Cyprian (*Quir.* 3.59, CCL III 1.148.34). Besides, it is a variation on the theme of God as the sole creator of the universe, which frequently recurs in the *Acta Martyrum*. For example, in the *Acta Cypriani* (1.2) Cyprian answered the pro-consul's question regarding his views on Valerian's order to acknowledge the rites of Roman religion with the words: *Nullos alios deos novi, nisi unum et verum Deum, qui fecit caelum et terram, mare et omnia quae in eis sunt*.<sup>18</sup> This designation of God as the sole creator of the universe is also quoted in Acts 14.15, when the people of Lystra regard Paul and Barnabas as Zeus and Hermes and even prepare to offer sacrifice to them. Otherwise, though, the first three volumes of the *Biblia Patristica* hardly mention any other texts where Ex. 20.11 (or Ps. 146.6) is quoted or referred to.

Why this emphasis on the works of God? From the fifth century B.C. onwards there was a tendency to conceive of the deity who is the supreme ruler of the universe in as abstract and transcendental a way as was possible within the limits of the human language. It is against the background of this tendency, which we find in philosophers, such as Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles, that the development of the doctrine of the knowledge of God through his works took place. This theological strategy of compensating for the invisibility of the supreme god by insisting on his works we find elaborated in different ways in various cults and philosophies, as Theo Korteweg has shown.<sup>19</sup> Stoic philosophers tried to solve the problem in another manner, which basically consisted in an outright identification of God and universe, but such a radical solution was, of course, impossible for Christian thinkers.

St. Paul therefore, when speaking of God's invisible qualities, limited himself to observing that these 'have been visible, ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made' (Rom. 1.20). And the apologist Athenagoras considered the harmonic nature of the cosmos to be one of the 'pillars of piety' (*Leg.* 4.2). In the martyrs' *Acts* this argument is slightly twisted but still recognizable. The martyrs use the argument to support their declination to worship dead gods who are

made from silver, gold or some other material. They alone worship a living god who is clearly visible in his works. It is noteworthy that the martyrs so frequently employ this rationalistic language. Evidently, when defending their faith in front of a civilized public they used arguments which they must have deemed to be attractive to that public. At the same time, these arguments distinguish them from other so-called Oriental cults in the Roman Empire, such as those of Isis and Mithras. This rationalistic tendency of early Christianity deserves more attention than it has received so far in discussions of the rise of this religion.

Having looked at the first part of the debate we now turn to its second half. There can be little doubt that the 'demonological' passage § 16-20 does not belong to any official interrogation. Von Harnack's overall confidence is not at all shared by other scholars and this certainly is one of the 'suspect' parts of the document. Even his impression that it bears "ganz das Gepräge des Christenthums des zweiten Jahrhunderts" is questionable. It is true that the description of God as 'timeless' and 'unperishable' etc. in § 16 could have been from the hand of Athenagoras or Justinus. On the other hand, the different predicates of God were of course used in later theology too. Besides there seem to be indications in the sequel which make an early date less feasible.

Having dismissed the pagan gods as merely the material products of man and as perishable by time, Carpus next abruptly introduces a hypothetical objection about the successes of divination. Indeed this aspect is touched upon in 2nd century apologetic texts, e.g. Athenagoras, *Leg.* 26.3-5, Tert. *Apol.* 22.7, but its role is not prominent and it is rather mentioned as part of a larger complex, viz. of miracles, especially of healing.<sup>20</sup> Besides, there is a tendency to deny or to belittle the possibilities of divination rather than to explain the phenomenon, as in the present text. This explanation is two-fold. Such activities are not due to the non-existing gods, but to the evil spirits who make use of the facilities offered by polytheism.<sup>21</sup> These spirits of course know their own wicked intentions and future actions and, secondly, their great experience, which results from their long existence,<sup>22</sup> also contributes to their prophesying capacity.

Such a way of reasoning savours of a more systematic treatment of the divinatory department of demonology, the final form of which is provided in Augustine's *De divinatione daemonum*. Carpus' two explanations figure there too. Augustine's main argument, however, consists in the swift mobility of the demons' aerial bodies. Such a view

requires a more thorough theoretical handling of demonology than can be witnessed in the present text. It may tentatively be concluded that Carpus' exposition of divination shows a state in the development somewhere between the impressions of the apologetes and Augustine's systematic treatise.

*Martyrium Justini* 3.2. It is clear that during his interrogation the prefect Rusticus tried to find out all the details about the organization of the Christians in front of him. At first Justinus remained evasive, but when Rusticus persisted, he answered ἐγὼ ἐπάνω μένω τοῦ Μυρτίνου βαλανείου. Hilhorst comments that Myrtinos is not the name of a 'personaggio identificato' (but why should it?) and even wonders whether it is a 'nome di persona' at all. One can only share his doubt. None of the onomastic collections consulted by us mentions a Myrtinos.<sup>23</sup> Franchi de' Cavalieri once thought that the name was a corruption of the known *balineum Mamertinum*.<sup>24</sup> This is perhaps not impossible, as the later recension B has τινὸς Μαρτίνου τοῦ Τιμιοτίνου. On the other hand, a small correction would solve the problem as well: Μυρτίλου, a very common name.

Archeological excavations in Ostia and elsewhere suggest that not uncommonly the quarters above small baths were rented as lodgings.<sup>25</sup> And indeed, Seneca writes in his well-known 56th Letter about the busy life in Baiae: *super ipsum balneum habito* (c. 1).

*Martyrium Justini* 4.2 Χαριτὼ εἶπεν· Χριστιανή εἰμι τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ δωρεᾷ. It is a well-known fact that specifically Christian names were only gradually introduced and that many names which seem to have a Christian ring already occurred in pagan society. This is not to deny that such names could receive a fresh sense in the light of the Christian faith. There is a clear illustration of this in ch. 2 of the *Martyrium Agapes*, where the editor links the names Agape, Irene and Chione with 1 Tim. 1.5, Joh. 14.27 and Ps. 51.9 respectively. A far more interesting case is *Mart. Just.* 4.2 and 3, where some martyrs in answering the presiding prefect interpret their names in a Christian sense themselves. Euelpistus' answer in § 3, τῆς αὐτῆς ἐλπίδος μετέχω, has been duly noticed by Whittaker and Hilhorst.<sup>26</sup> There is another clear example in § 2, where the only woman in Justinus' group says the words quoted above. This case did not escape Bartelink in his study of early Christian names and their allusions.<sup>27</sup> It is remarkable, though, that the name of this woman, Charito,



is extremely rare. Although the name occurs in a fourth-century Athenian dedication (*SEG* XXXV.141), it is a rarity in all the major onomastic collections.<sup>28</sup> This absence strongly suggests that Charito did assume a new name in which she wanted to stress the importance of God's or Christ's grace (χάρις). In that case she may well be referring to Eph. 3.7 or perhaps to Rom. 5.15, passages which are also quoted in *Mart. Pol.* 20.2. On the other hand, *Mart. Pol.* 2.3 and *Mart. Lugd.* 1.6 and 24 just mention the grace of God and Christ without reference to these texts of the New Testament.

*Martyrium Lugdunensium* (Eus. *HE* 5.1 and 2) 1.34 ἐκείνους μὲν γὰρ ἐπεκουφίζεν... ἡ πρὸς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγάπη. Since Perler's relevant study<sup>29</sup> it is generally recognized that there are some undeniable terminological resemblances between the famous letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne and the 4th book of Maccabees and that these resemblances could well be explained as due to influences of the latter text on the way of thinking in the named churches. Especially the 'agonistic' aspects of the terminology are mentioned to prove this dependence. Some scholars have, however, called for cautiousness in assuming precise links.<sup>30</sup> That is a timely warning in view of the wholly different atmosphere and tenor of the two texts: 4Macc. is a diatribe with strong reminiscences of the genre of the *logos epitaphios*,<sup>31</sup> *Mart. Lugd.* is a report by eye-witnesses whose very eyes clearly saw the true course of events. This last point is quite important. All those present of course witnessed the mutilation and indeed the annihilation of human bodies, but the writers beheld something else too. For them e.g. Christ's glory (δόξα) was manifest, not as a remuneration after the sufferings, but exactly within these sufferings themselves. For a treatment of this we refer to a paper in *Studia Patristica* XVIII, 3, 111-118.

Another prominent motif is the martyr's love of God and Christ. Vettius Epagathus is filled with this love (9), Blandina's love for Christ was shown in true force (17), Alexandros was well-known because of his love of God (49). The lemma above shows that it was characteristic of the martyrs in general, whose love is further stressed in 2.6 and 7. Of course the steadfastness of the martyrs in other *Acts* could also be regarded as an implicit token of their love of God, but the explicitness of the Lyonnese letter is unique. It reminds of the 1st Epistle of John (e.g. 2.5 ἀληθῶς ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ τετελείωται) and is one of the many reminiscences of the NT in the letter.

As to the contents, this important motif is not paralleled in 4Macc. In fact there is a most remarkable difference. The subst. ἀγάπη does not occur in 4Macc., but there are two instances of the verb ἀγαπᾶν, one in 15.3, where the mother, confronted with the choice between εὐσέβεια and the bodily salvation of her sons, τὴν εὐσέβειαν μᾶλλον ἡγάπησεν τὴν σώζουσιν εἰς αἰωνίαν ζωὴν κατὰ θεόν. She loved (Jewish) religion, but the Lyonnese martyrs loved God, thus testifying to the typically personal relationship, which is so characteristic of Christian martyrdom.

The love of God by the Lyonnese martyrs is clearly paralleled only by the two oldest Greek martyrological treatises, book 4 of Clemens' *Stromata* and Origen's *Exhortation to Martyrdom*. Clemens pictures the martyr as the true Christian, the "Vertreter aller Vollkommenheit", who is completely dominated by love of God. "Clemens wird nicht müde, immer von neuem darauf hinzuweisen, dass das Martyrium nur dann wertvoll ist, wenn es aus Liebe zu Gott geschieht".<sup>32</sup> Cf. e.g. 4.14.1 οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ ἐλπιδὶ δωρεῶν ἡτοιμασμένων πιπράσκων τὴν πίστιν, ἀγάπη δὲ πρὸς τὸν κύριον ἀσμενέστατα τοῦδε τοῦ βίου ἀπολυθήσεται.

In his *Exhortation* Origen too stresses love of God as the incentive of the martyrs, e.g. at the end of ch. 2: ...ἐπιδειξαμένους τὴν ὅλην ψυχὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην, and ch. 15: ...ὁμῶς τοῖς διὰ τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ πρὸς θεὸν ἀγάπην πατοῦσι τὴν ἀπατηλὴν δόξαν κτλ.<sup>33</sup>

Of course the writers of the Lyonnese letter did not provide a systematic treatise on martyrdom. They were describing the predicament of individual Christians, but their report corresponds with Clemens and Origen in that they presented their martyrs as the true Christians.<sup>34</sup>

*Acta martyrum Scilitanorum* 12. During his interrogation the proconsul Saturninus suddenly noticed that Speratus was carrying some books and he asked him: 'quae sunt res in capsula vestra?' Speratus answered: 'Libri et epistulae Pauli viri iusti'. Bastiaensen (ad loc.) rightly notes that the *capsula* was a "cassetta adibita a contenere rotoli".<sup>35</sup> He also convincingly argues that *libri et epistulae* has to be understood as *libri epistularum*. There is, however, another important aspect of this episode, which deserves some attention.

Basing themselves on the slowly increasing number of Christian biblical papyri of the second century, of which now eleven are known, Roberts and Skeat have concluded that "when the Christian Bible first emerges into history the books of which it was composed are always written on papyrus and are always in codex form."<sup>36</sup> The reasons for

this development are still being debated. Recently, Harris has argued that the codex form enabled theologians “to find the passage which you want to read to the faithful or use against your opponent in a theological squabble”—an explanation more inspired by experiences with modern Bible-punching fundamentalists, it seems, than with ancient methods of debate. Van Haelst, on the other hand, has proceeded along a more convincing road. As he points out, Christianity spread less quickly in Egypt than Roberts and Skeat assumed. The papyrological evidence strongly suggests that it only started to gain popularity at the beginning of the third century. Such a date is also in better agreement with the date of the earliest Christian codices, which have to be dated somewhat later than was done by Roberts and Skeat. Consequently, the rise of the codex in Christian circles was not that different from its rise among non-Christians. There is thus no reason why the codex could not have been used first by the Christian congregation in Rome, the place where anyway the codex is first mentioned by Martial. The reason for its employment instead of the scroll were purely practical. It was much better suited to be carried along than the more cumbersome scrolls which were kept on by the Jews for reasons of religious conservatism.<sup>37</sup>

It seems clear from Van Haelst’s persuasive argument that Roberts and Skeat postulated the monopoly of the Bible codex form among the early Christians, because they were misled by the total loss of codices and scrolls outside Egypt. Moreover, as was done by Harris, Van Haelst and McCormick, they had also overlooked the passage under review. Clearly, Speratus and his fellow-Christians still read the Bible from a book-roll and not in codex form. Such a practice also fits in with the fact that Tertullian does not mention the codex either in his highly varied terminology of the Bible.<sup>38</sup> It would seem, then, that the codex form originated in Rome and only gradually established itself in the Roman Empire.

Unfortunately, it is not clear in which language Speratus read the Pauline epistles. Bastiaensen considers it not impossible that it was a Latin version but favours the possibility of a Greek one, since Speratus makes a cultured impression.

*Acta martyrum Scilitanorum* 14. When Saturninus pronounced the official sentence on Speratus and his fellow-Christians, the main ground of his decision lay in their confession of a Christian way of life. he

explicitly mentioned a further consideration: "Because in spite of the opportunity to return to the Roman tradition which was offered to them, they obstinately (*obstinanter*) persevered". Pliny found the *inflexibilem obstinationem* (Ep. 10.96.3) of the Christians led before his tribunal quite distasteful and Tertullian mentions that this reproach was often made against the Christians.<sup>39</sup> De Ste Croix, in his well-known discussion with A.N. Sherwin-White on the reasons for the persecution of the Christians, even suggests that to the Romans this obstinacy was one of the less desirable manifestations of the Christian *superstitio*.<sup>40</sup>

The Christians of course had a different view of this steadfastness. Those who were able to withstand the tortures which soon had become part and parcel of the proceedings gave true evidence of true endurance. This was not a virtue in itself, comparable to the unshaken *constantia* of the Stoic sage,<sup>41</sup> who could not really be touched by pain, injury and injustice. On the contrary, for the early Christians, as St. Paul expresses it (Rom. 5.3-4, tr. C.K. Barrett), "Affliction produces endurance, and endurance tried character, and tried character hope". Without this endurance it was a hard road to salvation as Cyprian reminded the faithful: *neque enim potest accipi dolorum et passionum corona, nisi praecedat in dolore et passione patientia* (*De bono patientiae* 10). The Christians were well aware of the need to be steadfast, and a few times bystanders are reported to have been moved to pity or admiration because of the martyrs' endurance (Pol.2.2, Lyons 56).

In the *Acta Martyrum* this steadfastness is frequently mentioned, in particular in the Lyonnese letter, in which ὑπομονή and its cognate verb occur about a dozen times.<sup>42</sup> It is not impossible that the Letter derives the theme from the New Testament,<sup>43</sup> since it shows a marked Biblical inspiration. On the other hand, the theme of endurance is much more prominent in 4Macc.<sup>44</sup>

Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 14.44-5 *nec trepidat sacram/spectare formam lumine lubrico*. Agnes' stubborn refusal to renounce her faith finally brought about her adversary's decision to compel her to prostitution (25-6 *hanc in lupanar trudere publicum/certum est*). Such a measure is reported more often about Christian women in similar situations. It usually is an attempt at intimidation rather than a form of punishment. A satisfactory treatment of the subject was provided long ago by Augar.<sup>45</sup> One recurring pattern of events is that the woman's purity is not violated. Nobody dared to approach Irene (*Acta Agapes* 6) and the virgin in Ambrose's thrilling story in *De virginibus* 2.4.22

sqq. *mutato habitu euolat...de laqueo*. This is also true in Agnes' case. Nobody so much as looks at her, apart from one undisciplined person, who casts a lascivious glance at the young virgin.

The expression *lumine lubrico* is well chosen by the poet, not only because of the powerful alliteration, but also in view of the adjective. In classical Latin *lubricus* means 'slippery' or 'unstable', both literally and metaphorically (Tac. *Hist.* 1.10.1 *lubrico statu*), though in the last case seldom directly concerning "animantes eorumque partes" (*TLL* 2.1689.83), Verg. *A.* 11.716 being one of the exceptions. Its negative connotations come out very clearly in Christian Latin, where it denotes instability and the inclination to go astray, especially in matters of faith or morals. This holds true for Prudentius, whose interesting usage of the word has received a slightly stepmotherly treatment in the lemma in *TLL*. Some instances not mentioned there: *Symm.* 2 pr. 35-6 about Peter's misadventure in Matth. 14.30: *et lapsante gradu pedes/pessum mergere lubricos*; *Ham.* 540 about the devil: *dominatio lubrica mundi*.

The moral depravity expressed by *lubricus* sometimes specifically concerns wantonness. This could be the case in Prud. *Cath.* 2.102-3 *ne lingua mendax, ne manus/oculiue peccent lubrici*. Van Assendelft ad loc. rightly stresses the difference with the purely physical sense in Cic. *N.D.* 2.142 *natura lubricos oculos fecit et mobiles*.<sup>46</sup> For *Per.* 14.45 there can be no doubt, as has been clearly worded by Franchi de' Cavalieri: "Solo un giovinastro ha l'audacia di fissare lo sguardo impudico in quelle angeliche forme".<sup>47</sup> There is a curious affinity with a passage in Clem.Alex. *Paed.*, which deals with obscenity: ἄμεινον εἶναι λέγων τοῖς ποσὶν ἢ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ὀλισθαίνειν (2.49.2. cf. also 2.50.3 and 3.69.3).<sup>48</sup>

Prudentius adds further lustre to the expression under discussion by playing on the different meanings of *lumen*. The peeping Tom is hit by lightning and therefore *caecus corusco lumine corrui* (vs. 48). Some other instances of this word-play are Lucr. 3.364 *lumina luminibus quia nobis praepediuntur*, Ov. *Met.* 10.293-4 *timidumque ad lumina lumen/attollens*, Cypr. Gall. *Hept. exod* 138-9 (about Moses at the burning bush) *mox timor ingreditur sensus lumenque caligat/lumine de nimio*.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See R. Staats, Pontius Pilatus im Bekenntnis der frühen Kirche, *ZThK* 84 (1987) 493-513.

- <sup>2</sup> Cf. J. den Boeft and J. Bremmer, *Notiunculae Martyrologicae*, *Vig. Chr.* 35 (1981) 43-56; *Not. Mart.* II, *ib.* 36 (1982) 383-402; *Not. Mart.* III, *ib.* 39 (1985) 110-130.
- <sup>3</sup> J. Bollandus, *Acta Sanctorum Januarii* III, 2nd ed (Brussels, 1863) 306.
- <sup>4</sup> W. Rordorf, Zum Problem des 'Grossen Sabbats' im Polykarp- und Pioniusmartyrium, in *Pietas. Festschrift für B. Kötting*, eds. E. Dassman, K.S. Frank = *JbAC* Suppl. 9 (1982) 245-9.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. P. Herz, *Untersuchungen zum Festkalender der römischen Kaiserzeit nach datierten Weih- und Ehreninschriften* I (Mainz, 1975) 145.
- <sup>6</sup> The standard work on Smyrna remains C.J. Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna* (Oxford 1938), but many of its details can now be corrected and supplemented with the help of G. Petzl, *Die Inschriften von Smyrna*, 3 vls (Bonn, 1982-1990).
- <sup>7</sup> The subject has often been discussed by Louis Robert. See, for example, his *Études Anatoliennes* (Paris, 1937) 96-110; *La Carie*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1954) 42; *Villes d'Asie Mineure* (Paris 1962<sup>2</sup>) 268, 324 n.1; *Fouilles d'Amyzon* (Paris, 1983) 106f, 200. In general, B. Shaw, Bandits in the Roman Empire, *Past & Present*, no. 105 (1984) 3-52, who on p. 18 misinterprets our passage; A.J.L. van Hooff, Ancient Robbers: Reflections behind the Facts, *Ancient Society* 19 (1988) 105-24.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. K. Hopwood, Policing the Hinterland: Rough Cilicia and Isauria, in S. Mitchell (ed.), *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia* (Oxford, 1983) 173-81; on Smyrnaean *eirenarchoi* see now Petzl on *I. Smyrna* 469.
- <sup>9</sup> See especially P. Franchi de' Cavalieri, *Note agiografice*, vol. 3 (Vatican, 1909) 46, 55, and vol. 7 (Vatican, 1928) 204-6, overlooked by Hopwood (n. 8); *SEG* xxxvii. 1852.
- <sup>10</sup> On Jews in Smyrna and Asia minor see our remarks in this journal 39 (1985) 117; add now J.H.M. Strubbe, Joden en Grieken: onverzoenlijke vijanden?, *Lampas* 22 (1989) 188-204.
- <sup>11</sup> Cf. L. Roberts, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec* (Paris, 1940) 273f, with the corrections by M. Rossner, Asiarchen und archiereis Asias, *Studii Clasice* 16 (1974), 101-142.
- <sup>12</sup> On the *venationes* see Robert, *Gladiateurs*, 309-31.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. J. Kubinska, *Les monuments funéraires dans les inscriptions grecques de l'Asie Mineure* (Warsaw, 1968) 94-9; Petzl (n. 6), index s.v. *καμάρα*.
- <sup>14</sup> Th. Baumeister, *Die Anfänge der Theologie des Martyriums* (Münster, 1980).
- <sup>15</sup> P. Suso Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ. Begriffsanalytische und begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum "Engelgleichen Leben" im frühen Mönchtum* (Münster, 1964) 120.
- <sup>16</sup> Account should be taken of Apoc.Bar. 51.10 "...They will be like the angels and be equal to the stars" (transl. A.F.J. Klijn), *Acta Pauli et Theclae* 5 *μακάριοι οἱ φόβον ἔχοντες θεοῦ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ γενήσονται* and perhaps *Acta Eustratii* PG 116, 500A (Symeon Metaphrastes) ...τὴν ἀγγελικὴν ἐπιζητοῦμεν αἰδιότητα.
- <sup>17</sup> A. von Harnack, *Die Acten des Karpus, Papyrus und der Agathonike*. TU 3, (Leipzig, 1888) 435-65; P. Franchi de' Cavalieri, Di una nuova recensione del Martirio dei ss. Carpo, Papilo e Agathonice = *Studi e Testi* 33 (Vatican, 1920, 1-40); H. Lietzmann, Die älteste Gestalt der Passio ss. Carpi, Papyllae et Agathonices, *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin, 1958) I, 239-50.
- <sup>18</sup> In its literal or adapted form the formula also occurs in Justin 2.5 (note its philosophical wording); Apollonius 2.44; Pionius 8.3, 9.6, 16.3, 19.8 and 11; Fructuosus 2.4; Montanus and Lucius 19.5; Julius 2.3; Agape 5.2; Crispina 1.7, 2.3; Phileas 3 (L) and 6 (G) Kortekaas.
- <sup>19</sup> See the learned discussion of this development by Th. Korteweg, The reality of the Invisible, in M.J. Vermaseren (ed.), *Studies in Hellenistic Religions* (Leiden, 1979) 50-102.



<sup>20</sup> Cf. P.G. Van der Nat in *RAC* 5, col. 744 sqq.

<sup>21</sup> This link in the argument is only implicit. It is evidently taken for granted. For the collective use of διάβολος cf. this journal 36 (1982) 383-4 and for a general treatment of demons and pagan gods cf. J.H. Waszink and J.C.M. van Winden, *Tertullianus, De idololatria* (Leiden, 1987) 73-78 and 115-116.

<sup>22</sup> Although τῷ χρόνῳ in the phrase ἀρχαιότερος ὢν τῷ χρόνῳ is slightly difficult to explain—presumably it is a dat. ‘der Beziehung’ (Kühner-Gerth I 440. Schwyzer-Debrunner II 168)—, the change into a gen. comp. is quite unlikely. The tenor of the argument is that only God is timeless. All other beings are creatures subject to time, albeit that some of them (spirits) are older than others (mankind). Perhaps τῷ χρόνῳ could also be explained as an instrumental dative: ‘having gained experience by the course of time’.

<sup>23</sup> We have consulted Pape-Benseler, Bechtel, Preisigke, Foraboschi, Fraser-Matthews and Solin.

<sup>24</sup> P. Franchi de’ Cavalieri, *Note agiografiche*, vol. 9 (Vatican, 1953) 24.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* (Oxford, 1973<sup>2</sup>) 417; F.K. Yegül, The small city bath in classical antiquity and a reconstruction study of Lucian’s “Baths of Hippias”, *Archeologia Classica* 31 (1979, 108-131) 123 n. 36. We owe these references to our pupil Annemieke Versteeg.

<sup>26</sup> M. Whittaker, *Jews and Christians: Graeco-Roman Views* (Cambridge, 1984) 163; A. Hilhorst, in *Atti e Passioni dei Martiri*, 394.

<sup>27</sup> G.J.M. Bartelink, Sur les allusions aux noms propres chez les auteurs Grecs chrétiens, *Vig. Chr.* 15 (1961) 32-9.

<sup>28</sup> We have consulted Pape-Benseler, Bechtel, Preisigke, Foraboschi and Fraser-Matthews. Remarkably, H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom. Ein Namenbuch*, 3 vls (Berlin-New York, 1982) lists *Mart. Just.* 4.2. as the only example of Charito.

<sup>29</sup> O. Perler, Das vierte Makkabäerbuch, Ignatius von Antiochien und die ältesten Märtyrerberichte, *Riv. di Arch. Crist.* 25 (1949) 47-72.

<sup>30</sup> J.W. van Henten, *De Joodse martelaren als grondleggers van een nieuwe orde* (Diss. Leiden, 1986) 324 n. 69; B. Dehandschutter in J.W. van Henten (ed.), *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie* (Leiden, 1989) 217 n. 8. W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution* (Oxford, 1965) 29 n. 159 is quite positive.

The date of 4Macc. has of course much to do with this question. In his dissertation Van Henten has modified and specified the ideas of Dupont-Sommer and Breitenstein in proposing a date around 100 A.D.

<sup>31</sup> J.H.C. Lebram, Die literarische Form des vierten Makkabäerbuches, *Vig. Chr.* 28 (1974) 81-96. But note the reservations and critique of H.S. Versnel, in Van Henten 1989 (n. 30), 166-77 and H.J. Klauck (ed.), *Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römische Zeit*, vol. III. 6 (Gütersloh, 1989) 660-2.

<sup>32</sup> W. Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus*, *TU* 57 (Berlin, 1952) 566.

<sup>33</sup> In ch. 20-26 Origen introduces the Maccabean martyrs as example. Remarkably, in dealing with the third brother’s disregard of his pains he says that the young man succeeded in that διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀγάπην (25).

<sup>34</sup> Baumeister o.c. 64 mentions the death of Rabbi Aquiba as “Beweis der Liebe des Menschen zu Gott”. This love, however, specifically concerns God’s commandments and does not seem to bear the same personal character as the Christian texts in question. For doubts concerning the historicity of the ‘martyrium’ of R.A. Aquiba see J.W. van Henten, *Das jüdische Selbstverständnis*, in idem (1989, see above n. 30), 130 n. 6.

- <sup>35</sup> For the *capsa* see Th. Birt, *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst* (Leipzig, 1907) 250.
- <sup>36</sup> Cf. C.H. Roberts and T.C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London, 1983) 42. Their list (p. 40-1) is now corrected by J. van Haelst, 'Les origines du codex', in A. Blanchard (ed.), *Les débuts du codex* (Turnhout, 1989, 13-35) 26-9 (we owe this reference to Professor Peter Parsons).
- <sup>37</sup> W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge Mass., 1989) 296, who rightly discards the explanations offered by Roberts and Skeat, which are convincingly refuted by Van Haelst (n. 36), 28-32. Martial: Van Haelst, 20f. Practical reasons: Van Haelst, 34-5, who overlooked the similar reasoning of M. McCormick, *The Birth of the Codex and the Apostolic Life-Style*, *Scriptorium* 39 (1985) 150-8 (equally overlooked by Harris).
- <sup>38</sup> See the survey by J.E.L. van der Geest, *Le Christ et l'Ancien Testament chez Tertullien* (Nijmegen, 1972) 3-62 (we owe this reference to Ton Hilhorst).
- <sup>39</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 27.2, 50.15, *De Spect.* 1.1, *Ad Nat.* 1.17-9.
- <sup>40</sup> G.E.M. de Ste Croix, in M.I. Finley, *Studies in Ancient Society* (London, 1974) 210-49, 256-62, esp. 257, 262.
- <sup>41</sup> For the Stoa see A.J. Festugière, *Hypomone dans la tradition grecque*, *Recherches de science religieuse* 1931, 477-86.
- <sup>42</sup> Cf. Polycarp 2.2 and 4, 3.1, 19.2; Carpus 36; Justin 5.2; Lyons 1.4, 6, 7, 16, 20, 27, 36, 39, 45, 51, 54 and 2.4; Dasius 4.4; Irenaeus 4.9, 5.2; Euplus 2.2; Forty Martyrs 1.5.
- <sup>43</sup> Cf. C. Spicq, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire. Supplément* (Fribourg and Göttingen, 1982) 658-65.
- <sup>44</sup> 4Macc. 1.11, 5.23, 7.9, 9.8 und 30, 15.30, 16.8, 17.4, 12, 17 and 23.
- <sup>45</sup> F. Augar, *Die Frau im römischen Christenprozess = TU 13.4* (Leipzig, 1905); add now *Analecta Bollandiana* 1961, 12.
- <sup>46</sup> M.M. van Assendelft, *Sol ecce surgit igneus. A Commentary on the Morning and Evening Hymns of Prudentius* (Groningen, 1976) 124.
- <sup>47</sup> P. Franchi de' Cavalieri, *Scritti agiografici* (Vatican, 1962), vol. I 315.
- <sup>48</sup> Marrou ad loc. calls this a "mot de Zénon, ap. Diogène Laërce, VII, 26", but the remarkable fact is that there one finds τῇ γλώττῃ instead of τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς

Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, Vakgroep Letterkunde  
 Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid