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Did Peter ever go to Rome?

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Abstract

Paul and Acts suggest that after Easter Peter lived in Jerusalem and had special responsibility for the mission to Palestine. *1 Clement* mentions his two-plus labours (cf. Acts 3–4, 5, 12), but not Rome and not martyrdom. It places him second of seven chronologically ordered victims of jealousy between AD 40 and 70. *Asc. Is.* 4:2–3 is about Nero redivivus, not the historical Nero, and has nothing to do with Peter. By AD 100 legends were forming about his sojourn in Rome (1 Peter) and his martyrdom (John 21). He probably died in his bed in Jerusalem about AD 55.

The tradition that Peter preached at Rome, and was martyred there under Nero, is often thought to go back to the first century. 1 Peter implies that he wrote the letter from Rome ('Babylon'). John 21:18–19 indicates that he was martyred. An association with Nero is claimed from the *Ascension of Isaiah*, probably a first-century text, and indications have also been found in the letter of the Roman church of the 90s known as *1 Clement*.

Evaluation of this literary evidence has been bedevilled by suspicions of confessional prejudice, but there have been many attempts to state the case neutrally, as with F. C. Baur.[1] With the twentieth century came the excavations under St Peter's Church in Rome, with claimed indications that Peter was buried there. These were sympathetically reviewed by Hans Lietzmann, together with inferences from third-century liturgical material.[2] But the general modern acceptance of the tradition has been due in large measure to the work of Oscar Cullmann. His *Petrus, Jünger – Apostel – Märtyrer* was published in 1952, with an English translation appearing in 1953 and a revised second edition in 1962: he accepted the literary case, but was sceptical of other arguments.[3] Of the more recent treatments, that of R. E. Brown in the Roman half of *Antioch and Rome* should be mentioned;[4] but the most

[1] F. C. Baur, 'Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz der petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, Petrus in Rom', *Tübinger Zeitsrift für Theologie* 4/3 (1831), 61–206; though Baur had his own agenda.

[2] H. Lietzmann, *Petrus und Paulus in Rom* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1927).

[3] O. Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 2nd edn (London: SCM Press, 1962).

[4] R. E. Brown and J. P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York/Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983); Brown includes useful tables linking *1 Clement* with 1 Peter and Hebrews.

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significant restatement has been that by Richard Bauckham in a 50-page article in *ANRW* (1992), with some critique of Cullmann.[5] Joachim Gnilka's recent work, *Petrus und Rom* (2002), is a fresh statement by a respected Catholic scholar. I have engaged with all three authors in the footnotes – Cullmann as the most widely known, Bauckham as the most cogent, and Gnilka as the most up-to-date and wide-ranging.[6]

I have divided the literary material into three sections: evidence from the apostle's contemporaries; evidence from *1 Clement*, as being from first-century Rome; and other evidence. I have not commented on the claimed archaeological and liturgical evidence.[7] This is partly from considerations of space; but also because Cullmann is dismissive of such claims, Gnilka is hesitant, and Bauckham does not discuss them.

1. The apostle's contemporaries

We learn something of Peter's life after the resurrection of Jesus from the letters of Paul, and something from Luke's account of him in Acts. It is true that a sceptical view of Luke is possible,[8] but on the whole his account of Peter is borne out by Paul. We also may have hints in Mark's Gospel, which is often thought to stem from Rome a few years after Peter's death.[9]

Peter was one of the founder-members of the Jerusalem church in the days after the crucifixion – indeed, the leading founder-member, though Luke emphasises the joint action of 'the apostles', 'Peter-and-John', in Acts 1–5. We have the impression that he was in Jerusalem semi-continuously in the years following (Acts 1–6). Stephen's preaching produced a reaction against the church, causing many to move away from Jerusalem, but Luke

[5] R. J. Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter in Early Christian Literature', *ANRW* 2.26.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 539–89; 539.

[6] J. Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom: Das Petrusbild in den ersten zwei Jahrhunderten* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 2002).

[7] A recent account of the archaeological evidence is offered by H. G. Thümmel, *Memorien von Petrus und Paulus in Rom* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999); he claims that such evidence goes back to 160–5, and concedes that there is some problem over the intervening century, when there is no sign that martyrs' graves were honoured. Cf. also Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom*, 126–41; J. S. Jeffers, *Conflict in Rome* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

[8] We may contrast the robust conservatism of M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch* (ET; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997) and G. Lüdemann's radical *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts* (ET; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

[9] C. C. Black, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001), gives a list of authorities (241).

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says that the apostles remained (8:1). In AD 37[10] Paul came to Jerusalem to make Peter's acquaintance,[11] and duly found him there (Gal 1:18; cf. Acts 9:27); Peter had a home there, where Paul stayed for a fortnight. Peter saw his mission as including other towns in Judaea, and we find him visiting Lydda and Joppa and the (plain of) Sharon (Acts 9:32–10.48); but he soon returns to Jerusalem (11:2) to give an account of the reception of Cornelius. Peter is still in Jerusalem when Agrippa I comes looking for him in the early 40s (12:2), and only leaves the city lest he should again be arrested, and executed (12:17). He tells the gathered Christians to inform James, implying that James is to take charge of the church, of which he has hitherto been joint pastor.[12]

Peter is back in Jerusalem in AD 48, when Paul and Barnabas come up to settle the terms of their ministry at Antioch (Gal 2:1–10); and he and James are clearly still, with John, the pastors of the metropolitan church. Peter has not come up specially for the occasion from a distant expedition – Paul came up 'by revelation', and found him there. James is now mentioned first (Gal 2:9), because he is not evangelizing Judaea but is in Jerusalem all the time (and he is more of a leader than Peter [cf. 2:11–12], and carried authority as Jesus' brother). But Peter's broader responsibility is made clear in 2:7–8: he had been 'entrusted with the [mission to the] circumcision', that is, at the least, Palestine. In Acts 15 Luke gives a quite differently presented account of the same incident, again giving Peter a central role in the home church: after there has been much public debate and strong feeling Peter settles matters with a highly pro-Pauline speech.[13]

Shortly after this Peter goes down to Antioch, deputed by his colleagues to see what was going on there, and if necessary to stop it (Gal 2:11–14). The church must have had a Gentile host who had bought meat from the market

[10] The dates given are approximate, being based on a rather conservative view of Acts; the point is not the date in itself but the spread of our evidence over some 30 years.

[11] O. Hofius, 'Gal.1,18: ἱστορῆσαι Κηφᾶν', *ZNW* 75 (1984), 73–85, defends this rendering against 'to question'.

[12] Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom*, 86–93, presents a picture in which, after Cornelius's conversion, Peter broadens his missionary vision. After his escape from prison he moves outside Palestine for safety, handing over the care of the Jerusalem church to James. But there is no evidence for any change of Peter's missionary policy after the Cornelius incident, or that he left Palestine (Acts 12:17 says just 'to another place'); and Paul finds the old leadership in charge when he arrives in Jerusalem in AD 48.

[13] For a defence of Acts 15 as a Lucan version of the conference of Gal 2:1–10, see M. D. Goulder, *Paul and the Competing Mission at Corinth* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 165–70.

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for the eucharistic supper;[14] but Peter, whether impressed by the fine spirit of the community or for other reasons, makes no objection and eats with the Gentiles. A further deputation from Jerusalem ('certain from James') arrives, however, and forces the issue: Peter now insists on kosher meat for the Jewish Christians, and Paul, thwarted and angry, is reduced to making a scene.[15] All this is not part of a programme of Peter's Mediterranean mission. It is a single special journey intended to settle the problem of Torah-observance in a crucial community, Antioch, the centre of the successful but rather heterodox mission to the Gentiles. Luke tactfully suppresses the uncomfortable incident in Acts 15, but he mentions that at this point Paul and Barnabas parted brass rags, and that Jerusalem had kept representatives in Antioch in the form of Silas and Judas (Acts 15:36–41). Peter had gone back to Jerusalem. He was still active when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in AD 54, for Paul mentions that 'Cephas' is among the apostles who take their wives round on mission at church expense (1 Cor 9:5); there is no hint that such missions were outside his normal field, Palestine.

Paul's final visit to Jerusalem was in AD 56. He came up for the feast of Pentecost, and was received by James (Acts 21:18). 'All the elders' were there, but this time there is no mention of Peter – surprising, as we should have expected to find him there for a festival. Josephus tells us that the High Priest Ananus took advantage of the absence of a Roman governor to have James executed.[16] This again suggests the absence of Peter, since he was equally significant as a Christian leader. Also, Hegesippus reports that after James's death an election was held for the post of bishop of Jerusalem, and

[14] It is often alleged, e.g. by Gnilka, that what was at issue was 'table fellowship with Gentiles'. But then (as now), Jews were normally at liberty to entertain Gentiles provided that the food was kosher. Kosher food is clearly at issue in Rom 14. See E. P. Sanders, 'Jewish Associations with Gentiles and Galatians 2:11–14', in R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa (eds), *The Conversation Continues* (FS J. L. Martyn; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1990), 170–88.

[15] Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom*, 93–108, represents Paul as maintaining a law-free gospel, justification by faith, modified by concessions to the conscience of the 'weak' Jewish Christians. This is far from accurate. Paul's slogan was 'not beyond what is written' (1 Cor 4:6), the bible and the bible only. Of course, Pauline Christians were expected to keep Torah in such matters as fleeing idolatry (idol-meat, 1 Cor 10:14), and πορνεία, (6.18), which does not mean marriage to a relative. These were not 'Jakobusklauseln', but the standard sins Jews attributed to Gentiles. Paul says Christians may eat meat from the market provided no one tells them it has been offered to an idol (1 Cor 10:23–30). Leviticus said they should not eat blood, and sheep were not strangled in the market: Leviticus does not mention kosher butchers or two sets of cooking pots. See Goulder, *Corinth*, esp. 47–74.

[16] Jos. *Ant.* 20.197–203.

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that Symeon, a relation of Jesus, was unanimously elected (Eusebius, *H.E.* 4.22.4). If Peter had been alive at this point, we might have expected him to take over as sole leader of the metropolitan church; or at least it might have been said, 'Since Peter was preaching around the world . . . '.

So where has Peter disappeared to? The thought comes to mind: why not on worldwide mission? Why not to Rome? But there are difficulties with this conjecture. Peter can hardly have been in Rome in AD 56, since Paul writes extended greetings to the church members in Rom 16 and is desperate to keep good relations with the Jerusalem church; but he does not mention Peter. Nor is it likely that he was in Rome in 59–61, when Luke accompanied Paul to the capital.[17] He has left Peter in suspended animation since Acts 15, and it is hard to think of any reason why he should suppress Peter's presence in the city if he were there with Paul, or even shortly before.[18]

There is, however, a more serious reason for thinking that Peter was not touring the Mediterranean preaching. Gal 2:7–8 reads: 'But on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcision just as Peter had been with that to the circumcision; for he who worked in Peter for the mission to the circumcision worked also in me to the Gentiles . . . ' Cullmann, Bauckham and Gnilka[19] all interpret this to mean that Peter carried responsibility for Jews all round the world, and Paul for Gentiles only. But such a view is hardly possible. In the first place it would imply a totally impractical duplication of travelling (at a time when the Lord might come at any moment!). The two 'good apostles' did not travel together: Peter is supposed to have left his rather fruitful work in Palestine in order to trail round after Paul preaching his slightly different gospel to the Jewish members of Paul's churches.

Secondly, such a division of labour was understood to be excluded by the evangelist most sympathetic to Peter. Matthew is a believer in the

[17] Luke speaks of Paul's arrival in Rome in the first person plural. His account of Paul's time there is full of problems, but these do not imply that his 'we' is undependable; at the least it is the only evidence we have.

[18] Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom*, 109, asks why Luke does not mention Peter's mission to Rome and generally outside Palestine, and replies, 'Die Antwort ist einfach. Ihm werden keine Quellen zur Verfügung gestanden haben'. Really? Luke was in Jerusalem in AD 56 and stayed with an old disciple, and talked to James and the elders (Acts 21:15–18); and he met a lot of Christians in Rome in 59 (Acts 28:15).

[19] Cullmann, *Peter*, 44–8; Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter', 576; Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom*, 98. There is a long-standing debate over whether the distinction in Gal 2:7–8 is geographical or ethnic. For a recent statement of the 'ethnic' case (i.e. that Peter had responsibility for Jews everywhere), see J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Black's NT Commentaries; London: A. & C. Black, 1993), 111–12; but Dunn does not respond to the above arguments.

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church's mission to the Gentiles, but he has Jesus clearly instruct the Twelve (Matt 10:5–6; cf.11:1), 'Turn not off on to any road to the Gentiles (εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθητε) and enter no city of Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. The mission to the Gentile world, and to the Samaritans, was to be conducted by missioners other than the Twelve. It was in fact, as Matthew had experienced it, the work of Paul and his colleagues at large, and of Philip among the Seven at Samaria; the responsibility of the Twelve was 'the house of Israel' at home, Palestine. Of course Matthew's narrative ostensibly describes Jesus' arrangements in his lifetime; but the evangelist is not concerned with historical accuracy, but with a more permanent situation. His missionary discourse (10:5–42) warns the Twelve that they will be brought before governors and kings (10:18), which did not happen till later; and they are told, 'You will not have gone through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes' (10:23), which clearly delimits their permanent commission. 'The towns of Israel' means Palestine. At 24:13 the disciples are told, 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in the whole world', without implying their agency. At 28:19 the Eleven, with others, are told, 'Go and make disciples of all the nations'; they are to oversee a world mission,[20] as well as sitting on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes who have been their special care (19:28).[21]

This interpretation is confirmed by the actual practice of the two leaders. Paul did not understand the Jerusalem agreement to imply that he should not preach to Jews. On the contrary, Luke portrays him as regularly beginning his work by speaking in a synagogue, and there were Jews in Paul's churches in Corinth (1 Cor 7:8–19), Philippi (Acts 16:14), and elsewhere. The nearest major city to Palestine was Antioch, and there was a considerable mixed church there by AD 48; but it is clear that in fifteen years and more Peter had never been near the place. When he and the others heard rumours of what had been going on in a church established for a good time, they sent

[20] Matthew envisions others beside the Eleven as being present. In 28:17 the Eleven worship their risen Lord, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν; judging by Matt 26:67 this should mean, 'but others doubted'.

[21] The modern stress on Matthew's consistency and theological interest only sharpens the tension. W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *The Gospel according to St Matthew, II, 8–18* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), explain the change as the consequence of the cross and resurrection, which form an 'eschatological turning-point' (167–9); but then the Son of Man is to come *after* the eschatological turning-point. U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus, 8–17* (EKK I/2; Zürich-Braunschweig/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), rejects the above exegesis on the grounds that 10:5a and 28:19 are both addressed to the same people (91). But what was Matthew to do? He knew that Jesus had sent the Twelve to the twelve tribes; but then to whom else could he have entrusted the world mission?

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'false brethren secretly introduced' to find out what was going on; and when Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem, Peter and the others 'saw' what the situation was. There have been claims that the 'Cephas party' at Corinth took its origin from a visit by Peter, but recent commentators are sceptical of this.[22]

We have one further document from a close acquaintance of Peter which probably comes from Rome, the Gospel of Mark. Mark does not cover the post-resurrection period directly, but he does give occasional hints. He has Jesus say to the sons of Zebedee, 'The cup which I drink shall you drink, and the baptism I receive shall you receive' (Mark 10:39). James was indeed martyred (Acts 12:1), and no doubt John also. Mark gives the apostolic leaders a mixed press: they are by turns heroes of the faith and dunderheads. But just as here he does his best for James and John, so we might have hoped for a hint of Peter's glorious martyrdom had such occurred. But all Peter gets are the bleak threats of 8:33–8, 'If anyone would follow after me, let him deny himself . . . ', and their dire sequel in chapter 14. The Gospel ends with Peter being sent to Galilee, but there is no hint of his faithful death.

Such is the sum of the historical evidence that can be culled from three NT authors whose lives overlapped with Peter's, Paul, Mark and Luke. If this were all the evidence we had, the conclusion would be clear, with a high level of probability. After Jesus' death Peter made his home in Jerusalem. He lived there for more than twenty years, making occasional visits to other towns in Palestine. He was almost always in Jerusalem when people called to see him. He felt a responsibility for the mission to Palestine. The only time we find him outside Palestine is for the Antioch incident of Gal 2:11–14, when the Jerusalem troika felt that they must put their foot down about Torah observance. Peter disappears after AD 54: he probably died in his bed about 55. The likelihood of his having visited Rome is remote.

[22] T. W. Manson, 'The Corinthian Correspondence', in *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles: Essays in Memory of T. W. Manson*, ed. M. Black (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962), 190–207; C. K. Barrett, 'Cephas and Corinth' and 'Christianity at Corinth', in *Essays on Paul* (London: SPCK, 1982), 28–39, 1–27. A more sceptical view is adopted by W.Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther. Teil 1: 1 Kor 1,1–6,11* (EKK VII/1; Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 144–6; A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI/Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 2000), 128–9. Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom*, 91–2, argues that as Paul and Apollos had been missionaries with followings at Corinth, so may those of Kephas have been converted by Peter; but other emissaries from Jerusalem might claim Peter's authority – cf. the 'false apostles' of 2 Corinthians.

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2. 1 Clement

Happily we are not limited to NT witnesses. We are fortunate in having evidence from Rome in the first century, in the form of the church's letter to Corinth, the so-called *First Epistle of Clement*,[23] usually dated in the middle 90s AD. This includes references to Peter and Paul in chapter 5, and much effort has been expended trying to extract juice from the orange. In fact the whole case turns on *1 Clement* 5. The author is writing early enough to know if Peter was martyred in his city. Peter was the prince of the apostles, and if he was martyred at Rome, every Roman Christian would have known about it. If Clement shows knowledge of Peter's martyrdom at Rome, then he was martyred there. If Clement does not know about it, he was not so martyred. I give first Lightfoot's translation of chapters 5–6, and will then comment *seriatim* on the Greek.[24]

> 5.1 But to pass from the examples of ancient days, let us come to those champions who lived nearest to our times. 2. Let us set before us the noble examples which belong to our generation. 3. By reason of jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church were persecuted and contended even unto death. 4. Let us set before our eyes the good apostles. There was Peter who by reason of unrighteous jealousy endured not one nor two but many labours, and thus having borne his testimony went to his appointed place of glory. 5. By reason of jealousy and strife Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. 6. After he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness

[23] The epistle does not contain Clement's name, which is traditional. For discussion and dating, see O. B. Knoch, 'Im Namen des Petrus und Paulus: Der Brief des Clemens Romanus', *ANRW* 2.27.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 3–54.

[24] J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London/New York: Macmillan, 1891). It is best to begin, as Bauckham does ('The Martyrdom of Peter'), with a neutral translation. Cullmann (*Peter*) gives a version of his own, which contains no less than four dubious renditions in the crucial 5:4. (1) He takes ἡμῶν with τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἀποστόλους rather than ὀφθαλμῶν, to yield 'our good [sc. Roman] apostles'. Elsewhere in *1 Clement* ἡμῶν seems always to qualify the preceding noun, as repeatedly in 21. (2) In common with Lightfoot he renders πλείονας by 'many'. But the Greek for many would be πολλούς; πλείονας means 'more', here 'not just two'. (3) He translates πόνους as 'torments', which is too specific; πόνους means 'trials' or 'labours'. 'Torments' would rule out a reference to Peter's earlier imprisonments. (4) By importing commas before and after μαρτυρήσας, he enables οὕτως to be taken with the main verb, and facilitates the understanding of μαρτυρήσας as 'having given his witness in death'. Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom*, 115, similarly takes πόνους as 'Peinen', understood without argument as torments leading up to his martyr's death.

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> unto the whole world and having reached the farthest bounds of the West, 7. and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance.
>
> 6.1 Unto these men of holy lives was gathered a vast multitude of the elect, who through many indignities and tortures, being the victims of jealousy, set a brave example among ourselves. 2. By reason of jealousy women being persecuted, after that they had suffered cruel and unholy insults as Danaids and Dircae, safely reached the goal in the race of faith, and received a noble reward, feeble though they were in body. 3. Jealousy hath estranged wives from their husbands, and changed the saying of our father Adam, *This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh*. 4. Jealousy and strife have overthrown great cities and uprooted great nations.

Down to chapter 4 Clement makes his thought clear. In earlier times the Corinthian church had been a pattern of humility and virtue, but success had made it arrogant. Jealousy and envy had stolen in, as they do in such cases. It was through ungodly jealousy that death entered into the world (Wisd 2:24). He then gives seven instances of the damage done by jealousy in the OT. The first of these, Cain's jealousy of Abel, culminated in the latter's being killed, and Clement devotes more than half the paragraph to this prize example. The others are given a sentence each: Esau's jealousy of Jacob, the brothers' of Joseph, the Israelites who killed his fellow and drove Moses to flight, that of Aaron and Miriam against Moses, that of Dathan and Abiram against Moses, and that not only of the Philistines but also of Saul against David.

Four features stand out from this list: (1) The examples are of jealousy. The noun ζῆλος is used in each case, and φθόνος is added for Cain; (2) Only the first example ends in death. Clement mentions that the brothers persecuted Joseph to the point of death (μέχρι θανάτου), but of course they did not kill him; (3) The instances are presented in the biblical order; (4) In each case the jealousy is against a brother, either in a familial sense, or in a national sense, a fellow-Jew. The Philistines are included against David, but Saul is also.

It is when we come to chapters 5–6 that things become not quite so clear. Here again there are seven illustrations of jealousy, from time 'closest [to us]', from 'our generation'. These are: 'the greatest and most righteous pillars', Peter, Paul, the 'large crowd of elect among ourselves', the suffering women, the women who left their husbands, and the great cities. Again, as in the former catalogue, the word ζῆλος introduces each example, with φθόνος added for the pillars, and ἔρις for Paul and the cities.

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There has been a tendency to collapse all this second list into a single multiple instance, that of the Neronian persecution, with two 'fillers' to make up the number. Thus it looks as if the suffering women belong with the great crowd of the elect at Rome; Peter and Paul were probably martyred at Rome, very likely under Nero also. They are included among the pillars of the first 'vague' instance.[25] Clement could not think of any more examples from the history of the church, so he threw in two weak examples at the end.[26] This is not convincing. Clement enjoys piling up lists of examples, inexorably, but he does not elsewhere form two lists of seven in parallel. He would have been quite capable of making a single catalogue of eight, with Peter, Paul and the Roman confessors together (balancing the long exposition of Cain and Abel), and avoiding the apparent bathos with which the second list seems to end. We should expect all seven instances in the modern list to be genuine examples of destructive jealousy, as in the ancient list. We might also reasonably expect the other features from the first list to apply, e.g. that they should fall in chronological order, and that the jealousy should be fraternal.[27]

The first example seems to be encouraging: διὰ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον οἱ μέγιστοι καὶ δικαιότατοι στύλοι ἐδιώχθησαν καὶ ἕως θανάτου ἤθλησαν. The word στύλοι suggests familiarity either with Gal 2:1–10 or with the vocabulary there used. The 'pillars' were the triumvirate that ran the church: they were widely regarded in the church as 'very great' and 'very righteous', and in early times had been Peter and the sons of Zebedee. James and John had been promised martyrdom by Jesus in a well-known incident (Mark 10:39), and James had in fact been executed by Agrippa I in the early 40s. So at least one of the 'pillars' had been persecuted and had contended unto death. Clement might have written 'James and John' as he has written 'Peter and Paul', but he may well be thinking also of James, Jesus' brother. The latter James had been one of the pillars of Gal 2:1–10, and Clement's δικαιότατοι might recall his widely used sobriquet of James the Just (ὁ δίκαιος). He 'contended to death'; and malice similarly moved Agrippa to martyr James bar-Zebedee, as

[25] So Cullmann, *Peter*, 93; Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter', 556, differentiates here.

[26] Cullmann, *Peter*, 93: 'The last two evidently are intended only to complete the number'; Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter', 557: 'general observations of human life which do not at all fit the pattern'.

[27] Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter', 559, squeezes the orange a little differently. He also excludes the two last examples as fillers: the remaining five then seem to be examples not of jealousy but of heroic testimony, almost a technical term for martyrdom. The pillars contended to death; Paul was martyred; so were the Roman elect, male and female; so we may naturally conclude that Peter was also, going thereafter straight to heaven.

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he tried to please the Jews (Acts 12:2). Luke use ζῆλος of the chief priests' move against the apostles in Acts 5:17. As in the first list, what is at issue is jealousy/evil intent within the community, including the Jewish community still; this is ascribed to ζῆλος καὶ φθόνος as with Cain alone in the first list, and, as with Cain, this example alone is said to end in death.

Clement's comments on Peter are notable both for what they say and for what they do not say:[28]

> λάβωμεν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἡμῶν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἀποστόλους· Πέτρον ὃς διὰ ζῆλον ἄδικον οὐχ ἕνα οὐδὲ δύο ἀλλὰ πλείονας ὑπήνεγκεν πόνους, καὶ οὕτω μαρτυρήσας ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸν ὀφειλόμενον τόπον τῆς δόξης.

Peter and Paul are 'the good apostles'. No doubt the others did sterling service, but, as Luke also makes clear in Acts, the real leaders who had brought the gospel to the world were Peter and Paul. It is surprising how little Clement seems to know about Peter. He knows something specific about at least three occasions in his life when he was in serious trouble, πόνους, labours or trials. Lightfoot's 'many' is rather strong for πλείονας, which means only 'more'. He knows they were due to ζῆλον, and he knows that 'in this way [Peter] gave witness' (οὕτω μαρτυρήσας). Now we cannot help reflecting that we find a very similar situation in the Acts of the Apostles. There Peter has three major trials: with the high priesthood in Acts 3–4 and again in chapter 5, and with Agrippa in 12:1–17. In the second of these 'the high priest and all those with him ... were filled with ζῆλος' (5:17). In both the first and second cases Peter testified to the truth of the gospel at his hearing (4:8–13; 5:29–32). An obvious possibility is that Clement is familiar with Acts, and is reproducing its account of Peter's troubles in outline.

Two objections are made to this. First, Bauckham says that there is no evidence that Clement knew Acts.[29] But even if this were so, it seems unlikely that Christians at the end of the first century would have had no interest in the history of their movement. One would have expected copies of Acts to be in wide demand, especially as they could be had for the price of a slave's copying for a week. One would have expected the church of Rome to be particularly well placed to hear about the book: it was written by someone who had lived for several years in Rome, and its climax was the arrival of the gospel in Rome. If by chance there was no copy in Rome, one would have

[28] Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom*, 114–15, says that Clement speaks unambiguously ('unzweideutig') of Peter's death. This is not so: he tells us that Peter went to heaven, and while it is good to be reassured on this point, there is no mention at all of his death, apart from the very ambiguous μαρτυρήσας.

[29] Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter', 559–60.

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expected Luke to have been a popular raconteur in his Roman days, and that stories about Peter's brave defiance of the high priesthood would have been particularly well received. Nor is it clear that Clement totally lacks evidence of knowing Acts. Lightfoot signs 2:1, 'more gladly giving than receiving', as an echo of Acts 20:35.[30] More generally, 42:3 reads: 'Having received a charge, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, [the apostles] went forth with glad tidings that the kingdom of God should come.' This sounds markedly like the voice of Luke in Acts.

The other question is over the meaning of μαρτυρήσας, which, it is said, is likely to carry the overtone of testimony *to death*, 'having given his *martyr's* witness'; the οὕτω would then 'probably' go with ἐπορεύθη. μαρτυρεῖν is used 70 times in the NT, almost always (especially in Acts) with the meaning of verbal witness (cf. 1:8). BAGD give one possible exception in 1 Tim 6:13 ('Jesus Christ who witnessed the good confession'), but otherwise the earliest such use is in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

Hesitations must arise again, however, from what Clement does *not* say. He does not mention Peter's preaching in east and west as he does with Paul, nor does he mention his death as he does with the pillars. Surely, one feels, if *Peter* had been martyred at Rome the local Christians would have preserved some memory of his ordeal; surely Clement would have written 'Having borne witness in Nero's garden', or ' ... in flames', or 'like the Lord', or something specific. As it is, he just goes to heaven (where exceptional saints go on death, cf. Phil 1:24), having borne witness. The preceding οὕτω most naturally goes with μαρτυρήσας, and links the testimony to the three-plus labours.

Things are only slightly different in Clement's account of Paul:

> διὰ ζῆλον καὶ ἔριν Παῦλος ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ὑπέδειξεν, ἑπτάκις δεσμὰ φορέσας, φυγαδευθείς, λιθασθείς, κήρυξ γενόμενος ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει, τὸ γενναῖον τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ κλέος ἔλαβεν, δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθών· καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἐπορεύθη, ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός.

Much of this comes from sources known directly or indirectly to us. Clement is fond of sevens, and it is not clear how he computed Paul's seven chainings; but we have plenty of references in Philippians, Philemon and Colossians, as well as in Acts 26:29; 28:20. His 'being made a refugee'

[30] The phrase is quite widely testified, but Clement is so addicted to biblical references that an Acts echo is likely.

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(φυγαδευθείς) is perhaps an echo of his escape from Damascus (2 Cor 11:32–3, ἐξέφυγον; cf. Acts 9:23–5). He was stoned (λιθασθείς) at Lystra (2 Cor 11:25, ἐλιθάσθην; cf. Acts 14:19, λιθάσαντες). He proclaimed the gospel in the east (Arabia, Antioch, Asia) and in the west (Rome). His teaching of the whole world to its western boundary implies familiarity with the references to Spain in Romans (15:24, 28). But, remarkably, it also implies total ignorance of the realities of the apostle's end: Clement thinks Paul went on from Rome to Spain, and Luke's ambiguous ending of Acts might encourage him to think that. This would be in line with the evidence of Philippians, and of Col 4:10–11 and 2 Tim 4:16, that Paul's arrival in Rome was broadly ignored by the Roman church, perhaps following hostile reports from Jerusalem. Luke, and no doubt others, did not wish to associate their names too closely with that of an executed criminal; and it may be that many of those who knew Paul perished in AD 64. But Clement knows that he gave his testimony before such ἡγούμενοι as Felix (Acts 24:1, τῷ ἡγεμόνι), Festus and Agrippa II (Acts 24–26). ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις are found together at 1 Cor 3:3, and (in reverse order, or with φθόνος) at Rom 13:13; Gal 5:20 and Phil 1:15. Paul claims the virtue of ὑπομονή for himself at 2 Cor 6:4 and 12:12. He aspires to the βραβεῖον of his calling in 1 Cor 9:24 and Phil 3:14. Clement certainly knew 1 Corinthians (chapter 47) and probably therefore 2 Corinthians. Most of the above references could have been drawn from a knowledge of the Corinthian and Roman letters. As with Peter, there is no clear mention of his death; but this time it is clear that Clement knows nothing about it:

> τούτοις τοῖς ἀνδράσιν πολιτευσαμένοις συνηθροίσθη πολὺ πλῆθος ἐκλεκτῶν, οἵτινες πολλαῖς αἰκίαις καὶ βασάνοις διὰ ζῆλος παθόντες, ὑπόδειγμα κάλλιστον ἐγένοντο ἐν ἡμῖν.

It is widely agreed that the reference here is to the Neronian persecution. πολὺ πλῆθος gives the same sense as Tacitus's *multitudo ingens*, and he also makes particular mention of the 'exquisite' tortures applied (*Annals* 15.44). No doubt under such pressure Christians will have informed against each other, so accounting for the ζῆλος; or there may have been more malign delation by Christians of different groups or by Jews. The apostles 'were joined' by the present group as noble examples. Most striking is the final phrase, ἐν ἡμῖν: this happened 'among us', i.e. in Rome – it would be easy to think that this was the first of the noble examples to be given in Clement's own community and city. Although a fair number of Roman Christians must have died (dreadfully), he does not mention this. What is relevant is the damage done by the ζῆλος and the courage displayed; it might seem boastful

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to speak of the martyrs' deaths if the same could not be said of the two good apostles. Also he is speaking of a considerable number of the faithful who suffered maltreatment and torture, and not all of them were burned alive to illuminate the imperial banquet; Tacitus, like other ancient historians, was not afraid of hyperbole:

> διὰ ζῆλος διωχθεῖσαι γυναῖκες, Δαναΐδες καὶ Δίρκαί, αἰκίσματα δεινὰ καὶ ἀνόσια παθοῦσαι, ἐπὶ τὸν τῆς πίστεως βεβαιὸν δρόμον κατήντησαν καὶ ἔλαβον γέρας γενναῖον αἱ ἀσθενεῖς τὸ σῶμα.

The women confessors are no doubt also victims of the same persecution of AD 64, and Clement includes them partly from just pride, but also because ζῆλος is a fault not limited to men. As with Paul, their noble reward is probably fame and glory (κλέος).

> ζῆλος ἀπηλλοτρίωσεν γαμετὰς ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἠλλοίωσεν τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀδάμ, τοῦτο νῦν ὀστοῦν τῶν ὀστέων μου καὶ σὰρξ ἐκ τῆς σαρκός μου.

It is not at all likely that Clement would have completed his list of examples with two 'fillers'. It is probable that all Christians would have heard of the deaths of Stephen and of James, Jesus' brother, and indeed others. Clement cites the estrangement of wives from their husbands because that was a major scandal in the church. Already in 1 Cor 7 Paul is opposing those who maintain that it is good not to touch a woman (which indeed he will allow), but also that a woman has the rights over her own body, which he will not. Sex was felt to be incompatible with contact with the divine. If women were truly to share in the gifts of the Spirit they should not marry; and if married, either the relation should be platonic or they should divorce. It is noticeable that the initiative in such divorces seems to lie with the woman (1 Cor 7:10–11). It is likely that this aspiration to celibacy is connected with women's praying and prophesying, and letting their hair loose, in 1 Cor 11 and 14: Israel was forbidden to go near a woman at Sinai (Exod 19:15), and David assured Ahimelech that his young men's vessels were holy in 1 Sam 21:5.[31]

This rejection of sexual union is a recurring feature in Jewish Christianity. Matt 19:12 speaks of 'those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven', limiting the case, like Paul, to those with a special vocation. But John the Seer sees 144,000 (Jewish) Christians standing on Mount Zion

[31] Cf. Goulder, *Corinth*, 125–51.

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and distinguished from those of every people: 'these are those who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins' (Rev 14:1–6). Later we find the same pressure in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, and among the Montanists. In all such instances a modern feminist will think Clement's ζῆλος gratuitous; but under the ancient patriarchal perspective, a woman who denied her husband sex was rejecting 'our father Adam's statement of her inferior destiny, and acting from jealousy of her husband's rights.

Clement might be speaking of scattered instances of such jealousy. But the other examples he gives are of particular crises, and it feels as if the same should apply here. In 1 Cor 7:26 Paul tries for a compromise 'in view of the impending crisis' (τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην): the married to remain married, the single single. But the (eschatological) crisis is a formidable prospect: the married 'will have tribulation in the flesh, and I am sparing you' (7:28). Jesus was remembered as having warned those in Judaea to flee to the mountains before it was too late, with a special word to women who were pregnant or suckling their infants (Mark 13:14–17). It would be small wonder, then, if Christian wives in Palestine called it a day for marital purposes when the advent of the Jewish War seemed to signify the beginning of travail. In such circumstances it is easy to believe that an anti-sex movement which had been stirring for more than a decade would come to a head.[32]

ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις πόλεις μεγάλας κατέστρεψεν καὶ ἔθνη μεγάλα ἐξερίζωσεν.

Again the notion of a 'general' filler seems implausible. This is not the first mention of civil upheavals: 3:2 mentions πόλεμος καὶ αἰχμαλωσία with ἀκαταστασίαι as arising from jealousy. A major fact in the Christian reading of history was the fall of Jerusalem (and other Jewish cities) in the Jewish War. One does not need to be a specialist in the subject to know that much of the responsibility for the disaster rested with people who actually called themselves Zealots (Ζηλωταί), so ζῆλος could once more be invoked as the villain, with internecine 'strife' its partner. Not only was Jerusalem overthrown, but the great Jewish people was largely uprooted and deported into slavery.

Such an exegesis does much to clarify the structure of Clement's thought. (1) His two lists of seven are parallel examples of the damage caused by *fraternal jealousy*. In the OT list the brothers are sometimes familial, but sometimes (as with Dathan and Abiram, or Saul) fellow-Jews. In the second list the jealousy

[32] The long passage in 1 *Clement* 21 on the 'guiding' of women suggests that the same trouble may have been at work in Corinth in the 90s, and that this is associated with the ousting of the Pauline presbyters.

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is sometimes inter-Christian (as with Paul or the wives), or inter-Jewish (as with the cities), and sometimes between Christians and Jews (as with Peter); we should remember that as late as Acts Paul addresses Jews as 'Brethren' (13:26; 23:6). (2) Only twice is *death* mentioned as the consequence of such jealousy: in the first OT example, Cain 'killed his brother'; and in the first contemporary instance the pillars 'contended to death'. (3) Like the OT list, the contemporary examples are arranged in chronological order. The first great and righteous pillar of whom we know, James bar-Zebedee, contended to death in the 40s AD. Peter, on the evidence listed in Section 1 above, went to his merited place of glory from Jerusalem about AD 55. Paul, on the evidence of Acts 28, went to the holy place soon after 61. The Roman martyrs, both men and women, were noble examples in Nero's persecution of 64. The women's refusal of marital rights is most easily understood as taking place in the early stages of the Jewish War, around 66–7. The overthrow of Jerusalem and the uprooting of its people took place in AD 70.

1 Clement 4–6 gives no support to claims either of Peter's visiting Rome or of his martyrdom there. The pillars, the undutiful wives and the overthrown cities all have reference to events in Jerusalem, so there is no suggestion that they all apply to Rome. The jealousy against Peter, his three-plus labours and his attendant witness, can all be explained from traditions known to us from Acts (and probably so known to Clement also). It would be extraordinary if the Roman church knew of Peter's martyrdom, whether by crucifixion or by burning in Nero's garden, and gave no hint of it in reference to his passage to heaven. The chronological sequence suggests, just as the Acts evidence does, that Peter died before Paul, in the 50s AD.

3. The origin of the Roman martyrdom legend

Legends arise from a conjunction of need with opportunity. The Roman church was founded by anonymous Christians, merchants perhaps or soldiers; but it was the church of the world's capital city, and Clement's letter itself shows that within half a century it reckoned to exercise a patronising influence on other churches. Soon it would be involved in doctrinal controversies in which apostolic tradition would be crucial. Roman authority needed legitimising, and a mission to the city by Peter, in which the apostle was martyred, would fill the bill exactly.

It was fortunate that three accidents enabled the idea of a Petrine visit to Rome to take root. Peter had historically conducted a mission to the Jews of Palestine from Jerusalem; but the leadership of the Jerusalem church had gradually been taken over by James the Just as 'bishop'. This left Peter without a 'bishopric', which Rome would be pleased to supply. Then secondly, it is

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likely that Mark wrote his Gospel for use in the Roman and other churches,[33] and Mark's Gospel contains more stories about Peter than anyone else. It was easy to explain this on the grounds that Mark had heard these stories, and other of Jesus' teachings, from Peter – as indeed he probably had, when living as a young man in Jerusalem. Papias tells us that the elder John had said that this was so (Eusebius, H.E. 2.15.2), so the idea was current very early in the second century. It was easy, then, to think that Mark had heard Peter teaching in Rome, and this is what was understood by 1 Peter. A third helpful factor was the paralleling of the careers of Peter and Paul which we find in Acts. Both apostles heal lame men, raise the dead, introduce Gentiles into the church, etc.; in this way they become 'the good apostles' of *1 Clement* 5, and there is an invitation to close their lives in parallel also.

1 Peter is still sometimes thought to be from Peter himself,[34] or as embodying substantially Petrine tradition,[35] but most scholars take it to be pseudepigraphic, and to date from near the end of the first century. It comes from 'Babylon', i.e. Rome, and associates Peter with 'Mark my son' (5:13), as Papias does. Peter is chief shepherd of the flock, as in Matthew, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ (5:1–2). This witnessing can hardly refer to the reports of an eyewitness, since Peter is not said in any Gospel to have been present at the crucifixion; more likely, as in 1 Cor 15:15 (ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν), it means the proclamation of the gospel of the cross. 1 Peter is thus evidence that perhaps 40 years after Peter's death, and a generation after the writing of Mark's Gospel, the Roman church was beginning to put two and two together. If Peter was the church's chief shepherd, he would surely have carried his witness to the world's chief city. If Mark knew all this Petrine material, and Mark lived in Rome, surely he would have heard Peter teaching there, as his son. Such a reconstruction would be useful, if not requisite, when commending one's church's teaching to a circle of distant provinces.

This then brings us to John 21, a central part of the argument for Cullmann, Bauckham and Gnilka. I agree with Bauckham in thinking that John 21 is part of the Gospel; that the stretching out of Peter's hands and the death by which he will glorify God imply that John believed him to have been crucified; and that the scene in 21:18–19 is related to John 13:36–7,

[33] C. C. Black, *Mark* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001), 241: 'Rome prevails as the likely, though not indisputable, origin of the Second Gospel in scholarship old and recent'. Black gives a considerable list.

[34] Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter', 543, takes 1 Peter to be authentic, and dates it in the 60s AD.

[35] J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter* (AB 37B; New York: Doubleday, 2000). This position is ably criticised by D. G. Horrell, 'The Product of a Petrine Circle? A Reassessment of the Origin and Character of 1 Peter', *JSNT* 86 (2002), 19–60.

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and probably to 10:11. Our difference lies in the source from which John drew his information.

In John 21:8–19 Jesus draws a contrast between Peter in his youth girding himself, and in his age stretching out his hands while others gird him and carry him where he would not. I agree with Bauckham in thinking that ἐκτενεῖς τὰς χεῖρας σου is John's addition, in order to imply crucifixion. Otherwise the wording does not imply crucifixion. ζώννυμι is not a natural Greek word for to bind the arms to a cross; prisoners were not 'girded' by others before crucifixion, nor carried unwilling to their place of execution; nor did they extend their hands *before* being so carried. But Bauckham's argument that without John's addition of these words we have an authentic 'cryptic reference to martyrdom' is extraordinary.[36] Without them we have nothing but the contrast between youth and age: what Bultmann and others have supposed to be a traditional proverbial saying.[37] So there is no sign of a pre-Johannine prophecy of Peter's death. What we have is John's belief that he had been crucified: it was in this way that Peter would glorify God; and Jesus ended, 'Follow me'. In 13:36–8 Simon Peter is told that he cannot follow Jesus now, but he will follow later. Peter protests that he will lay down his life (ψυχήν...θήσω) for him now, but is told that the cock will not crow till he has denied Jesus three times.

The prophecy of Peter's threefold denial comes in all four Gospels, but John's account is noticeably closer to Luke's than to the first two evangelists, who are unsparing. The Lucan picture (Luke 22:31–4), however, is more friendly. Jesus tells Peter ('Simon, Simon . . . ') that the disciples have been tested by Satan; through Jesus' prayer his faith will not fail, and when he has 'turned', he is to strengthen his brethren. Peter (now so addressed) says that he is ready to go with the Lord both to prison and to death; but the conversation still ends with the prophecy of his denial. John has three things in common with this Lucan version. First, there is the play of names between the present weak, human Simon and the heroic Peter of the future. Then there is the adjustment of Peter's boasts to something that will in fact come true: Peter will be going to prison (and, if necessary, to death) when he becomes the church's main support in Acts; he will (ultimately) lay down his life for Jesus, as understood in John 21. Both Gospels draw the contrast between present denial and future confession.

[36] Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter', 546–7.

[37] R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 713; B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (NCB; London: Oliphant, 1972), 636; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 2nd edn (London: SPCK, 1978), 585.

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Luke's words, 'Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death', are an invitation to John. Peter in fact went to prison at least three times, as is related in Acts: will he not have gone to death too? But Luke 22 does not specify the method of death. That is indicated to John in a number of passages in the synoptics, but especially in Mark 8:31–9:1. Here Jesus tells Peter and the others that he must be put to death. When Peter remonstrates with him, Jesus says: 'If anyone wishes to follow after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever will save his life (ψυχήν) will lose it'. It is this theme, which recurs in other passages, that enables John to make the necessary inference. Peter was ready/willing to lose his life (ψυχήν), to take up his cross, and to *follow* Jesus. John's repeated play on the word ἀκολουθεῖν echoes Mark's: 'Where I am going you cannot *follow* me now, but you will *follow* later', 'and when he had said this he said to him, *Follow* me . . . If I will that he abide till I come, what is that to thee? *Follow* thou me.'

It would seem, then, that John drew his belief that Peter had been crucified not from independent tradition but by inference from the synoptics. Much of John's narrative is obtained by inference. He thinks Jesus will have asked Peter three times if he loved him because Peter had denied him three times. He thinks there was a charcoal fire at Peter's restitution because there was a charcoal fire at his denial. Luke 24:24, 'Certain of those with us went to the tomb', told him that Peter did not go alone. John has structured the last chapters of his Gospel as in part a competition between Peter and his own hero, the Beloved Disciple. The Beloved Disciple does better than Peter at every point, but Peter is restored to his pastoral office in 21:15–17, and he needs a final destiny to parallel the Beloved Disciple's also. The latter Jesus intended to abide till his coming; Peter's martyrdom, apparently implied in Mark 8 and Luke 22, will have formed the climax to his life of following his Lord.

Bauckham adds a number of further texts of possible relevance, to two of which he attaches importance. One of these, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, we may pass over. It is dated to the Jewish Revolt of 133–5, by which time I agree that Peter's Roman martyrdom was becoming an established tradition. Also the text is corrupt and difficult. This is not true, however, of the Christian additions to the *Ascension of Isaiah*, which Knibb[38] and others date in the first century, and whose text is comparatively undisputed. *Asc. Is.* 3:13–4:22 gives Isaiah's vision of the Christian future in four phases: the gospel story (told with clear reference to Matthew's Gospel, e.g. the grave guards); a period of church history in which corruption sets in (cf. Matt 24:12); the final crisis in which Beliar becomes incarnate in the form of Nero redivivus; and the

[38] M. A. Knibb, 'Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah', in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1985), 2:143–76, esp. 149.

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climax in the coming of the Lord. The 'king of iniquity' in phase 3 is certainly Nero because he is described as 'murderer of his mother'; and the text continues (4:3): 'He will persecute the plant which the twelve apostles of the Beloved will have planted; one[39] of the twelve will be given into his hand'.

This plain tale gives rise to a remarkable piece of circular exegesis.[40] The body of 4:1–13 clearly describes a future series of events, in which Beliar takes the form not of Nero in his historic lifetime (dying in AD 68), but (as in Rev 13) of Nero come to life again. However, 4:3 mentions his persecution of the church, and his arrest of one of the Twelve. This is then taken to refer to the persecution of 64, and the (presumed) martyrdom of (presumably) Peter: therefore 4:2–3 is an inserted reference to the historic Nero, and the future narrative resumes at 4:4.

This is a classic example of circular argument. We have this part of the text in Greek (the original language), and the verbs are in the future (διώξει, παραδοθήσεται), as in the rest of the vision. The king of iniquity (ἄνομος) is the man of iniquity of 2 Thess 2, to which the vision is indebted for several details ('I am the Lord, and before me there was no one', 4:6; cf. 2 Thess 2:4; his deceitful miracles, 4:9–10; cf. 2 Thess 2:9), as well as its general structure. 4:3 is the only reference to the persecution of the church under the reign of Beliar, a central theme in both the Gospels and the Apocalypse (Matt 24:15–22; Rev 13). There is therefore not the least reason for taking 4:2–3 out of its future context. It speaks of the final persecution of the church before the Lord's coming. One of the Twelve will fall into the hands of Beliar/Nero: who then may this be? We may naturally think of the Beloved Disciple, who was expected to remain till Jesus came, but of whom Jesus did not actually say that (John 21:22). In time this disciple was believed to have been John bar-Zebedee, who was credited with having lived to a great age. There is thus no reason whatever to associate the verses with the historic Nero, or AD 64, or Rome, or Peter.

Thus by the end of the century the chocks were away for the Petrine legend to take off. It was believed in Asia that Peter had been martyred by crucifixion, and that his sermons had been recorded by Mark in Rome. Such reports were no doubt received with great interest in Rome, though a responsible leader like Clement knew that there was no such tradition in his community. But with hints in Ignatius, in the *Apocalypse of Peter* and in the later *Acts of Peter*, the balloon had taken off; and it will take more than sober scholarship to bring it down.

[39] So the Greek text; Ethiopic has 'some'.

[40] This is not peculiar to Bauckham and Gnilka: the same interpretation is given by Knibb, 'Martyrdom', 161.

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