

The Sacred Scriptures and the Veneration of the Martyrs

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Abstract: If “canon” and “sacred scriptures” are measured by what was read aloud, preached and regarded as inspiring, then martyr stories were every bit as foundational to the development of Christianity as the books that would later become the New Testament. Modern editors have tended to obscure this phenomenon, treating pre-Constantinian martyr acts as a matter of history rather than piety. As a result, the central place of non-canonical books, including books about martyrs, is often overlooked. Returning to the material evidence and re-examining “scripture” as a matter of practice rather than doctrine destabilizes the ostensible centrality of canon in developing Christianity.

“Dishna Papers”¹

	LDAB no. G.-A. no.	Inventory Number(s)	Contents	Language	Date
1.	2565 p ⁷²	P. Bod. 10-13 + P. Bod. 20 + P. Bod. 5 + P. Bod. 7 + Bibl. Vat. Peter 01-02	Proto-Gospel of James 3 Corinthians 11 th Ode of Solomon Jude Melito, <i>Peri Pascha</i> Hymn excerpt Apology of Phileas Psalm 33:2-34:16 (LXX) 1-2 Peter	Greek	ca. 300-399
2.	107771	Chester Beatty 2076 + Schøyen 193	Melito, <i>Peri Pascha</i> 47-195 2 Maccabees 5:27-7:41 1 Peter Jonah Homily for Easter morning	Coptic	ca. 326-349
3.	4120	P. Bod. 27 + P. Bod. 45	Susanna (Theodotion) Daniel 1:1-20 (Theodotion) Thucydides 4.1.1-2.6	Greek	ca. 200-399 (Turner 4 th cent.)
4.	2777 p ⁶⁶	P. Bod. 2 (Suppl) + P. Köln 5.214	Gospel of John	Greek	ca. 200-249
5.	107758	P. Bod. 3	Gospel of John 1-3, 4, 5-21 Genesis 1:1-4:2	Coptic	ca. 300-499
6.	2743	P. Bod. 4 + P. Köln 8.331 + P. Bod. 25 + P. Bod. 26 + P. Köln 1.3	Menander <i>Samia</i> , <i>Dyscolus</i> , <i>Aspis</i>	Greek	ca. 200-399
7.	107761	P. Bod. 6	Proverbs	Coptic	ca. 300-499
8.	2895 p ⁷⁵	P. Bod. 14-15 + Mus. Helv. 64	Gospel of Luke Gospel of John	Greek	ca. 175-250 (Nongbri 4 th cent.)
9.	108535	P. Bod. 16	Exodus 1-15, 21	Coptic	ca. 300-399 (Kasser 5 th -6 th cent.)
10.	108536	P. Bod. 18	Deuteronomy 1-10	Coptic	ca. 350-399
11.	107759	P. Bod. 19	Romans 1:1-2:3 Matthew 14:28-28:20	Coptic	ca. 350-450
12.	108537	Chester Beatty 1389 + P. Bod. 21	Joshua (chs. 12-21 omitted) Tobit 14:13-15	Coptic	ca. 300-499

¹ With many thanks to Brent Nongbri. Without his careful work on the Bodmer Papyri and the Dishna Papers and his generosity in sharing this work with me I would never have been able to complete these tables.

13.	108176	P. Bod. 22	Jeremiah 40:3-52:34; Lamentations; Letter of Jeremiah; Baruch 1:1-5:5	Coptic (parchment)	ca. 350-450
14.	108542	P. Bod. 23	Isaiah 47-66	Coptic	ca. 350-450
15.	3098	P. Bod. 24	Psalms 17-118	Greek	ca. 150-399
16.	552	P. Duke 798 + P. Barc. 126-178 + P. Barc. inv. 292 + P. Barc. 338	Cicero, <i>In Catilinam</i> , 1 and 2 Hymn to the Virgin Mythological drawing Prayers (<i>Anaphora</i>) Alcestis Tale of the Emperor Hadrian Word List	Latin Latin -- Greek Latin Latin Greek	ca. 350-399
17.	108121	P. Bod 41	Acts of Paul	Coptic	4 th cent.
18.	1106	P. Bod. 29-38	Hermas, <i>Shepherd</i> Visions 1-3 Visions of Dorotheos <i>Ad Abraham</i> Other short poems in hexameter and distycha	Greek	ca. 350-450
19.	--	P. Bod. 40 (unpublished)	Song of Songs	Coptic	5 th cent.

Disputed – Included in the Dishna Collection by Robinson but not by Kasser²

	LDAB G.-A. no.	Inventory Number(s)	Contents	Language	Date
1.	2763	Chester Beatty AC 1390	Mathematical exercises John 10:7-13:38	Greek Coptic	ca. 275-349
2.	8	P. Köln 901 + Duke University P. 772	Achilles Tatius, <i>Leucippe and Cleitophon</i> III.17-25	Greek (a roll)	ca. 200-299
3.	7335	P. Bod. 1 (1)	<i>Illiad</i> Book 5	Greek	ca. 217-319
4.	2073	P. Bod. 1 (2)	<i>Illiad</i> Book 6	Greek	ca. 217-319
5.	4651	P. Köln 9.359 +Duke University P. 774	? Possibly a Cynic diatribe	Greek	ca. 100-299
6.	2074	P. Köln 12.468 + P. Duke 779	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i> 3.43-497, 4.1- 408	Greek	ca. 250-349
7.	108402	Chester Beatty 2018	Apocalypse of Elijah	Coptic	ca. 300-499
8.	3158	Chester Beatty Bibl. 13	Psalms	Greek	ca. 300-399
9.	3159	Chester Beatty Bibl. 14	Psalms	Greek	ca. 300-399
10.	107904, 107760, 17905	P. Palau Rib. Inv. 181 + P. Paulau Rib. Inv. 182 + P. Paulau Rib. Inv. 183	Gospel of Luke Gospel of Mark [perhaps not part of the archive] ³	Coptic	ca. 400-499
11.	3030	Chester Beatty Ac 1499	Greek-Latin Lexicon on the Pauline Epistles Greek Grammar	Greek/Lat in Greek	ca. 400-499

² Bibliography: Rodolphe Kasser, "Bodmer Papyri," *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (New York: MacMillan, 1991) vol. 8, 48-53; *idem*, "Le Papyrus Bodmer III reexamine: Amélioration de sa transcription," *Journal of Coptic Studies* 3 (2001): 81-112; James A. Robinson, "The First Christian Monastic Library," in *Coptic Studies: Acts of the Third International Congress of Coptic Studies* (Warsaw: Editions scientifiques de Pologne, 1990), 371-8; *idem*, "The Pachomian Monastic Library at the Chester Beatty Library and the Bibliothèque Bodmer," *Occasional Papers of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity* 19 (1990): 1-27; *idem*, "The Pachomian Monastic Library at the Chester Beatty Library and the Bibliothèque Bodmer," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (1990-1991): 26-40; and, *idem*, *The Story of the Bodmer Papyri: From the Monastery's Library in Upper Egypt to Geneva and Dublin* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011). With thanks to Stephen Emmel, who shared his copy of Robinson's essay in *Manuscripts of the Middle East* with me.

³ See Christian Askeland, *John's Gospel: The Coptic Translations of Its Greek Text* (Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung 44; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 73-78. I would like to thank Christian Askeland for discussing a number of these manuscripts with me.

12.	1949 (132241)	P. Köln P. 906 + P. Duke 769v Reuse of P. Duke inv. 769r	Scholia to Homer, Odyssey, 1.45-116 Tax receipt	Greek	ca. 200-299 ca. 200-399
13.	108078	Chester Beatty Ac 2556	Letters of Pachomius 9a, 9b, 10, 11b	Coptic	6 th cent.
14.	7072	P. Bod. 28	Fragments of a Satyr play	Greek	Unspecified
15.	9939	P. Bod. 48	<i>Iliad</i> 1.45-58	Greek	3 rd cent.
16.	108426	P. Yale inv. 1779	Psalms 76-77	Coptic	4 th -5 th cent.

Bodmer Miscellany (LDAB 2565)

Section [?]	Text	Content	Scribe	Pagination (as in the ms)
I	1	Nativity of Mary Γένεσις Μαρίας Αποκάλυψις Ἰακώβ colophon: εἰρήνη τῷ γράψαντι καὶ τῷ ἀγαγινώσκοντι	A (Testuz) 1 (Turner)	1-49
	2	3 Corinthians 1, 3 Κορίνθιοι πρὸς Παῦλον Παῦλος Κορινθίους (sic).	B 2	50-57
	3	11 th Ode of Solomon* Ὦδὴ Σολομῶντος	B 2	57-62
	4	Jude Ἰούδα ἐπιστολὴ (sic)	B 2	62-68
	5	Melito, <i>Peri Pascha</i> * Μελίτωνος Περὶ Πάσχα colophon: ἰρήνη τῷ γράψαντι καὶ τῷ ἀναγινώσκοντι καὶ τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν κ(ύριο)ν ἐν ἀφελότητι καρδίας	A 3	1-63
	6	Hymn Excerpt	A 3	64
II	7	<i>Apology of Phileas</i> Ἀπολογία Φ[ι]λέου ἐπισκόπου Θμοῦεως colophon: ἰρήνη τοῖς ἀγείοις (sic) πᾶσιν	C 4	129-146
	8	Psalms 33-34 (LXX) Ψαλμὸς Δαυὶδ	D 5	147-51
III	9	1 Peter colophon: εἰρήνη τῷ γράψαντι καὶ τῷ ἀγαγινώσκοντι 2 Peter	B 6	1-36

Crosby-Schøyen MS 193 (LDAB 107771 – a single quire codex of 68 bifolia)

Text	Content	Format	Language
1	Melito, <i>Peri Pascha</i>	one column first leaves missing	Coptic translation
2	2 Maccabees 5:27-7:41 “The Martyrs of the Jews under Antiochus the King”	one column continuously paginated wth Melito	Coptic translation
3	1 Peter	one column new pagination	Coptic translation
4	Jonah	one column new pagination	Coptic translation
5	Homily for Easter Morning	two columns last leaves missing	Composed in Coptic

Other examples:

Latin Miscellany (LDAB 552 – a single quire codex of 28 bifolia of which 26 are extant)

Text	Content	Language	Pagination (reconstructed)
A	Cicero, <i>Catiline Orations</i> 1 and 2 (highly fragmentary) colophon: utere [f]elix doroth[ee] in the shape of a <i>tabula ansata</i>	Latin, one column, 22 lines, 9.7x8.5 cm	5-47
B	Hymn to the Virgin	Latin, one column, 16 lines of text, 10.5x8 cm	48-56
C	Mythological drawing (Hercules and Diomedes)	---	57
D	Greek <i>Anaphora</i>	Greek, one column, 26-28 lines, 10x8.5 cm	58-64
E	Alcestis	Latin, one column 22-26 lines, 10.2x9 cm	65-71 [72]
F	Tale of the Emperor Hadrian colophon: filiciter .. dorotheo in the shape of a <i>tabula ansata</i> , with the Greek ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ written across the top	Latin, one column 21-22 lines, 10.2x8.5 cm	73-80
G	List of Words	Greek, three columns, average of 32 lines/ entries per page	81-106

“Book of Visions” (LDAB 1106, 11 bifolia in a single quire)

Text	Content
A	Hermas, <i>The Shepherd</i> , Visions 1-3
B	“Vision of Dorotheos” Ὅρασις Δωροθέου
C	Πρὸς Ἀβραάμ
D	Τί ἂν εἴποι ὁ Κάϊν ἀποκτείνας τὸν [Ἄβελ]
E	Τί ἂν εἴποι ὁ Ἄβελ ἀποκτείνας τὸν Κάϊν

Early Christian Book Lists (incomplete)

1. P. Ash. inv. 3 (LDAB 5720; Van Haelst 1192; Otranto 1). 4th cent. Papyrus. Greek. Fragment of an isolated folio. Book list.

Shepherd of Hermas, a commentary of Origen, Leviticus, Job, Acts of the Apostles, a work by Apa Bal[?], Song of Songs, Origen *Commentary on John*, Exodus and Numbers, a Gospels book (Μέγα Βιβλίον).

2. P. Grenfell 2, 111 (LDAB 6141; Van Haelst 1193; Otranto 3). 5th-6th cent. Papyrus. Greek. Isolated folio. Inventory of the church of Ibion.

21 books on parchment (unlisted). 3 books on papyrus (unlisted).

3. P. Prag. 178 (Otranto 4). 5th-6th cent. Papyrus. Five fragments. Greek. Inventory of a monastic library.

Too fragmentary to make out the books.

4. Pieke (ed.) *Tod and Macht*, 67 (LDAB 113888). 6th-8th cent. Ostrakon. List of books.

Wisdom, Esther, Judith, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, Shepherd of Hermas

5. P. Prag. 87 (LDAB 6489; Van Haelst 1200; Otranto 5) 650-700 CE. Papyrus. Greek. A private letter.

Chronicle (perhaps of the church?) a book of Theodotus of Ancyra, a commentary of Basil of Caesarea, Didymus *Commentary on Psalms*, a commentary of Gregory of Nazianzus, an unknown book on the Resurrection, Psalms, Daniel, and Gospels (which has been lost).⁴

6. P. Mon. Epiph. 555 (LDAB 87091). 7th cent. Papyrus. Coptic. Monastery of Epiphanius of Thebes. Book list.⁵

Gospel according to John, 2 copies of the Letters of Paul, Gospel according to Matthew, A[pa Severus that] to (or against) Julianus of ...

7. P. Vindob. Gr. inv. 26015 (LDAB 6724; Van Haelst 1199; Otranto 6) 7th-8th cent. Papyrus. Greek. Book list, perhaps of a church [?]. Last lines illegible.

“Prophets,”⁶ Martyrdom of Peter, Martyrdom of Eustachius, Acts of Pilate, Martyrdom of George, perhaps a book about Helena’s finding of the true cross.

8. P. L. Bat. 25, 13 (LDAB 6666; Van Haelst add.; Otranto 7) 7th-8th cent. Papyrus. Greek. Inventory of Church Property, including books, textiles, and valuable liturgical objects.

Bilingual Psalter (Coptic/Greek), Acts and Catholic Epistles, the Life of Saint (lacuna) and the Life of Saint Macrina, writings of Saint Serapion of Thmuis, Wisdom of Solomon and (lacuna), Apocalypse of Esdras [or IV Esdras], writings of the holy fathers [= *Apophthegmata Patrum*], Life of Galla Placidia and “On Virginity” by Basil of Ancyra, writings in verse, Lives of the Holy Martyrs and the Life of Saint (lacuna), “On the Creation” by Basil of Caesarea and letters of John Chrysostom, Panegyrics to Constantine, Athanasius and Basil of Caesarea, Life of Peter the Iberian, theological writings of Saint (lacuna), Hymns of Gregory of Nazianzus, Gospels of (lacuna) and Mark, Catholic Epistles, writings of the holy fathers [= *Apophthegmata Patrum*], four copies of the Gospels of Luke and (lacuna), new books containing the letters of Paul, Acts of the Apostles, Catholic Epistles

9. SB Kopt 1. 12 (LDAB 87767), 7th-8th cent. Ostrakon. Coptic. Inventory of the library of the Monastery of Elias.

Column A, recto: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, 1-4 Kings, Chronicles, the Esdras [1-6?], Minor Prophets, Isaiah on papyrus, Isaiah on parchment, Jeremiah, 2 parchment Psalters, 1 Psalter on papyrus, Fourfold Gospels on parchment, Luke with the *Apostolikon*, Matthew with the *Apostolikon*, 2 *Apostolikon*, Acts + the Catholic Epistles + Apocalypse, Matthew, Mark and Luke on papyrus, Acts and John on papyrus, John on papyrus. Column B, recto: Acts, Pachomian Rules, Commentary by Athanasius, Martyrdom of Apa Philotheos, Life of Pachomius, Life of Epiphanius, Acts of Peter with encomia of Athanasius, a work by Pachomius, the “Elders of Scetis” (perhaps History of the Patriarchs?), Life of Thomas, Life of Coore, Life of Malchos, Life of Saint Mary (of Egypt?), Apostolic Constitutions, Commentary of Shenoute, Discourses of Shenoute, Life of Paul and Theophilus.

⁴ Here I am following the recent reconstruction of the last six lines by J. Gascou rather than that of C. Wessley, the original editor: C. Wessley, “Catalogus librorum saeculi V-VII,” in *Festschrift zu Ehren Emil von Ottenhals* (Innsbruck, 1925), 184-5 and J. Gascou, “Notes Critiques: P. Prag. I 87, P. Mon. Apollo 27, P. Stras. VII 660,” *ZPE* 177 (2011): 243-53 (243-6)

⁵ In this same cell, a number of literary works were found, many by the same scribe and most on pottery: Exodus 15; 2 Kings 1-2; Job 29-30 and Isaiah 38; Psalm 18; Psalm 21; Psalm 23; 35, 105; Psalm 45 + doxology; Psalm 40; Psalm 50; Psalm 35, 57, 70, 73, 75, 137, 142, 138; Psalm 88 + Matthew 16:18 + Hebrews 5:6; Psalm 135; Ezekiel 3; Ode 8 *Daniel); acrostic hymn on the passion; 3 prayers; Trishagion; Trishagion, troparia, Psalm 95; Troparion with Matthew 1:23; Liturgical text; Troparion quoting Psalm 50 and Ode Daniel; Troparion. See S. Bucking, “Scribes and schoolmasters? On contextualizing Coptic and Greek ostraca excavated at the Monastery of Epiphanius,” *Journal of Coptic Studies* 9 (2007): 21-47.

⁶ There are approximately 14 letters missing: βίβλοςπροφήτου. H. Gerstinger speculates that one of the Old Testament Apocrypha may have been listed, or Daniel, or the Martyrdom of Isaiah (“Ein BÜchverzeichnis aus dem VII-VIII Jh. N. Chr. Im Pap Graec. Vindob. 26015,” *Wiener Studien* 50 (1932): 185-92 (190).

Verso: Funerary rite (2 copies), Martyrs of Apa Epithumios with Elijan and Apa Sabinos, and others, Discourses for the feast of Epiphany, precepts of Athanasius, Didascalia Apostolorum, Life of Philip, Life of Marcarios of Tohe, History of the Church [?], Panegyric of Gregory of Nazianzus on Basil of Caesarea, Panegyric of Severus on John of Constantinople, Martyrdom of Apa Leontios, with others, Job on papyrus, Job on parchment with Proverbs and a commentary, Acts of John and Stephen, Life of Shenoute, discourse of Cyril, book of martyrs, discourse of Athanasius, teachings of John the Baptist, martyrdom of John the Baptist, Martyrdom of Peter, a book of medicine, another little book.

Maccabean Martyr Sightings and Citings

Dates	Places	Relevant Events	Sightings/Citings	Notes
166-164 BCE	Judea, Galilee Idumaea	Maccabean Revolt Death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid (Greek) King	2 Maccabees 4 Maccabees	
66-73 CE	Judea/Palestine Galilee	Jewish Wars Destruction of the Second Temple		
ca. 75-80	Rome	Colosseum completed with spoils from the Jewish Wars	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i> 2.152-3	
ca. 100	Syria?		Hebrews 11:35b	
177	Lyons, Vienne Asia Minor		<i>Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne</i> 55	Preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Church History</i> 5.1.55. Blandina is compared to Salomone
202-204	Rome		Hippolytus, <i>Commentary on Daniel</i> 35	
235	Alexandria (later Caesarea)		Origen, <i>Exhortation to Martyrdom</i> 22-27	Origen cites 1-3 Maccabees explicitly in several of his works. Perhaps he included all four books in his <i>Hexapla</i> ?
249-251		Emperor Decius 1 st empire wide persecution		
252-258	North Africa		Cyprian <i>Ad Fortunatum</i> 11 and <i>Letter</i> 58.6	Cyprian compares the brothers to “the seven- branched lamp in the tabernacle of witness”
??	Egypt		Crosby-Schøyen MS 103 Lacau MS B	a miscellany a roll
304	North Africa		<i>Passio Sanctorum Mariani et Iacobi</i> 13.1-3a <i>Passio Sanctorum Montani et Lucii</i> 16.3-4	The mothers of the martyrs are compared to Salomone.
314	Rome Nicomedia		Lactantius, <i>Deaths of the Persecutors</i> 33	Antiochus IV = Galerius
??	Caesarea or Alexandria		Codex Sinaiticus	1 and 4 Maccabees included.
before 340	Caesarea		Eusebius, <i>Demonstratio evangelica</i> 10.1.10 Eusebius, <i>Onomasticon</i>	

356-361	Sardinia Cilicia II Antioch	Arian/homoian controversy is raging and (it seems) the homoians are winning	Lucifer of Cagliari <i>De non conueniendo cum haereticis</i> 13 (There must be no agreement with heretics) <i>De non parcendo in deum delinquentibus</i> 21-23, 35 (No pardon for those who sin against God)	Constantius II = Antiochus IV
361-363		Emperor Julian		offers to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem
362	Cappadocia		Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration</i> 15	Recommends the introduction of a feast day in Nazianzus
367	Alexandria	Athanasius writes his 39 th Festal Letter setting the date of Easter and listing the “canonized” books (κανονιζόμενα – “those prescribed by rule”)		1-4 Maccabees omitted
after 379	Antioch		John Chrysostom <i>Homilies 1 and 2 on the Maccabees</i>	John seeks to introduce a cult of the Maccabean martyrs in Antioch
386	Milan		Ambrose <i>On Jacob and the Blessed Life</i>	
388	Milan Callinicum		Ambrose <i>Epistle</i> 74	
??	Brescia		Ivory casket with typological scenes	
393		Honorius (West) Arcadius (East)		
398 or 399	Constantinople		John Chrysostom <i>On Eleazar and the Seven Boys</i>	
ca 400	Ephesus?		Codex Alexandrinus	
402	Ravenna	Honorius moves the imperial court		
??	Hippo		Augustine <i>Sermons</i> 300 and 301	Augustine refers to a basilica dedicated to them in Antioch
419		Council of Carthage		1-2 Maccabees included among the canonical books
before 461	Rome		Leo the Great <i>Sermon</i> 84b	Preached in San Pietro in Vincoli on the day of the feast
after 561	Rome		San Pietro in Vincoli Maccabean martyrs sarcophagus	Relics translated to Rome
before 578	Constantinople		John Malalas <i>Chronographia</i> 8	John refers to a basilica in Antioch dedicated to the Maccabean martyrs and to relics installed there by the Jews
630	Constantinople		<i>Chronicon Paschale</i>	
before 650	Rome		Santa Maria in Antiqua	

2 Maccabees 2:16

Since, therefore, we are about to celebrate the purification [of the temple], we write to you. Will you therefore please keep the days?⁷

4 Maccabees 7:11-15

Truly the contest (ἀγών) in which they were engaged was divine, for on that day virtue gave the awards and tested them for their endurance. The prize was immortality in endless life. Eleazar was the first contestant, the mother of the seven sons entered the competition, and the brothers contended. The tyrant was the antagonist, and the world and the human race were spectators. Reverence for God was victor and gave the crown to its own athletes.

Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 12.7.323-25⁸

So much pleasure did they [the Judeans of Jerusalem] find in the renewal of their customs and in unexpectedly obtaining the right to have their own service after so long a time, that they made a law that their descendants should celebrate the restoration of the temple service for eight days. And from that time to the present we observe this festival, which we call the festival of Lights (φῶτα), giving this name to it, I think, from the fact that the right to worship appeared to us at a time when we hardly dared hope for it

Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.152-153⁹

The war against the Romans proved their souls in every way: during it, while being twisted and also bent, burned and also broken, and passing through all the torture-chamber instruments, with the aim that they might insult the lawgiver or eat something not customary, they did not put up with suffering either one: not once gratifying those who were tormenting [them], or crying. But smiling in their agonies and making fun of those who were inflicting the tortures, they would cheerfully dismiss their souls, knowing they would get them back again

Hebrews 11

³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,³⁴ quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection.³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.³⁷ They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented—³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.³⁹ Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what

⁷ Invitations from one Greek city to another to join local feast days were sometimes accompanied by historical reports similar to the accounts that follow in 2 Maccabees; perhaps the writer had this Greek model in mind. Jan Willem Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviors of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 57; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 46-48.

⁸ Greek text with English translation by Ralph Marcus, *Josephus*. Vol. 9, *Jewish Antiquities, Book XII-XIV* (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1943), 166-69

⁹ English translation by Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus. Translation and Commentary*, edited by Steve Mason. Vol. 1b, *Judean War 2* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 121-23. As Steve Mason has suggested, the vocabulary of this passage displays strong affinities with 4 Maccabees, demonstrating Josephus's debt to the book. Shared terms include στρεβλόω, βάσανος, αικίζω, διαλέγω, ὑπομένω, and βασανιστήριον. Shared themes include burning as torture, the instruments of torture described, the forced eating of pork and the promise that the release of life will be followed by the regaining of one's soul (Mason, 122-23 nn 931, 933-34, 936, 941). Jan Willem Van Henten has also noted the many correspondences between Josephus's descriptions of noble death and the martyrological sections of 2 and 4 Maccabees. He states the case most forcefully in, "Noble Death in Josephus: Just Rhetoric?" in *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method*, ed. Zuleika Rodgers (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 193-219.

was promised,⁴⁰ since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.¹⁰

Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne 55 (=Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.1.55)
And last of all, the blessed Blandina, like a noble mother encouraging her children, she sent them before her in triumph to the king and then, after duplicating in her own body all her children's sufferings, she hastened to rejoin them, rejoicing and glorying on the way as if called to a marriage feast rather than cast to wild beasts.¹¹

Hippolytus of Rome *Commentary on Daniel* 35.8-9

For we find also the seven martyrs who, under Antiochus, endured terrible punishments and were taken from the world. And so what of it? Was God not able to smite king Antiochus and to rescue the seven brothers? He was able, but he did not will to do this so that this example may become ours. For if he rescued everyone, who would he destin to testify? But if all were testifying and were killed, he would be reckoned by some of the faithless as being this: a powerless God.¹²

Origen *Exhortation to Martyrdom* 22-27

The seven brothers described in the books of the Maccabees, whom Antiochus tortured with whips and scourges because of their loyal adherence to their religion, constitute a magnificent example of courageous martyrdom to everyone...¹³

Cyprian *Ad Fortunatum* 11

What, indeed, do we find in the Maccabees of the seven brothers, equals alike in their lot of birth and virtues, filling up the number seven in the sacrament of a perfected completion? Seven brothers were thus associating in martyrdom. As the first seven days in the divine arrangement containing seven thousand of years...and the seven-branched lamp in the tabernacle of witness, and the seven golden candlesticks in the Apocalypse... With the seven children is manifestly associated also the mother, their origin and root, who subsequently begat seven churches, she herself having been first, and alone founded upon a rock by the voice of the Lord ... Also the

¹⁰ For discussion see Jan Willem Van Henten, "The Reception of Daniel 3 and 6 and the Maccabean Martyrdoms in Hebrews 11:33-38," in *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity. Studies in the History of Religion in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer*, ed. by J. Dijkstra & J. Kroesen & Y. Kuiper (Texts and Sources in the History of Religions. Numen Book Series 127. Leiden: Brill, 2010) 373-6.

¹¹ G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique* (SC 31, 41, 55. Paris: Éditions du Cerf)
[TLG]: ἡ δὲ μακαρία Βλανδίνα πάντων ἐσχάτη, καθάπερ μήτηρ εὐγενῆς παρορμήσασα τὰ τέκνα καὶ νικηφόρους προπέμψασα πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα, ἀναμετρουμένη καὶ αὐτὴ πάντα τὰ τῶν παίδων ἀγωνίσματα ἔσπευδεν πρὸς αὐτούς, χαίρουσα καὶ ἀγαλλωμένη ἐπὶ τῇ ἐξόδῳ, ὡς εἰς νυμφικὸν δεῖπνον κεκλημένη, ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς θηρία βεβλημένη· Compare 4 Macc 15: 11-12: Nevertheless, though so many factors influenced the mother to suffer with them out of love for her children, in the case of none of them were the various tortures strong enough to pervert her reason. But each child separately and all of them together the mother urged on to death for religion's sake...

¹² M. Lefèvre, *Hippolyte. Commentaire sur Daniel* (SC14. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1947):126-27
[TLG]: Εὐρίσκομεν γὰρ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ μάρτυρας ἐπὶ Ἀντιόχου δεινὰς κολάσεις ὑπομείναντας καὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου παραληφθέντας. Τί οὖν; οὐκ ἠδύνατο ὁ θεὸς πατάξαι τὸν βασιλέα Ἀντίοχον καὶ ῥύσασθαι τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀδελφούς; ἠδύνατο· ἀλλ' ἵνα ἡμέτερος οὗτος γένηται ὑπογραμμός. Εἰ γὰρ πάντας ἐρρῦετο, τίς ἤμελλεν μαρτυρεῖν; εἰ δὲ πάντες ἐμαρτύρουν ἀποθνήσκοντες, ἐλέγετο ἂν ὑπὸ τινῶν ἀπίστων. (also see 2.20.1-5)

¹³ P. Koetschau, *Origenes Werke*, vol. 1 (*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 2. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899): 3-47 [TLG]: Καὶ οἱ ἑπτὰ δὲ ἐν τοῖς Μακκαβαϊκοῖς ἀναγραφέντες ἀδελφοὶ, οὓς μάλιστα καὶ νευραῖς ἠκίστατο Ἀντίοχος ἐμμένοντας τῇ θεοσεβείᾳ, δυνήσονται παράδειγμα κάλλιστον εἶναι ῥωμαλέου μαρτυρίου παντὶ λογισαμένῳ ἂν, εἰ μέλλει παιδαρίων εἶναι ἐλάττων, οὐ καθ' ἓνα μόνον βασάνους ὑπομεινάντων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ τὴν αἰκίαν τῶν ἀδελφῶν τεθεωρηκέναι παράστημα εὐτονον εὐσεβείας ἐπιδειξαμένων. English translation by Henry Chadwick in *Alexandrian Christianity* (Library of Christian Classics 2; London: SCM Press, 1954), 393-429 (at 408). For further discussion, see Jan Willem Van Henten, "The Christianization of the Maccabean Martyrs: The Case of Origen," in *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Antique Christianity. Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter*, ed. J. Leemans (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 241; Lueven: Belgium, 2010), 333-51.

admirable mother, who, neither broken down by the weakness of her sex, nor moved by her manifold bereavement, looked upon her dying children with cheerfulness, and did not reckon those things punishments of her darlings, but glories, giving as great a witness to God by the virtue of her eyes, as her children had given by the tortures and suffering of their limbs.¹⁴

2 Maccabees 5:27-30 ... 7:30-31 (The first and last verses of the book labeled “The Martyrs of the Jews under Antiochus the King” in Crosby-Schøyen MS 193)

But Judas Maccabeus, with about nine others, got away to the wilderness, and kept himself and his companions alive in the mountains as wild animals do; they continued to live on what grew wild, so that they might not share in the defilement... While she [the mother] was still speaking, the young man said, ‘What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king’s command, but I obey the command of the law that was given to our ancestors through Moses. But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will certainly not escape the hands of God.

Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 33

It was during the eighteenth year of his reign that God struck Maximian [Galerius] with an incurable malady. A malign ulcer appeared on the lower part of his genitals and spread more widely. Doctors cut and then treated it; a scar formed, but then the wound split open; A vein burst, and the flow of blood imperilled his life. The haemorrhage was stopped with difficulty....As the marrow was assailed, the infection was forced inwards and got a hold of his internal organs; Worms were born inside him. The smell pervaded not just the palace but the whole city; And this was not surprising, since the channels for his urine and his excrement were now confused with each other. He was consumed by worms, and his body dissolved and rotted amid insupportable pain.¹⁵

Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* 10.1.10

And the second passage, from Psalm 78, was fulfilled in the time of Antiochus, called Epiphanes, who being King of Syria entered Jerusalem, polluted the Temple, destroyed the Altar, and in his endeavour to compel the Jews to hellenize, slew countless men and women who were martyrs for their law and their father's religion, and he inflicted all sorts of punishments on them.¹⁶

Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 15.2, 5

Who were the Maccabees? The festival today (ἡ παροῦσα πανήγυρις) is indeed in their honor, though not many recognize them because their contest (ἀθλήσις) antedates Christ... Who were these people? Where did they come from? What kind of culture and education did they have so as to rise to such a peak of valor and renown that they are both honored annually with these festal

¹⁴ R. Weber, ed. *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera. Ad Quirnum, Ad Fortunatum* (CCL III.1; Turnholt: Brepols, 1952), 205-6.

¹⁵ J. Moreau, *De la mort des persécuteurs* (SC 39; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf), 115. This same model would be applied by John Chrysostom to the Emperor Julian’s uncle, also named Julian, fifty years later (*Homily on Saint Babylas, or Against Julian and the Pagans* 17.92). Julian’s uncle Julian, Count of the Orient, stole the vessels of the Christian basilicas of Antioch, beat them flat and sat on them, John reports, but the “punishment was swift” for “his secret parts withered and swarmed with maggots” (English translation by Marna M. Morgan in Samuel N. C. Lieu, ed., *The Emperor Julian: Panegyric and Polemic* [Translated Texts for Historians 2; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989], 59-79 [68]).

¹⁶ Hiekel, *Eusebius Werke* vol. 6 [TLG]: τὰ δὲ δεύτερα, <τὰ> ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑβδομηκοστοῦ ὀγδοῦ, ἐπληροῦτο κατὰ τοὺς Ἀντιόχου χρόνους τοῦ κληθέντος Ἐπιφανοῦς, ὃς τῆς Συρίας βασιλεύσας ὑπάγεται μὲν τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα μαιίνει δὲ τὸν ναὸν καὶ καθαιρεῖ τὸ θυσιαστήριον, ἔπειτα τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἐλληνίζει ἐπαναγκάζων, πλείστους ὅσους αὐτῶν ἀνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας ὑπὲρ τοῦ οἰκείου νόμου καὶ τῆς πατρώας εὐσεβείας ἀνήρει, ποικίλαις προαικιδόμενος τιμωρίας. English translation W. J. Farrar.

processions (ὥστε καὶ ταῖς ἐτήσίοις ταύταις τιμᾶσθαι πομπαῖς τε καὶ πανηγύρεσι) and every heart treasures their glory in greater measure than these visible expressions indicate?¹⁷

Our ancestral homeland and our friends and our kinsmen and comrades and this temple with its great and celebrated name and time honored festivals and rites are in no way sweeter than God and the dangers we encounter on behalf of goodness.¹⁸

John Chrysostom, *Homilies Against the Jews* 2

How many wars have been fanned against the church...or kinds of punishment and persecution contrived...[including those involving] frying pans and catapults, cauldrons and furnaces?¹⁹

John Chrysostom, *Homily 1 on the Maccabean Martyrs* 1.1

Please don't mention the dust, nor think about the ash, nor the bones that have been consumed by time, but open wide the eyes of faith and see God's power that accompanies them, the grace of Spirit that clothes them, the glory of the heavenly light that surrounds them (*Homily* 1.1).²⁰

Ambrose, *Epistle* 74 [40].16

Will punishment be exacted also for the burning of a temple of the Valentinians? For what should we call a place of assembly of pagans if not a temple? For when the Valentinians blocked the route along which the monks were advancing in procession to the festival of the Maccabean martyrs, chanting psalms, as was their ancient practice and custom, the monks were angered by such insolence, and set fire to the Valentinian shrine which had been hastily constructed in some country village.²¹

Eusebius, *Onamasticon* (added by Jerome)

Modeeim: Village near Diospolis. Home of the Maccabees where their tomb is pointed out even now. (Indeed it is amazing that their remains are shown in Antioch, but our author [i.e., Eusebius] is to be believed.)²²

Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon* 300

That's why it is not unsuitable, not in the least improper, but on the contrary absolutely right that [the feast of the Maccabean martyrs] and their solemnity to be celebrated especially by Christians. What do the Jews know about such a celebration? Word is going round [*praedictur* – “being publically announced”] that there is a basilica of the Holy Maccabees in Antioch; in the very city, that is to say, which is called by the name of that persecuting king.... This basilica is owned by Christians, was built by Christians. It's we who celebrate their memory; it is among us that thousands of holy martyrs throughout the world have imitated their sufferings (*Sermon* 300).²³

¹⁷ Oration 15 “In Praise of the Maccabees.” PG 35.912A-33A. English translation by Martha Vinson, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Select Orations* (Fathers of the Church 107; Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 72-84 (at 73).

¹⁸ PG 35.912A-33A [TLG]: Ἡδὺ μὲν καὶ ὁ κόσμος οὗτος, καὶ τὸ πατρῶν ἔδαφος, καὶ φίλοι, καὶ συγγενεῖς, καὶ ἡλικιωταί, καὶ ὁ ναὸς οὗτος τὸ μέγα καὶ περιβόητον ὄνομα, καὶ πανηγύρεις πατρικαί, καὶ μυστήρια, καὶ πάντα οἷς ἡμεῖς τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρειν δοκοῦμεν. Οὐπω δὲ ἠδίω Θεοῦ, καὶ τῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ καλοῦ κινδύνων.

¹⁹ PG 48:885-6. English translation C. Mervin Maxwell, “Chrysostom's Homilies Against the Jews: An English Translation,” PhD dissertation (University of Chicago, 1966), 115. As Maxwell notes, 2 Maccabees 7:3 suggests that, when torturing the mother and her seven sons, Antiochus Epiphanes called for “pans and cauldrons” (κθυμος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς προσέταξεν τήγανα καὶ λέβητας ἐκτυροῦν, also see 4 Macc 8:13).

²⁰ English translation Mayer, 137.

²¹ English translation Liebescheutz, 103-4.

²² Μωδεεῖμ (1 Macc 2, 1). κώμη πλησίον Διοσπόλεως, ὅθεν ἦσαν οἱ Μακκαβαῖοι, ὧν καὶ τὰ μνήματα εἰς ἔτι νῦν δείκνυται.

²³ English translation by Edmund Hill, *Augustine. Sermons*, vol. III/8, *Sermons 273-305A* (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century; Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1994), 279.