

The passion of Perpetua and Felicitas as an adapted apocalypse

A paixão de Perpétua e Felicidade como um apocalipse adaptado

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Abstract

The resonances of the language and imagery of the *Passion of Perpetua* with Jewish apocalyptic literature has long been recognized. A comparison of the morphological features of the *Passion of Perpetua* with those of apocalyptic literature reveals that they share the same features. Even more fundamentally, key aspects of the social roles which the *Passion of Perpetua* played within the Carthaginian and North African Christian communities are analogous with the social roles that have been postulated for Jewish apocalyptic literature. The *Passion of Perpetua* therefore displays the signs of having been written as an adaptation and application of the Jewish apocalyptic texts to the specific challenges faced by the early North African Christian communities.

Keywords: *Passion of Perpetua*, North Africa, Early Christianity, Jewish apocalyptic.

Resumo

As ressonâncias da linguagem e da imagética da *Paixão de Perpétua* com a literatura apocalíptica judaica são há muito reconhecidas. Uma comparação das características morfológicas da *Paixão de Perpétua* com aquelas da literatura apocalíptica revela que ambas partilham das mesmas características. Mais importante ainda, há aspectos-chave dos papéis sociais desempenhados pela *Paixão de Perpétua* na comunidade cartaginense e nas comunidades cristãs norte-africanas que são semelhantes aos papéis sociais que têm sido postulados para a literatura apocalíptica judaica. Portanto, a *Paixão de Perpétua* apresenta sinais de ter sido escrita como uma adaptação e aplicação dos textos apocalípticos judaicos aos desafios específicos enfrentados pelas primitivas comunidades cristãs norte-africanas.

Palavras-chave: Paixão de Perpétua, Norte da África, Cristianismo Primitivo, Apocalíptica Judaica.

Introduction

As fascinating as the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* is, and as convinced as many scholars and theologians have been with regard to its provenance and meaning, Bremmer is correct in reminding us that there is much that is still unclear. “The background,” he writes, “immediate milieu and mental world of the protagonist are only known in outline” (Bremmer, 2002a, p. 77). That the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* has apocalyptic sources and influences, both Jewish and Christian, has long been postulated. However, to

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what extent can *Perpetua* be classified as an adaptation of the Jewish apocalypses in its own right?

1. Compositional issues

Questions of genre in relation to the *Passion of Perpetua* are vexed and complex¹. One of the many issues is that *Perpetua*² seems to differ significantly from other early Christian biographies (Finn, 2002, p. 305). *Perpetua* seems to belong to an earlier time, and hence to an earlier literary tradition. On the other hand, there are similarities between *Perpetua* and the genre of the *Martyr Acts* (Hopkins, 1999, p. 14–121)³. *Perpetua* has been considered to be an important literary model for this genre (Altman, 2008, p. 85). However, in recent years, scholars have sounded significant cautions regarding the usage of the genre of *Martyr Acts* as a modern construct (Bremmer, 2002a, p 91). It is nevertheless clear that *Perpetua* belongs to a very early phase of martyrdom narratives (Shaw, 2004, p. 296). But if *Perpetua* is indeed a literary prototype for the genre of the *acta*, how can we be certain that it does not belong to another, previous “genre”, or merely represents a transitional form?

Bremmer concedes that the concept of genre is not entirely useless when considering the *Passion of Perpetua*, but notes there are important questions to be asked, particularly concerning where the genre comes from (Bremmer, 2002a, p. 80)⁴. It has been asserted that the “genre” of martyrology developed from the Jewish apocalyptic texts, and furthermore, that an affinity with these texts is particularly evident in the *Passion of Perpetua* (Frankfurter, 1996, p. 193). The martyr acts and apocalyptic literature are not mutually exclusive types of texts, but rather supportive of each other. Therefore, we may also ask to what extent the *Passion of Perpetua* itself may be referred to as an apocalyptic text in its own right.

Before going on to explore this question, some observations about the compositional history of *Perpetua* should be made. The editor of the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* assures readers that the text is as Perpetua left it. The editor specifies that Perpetua “narrated this whole affair of the martyrdom herself. She has written it in her own hand and she leaves us her own impressions” (*The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*, 2000, p. 389)⁵, “...*ipsa*

narravit, sicut conscriptum manu sua et suo sensu reliquit. (Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité, 1996, p. 106)”.

Most modern interpreters accept this assertion⁶. However, Cobb rightly warns us that we must be wary of “interpretations of Perpetua’s story [that] are wholly dependent on the authenticity of the authorial claim, a claim that in the end cannot be substantiated” (Cobb, 2008, p. 95). In this regard, it is important to note that the reliability of the authorial claims is an issue distinct from that of the *function* of the text (Halporn, 1991, p. 224 and 231)⁷.

There are good reasons, however, to believe that *Perpetua* was put into its final form shortly after the events described within it took place (Robeck, 1992, p. 13). The text itself claims that the section of the work that purports to be Perpetua’s diary was written by Perpetua herself⁸. Bremmer points to several literary lines of evidence that support this claim (Bremmer, 2002a, p. 82)⁹. Trevett suggests that the editorial sections of *Perpetua* were written “not later than c. 207 CE” (Trevett, 2002, p. 178). The editor of *Perpetua*, who plays an important role in framing the text, and thus in its interpretation, remains anonymous. Indeed, the veracity of his narration is open to question, particularly in terms of the depiction of the events that occurred in the amphitheatre¹⁰. While Tertullian himself has often been suggested as the editor, this too has recently been questioned¹¹.

There is, however, sufficient evidence for us to accept the essential unity of the text, a unity that was provided by the editor(s). We may also, with reasonable confidence, accept an early dating for the original text/s. The text’s early popularity and its role in developing the taste for martyrdom narratives cast as cosmic battles also seem quite clear¹². Petr Kitzler has highlighted the seminal nature of the *Passion of Perpetua* in North African hagiography, observing that *Perpetua* became “a paradigmatic and, at least in North Africa, a ‘canonical’ martyrological text, imitated in its macrostructure as well as in its microstructure” (Kitzler, 2012, p. 4). The *Passion of Perpetua* reflects the world view that was (or was soon to become) normative for a significant number of the Christian communities in Carthage and North Africa, and influential even in the East.

The question of whether the *Passion of Perpetua* should be properly viewed as an apocalypse hinges on the *function* of the text rather than its authorial

authenticity. It is worth noting, however, that the device of pseudonymity is standard in Jewish Second Temple apocalypses. John J. Collins has explored the role of pseudonymity in the formation of elect groups in the context of eschatology (Collins, 1999, p. 43). The *Passion of Perpetua* has not been considered a pseudepigraphical text. Indeed, to the extent that Perpetua is seen as having written about her visions herself, the non-pseudepigraphic nature of the text is a feature that differentiates it from the Jewish apocalypses. When attempting to understand the *Passion of Perpetua* in relation to the Jewish apocalypses, this should be taken into account, together with the text's Graeco-Roman context and radical Christian message. In these terms, it is best to understand *Perpetua* as an adaptation of the older Jewish apocalypses.

Before discussing apocalypticism, the question of Montanism will be briefly considered. In spite of Rex Butler's articulate defense of the view that the *Passion of Perpetua* is a Montanistic text (Butler, 2006), Tabernee concedes that it is impossible to definitely determine whether Perpetua and her companions were members of a Montanistic group (his own view is that they likely were) (Tabernee, 2007, p. 64)¹³. However, even if the editor of *Perpetua* was Montanist, this does not necessarily mean that the martyrs were adherents of the New Prophecy (Tabernee, 2007, p. 64–65)¹⁴. The unquestioned orthodoxy of *Perpetua* in the minds of later editors of the *passio* and the *acta*, and of later North African bishops weighs heavily on this question (Tabernee, 2007, p. 64–65)¹⁵. All in all, the arguments for the origins for *Perpetua* being non-Montanistic are the more convincing (Robeck, 1992, p. 15). Even Christine Trevett, who strongly suspects that the martyrs belonged to the New Prophecy (Trevett, 2002, p. 178), still admits that “the Prophecy was little different from much of the Christianity of its age. It was all a matter of emphasis and of degree” (Trevett, 2002, 178)¹⁶.

Developing this point further, we may characterize early North African Christianity as encouraging an eschatological group identity in contraposition to the established authorities, and as valuing prophecy, miracles, and other manifestations of the Spirit of God. These aspects were also highly valued by the New Prophecy. Considering each of these elements, we can see marked affinities between North African Christianity in the late second and early third centuries, Montanism, and apocalypticism. It is reasonable to interpret the indicators of the New Prophecy some scholars have seen in *Perpetua* alternatively as markers of an apocalyptic world view. However, it is also important to understand that these

categories were not mutually exclusive at this stage of North African Christianity, and neither were the boundaries at all clear.

2. The Jewish apocalyptic background to the *Passion of Perpetua*

2.1. Influence and terminology

Perpetua's grounding in the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition is not difficult to discern. Many elements in the visions are “genuinely apocalyptic in character because they reveal sacred time and space” (Daniélou, 1997, p. 59). In Daniélou’s view, these elements demonstrate the Jewish culture of popular Christianity in North Africa (Daniélou, 1997, p. 59). Frankfurter notes that the visions of ascent in *Perpetua* not only reveal a deep knowledge of Jewish apocalyptic traditions, but also “represent... the continuity and use... of the textual self-consciousness of Jewish apocalypses” (Frankfurter, 1996, p. 137–138, 141).

The influence of the early Jewish apocalypses is apparent in the *Passion of Perpetua*. In Saturus’ vision there are a number of clear parallels with *1 Enoch* (Rowland, 1982, p. 400–401). Significant parallels with early Christian apocalypses such as the *Ascension of Isaiah* (Daniélou, 1997, p. 60)¹⁷, the *Apocalypse of Peter* (Rowland, 1982, p. 398; Salisbury, 1997, p. 102, following Robinson, 1891, p. 37–43)¹⁸, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*¹⁹ have also been identified. Since the textual and contextual sources of the *Passion of Perpetua* are thus to be found in the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic literature, this must surely suggest something about the nature and function of the text.

Jewish apocalypticism as a phenomenon, and apocalyptic literature as a genre, are challenging to define. In addition to many other reasons, we must always be careful when attempting to label ancient phenomena (Collins, 1998, p. 3). Although there is still no accepted definition of apocalyptic,²⁰ there is some common terminology, largely thanks to the work of the Society of Biblical Literature Genres Project, which systematically analysed all the literature that has been hitherto regarded as apocalyptic. John J. Collins, who edited the findings which were published in *Semeia* 14 (Collins, 1979, p. 1-20), later reported that

[t]he thesis presented... is that a corpus of texts that has been traditionally called “apocalyptic” does indeed share a significant

cluster of traits that distinguish it from other works. Specifically, an apocalypse is defined as: “a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world” (Collins, 1998, p. 4-5).

This definition is now several decades old, but still represents the most systematic analysis of the morphological features of apocalyptic texts. Since it remains the standard morphological treatment of the apocalyptic genre, it will be used here²¹. *Semeia*'s definition of an “apocalypse” does have a key weakness, in that it does not address the important issue of the function of apocalyptic texts. For this reason, the question of the function of *Perpetua*, within the broader context of the social function of apocalyptic literature, will also be dealt with. The terminological usages of “apocalypticism” as a world view, “apocalyptic eschatology” as an aspect of this world view, and “apocalypse” as referring to a literary genre associated with this world view were also proposed in *Semeia* 14, and are now generally accepted²². For this reason, these usages will also be adhered to for the purposes of this paper²³.

Returning now to the *Semeia* definition of an “apocalypse”, Collins groups the apocalypses into sub-categories, one of which is denominated as “Otherworldly Journeys with Only Personal Eschatology” (Collins, 1979, p. 22-23). As an apocalypse, *Perpetua* certainly fits into this category. Indeed, Rowland warns us that the “concentration on the future orientation of the apocalypses has at times given a rather distorted view of the essence of apocalyptic. Apocalyptic is as much involved in the attempt to understand things as they are now as to predict future events” (Rowland, 1982, 1-2). In this sense, *Perpetua* has very significant conceptual affinities with Jewish apocalypses such as the *Life of Adam and Eve* and the *Testament of Abraham*. In fact, a focus on personal and immediate eschatology, rather than on future and cosmic eschatology appears to be much more the concern of later Jewish apocalypses such as these. This is particularly reflected in their conceptualization of the immediate fate of the righteous dead, and the lack of an eschatological resurrection.

Some observations will now be made regarding the various morphological features of the *Passion of Perpetua*. They will be discussed with reference to the *Semeia* definition of apocalyptic literature.

2.2. Revelatory literature with a narrative framework

Bornkamm has stated that “the disclosure of divine secrets is the true theme of later Jewish apocalyptic” (Bornkamm, 1967, p. 815)²⁴. These divine secrets were revealed through dreams, visions, or divine intermediaries (Rowland, 1982, 21–22). The *Passion of Perpetua* emphasizes just such revelations through precisely these means, and within a narrative framework which has made these revelations compelling reading for almost two millennia. In particular, *Perpetua* seeks to present a divine revelation on a question that had always been one of the principal foci of apocalyptic literature: the destiny of humans after death.²⁵ The apocalyptic literature circulating among Christians at the time of the rise of Christianity is important in giving us a glimpse of popular views of the afterlife. Richard Bauckham notes that when people wanted to know about the fate of the dead and otherworldly mysteries, people turned to the apocalyptic literature (Bauckham, 1998, p. 3). A major concern of “the whole apocalyptic tradition from beginning to end was the fate of the dead” (Bauckham, 1998, p. 82).

While it is entirely relevant that one of the central themes of the *Passion of Perpetua* is the fate of the dead, this seems not to have received the emphasis it merits²⁶. *Perpetua* reveals the life that follows that of this world; in the words of Perpetua, the text describes what it means to have ceased “to have no hope in this world” (*Perpetua*, 2000, p. 390). Most importantly, this concern is not limited to the martyrs, since *Perpetua* assumes that the righteous Christians who have died previously have also made the same journey of ascent that Perpetua and Saturus themselves make. This is evident in Saturus’ vision, in which in heaven, the martyrs seem to be the minority, even being mentioned as an afterthought: “But then we began to recognize many brothers and sisters, even some martyrs [*sed et martyras*]” (*Perpetua*, 2000, p. 394; 1996, p. 152)²⁷. This is an apocalyptic eschatology that encompasses not only the martyrs, but also all the righteous who have died.

2.3. Revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient

In the *Passion of Perpetua*, and particularly in the vision of Saturus, the martyrs are “borne by four angels” (4.1) in their ascent to heaven, and are welcomed by four other angels, who acted as their guides (4.2). This is entirely

congruous with the angelic guides who often appear in other apocalypses²⁸. However, in this text, the otherworldly beings who mediate the revelation to the living are actually the martyrs themselves. Their revelations are the dreams and visions that they relate, and the recipients are the other believers who remain on earth²⁹.

How can the martyrs be otherworldly beings? Within the text they become so as soon as they embrace their destiny as martyrs; it is at this moment they cross the line between the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit. This is indicated after Perpetua's first vision, as a result of which she writes, "I immediately reported this to my brother and we understood that we would undergo martyrdom and we began to put no hope in this world [*et coepimus nullam spem in saeculo habere*]" (*Perpetua*, 2000, 4.10, p. 390; 1996, 4.10, p. 116–118). However, even before this time, Perpetua is acknowledged as an intermediary between believers and heavenly beings, and between the world of the living and the world of the dead. She describes the antecedents to her first vision in prison as follows:

Then my brother said to me, 'Noble sister, you already have such a great reputation [*iam in magna dignitate es*] that you could ask for a vision [*postules visionem*] and it would be revealed to you whether we will be martyred or released.' I knew that I could discuss these things with the Lord, [*quae me sciebam fabulari cum Domino*] whose favors I had already experienced, so I promised him faithfully: 'Tomorrow I shall report to you' (*Perpetua*, 2000, 4.1, p. 390)³⁰.

The term "otherworldly being" is being used here in a sense slightly different to that of Collins' definition. In doing this, the tendency of the *Passion of Perpetua* is merely being followed on this point. While Perpetua and Saturus are not angels, as usually designated by the term "otherworldly beings", as martyrs, they belong to both "this world" and "the other world." Since the martyrs as confessors have a liminal status, though still belonging to this world, their revelations have relevance for the community that the revelations of angels cannot have.

Within the context of the "otherworldly" intercessory role of martyrs and their authority, there are no clearly defined boundaries between their experiences in the visionary world and in the present world³¹. This is also the case in the earlier Jewish apocalypses, in which the transitions between this and the other

world are effected seamlessly. In this sense, the apocalyptic nature of the text is reflected in both the visions and the narrative of the *Passion of Perpetua*. This conceptualization of the overlapping of the martyrs' earthly life and their ascension into heaven overlaps in early Christianity (Moss, 2010, p. 132). We have, for example, the striking statement about Agape, Irene, and Chione, when before their martyrdom, they flee to a mountain to pray. The writer of the *Martyrdom* states that through their prayers, "though their bodies resided on the mountain top, their souls lived in heaven. καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα τῷ ὕψει του ὄρους πραοῆπιτον, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν ἐν οὐρανοῖς εἶχον πολιτευομένην" (Musurillo, 1972, p. 282).

Tertullian, Perpetua's contemporary, comes close to the same idea when he writes to the imprisoned martyrs that:

Though the body is shut in, though the flesh is confined, all things are open to the spirit. In spirit, then, roam abroad in spirit walk abroad [*Vagare spiritu, spatiare spiritu*], not setting before you shady walks or long colonnades, but that way which leads to God [*sed illam viam, quae ad deum ducit*]. As often as in spirit your footsteps are there, so often you will not be in bonds [*Quotiens eam spiritu deambulaveris, totiens in carcere non eris*]. The leg does not feel the chain when the mind is in the heavens [*Nihil crus sentit in nervo, cum animus in caelo est*] (Tertullian, 1973, p. 694).

Perpetua rejects or ignores not only historical time (Rader, 1981, p. 7), but space as well. Maldonado-Pérez notably comments that "[t]his dynamic ability of the martyr to exist between present-future horizons, in turn, defied all boundaries of time and space, life and death, powers and principalities. The result is a subaltern existence that is uniquely subversive" (Maldonado-Pérez, 1999, p. 103-4)³².

In this regard, Ronsse's observations regarding the use of the word *uideo* ("I see") in the Latin historic present or dramatic present to introduce Perpetua's visions are relevant. She argues that the use of the historic present here has an oracular sense, and should be understood, in a sense, as transcending time (Ronsse, 2008, p. 81-82). Ronsse comments that

[b]ecause this present tense alters or plays with the sense of time, it challenges notions of presence and absence, creating a seemingly impossible experience for listeners. The dramatic, or oracular, present tense thus challenges interpretations of historical events: they are not wholly of the past and cannot be

understood without their continual recreation in the present (Ronsse, 2008, 83).

The revelations of Perpetua and Saturus are also unquestionably authoritative. Indeed, as martyrs, the authority of Perpetua and Saturus is above even that of the earthly ecclesiastical authorities. In Saturus' vision, in heaven, Optatus the bishop and Aspasius the presbyter and teacher "threw themselves at our feet [*et miserunt se ad pedes nobis*]" (*Perpetua*, 2012, 13.1–2, p. 115–131)³³. Candida Moss importantly observes that the martyrs here are given the power to judge in ecclesiastical disputes, and that the associated "[e]ntronement elevated the martyr in the heavenly hierarchy" (Moss, 2010, p. 155). It is relevant to note that the concepts of "enthronement" and "elevation to the heavenly hierarchy" clearly derive from Jewish apocalyptic literature³⁴.

2.4 Disclosing a transcendent reality which is temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation

The *Passion of Perpetua* most certainly discloses a transcendent reality that is temporal, and that encompasses eschatological salvation. It represents a realized eschatology in the sense that although the editor refers to living the "last days"³⁵, in Perpetua and Saturus' sections there is arguably no concept of a future end of the world, or of resurrection, or even of judgment for the righteous in *Perpetua* at all (Collins, 1998, p. 268, 278). Eschatology is entirely realized, and specifically so at the moment of death, and there are no indications whatsoever in the text of any future increased states of blessedness. All the joy of the martyrs is realised³⁶. Saturus writes,

Then the elders said to us, 'Go and play'. And I said to Perpetua, 'You have your wish' [*Habes quod uis*]. And she said to me, 'Thanks be to God. However happy I was in the flesh, I am happier here and now [*quomodo in carne hilaris fui, hilarior sim et hic modo*]" (*Perpetua*, 2000, 12.6–7, p. 394).

The temporal, transcendent, and saving reality in *Perpetua* is in fact death, which in the case of Perpetua and her companions, is through martyrdom. It is the temporal death which occurs in this world that encompasses the eschatological salvation, for as soon as they have "gone forth from the flesh..." (*Perpetua*, 1972, p. 119)³⁷ (*exiimus de carne*), they ascend to

the presence of God in heaven. The interview occurs within the garden, which seems to be an unmistakable reference to paradise³⁸, and moreover, it is in this same place that Saturus recognizes “even some martyrs” among “many brothers and sisters”³⁹. There is no suggestion in the text that they have any further interest in the eschatology of the world of the flesh, or that there is any such eschatology after death. This is the transcendent reality that *Perpetua* seeks to disclose, as far as this world is concerned.

2.5. Disclosing a transcendent reality which is spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world

The disclosure of a transcendent reality which is spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world is indeed at the very heart of the *Passion of Perpetua*. Both Perpetua and Saturus have visions of ascent to heaven, describing both the ascents and what they find in the supernatural world above. Viewed from this perspective, *Perpetua* is not primarily about this world, but about the world above.

In the Hellenistic period, the ecstatic experience was associated with a sense of ascent, ascension, or theurgy (Segal, 2004, p. 336, 308). In the Jewish apocalyptic literature, the heavenly journey principally performs an important role in theodicy, confirming that the cosmos operates on moral principles and that the enemies of God will be overthrown and the faithful vindicated (Segal, 2004, p. 340)⁴⁰. Indeed, heavenly ascents became one of the “trade-marks” of the apocalyptic world view⁴¹. Such ascents are at the heart of Perpetua’s first vision, and of Saturus’ subsequent vision⁴².

3. The apocalyptic social polemic of the *Passion of Perpetua*

This leads us to the social function of *Perpetua*. The apocalyptic perspective tended to be particularly highlighted during times of persecution. Accordingly, the ideas of the authors of apocalyptic literature were often in counterposition to the ideas of those in power (Gruenwald, 1988b, p. 24). The role of the *Passion of Perpetua* must, therefore, be understood as being similar to that of other apocalyptic texts. As Rowland observes:

What was required was a direct and authoritative answer to man's most pressing questions... Many would have echoed the cry of the unknown prophet who, in Isaiah 64.1, pleads with God to rend the heavens to solve the many riddles of existence that presented themselves. The answer to this desperate plea is found in apocalyptic (Rowland, 1982, p. 11).

Within this context, and regardless of their overt focus, apocalypses are always ultimately about the community that their concerns represent⁴³. The role of apocalypses within Judaism was expressed succinctly by Perdue. He noted that:

The apocalyptic communities, denied an active role in shaping the religious, social, and political character of a new expression of Judaism, anticipated a final transformation of history by God, who was expected to usher in a new life beyond the current one that was to be the reward of the faithful and religiously observant members of the apocalyptic community, while the wicked forces of the present rulers and their evil supporters were to be destroyed (Perdue, 2008, p. 358).

Within this context, apocalyptic communities had an anti-traditionalistic focus. Frankfurter suggests that contention over prophetic authority and revelation underlie many of the disputes within the early church, and that apocalypticism was at the very heart of these disputes (Frankfurter, 1996, p. 142). This should not be entirely surprising, since a number of scholars have identified the origins of Jewish apocalypticism as the product of levitic or priestly circles, and have maintained that “the polemical tones struck therein... echo an inner-priestly struggle for hegemony and authority” (Gruenwald, 1988a, p. 139)⁴⁴. If these are the origins of Jewish apocalypticism, then perhaps we may argue that this aspect continued into the Christian apocalypses.

Bearing this context in mind, the self-reflexive aspects of *Perpetua* must also surely be taken into account in identifying the nature and meaning of the text. Indeed, the preface added by the editor is essentially an appeal to continuity with the apocalyptic tradition. Frankfurter very significantly notes that the preface to the *Passion of Perpetua* is “self-consciously literary” (Frankfurter, 1996, p. 137), and evokes the revelations of the ancients in an attempt to deliberately reformulate Jewish apocalyptic literature (Frankfurter, 1996, p. 137).

The preface commences by referring to “ancient illustrations of faith” by which the church is edified, and asking why new examples of faith should not

also be collected. Indeed, it argues that the newer manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit⁴⁵ have at the very least authority equal to that of the ancient manifestations, since they are all of the same Holy Spirit, and it is evident we are now in the last days of the history of the world⁴⁶. The preface continues by affirming that the community to which the redactor belongs acknowledges and reverences the ancient prophecies and the modern visions equally (*itaque et nos qui sicut prophetias, ita et visiones novas pariter repromissas et agnoscimus et honoramus*) (Perpetua, 2010). Furthermore, the redactor considers that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are still being administered to all, as in ancient times, and that accordingly, revelations are still being given.

It is the preface and the close to the work which confirm the text's meaning as a unified whole. The focus of the preface is to present the text as a new revelatory book in the same apocalyptic tradition. The contents of Perpetua and Saturus' narratives can be understood within an apocalyptic framework, but the particular role of the editor was to consciously make the apocalyptic nature of the text explicit (LeMoine, 1999, p. 202), and to claim the text for the community. The link between genre and community therefore articulated the role that the text was to play within that community, which was the role that apocalyptic texts had long played in previous communities.

It is not merely coincidental that a key aspect of the preface to *Perpetua* is its polemical nature (den Boeft, 2011, p. 177). This polemical nature is best understood in terms of the apocalyptic nature of the text itself. As Teresa Sardella suggests, the text certainly appears to be raising questions about which texts should be included in the Christian liturgy (Sardella, 1990, p. 259–78)⁴⁷, but even beyond this aspect, these questions should themselves be understood as merely part of a larger concern. The text displays multi-faceted subversion at many levels, and it is for this reason that the editor initially sets the whole of the narrative in an anti-traditionalistic framework. Sardella has indeed noted the strong anti-traditionalistic position of the preface, referring to it as *[n]egando i valori assoluti ed esclusivi dell'antiquita il prologo si attesta dunque su una decisa posizione anti-tradizionalistica, che richiama un concetto di tradizione estraneo all definizione teological di traditio* (Sardella, 1990, p. 263)⁴⁸. Interestingly, in terms of later ecclesiastical and theological developments relating to the *Passion of Perpetua*, Kitzler's analysis indicates that the subsequent *Acta* were intentionally purged of the "potentially grating features contained in the *Passio Perpetuae*..."

(Kitzler, 2007, p. 16) and that these attempts to “smother all innovative and revolutionary features of the text” (Kitzler, 2007, p. 13) reflect the tension between tradition and innovation. These are important insights that help to situate the purpose of the text within an apocalyptic world view.

4. The apocalyptic social function of the *Passion of Perpetua*

Maureen Tilley highlights the overt apocalyptic concerns of *Perpetua* in terms of its eschatology, and the way in which Perpetua and her community would “trample on evil” (Tilley, 1997, p. 43). Going beyond the surface themes, however, we may begin peeling back the outer layers of the social role of *Perpetua* as an apocalyptic text. In this regard, Barr insightfully suggests that apocalypses functioned to transform their audiences by bringing them into an experience with the other reality of the apocalypse (Barr, 2006, p. 86).

Barr suggests an analogy with the transforming power of religious rituals (Barr, 2006, p. 86). Barr argues that the act of hearing an apocalypse took the oppressed community “behind the veil of limited human experience to the secret world where all meaning becomes clear” (Barr, 2006, p. 87). When hearing an apocalypse, Barr maintains that the community expected to experience this other world through the transformative power of language, and in this way they were assured of the existence of a “more real world... that already existed and that would thus control both the future and the present” (Barr, 2006, p. 88). The apocalyptic experience for a community that generated and heard apocalyptic texts was therefore not a passive one; instead, it was fundamentally transformational. Because the experience of the reading of an apocalyptic text was essentially a community experience⁴⁹, the transformation engendered by text involved the transformation of the community. However, personal transformation was also involved, since it was individuals who, as part of the community, responded to the hearing of the apocalyptic text.

We may now apply these insights to the *Passion of Perpetua*, particularly in view of the earliest evidence of how the text was sacrally used in the Christian communities. Augustine refers to the psychologically experiential effect of the liturgical use of the *Passion of Perpetua*. Writing specifically about the reading of the *Passion of Perpetua* in the community, Augustine comments that “all those things, recounted in such glowing words, we perceived with our ears, and

actually saw with our minds” (Augustine, 1994, Sermon 280.1, p. 72)⁵⁰. “...*verborum digesta et illustrata luminibus, aure percepimus, mente spectavimus*” (Augustine, 1994, Sermon 280.1).

Indeed, even more than this, in *Sermon 282.2*, Augustine refers to his hearers having “committed to memory” (Augustine, 1994, Sermon 282.2, p. 81)⁵¹ (*sicut memoriae traditum novimus*) (Augustine, 1994, Sermon 282.2) what was read. These statements highlight the social and psychological impact of the text.

The aspect of active social transformation implicit in *Perpetua* has been extensively studied in recent decades. Judith Perkins notes how *Perpetua*, “by locating new sources and avenues of power, functioned to subvert the hierarchical structures holding sway in the early Empire” (Perkins, 1995, p. 104). Gager observes that doctrines that focus on the body are especially concerned with social relationships and with society (J. G. Gager, 1982, p. 347). Within the *Passion of Perpetua*, for example, the subversion of existing social structures is exemplified in the language used in the vision of the Egyptian, in which the Christian victory is described in “terms that emphasize the subversion of the top by the bottom” (Perkins, 1995, p. 110).

Rhee, also typifying recent studies dealing with *Perpetua* in the context of gender inversion, women’s empowerment, and social resistance (Rhee, 2005, p. 153), uses the accounts of Perpetua’s confrontations with her father to note how she “overcomes this socially vested authority and overturns the traditional patriarchy—the fundamental hierarchy of the society” (Rhee, 2005, p. 150). Importantly, the martyrs are not passive; as Fannie LeMoine notes, they refuse to play the role of willing victims (LeMoine, 1999, p. 206). This is deliberately emphasized in the account of Perpetua’s death, in which “she herself carried the wavering right hand of the youthful gladiator to her throat. Possibly such a woman could not have been slain unless she herself had willed it” (*fortasse tanta femina aliter non potuisset occidi*) (*Perpetua*, 2010, 6.4)⁵². These are all textual representations of the socially transformative role of the text, accomplished through its ritual use in the Christian communities of North Africa.

5. The apocalyptic community in the *Passion of Perpetua*

Through the experiences recounted in their narratives, the martyrs sought

to transform their communities. Not only were the visions and experiences of the martyrs in *Perpetua* for the benefit of the whole Christian community; (*Perpetua*, 6.4) the Christian community is pervasive throughout the narrative. The community is clearly included in the “we” in the preface, and is the community to which these revelations belong: “So we who consider these new visions promised just as much as those prophecies [*Itaque et nos qui sicut prophetias ita et uisiones*] acknowledge the rest of the virtues of the Holy Spirit as provisions for the Church” (*Perpetua* 1.1, 2000, p. 388; 1996, p. 102).

The community is present at the arrest (2.1) and in the dungeon (3.7). The community is present at Perpetua’s trial, in her affirmation of solidarity with the Christian community by declaring “I am a Christian” (*Christiana sum*; 6.4). In Perpetua’s first vision, she ascends the ladder together with Saturus, representing the community of the martyrs (4.2). The community prays together in prison (7.1). In Perpetua’s third vision, the Christian community is represented by Pomponius the deacon, who says to her, “Perpetua, we are waiting for you; come!” (*Perpetua, te expectamus, veni*; 10.3). Who are the “we” if not the Christian community? Even in the midst of her tortures in the amphitheatre, Perpetua is mindful and connected with the community of believers, admonishing the brother and the catechumen to “Stand fast in the faith” (*Perpetua*, 2000, 20.10, p. 396)⁵³.

Furthermore, the essential unity between the martyrs and the surviving community is emphasized by the fact that Pomponius in vision held Perpetua’s hand through the rough and winding places on the way to the amphitheatre (*Et tenuit mihi manum, et coepimus ire per aspera loca et flexuosa*; 10.3). Pomponius’ words of encouragement when in vision they arrive at the amphitheatre are significant: “Do not fear, I am here with you, and I am labouring with you⁵⁴. *Noli pauere, hic sum tecum, et conlaboro tecum.*” (*Perpetua*, 1996, 10.4, p. 136)⁵⁵.

This is followed immediately by the statement that *et abiit* (“and he departed”). This is the point; Perpetua was apparently alone, but she was not really alone, for through and within her was represented the entire Christian community. In this way, Perpetua was assured that even though she would not see them all with her physical eyes, her whole community would be there in the amphitheatre, suffering, and overcoming, with her. Indeed, when Perpetua is taken, wounded, from the arena to the Sanavivarian Gate, the text tells us that

“[t]here Perpetua was taken care of by a man by the name of Rusticus who was then a catechumen [*Illic Perpetua a quodam tunc catechumino, Rustico nomine*]. He stayed close to her [*qui ei adhaerebat, suscepta*].” (Tilley, 1994, p. 396).

An important part of the meaning of the text is that death cannot break the bond between the martyrs and their community. In Saturus’ vision, it would seem that the Christian community is present in heaven itself (incredibly to modern readers). Saturus and his companions find Optatus the bishop and Aspasias the presbyter, who were in conflict about some matter. They throw themselves at the martyrs’ feet, and say: “Make peace between us because you died and left us this way [*quia existis, et sic nos reliquistis*].” (*Perpetua*, 2000, 13.2, p. 394; 1996, 13.2, p. 150).

Exeo clearly refers to the deaths of Saturus and his companions, since it is the same verb used by Saturus in the beginning of his vision, where he writes that they had “gone forth from the flesh...” (*Perpetua*, 1972, 11, p. 119) (*exiimus de carne*). The petition of Optatus and Aspasius to the martyrs to resolve their dispute is an amazing depiction of the earthly Christian community squabbling even in heaven. However, this is not because Optatus and Aspasius actually *are* in heaven; but rather it can only be because the martyrs themselves represent, and even more so, encompass in themselves the entire Christian community after their martyrdoms. The corollary of this is that there is one community between the faithful in heaven and earth.

The martyrs have authority as “mediators between time and eternity” (LeMoine, 1999, p. 201, 204)⁵⁶, encompassing both the earthly and heavenly communities, and communicate within and with both. This is reinforced by the expectation within *Perpetua* “of the end of time” (LeMoine, 1999, p. 201). This eschatological setting is explicitly framed by the author of the preface (LeMoine, 1999, p. 202), as well as through allusions to the Apocalypse of John’s description of the saints, their struggles, and victory in the final days (Tilley, 1997, p. 43). In this regard, note particularly Perpetua’s victory over the dragon in her first vision (cf. Rev 1:3) and the description of heaven as a garden (cf. Rev 22:1–6).

The protagonists in *Perpetua* represent themselves as struggling and overcoming within an apocalyptic world view. In themselves, they represent and unite the entire Christian community. Thus far, this representation of the

mediators falls squarely within the genre of apocalyptic literature, and indeed illustrates the social function of apocalypticism in operation within the Carthaginian Christian community. However, *Perpetua* also demonstrates a highly significant development of this concept within the North African church. This development is set within the context of the early and continued liturgical use of the text of *Perpetua*, even to this day. When the church at Carthage prayed to Perpetua and to Felicity, like the Christians of today in the mass, they prayed to them as “major intercessors” (LeMoine, 1999, p. 204). However, as we have seen, the text itself suggests more than merely a *unio liturgica*, perhaps moving towards a *unio mystica*. It is in this sense that the Christians of Carthage may have venerated their newly dead heroes.

These concepts appear to have deep roots in the Jewish apocalyptic world view. This focus on the mediator joining the heavenly community of angels, indeed, “angelification”, is a notable motif in a number of key Jewish apocalyptic texts⁵⁷, particularly the Enochic texts. The concept of angelification appears to have been embraced by the Qumran community. In the “Angelic Liturgy”⁵⁸ there are many references to divine hierarchies, the seven heavens, and the appearance and movements of God’s throne chariot, familiar from Merkabah Mysticism (Segal, 2004, p. 412–413)⁵⁹. Segal notes that the “Angelic Liturgy” appears to be “the liturgy of the human priests at Qumran who were actually undergoing transformation into angelic creatures, worshiping in the heavenly Temple. The liturgy seems to map a seven-stage ascent to heaven to view God’s throne and glory.” (Segal, 2004, p. 304)⁶⁰.

Crispin Fletcher-Louis has convincingly demonstrated that the Qumran community’s language of mystical participation was directed toward angelification.⁶¹ This is expressed in many texts within the context of a present experience of human fellowship with the angels (Collins, 2009, p. 296). Indeed, the life of the community was structured to enable participation in this heavenly cult (Collins, 2009, p. 301). This transformation and participation appears to have been perceived very much as a present experience, which would indeed be more fully realized in the future (Collins, 2009, p. 308). This would seem to account for the fact that the scrolls of the Qumran sect contain no reflections concerning death as a problem (Collins, 2009, p. 308). This feature is, interestingly, analogous with the perspective of the *Passion of Perpetua*.

The people of the Qumran community therefore considered themselves as sharing in the life of the heavenly world, on the basis of the authority of the angels with whom they worshipped (Elior, 2004, p. 183)⁶². Although the Qumran writings come from an earlier time and another milieu, they illustrate how the notion of the transcendent community, which is evident in *Perpetua*, is also found in the early Jewish apocalyptic tradition, and in the aspirations of at least one Jewish community. That this theme appears in both of these contexts is not surprising, given the *Passion of Perpetua's* roots in Jewish apocalyptic traditions.

The role of the text of *Perpetua* within the early Christian communities in North Africa was to engender the transformation of the needy community on earth, into a common identity and solidarity of a transcendent community. This was a community that was understood to encompass, not only the earthy community of the faithful, but notably also the heavenly community of those of their number who have died. This was accomplished within a framework that was grounded in Jewish apocalypticism, and manifested through the mediation of *Perpetua* and her companions⁶³. It is clearly evident that the social role of *Perpetua* may be better understood via the genre of Jewish apocalyptic literature, and by direct analogy, via the role of the previous apocalyptic texts within their own communities. Indeed, for the Christian church, martyrs like *Perpetua* became much more effective mediators than, for example, Enoch in the apocalyptic tradition. Not only were these their very own mediators, from their own community, and therefore much more powerful, but the North African cult of the dead also imbued their veneration with strong filial and community ties.

Conclusion

According to a number of different tests, there is more than sufficient affinity between the *Passion of Perpetua* and the apocalypses to classify it as an apocalyptic text in its own right. The nature of *Perpetua*, and its apparent sources and intertextuality, all point to it being an apocalyptic text. The *Passion of Perpetua* was written within an apocalyptic milieu, and appears to self-consciously claim to belong to that same tradition.

The reasons why the *Passion of Perpetua* has not been seen as an apocalyptic text are complex. It is after all a martyrology, and a text that, almost since its inception, has been put to ritual, sacral use. In modern times it has

been analysed from so many perspectives, and to fit so many theological, political, and social agendas that perhaps its explicit role and function in the Carthaginian Christian communities has been somewhat overlooked. However, by understanding *Perpetua* as an apocalyptic text, a window is opened into its function in the communities within which it was originally written and accepted.

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¹ See Van Den Eynde (2005, p. 27); Kitzler (2007, p. 4).

² The *Passion of Perpetua* will be abbreviated to *Perpetua*.

³ See also Cox Miller (1994, p. 150); Hopkins and Beard (2005, p. 10); Hartney (2005, p. 35).

⁴ In this regard, Bremmer highlights the liturgical use of *Perpetua*. Note the liturgical terms in the *Passion of Perpetua* 1.1, 5 (*lectione*), 1.6 (*audivimus... per auditum*), 21.11 (*legere*) (Bremmer, 2002, p. 80) Cf. Urner (1952, p. 25–42). Amat (1996, p. 191) highlights this liturgical background in the clause *instrumentum Ecclesiae* (1.5): “[i]nstrumentum en latin tardif désigne toute forme d’instruction, et particulièrement au moyen des Livres Saints”.

⁵ Note that Herbert Musurillo translates *suo sensu* as “according to her own ideas” (Mursurillo, 1972, p. 109).

⁶ See Shaw (2004, p. 306). See also Prinzivalli (1999, p. 119). However, see Kraemer and Lander (2000, p. 1055–8).

⁷ It is more with the latter issue that this paper deals.

⁸ *Perpetua*, 2.2.

⁹ On the Latin and Greek texts, see also Bremmer (2004, p. 535–536).

¹⁰ See Bremmer (2004). In support of this view, see also Dronke (1984, p. 5); and Bowersock (1995, p. 36).

¹¹ Regarding the editor, Bremmer (2002a, p. 82) asserts that “we can be absolutely certain that he was not Tertullian.” In support of this view, see Leal (2009, p. 63); and Tilley (1994, p. 832).

However, the view that Tertullian edited the *Passion of Perpetua* has a long pedigree, going back to J. A. Robinson (1891, p. 47–57) and Adhemar D’Alès (1907, p. 18). The idea has been more recently supported by Carl Sommer (2007, p. 359); and William Farina (2008, p. 26). However, the identity of the editor(s) of *Perpetua* is not directly relevant to the argument being made here.

¹² See, for example, the *Acts of Cyprian*, the *Martyrdom of Marian and James*, and the *Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius*. See also Moss (2010, p. 99).

¹³ The issue of whether the *Passion of Perpetua* is Montanistic has a long history of scholarly debate, with the view of a Montanistic background to the *Passion of Perpetua* being supported by the volume of scholarship. In the final analysis, there is nothing incompatible between Montanism and the apocalyptic genre. Supporters of the Montanistic view include David Frankfurter (1996, 137); Robinson (1981, p. 51–2); Andrzej Wypustek (1997, p. 6); Elaine Huber (1985, p. 47); and Antonie Wlosok (1997, p. 424). Against the view that *Perpetua* should be considered as Montanistic, see Tilley (1994, p. 835); and Kraemer and Lander (2000, p. 1061).

¹⁴ Note that in *De Virginitibus Velandis*, 2.2, Tertullian argues for the essential unity between the Christians of Carthage and Christians elsewhere.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Augustine (1994, 280.1; 281a.1), *Quodvultdeus*, *De tempore barbarico* 1.5, and the unanimous evidence of the various catholic martyrologies with regard to *Perpetua*’s orthodoxy.

¹⁶ See also Tilley (1994, p. 834).

¹⁷ On the Jewish background of the *Ascension of Isaiah*, see Jensen (2006, p. 142). See also Gruenwald (1980, p. 62); and Gieschen (1998, p. 239, 244).

¹⁸ On the Jewish background for the *Apocalypse of Peter*, see Bauckham (1988, p. 4731; p. 84); and Bauckham (1986, p. 82).

¹⁹ On parallels between *Perpetua* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, see Robeck (1992, p. 25); and Salisbury (1997, p. 102). In this regard, the scope of this present paper has been limited to identifying conceptual similarities between the *Passion of Perpetua* and the Jewish, rather than the Judaeo-Christian apocalypses. These Judaeo-Christian apocalypses are all heavily influenced by the strictly Jewish apocalyptic literature as well.

²⁰ This was noted by Margaret Barker (1987, p. 13).

²¹ This definition is admittedly wide. However, it has achieved at least some degree of general credibility. Conformity to the definition is essentially a matter of degree.

²² See also the detailed discussion of the phenomenological issues associated with the term “apocalyptic” in Körtner (1995, p. 23–55).

²³ Therefore, the term “apocalyptic,” when used by itself in this paper, refers to an apocalyptic world view in general. Note that some secondary sources that do not align with these usages of these terms will be quoted here.

²⁴ See also Rowland (1982, p. 9–11).

²⁵ It should however be noted that notions of the afterlife do not themselves define apocalyptic.

²⁶ This is certainly the theme of *Perpetua* that Tertullian highlights in *Treatise on the Soul* 55.4. See also Bauckham (1998, p. 1, 86). On the variety of approaches to the nature of resurrection in the *acta*, see Moss (2010, p. 123–124, 133). For scholars who have given the matter of the afterlife in *Perpetua* attention, see Orbán (1989, p. 169–77); and Bremmer (2000, p. 97–111).

²⁷ Note that *sed ed* is omitted from manuscripts B, C and E. (1996, p. 152). On the compelling argument for the “exclusive” translation of *sed et*, see Bremmer (2003, p. 70). Similarly, see translations by Chiarini, Musurillo and Tilley. See also Bastiaenen et al. (1987, p. 135). However, note that F. Dolbeau (*ReAug* 47, 2001, p. 382, cited in Bremmer, 2003, p. 70) translates *sed et* as referring to “non-exclusive” categories, as apparently does Amat’s translation: “mais tous des martyrs.” (*Passion*, 1996, p. 153)

²⁸ On the prominent role for angels as guides for tours of heaven, see Ricklefs (2002, p. 93). Also see Gruenwald (1988b, p. 20).

For examples in primary sources, see *1 Enoch* 19–21; Revelation 17, 19, 21.

²⁹ The redactor writes: “[t]hese are the remarkable visions of the blessed martyrs Saturus and Perpetua, which they themselves have written” (*Hae visiones insigniores ipsorum martyrum beatissimorum Saturi et Perpetuae, quas ipsi conscripserunt; The Passion of Perpetua*, 2000, 14.1, p. 384; 1996, 14.1, p. 152–154).

³⁰ See also the subsequent account of Perpetua’s intercession for her dead brother Dinocrates at 7.9–10.

³¹ See *Perpetua*, 4.9–10; 13.2, 8.

³² She continues (116) by commenting that the martyrs’ “ability to evoke an interstitial –here now yet still to come– domain subverted all earthly notions of time and space. For the seer/recorder or reader, the present “reality” was subverted by that new reality represented by the “otherwise” then–now–or–later visual interstice. In this subaltern existence —from this spatio-temporal margin— all other centers of thought and being are minimized, and their persuasive powers relativized”.

³³ The fact that Optatus and Aspasius are alive on earth while present in heaven in Saturus’ vision highlights the transcendent nature of the martyrs’ experience and authority, and in this sense, the lack of boundaries between their visionary and earthly experiences.

³⁴ See particularly *2 Enoch* 22–37; *3 Enoch* 9:1–5; 10:1–3; 15:1–2; 16:1. Also the *Prayer of Joseph*, lines 7–9, and the “Angelic Liturgy” (*IIQShirshab* and other fragments found in cave 4).

³⁵ *Perpetua*, 2012, 1. 3-4, p. 125.

³⁶ And by extension, all of the other righteous dead as well (according to *Perpetua*, 13.8).

³⁷ Note also Tilley’s translation: “We left our bodies” (*exiuiumus de carne*; 393). Robeck (Robeck, 1992, p. 72) refers to this as “a clearly Platonic clause”.

³⁸ *Perpetua*, 13.8.

³⁹ *Perpetua*, 13.8.

⁴⁰ See also Gruenwald (1988b, p. 23).

⁴¹ Note particularly I. Gruenwald (1988c, p. 5). Also Gruenwald (1988b, p. 19).

⁴² It is interesting to compare the concepts in *Perpetua* with what Perpetua’s contemporary Tertullian later wrote to the martyrs: “Though the body is shut in, though the flesh is confined, all things are open to the spirit. In spirit, then, roam abroad; in spirit walk about [*Vagare spiritu, spatiare spiritu*], not setting before you shady paths or long colonnades, but the way which leads to God [*sed illam viam, quae ad deum ducit*]. As often as in spirit your footsteps are there, so often you will not be in bonds [*Quotiens eam spiritu deambulaveris, totiens in carcere non eris*]. The leg does not feel the chain when the mind is in the heavens [*Nihil crus sentit in nervo, cum animus in caelo est*].” As he wrote these words, it is possible that Tertullian had the example of Perpetua and Saturus in mind, for this is precisely what they did (see Tertullian, *Ad Martyras* 2.9–10, 1973, p. 693–696, 694).

⁴³ The community is both explicit and implicit in *Perpetua*, and it includes both the past (see Preface), present, and future communities. See Castelli (2004, p. 103).

⁴⁴ See especially Elier (2004, p. 31–32).

⁴⁵ *Perpetua*, 1.3: *secundum exuperationem gratiae in ultima saeculi spatia decreta* (“in accordance with the exuberance of grace manifested to the final periods determined for the world”). This is Luke Dysinger’s translation, in this instance preferable for both its closeness to the text, and as better capturing the tone of the apocalyptic world view (see *Perpetua*, 2010).

⁴⁶ Here the redactor cites Joel 2:18–19 and Acts 2:17–18.

⁴⁷ See also den Boeft (2011, p. 178).

⁴⁸ As noted previously, this stance has been mistakenly interpreted as “Montanistic.”

⁴⁹ On the oral performance of apocalyptic texts, see Henze (2012, p. 181–200).

⁵⁰ See also Burrus (2008, p. 30).

⁵¹ “On the Birthday of the Martyrs Perpetua and Felicity”, tr. Hill.

⁵² Note that Latin manuscripts B and C have *posuit* instead of *transtulit*. This variation is of minor importance in terms of Perpetua’s refusal to be passive (see *Perpetua*, 1996, p. 180).

⁵³ Here the text is quoting from 1 Cor. 16:13.

⁵⁴ Here Dysinger’s more literal translation of *conlaboro tecum* as “I am laboring with you” is preferable to Tilley’s “fighting alongside you”.

⁵⁵ Regarding *conlaboro tecum*, Amat (p. 223) observes: *Le verbe, comme d’autres composés du préverbe con, est exclusivement chrétien.*

⁵⁶ This role is foreshadowed by Perpetua’s vision of Dinocrates.

⁵⁷ See *1 Enoch* 39:7; 62:15–16; 104:2–62; *2 Enoch* 22:7–10; 30:8–11; *Testament of Moses* 1:14, 15–19; and *Prayer of Joseph*, lines 7–9. See also Collins (2009, p. 291–292).

⁵⁸ The “Angelic Liturgy” consists of *IIQShirshab* and the other fragments found in cave 4.

⁵⁹ See also Mishnah *Hagigah* 2:1.

⁶⁰ Note also the angelomorphism in *1QSb* 4:24–28.

⁶¹ See particularly Fletcher-Louis (2010, p. 443). Earlier, Fletcher-Louis (1997, p. 184, 198).

⁶² See *Community Rule* XI.7–8. Note also *War Scroll* XII, I.6–7; *Blessings Scroll*, 4Q289, frg.Ia,5; and 4Q381, frg.I.10–11; and 1 QH 11:19–21. Rachel Elier (2004, p. 173) suggests that the origins of this conceptualization of the Qumranic community are to be associated with the Enochic texts.

⁶³ Bremmer affirms that within Christianity, “[t]he idea of intercession itself probably stems from the Jewish background of Christianity, since in both Jewish and early Christian apocalypses exemplary figures, like Ezra or Paul, intercede on behalf of the damned”. (Bremmer, 2002b, p. 65–66, citing Baukham, 1998, p. 136–148).

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