Gelitten
Gestorben
Auferstanden

Herausgegeben von
TOBIAS NICKLAS, ANDREAS MERKT
und JOSEPH VERHEYDEN

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe
273

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Passions- und Ostertraditionen im antiken Christentum

Herausgegeben von

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und Joseph Verheyden

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Vorwort

Passion und Auferstehung Jesu von Nazaret dürfen in keinem christlichen Glaubensbekenntnis fehlen. Die ältesten Zeugnisse, die wir darüber besitzen, finden sich im Neuen Testament: Nicht nur die Evangelien erzählen ausführlich von Jesu Leiden, seiner Kreuzigung und Auferstehung bzw. Himmelfahrt, auch Paulus beschreibt Christus immer als den Gekreuzigten und Auferweckten und entwickelt von diesem Zentrum aus entscheidende Linien seiner Theologie.

Der vorliegende Band aber stellt nicht die übliche Frage nach den Wurzeln des christlichen Bekenntnisses zum gekreuzigten und auferweckten Jesus von Nazaret, der als Christus und Sohn Gottes verstanden wird, sondern interessiert sich für die unterschiedlichen Richtungen, in die sich dieser Glaube und die damit verbundenen Textwelten, Vorstellungen und Ideen weiterentwickelt haben.

Die hier gesammelten Beiträge gehen in ihrem Kern auf zwei Tagungen zurück: ein Seminar der Arbeitsgruppe „Christian Apocrypha“ auf der Jahrestagung der *Society of Biblical Literatur*e (SBL) in San Diego, Kalifornien, im November 2007 und ein Treffen der Projektgruppe des „Novum Testamentum Patristicum“ (NTP) auf der „International Conference on Patristic Studies“ im August 2007 in Oxford. Für die Veröffentlichung und zur Abrundung des Bandes wurden weitere Autoren angefragt.

Als Herausgeber sind wir allen beteiligten Autoren für ihre Mitarbeit, aber auch ihre Geduld bis zur Entstehung des Bandes zu Dank verpflichtet. Zu erwähnen ist auch das Organisationskommittee der SBL-„Christian Apocrypha Group“, allen voran Prof. Dr. Francois Bovon und Prof. Dr. Ann Graham Brock, die das erste der beiden Treffen, in dem apokryphe Texte im Vordergrund standen, möglich gemacht haben.

Wir danken Prof. Dr. Jörg Frey für die Aufnahme dieser Sammlung in die renommierte Reihe „Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament“ sowie den Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern des Verlags Mohr Siebeck, vor allem natürlich Herrn Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, für die freundliche und unkomplizierte Weise der Zusammenarbeit.

Ohne Frau Dr. Michaela Hallermayer, wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Lehrstuhl für Historische Theologie (Alte Kirchengeschichte und Patrologie) der Universität Regensburg, die für alle Formatierungen und die Hauptarbeit bei der Erstellung des Registers verantwortlich zeichnete, wäre die Herausgabe dieses Bandes sicherlich nicht möglich gewesen. Ihr gilt unser herzlicher Dank!

Als Herausgeber des *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* (NTP) denken wir hier auch an zwei Gründerväter dieses Projekts. Am 8. August 2007 ist Gerhard May im Alter von 66 Jahren verstorben. Seine früh einsetzende Krankheit hinderte ihn an der Verwirklichung vieler Pläne, darunter auch die Erstellung des NTP-Bandes zum Epheserbrief. Die Mitglieder der NTP-Gruppe schätzten vor allem seine kommunikative, ruhige und freundliche Art, die er mit einem breitem Fachwissen verband. Keine neun Monate später, am 25. April 2008, ist auch Basil Studer OSB, kurz vor seinem 83. Geburtstag, verstorben. Er hat die patristische Welt und insbesondere die Autoren des NTP durch seine profunden Kenntnisse bereichert. Trotz seines nimmermüden Arbeitseifers konnte er den NTP-Band zu den Johannesbriefen nicht mehr vollenden. Die Herausgeber wie auch die Autoren und Autorinnen des NTP werden beiden ein ehrendes und dankbares Andenken bewahren.

Regensburg und Leuven im Oktober 2009

Tobias Nicklas, Andreas Merkt und Joseph Verheyden

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Passion and Martyrdom Traditions in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles

ISTVÁN CZACHESZ

Only few of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles contain an extended report of the passion and resurrection of Jesus. Whereas the texts imply knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus by the reader, most of them provide only summaries of these traditions, or references to them – apart from the passion narrative in the *Gospel of the Acts of John*.[1] In this article I will argue that, notwithstanding the scarcity of reports about Jesus' passion and resurrection in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, these books contain a wealth of relevant material that helps us in the study of passion and resurrection traditions. I will particularly elaborate on the hypothesis, suggested in a former publication,[2] that the passion and resurrection narratives as well as the martyrdom of the apostles (in the Apocryphal Acts) derive from the same narrative tradition and should be regarded as variants of the same basic story. (1) In the first part of the article, I will describe a cognitive psychological model that provides the methodological scenario against which we will interpret our sources. (2) In the second part of my contribution, I will provide arguments for the hypothesis that the passion and resurrection narratives about Jesus, on the one hand, and the martyrdom narratives about the apostles, on the other hand, originate from a common martyrdom script, rather than the martyrdom stories imitating Jesus' death and resurrection. (3) In the third part, I will briefly examine the death of the martyrs in the *Gospel of Mark* and the major Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles from the perspective of the proposed theory.

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[1] *Acts of John* 87–105. For the interpretation of this section as a gospel, see I. Czachesz, "The Gospel of Peter and the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: Using Cognitive Science to Reconstruct Gospel Traditions," in *Das Evangelium nach Petrus* (ed. T. Nicklas and Th.J. Kraus; TU 158; Berlin and New York 2007), 245–261 at 245–247; id., *Commission Narratives: A Comparative Study of the Canonical and Apocryphal Acts* (Studies in Early Christian Apocrypha; Leuven and Dudley 2007), 102–106; id., "The *Gospel of the Acts of John*: Its Relation to the Fourth Gospel," in *Legacy of John: Second Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. T. Rasimus; Leiden and Boston 2009), in press.

[2] I. Czachesz, "Gospel of Peter," (n. 1) 261.

1. The transmission of stories: a cognitive psychological model

The model of narrative transmission that we will be using in this article has been outlined in some former publications.[3] In the transmission of early Christian traditions, memory has played a significant role. This has been recognized first by form criticism, and more recently by authors embracing orality studies.[4] It would be a mistake, however, to regard early Christianity as a purely oral culture,[5] or to reduce the examination of the role of memory to oral transmission alone.[6] The nature of ancient literacy was such that memory played a significant role in all aspects of it. Ancients habitually read aloud, had texts read to them by slaves, or listened to public readings.[7] Owning books had the significant function of signalling social and intellectual status, and reading was mostly a social activity: typically, books were read and discussed in bookstores or at dinners and symposia held in private homes.[8] When listening to a text and subsequently discussing it with a group of peers, people encountered literature as an oral/aural rather than as a visual event. In a Jewish context, in addition to bookstores and private homes, synagogues and study-houses (*bātê-midrash*) provided opportunities for intellectual exchange about religious literature.[9] When people discuss about texts in our days, participants often have printed copies or photocopies before them. In antiquity, participants in such discussions had to maintain a memory of the text to be able to talk about it, as well as they had to cite other relevant literature by heart rather than looking them up in their Bibles, for example. Authoring texts also involved memory to a great extent. The use of written sources was constrained in several ways. First, books were written continuously (*scriptio continua*), without punctuation or word division, thus providing no visual aids that would aid the eye in finding particular passages. Second, the scroll format was less then optimal for jumping across different parts of a book to find a passage or compare different passages. Third, ancients did not use desks on which they could have laid out scrolls (or later codices), which would have enabled them to use multiple sources critically (in a modern sense) when writing a new text.[10] Again, relying on memory or having slaves to read out sources aloud (which again involved the use of memory) could provide solutions to overcome such difficulties. For the study of the transmission of early Christian traditions it is therefore imperative to understand how we retain texts in memory and how we retrieve them when we want to retell them or use them in a discussion or while writing a book.

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[3] I. Czachesz, "The Gospels and Cognitive Science," in *Learned Antiquity: Scholarship and Society in the Near East, the Greco-Roman World, and the Early Medieval West* (ed. A.A. MacDonald et al.; Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 5; Leuven 2003), 25–36; id., "The Transmission of Early Christian Thought: Toward a Cognitive Psychological Model," *SR* 36 (2007), 65-84; id., "Rewriting and Textual Fluidity in Antiquity: Exploring the Sociocultural and Psychological Context of Earliest Christian Literacy," in *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer* (ed. J.H.F. Dijkstra et al.; Leiden and Boston 2009), in press.

[4] E.g. W.H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q* (Philadelphia 1983); J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge 2003); J.A. Draper (ed.), *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity* (Leiden and Boston 2004); R.K. McIver and M. Carroll, "Distinguishing Characteristics of Orally Transmitted Material when Compared to Material Transmitted by Literary Means," *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 18 (2004), 1251–1269; A. Kirk and T. Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (Atlanta 2005); R.A. Horsley et al. (ed.), *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark. Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber* (Minneapolis 2006).

[5] R. Uro, "Thomas and Oral Tradition," in *Thomas at the Crossroads* (ed. id.; Edinburgh et al. 1998), 8–32; R. Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (London and New York 2003), 106–133; Czachesz, "Transmission" (n. 3), 67.

[6] Czachesz, "Rewriting" (n. 3).

[7] W.A. Johnson, "Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity," *The American Journal of Philology* 121 (2000), 593–627; R.J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *The Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987), 213–223.

[8] E. Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (London 1985), 52; Starr, "Circulation" (n. 7), 223; Johnson, "Sociology of Reading " (n. 7), 612–615.

Most studies that considered the use of memory in ancient culture so far have concentrated on techniques to expand the limitations of memory. Both rhetoricians and rabbis had special ways to increase the span and accuracy of their memories.[11] Yet this is by far not the only way we can look at memory in the context of literary transmission. Only a minority of the literate members of ancient society (and of people involved in textual transmission in general) were rhetoricians or rabbis. Moreover, how memory works relies largely on cognitive structures that influence remembering in experts and laypersons, modern and ancient alike. In this contribution I will only deal with the transmission of narrative materials, which is particularly relevant to the study of passion, resurrection, and martyrdom narratives.

In Frederic Bartlett's famous experiment, Cambridge students had to recall a North American folktale, the "War of the Ghosts."[12] These experiments, and similar others, led Bartlett to the idea that our memory makes use of mental *schemas*; he defined "schema" as "an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences."[13] New information that does not fit into our mental schemas, will be either changed so that it matches them, or will be forgotten. The story of the "War of the Ghosts" underwent substantial changes both when the same subjects had to recall it at various time intervals, as well as in the experiment in which the story was transmitted from one subject to another in a chain-like fashion. In the latter case, however, the changes were such that the resulting stories "would hardly ever be connected with the original by any person who had no access to some intermediate version."[14] More importantly, however, the alterations in the texts showed regularities, to which we will immediately return.

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[9] C. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ; Tübingen 2001), 101–103.

[10] F.G. Downing, "A Paradigm Perplex: Luke, Matthew and Mark," *NTS* 38 (1992), 15–36.

[11] E.g. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 11.2; J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* (Cambridge 1969), 40–90.

[12] F. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental & Social Psychology* (Cambridge 1932).

A model of how narrative schemas function in remembering has been suggested by Roger C. Schank and Robert P. Abelson.[15] Their primary focus was on understanding how we accumulate knowledge in everyday life. "Some episodes," they argued, "are reminiscent of others. As an economy measure in the storage of episodes, when enough of them are alike they are remembered in terms of a standardized generalized episode which we call a script."[16] A *script* functions then as "a set of expectations about what will happen next in a well-understood situation."[17] When we receive sufficient amount of information that is related to a given script, the script is evoked (instantiated).[18] Scripts make clear what is going to happen in a given situation and what acts of various participants indicate.[19] They provide a memory structure, serving as a storehouse of old experiences in terms of which new experience can be encoded into memory; thinking means finding the most appropriate script to use. Finally, new information can modify the script.[20] A famous example is the restaurant script: 1) *actor* goes to *restaurant*; 2) *actor* is seated; 3) *actor* orders *meal* from *waiter*; 4) *waiter* brings *meal* to *actor*; 5) *actor* eats *meal*; 6) *actor* gives money to *waiter*; 7) *actor* leaves *restaurant*. Entering a restaurant, but also other information that contains a reference to an element of a restaurant visit, evokes the script; we will then have no difficulty, for example, finding out how to get food from the waiter or understanding why someone paid in the end. We prefer to avoid having to revise our scripts, because even minor changes in our memories might require us to reconfigure many other parts of our knowledge, involving “effortful cognitive operations.”[21] As a consequence, we tend to preserve our scripts and accommodate new information to them, rather than the other way around, which falls in line nicely with Bartlett’s empirical observations about the function of schemas in remembering.

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[13] Ibid., 201.

[14] Ibid., 171.

[15] R.C. Schank and R.P. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures* (Hillsdale, N.J., and New York 1977); id., "Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story," in *Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story* (ed. R.S. Wyer et al; Advances in Social Cognition 8; Hillsdale, N.J. 1995), 1–85.

[16] Schank and Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals* (n. 15), 10, 16–19.

[17] Schank and Abelson, "Knowledge and Memory" (n. 15), 5.

[18] Schank and Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals* (n. 15), 46–50, describe very precise rules for the application of scripts.

[19] Schank and Abelson, "Knowledge and Memory" (n. 15), 5.

[20] Ibid., 6.

Schank and Abelson also recognize the significance of storytelling as the context of remembering.[22] We recall memories as stories, which we usually tell in a particular social setting.[23] While telling and retelling a story, however, we always adapt it to cultural norms, in order to create a coherent narrative. Since nothing in life occurs as a culturally coherent story, in practice we always “lie” when we recall past events. Bartlett as well as Schank and Abelson pay attention to the social context of remembering. Whereas they observe that stories tend to get more and more condensed during subsequent repetitions, they also recognize that this is not necessarily true in all settings.[24] Bartlett particularly refers to the social stimulus that is underlying oral performance,[25] a factor that has been frequently referred to in orality studies.[26] Schank and Abelson write about “embellishments” that consist of fictional details added to the story as it is performed repeatedly.[27] That is, whereas the original details of the event tend to be compressed or forgotten, new details are being added. One has to remark that there is a difference between the “War of the Ghosts” and some other material used by Bartlett, on the one hand, and the events (such as a restaurant visit) that are in the focus of Schank and Abelson’s interest. The former type of material had been selected for its unfamiliar (Native American) cultural character and became adapted in transmission to mental schemas related to another (British) culture: the process that took place here was transformation from one schema to another. The latter type of material (a restaurant script) comes from first-hand experience and is stored immediately as culturally familiar or relevant information in memory.

How memories are stored was the main interest of Bartlett as well as of Schank and Abelson. David Rubin, in turn, proposed a new explanation regarding the cognitive mechanisms that underlie the *recall* of oral tradition.[28] Rubin's theory takes its departure from the observation that the structure of oral tradition is sequential, that is, in an oral composition "[o]ne word follows another as the physical effects of the first word are lost."[29] Unlike the reader of a text, the singer and listeners of an oral composition do not have simultaneous access to words or phrases in a text, except when they follow each other immediately. Oral traditions are therefore "recalled serially, from beginning to end," in a process that Rubin calls *serial recall*.[30] The mechanism by which this occurs is *cuing*. The cues that make serial recall possible consist of various constraints, by which a word or phrase limits the choice of the next word or phrase in such a way that results in a sufficiently close reproduction of the text (cue-item discriminability). Constraints include imagery, theme, rhyme, alliteration, rhythm, and music. At the beginning of the song, genre-specific constraints provide initial cues. The "singer" starts out with an initial word or phrase, rhythm, or melody, and follows the various constraints, often implicit and subconscious ones, to produce the next word, phrase, or line, until the end of the text is reached. Rubin puts particular emphasis on the local nature of cuing, as opposed to relying on an overall schema or theme. He quotes interesting examples of how particular details of a text are accessible even to experts only after a "running start." For example, an exorcist on Sri Lanka, when asked to give information on a particular demon, suggested the following procedure: "I will sing it and you tell me when the demon you want has his name mentioned. Then I will go slow so that you can put it onto tape recorder."[31]

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[21] Ibid., 17.

[22] Ibid., 33–34.

[23] Ibid., 41–49.

[24] Bartlett, *Remembering* (n. 12), 175; Schank and Abelson, “Knowledge and Memory” (n. 15), 36–37.

[25] Bartlett, *Remembering* (n. 12), 174.

[26] A.B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA 1960); M. and A. Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford 1971).

[27] Schank and Abelson, “Knowledge and Memory” (n. 15), 35–36.

The mechanism of serial recall seems to be at odds with the various schema models, which explain memory with reference to global rather than local organizing principles. The contradiction, however, disappears if we think about the different settings that are presupposed by these models. As mentioned before, memories usually tend to become more and more concise and adapt to existing mental schemas. However, when a social setting of oral performance is presupposed, texts tend to become increasingly longer, by performers adding new details and embellishments to them. In the course of repeated performances, or as the text is learned and performed by other singers, the development of the tradition will heavily depend, in addition to script-like schemas, on the constraints that make serial recall possible. The best way to understand the transmission of narratives is therefore to regard them as scripts that are fleshed out with the help of serial recall. Identifying scripts and themes in classical texts has a long tradition in the so-called formulaic school of Homeric studies,[32] as well as in the form-critical approach to biblical texts. Finally, as Rubin observes, there is a group of texts, which he calls "sacred texts," that are supposed to be recalled verbatim.[33] When recalling the Preamble of the American Constitution or *Psalm* 23, for example, the use of synonyms, substitute words, or embellishments is not acceptable. One has to remark, however, that "sacred texts" are often recited with typical errors, which go unnoticed by the performer, and sometimes even by the listeners, probably because they fulfil the various constraints – even if they change the *meaning* of the text.

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[28] D.C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-Out Rhymes* (New York 1995).

[29] Ibid., 175.

[30] Ibid., 175–179.

[31] Ibid., 190.

Schemas (scripts), cuing mechanisms, and the social setting of recall can be thought of as constraints, which provide us with criteria to understand (and predict) in which ways memories and traditions change over time. Some of these factors are culturally shaped and determined; others, such as scripts for interpreting personal experience, can be influenced by individual differences. There is yet another group of constraints that is especially relevant for understanding the formation of repeatedly transmitted texts, ideas, and beliefs, undergoing a process of repeated reproduction.

Experimental work conducted since the 1970s has demonstrated that humans cross-culturally share a number of ontological categories to make sense of their environment, including the categories of HUMAN, ANIMAL, PLANT, ARTIFACT, and (natural) OBJECT.[34] In this case, by ontological categories we do not mean an articulated, let alone philosophical, categorization of the world. Ontological categories are implicit, intuitive notions about "clusters of properties that unambiguously and uniquely belong to all members of a given category at that level." For example, "[a]ll animals are alive, have offspring, and grow in ways that only animals do."[35] In other words, people have particular expectations toward things belonging to a particular category. Based on Keil's works on ontological categories, anthropologist Pascal Boyer developed a theory of *minimal counterintuitiveness*. He proposed that ideas violating intuitive expectations about ordinary events and states, that is, ones that "combine certain schematic assumptions provided by intuitive ontologies with nonschematic ones provided by explicit cultural transmission," have a better chance to be remembered in cultural transmission than ideas not containing such violations.[36] Violations of ontological expectations, however, cannot be excessive: such concepts are difficult to remember and will not be transmitted. Boyer has particularly suggested that religious ideas are minimally counterintuitive.[37] The idea of a ghost that can go through walls, for example, is based on the ontological category of human beings, but violates our expectations about intuitive physics that should otherwise apply to humans.

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[32] Ibid., 210–220; E. Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the Iliad and the Odyssey* (Oxford and New York 2001).

[33] Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions* (n. 28), 181.

[34] F.C. Keil, *Semantic and Conceptual Development: An Ontological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA 1979), 48; S. Atran, "Basic Conceptual Domains," *Mind & Language* 4 (1989), 7–16; idem, *In Gods we Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (Oxford and New York 2002), 98; P. Boyer, "Cognitive Constraints on Cultural Representations: Natural Ontologies and Religious Ideas," in *Mapping the Mind: Domain Specificity in Cognition and Culture* (ed. L.A. Hirschfeld and S.A. Gelman; Cambridge 1994), 400–401; id., *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (New York 2001), 90.

[35] F.C. Keil, *Concepts, Kinds, and Cognitive Development* (Cambridge, MA 1989), 214.

Involuntary response to emotionally salient motifs in textual traditions is another factor that contributes to their selective transmission.[38] Children spontaneously imitate facial expressions and other bodily movements at a very early age, indeed, right after birth.[39] A significant contribution to understanding imitation has been the discovery of so-called *mirror neurons* in monkeys in the late 1990s.[40] These neurons are activated when monkeys observe an action in another monkey as well as when animals themselves act in such a way. In humans, as well, the observation of actions performed by others activates brain areas that are also responsible for the movement of different parts of the body.[41] There are similar findings about emotion: the same brain parts that are involved in the feeling of disgust and pain are also activated when we empathize with such emotions.[42] Not only do we not actually have to carry out actions or be exposed to pain in order to empathize with them, but also a limited amount of information is sufficient to activate the relevant brain areas and to elicit empathy.[43] Recent experimental findings support the hypothesis that emotionally arousing details in stories enhance the memorability of the gist and details (both central and peripheral) of the narrative.[44] In sum, we can identify at least two constraints that enhance the memory of certain types of details in stories: minimal counterintuitiveness and emotional salience.

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[36] P. Boyer, *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion* (Berkeley 1994), 48, 121, and passim.

[37] Boyer, *Religion Explained* (n. 34), 58–106; I. Pyysiäinen, *How Religion Works: Towards a New Cognitive Science of Religion* (Leiden and Boston 2001), 9–23.

[38] I. Czachesz, *The Grotesque Body in Early Christian Literature: Hell, Scatology, and Metamorphosis* (unpublished Habilitationsschrift Heidelberg 2007), 202–207; id., "Metamorphosis and Mind: Cognitive Explorations of the Grotesque in Early Christian Literature," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity* (ed. T. Karlsen Seim and J. Økland; Berlin and New York 2009), 219–243.

[39] A.N. Meltzoff, "Elements of a Developmental Theory of Imitation," in *The Imitative Mind: Development, Evolution, and Brain Bases* (ed. id. and W. Prinz; Cambridge Studies in Cognitive Perceptual Development; Cambridge, U.K. and New York 2002), 19–41; S. Hurley and N. Chater, "Introduction: The Importance of Imitation," in *Perspectives on Imitation: From Neuroscience to Social Science. Volume 2. Imitation, Human Development, and Culture* (ed. S. Hurley and N. Chater; Cambridge and London 2005), 1–52.

[40] G. Rizzolatti and L. Craighero, "The Mirror-Neuron System," *Annual Review of Neuroscience* 27 (2004), 169–192.

[41] G. Rizzolatti, et al, "The Mirror System in Humans," in *Mirror Neurons and the Evolution of Brain and Language* (ed. M.I. Stamenov, et al; Amsterdam 2002), 37–59.

If we now put together the pieces, we arrive at the following cognitive psychological model of the transmission of narratives. When hearing a narrative, or a detail of it, an appropriate script will be activated in our minds. The story will be remembered as an instance of the respective script. Details that do not fit in with the script will be eliminated or adapted to the script. Typical tendencies that Bartlett observed during the repeated reproduction of stories include omission, abbreviation, rationalization, fluidity of proper names and titles (of stories), bias toward the concrete (at the cost of arguments or reasoning), and a loss of individual characteristics (in favour of commonplace characterizations and epithets).[45] All being equal, however, minimally counterintuitive details and emotionally salient details will stick to memory better than other details, and the latter will also create a halo of enhanced memorization for the gist of story as well as for other details. When the story is recalled, either for oral performance or for written citation, a number of cues will be used to reproduce the text based on the appropriate script. The cuing mechanisms will serve as constraints that determine what and how will be recalled and performed. Depending on the social context of communication, the story will be tailored and embellishments will be added. When the recipients hear or read the story, the constraints of memorization will come to play once again, resulting in a cycle that can be repeated at will. Bartlett also remarks that whereas texts usually change gradually in the course of repeated reproduction, in almost every series an individual version comes in at some point that results in a sudden break away from the original text. We can hypothesize that such idiosyncratic versions contribute to the homogenization of different traditions, since they make subsequent versions less dependent on the original text and more dependent on the cognitive psychological regularities of memory and transmission.

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[42] C. Keysers and D.I. Perrett, "Demystifying Social Cognition: A Hebbian Perspective," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8 (2004), 501–507; T. Singer et al., "Empathy for Pain Involves the Affective but Not Sensory Components of Pain," *Science* 303 (2004), 1157–1162.

[43] V. Gallese et al., "A Unifying View of the Basis of Social Cognition," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8 (2004), 396–403.

[44] C. Laney et al., "Memory for Thematically Arousing Events," *Memory & Cognition* 32 (2004), 1149–1159.

[45] Bartlett, *Remembering* (n. 12), 124–129, 141–146.

2. Passion and Martyrdom: Common Origins?

There are evident similarities between the passion narratives of the canonical and apocryphal gospels, on the one hand, and the martyrdom narratives of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, on the other hand. In most of the Apocryphal Acts, the apostle is arrested, interrogated, imprisoned, mocked, and executed, much in the same way as Jesus in the passion narratives. The apostle can even appear after his death, similarly as Jesus does in the post-resurrection episodes. How can we account for these similarities? This is the question that I try to answer in the rest of my article. According to a famous passage of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the martyrs were loved "as disciples and imitators of the Lord" (ὡς μαθητὰς καὶ μιμητὰς τοῦ κυρίου).[46] Based on this and other remarks of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*,[47] as well as other references in early Christian literature,[48] it has been frequently argued that the martyrs imitated Christ.[49] In a similar vein, the martyrdom of Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles has been interpreted as an imitation of the passion narrative.[50] What does this imply for the interpretation of the similarities between the passion narratives and the martyrdom of the apostles in the Apocryphal Acts? Were the latter written so that the apostles' martyrdom would imitate Christ's passion?

To give an answer to these questions is not as easy as it might seem. Without being able to undertake an exhausting survey of imitation in context of early Christian literature, let us only recognize some of the most relevant aspects of the subject that are helpful in examining the connection between the passion narratives and the martyrdom of the apostles. 1) First, as already A.D. Nock has noticed, the idea that the "unique attractiveness of the central figure of Christianity" was a key to the success of the Church is an anachronistic one, guided by nineteenth century idealism and humanitarianism. In the early Christian tradition, the emphasis was on Christ's superhuman qualities: for the early Church, he was a divine saviour rather than a human being setting a pattern for a better way of life.[51] We cannot simply take it for granted, as a general rule, that the Acts of the Martyrs (or the Acts of the Apostles) put an emphasis on the "imitation of the life and death of Jesus."[52] 2) Second, the notion of "imitation" was frequently employed in antiquity in the sense of living up to certain ideals. An important function of Greek biographies was to provide models for coming generations to follow.[53] This concept is also found in Jewish literature, especially in apocryphal sources and Philo,[54] and includes the "imitation" of biblical heroes, martyrs,[55] and even the "imitation" of God.[56] In the New Testament, Paul frequently calls his readers to imitate him as well as Jesus.[57] In all of these references, the point is to take an example from an outstanding figure in living up to some standard or ideal. For instance, the example of the martyrs in *4 Maccabees* teaches the reader how passions can be controlled to endure extreme sufferings. 3) Third, commentators of the New Testament have particularly drawn on the philosophers' advice about how a disciple can learn from his master by co-habiting with him or by imitating his words and deeds.[58] Whereas such a scenario could certainly be envisaged by the authors of the Gospels in connection with Jesus and his closest circle, it is a less likely one in the context of Paul and his congregations, not to mention Paul's relation to Jesus, or the relation of the martyrs (such as Stephen or Polycarp in our examples) to Jesus. Stoic advices about assuming a philosopher's life cannot be taken as a decisive argument about the meaning of "imitation" in our texts. 4) Fourth, the occurrence of the themes of learning by imitation or living up to ideals by imitation in a text does now allow any direct conclusion about the imitation of sources by the author, such as the biography of the imitated hero.

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[46] *M.Pol.* 17.3.

[47] *M.Pol.* 1.2.

[48] E.g. *Heb* 12.2; *Rev* 1.5, 2.13, 11,3, 17.6; *The Martyrs of Lyons* (Eusebius, *h.e.* 5.2.2).

[49] E.g. G. Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge and New York 1995), 143–248; L.L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York 1990), 189; E.S. Bolman and P. Godeau, *Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea* (New Haven 2002), 54; H. Rhee, *Early Christian Literature: Christ and Culture in the Second and Third Centuries* (New York 2005), 92–96.

[50] L.T. Johnson and D.J. Harrington, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, Minn. 1992), 110–113, 142–144.

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[51] A.D. Nock, *Conversion* (New York 1933), 210.

[52] W.T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Oxford 1998), 62.

[53] A. Dihle, *Studien zur griechischen Biographie* (Göttingen 1970), 20.

[54] Wisd 4.2; *TestXIIPatr* 12.3.1, 12.4.1 and below; cf. W. Michaelis, "Mimeomai," in *ThWNT* (ed. G. Kittel et al.; Stuttgart etc. 1942), 661–678.

[55] *4 Macc* 9.23, 13.9.

[56] *TestXIIPatr* 10.4.3, μιμεῖται κύριον.

[57] 1Cor 4.16; 11.1; Phil 3.17; 1 Thess 1.6; 2 Thess 3.7,9; cf. W.P. De Boer, *The Imitation of Paul: An Exegetical Study* (Kampen 1962); V.A. Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director: An Analysis of the Imitation of Paul with Implications and Applications to the Practice of Spiritual Direction* (Milton Keynes and Colorado Springs 2007); C. Gieschen, "Christian Identity in a Pagan Thessalonica: The Imitation of Paul's Cruciform Life," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 72 (2008), 3–18.

[58] Seneca, *ep.* 6.5–6; Dio Chrysostom 55.4–5; cf. C.H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Missoula, Mont. 1974), 89–110; A.J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia 1987), 52–53.

A quick look at some of the martyrdom narratives of the Apocryphal Acts gives further support to these observations. In *Acts of Peter* 35, in the famous *quo vadis* episode, Jesus explicitly tells Peter, "Yes, Peter, again I shall be crucified (πάλιν σταυροῦμαι)." After seeing Jesus ascending to heaven, Peter returns to Rome "rejoicing and praising the Lord because he said, 'I am being crucified'." The conclusion of the episode emphasizes once again: "This was to happen to Peter." Thus the reader of the *Acts of Peter* is explicitly instructed to understand Peter's martyrdom as an imitation of Jesus' death. In his address to the cross (ch. 37), Peter contemplates the "mystery" of the cross, on which Christ suffered. The overall design of the martyrdom narrative is similar to the plot of the passion narratives (to which we will return immediately), yet the details of the story do not imitate the passion narratives. For example, Peter wants to be crucified head downwards, does not actually suffer,[59] and delivers a lengthy sermon from the cross – however, without repeating any of Jesus' words on Golgotha. It is the fact of martyrdom through crucifixion that serves as the point of comparison, and no attempt is made to a step-by-step imitation of the passion narrative. The point will be clear if we take a look at the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, where we can see a different narrative strategy: emphasizing imitative details. In this martyrdom text, we read comments such as "they who betrayed [Polycarp] might undergo the punishment of Judas himself" (6.2); Polycarp being carried to the city on an ass, the day being "the great Sabbath" (8.1); when he was bound he was like a "distinguished ram" (14.1); and the Jews guarded (ἐτήρησαν) the spot as Christians wanted to collect Polycarp's body, lest they would start to worship him instead of Christ (17.2; cf. *Matthew* 27.62–66; *Gospel of Peter* 29–33). To summarize our observations: whereas the *Acts of Peter* tells a story with an overall design similar to Jesus' passion, but without emphasizing imitative details, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* employs explicit references to emphasize the imitative details in its narrative, the overall design of which is not particularly similar to the passion narratives.

A detailed analysis of all martyrdom narratives, comparing them with the passion narratives, cannot be undertaken in this article, even if we restricted the investigation to the major Apocryphal Acts. We will have to limit ourselves to examining a couple of passages in the next section. In order to gain a broad overview, however, we can first turn the results of a previous comparative study of the Apocryphal Acts and the *Gospel of Peter*.[60] This comparison revealed that besides the agreements between the martyrdom narratives of the Apocryphal Acts with the canonical passion narratives, there are a number of agreements among one or more of the Apocryphal Acts, the *Gospel of Peter*, and occasionally other sources, that are, however, not found in any of the canonical gospels. For example, Jesus and the apostles are actually *ordered* to be crucified (*Gospel of Peter* 2; *Acts of Peter* 36; *Martyrdom of Paul* 3; *Acts of Andrew* 51; *Acts of Thomas* 106), they are being "dragged" (σύρω) by the soldiers (*Gospel of Peter* 6; *Acts of Andrew* 52; *Acts of Thomas* 106; Justin, *1 Apology* 35.6), and the cross speaks or is personified (*Gospel of Peter* 41–42; *Acts of John* 98–101; *Acts of Peter* 37; *Acts of Andrew* 54; *Gospel of the Savior* in Pap. Berol. 22220; *Ethiopic Apocalypse of Peter* 1). In many other instances, one or two of the Apocryphal Acts contain parallels with the *Gospel of Peter*, whereas the others agree with another gospel narrative or with none.[61] It can be further observed that the same martyrdom narrative can sometimes agree with the *Gospel of Peter*, yet at other times with one or more of the canonical gospels. The report of the apostle's death in the *Acts of Peter* 40 and *Acts of Andrew* 63 ("handed over his spirit"), for example, agrees with the canonical gospels against the *Gospel of Peter*.

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[59] M. Pesthy, "Cross and Death in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles," in *Apocryphal Acts of Peter* (ed. J.N. Bremmer; Louvain and Ithaca, NY 1998), 123–133 at 124–126.

The problem with which we are faced resembles the synoptic question, but it is much more complicated, due to the involvement of the greater number of parallel texts. In the study of the synoptics, scribal transmission has been the ruling metaphor. The intertextual relations among the texts have been explained by positing authors who selectively copied, merged, and modified their sources. We have seen that such a compositional process is unlikely to have taken place under the circumstances of ancient literacy.[62] Adding the technical improbability of what we can call the "editing model" to our previous observations about the phenomenon of imitation, we can conclude that such a complex range of agreements and differences among the sources can hardly be explained with reference to the compositional technique of literary imitation. Instead, we suggest that the matrix of similarities and variations in our sources originated, to a large extent, from a different process, that is, from the effects of memorization and recall on the oral and scribal composition and transmission of the martyrdom and passion narratives.

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[60] Czachesz, "Gospel of Peter" (n. 1).

[61] Ibid., 253–254. Add *Acts of Peter* 41 to the one but last row of the table.

[62] See also Downing, "A Paradigm Perplex" (n. 10), 15–36; McIver and Carroll, "Distinguishing Characteristics of Orally Transmitted Material" (n. 4), 1251–1269.

How did a martyrdom script emerge in early Christianity? Stories of martyrdom were well-known in both Greek and Jewish traditions. We have already mentioned that epitomizing outstanding heroes as examples for coming generations was a major motivation behind the emergence of the biographical tradition in ancient Athens. The first known representative of the genre, Plato's *Apology of Socrates*,[63] powerfully introduces its hero through narrating his martyrdom. Half a millennium later, Socrates' example decisively shaped Christian images of martyrdom.[64] In Jewish literature, at the same time, biographies mainly followed idealized patterns rather than portraying individual personalities.[65] And the ideal, it seems, was peaceful death rather than martyrdom. Even the martyrdom of a suffering prophet like Jeremiah is missing from the earliest tradition. In the Hellenistic period this situation changed. Paradoxically, it was probably under the influence of the Greek ideal that the story of the Maccabees, the emblematic figures of Jewish national pride, was coloured by the martyrdom narratives of Eleazar and the mother with seven sons.[66] The martyrdom narratives preserved in the books of the Maccabees contributed an important element to the martyrdom script, that is, oriental interest in gruesome details.[67] At the time when Christianity was emerging, the ideal of martyrdom became increasingly valued in the Roman world. Beginning with the early principate, Stoic contempt of death was famous, and accounts of Stoic martyrs circulated.[68] A particularly remarkable group of martyrdom texts is preserved in the so-called *Acta Alexandrinorum*, containing records of the processes of Alexandrian noblemen, written probably between the middle of the first to end of the second century AD.[69] Whereas the Socratic, stoic, and cynic martyr ideal probably inspired formative Christianity, a direct influence of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* on the earliest Christian martyrdom narratives is unlikely.[70] In sum, the Christian martyrdom script united elements from two different traditions. On the one hand, it incorporated the Greek emphasis on Socratic wisdom during the trial, including a testimony or farewell speech; on the other hand, it inherited from the Maccabean tradition a detailed description of ordeals and death.

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[63] Dihle, *Studien* (n. 53), 18, 19, 35, 36, etc.; P.C. Miller, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley 1983), 7.

[64] As various scholars suggested, Acts 17 probably alludes to Socrates; see, for example, J.C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting* (London 1970), 160–171. Lucian, *Passing of Peregrinus* 12, reports that Christians called Peregrinus, when he was in prison, "the new Socrates." For the second and third century Fathers, see K. Döring, *Exemplum Socratis: Studien zur Sokratesnachwirkung in der kynisch-stoischen Popularphilosophie der frühen Kaiserzeit und im frühen Christentum* (Wiesbaden 1979), 143–161. For Eusebius' *Life of Origen* 6.3.7, see Miller, *Biography* (n. 63), 87.

[65] K. Baltzer, *Die Biographie der Propheten* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1975).

[66] 2Macc 6–7; 4 Macc 5–12. Explicit references to those passages are found in *Martyrdom of Marian and James* 13.1 and *Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius* 16.4; cf. A. Hilhorst, "Fourth Maccabees in Christian Martyrdom Texts," in *Ultima Aetas: Time, Tense, and Transience in the Ancient World. Studies in Honour of Jan den Boeft* (ed. C. Kroon and D. den Hengst; Amsterdam 2000), 107–122.

[67] For the sources of torture in early Christian imagination, see I. Czachesz, "Torture in Hell and Reality: The *Visio Pauli*," in *The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul* (ed. J.N. Bremmer and I. Czachesz; Studies in Early Christian Apocrypha; Leuven and Dudley, MA 2007), 130–143; Czachesz, *Grotesque Body* (n. 38), 11–34.

[68] H. Musurillo, *Acta Alexandrinorum (Acts of the Pagan Martyrs)* (Oxford 1954), 239–242.

In the earliest Christian martyrdom narratives, particularly in Jesus' passion and the martyrdom of the apostles, we can identify the following *martyrdom script*: 1. arrest; 2. imprisonment and tortures; 3. reaction of the martyr's companions; 4. significant words of the martyr; 5. conviction; 6. way to the place of execution; 7. last words of the martyr; 8. death; 9. miraculous signs; 10. reaction of friends and enemies; 11. resurrection; 12. appearances. Although this presentation of the martyrdom script resembles the way form criticism describes the "forms" of tradition that belong to particular situations of life (*Sitze im Leben*), or the way "themes" are presented in the oral formulaic school, a script should be understood not so much as a standard set of motifs but rather as a bundle of cultural expectations that are learned by exposure to different kinds of texts, experiences, and social exchange. For example, we can think about the restaurant script as a convenient parallel: it is derived from a large number of bits and pieces, including restaurant visits of all sorts as well as novels, movies scenes, anecdotes, etc. Although we cannot pursue this issue in more detail in this contribution, we remark that the task of locating the origins of the Christian martyrdom script will have to involve the analysis of social locations where Greek (Socratic, stoic, cynic) and Jewish (Maccabean, prophetic) martyrdom traditions could merge, such as in Jewish elite circles with Greek literate education.[71]

The last two elements of the script, resurrection and appearances, deserve special attention. In a cognitive psychological study of early Christian ideas about Jesus' resurrection,[72] I have argued that passion stories containing accounts of the resurrected Jesus have been more successful in the transmission than passion stories without such episodes, due to their minimally counterintuitive details (see above). This seems to contradict the suggestion that resurrection and appearances after death were parts of a standard Christian martyrdom script. One can solve this contradiction in two ways. First, resurrection and appearances after death could develop in each narrative individually, due to their minimally counterintuitive features. Second, we can alternatively hypothesize that due to their memorable features, these elements became integrated in the martyrdom script at an early stage, and it was this longer martyrdom script that served as a template for the transmission of the passion of Jesus and the martyrdom of the apostles.

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[69] Ibid., 83–232.

[70] Cf. ibid. v, 244, 262; K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," in *ANRW II* 25, 2 (1984), 1031–1432, 1250–1251.

[71] Cf. Czachesz, "Rewriting" (n. 3).

[72] Id., "Early Christian Views on Jesus' Resurrection: Toward a Cognitive Psychological Interpretation," *NedThT* 61 (2007), 47–59.

Instead of using the concept of imitation, we can now rely on the martyrdom script as a key factor in explaining the relation of the martyrdom narratives of the Apocryphal Acts to the passion narratives. According to this alternative explanation, a narrative script of martyrdom, derived from Jewish and Greek tradition, determined how earliest Christianity transmitted the passion narratives and the martyrdom traditions about the apostles. This (rather than the concept of imitation) explains the similarities in the overall design of the narratives. During the early phase of transmission, which was probably dominated by orality, the tradition was shaped by the memory constrains that have been outlined in the previous section, changing the stories over time and producing different versions. Influences among different stories developed gradually, especially after the texts had been disseminated in a broader social and geographical circle. This accounts for the (verbatim) agreements in minor details. A quick look at the historical timeframe supports the viability of such a solution. Since the first written gospels cannot be dated much earlier than 70 CE,[73] the circulation of narratives about the death of Paul (and Peter), traditionally set under Nero, could predate the written gospels.[74] Other early martyrdom traditions include the Stephen story (in *Acts* 6.8–8.1) and the death of James (brother of John, in *Acts* 12.1–3). Even after written gospels existed, it took time until they started to circulate broadly, and martyrdom traditions could develop without direct contact with them. Also some Apocryphal Acts (particularly the *Acts of Paul*) could very well be written before some of the (canonical) gospels.[75] Finally, as we have seen, the memory effects continued to influence transmission significantly in the phase of written transmission and secondary orality.

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[73] Attempts at establishing substantially earlier dates, such as by J.G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (London and New York 2004), remain highly controversial. For a balanced overview, see F. Horn, "Einleitung in das Neue Testament: Tendenzen und Entwicklungen. I," *ThR* 68 (2003), 45–79; F. Horn, "Einleitung in das Neue Testament: Tendenzen und Entwicklungen. II," *ThR* 68 (2003), 129–150.

[74] The martyrdom of Peter and Paul is reported first in 1 Clem 5. Cf. H. Löhr, "Zur Paulus-Notiz in 1 Clem 5,5–7," in *Das Ende des Paulus* (ed. F.W. Horn et al., BZNW 112; Berlin and New York 2001), 212–213; U. Schnelle, *Paulus: Leben und Denken* (Berlin and New York 2003), 425–431.

3. The Death of the Martyr

In the last section of my contribution I will make a few observations about an important part of the martyrdom script, that is, the death of the martyr and the events immediately surrounding it: 7. last words of the martyr; 8. death; 9. miraculous signs; 10. reaction of friends and enemies.[76] The texts with which I will deal include the relevant section of the *Gospel of Mark* (15.33–39) and four of the major Apocryphal Acts: *Martyrdom of Paul* 5; *Acts of Peter* 38–40; *Acts of Andrew* 54–64; and *Acts of Thomas* 167–168 (in the *Acts of John* the apostle dies a peaceful death). A quick look at the five passages reveals that they substantially differ with regard to their length and details. The most concise and straightforward account is found in Paul's *Martyrdom*:

> 7 And turning toward the east, Paul lifted up his hands to heaven and prayed at length; and after having conversed in Hebrew with the fathers during prayer 8 he bent his neck, without speaking any more. When the executioner cut off his head 9 milk splashed on the tunic of the soldier. 10 And the soldier and all who stood near by were astonished at this sight and glorified God who had thus honoured Paul. And they went away and reported everything to Caesar (trans. J.K. Elliott).

The narrative as it stands is probably the result of a chain of repeated reproduction, which favours brevity and concreteness. For example, the conciseness of the report about the last words of Paul becomes obvious if we compare it with Andrew's last words (*Acts of Andrew* 63) or Thomas' prayer (*Acts of Thomas* 167), which include a great number of mythological and theological details. Andrew's last words are also preceded by a long sermon told from the cross for "three days and three nights" (ch. 59), and Peter speaks at length, as well, while hanging head downwards (*Acts of Peter* 38–39). These long sermons are almost certainly written compositions that at some point were combined with the oral sources.

The text of the *Gospel of Mark* contains verbatim quotations of Jesus' last words, yet it does not include a lengthy address that would indicate the inclusion of a written composition. Jesus' words "why have you forsaken me" add an emotional detail to the story and suggest true suffering, contrary to the martyrdom of the apostles, from which any reference to the human experience of suffering is absent.[77] Above we have seen that such emotionally laden details are important tools for the memorization of narratives, enhancing the memorability of both the particular motif as well as the memorability of the whole narrative and its details. Other emotionally laden details of the execution of Jesus, such as the mocking by the soldiers, probably had similar effects on the course of oral transmission and contributed to the richness of details in this part of the gospel narratives. As a consequence, the whole episode of Jesus' death probably retained the characteristics of the oral tradition.

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[75] See e.g. A. Hilhorst, "Tertullian on the Acts of Paul," in *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (ed. J.N. Bremmer; Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles; Kampen 1996), 150–163 for an early dating of the *Acts of Paul.*

[76] I retain the numbering of the elements of the martyrdom script (see above).

Miraculous signs at the death of the martyr are found in some of our texts (*Mark*, *Acts of Paul*), but not in all of them. In the passion narrative, the death of Jesus is introduced by the three-hour darkness on "the whole land" (or on "the whole earth") and immediately followed by the tearing apart of the curtain of the temple. In the *Martyrdom of Paul*, milk splashes out of the neck of the apostle after he is beheaded. No miraculous signs are reported at the death of Peter, Andrew, and Thomas – if we do not count the miracle that Andrew was talking for three days and nights from the cross. Such details are attention grabbing and therefore unlikely to disappear from the narrative once they had been introduced.[78] This prompts the question of whether miraculous signs at the martyr's death are parts of the martyrdom script or were only included occasionally in the narratives. To formulate the question differently, we are asking whether such miracles formed part of the cultural expectations in terms of which the first Christians remembered Jesus and the martyrs or only gradually developed in transmission, due to their memorable features. The gradual accumulation of miraculous details can be observed in other martyrdom stories, such as in different versions of the martyrdom of Justin.[79] Stephen's martyrdom provides an interesting case: here the martyr sees "the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (*Acts* 7.56), which is, however, not a sign in the sense of being a divine vindication of the hero in front of his executors – as it is not seen by anyone else than Stephen, in contrast to the signs at Jesus' and Paul's deaths. It is also difficult to decide about the counterintuitive nature of some of these signs. We can call them counterintuitive in a technical sense only if they violate cross-culturally held expectations about ontological categories. Complete darkness during the day is arguable contrary to very basic intuitions about the cycle of nature. However, the splitting of a drapery and the simultaneous occurrence of such an event with Jesus' death is unexpected, yet not strictly speaking counterintuitive. Milk flowing forth from a human's blood vessels is probably counterintuitive, since we have deeply rooted intuitions about the human body, to which the appearance of blood certainly belongs. In addition to the counterintuitive nature of the signs, also their context determines how stable they are in transmission. This might explain that in some contexts (for example when an event is interpreted as a sign) even surprising motifs that are not technically speaking counterintuitive can be consistently retained.[80]

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[77] M. Pesthy, "Cross and Death" (n. 59), 124–126.

[78] This might also provide an argument against the dependence of the Lukan passion on the Markan narrative.

[79] Cf. A. Hilhorst, "The Apocryphal Acts as Martyrdom Texts: The Case of the Acts of Andrew," in *Apocryphal Acts of John* (Kampen and Ithaca, NY 1995), 1–14.

Finally, let us consider an example of how stylistic constrains serving as cues for serial recall can be identified in texts. We can observe that the death of the martyr in the gospels, the Apocryphal Acts, and the Acts of the Martyrs is usually expressed by phrases meaning "gave up his spirit," such as ἐξέπνευσεν, ἀπέπνευσεν, ἀφῆκεν / παρέδωκεν / ἀπέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα).[81] When the speaker arrives at this detail, he knows that a phrase with "spirit" is appropriate in this context, but the actual formulation is influenced by a number of other cues, including the rhythmic structure of the preceding words. For example, *Mark* 15.37 contains an almost perfect Iambic trimeter:

(ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς) ἀφεὶς φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐξέπνευσεν.
- - v - | - - v v - |v - - -

Furthermore, Mark cannot use ἀφίημι in connection with "spirit", as does *Matthew* 27.50, because he has already used it in the phrase ἀφεὶς φωνήν. The parallel text of *John* 19.30 has alliteration at this place: κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα ("Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit").

4. Conclusion

In this article I have put forward the hypothesis that passion and martyrdom narratives in early Christian tradition made use of a common narrative schema, called the *martyrdom script*, which stemmed from both Jewish and Greek cultural traditions. We have shown that the concept of imitation is not sufficient to explain the kinds of similarities and differences that exist among the passion and martyrdom traditions. The use of a common script, in contrast, explains the similarities in the overall structure of the narratives. The stories received their present form due to the memory effects constraining repeated reproduction and serial recall, as well as to the salience of concepts with counterintuitive and emotionally laden features. Whereas oral transmission is especially responsible for the shaping of the texts by these mechanisms, the memory effects continued to influence transmission significantly in the phase of written transmission and secondary orality. Observations about the death of Jesus and the apostles illustrated how various features of the texts can be understood against this scenario.

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[80] It has to be noted that the theory of counterintuitiveness predicts that such ideas enjoy an advantage in transmission *all else being equal* – therefore the contextual effects mentioned do not influence the validity of the theory itself.

[81] E.g. *Martyrdom of Saint Carpus* 47; *Martyrdom of Pionius* 21.9; *Martyrdom of St. Conon* 6.5. For comparing the Apocryphal Acts with the Acts of the Martyrs, see Hilhorst, "The Apocryphal Acts as Martyrdom Texts" (n. 79).

Dream Magic: The Dream of Pilate’s Wife and the Accusation of Magic in the *Acts of Pilate*[1]

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Among the canonical Gospels, only the Gospel of Matthew makes reference to Pilate’s wife. In the context of the Matthean passion narrative, the reference reads: “While [Pilate] was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent [word] to him saying, ‘[Let there be] nothing between you and that innocent man, for today I have suffered greatly in a dream on account of him’ (καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ λέγουσα· μηδὲν σοὶ καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ πολλὰ γὰρ ἔπαθον σήμερον κατ’ ὄναρ δι’ αὐτόν – 27:29).” This comment about Pilate’s wife and her dream introduces a certain interpretive ambiguity. Neither the dream itself, nor its meaning are narrated.[2] The dream of Pilate’s wife is mentioned as part of her message to Pilate, which is given in direct discourse and simply contains her response to or experience of the dream. The reader is only given the perspective and understanding of Pilate’s wife; there is no comment or explanation from an omniscient narrator as to the meaning or purpose of the dream. Questions, then, arise as to the nature or content of her dream, and what is being emphasized.[3] This ambiguity is

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[1] This essay originated from a paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in San Diego, California, Nov. 19, 2007, for the Christian Apocrypha group.

[2] In regard to this interpretative ambiguity of Pilate’s wife’s dream, the dreams of Matt 1–2 (1:18b–25; 2:12, 13–15, 19–21, 22) are quite different. Either the dreams are narrated (1:18b–25; 2:13–15, 19–21), and thus their meaning is “self-evident”, or the significance of the dreams are noted by the narrator (2:12, 22).

[3] This interpretative ambiguity is exhibited by the different interpretations offered by modern commentators. W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Matthew 3* (ICC; Edinburgh 1997), 587, suggests that she suffers because of some concern that an innocent man might be found guilty. J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids 2005), 1172, and J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* 2 (HTKNT 1; Freiburg i. Br. ²1992), 456, suggest that her suffering is related, not to the execution of an innocent man, but to some sense of self-interest. M. Frenschkowski, “Traum und Traumdeutung im Matthäusevangelium: Einige Beobachtungen,” *JAC* 41 (1998), 34, interprets the dream as a nightmare, portending some catastrophe or revealing the displeasure of the divine. W. Carter, *Pontius Pilate: Portraits of a Roman Governor* (Collegeville, Minn.