Pionius as Martyr and Orator:

A Study of the *Martyrdom of Pionius*

by

Samantha L. Pascoe

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Religion

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

*****

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

Pionius as Martyr and Orator:

A Study of the *Martyrdom of Pionius*

BY

Samantha L. Pascoe

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of

Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how *martyria*, as well as the acts of martyrdom, functioned for the Christian community in a similar manner to the Roman edicts and decrees. Through a critical evaluation of *The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions* as a case study, the focus of the investigation is on notions of writing and writing with the body as a means to create an individual and cultural memory. This memory structured Christians' ideas of other religious communities (that is, Jews and Pagans), their eschatological ideals, and influenced the assumptions of Christian martyrdom.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following my acceptance to the Master's program at the University of Manitoba I had many (mis)conceptions of what it meant to be a student, let alone a good one. My teachers (personal and academic) have helped me to grow in ways that I never knew possible. Many colleagues and friends have made significant contributions in the form of support and encouragement; these kind people stand out: Nat Morehouse, Jason Redden, melanie brannagan, Christina Fawcett, Tom Dobson, Julia Schmidt, Paul Oakley, Hilary Henley, and Art Henry. The students I taught at the University of Manitoba and St. Norbert Collegiate indeed have nourished my own studies with their words of wisdom.

The kindness of the Department's administrative staff, Debbie Fiorucci, Anna Cianflone, and Rose Fiorillo, promoted a positive environment allowing me to navigate the bureaucratic uncertainties of graduate studies. Both the Fr. Christopher M. Keenan, S.J., and the Fr. Patrick Mary Plunkett, S.J., memorial scholarships, as well as Manitoba Millennium Scholarship, have assisted by funding parts of this degree.

There are many instructors and senior scholars who have affected, in one form or another, this work and should not be forgotten: Dawne McCance, Mark Joyal, Brenda Cantelo, Luis Melo S.M., David Bergen, Alan Kirk, and Elizabeth Alexandrin. In addition to these individuals I would not have been able to complete this project without the help of two individuals: Laurence Broadhurst and Egil Grislis. Prof. Broadhurst's diligence as a course instructor and reader has continually helped to improve the quality of my work. My supervisor, Prof. Grislis' grace, care, and guidance were (and will remain) indispensable. His contributions to my studies and career cannot be underestimated.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the all people, most especially my family and Cory Rutherford, who forgot to let me in on *the secret*. Thanks for being my strength when I had none!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION

As criminals, Christians in the Roman Empire were unlike regular criminals. Christians "were punished for what they had done in the past, the Christian [martyr] was punished for what he [or she] was in the present, and up to the last moment could gain pardon by apostasy."[1] Similarly the martyr, who is a figure of authority through the use of his or her body, creates an act that supersedes the actions of the ruling authorities and their representatives. The stories of martyrs are not unique among the writings of early Christians, but are also found throughout the writings of Pagans and Jews in antiquity. These stories are generally understood as depicting a fragile political and religious environment, with the ruling authorities struggling to maintain control of the cities, of the communities, and even of the empire through edicts and decrees.[2] Through these stories, the martyrs maintain the ability to testify (as the etymology of "martyr" asserts) with their bodies not only to their own struggles and sufferings but also to the philosophical, religious and eschatological understandings of their community.

By using the third-century Greek Christian text *The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions*[3] (henceforth *Mart. Pion.*)[4] as case study, I will show that these *martyria* themselves, as well as the very act of martyrdom, clearly function for

---

[1] T. D. Barnes "Legislation Against the Christians," *JRS* 58 (1968): 48.

[2] See Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers,1986), 419-92; W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 285-323; and Barnes, "Legislation."

[3] Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of *Mart. Pion.* are from Herbert Anthony Musurillo, "The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions," in idem, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 136-67 with verse references from the Greek version on the facing pages. All of the French translations of *Mart. Pion.* are from Louis Robert "Martyre de saint Pionios, prêtre, et de ses compagnons" in idem, in *Le martyre de Pionios prêtre de Smyrne: Édité, traduit*

Christians in a manner very similar to the way Roman edicts and decrees function for the imperial establishment. That is to say that this *martyrium* edified Christians' ideas of individual and cultural memory,[5] which structured their ideas of other religious communities (i.e., Jews and Pagans), their eschatological ideals, and influenced their ideological assumptions of Christian martyrdom.

The aim of this thesis is threefold: (1) to assess how their writings constructed an individual and cultural memory; (2) to show that this memory is ethically charged, influencing Christians' eschatological ideals, their ideas of other religious communities and their assumptions of martyrdom; (3) and to show that the writings of martyrs and their act of martyrdom (also an act of writing) function in relation to Roman edicts and decrees by constructing ethical ideals with eschatological significance. My study of *Mart. Pion.* not only contributes to the research areas of martyrdom but will also show that this particular martyrium is essential for understanding how socio-political adversities formulated a positive conception of physical suffering for early Christians. These

---

et commenté par Louis Robert (eds. Glen W. Bowersock et C. P. Jones: Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), 33-45 and translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

[4] Unless otherwise noted the abbreviation scheme I will be following throughout this thesis is from the Society of Biblical Literature. See Patrick H. Alexander et al., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass.: 1999) especially, 73-84.

[5] There is no shortage of studies on memory, individual memory, or cultural memory (see Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-40); and Barbie Zelizer, "Reading the Past Against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies," *Studies in Mass Communication* 12 (1995): 214-39, for two recent reviews of this field of study). In each instance, scholars employ other equally vague terms in an attempt to define these first terms. I understand memory as a social construction of a narrative (performative through ritual, representational through texts and iconography) from the past that is developed from one's personal interactions with one's surroundings. These surroundings include, but are not limited to, one's family, religious communities (which they belong to or interact with), as well as their social class. In each instance, this memory is repeatable and is experienced in the present when the event is retold with an emphasis on its relevance for the contemporary situation. The result is that these memories are vulnerable to being distorted and read as (potentially) ahistorical. I, therefore, understand cultural memory, similar to Elizabeth A. Castelli, who reads it as text rhetorically created to assist individuals within their own communities to understand and interpret both violence and suffering done to themselves and those around them (*Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 11-32).

conceptions should be understood as a political tool[6] based on Christian ethical convictions of life and death as well as their relationship to the divine. These conceptions have yet to be addressed by scholars of religion who study *Mart. Pion.*

My contention is that the event of Pionius' martyrdom and the memory-text, *Mart. Pion.*,[7] should both be understood as written stories that testify to an evolving ethical memory. This memory functions to create an individual and cultural identity for Christians who are struggling in this volatile socio-political environment. The textual story is a memorialization of an actual event to be handed down to the coming generations for pedagogical purposes, wherein the recopied stories and celebrated events of the martyr's festivals reinforce the martyr as a mimetic image of Christ and other martyrs.[8] Similarly, these texts "served as the basis for all subsequent accounts of the martyrdoms of that period and provided the inspiration for new martyrs whose faith was to be tested in the centuries to follow."[9] Thus, Pionius' martyrdom, as well as the events leading to it, instruct Christians in regard to ethical actions, both socially and religiously.

To begin to prove this, I will briefly summarize *Mart. Pion.* and highlight some of the critical information discussed by scholars. There, I present this text as being representational of the topics of martyrdom, writing, memory, the physical body, and the construction of Christian identity (in relation to the Jews and Pagans). Next, I shall detail

---

[6] This idea of political battle is similar to that of David Easton who sees politics as a "process by which values are authoritatively allocated in society" (*A Framework for Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 50; see also Alan Ball, *Modern Politics and Government* (London: Macmillan Education Limited, 1988), 3-15).

[7] *Mart. Pion.* "puts itself forward explicitly as a memory-book, a σύγγραμμα (record) that provides its readers with a μνημοσύνη (memory), left behind by Pionius himself as fortification for others" (Castelli, *Memory and Martyrdom,* 92).

[8] See Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 434-50, especially 440 and 446.

[9] Glenn W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995; repr., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24.

the textual traditions of *Mart. Pion.* and offer an appraisal of its secondary literature. This appraisal focuses on specific works of nine scholars that have offered sustained readings (i.e., a commentary on the entire text, or a discussion of at least a single chapter or section) of *Mart. Pion.* and not simply summarized it or used it as an auxiliary example to another sustained argument. Finally, I will close this chapter by detailing the remaining chapters of this thesis and their argument.

I.1 A Summary of the Martyrdom of Pionius

Pionius' text, *Mart. Pion.*, was left as instructions to other Christians by an (Christian) editor. This editor also tells the story of Pionius' punishment as a criminal, for he would not sacrifice or eat the sacrificial meat[10] as the decree of Emperor Decius (d. 251 C.E.) dictated in year 249 C.E.[11] The unnamed Christian editor begins *Mart. Pion.* by introducing the protagonist Pionius as an "apostolic man" and as a "martyr," whom "[t]he Apostle" encourages the Christian community to remember" (1:1), since he is a

[10] The notion of sacrifice contains a spectrum of actions that could be performed by an individual. These actions might include bringing (or purchasing) an animal to be killed at a temple, eating this or other previously sacrificed meat, offering an oath to the deity, or even a pinch of incense. In each instance the actions of sacrificing were a means of showing one's honour, respect, and conformity towards the god(s) and/or towards the traditions of the Empire. For a detailed discussion of pagan sacrifice see: Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 424-32); Royden K. Yerkes, *Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952); and Richard Hecht, "Studies on Sacrifice, 1970-1980," *RelSRev* 8 (January 1982): 253-59, for a review of earlier studies on sacrifice.

[11] *Mart. Pion.* 2:1 and 23 clearly indicate the date to be during the reign of Decius (249-251 C.E.), though there are some scholars who debate this on the basis of Eusebius' account, *Hist. eccl.* 4.15. J. B. Rives notes that there is only a minority of scholars who debate whether *Mart. Pion.* provides an accurate account of the martyrdom and that "most accept a Decian date for the events portrayed, and many think that much of the text derives from Pionius himself" ("The Decree of Decius and the Religion of the Empire," *JRS* 89 (1999): 136). See also Barnes, "Legislation," 45; Barnes, "Pre-Decian Acta Martyrum," *JTS* 19 (1968): 529-31. Conversely, H. Grégoire agrees with Eusebius and dates *Mart. Pion.* to the reign of Marcus Aurelieus, ("Les Persécutions dans l'Empire Romain," *Académie royale de Belgique, Mémoires* 46 (Bruxelles, 1951), while Musurillo does not locate this text in either reign but states "[g]iven the vagueness of the legal background, it seems impossible to determine whether Pionius and his companions were taken during the Decian persecution" (*ACM*, xxix). I have chosen to follow Robert, however, who most convincingly accepts Decius' reign as the date and clearly recounts several viable reasons as to why this date is indeed accurate (see *Martyre de Pionios*, 2-6).

"continuation of the apostolic imperative."[12] The editor does not provide his or her reader with any information about Pionius before the narrative of his arrest and death. The tales of his earlier life (i.e., pseudo-prayer and biography) are written much later and are disputable.[13] Both of these epithets for Pionius insist that he should be remembered for his written teachings (i.e., "this writing" (1:2) and his martyrdom). Indeed, the editor, or martyrologist, is rewriting Pionius' own account of martyrdom as a physical memorial of Pionius the man and his actions,[14] and creating a text that is both a composite and "domesticated."[15] The instructions to the faithful to remember a martyr and his or her teachings are not unique to *Mart. Pion.,* but are also found in other martyria.[16] What is important to note is this writing, τὸ σύγγραμμα τοῦτο, needs to be understood as the text behind this version of the *Mart. Pion.* and can be thought of as a kind of diary. That is to say, "this σύγγραμμα constituted the basis for the surviving account down to the moment at which Pionios was sent to his death."[17] Many scholars argue that this is the case including Hippolyte, Delehaye, Louis Robert, J. Cadoux, and Glen Bowersock, with

---

[12] Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 92.

[13] C. J. Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna: A History of the City from the Earliest Times to 324 A.D.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 306 n. 1; cf. Delehaye, *Les passion des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (rev. et cor. ed.: Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1966), 33-46.

[14] See Delehaye, *Passions des martyrs*, especially 30-32. Here, Delehaye emphasizes that the editor has transposed much of Pionius' text to the third person but the instances of the first person that remain in chapters 10 and 18 prove that there are parts of an original text that are behind this story. Thus, "sa [*Mart. Pion.*] valeur historique n'ait j'amais été sérieusement mise en question" (32).

[15] See Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 92.

[16] *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* (henceforth *Mart. Poli.*) 1 (Musurillo, Acts of the Christian Martyrs); *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* (Musurillo, Acts of the Christian Martyrs); *The Acts of Marcellus* (Musurillo, Acts of the Christian Martyrs); *The Acts of Maximian* (Musurillo, Acts of the Christian Martyrs).

[17] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 29.

Robin Lane Fox hinting at such repeatedly.[18] Also of note is that the use of the term record or σύγγραμμα is not found in the Latin version of the *Mart. Pion.* but is found in the old-Slavic translation, which Robert notes to be very literal.[19]

Scholars, such as Robert and Bowersock, frequently balance Perpetua's prison diary with Pionius' text, with the difference being that the editor of Perpetua's prison diary "explicitly says that the narrative is drawn from her account."[20] What is important to note is that "the educated class were those who wrote, and so the only view that comes down to us in texts speaking in the first person is that of this class."[21] The diaries of other martyrs, e.g., Perpetua, impacted the construction of other stories and letters.[22]

Following this introduction, which gives Pionius authority as a teacher whose moral actions should be imitated, the editor provides the setting of the arrest of Pionius and his companions as well as for the entire narrative.[23] The function of this setting is twofold.[24] First, the setting is temporally located by positing an actual date of "the second day of the sixth month [...during] the persecution of Decius" (2:1), which is on "a great

---

[18] Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna*, 389 n.1; Delehaye, *Passions des martyrs,* 30-2; Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 28-9; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 470, 471, 483; and Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 4-6, 49.

[19] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 50.

[20] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 33; Louis Robert, "Une vision de Perpétue martyre à Charthage en 203," *CRAI* (1982): 228-76.

[21] Though James A. Francis in *Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World* is speaking specifically about Asceticism in the second century his comment concerning those who wrote is indeed applicable to the martyrs as well (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

[22] See Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 440 as well as 468-71.

[23] See Jan den Boeft and Jan Bremmer, "Notiunculae Martyrologicae III. Some Observations on the Martyria of Polycarp and Pionius," *VC* 39.2 (1985): 113-4 for a discussion of Pionius as a saint and an apostle.

[24] This setting was once of frequent debate amongst scholars with Musurillo depreciating the significance of the suggestion of Decius, stating that "it is the only substantial martyrdom that we possess which pretends to date from the period of the Decian persecution (*ACM*, xxix). Though, Robert more recently (1994) has had the final say by his emphasis on the Pionius' and the editor's emphasis on the beauty of Smyrna (see *Martyre de Pionios*, 4).

Sabbath and on the anniversary of the blessed martyr Polycarp" (2:1). This is, according to Robert, the 23rd of February and the great Sabbath might be either the Saturday before Lent or the Saturday during Lent.[25] Though scholars, e.g., Robert, Lane Fox, and T. D. Barnes, continue to debate not only the date of this "great Sabbath" and its significance to the Jewish, Christian, and Pagan communities,[26] what is obvious is that it was a festival "on which pagans and Jews alike were free to stay away from work."[27] Second, these images also reinforce Pionius' apostolic and spiritual authority by genealogically binding him to the apostles through Polycarp's death and his connection (asserted by ecclesiastical tradition) to John the Apostle.[28]

Pionius and two of his companions (Sabina and Asclepiades) were, according to the text, arrested on the anniversary of Polycarp's martyrdom.[29] They made special preparations (i.e., placed chains around their necks[30] and had a sacred meal[31]) for this arrest by Polemon "the temple verger" (3:1) because Pionius had received a vision the previous night while they fasted and prayed.[32] This vision is one that Pionius does not

---

[25] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 50; See also A. Hilhorst, "L'ancien Testament dans la polémique du martyr Pionos," *Aug* 22 (1982): 454.

[26] C.f. Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 50-1. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 485-7; and Barnes, "Pre-Decian," 509-31, especially 522-3.

[27] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 48.

[28] Polycarp is traditionally understood as one "who (it was said) had actually known the Apostles personally" (G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?" *Past and Present* 26 (1963): 26).

[29] *Mart. Pion.* 2:1.

[30] *Mart. Pion.* 2:3.

[31] *Mart. Pion.* 3:1.

[32] Because of its repetition in the text and the problem of translating and interpreting these two instances, scholars frequently discuss the use of the word εἶδεν. Musurillo, unlike Robert who simply uses a single word "sut," chooses two different words in his translation, "Pionius knew…" and "he realized" (Musurillo, *ACM*, 138; c.f. Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 33). Boeft and Bremmer, however, suggest "[i]t is much more likely that Pionius 'saw' that he was to be arrested the next day" ("NM III", 115) and further emphasizes this reading on the basis of the presence of δεῖ. They argue it "obviously refers to 'divine

record, or perhaps the editor removes, and is not unlike that of other martyrs who have visions and then make preparations for their impending persecutions and deaths.[33] Nevertheless, this vision is relegated to the periphery, with the importance being placed on Pionius' words, his orations. These preparations signify to the crowd of Greeks, Jews, and women[34] that though these people are being led toward the temple, they are not going there to sacrifice; instead Pionius, Sabina[35], and Asclepiades are prisoners of Polemon and are being (unjustly) punished.[36] Robert advocates that this antagonist character, Polemon, is "sans doute" from the sophist family in the second century and cannot be the temple verger *aedituus* from the two Latin translations.[37]

The narrative continues and we are told that Pionius, upon his arrival at the forum,[38] gave a speech. This speech reproaches both the Greeks and the Jews for their attitude toward Christians. This is, indeed, an oration based on the mentioning of Pionius'

---

destiny or unavoidable fate,'" which is relevant to the community's understanding of dying in Antiquity (ibid.). This means that the idea of a pre-death vision was important and relevant as to how one died, because without it death was understood to have snuck up on you; therefore one died a cursed death. Both Robert and Boeft & Bremmer parallel this vision with Polycarp's premonition found in *Mart. Poli.* 5.2 (*Martyre de Pionios*, 51; "NM III," 115).

[33] Two other examples are *The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* 4:2 and *Mart. Poli.*, 5:2.

[34] The martyrologist is locating the women as a distinct entity within the crowd. These women are being addressed directly in this oration, since they are ethnically Jewish or Roman, even though they are being segregated. This segregation needs to be further explored in relation to the possibility that the martyrologist of *Mart. Pion.* might be female; perhaps Sabina. This possibility is based on 10:5, "Il parlait de notre compagnon Asclépiadès." This "us" should not be understood as "the general term for 'us Christians.' It refers to the martyrs at this point in the story, we can deduce that it refers to Sabina and Pionius only" (Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 470-1). Unfortunately, the discussion of gender in this text is outside of this thesis.

[35] Lane Fox at the beginning of "9. Persecution and Martyrdom" in *Pagans and Christians* makes two passing comments that there is a "prominence in martyrdom of well-born girls" (419 and 420), though this does not apply to Sabina. She, as we are told later in *Mart. Pion.*, was a member of the house of the "immoral Politta" (9:3) as a slave.

[36] *Mart. Pion.* 2:4 and 6:3.

[37] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 52-3; See also Philostratus, *Vit. soph.*, I. 530-44.

[38] The description of this forum, *Mart. Pion.* 3:6, provides topographical evidence of Smyrna in the third century. The features are found in the Greek, Latin and Armenian versions of *Mart. Pion.*, but are totally missing from the Old-Slavonic (Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 54-5).

gesture of "stretching forth his hand" with φαιδρῷ τῷ προσώπῳ (4:1)[39] by the martyrologist.[40] This oration is told to us ἀπελογήσατο (4:1), that is "en ces terms,"[41] and encompasses twenty verses from 4:2-22.

This oration is predominantly written in the first person singular and has Pionius speaking to a crowd of "Greeks, Jews, and women" (3:6), though he only addresses the Greeks and Jews. Historically speaking, this Jewish community was well known, including their potentially volatile relationship of persecution between them, the Romans, and the Christians.[42] Pionius knows of the Jewish and Greek sacred texts and employs rhetoric from the *Od.* and the Hebraic scriptures including the stories of Solomon, of Moses, and of Samuel, recalls the images of Sodom and Gommorah, the golden idol, and Beelphagor, and directly references *Judg, Exod, Esth, 1-2Kgs* and *Ps*.[43] Similarly, he employs the political language of the Greeks when he gives Smyrna the epithet of beauty, and acknowledges those who live "by the river of Meles" (4:2) on the border of Smyrna.[44]

Therefore, in his conclusion, Pionius declares that he and his companions are refusing to offer a sacrifice because they "do not worship [their] gods, nor will [they]

---

[39] "le visage radieux" (4:1); See Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 34.

[40] Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 94.

[41] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 34.

[42] Marcel Simon details this relationship, *Verus Israël: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135-425)* (trans. H. McKeating; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), especially 135-78.

[43] All of these images will be discussed in greater detail below, i.e., "Chapter III: Writing with the Voice: The Influence of Textual Orations."

[44] See Robert, *Martyre de Pionios,* 56-7 for a discussion of the terms beauty and the river, and 4-6 for the beauty of Smyrna; also see Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna,* 171-4 and Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians,* 474.

adore the golden idol" (4:22).[45] This declaration is despite the authorities' persistent interrogations, threats, and the later supplications by Pionius' advocates that they conform to the decree.[46] An example of this is the dialogue between a lawyer named Alexander and Pionius (6:1-5). The author states that Pionius is able to silence the wicked lawyer, even though Alexander seems to have the final words in this scene, "What use is all this talk of yours, when it is impossible for you to live?" (6:5). This statement sets a more aggressive tone for the antagonist's comments for the remainder of the narrative,[47] and this does not silence Pionius since he will continue to debate and will give another, much longer, oration. The result is that Pionius and his companions, following an interrogation by Polemon, "for the sake of the record," are brought to prison to await the arrival of the proconsul (9:1).

During this interrogation, Polemon asks Pionius, Sabina, and Asclepiades very similar questions and they provide similar responses. The second person to be interrogated is Sabina, though the author here recounts a scene where Pionius insists that Sabina lie and say that her name is Theodotê, so that she is not returned to the brothel of Pollita, her former mistress. Robert notes that both C. P. Jones and Lane Fox briefly comment about Sabina and her mistress (Flavia) Politta.[48] Yet, none of these scholars

---

[45] This quotation is emphasised by the editor's assertion that Pionius' himself repeats it, following his silencing of the crowd, the temple verger, and his attendants (*Mart. Pion.* 5:1-2).

[46] *Mart. Pion.* 5:3. Here is the author's first instance of foreshadowing of Pionius' martyrdom by having members of the crowd, and later Polemon pleading with Pionius to change his mind because he deserves to live (see also *Mart. Pion.* 6:5).

[47] E.g., *Mart. Pion.* 7:3-6, 18:3, and 18:8.

[48] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 71, Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 463-5 and C. P. Jones, "Flavia Politta and Manilius Fuscus, *CP* 84.2 (1989): 129-36.

addresses the fact that though Sabina's name has been changed, "for the record" (9:1), it is not maintained in the text proper. That is, she is never called Theodotê again.[49]

While Pionius and his two companions are on their way to prison, the author presents Asclepiades as (potentially) having offered sacrifice in the market place. "Someone else said: 'Why look, the little fellow's going off to sacrifice!' He was referring to Asclepiades who was with us. Pionius said: 'You lie; he is doing no such thing. Still others said: But this one and that one have offered sacrifice'" (10:5-6). Of note is the author's ambiguous gesture towards any individual with the comment of "this one and that one." This, indeed, allows for the assumption of Asclepiades (and potentially even Sabina) as having offered sacrifices, though later in the narrative at 18:6-9, antagonists from the crowd challenge both Sabina and Asclepiades.

Lane Fox, as previously noted, denies the possibility that this *us* would hold the implication of the Christian community, but positions it as an insider's perspective and "refers to Sabina and Pionius only."[50] Similarly, Robert argues that the personal tone as found in σὺν ἡμῖν which must be from Pionius' original writings; thus, "[c]'est une indication bien précise, et je ne puis affaiblir la valeur de cet ἡμῖν [us]."[51] At the very least, the editor throughout *Mart. Pion.* has "relegated the first-person voice to the dialogue and speeches in the text, rewriting the text in a third-person voice. Nevertheless,

---

[49] One might speculate that this is because the editor is attempting to compile two accounts of Pionius' martyrdom: one that is a "record," which names a women Theodotê and not Sabina, and another which only has the name Sabina.

[50] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 471.

[51] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 73.

occasionally the point of view of the narrative shifts, fleetingly returning the perspective to the Smyrnean presbyter."[52]

This section of text reflects the realm of the political, including the structuring of the religious frame of reference. This refusal to sacrifice is on two grounds: moral and theological. These levels are not only unique to the individual, but also need to be adhered to by the community. Pionius is the example and here is advocating proper actions. He does state, however, that his actions are his own and that Asclepiades is able to make his own decisions concerning his relationship with the *eschaton*, but that he will not succumb.

While in prison Pagans and Christians came to sway them, i.e., Pionius, his companions, Limnus, a Macedonian woman[53], and Eutychian,[54] but "they were surprised to hear the answers they gave" (12:1). Perhaps ironically, the gender of Pionius and his companions who are within the prison is identical to that of those coming in: two males and a single female. According to Robert, Delehaye is correct to point out that the mention of these heretical martyrs is proof of the authenticity of this text, because the Church did not accept them.[55] There were also Christians, (perhaps) taken captive for similar reasons to Pionius, who cried out in grief. Now, Pionius, not being persuaded by the Pagans and Christians to go sacrifice, is influenced to give his second speech, directed towards Christians (and perhaps Jews).[56] He tells them how to compose themselves.

---

[52] Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 93.

[53] See Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 468 for a discussion of this Macedonian woman.

[54] *Mart. Pion.* 11:2.

[55] See Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 75; and Delehaye, *Passions des martyrs*, 29.

[56] This second speech is much longer, comprised of 12:3-14:16.

This speech is much longer and more emotionally charged and has been called "a passionate sermon."[57] Indeed, it begins with Pionius weeping and saying,

> I am tormented anew, and I am torn limb from limb, when I see the pearls of the Church being trampled by swine, the stars of heaven being swept down to earth by the dragon's tail, and the vine which the right hand of God planted being ravaged by the solitary wild boar, so that all those who pass by on the road may pluck its fruit (12:3).

In this speech Pionius addresses other Christians who had succumbed to the pressure of the Romans and sacrificed against their will (12)[58] and those who have converted to Judaism, a rival faith (13 and 14).[59] According to Hilhorst, "[c]e discours se divise en trios parties. D'abord c'est un veritable centon de texts bibliques, empruntés pêlemêle à l'Ancien et au Nouveau Testament, qui expriment la desolation de l'orateur, puis accablent de reproches."[60]

The next two chapters, 15 and 16, show "Pionius stressing his preference for the normal and correct proceedings."[61] Here in chapter 15 we are told that two men, Polemon and Theophilus, approached the Christians. Polemon is called the "Temple verger," though we are not told explicitly which temple he represents. He might have been from the temple Nemesis, den Boeft and Bremmer write, "[a]lthough his function, neokoros, is given, it unfortunately is not stated to which temple he was attached."[62] Polemon came to the prison with Theophilus (a cavalry commander) and taunted them, saying "Look,

---

[57] See Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 471.

[58] See also Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna*, 389, who speaks about "Christians who had submitted to violence" and thereby sacrificed to protect themselves.

[59] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 77.

[60] Hilhorst, "L'Ancien Testament," 93, my translation.

[61] den Boeft and Bremmer, "NM III," 124.

[62] den Boeft and Bremmer, *ibid.*, 118.

Eutemon, one of your leaders offered sacrifice. So should you too be persuaded" (15:2). Both Theophilus and Polemon "belonged to the upper-class of Smyrna. Polemon was most likely a descendant of a king of Pontus and the famous sophist Polemon from Hadrianic times."[63] Pionius responds to him, not even addressing his comments, but instead he would like to know where the proconsul is and encourages them not to worry about who is sacrificing but to bring him there (15:3).

Next there is a physical altercation when Theophilus is challenged by Pionius. The commander, attempting to impose his authority over Pionius, declares that he is in charge and "[t]hen taking hold of Pionius he knotted a scarf around his neck so that he was practically choking, and handed him over to one of the soldiers" (15:6). What is interesting is that the chains that Pionius had previously worn are not there anymore, because if they were one might assume that the proconsul would have simply grabbed it. Similarly, there must be significance to the choking. Also the audience is not told of any physical torture being inflicted upon Sabina (who is singled out) and the others. Their response is to prostrate themselves on the ground and yell, "[w]e are Christians" (15:7). The physical altercation between Pionius and the (six)[64] soldiers seems to continue with him having to be carried with his "head downwards, since they were unable otherwise to prevent him from butting them in the side with his knees and interfering with their arms and legs. They carried him shouting and threw him down in front of the altar beside which Euctemon was still standing in an attitude of worship" (15:7-16:1).

---

[63] den Boeft and Bremmer, *ibid.*, 118.

[64] See Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 42.

Pionius is questioned further by Lepidus,[65] who asks whom he worships. Pionius' response is "The God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them" (16:3b). Lepidus connects this God with "the one who was crucified." This is interesting because Pionius does not use Jesus' name, or Christ for that matter, yet Lepidus makes this connection easily. There is a sense, then, that the author understands that Christians, indeed Pionius, are being punished for their disobedience to the laws. Now Lepidus is going against the laws (of the decree) since he is not punishing Pionius and his companions for being Christians but is rather attempting to persuade them to sacrifice. This therefore shows Lepidus' reluctance to punish and kill someone for not sacrificing.

Abruptly, the narrative shifts to the arrival of the proconsul to Smyrna, and Pionius alone will be the focus of the narrative (19:1). The structure of *Mart. Pion.* "can be divided into two parts" with "[b]oth halves end[ing] with an official interrogation"[66] (i.e., 9.1 and 19.1), taken down by "stenographers [who are] present at the hearings."[67] Within the account of the first interrogation with Polemon the stenographer is called a νοτάριος, which "was simply taken over from Latin, *notarius*."[68] The interrogation at 19:1 is held on "le 4 avant les ides de mars" or "the twelfth of March with the minutes being taken down by secretaries" (19:1). The tense of "being taken down" indicates that this section of text is being recopied from the official minutes. Similarly, the lack of editorial comments about Pionius' or his companions' stature emphasizes this.

---

[65] Though Lepidus' title is not given Robert argues that from 16:2 one can assume that he is a magistrate of the city (*Martyre de Pionios*, 92).

[66] den Boeft and Bremmer, "NM III," 120.

[67] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 36.

[68] Bowersock, *ibid.*, 37.

Quintillian, like the other Roman officials, attempts to persuade Pionius into sacrificing, using oral rhetoric and physical tortures. Pionius does not succumb and is sentenced to die by being burnt alive in the amphitheatre. From this narrative, however, he does not suffer with his companions,[69] but with an outsider Meterodorus, a Marcionite priest. The on-lookers witnessed Pionius' "great combat" in the amphitheatre, in which Pionius is victorious (22: 1), since he received "his crown [...] through his body" because his body was not mutilated.[70] The result is that those who had missed the mark returned to the Christian faith because of the potential consequences in the afterlife.

I.2 Textual Traditions

Scholars generally assume that the original version of *Mart. Pion.* was written in Greek[71] and is the source of the other translations and stories about Pionius;[72] therefore, I shall assume, following especially Robert, that *Mart. Pion.* is similar to the original.[73] The primary witness to the Greek tradition dates to approximately the twelfth century and is corroborated "by earlier versions: an Armenian translation which was made in the 430s, a Latin one which is known in fragments dating form the eighth century and a Slavonic translation which were known in a late-eleventh-century copy."[74] Thus, my assumption, following Robert and Lane Fox, is that the original text was composed in Greek and shortly after Pionius' martyrdom (c. 250 C.E.) in Smyrna.

---

[69] Pionius' companions are last mentioned five chapters earlier at 18:7 and 9.

[70] This recalls the crown that Pionius and his companions would not accept from 18:4.

[71] See Robert, *Martyre de Pionios,* 11-13; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 460.

[72] The information regarding which scholar advocates for the Greek translation is found in the "I.3 Literature Review" below.

[73] See Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 1-2.

[74] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 460.

I.3 Literature Review

Scholars of early Christian martyria frequently overlook *Mart. Pion.*, tending to focus on other *martyria*. This is not to say that this text has been completely ignored—it has not been—but rather that there is only the single sustained commentary by Robert on *Mart. Pion.* (in French). Other martyrdom accounts, especially *Mart. Poli.*, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, and *The Martyrdom of Lyons and Vienne*, have been studied far more extensively.[75] Furthermore, when scholars have treated various themes found in *Mart. Pion.*, including martyrdom or anti-Judaism, they use it merely as a supportive example to a larger argument.[76]

Robert has stated that *Mart. Pion.* has been neglected and should not be because it is extremely crucial for understanding the topographical description of Smyrna in the

---

[75] There are many examples of monographs and articles dedicated to each of these texts, including but not limited to Boudewijn Dehanschutter's work *Martyrium Polycarpi: een literair-kritische studie* (Leuven: University Press & Peeters, 1979), Regis Burnet's *Epitres et lettres, I et II siecle: de Paul de Tarse à Polycarp de Smyrne* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, "Lectio Divina, 192," 2003), and William R. Schoedel's commentary *Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragments of Papias* (Camden, N.J., 1967) concerning *The Martrydom of Polycarp*. There is the critical translation of *The Passion of Felicity and Perpetua* by Jacqueline Amat titled *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité; suivi des Actes* (Paris: Les editions Cerf, 1996), along with many articles including W. Tabbernee's "Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian ministry in Carthage c. 203 C.E." (*PRSt* 32.4 (2005): 421-44) and C. Merten's "Les premiers martyrs et leurs rêves : cohésion de l'histoire et des rêves dans quelques 'Passions' latines de l'Afrique du Nord" (*RHE* 81 (1986): 5-46). Finally, the articles of R. Preux "Réflexions sur l'histoire des communatés chrétiennes de Lyon et de Vienne au second siècle" (*MScRel* 23e annee, Supplement (1966): 3-6) and M. Colardelle's "Églises et sépultures dans les Alpes du Nord (Aoste, Genève, Grenoble, Lyon et Vienne)," in *Actes du XIe Congrès International d'Archéologigie Chrétienne, 2.* (Rome: École Française. [S.1]: Pontifico Ist di Archeologia Chr, (1989), 1535-49) concerning *The Martyrdom of Lyon and Vienne.*

[76] A fine example of this is Donald W. Riddle's use of Pionius as a supplementary example, only mentioning him twice throughout his book *The Martyrs: A Study in Social Control* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931). The first instance, in a single sentence, states "Pionius and his associates met their prison experiences with continued glorias" (Riddle, *The Martyrs*, 48). And the second lists *Mart. Pion.* 9 among six other martyrdom accounts in a footnote emphasizing the martyrs' Christian faith (Riddle, *The Martyrs*, 57). Similarly, Delehaye addresses *Mart. Pion.* directly for only six pages, with the other seven references being tangential in *Passions des martyrs*. Conversely, he focuses on Polycarp directly for almost thirty pages, and Felicity and Perpetua for twenty-one pages. E. Leigh Gibson in "Jewish Antagonism or Christian Polemic: The Case of the Martyrdom of Pionius," also addresses this discrepancy noting, "W. H. C. Frend makes only two passing references to Pionius and his companions compared to eighteen references to Polycarp" (*JECS* 9.3 (2001):341).

Imperial era as well as during the Hellenistic era.[77] This includes the description of the sanctuary of Nemesis.[78] Similarly, *Mart. Pion.* explains in great detail the imperial institutions of the Empire and the municipal levels of government.[79] Although these ideas have only been briefly taken up and are yet to be fully explored, I will not be discussing them because of the limits of this project.

This "Literature Review," as previously noted, will treat nine scholars who have discussed *Mart. Pion.* and who have attempted to read it offering either a kind of commentary on the whole text, or a reading of several specific chapters of the text. These readings might be offered in the form of an entire chapter, a large portion of a chapter, or an entire article, and might be used to develop both a dominant theme found in *Mart. Pion.* as well as furthering a reading of the text proper. Because of these restrictions, my literature review will not include scholars who briefly mention *Mart. Pion.* (e.g., Donald Attwater and Cyrilla Wantage),[80] or scholars who have simply recounted it for the purposes of support for a larger argument (e.g., Elizabeth A. Castelli, Chris Huebener, and Robin Darling Yong).[81]

---

[77] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 1.

[78] Robert, *ibid.*

[79] Robert, *ibid.*

[80] Donald Attwater, "St. Pionius: At Smyrna, A.D. 250" in *Martyrs: From St. Stephen to John Tung* (New York: Sheed & Ward Inc., 1957), 30-3; Cyrilla Wantage, "Pionius of Smyrna," *StPatr* X (1967): 281-284.

[81] Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*; Chris Huebner, "Between Victory and Victimhood: Reflections on Culture and Martyrdom," *Direction* 34.2 (2005): 228-40; Robin Darling Young, *In Procession Before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2001).

I.3.1 Hippolyte Delehaye (1966)

Les passions des martyrs et les genre littéraires, by Hippolyte Delehaye, focuses on the stories of martyrs, which are frequently misleadingly labelled as "the acts of the martyrs," with only a few references to martyrdoms. This work is not a complete survey of this genre, but is a treatment of some of the common martyria texts into a classification of their category. Delehaye demonstrates that there are four genres: historical passions; panegyrics of martyrs; artificial martyria; and romantic martyria. Furthermore, he advocates that the martyr as a literary character resembles that of a hero and/or a god from epic poetry.[82]

Here Delehaye, unlike Robert (to be discussed below), is not willing to say which version is the closest to the original. He does insist that there are sections of *Mart. Pion.* (e.g, Chapter 20) in the Greek version that seem to have gaps but that he will nevertheless follow it.[83] When writing of the orations Delehaye notes, as other scholars do as well, that there are two instances where it seems an auto-biographical fragment exists and therefore argues that *Mart. Pion.* was probably written by Pionius himself with a redactor, from the same era as Pionius,[84] adding small sections at the beginning and end of the text.[85]

I.3.2 Herbert Anthony Musurillo (1972)

The Acts of the Christian Martyrs presents a translation of twenty-eight martyrdoms dating from approximately 156 to 324 C.E. Twenty-three of these are deemed reliable,

---

[82] See Delehaye, *Passions des martyrs*, 114-7.

[83] Delehaye, *Passions des martyrs*, 27.

[84] Delehaye, *Passions des martyrs*, 27.

[85] Delehaye, *ibid.*, 30-1.

and of these the remaining three (*Mart. Pion.*, *Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius,* and the *Martyrdom of Marian and James*) are "extremely important and informative."[86] These are chosen from the thirty-three martyria originally published in 1965 by Knopf-Krüger-Ruhbach.[87] The text begins with an introduction that systematically details each martyrium, providing its date, a brief summary of the historical context, the textual genealogy, and a brief, but relevant, bibliography including the manuscripts (MSS) and earlier translations. The texts themselves are provided with the original text, Greek or Latin, on the left-hand side and on the facing side an adequate English translation with ample notes.

That is to say, Musurillo is not providing a commentary on the texts, but simply a peppering of relevant parallels and comparisons. Methodologically, Musurillo advocates that each martyrium should be studied on its own terms (based on the lack of external evidence outside of Eusebius), even though there might be parallels to other texts and martyria. This, therefore, leaves his reader questioning the possible relationships between these texts. Because Musurillo's translations are based on the *coercitio* theory, he surmises that prior to Decius' legal foundation, the persecution against the Christian church was not adequately defined.[88]

Musurillo's reading of *Mart. Pion.* positions the text as being originally written in Greek and "in a style which resembles that of the great *Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne*" and containing an "anti-semitism [which] is much stronger and more rhetorical (**4.** 8-12, **12.** 16) than in either the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* or the *Letter of the*

---

[86] Musurillo, *ACM*, xii.

[87] Musurillo, *ibid.*, xii.

[88] See Musurillo, *ibid.*, lx.

Churches of Lyons and Vienne."[89] Musurillo admits that an adequate dating of this text is burdensome, with many sections not seeming to fit with the reign of Decius, and he therefore laments that "it is unfortunate that it is the only substantial martyrdom that we possess which pretends to date from the period of Decian persecution."[90]

I.3.3 A. Hilhorst (1982)

Hilhorst's article "L'Ancien Testament dans la polémic du martyr Pionius" locates the date of the text as during the persecution of Decius in either 250 or 251.[91] The focus of the article is not the polemic of the entire text of *Mart. Pion.* as the title suggests, but rather simply the polemic of the two orations.

Hilhorst maintains that even though the first speech contains many Jewish themes it, nevertheless, is directed at the Pagans. These themes are employed as a counter attack denouncing the Jews to the Pagans.[92] The second speech, divisible into three, unites the biblical texts from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures to form a speech showing Pionius' disappointment with his audience. The second part of this speech does not attack the Jews, but instead is a judgement against Christians who frequent the Jewish synagogues.[93] The polemic as to why they should not go to the synagogues is based on the Jews' negative beliefs about Jesus; these beliefs, according to Hilhorst, drive the final part of the speech concerning the Witch of Endor (from the *First Book of Samuel*). Pionius' reading of this tale is unique because it positions Satan as playing a trick, which

---

[89] Musurillo, *ibid.*, xxviii-xxix, original bold.

[90] Musurillo, *ibid.*, xxix.

[91] Hilhorst, "L'Ancien Testament," 91.

[92] Hilhorst, *ibid.*, 92.

[93] Hilhorst, *ibid.*, 93.

is unlike other readings from the Talmud, or Josephus, which tend to either exemplify power or at the very least prove that necromancy is possible.[94] In each instance, Hilhorst is positioning Pionius' polemic as anti-Judaic and as being employed in order to gain Pagan converts to Christianity rather than to Judaism.

I.3.4 Jan den Boeft and Jan Bremmer (1985)

Both Jan den Boeft and Jan Bremmer were working on a series of articles for *Vigiliae Christianae* treating many of the *Acta Martyrium*. They employed, as I have here in this thesis, Musurillo's *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* as their primary source for martyria. These articles presented some critical notes concerning "some problems and passages which in [their] view deserve closer attention."[95] Den Boeft and Bremmer investigate *Mart. Pion.* directly in "Notiunculae Martyrologicae III."[96] They critically assess four specific sections: the introductory statement at 1:1, the repetition of εἶδεν at 2.2, the final section of the first oration 4:17-23, and broadly assess chapters 13, 15, 17, and 23.[97] In each section den Boeft and Bremmer evenly treat all of the sources in many languages (e.g. French, German, Slavic, Latin, and English to name only a few), which are available to them for their investigation of *Mart. Pion.* They do well also to utilize other Christian and Roman sources in their critical notes when assessing translations and/or parallels.

---

[94] Hilhorst, *ibid.*, 94-5.

[95] Jan den Boeft and Jan Bremmer, "Notiunculae Martyrologicae" *VC* 35.1 (1981): 43.

[96] den Boeft and Bremmer, "NM III."

[97] No indication is given by den Boeft and Bremmer as to why they have chosen to focus their attention on these specific sections of *Mart. Pion.*

I.3.5 Robin Lane Fox (1988)

According to Lane Fox, "[i]f carefully analysed, it [*Mart. Pion.*] shows us a martyr in the making, his ideals, his views of pagan culture, the great city of Smyrna, its sophists and its Jews."[98] For Lane Fox, in every instance where paganism was deemed traditional and held inclusive understandings of people and their backgrounds, Christianity is juxtaposed as being exclusive and unique. The chapter of most interest to us is the ninth, "Persecution and Martyrdom," focusing on the psychology and protocols of martyrdom.[99] Within this chapter there is a commentary on *Mart. Pion.*, which he calls "our single narrative of life in a great Ionian city in the mid-third century."[100] Unfortunately, Lane Fox's readings combine the various versions of the text to fit his reading of the city and not the text. Similarly, he presents newly discovered inscriptions on buildings and coins to authenticate the events found in *Mart. Pion.* to the reign of Decius. Thus, his readings juxtapose the Roman culture and Christianity rather than allowing them to build together or allow Roman culture to be the background.

I.3.6 Jan den Boeft (1989)

In a poorly titled article, "Are you their teacher? (*Mart. Pionii* 19.6)," den Boeft discusses the title of "teacher" (διδάσκαλος), "the Greek rendering of rabbi,"[101] within the context of several martyrdoms including Polycarp's, Justin's, Agape's, Perpetua's, and Pionius'. It is poorly titled because it is not dedicated to *Mart. Pion.* as one might assume

---

[98] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 460.

[99] Lane Fox, *ibid.*, 419-91.

[100] Lane Fox, *ibid.*, 472.

[101] Jan den Boeft, "Are you their teacher? (*Mart. Pionii* 19.6)" *StPatr* 21 (1989): 60.

from the title, but only directly addresses *Mart. Pion.* for less than one-fifth (a single page) of the article. This article, however, does point out that the Greeks did not recognize teachers since they did not "teach" others.[102] Conversely, this title was given to some of the early Christians who were persecuted in the second century (e.g., Justin),[103] and other martyrs (e.g., Agape and her friends) were questioned explicitly about the teachings they had received as well as the texts (books and parchments).[104] Finally, when den Boeft addresses *Mart. Pion.*, he advocates that it "testifies to the widespread of the effects of the Decian persecution half-way through the third century" and that it is a "memorandum written by the martyr himself".[105] Den Boeft positions Pionius as a teacher on the basis of the title of presbyter as well as his confirmation of teaching piety at *Mart. Pion.* 19:5-8.

I.3.7 Louis Robert (1994)

Glen Bowersock and Christopher Jones, following Robert's death in 1985, completed his work on Pionius. Jeanne Robert, Robert's wife, entrusted his "vast and wide-ranging" files on Pionius to them and they "edited them and supplemented them in French so as to incorporate, whenever possible his own words."[106] They do on occasion, however, offer some more recent suggestions about problematic sections of the text and fill in the gaps of Robert's argument by adding further notes, which is not directly indicated, but are only evident from the bibliographic references.

---

[102] den Boeft, *ibid.*, 61.

[103] den Boeft, *ibid.*, 62.

[104] den Boeft, *ibid.*, 63.

[105] den Boeft, *ibid.*, 64.

[106] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios,* xiii.

The thrust of Robert's work is to authenticate *Mart. Pion.* and locate it in the time of Decius' persecution (250 C.E.). He does so by analyzing the setting and historical details provided in the narrative. Robert also points out many of the controversial problems of meaning of Greek terms and how they were (or might have been) used (e.g., 2:2 &3 εἶδεν; 4.2 ἀπελογήσατο; and 15:6 διωγμίτῃ). Therefore, Robert's text provides a complete reading of both the text *Mart. Pion.* and Smyrna.

I.3.8 Glen Bowersock (1995)

Martyrdom and Rome was originally given as a series of lectures at Queen's University, Belfast, in May 1993. The first chapter, "The Making of Martyrdom," is definitional and locates the notion of martyr in the context of early Christianity and not necessarily Jewish or Graeco-Roman, even though he addresses such potential martyrs as found in Maccabees, or Socrates.[107] His argument is on the basis that the Greek term "martyr" did not include the idea of dying for a cause until its materialization in the *Mart. Poli.*[108] Thus, Bowersock claims "the concept of martyrdom was constructed by Christians in the hundred years or so between about 50 and 150, and the word adapted in the second half of that period."[109] Essentially, Bowersock is positioning martyrdom as being popular because of the public's draw towards spectacles (i.e., blood entertainment). The next chapter details literary and documentary sources of martyria. These forms included the topics of editorial emphasis (techniques and priorities) and oral traditions. The point is to differentiate the texts which are "potentially important documents for the taste and nature

---

[107] See Appendix 1 "Protomartyr," *Martyrdom and Rome*, 75-6.

[108] See Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 13-9.

[109] Bowersock, *ibid.*, 13.

of Christianity when Rome still had its empire and empowered its far-flung bureaucracy to process recalcitrant Christians within the legal system of the age."[110] Specifically throughout this chapter, as well as "Appendix 4," Bowersock employs the martyrdoms of Pionius, Perpetua and the Martyrdoms at Lyon as his prime examples. This is because they all "contain much authentic material excerpted and included by the redactors, if occasionally supplemented or altered."[111] Chapter 3 "The Civic Role of Martyrs" points out how the spectacle of martyrdom was of the utmost importance for the spread of Christianity in the pre-Constantinian church. Finally, Chapter 4 broaches the discussion of suicide and martyrdom. His argument is that "without the glorification of suicide in the Roman tradition, the development of martyrdom in the second and third centuries would have been unthinkable" because "both Greek and Jewish traditions stood against [voluntary martyrs]."[112]

I.3.9 E. Leigh Gibson (2001)

Gibson's article, like Hilhorst's, addresses Pionius' polemic in *Mart. Pion.* and focuses on the two orations. Her reading differs as she continually declares that a diligent scholar must question the readings posited by other scholars concerning this text.[113] These questions must encompass not only Pionius' polemic within the two speeches, but also the authenticity of authorship, as well as dating. There is no direct result provided by Gibson concerning any of these questions, although they do allow for several potentially fruitful areas of exploration to be addressed later in chapters III and IV of this thesis.

---

[110] Bowersock, *ibid.*, 25.

[111] Bowersock, *ibid.*, 26.

[112] Bowersock, *ibid.*, 72-3.

[113] Gibson, "Jewish Antagonism," 339-43.

I.4 Thesis Structure and Methodology

Having established the skeleton of the text proper and of my key topics, I will shift my attention towards the ethical and political implications of martyrdom, in "Chapter II: Testifying to Remember: To (Re)Write Textually." This chapter will introduce Christian martyrdom, specifically addressing the reign of Decius, and will present some of the dominant scholarly discussions. The goal is to define martyrdom and show Pionius as a martyr in *Mart. Pion.* and will only briefly discuss his companions as potential martyrs. This discussion will support my evaluation of the character Pionius found in Chapter III.

To discuss Pionius' two orations adequately in "Chapter III: Writing with the Voice: The Influence of Textual Orations," I will begin by briefly reviewing some of the scholarly understandings of the Jewish, Christian, and Pagan communities. A detailed reading of *Mart. Pion.*, including the interrogations and conversations of Pionius and his companions with their antagonists and Pionius' orations, will follow this, where an assessment will be made of the relationship of these communities and how they interacted. The goal is to establish the relationship of these communities from within the text without using the, perhaps tainted, assumptions of scholars.

Building on and from the definitions of martyrdom, from Chapter II, and of community and individual interrelations from Chapter III, "Chapter IV: Constructing Ethics Political Decrees and Being a Martyr" investigates what is being constructed in the written text concerning other communities (e.g., Romans, Jews, women, and other Christians). The goal of Chapter IV is to detail the function of the martyr's body with respect to several key elements of martyrdom, wherein each of these elements promotes an individual and cultural memory concerning the 'proper' bodily actions, before and

during the act of being martyred. Finally, I will suggest the implications of such a reading and the possibilities for future readings of *Mart. Pion.* and other martyria.

CHAPTER II:
TESTIFYING TO REMEMBER: TO (RE)WRITE TEXTUALLY

The actions of a martyr hold a great deal of authority. These actions are important not only to the individual who is being martyred, as they frequently relate to the eschaton questions, but also are exemplary to others in the martyr's community. Thus, these actions are taken up and adapted by those who hold a similar belief system. In this Chapter, I begin by reviewing scholarship on Christian martyrdom specifically relating to the reign of Decius. Again, this reign was chosen as a focus, since it is generally accepted by scholars that *Mart. Pion.* was composed during this Emperor's reign.[114] Using this information with highlighted information from other times of persecution, I show that martyrdom is an act of testimony, as its etymology stresses, that results in punishment (torture and suffering) for the martyr. The goal of this punishment, for the Romans, is not to kill the individual but instead to exert power upon the individual by forcing apostasy and thereby perpetuating power. It is only when the martyr will not change his or her moral ideas and conform to this ruling authority that he or she is killed. The martyr's non-conformity is based on his or her understandings of the body's relationship to its contemporary world and its relationship to the eschaton. Here I show that the spiritual body of the martyr becomes purified through the act of dying for his or her theological beliefs and this act is the example for other followers in their community. This will be addressed in the section titled "II.2 Defining Martyrdom." Having addressed some of the key areas of persecution relating to Decius and having created a working definition of martyrdom I will shift my discussion to addressing "II.3 Pionius as Martyr." This

[114] See footnote 11 above.

analysis focuses on examining how the text presents Pionius as a martyr whose actions and directions to others are located in the martyr's body. In addition to this, I look at how a martyr's actions affect others in the community.

II.1 Christian Persecution during the Reign of Decius

Persecution against the Christians prior to Decius' edict in the fall of 249 is limited to three concentrated acts. They are the "'new edicts' in Asia in 170's, a 'decree of the Senate' in the 180s and an alleged order against Church leaders from the Emperor Maximin in the mid-230s."[115] The first instance of Christians being killed as martyrs was in 180 in Africa.[116] Christians were not an isolated part of society in the Roman Empire, but instead they varied in age and class and were located throughout the cities and the countryside.[117] Their persecution and eventual martyrdom has been studied extensively, with some scholars suggesting that there were few martyrs and others suggesting there were many.[118] There also have been many opposing understandings of the ecclesiastical and political beliefs, which may or may not have been the basis for these persecutions.[119] Frend argues that there were only a few persecutions, that is to say "the total *recorded* 'incidents' in the whole Empire for two generations may be counted on the fingers of one

---

[115] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 422-3.

[116] Lane Fox, *ibid.*, 434.

[117] Pliny, *Ep.*, 10.96 and Tertullian, *Apol.*, 37.4 indicate that Christians can be found everywhere in Carthage, including the senate and the imperial palace. Within these two places, it is unlikely that the Christians were of rank, but instead were probably civil servants at best and slaves at worst.

[118] Examples of such include: Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*; Lane Fox's work, *Pagans and Christians*; Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire: (A.D. 100-400)* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984); and Ramsay MacMullen and Eugene N. Lane, eds., *Paganism and Christianity, 100-425 C.E.: A Sourcebook* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

[119] See Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, x; A. N. Sherwin-White, "The Early Persecution and Roman Law Again" *JTS* 3 (1952): 199-213; and "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted? –An Amendment" *Past and Present* 27 (1964): 23-7.

hand."[120] Yet, the actual incidents as found in the Christian texts do not provide historians with a clear picture of the trials or the numbers of those who were persecuted. This is because the accounts of martyrdom are not corroborated externally and lack any evidence that would authenticate either the events or the persons being portrayed in the author's world. This world is not entirely fictitious, but is significant sociologically because it presents the author's political and social understandings of the times and allows for a construction of his or her cultural memory.[121] Along these same lines, there is no single interpretation of a text or martyrdom. Even in the case of *Mart. Pion.*, there are many versions in various languages that are read by different people (e.g., Eusebius) who present and emphasize aspects that are relevant to his or her community.

Martyria are essentially hagiography and have the goal of presenting the protagonist as a person of God. Today, however, martyria tend to be understood as implying and/or containing notions of fiction that are uncritically presenting the characters within the text. Perhaps this is because the text narrates the vivid physical punishments of these characters and portrays them and their body in pain, though they are presented as if they do not experience it.[122] That is to say, the martyrs are depicted as being calm during the torture, which is hard to imagine as truth and "the reader is tempted to write off this hagiographic homage."[123] The antagonist, through his or her tyrannical rule, forces the martyr to a position of self-sacrifice for his or her own ideals (which are also communal). The martyr, who is able to endure these battles, is an

---

[120] Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 181, emphasis original.

[121] Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*.

[122] Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[123] Maureen A. Tilley, "The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr," *JAAR* 59.3 (1991), 467.

example for others who might have to endure these same punishments.[124] Examples of punishments are: being able to endure the tortures of crucifixion or being burnt alive, where their bodies do not succumb to any of the signs of abuse. The martyr's body is unharmed and frequently is portrayed as being better than it was during his or her lifetime – this is, as we shall see below, found in the case of Pionius. Therefore, the martyria allowed for potential future martyrs to be able to anticipate not only the punishment and tortures, but also be taught how to correctly respond to questioning.

In the first centuries martyrs and their stories impacted others, though the impact might not have been tremendous and the actual number of martyrdoms might not be what scholars make it out to be. The early Christian martyrdoms may have been the first time that the Pagans were abundantly aware of Christians' presence in the Empire.[125] This martyrological presence was not the primary reason for Christianity's growth, and Christian apologists as well as martyrologists say as much. For instance, *Mart. Poli.* tells of how Polycarp was the twelfth martyr in Smyrna.[126] Later Origen (185-254 C.E.), when denying that Christians were simply a group of rebels, clearly argued that the martyrs were "few" and that they "can easily be numbered."[127] Eusebius also records ninety-one martyrs in Palestine during the ten years of the great persecution.[128] Furthermore, he suggests that for many years in Egypt there were daily martyrdoms, which might have been in the numbers of ten or more, and perhaps in excess of one hundred.[129]

---

[124] See Riddle, *The Martyrs*; especially 53-76.

[125] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 66.

[126] *Mart. Poli.*, 19.

[127] Origen, *Cels.*, 3.8.

[128] R. M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), 5.

[129] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 8.9.3.

Scholarship surrounding the Decree of Decius is also inconsistent, with various scholars presenting differing ideas as to what exactly was going on. Most recently J. B. Rives's article "The Decree of Decius and the Religion of the Empire" provides the clearest explanation of the situation. His method allows for a balanced approach to the political implications of this decree, as seen in his detailing of the four sources used to understand the decree. What is important to note is that none of these sources alone or taken together can provide clear evidence of the actual contents of the decree. Instead they all simply speak of various aspects of the decree, and from this information scholars have attempted to decipher its contents.

II.1.1 Sources for Decius' Decree

As previously stated, four sources, the *libelli*, the Christian writings of Cyprian (d. 258 C.E.) and Eusebius, the *Mart. Pion.*, and the *Sibylline Oracle*, provide scholars with information concerning the Decree of Decius. The libelli are forty-four papyri with "thirty-four from Theadelphia in the Fayum, three from Oxyrhynchus, and the rest from other villages."[130] These libelli show the edict as being generally structured and containing the order that all peoples within the empire shall offer sacrifice to the gods. This model is also seen in two later edicts, during the persecution of Diocletian (i.e., in 304 C.E. and the winter of 305-6 C.E.). Next are the writings of Cyprian and Eusebius' "extensive quotations from two contemporary letters of Dionysius."[131] Cyprian, as discussed below, contends that there was an influx of Christians who sacrificed or who attempted to obtain a certificate stating that they had offered sacrifice.

---

[130] Rives, *ibid.*, 135-6.

[131] Rives, *ibid.*, 136.

The Martyrdom of Pionius does provide some information for this decree; however, as previously noted, scholarship remains divided on the accuracy of its portrayal. Again, this is because Eusebius' writings are considerably different from Pionius' with respect to dating the persecution proper. That is, Eusebius dates *Mart. Pion.* in the reign of Marcus Aurelius.[132] Finally, the *Sibylline Oracle* is not entirely irrelevant when discussing this decree because it speaks of Decius as a ruler (II. 81-8) and of his death (II. 100-2); "although it does mention the decree, it does seem to allude to the persecution of Christians."[133] Thus, this text can be used to provide contextual support to the claims of the other texts.

Christians held the same status and legal position from the reign of Trajan until the reign of Decius.[134] The dating of Decius' decree is generally accepted to be the fall of 249 C.E., with its instructions being directed towards the individuals in the community.[135] The primary component is a sacrifice to the gods or the Emperor as well as the ingestion of the meat coupled with an oath.[136] These sources do not mention the Jews as being required to offer sacrifice, nor do they mention that they attempted to receive exemption in some way; thus, the scholarly consensus is that "the only people likely to have been exempt were the Jews."[137]

---

[132] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 4.15-46-7

[133] Rives, "The Decree," 136.

[134] Barnes, "Legislation," 48.

[135] For a discussion of some of the background of Emperor Decius see Lane Fox, *Pagans and Romans*, 451-3 and D. S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1990), especially 40-6.

[136] This kind of sacrificial testing is not unique to this era but both pre-dates and post-dates the decree of Decius (See G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution," *HTR* 47.2 (1954): 79-81).

[137] Rives, "The Decree," 138.

There is some evidence within the libelli[138] of Christians seeking to obtain certificates indicating they did not have to sacrifice. There is the implication that these certificates were false and being purchased to allow Christians an exemption. These certificates were written by the local magistrates and were everywhere enforced by the commissioners.[139] "Our evidence comes mainly from Africa, Spain and Rome, during the Decian persecution, when certificates of compliance with the imperial order to sacrifice to the gods were purchased wholesale by the less steadfast members of the Christian community."[140] These certificates, however, are not attested in *Mart. Pion.*[141] There is no evidence suggesting Emperor Decius created any "specific measures against the hierarchy or Church property, nor did he forbid Christians from meeting or even practising their rites in prison."[142] Decius seems to have simply required the act of sacrifice. This rings true with the evidence in *Mart. Pion.,* which according to Robert, holds the same circumstances as found in the libelli, that is Polemon's search for Christians at *Mart. Pion.* 3:1.[143]

The goal of the test of sacrifice, found in these sources, was not "to expose Christians but to give those falsely accused of Christianity a chance to clear them in a universally recognized manner."[144] Christians simply needed to offer respect to the Pagan

---

[138] See de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution," 86-9, for a rationalization of the discrepancy in the content of these libelli between the East and the West.

[139] de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution," 97.

[140] de Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians," 17.

[141] de Ste. Croix emphasizes that the presence of the Greek found in Cyprian's *Ep.* 43.3.1 (Carthage) and he alludes the possibility of a relationship to *Mart. Pion.* 3.1 ("Aspects of the 'Great Persecution," 97).

[142] Rives, "The Decree," 142.

[143] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 8.

[144] de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution," 79.

and city gods; they "were told that they were not being asked to give up their own religion, but simply to pay respect to the gods on whom the welfare of the Empire depended."[145] This is evident in the actions of the Roman governors who frequently attempted to compromise with Christians before they sentenced them to death. That is to say, "[i]n their own limited terms, Roman governors often strove for a compromise with the Christians before them. If a Christian refused to eat sacrificial meat, might he not offer a simple pinch of incense? Could he not sacrifice 'at least' to the Emperor, as if the Emperor was not such an intractable divinity?"[146] Furthermore, the act of persecution, including the insistent requests for sacrifice and sensible behaviour (e.g., *Mart. Pion.* 20), reveals the central goal to be a declaration of apostasy.

The magistrates from the various locales were in charge of the proceedings against Christians though "[i]t is not clear whether it also included special provisions concerning the punishment of people who refused to comply."[147] There is evidence from Cyprian and *Mart. Pion.* which clearly identifies the use of physical punishment when a Christian refused to sacrifice (e.g., Cyprian, *Ep.* 38.1,2 and 56.1; and *Mart. Pion.* 19-20).[148]

The implication of physical punishment upon the individual as well as the idea of ingestion emphasize the individualistic components of the decree and could therefore indicate Decius' intentions. This is not to say that there is not an implication for the community as well – there is. This implication stems from the Roman ideas of cult were

---

[145] Frend, "The Failure," 15; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* vii. II. 7.

[146] Lane Fox, *Pagans*, 421.

[147] Rives, "The Decree," 136-8.

[148] Rives, *ibid.*, 137, n. 13.

"by definition collective" and positioned the notion of sacrifice as being "counter to traditional religious organization."[149] There were precedents for the individualistic nature of the cult, but in Decius' decree there is a lack of connection with any important civic event, which is an aspect of its distinctiveness.[150] Similarly, during this time the Christians who were being persecuted "were not to be sought out: 'conquirendi non sunt'" by officials, and those who were being persecuted were turned in by others.[151] It should be noted that it is not until Valerian's (c. 200-260 C.E.) persecution in 257 C.E. that the meeting places (Churches and homes) of Christians began to be actively targeted.[152]

To be clear, the issue of the Christians' failure to sacrifice was pivotal to their problems in the Empire. Because they were not offering a sacrifice to the god(s) they were understood to be atheists. The Christians' God was understood as being unseen and unrepresented, which, when combined with their refusal to sacrifice for the Roman gods, who were visible, meant they were being disrespectful of and dishonouring the divine and the Empire. Therefore, during instances of communal turmoil, famine, drought, and flood, the Christians were an easy scapegoat. An example of this is found in the writings of Tertullian (155-230 C.E.), who represents the Roman beliefs as demonizing Christianity:

> [T]hey think the Christians are the cause of every public disaster, of every affliction with which the people are visited. If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not send its waters up over the fields, if the heavens give no

[149] Rives, *ibid.*, 145.

[150] Rives, *ibid.*, 147.

[151] de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution," 79 as well as de Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early," 15.

[152] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 422.

> rain, if there is an earthquake, if there is famine or pestilence, straightway the cry is, "Away with the Christians to the lion!" What! Shall you give such multitudes to a single beast?[153]

This example shows the execution of Christians as having the power to minimize or even defuse the Pagan community's anger. The Jews who, like the Christians, also held that God was invisible, had previously (before the Temple destruction in 70 C.E.) offered sacrifices that appeased the Emperor. These actions assisted in their relationship with the Pagan communities, since they were not blatantly refusing to acknowledge the Pagan gods. Furthermore, Pagans did not seem to understand the Christians' refusal, based on their (i.e. the Christians') understandings of Christ's sacrifice. Christians argued that Christ's sacrifice had a dual effect: one, it removed the need to offer any further sacrifices and, two, his sacrifice was one which superseded all future sacrifices. That is to say, Jews no longer participated in sacrifices because of their lack of place to do so, since their Temple was destroyed, but the Christians' abstinence, based on these previous two reasons, angered and insulted the Romans, more specifically the Emperor,[154] because of their sheer disobedience.[155] This focus upon the community of Christians has led many scholars incorrectly to assume Decius' decree to be anti-Christian, yet there is "no compelling reason to see his decree as primarily an anti-Christian measure."[156]

In short, this decree affected the church in various ways. The Church needed to figure out how to deal with the pressure of those who had compromised their faith and apostatized, and those who had purchased a certificate indicating that they had sacrificed

---

[153] Tertullian, *Apol.*, 40.2.

[154] S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 220-1.

[155] Sherwin-White, "An Amendment," 25-6.

[156] Rives, "The Decree," 142.

(*libellatici*). With the death of the bishop in Rome there were issues as to how to deal with this pressure. Cyprian, the bishop who had escaped persecution by flight, positioned lapsed Christians as a pressing issue requiring judgement from the bishops of the church. He went as far as to forbid presbyters from allowing them communion, which denied them forgiveness.[157] Furthermore, Cyprian contested against granting forgiveness to the lapsed that confessed, which then allows them to be readmitted into the community of the church.[158]

II.2 *Defining Martyrdom*

The task of defining the terms martyr and martyrdom is complex, as seen by the various definitions created by scholars over the course of many centuries. Part of this complexity is that many, if not all, cultures from antiquity to today have a slightly different understanding of what it means to be a martyr. Therefore, as Ekkehard Mühlenberg rightly suggests, "[t]here is no lack of scholarship concerning that one word 'martyr' and its derivatives."[159]

This section will begin by presenting a diachronic definition of the term martyr, followed by a discussion of how this word and the derivative martyrdom have been presented historically, with an emphasis being given to Pionius' contemporaries.[160] Here special attention will be given to these two terms, martyr and martyrdom, from a sociological perspective; more specifically, I will look at defining martyrs as a social

---

[157] Cyprian, *Ep. 9.*

[158] Cyprian, *Ep.* 10 and 17.

[159] Ekkehard Mühlenberg, "The Martyr's Death and its Literary Presentation" *StPatr* 29 (1997): 85.

[160] The arguments in my analysis draw heavily from four principal sources: Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*; Perkins, *The Suffering Self*; Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*; and Riddle, *The Martyrs.*

type.[161] In addition to this, I will briefly discuss the relationship of the martyr's body to martyrdom. Indeed, any definition of martyrdom that has been (and perhaps will be) constructed is not static but continually transforms into an interplay between historical and societal contexts. Having created a definitional base, I will address Pionius as a martyr in the following section.

Originally, the term "martyr" first referred to someone who, as a witness, testified in court, "with no expectation of death."[162] This martyr who testified was not (necessarily) under persecution but could simply be offering information for or against someone on trial. Late in the first century C.E., this term began to be linked to an individual who was required, still within the court system, to testify on his or her own behalf concerning their faith, with the understanding that there was a correct answer and that the wrong one could result in his or her physical punishment.[163] This element of physical punishment began to overpower and became the sole focus of the term, with the notions of witness and testimony diminishing and ideas of dying for one's faith superseding them.

---

[161] The term social type was first presented by George Simmel and later developed by George Arditi in "Role as Cultural Concept," *Theory and Society* 16.4 (1987): 565-91 and is in opposition to the idea of social role. A social type assumes an enduring connection between the individual and his or her structural condition. Arditi writes, "[I]n the concept of social type the person is perceived as the possessor of a character. This character is social in the sense that it originated because of structural arrangement of the society. The person is not an actor, someone 'who comes forward to play certain parts on the stage of society; he or she is 'someone irretrievably within the play.' The character lives within the play, and the play comprises the essence of his or her reality. 'The actor leaves the stage; the character really may not do so. The actor belongs to the same world as the author, and participates in the making of a fiction; the character is in a closed world.' According to the concept of social types we live within one social reality, and this determines to a great extent what we are. The behavior that derives from it is pervasive, permanent" (" Role as Cultural Concept," 572). For a contemporary study, which in part uses the term social type, see Eugine Eriner and Anita Weiner, *The Martyrs Conviction: A Sociological Analysis* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

[162] Allison A. Trites, "Μάρτυς and Martyrdom in the Apocalypse" *NV* 15.1 (1973), 72-3.

[163] Trites, *ibid.*,72-3.

Essentially there are three factors to being a martyr or to martyrdom: holding a clear conviction; the (active or passive) choice of adhering to one's conviction even to the point of suffering; and the suffering (including death). Each of these is not necessarily present, though the martyr is always presented as a person who is from a suppressed group and willingly suffers for his or her group's ethics and traditions rather than renouncing them. Put another way, the martyr sacrifices himself or herself for a social cause.

The texts that use the terms martyr and martyrdom seem to follow this same progression. Scholarly literature tends to disagree about the origin of the term martyr, as well as whether or not the term necessitates the context of Christian theology. Indeed, some scholars insist that the conceptions of martyrdom began in the Pagan texts about Socrates, while others locate it in the religious cultures of Judaism (i.e., pre-Christian). Some argue that though the concept was beginning to be formed in either or both of these times, it was only epitomized in the crucifixion of Jesus and in Christianity.

"Martyrdom," according to Bowersock, "was conceived and devised in response to complex social, religious, and political pressures, and the date and the circumstances of its making are still the subject of lively debate."[164] Huebner theologically positions martyrdom as "an essentially eschatological notion" which he argues is the only way one can read the martyria of Polycarp and Pionius.[165] Using the language of Slavoj Zizek, Huebner argues, "[t]he martyr thus performs a kind of uncoupling, whereby the world as

---

[164] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 5.

[165] Huebner, "Between Victory," 335.

we know it is stripped of its apparent givenness, and strange new possibilities emerge."[166] The paradoxical nature of a martyr is that he or she urges others through their act of suffering (i.e., "the martyr dies and his rule begins").[167]

Persecution is an important trait of the martyr, whether Christian or not. The Christian martyr's ability to endure this persecution and not recant is held to be of importance because he or she is seen as withstanding "not just the actual tortures and bodily punishments of Roman executions in the arena, but also defeat the enemy who is identified with the Devil."[168] This is opposed to the Pagan martyrs who were very rarely "willing to sacrifice their life for religious motives, as Christian and Jewish martyrs did."[169] The deaths of Socrates and other Pagan martyrs (e.g. Achilles, Ajax, and Antigone) are frequently spoken of by scholars (e.g., Droge and Tabor) as an "act resulting from an individual's intentional decision to die, either by his own agency, by another's, or by contriving the circumstances in which death is the known, ineluctable result."[170]

The physical torture inflicted upon the martyr's body "was accepted as a matter of course, whether inflicted in the squalor of the narrow confines of the prison, or before the shouts of the hostile on-lookers in the amphitheatre."[171] This acceptance was not (necessarily) understood by the on-lookers, more specifically the Pagans. Marcus

---

[166] Huebner, "Between Victory," 335; Slavoj Zizek, *The Fragile Absolute: or, Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* (London: Verso, 2000), 123-30.

[167] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, (trans. Alexander Dru; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), 151.

[168] Brent D. Shaw, "Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs," *JECS* 4.3 (1996): 289-90.

[169] See Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 5.

[170] Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 4.

[171] Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 12.

Aurelius, who did find the flamboyant actions of Christians provocative, deemed their actions as futile.[172] The martyr's actions were paralleled with those of athletes and their "martyrdom is likened to a contest."[173] In this contest, the martyrs are depicted as "regain[ing] youth and vigour amid tortures, they resist suffering, they defeat the desperate strength of their executioners, and in the end, by 'sealing their witness' by death gain the crown of immortality."[174] Though the Christian might be paralleled with the gladiator, there are some differences, including the fact that the Christian, unlike the gladiator, would eventually die, while the gladiator rarely died, but conceded.[175] Also the notion of honour for each of these characters originated from various circumstances. For the gladiator, honour came from the crowd because he fought to win his battle, while the Christian, by succumbing to his or her punishment, anticipated the divine honour from God.[176] Therefore, the martyrs show their personal worth in public to their religious community through the actions of their body, which endures this athletic contest.[177]

The Jewish definition of martyrdom, beginning with the Maccabean corpus (specifically found in *2-Macc* 6:18-31 and 7, as well as *4-Macc* 5 and 8), begins with the persecution of Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes' (167-75 B.C.E.). This Maccabean revolt is

---

[172] See Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 11.3. See also Josephus, *Ant.* 18.8.4 and Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 13.

[173] Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 19.

[174] Frend, *ibid.*

[175] See Carlin A. Barton, "Savage Miracles: The Redemption of Lost Honor in Roman Society and the Sacrament of the Gladiator and the Martyr" *Representations* 45 (1994): 41-71.

[176] E.g., *Mart. Poli.* 17.1 and *Mart. Pion.* 7:6 and 18:9-11.

[177] Shaw, "Body/Power/Identity," 278.

essential to addressing martyrdom since it "was the first great revolutionary outbreak against what became the values of the Greco-Roman world."[178]

Maccabees predates the rise of the Christian movements by approximately two centuries and this positions martyrdom in three ways. First, the Maccabean corpus presents martyrdom as individualistic in how someone testifies to the *Torah* and takes a personal stand against "the forces of heathenism."[179] This personal witnessing might involve suffering (and possibly death) on the part of the witness.[180] This witness, however, might not necessarily be testifying in a legal setting of the courts, but on the basis of one's relationship with *Torah* and the divine, they remain a witness to their faith. The second way, which is rooted in the first, "was the hope of personal resurrection [...] and vengeance on apostates and persecuting powers hereafter."[181] Finally, stemming from the previous two is the idea that this personal struggle of testifying and martyrdom is relevant cosmologically, "with the opposition viewed less as human oppressors than as representatives of demonic powers."[182] In each case, these definitions are tied to "an ancient understanding that certain human deaths were sacrificially efficacious" and that they later "provided the content for the Christian understanding of the sacrificial death of Christ to redeem Israel."[183] Indeed, the Christians' soteriological claims were firm and

---

[178] Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, xiii.

[179] Frend, *ibid.*, 34.

[180] Frend, *ibid.*, 34.

[181] Frend, *ibid.*, 34.

[182] Frend, *ibid.*, 34.

[183] Young, *In Procession*, 4-5.

they held a distinct and unique confidence that, through a martyr's death, there would be a reward after death.[184]

This does not mean that Christians were the only persons willing to die for their beliefs, since Socrates and the Maccabees did as well. They were all martyred publicly; their deaths were a spectacle. As a spectacle, the martyr's death was "exceptionally public" because their cultural era "coincided with a particular phase in the history of public entertainment: they were pitched into the cities' arenas for unarmed combat with gladiators or bulls, leopards and the dreaded bears."[185] Because the Christians' deaths were set in the Roman amphitheatre, they were deemed to be political and sociologically based. Since the stadium in Smyrna held as many as 20,000 witnesses to a Christian spectacle, the news of Christianity and its anti-Roman ideas would have begun to spread. Conversely, the Christian martyrs saw this spectacle as a means to declare publicly their faith through the actions of their bodies. Arguably, the stadium might not have been an ideal location for the trial of the martyrs' since, if the community did not approve of the execution, it might cause an uproar and disturb the order of the area. This is emphasized by G. E. M. de Ste. Croix who writes: "It was the provincial governor in each case who played the more significant role [as opposed to the Emperor]—and even his attitude might be less important than what I must call 'public opinion.'"[186] An example of this is found in the writings of Marcus Aurelius (121-180 C.E.). He understood the Christians as individuals who held superstitions that were irrational and were willing to die "from mere obstinacy" (*Med.* 11.3).

---

[184] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 5-16.

[185] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Romans*, 420.

[186] de Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians," 15.

The Christian martyrdoms hold eschatological significance because the martyrs have direct access to Heaven for themselves and the others in their community.[187] Christian writers, like Tertullian, presented them and their martyrdoms eschatologically, emphasizing the individual nature of dying and entering into Heaven. Tertullian writes, "The sole key to unlock Paradise is your own life's blood,"[188] adding that martyrdom was "a second front" which had the ability to remove post-baptismal sin.[189] Hippolytus (170-235 C.E.), a contemporary of Tertullian from Rome, suggests that martyrdom has a cleansing effect upon Christians which will allow them to enter Heaven even if they were not baptised. He writes, "if it should happen that they treat him shamefully and kill him [before his baptism], he will be justified, for he has been baptized in his own blood."[190] Similarly, Origen in his *Mart.* contends,

> It may be that as we have been purchased by *the precious blood* of Jesus who has received *a name above all names*, so some will be ransomed by the precious blood of martyrs; for the martyrs themselves are exalted higher than they would have been if they had been *justified* only and not also become *martyrs*.[191]

In each of these descriptions martyrs transcend nature and abide between the earthly world and Heaven.[192] Other examples of martyrs as having this power come from the inscriptions found on the walls surrounding the graves of martyrs.[193] There the Christian

---

[187] Ideas of such are found in *Rev* 20:4-5.

[188] Tertullian, *An.*, 55 and *Res.*, 43.

[189] Tertullian, *Bapt.*, 16 and *Scorp.*, 6.

[190] Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.*, 19.2.

[191] Origen, *Mart.* 50.

[192] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 445.

[193] Josef A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great*, (trans. Francis A. Brunner, C.SS.R: Notre Dame, India: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 182.

followers petitioned the martyrs to intercede for those who were dead and/or dying to assist in the person's journey in the afterlife.

The visiting of confessors to the martyrs both in prison and to the graves positioned the martyrs in the role of a kind of priest. Hippolytus articulates this role of the martyr: "[o]n a confessor, if he has been in bonds for the name of the Lord, hands shall not be laid for the diaconate or the presbyterate, for he has the honour of the presbyterate by his confession."[194] Confessors, like martyrs, held a kind of access to the divine, though they were not to be understood as the equivalent. This is evident from both Eusebius' *Hist. eccl.* 5.2.2 and *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* 1.3, 2.3.[195] Nevertheless, this does not overturn the hierarchical privilege bestowed upon confessors, who are potential martyrs. Tertullian further explains that there are people who are unable to find comfort within the Church and have sought "it from the imprisoned martyrs. And so you ought to have it dwelling with you, and to cherish it, and guard it, that you may be able perhaps to bestow it upon others."[196] This apologetic literature frequently used Socrates "as an illustrative example of grave injustice done to a wise man; Socrates is even pictured as a forerunner of the Christian martyrs."[197]

Near the end of the second century both the birthdates (*natalicia*) and the date of the martyrdom were celebrated annually;[198] this was done in song[199]. These ceremonies

---

[194] Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.*, 10.1.

[195] Cyprian later in *Ep.* 27 reprimanded this.

[196] Tetullian, *Mart.* 1.

[197] den Boeft and Bremmer, "NM III," 121.

[198] Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 257; Delehaye, *Passions des martyrs*, 11-59; *Mart. Poli.* 18-19; Tertullian, *Cor.*, 3; and hinted at in Mart. Pion. 2:1.

[199] Tertullian, *Scorp.*, 7.

might be held at the burial places of the martyrs.[200] As with the previously mentioned inscriptions that emphasize a proximity to the martyr, there was a significant importance forced upon the physical bones and flesh of the martyrs. This importance began early in the history of martyrdom, and Lane Fox maintains: "The race for bones and skin began early."[201] An example dated to the reign of Theodosius holds that he was strictly opposed to the division and transferring of martyrs' bodies and that they should not be sold for any price.[202] In addition to this example, Ambrose's (d. 397 C.E.) writes of the discovery of the relics of the two saints Protasius and Gervasius (approximately 386 C.E.):

> Why should I use many words? God favored us, for even the clergy were afraid who were bidden to clear away the earth from the spot before the chancel screen of SS. Felix and Nabor. I found the fitting signs, and on bringing in some on whom hands were to be laid, the power of the holy martyrs became so manifest, that even whilst I was still silent, one was seized and thrown prostrate at the holy-burial place. We found two men of marvellous stature, such as those of ancient days. All the bones were perfect, and there was much blood. During the whole of those two days there was an enormous concourse of people. Briefly we arranged the whole in order, and as evening was now coming on transferred them to the basilica of Fausta, where watch was kept during the night, and some received the laying on of hands. On the following day we translated the relics to the basilica called Ambrosian. During the translation a blind man was healed.[203]

By reburying the bones of martyrs, the community of believers was tied with the past and these martyrs, but the bones also held a protective agency that guarded the current community.[204] This quotation is also important because it shows that the power of martyrs in the community did not end in their own community, but transferred and continued well into future centuries, as in the example here. Huebner, a contemporary

---

[200] Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 257-8.

[201] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 446.

[202] *Codex Theodosius* 9.17.7 (in Jungmann, *Early Liturgy*, 185).

[203] Ambrose, *Ep.* 22.2.

[204] Ambrose, *Ep.* 22.10.

theologian, also concludes that martyrdom is "an essentially eschatological notion" and that this is the only way that scholars can read the martyria of Polycarp and Pionius.[205]

The martyr's actions function as a kind of "moral oxymoron" whereby the weak who silently endure are elevated to a superior status.[206] Shaw writes:

> The elevation of prominence of the passive value of merely being able to endure would have struck most persons, certainly all those spectators, as contradictory and, indeed, rather immoral. A value like that cut right across the great divide that marked elite free-status male values and that informed everything about bodily behaviour from individual sexuality to collective warfare: voice, activity, aggression, closure, penetration, and the ability to inflict pain and suffering were lauded as emblematic of freedom, courage, and good. Silence, passivity, submissiveness, openness, suffering –the shame of allowing oneself to be wounded, to be penetrated, and of simply enduring all of that – were castigated as weak, womanish, slavish, and therefore morally bad.[207]

The martyr participates as a social actor in a martyrdom that is both individual and communal. One is a martyr based on his or her conflict with an antagonist who is against the convictions of the martyr and his or her community. The martyr's acceptance of the suffering for the cause promotes the community and the individual and allows for the sufferer to gain power in a blossoming social movement as well as during a moment of social persecution.

The martyr also has the ability to influence the group in which they are a part. As Riddle first observed, the role of the group also held a pivotal role in the continuing motivation of the individual being martyred. Riddle writes,

> It is not to be thought that martyrs in any significant numbers could have undergone their fate if they had been abandoned in it by their fellow Christians. They were able to meet their crises only because they were members of societies

---

[205] Huebner, "Between Victory," 335.

[206] Shaw, "Body/Power/Identity," 279.

[207] Shaw, *ibid.*

> which kept effective influence of their social bonds. That such influence was operative before and during the time of confession, and even after confession had been secured, while the confessor lay in prison or actually, as he fondly supposed, after his faithfulness unto death, accounts for the maintenance of the martyr's courage. In other words he was enabled to emerge through the painful course of punishment because he was one of a number. He was such a person as he proved to be because of group influences, of which for this purpose his Christian fellowship was the most effective. It was because of his integration as one of a group, that he was thus controllable. The essential factor in control was the influence, variously applied of the group.[208]

Martyrs are able to withstand tremendous amounts of pain rather than conform to the tyrannical ruler because they do not want to disappoint their group. Their martyrdom "was outer-directed; it was concerned less with the church as a corporate entity than with the kingdom of God, which is to say that it participated in a kind of expectant, not realized, eschatology."[209] Thus, martyrdom must be defined as the choice of a single individual to succumb to pain and suffering for their group, because they do not suffer alone: their community assists them. This social aspect also reinforces the moral ideals held by both the individual and the community. These are motivating reasons that impact how these groups manage themselves and promote self-determination. This process of self-determination, according to Riddle, includes five components.

The first component relies on the individual to affirm the group's identity by continually choosing and privileging their own group's values and traditions over and above those of the other groups and communities. Next is the preservation and adaptation of norms in relation to the set of circumstances occurring around them. These new norms must then be legitimized. Similarly, the third component allows for the individual to dismiss and/or devalue the threatening acts of the other groups, which allows for the

---

[208] Riddle, *The Martyrs*, 101.

[209] Young, *In Procession*, 11.

fourth component of creating order within the group even though there is change occurring around them. Finally, the process of self-determination must manoeuvre any types of conflict that are due to a lack of articulated structure between one group and the others with which it interacts (e.g., the Christian apologists).[210] The individual martyr essentially claims that he or she chooses not to live if his or her values, instilled from the group, are denied and/or prohibited.

The Christian's martyrdom is a liturgical presentation of his or her faith through the act of vocal and physical confession. Young clearly articulates this, stating that martyrdom "functioned as a public liturgical sacrifice in which the word of Jesus and his kingdom was confessed and acted out, and an offering made that repeated his own. [...] When the Eucharist was still private, not open to non-Christian view, the martyrs' sacrifice was public and dramatic."[211] The martyrs, therefore, nourish "their own communities, who enjoy God's favor and a good fortune in exchange, but for their persecutors as well. This sacrifice yields a large return on the investment, and the benefits are potentially universal as Clement of Alexandria and Origen indicate."[212]

II.3 Pionius as Martyr

Pionius, the protagonist of *Mart. Pion.*, is not only positioned as a man of God, he is also implicitly shown as an example who is worthy of being followed. His story, like that of the apostles and of Jesus, should be imitated. This is not to say that his martyrdom (and death) should be imitated but his actions and diligence to God should be. Thus, those who

---

[210] Riddle, *The Martyrs*.

[211] Young, *In Procession*, 11-2.

[212] Young, *ibid.*, 9.

read the account of Pionius are encouraged to emulate his actions, even to the point of death.[213]

Indeed, Pionius is martyred for his beliefs. He is questioned "for the sake of the record" (9:1) twice (chapter 9 and 19) concerning his identity. Having (incorrectly) responded to these interrogations, Pionius is tortured and repeatedly told that if he will "change [his] mind and the nails will be taken out" (20:3). Enduring this torture shows Pionius holding an active conviction and choosing to keep it even despite his physical suffering. Instances of this are found when Pionius is being chocked with a scarf and, instead of succumbing, shouts "We are Christians!" (15:7); when Pionius is challenged by Polemon to sacrifice while "hanging in torture" and being "tortured by his fingernails" (20:1 & 2 respectively); and in the comments after Pionius is nailed on to the gibbet by the public executioner (21:6-8).

The Martyrdom of Pionius tells of many of the antagonists attempting to persuade Pionius to sacrifice, because others from his community have done so (e.g., Alexander 6, Rufinus 17, and later the proconsul Quintillian 20). The text, however, is clear that Pionius' actions are his own and that though they are a part of his faith he will not do so. A clear example of this is found in chapter 10.

> Someone else said, "Why look, the little fellow's going off to sacrifice!" He was referring to Asclepiades who was with us."
> Pionius said: "You lie, he is doing no such thing."
> Still others said: "But this one and that one have offered sacrifice."
> Pionius said: "Each man has his own life to lead. This has nothing to do with me. My name is Pionius" (10:5-6).

---

[213] See *Mart. Pion.* 1.

This occurs when Asclepiades is accused of sacrificing. Pionius' response is descriptive of his ethical understandings of the self in relation to God as well as to his or her community. This also reflects the realm of the political, including the structuring of the religious frame of reference. This refusal to sacrifice contains two levels: moral and theological. These levels are not only unique to Pionius, as an individual, but should be adhered to communally. Pionius is presented as the example and is the character who is advocating correct actions, though his actions remain individualized. That is to say, Pionius' character says that Asclepiades is able to make his own decisions concerning sacrificing as well as his relationship with the eschaton, but that Pionius himself will not succumb to the reigning officials; he is who he is. What is important to note is that even though Pionius' actions are clearly individual, the text proper contends that his actions and words as presented in *Mart. Pion.* are instructive to the community "as a memorial of his teaching" (1:2).

Pionius is not being tortured for any other reason than for his beliefs as a Christian. These beliefs will not allow him to offer a sacrifice to the Emperor (or any other deity). Indeed, Pionius' character actively pursues his martyrdom when challenging Polemon: "You have been ordered either to persuade us or to punish us. You are not persuading us. So, inflict punishment" (8:1). Had Pionius denied his faith, yielded to the pressure, and sacrificed, to anything, this martyrium would no longer be of worth to his community. This is because the text would no longer show the proper conduct of a Christian and of a martyr. Thus, the martyriologist truly identifies this act of testimony as a means of identification with Christ and other Christians, and fosters a unity within the community that provides support to those who suffer for similar ideals. This fostering of

ideals is a fundamental part of the communal aspect of martyrdom as a liturgical presentation of Pionius' faith.

The tortures of martyrs, as previously stated, are presented as being involved in a contest, and Pionius' character is as well. He is crowned and achieves his own victory. The martyrologist writes, "After his victory in the great combat he passed through the narrow gate into the broad, great light. Indeed his crown was made manifest through his body [...] to us who were present saw his body like that of an athlete in full array" (22:2-3). Pionius and his companions are crowned earlier in the text (18:3-6). They did not accept these crowns but "tore them apart and threw them away" (18:4). Perhaps this is because they had not yet been to battle. Asclepiades is also implicated in a battle as a potential martyr. He is antagonised by Terentius, who is "in charge of the gladiatorial games": "[a]fter your condemnation I shall ask for you to compete in single combat with my son" (18:8-9). The inclusion of this challenge is curious because earlier at 10:5, Asclepiades is said to have offered sacrifice and, therefore, should no longer be at risk of punishment.[214] Sabina, however, is not implicated in any battles in the text, though other (potential) female martyrs are not excluded from this in their martyria.[215]

Finally, *Mart. Pion.* clearly illustrates the five components of Riddle's self-determination, described above. Pionius is an individual who chooses to act on his beliefs because he understands them to be superior to those of the edict and the empire. Pionius also emphasizes his traditions through his incorporation of his companions into the

---

[214] Not a single commentator interprets and/or presents any reasons for this discrepancy. Robert does offer an analysis of the gladiatorial games in his commentary and makes reference to George Ville, *La gladiature en occident des origines à la morte de domitien* (see *Martyre de Pionios*, 101-2).

[215] See *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*; *Martyrdom of Agapê, Irenê, Chionê, and Companions*; and Blandina in *The Martyrs of Lyons* 18.

narrative as others who are willing to suffer for the same belief systems. An example of this is the placing of woven chains around Sabina's, Asclepiades', and Pionius' necks at 2:3. Next, Pionius and his companions dismiss the taunts of the antagonists since the taunts lack value to them and to their faith. Examples of Pionius' and his companions' dismissals are: Pionius' battle with someone from the crowd, who himself will not be persuaded to Christianity for fear of being burnt alive, provoking Pionius' statement: "[i]t is far worse to burn after death" (7:4); Sabina's laughter and smile (7:4-6); and Asclepiades' statement of "You do not terrify me with this" (18:9). The fourth and fifth components are found in the orations attributed to Pionius. In these orations Pionius speaks to the crowds of people concerning correct actions as well as the circumstances found around them. He addresses the rhetorical areas of contradiction and shows their stories to be a part of, not distinct from, the stories of his community. This will be addressed in detail in the following chapter.

This chapter has reviewed persecution, emphasizing its occurrence during the reign of Decius. Next I defined martyrdom with respect to this persecution as well as the cultural understandings of the surrounding communities. Finally, I addressed how the character Pionius is presented as a martyr in *Mart. Pion.* These discussions have laid some preliminary groundwork that will assist in the following two chapters. Chapter III will investigate Pionius' orations, interrogations, and conversations with both his antagonists and his companions. Chapter IV will examine how ethics are constructed individually and communally by Pionius' role as a martyr.

CHAPTER III:
WRITING WITH THE VOICE: THE INFLUENCE OF TEXTUAL ORATIONS

There are many complexities in distinguishing between the communities of Jews and Christians in the second through third century. Some scholars of early Christianity use the plural forms of Judaism and Christianity (i.e., Judaisms and Chritianities), while others maintain the singular on the assumption that there is a nucleus, or perhaps a familial similarity exemplified through genealogical metaphors.[216] The result polarizes the descriptions of these communities, with some scholars advocating clear-cut divisions between the various communities.[217]

Paula Fredriksen, in "What 'Parting of the Ways'?", summarizes scholarship's assumptions concerning the dates when this division between Jews and Christians possibly occurred:

> [t]he options available in the texts of choice have supported such answers as c.28-30 CE, when Jesus proclaimed a supposedly startling new vision to an indifferent or hostile Israel; c. 50 CE, when Pauline communities are imagined as separate from and independent of Diaspora synagogue communities; c. 70 CE, when the Temple's destruction supposedly untethered Gentile Christianity from its awkward and lingering attachment to Jewish practice; c. 135 CE, after which point Jews were no longer permitted into Aelia, and the leadership of the 'mother church' passed from Jewish to Gentile Christians; or certainly by 200 CE, when

---

[216] See Jan Willem van Henten and Athalya Brenner eds., *Families and Family Relations as Represented in Early Judaisms and Christianities: Texts and Fictions: Papers Read at a NOSTER colloquium in Amsterdam June 9-11, 1998* (Leiden: Deo, 2000) and more succinctly Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford. Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), especially 1-6, where he presents descriptions of how familial metaphors (mis)function.

[217] For a detailed discussion of these divisions see Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), especially 1-24, which summarizes the background of the "Parting of the Ways model."

> Jewish persecutions of Gentile Christians and increasingly effective ecclesiastical organization combined both to articulate and to finalize the 'inevitable' break.[218]

Daniel Boyarin explains the problem of genealogical metaphors: one would have to "imagine a single mother religion that could give birth to a daughter religion, we have to find some way of reducing the diversity of Jewish religious life in the pre-Christian era to a single object that we can then designate as Judaism."[219] He continues:

> scholars have begun to recognize that the historical picture is quite a bit more complicated [...with scholars] speak[ing] of a twin birth of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism as two forms of Judaism, and not of a genealogy in which one – Judaism – is parent to the other – Christianity.[220]

Recently scholars have begun to argue that the divisions are much more fluid and that "there could be and would have been social contact, sometimes various forms of common worship, all up and down the continuum of 'Jews' and 'Christians.' The social continuity provided for the possibility of cultural interaction and shared religious development."[221] It is these understandings that affect how scholars analyse, describe, and read ancient texts.

This is also true for scholars' treatment of *Mart. Pion.*, more specifically Pionius' two orations. That is to say, scholars who tend to position Judaism as a distinct entity from Christianity have subsequently found that Pionius' orations are anti-Judaic,[222] providing "evidence of an animosity that the Jews of the third-century Smyrna bore

---

[218] Paula Fredriksen, "What 'Parting of the Ways'?" in idem, *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 35.

[219] Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 1.

[220] Boyarin, *ibid.*, 2.

[221] Boyarin, *ibid.*, 10.

[222] See Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*; Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*; Hilhorst, "L'ancien Testament;" and den Boeft, "Are you there teacher?".

toward their Christian neighbors" and, therefore, position Pionius' orations in direct opposition to the Jewish community.[223] Scholars, however, who allow for a more fluid exchange between these communities and who do not maintain that they are totally distinct tend to locate these orations as being only potentially anti-Judaic or as an example of an intra-Christian debate.[224]

This chapter begins with a brief review of the scholarly description of the relationships of these three communities. Here I am following Paula Fredriksen's text "What 'Parting of the Ways'?" because she is systematic and conscientious when addressing how scholars have presented these communities and historically and socially contextualizes her readings of these communities. Next I will detail Pionius' and his companions' conversations and interrogations with their antagonists. This detailing will attempt to show that the martyrologist understood the relationship between these three communities and how they interacted from within the text. By using these interrogations from the author's world, I will then assess *Mart. Pion.*, and then Pionius' orations separately, in an attempt to better understand the rhetoric of them.

III.1 The Relationship between Jews, Christians, and Pagans

The Jews and Pagans in the Roman Empire during the second and third centuries understood religion as a kind of topographical entity, wherein the god(s) primarily were localized to "natural" or "man-made" places and "attached to particular *peoples*; 'religion' ran in the blood."[225] This meant that when one travelled to another city in the

---

[223] Gibson, "Jewish Antagonism," 340.

[224] Boyarin, *Dying for God*; and Gibson, "Jewish Antagonism."

[225] Paula Fredriksen, "What Parting," 39.

Empire or even into another area in the same town, one not only brought one's own god(s) with him or her but also encountered the god(s) of others in the areas they visited. This occurred because each region held its own local traditions and cults; generally speaking, there was a requirement that even a visitor offer cult on specific days and in specific ways.[226] Thus, one expected to encounter others and their god(s) in the Empire and "presupposed religious difference."[227] This is not to say that each individual and his or her communities tolerated the other. Indeed, even though Pagans allowed for a more diverse culture with differing leaders and selective cults that an individual could choose without the abandonment of their local religious traditions, they remained "scornful" of outsiders and their belief systems.[228]

More specifically, Romans thought that many of the Jewish customs and stories were unusual and puzzling, for example, the opinion that circumcision was genital mutilation and that the tales about their jealous god were arrogant and incomprehensible.[229] The Jews in antiquity, however, were accepting of many aspects of the Roman world. They knew and used the Greek language and participated in civic life, "as ephebes or members of town councils, [...] officers in the Gentile armies, [...] patrons of, or observers at athletic, dramatic, or musical events."[230] This does not mean

---

[226] See Robert Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire* (trans. Antonia Nevill: Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996).

[227] Fredriksen, "What Parting," 40.

[228] Fredriksen, ibid., 41.

[229] See Rives, "Human sacrifice;" as well as Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), especially 107-76 and 201-32; and Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), for a detailed discussion of the Pagan conceptions of Jews and Judaism.

[230] Fredriksen, "What Parting," 40.

that they would forgo their religious beliefs and loyalties.[231] They remained separate by refusing to accept the advances of the Greek culture,[232] and "avoided overt public cult, though essayed to compensate variously through dedications, patronage and prayer."[233] They differentiated themselves from the Pagan community by being both exclusive for those who were ethnically Jewish, as well as inclusive towards the gentile[234] (i.e., Pagans who sympathized were labelled as "godfearers").[235] As citizens of the Empire, Jews were able to claim, justifiably, that the Roman law allowed for their meetings and their study of *Torah* since this was recognizable as either a religion or a philosophy.[236] Furthermore, some Jews, those from Smyrna, were granted "equal status" as citizens in the Empire.[237] This is not to say that Pagans tolerated and did not condemn and persecute Jews, but this persecution was local and would become resolved through the intervention of higher Roman authorities,[238] with each community struggling to understand the cult(s) and the god(s) of the other.

This level of tolerance given to the Jewish community was of great benefit to the early Christians, since Romans might have perceived the difference between Judaism and Christianity as involving different understandings of two philosophical schools with some

---

[231] Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 69.

[232] Feldman, *ibid.*, 38.

[233] Fredriksen, "What Parting," 44.

[234] Paula Fredriksen and Adele Reinhartz, eds., *Jesus, Judaism and Christian anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 14; see also Simon, *Verus Israël*, 315-55.

[235] For a detailed discussion of "godfearers" see Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?: Constructing Early Christianity* (New York: T & T Clark, 2002), especially 31-68.

[236] Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna*, 304-5.

[237] Cadoux, *ibid.*, 304.

[238] See Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 121-60.

similar authoritative texts.[239] There also is a difficulty in being able to know exactly how many Christian or Jewish meeting places there were and, therefore, how many people there were.[240] Furthermore, Christians, like the Jews, did inhabit the cities and the countryside of the Empire and also were found in the senate and the imperial palace.[241] Even so, the Pagans did persecute both the Christians and the Jews for being "un-Roman."[242] The Jews, however, because of their religious ethnicity were tolerated to a greater extent than the Christians.[243] Let us now turn to the interrogations and conversations to set the groundwork for a rereading of the orations and *Mart. Pion.*

III.2 Jews, Christians, and Pagans in Mart. Pion.

The relationships among the Jews, Christians, and Pagans in *Mart. Pion.* are not always evident. By analyzing how the characters converse with each other, i.e., by focusing on their points of clarification, as well as what texts and religious beliefs they use to make their claims, I will attempt to characterize the relationship between these three communities.

Through much of the first seven chapters of *Mart. Pion.* the antagonists are attempting to persuade Pionius and his companions to obey the Emperor's edict and "to sacrifice and taste the forbidden meats" (3:1). Pionius' responses indicate that he is aware not of the edict *per se*, but that he and his companions only worship and "obey the living

---

[239] Robert Louis Wilken, *Christians as the Romans saw them* (2nd. ed. London: Yale University Press, 2003), 73-83.

[240] Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 216-39.

[241] Tertullian, *Apol.*, 37.4 and Pliny, *Ep.*, 10.96.

[242] Fredriksen, "What Parting," 41.

[243] See Chapter II above, especially 41-2.

God" (3:4). There are two things of note in this passage that describe the relationship of these three communities. First, the notion of worshiping him alone (3:3) functions in two ways: one, it is the first instance that *Mart. Pion.* cites from the Hebraic scriptures, *Exod* 20:3 and *Deut* 6:13;[244] and two, it differentiates Pionius from the Pagan community but not from the Jewish one. The other element of note is the distinction of a god as living because it clearly juxtaposes Pionius' God with the idols of the Empire who are never referred to as such.[245] However, this does not delineate Pionius' God from the Jewish God, who is also understood as a living God.[246]

The crowd of "Greeks, Jews, and women" (3:6) were intrigued by the sight of Pionius, Sabina, and Asclepiades wearing chains and entered the forum to eagerly watch their actions. The martyrologist justifies the presence of these peoples, stating, "they were on holiday because it was the great Sabbath" (3:6). Nevertheless, as previously noted, scholars are unaware of the exact date and its significance. What is evident here is that the editor is using the day as a means to justify why this collection of peoples were present to listen to Pionius' first oration.

At the close of this first oration some "advocates together with Polemon" encourage Pionius to change his mind: "we love you. There are many reasons why you deserve to live, for your character and righteousness. It is good to live and to see the light" (5:3). This metaphor, used by the Pagans, is well known to them since it is found in the contemporary funeral rites.[247] On the basis of his claim that this metaphor was in use

---

[244] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 53.

[245] Robert, *ibid.*, 52; Louis Robert, *Hellenica: Recueil d'épigraphie, de numismatique et d'antiquités greques, XI-XII* (Limoges, Paris, 1940-65), 311.

[246] E.g., *Josh* 3:10; *Ps* 18; *Ps* 31:18-21; and *Ps* 42.

[247] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 64.

during funeral rites, and was found in both *Ps* 49 and very clearly in *Job* 33:28, Robert argues, "[l]e τοῦτο indique que les interlocuteurs savent déjà la response de Pionios sur la lumière."[248] If this is the case, then one can assume that the Pagans knew and understood Pionius' conception of God as the "one true light" (5:4). Yet, Pionius continues to distinguish his conception of the world from the Pagans'. He says "[a]ll these things are indeed good, and we do not run from them as though we are eager to die or because we have God's works. Rather, we despise these things which ensnare us because of the superiority of those other great goods" (5:5). In this verse, there is a rare word θανατιῶντες, which is used by Lucian (120-180 C.E.) when he is writing to Cronius concerning the life of Peregrinus (or Proteus).[249] The instance of this word indicates that the martyrologist may have been familiar with the Pagan Lucian's work. Pionius further exemplifies his understanding of the Pagan customs and rituals concerning sacrificing and points out that his presence at the temple of Nemesis "would not profit your idols" (7:2).

The use of fire as a means of torture and executions is common in the Hebraic scriptures as well as the Christian scriptures and texts as a recognized punishment for not sacrificing.[250] Pionius, however, adds that "[i]t is far worse [...] to burn after death" (7:4b). Here Pionius is clarifying his understanding of the afterlife as one that punishes the body by fire. The response of Polemon and his men demonstrates the differing understandings of the afterlife between Pagans and Christians. When Sabina responds

---

[248] Robert, *ibid.*

[249] Robert, *ibid.*

[250] Parallels include *Codex Hummurabi*, *2-Macc*, *4-Macc*, *Mart. Poli.*, Plutarach, *Is. Os.*, and Pseudo-Philo, *Biblical Antiquities* 6 (see van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death*, 52, 52 n. 30; and 138).

with a smile, Polemon and his men ask, "You laugh?" (7:5). This question allows Sabina to explain this aspect of her religious faith. She says, "You see, we are Christians. Those who believe in Christ will laugh unhesitatingly in everlasting joy" (7:5b). This statement details the positive attributes of the Christian afterlife, found in *Herm.*,[251] which might not have been clearly known by either the Jewish or the Pagan community. These men quickly point out, perhaps antagonistically,[252] that "[w]omen who refuse to sacrifice are put to brothel" (7:6). This punishment is not unique and was also given to other Christian women,[253] and both the Pagans of the community and the Christian community knew this.

The official interrogation of Pionius and his companions is foreshadowed by a brief discussion between Pionius and Polemon (8). In this section of *Mart. Pion.*, Polemon asks "Which god do you worship?" (8:3) to clarify Pionius' previous response of "I am a Christian" (8:2). Pionius' description seems to be accepted by the Pagan, and then Polemon asks that Pionius "[m]ake a sacrifice at least to the Emperor" (8:4). He replies that he will not "offer sacrifice to men" (8:4),[254] a distinction that suggests one of two things. First, because the Jewish community was known to offer sacrifice on behalf of the Emperor prior to their temple's destruction, Polemon might not understand that there is a difference between the Jews and Christians.[255] The second thing, and just as

---

[251] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 58.

[252] I say "perhaps" because the response of the "men" is to a woman, and as previously noted it seems they are of a different class in the communities of Jews and Pagans.

[253] See Musurillo, *ACM*, 147 n.20; and van Henten and Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death*, 138 n. 31; Ambrose, *Concerning Virgins*, 2.4.23.

[254] Robert notes that the idea of offering a sacrifice to the Emperor is related to *Mart. Poli.* 4, Pionius is asked at the very least to offer an oath to the Emperor (*Mart. Pion.* 69).

[255] See Chapter II above, especially 41-2, for a discussion of Jews acceptance of offering cult to/on behalf of the Emperor.

likely, is that some Christians might have been inclined to offer some form of cult to the Emperor, as seen in their possession of certificates stating they had sacrificed.[256] Within this interrogation, taken "for the sake of the record" (9:1), Polemon asks Pionius, "What [assembly][257] do you belong to?" (9:2). His response is "The [universal…] with Christ there is no other" (9:2). When Polemon questions Sabina, her responses are formulaic and fit well with Pionius', while Asclepiades' responses require further clarification. Asclepiades' answer "Jesus Christ" triggers Polemon to ask "Is this the same or another?" (9:9). This clarification suggests a (possible) confusion between various Christian communities.

Examples in the text of *Mart. Pion.* of peoples from other communities are found in chapter 11. A presbyter, a Macedonian woman from another town, and a man from the Phrygians' sect were being held in prison.[258] We are not told why they are being held but that they spoke, indeed, "argued" (φιλολογεῖν) (11:6) with one another, but they also prayed together "night and day" (11:7). This shows, at the very least, a conversation between these (Christian?) communities about aspects of faith. This also is reinforced by the introduction to the second oration: "while they were in prison many pagans came to try to persuade them but they were surprised to hear the answers they gave" (12:1). Pionius is showing compassion for all the people who are being held captive by the Pagans and advocates for them and encourages them in his second oration. Furthermore, at the end of *Mart. Pion.* Pionius is depicted as dying in the same way as "Metrodorus

---

[256] See my above discussion of Cyprian's comment on Christians who had either lapsed or obtained certificates stating they had sacrificed, especially 42.

[257] I have chosen to translate ἐκκλησίας as assembly instead of church which tends to impose contemporary ideas of Christianity back on to a text and its community.

[258] *Mart. Pion.* 11:2.

from the Marcionite sect" (21:5). That is, they "both faced the east. After they brought the firewood and piled up the logs in a circle [...]" (21:6-7). This uniformity reinforces the similarities between martyrs from different communities.

Following the second oration, there is a physical altercation between Pionius and Theophilus, a cavalry commander (15: 5-16:1), which resulted in Pionius, "Sabina and the others" (15:7) being carried to the altar. From this point forward, the tone of the discussions becomes more heated. At the altar, Pionius is questioned by Lepidus, who asks him why he and his people do not offer sacrifice (16:2). Pionius' response is "Because we are Christians [and worship t]he God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them" (16:3b). Lepidus connects this God with "the one who was crucified" (16:4). Thus, this Pagan, unlike Polemon at 8:4, easily makes the connection between the God Pionius is describing and Christ. This parallel might suggest that Lepidus is equating Pionius with a Jewish community who understood that its messiah had come, or that he simply knew that the Christian community has a Christ figure. Nevertheless, Lepidus' cursing of Christ clearly shows hostility between himself and that community.

Rufinius, "a bystander" (17:1) who is an outsider, attempts to diffuse the situation, but Pionius aggressively condemns him. He declares, "Is this your rhetoric? Is this your literature? Even Socrates did not suffer thus from the Athenians" (17:2). Pionius mentions these persecutors by the names Anytus (a persecutor of Socrates in Plato's *Apol.*), Meletus (named as the key prosecutor in Plato's *Apol.* 3), Aristides (defended Athenian policy) and a philosopher, Anaxarchus, who was also persecuted (his story is told by Diogenes Laertius and Cicero). This shows Pionius' fluency in the history of the

Pagan community and offers to parallel their accounts with that of his own and the other Christians being persecuted.

During all of this commotion, someone asks Sabina, "Why could you not have died in your own native city?" (18:7a). Her response is genealogical and based on the community's ideas of religion as topographical: she declares that Pionius is her brother. This therefore implies two things: first, that the setting of *Mart. Pion.* is Pionius' native city; and second, as his sister, she would also be from there. This declaration suggests Christians understood their relationship to one another as binding and familial, and that they share a common source of (spiritual) blood. Their faith should therefore be understood as a religion, which is topographical.

The second official questioning of Pionius and his companions is by Quintillian and offers more information and clarification concerning how these two communities understood each other. The questioning begins as the other occurrences do, but here Quintillian formally asks, "What is the cult or the sect to which you belong?" (19:4). Pionius' response is that he is of "the Catholic" (19:4). But Quintillian does not seem to understand what Pionius means by this and asks, "De quells catholiques?" (19:5).[259] Pionius does not directly respond to this question but states that he is "a presbyter" from "the Catholic Church," but Quintillian again seeks clarification, asking "Are you one of their teachers?" (19:5-6). This question is asked, "[p]resumably" because "the proconsul does not grasp the meaning of the term 'presbyter', but he does understand that Pionius is an important person in the church.[260] Quintillian, now upset, attempts to get Pionius'

---

[259] Robert's translation differs from Musurillo's. Musurillo's reads, "The proconsul asked: 'What is the cult or the sect to which you belong?' 'The Catholic,' he answered. 'What do you mean, the Catholic?' asked the proconsul" (19:4-5).

[260] Boeft, "Are you their teacher?" 64.

attention by asking if he is a teacher of "foolishness," but Pionius quickly corrects him stating "piety [...] Piety towards God the Father who has made all things" (19:6-7). Quintillian accepts this response and simply states, "Sacrifice" (19:8). Pionius now must clarify for him: "My prayers must be offered to God." Quintillian agrees with Pionius and states, "We reverence all the gods, we reverence the heavens and all the gods that are in heaven. What then, do you attend to the air? Then sacrifice to the air." Pionius rejects this: "I do not attend to the air [...] but to him who made the air, the heavens and all that is in them." Quintillian seeks a name from Pionius: "Tell me, who did make them?" (19:11), but Pionius will not answer, saying simply, "I cannot tell you" (19:12). Pionius does not respond to Quintillian's offering of the name Zeus, "ruler of all the gods" (19:13). Why does Pionius not answer? Robert suggests that it is in part because the Christian god is ineffable from the aspect of a Creator and because his cult is a mystery, which cannot be defended.[261] Perhaps Pionius does not name God because it is unspeakable.[262] Once again, this differentiation is only between Pionius' Christian community and the Pagan one.

These conversations and interrogations (again, with the exception of the two orations) are between characters who are self-identified Christians and Pagan officials who are attempting to persuade the captured Christians to offer sacrifice to obtain freedom. Nowhere in these sections is there an allowance for one to entertain a claim concerning the Jewish community and their relationship to either the Christians or the Pagans. The largest impediment to determining how the martyrologist understood the relationship of Jews to either Christians or Pagans is that nowhere in *Mart. Pion.* is there

---

[261] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 111.

[262] See *Exod* 3:14-15, and especially 20:7 "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God."

an explicit mention of the Jews as a community, outside of the introduction to the first oration, 3:6.

Pionius' Christians knew the Hebraic texts and metaphors and used them.[263] But this knowledge only shows a textual level of interaction and not a distinction from the community. One might therefore be able to surmise reasonably that Pionius' definition of being a Christian was either that is was a sect of Judaism or independent from Judaism yet privileging the Hebrew texts as an authoritative source. In addition to this, one cannot justifiably position these sections of *Mart. Pion.* as being either anti-Judaic or anti-Pagan. This is because the responses of Pionius and of Sabina are not antagonistic or degrading to the Jewish and Pagan communities, but instead use their language, metaphors, and rhetoric to advocate for their own actions and to distinguish their religion from the others.

III.3 Rereading Pionius' Orations – Listening to the author's voice.

There are references to the texts of the Jewish, Christian, and Pagan communities found throughout the two orations in *Mart. Pion.* These references analogously and proverbially explain and justify why Pionius and his companions will not worship and offer sacrifice. They also provide information that suggests how these three communities understand each other. Having established that there is no clear individualization of the Jewish community in the conversations and interrogations of *Mart. Pion.*, a rereading of the two orations based on such a groundwork could potentially overlook such a differentiation. I propose, therefore, first to read each oration individually, focusing on how the orator

[263] E.g., *Mart. Pion.* 3:3, 5:3-4.

speaks of the Jewish, Christian, and Pagan communities.[264] This reading will be followed by a comparison of the two orations, highlighting the differences and similarities that will be compared to the conversations and interrogations from the rest of *Mart. Pion.*

III.3.1 The First Oration (4:2-23)

This first oration begins with the orator addressing the crowd: "You men who boast of the beauty of Smyrna, and you who dwell by the river of Meles and who glory (as you claim) in Homer, and those among this audience who are Jews, listen while I make my brief discourse" (4:2). This introduction positions the orator to be speaking to a crowd of Pagans and Jews, but he is not speaking to all of them per se; he only addresses those who "laughed and rejoiced at those who deserted, and considered [for amusement] the error of those who voluntarily offered sacrifice" (4:3). The orator sternly reminds the Pagans not to be "gloating over those who are going to die" (4:4). This phrase is proverbial and Pagan and is reminiscent of Homer's *Od.* 22.412.[265] Next, the orator quickly turns his attention towards the Jewish community and tweaks two passages from their *Torah.* The first is from *Deut* 22:4 and the second is from *Prov* 24:17. These passages, like that from the *Od.*, emphasize right actions in that one should assist others, even one's enemy, when they are knocked down, but does not outright condemn him or her for his or her actions. Instead, in the next few verses, the orator juxtaposes his own "obedience" as one who has "chosen to die rather than transgress his [God's] commands" (4:7). He, however, emphasizes his consistency in non-divergence from the teachings he

---

[264] I make the distinction of an orator to differentiate him from the character Pionius found in my readings of the conversations and interrogations of *Mart. Pion.*

[265] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 57.

has received and now teaches to others. This emphasis is rhetorical and not overtly condemning to the communities of Jews and Pagans and positions his community's teachings as both containing and providing wisdom like the teachings of Homer, of Moses, and of Solomon. He does not outright distinguish or label whence or from whom he has received his teachings – there remains an ambiguity.

The orator now turns his comments to the other Pagans and especially Jews in the audience, those who are not capable of doing the things he will speak of next. He asks them,

> At whom then do the Jews laugh without sympathy? For even if they claim we are their enemies, we are at any rate men, and men who have been treated unjustly. They claim we have our chance to speak out. Yes, but whom have we offended? Did we murder anyone? Did we prosecute anyone? Did we force anyone to worship false gods? Or perhaps they think that their crimes are similar to those now committed by men out of fear. Rather, their sins differ as much as voluntary sins are different from indeliberate ones. Who forced the Jews to sacrifice to Beelphegor? Or partake of the sacrifices offered to the dead? Or to fornicate with the daughters of foreigners? Or to sacrifice their sons and daughters to idols? To murmur against God? To slander Moses? To be ungrateful to their benefactors? Or in their hearts to return to Egypt? Or, as Moses went up to receive the Law, to say to Aaron, Make gods for us, and then to make the calf – and all the other things they did? For they are capable of deceiving you. Then let them read to you the book of Judges, Kings or Exodus, or all the other passages which prove them wrong (4:8-10).

This passage provides a great deal of information as to how the orator understands his relationship with the Jewish community. This community interprets the orator as an enemy (4:8), though there is no reason given as to why this is the case. The orator, recalling his previous arguments at 4: 5, from *Deut* and *Prov*, declares that they are men who when downfallen should not be ignored and have their negative circumstances celebrated. Next the orator implies that the Jews are the ones who have turned him and others from his community over to the Romans. He questions the motivation of this

community when he asks "whom have we offended? Did we murder anyone? Did we prosecute anyone? Did we force anyone to worship false gods?" (4:9). Though these questions do not directly accuse them of committing these crimes, there is the implication that this community has, yet the orator is not turning them over to the authorities. The final verse of this section is extremely similar to *Heb* 10:26, though there are many similarities to the texts of the Pagans as well.[266] This therefore shows the orator's blending of his community's teachings with those of the Pagans'.

The orator's recalling of these various images from Beelphegor[267] and the story of Moses from *Exod* 6:2-3 functions in two ways. The first way compares the idolatrous behaviour of the Israelites in *Num* 25 (from the image of Beelphegor) to the actions of those who are condemning his community. The second way these images function is to show that the sins of the few can and do become the sins of the community. The implication is that those few who are against the orator and his community represent an entire community and are responsible by association.

The orator now turns his argumentation towards the ideas of sacrifice and for the first time identifies his community as Christian.

> Do they ask why was it that some, without any pressure, came to sacrifice of their own accord? But would you condemn all Christians because of these? Consider the present life as though it was a threshing-floor. Which pile is larger, the chaff or the wheat? For when the farmer comes to clear the threshing-floor with his winnowing-fan, the chaff, being lighter is easily carried off by the wind, whereas the wheat remains as it was (4:13-4).

By using the metaphor of the threshing-floor from *Matt* 3:12, the orator is now clearly using the language of the Christians. This is an allegorical separation of the righteous (the

---

[266] Robert, *ibid.*, 58.

[267] "The Septuagint form of Baal-Peor" (Musurillo, *ACM*, 141 n.7).

wheat) from the wicked (the chaff). It also contains the image of being carried off with the wind, which is related to the changing of one's mind, so that they will not be killed, but the righteous remain in place and are willing to die. One must also note, and unfortunately no commentator does, that this pericope is also reminiscent of the start of the barley harvest during the Passover festival in *Lev* 23:10 and the winnowing in *Ruth* 1:22. The orator, therefore, is also using metaphors and images tied to the scriptures and cult of the Jewish community.

The next parable is similar to the previous one and is used in a like manner by the orator. It is from *Matt* 13:47 and displays images of separating the good from the bad, but there is also the implication that it is not up to man to make these kinds of decisions but God. The orator, therefore, is using this parable to challenge those (the Jews) who condemn him and other Christians: "Consider again the net that is cast into the sea. Surely not everything that it gathers is of value. [...]If we are guilty, then how will you escape the same penalty, being proved wicked by your own deeds" (4:15). These ideas are further emphasized with a "citation précise" from *1-Pet* 4:18:[268] "[i]f the just man is saved only with difficulty, then what place will there be for the impious and the sinner?" Thus, the orator is clearly differentiating his proper actions from those who are wicked and attempting to convince them to change their ways because "[t]he judgement of the world is imminent" (4:16).

The next three verses in this oration describe many physical places that have characteristics from the orator's travels "through Palestine and crossing the Jordan river"

---

[268] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 59.

(4:17). These places, like the images at Beelphegor, show there will be an imminent judgement for everyone in the community and not just those who have sinned:

> I saw a land that bears witness even to the day of the divine anger that has afflicted it by reason of the sins committed by its inhabitants, who killed foreigners, drove them out, or did them violence. I saw smoke rising even until now, and a land scorched by fire [...] I saw, too, the Dead Sea, a body of water transformed and depleted beyond its natural state by the fear of God, unable to nurture any living thing [...] You yourselves see and testify how the land of the Lydian Decapolis is scorched by fire and remains an example of men's impiety even to this day; you know the volcanic fire of Etna and Sicily and even Lycia and the islands. And even though this has kept away from you, consider your familiarity with hot water [...] Consider, too, the partial conflagrations and floods, [...] in the case of Deucalion, and we in the case of Noah. They are partial and occur in this way that we may comprehend the nature of the whole from the part. (4:17-24).

His tale of his trip to the region of the Dead Sea emphasizes "the desolate situation of the land and the curious qualities of the sea."[269] This idea, an example of impurity (4:21), is from *2-Pet* 2 and is paralleled with an image of Sodom and Gomorrah, on the basis of proximity to the Dead Sea,[270] and the image of the flood.[271] Though these images are all directly tied to the Jewish community, which the orator is condemning, they would have also been known to the Pagan community, which knew about the destructive nature of both fire and water.[272] This image is reinforced with a reference to Noah, who is known by all of the communities. In addition, the orator is also using an allusion to *Dan* 3:18, which maintains the eschatological nature of the oration, and finally reinforces, for a third time, that the actions of a part of a community are representative of the entirety.

---

[269] den Boeft and Bremmer, "NM III," 115.

[270] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 59-60.

[271] den Boeft and Bremmer, "NM III," 116.

[272] den Boeft and Bremmer, *ibid.*

This speech closes by clearly defining the orator and his community: "[h]ence we bear witness to you of the judgement by fire that is to come, accomplished by God through his Word, Jesus Christ. And so for this reason we do not worship your so-called gods, nor will we adore the golden idol" (4:24). This statement clearly shows that the orator knows and accepts that he will die by fire, a Pagan punishment, but that this will is not negative because it is a part of the plan of God. In addition to this the Emperor is not described as a god, but rather he is equated with "the golden idol" (4:24).

III.3.2 The Second Oration (12:3-14:16)

Within this oration, the orator addresses other Christians who had succumbed to the pressure of the Romans and sacrificed against their will (12),[273] as well as those who have converted to Judaism, a rival faith (13 and 14).[274] This oration is given from prison and the orator is weeping as he begins,

> I am tormented anew, and I am torn limb from limb, when I see the pearls of the Church being trampled by swine, the stars of heaven being swept down to earth by the dragon's tail, and the vine which the right hand of God planted being ravaged by the solitarily wild boar, so that all those who pass by on the road may pluck its fruit (12:3-4).

Within the single first verse, there is a reference to *Matt* 7:6. This verse reads "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do they may trample them under their feet and then tear you to pieces." But here it is the orator who is torn; those from his community are the pearls and they are being run over by the swine, which suggests that the teachings of the Church should only be given to those who are

---

[273] See also Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna*, 389, which speaks about "Christians who had submitted to violence" and thereby sacrificed to protect themselves.

[274] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 77.

spiritually ready. This image is also a metaphor, positioning the antagonist as swine. The next reference is from *Rev* 12:4: "His [the red dragon] tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth;" but in *Mart. Pion.* it is paraphrased.[275] The dragon image is also well known in Pagan texts and is used throughout the Hebraic Scriptures to symbolize evil as well as the enemies of God.[276]

The vine holds distinct similarities to *Ps* 80:13-16:

> Boars from the forest ravage it and the creatures of the field feed on it. Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see! Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself. Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire, at your rebuke your people perish.

The concluding lines of this *Psalm* are a prayer for restoration from God and perhaps will offer encouragement to the orator's church or community. The images of the antagonists are apocalyptic and revelatory and are presented in the earthly realm where these communities battle.

The orator is speaking to his "little children" (i.e., his community) and encourages them so that they will continue to "travail until Christ shall be formed within you" (12:4). These genealogical metaphors are striking because they are not consistent. The first positions the orator as a father who is instructing his children. The next is the metaphor of travail, which by definition is related to laborious effort (i.e., the pains of childbirth), portraying the children as suffering females. These girls will be granted the gift of birthing an anointed one.[277] The next part of this verse, identical to *Baruch* 4:26,[278] positions the children as males, whose lives will not be smooth.

---

[275] Robert, *ibid.*, 78.

[276] See *Ps* 74:14; *Isa* 27:1; *Ezek* 29:3; *The Martyrdom of Matthew* v.22; and Plato, *Ion*, 344.

[277] This is a potential parallel to Mary in *Luke* 1 and 2.

The gender of the good people now shifts so they become female. They are identified with Susanna and the antagonists are "vicious old men" (12:5). This parallel suggests the protagonists are caught in a quandary: they are being falsely accused of a mortal sin. In *Dan* 13, Daniel implores them not to harm the daughter of Israel, and goes on to save Susanna from the two old men. The next character who is brought into the text is Aman or Haman from *Esth*. Haman is an enemy of the Jews and is a character who has (ironically) plotted to kill the Jews during Purim through an edict and employs the seal of the king. Following his actions, both he and the king retire and drink "while the city of Shushan was bewildered" (*Esth* 3:15). Like Susanna, Esther is a Jewish heroine, although there are no references to her found in the Christian scriptures.[279] In addition to this, the orator's community is likened to the Jewish heroines. Moreover, the Pagan and Jewish communities correspond to the antagonists.

The question is presented "Have all of the virgins [another female image] completely nodded and fallen asleep?" (12:8), which is tied to "The Parable of the Ten Virgins" from *Matt*. This parable can be understood in many ways. It depicts the holy lives of women, the church as the wife of Christ, and the eschaton.[280] In addition to this, the parable exemplifies a time of persecution and of spiritual decay in the community, requiring a perseverance of the faithful similar to the widow. That is to say, the orator is acknowledging that he and his community are being persecuted, but this persecution should be encouragement to remain faithful.

---

[278] Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 79.

[279] Robert, *ibid.*

[280] Robert, *ibid.*, 80.

The instances of the persecution spoken of by the orator include those from outside of one's community and persecution from a member of one's own community. He is hearing "that each one is betraying his neighbour, that the word might be fulfilled, Brother will deliver brother up to death" (12:10). Thus, the persecution is being suggested to be not only an external threat but one from the home. A description of the persecution contains two kinds of agricultural imagery, and eschatological judgment.

> Indeed Satan has demanded to have us that he might sift us like wheat, and the fiery winnowing-fork is in the hand of the Word of God for the clearing of the threshing-floor. It may be that the salt has lost its saviour and, cast out, is trodden on by men. But let no one imagine, my little children, that the Lord has failed, but rather we ourselves. Can my hand be shortened, he says, that it cannot save, or my ear made dull that it cannot hear? But your sins have made a separation between you and my God (12:11-4).

This first image of the threshing-floor joins two verses, one from *Luke* 22:31 and one from *Matt* 3:12. There are also ties to *Matt* 13:30 and 25:41 and the notion of an eternal fire. The next agricultural image is of salt, which was used to preserve and to flavour foods from *Matt* 5:13 and *Mark* 9:50. The majority of salt was obtained from the Dead Sea and contained many impurities that made it ineffective. These examples, listed by the orator at 12:15, once again, do not prove God's unfaithfulness, but the community's, and remind them of this with a reference to *Isa* 59:1-2.[281] Furthermore, he is imploring his community to let their "justice exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees" (12:16). Both the scribes and the Pharisees are religious groups from the Jewish community and are here explicitly being mentioned as a part of the orator's community.

---

[281] Musurillo, *ACM*, 153; Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 80.

The Jewish community has been inviting members of the orator's community to synagogue, and the orator questions the ethical nature of this request.[282] His concern is that they should not "fall into greater, more deliberate sin [than going to this place] lest anyone commit the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (13:1). This holds parallels to *Mark* 3:29, *Matt* 12:31, and *Luke* 12:10. The orator's warning uses the imagery from Sodom and Gomorrah and directly condemns the Jewish community: "Do not become with them rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose hands are tainted with blood. We did not slay our prophets nor did we betray Christ and crucify him" (13:2). The orator now clearly details what this community has been saying concerning Christ: "Christ was a man, and he died a criminal" (13:3).[283] The orator's response is instructive and tells his community how to counteract this accusation.

> But let them tell us, what other criminal has filled the entire world with his disciples? What other criminal had his disciples and others with them to die for the name of their master? By what other criminal's name for many years were devils expelled, are still expelled now, and will be in the future? And so it is with all the other wonders that are done in the Catholic Church. What these people forget is that this criminal departed from life at his own choice (13:4-7).

Thus, Christ is recognized as being a criminal, who by his actions has created a community of disciples in the Catholic Church willing to die for his name. What is important to note is that this is the first instance that the orator is distinguishing this church as Catholic. The phrase, "to die for the name of their master" (13:5) is provocative because it was during Trajan's reign and from his edict that Christians were being

---

[282] Both Robert and Simon note that Jews were known to proselytize. See Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 82 and Simon, *Verus Israël*, 271-305.

[283] This accusation is one paralleled in *Matt.* 27:39-44. See Musurillo, *ACM*, 153; Robert, *Martyre de Pionios*, 82; and Simon, *Verus Israël*, 229-32.

punished for being Christian in name.[284] This clearly differs from Decius' edict, which calls for punishing Christians who will not offer proper cult. In addition to this, there is no mention of sacrifice or offering any form of cult to the Emperor in this oration, and therefore, this does not relate to the Decree of Decius.

There are also claims being made by the Jewish community: "Christ performed necromancy or spirit-divination with the cross. Yet what Scripture in their possession or in ours says this of Christ?" (13:8-9). This verse depicts the Jewish community and the orator's community as having differing sets of scriptures that each individual must decipher to be able to know what to believe (13:9). With respect to the actual practice of necromancy, den Boeft and Bremmer remind us of three things: first, "to perform necromancy with *biothanati* was normal practice;" second, crucifixion "was the *servile supplicium* par excellence;" and third, a dead person's body would "appear in the state in which they have died."[285] Furthermore, this charge of Jesus as a *biothanes* is not unique to *Mart. Pion.* and is also found in the *Martyrdom of Conon*:

> Why do you continue to err, saying that a man is God, and indeed, one who died as a criminal. For I have learnt accurately from the Jews what his family was, the works he showed forth to his people, and how he died on the cross. They have brought me his accounts and have read them to me (4:6-7).

Stephen Gero argues that this verse, in *Martyrdom of Conon*, points to "the presence of the *Toledoth Yeshu* (the anti-gospel), even though *Mart. Pion.* seems to deny the existence in fact of an anti-Christian Jewish book."[286] According to Gero, there is a difficulty in attempting to interpret this passage:

---

[284] See Sherwin-White, "An Amendment," 23-4.

[285] den Boeft and Bremmer, "NM III," 118, original emphasis.

[286] Stephen Gero, "Jewish Polemic in the Martyrium Pionii and a 'Jesus' Passage from the Talmud," *JJS* 29 (1978): 165; see also Salisbury, *The Blood of Martyrs*, 108-9.

> Jesus himself practiced necromancy. *Prima facie* more likely is the interpretation that the charge consisted in the assertion that the disciples brought the phantom of Jesus back from the grave, and thus simulated the bodily resurrection of their master.[287]

The orator juxtaposes this story with the story of Saul:

> It is written that Saul inquired of a diviner, and that he said to the woman who was performing the necromancy, Bring up for me Samuel, the prophet. And the woman saw a man rising up wrapped in a robe, and Saul recognized that it was Samuel, and put to him the questions that he wanted. (14:2-3).

This story is a "lie" according to the orator since he had heard it "repeated now as though it were recent" even though he had heard it "uttered by Jewish people since [he] was a child" (14:1). Here, the orator is ambiguous and not clearly demarcating himself as a member of this community but only suggests this story is well known to him. He, however, does question the story and then posits his own parabolic response.

> Well, then, was the diviner able to bring up Samuel or not? If they say she was, then they admit that wickedness has more power then righteousness, and then they are accursed. If they say that she did not, then they should not assert it of Christ the Lord. But the explanation of this story is as follows. How was this wicked diviner, herself a demon, able to bring up the soul of the holy prophet that was resting in the bosom of Abraham? For the lesser is commanded by the greater. Surely then Samuel was not brought back, as these suppose? Of course not. The truth is somewhat as follows, Whenever anyone revolts from God he is followed by the rebel angels, and demonic ministers assist him with every sort of drug, magician, priest, and wizard. And no wonder: for the Apostle says: Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Indeed, even the Antichrist will appear as Christ. So the Samuel was not brought up from the grave; but rather demons from Hell disguised themselves as Samuel and thus appeared to the diviner and the faithless Saul (14:4-11).

---

[287] Gero, "Jewish Polemic," 166-7.

This story, of the witch of Endor, *Sam* 28:7-25, was also commented upon by others (e.g., Tertullian, Origen, and Eustathius) as well as Jews, e.g., Rabbi Abbahu.[288] The orator's reading is not original, to judge solely from the explanation he gives in 14:4-14. "Ce qu'il apporte de nouveau, c'est son application au debate juif-chrétien."[289] The orator is reading the Jewish community's narrative in harmony with the Apostle's writings, *2-Cor* 11:14-5. This reading is being given specifically to assist the members of his community who are being asked to justify their understandings of Jesus' ascension. Because the orator understands the complexity of his argument, he provides them with a simpler argument based on the community's ethos. He tells them to assert "we are stronger than you, who committed fornication and worshipped idols without being forced to" (14:15) and closes the oration, urging his community to "not yield to them in despair, my brethren but cleave to Christ by repentance; for he is merciful in receiving you back as his children" (14:6). Yet, within this final verse the orator is acknowledging those who have not remained faithful, perhaps even those who had turned in others from the community, and reminds them that they can repent and be accepted back into the community.

III.3.3 Comparing the First and Second Orations

When comparing the first and second orations the most obvious difference is the length. The first oration is only twenty-one verses (4:2-23), while the second oration is thirty-eight verses (12:3-14:6). The first oration uses images and metaphors from both the

---

[288] See Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 480-1; See also K. A. D. Smelik, "The Witch of Endor, I Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis till 800 A.D.," *VC* 33.2 (Jun. 1979): 160-79; and Gero, "Jewish Polemic," 165-6 n.9.

[289] Hilhorst, "L'Ancien Testament," 95.

Jewish and Pagan communities, while the second oration focuses solely on the Jewish community. There are two common images presented from the Jewish community.

The first is the image of the threshing-floor found at 4:13-14 and 12:11. In the first oration the orator uses this image to show that each community member will be judged and that one's actions are not reflected onto the entire community. The division of the wheat and the chaff is not passively done by the wind and not affected by an individual. The second oration, however, uses a much stronger manner to divide the wheat and the chaff, with Satan demanding a separation and the hand of the Word of God using a fiery winnowing-fork.

The second image is of Sodom and Gomorrah. The second oration (13:2) explicitly mentions this image and uses it to condemn the Jewish community for their actions against Christ. The first oration does not mention Sodom and Gomorrah by name, but the image is present with the mention of the Lydian Decapolis, which was "scorched by fire and remains an example of men's impiety" (4:21).

Another difference, though not directly related to the Jewish community, is the orator(s)' references to God. The first oration only identifies God at its close, stating that these things will be "accomplished by God through his Word, Jesus Christ" (4:23). The second oration, however, names God in many ways, calling him "Lord Jesus" (12:9), the "Word of God" (12:11), "Lord" (12:13), "Christ" (13:2, 8, 9, and 14:16), and "Jesus Christ" (14:14). In addition to this, the second oration mentions the "Holy Spirit" (13:1). Furthermore, the orator's community in the first oration is not spoken of as "my little children" and "my tender sons,"[290] as they are in the second oration. The community,

[290] *Mart. Pion.* 12:4.

from the first oration, is addressed implicitly through pronouns, which creates another difference in how the orator(s) speak of their own community.

A common aspect of questioning is found in both orations, though they are structured differently. The first oration centrally presents a cluster of rhetorical questions for the Jewish community. The intent of asking these questions is not to judge the Jewish community but to illustrate to them that they hold an incorrect understanding of the orator's community, just as one could hold an incorrect understanding of their community. This inaccuracy is exemplified in the statement: "[t]hen let them read to you the book of Judges, Kings, or Exodus, or all the other passages which prove them wrong" (4:12). The second oration, however, poses the questions differently, with the orator stating an idea from the Jewish community and telling his community to ask them about their texts in this way (e.g., 13:4-5 and 13:9). These questions are not rhetorical but instructive tools for the orator's community to use against the Jewish community. This is reinforced by the orator's discussion of the witch of Endor, which concludes with the comment: "[a]nd if you are unable to maintain this against them, tell them" (14:15). Along these same lines, the tone when discussing the other communities is much more aggressive, perhaps even antagonistic, in the second oration.

Moreover, the tone of the first oration with regard to the other communities promotes acceptance on the basis of the orator's use of their texts to solidify his arguments, using their language, metaphors, and images. The orator also promotes proper actions on the basis of the referenced texts. The second oration, however, blends the other community's texts with his own, creating a validating argument of why his community's beliefs are correct.

The final and most significant difference is the presentation of sacrificing. The first oration speaks of sacrificing during the cluster of questions: "Did we prosecute anyone? Did we force anyone to worship false gods? [...] Or partake of the sacrifices offered to the dead? [...] Do they ask why was it that some, without any pressure came to sacrifice of their own accord?" (4:9-13). These questions are being posed of the Jewish and Pagan communities and clearly relate to the orator's community being attacked for not offering sacrifice or cult to the Emperor. Indeed, the final verse of the second oration, solidifies this: "And so for this reason we do not worship your so-called gods, nor will we adore the golden idol" (4:23). These aspects of sacrifice are relevant to the Decian persecution and his edict, as noted in Chapter II.[291] Yet the second oration does not once mention sacrificing or offering cult to the Emperor, with the only idea of persecution mentioned being related to dying "for the name of their master" (13:5), which is not a part of the edict of Decius but instead a part of Trajan's.

On the basis of these observations on the second oration one must ask: is the second oration compatible within the interrogations and conversations of *Mart. Pion.*? The answer must be "no." The second oration does not speak of sacrifice or offering cult to the Emperor, nor does it advocate against such actions. Instead the rhetoric of the second oration is adversarial and in stark opposition to the other communities. This is unlike the first oration in that its rhetoric bases the ideas from the orator's community as a belief system that is central to understanding and promoting correct actions. In the first oration as well as the interrogations and conversations, the images, metaphors, and textual references are no longer depicted as Pagan or Jewish, but are developed from and

[291] See above pages 32-6.

now belong to Pionius' community. Thus, one must conclude that the second oration is contextually inconsistent with the rest of *Mart. Pion.* This allows for the possibility that it does not originate from the author of the first oration.

CHAPTER IV:
CONSTRUCTING ETHICS: POLITICAL DECREES AND BEING A MARTYR

The narratives of martyrs are a source of understandings concerning the Romans and their court procedures.[292] Bowersock explains that they are handed down from three types of accounts.[293] The first is the "alleged writings of martyrs."[294] These writings speak of the events that lead up to the martyrdom, including preparations and visions. The second type is the eyewitness account where "a sympathetic viewer has recorded his [or her] impressions relatively soon after the martyrdom."[295] The eyewitness might simply be telling their account of the martyrdom or they might be editing and presenting the writing of a martyr. Finally, there are "apparently official transcripts of the proceeding in which the martyr was interrogated before a Roman magistrate."[296] The focus of these writings is on the interrogations, the tortures, the sentencing, the custody of the martyr, and conclude with their death. *The Martyrdom of Pionius* harmonizes each of these accounts and presents Pionius and his companions' interrogations, tortures, their time in custody, concluding with Pionius' death.[297]

Perkins notes that "Ignatius was the first writer to use the word πάθος ('suffering') to describe Christ's death, and his choice underlines his focus [...] Ignatius, like Aristides, projected the suffering body as the meeting place of human and divine."[298] Pionius, who is located by the martyrologist in Smyrna (4:2), is in the same place that

---

[292] Brent Shaw, "Judicial Nightmares and Christian Memory," *JECS* 2 (2003): 533-63.

[293] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 27.

[294] Bowersock, *ibid.*

[295] Bowersock, *ibid.*

[296] Bowersock, *ibid.*

[297] Bowersock, *ibid.*

[298] Perkins, "The 'Self'," 263.

Ignatius writes to, "the city where Aristides took his icy plunge into the river and was rewarded with divine union."[299] Perkins states that "[i]n Ignatius the 'self' does not really come into being until it suffers; suffering is not simply something that happens to a person. Rather, it is the means of achieving real selfhood."[300] It is Ignatius who "linked the ideas of suffering and community, for he placed as strong a discursive emphasis on the community validated by suffering as on the suffering itself."[301] Unfortunately, because martyria were never canonized, we cannot know the precise role they held in a Christian community, but "they were no doubt widely circulated and read [...] and constituted a literature that at once inspired, entertained, edified and persuaded."[302] These texts were used to train and "to equip Christians to detach themselves from the body and sensible world and to prepare them to offer their bodies in a certain state of calm."[303]

Pionius' memory-text[304] is a writing that shows his convictions in opposition to the ruling authorities. Pionius received a vision of death[305] and actively made preparations for it. These preparations included the placing of chains around his and his companions' necks[306] and having a meal of "sacred bread and water" (3:1). The chains "were a symbol. When the soldiers had found Pionius, he and his friends were already bound and waiting. In a gesture of Christian passivity, they had given themselves up in

---

[299] Perkins, *ibid.*

[300] Perkins, *ibid.*, 264.

[301] Perkins, *ibid.*, 265.

[302] Richard A. Norris, Jr., "Apocryphal Writings and Acts of the Martyrs," in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (ed. Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth: New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 28.

[303] Young, *In Procession*, 11.

[304] *Mart. Pion.* 1:2.

[305] *Mart. Pion.* 2:2.

[306] *Mart. Pion.* 2:3.

bonds of their own making."[307] This meal, like the chains, binds the characters to each other as a community. They indicated to the antagonists that they will not be swayed to offer sacrifice and that they are "determined to be led off to prison forthwith" (2:4). This is reinforced in a separate conversation with Alexander in which Pionius details three reasons as to why they are wearing chains. He says,

> First of all [...] so that though we are passing through your city we might not be suspected of having come to eat forbidden foods; secondly that you may understand that we do not consent even to be questioned. Rather we have made our decision and are going not to the temple of Nemesis but to the public gaol. And lastly, that you may not seize us and take us off by force but rather leave us alone because we are already in chains. (6:3).

These self-imposed chains signify their "passive compliance" with the Roman community, who is attempting to force them to sacrifice,[308] and that they will remain loyal to their beliefs even at the cost of their lives.

Pionius' community, as seen in the interrogations, conversations, and first oration, is not totally separated from the communities of the Pagans and the Jews. Indeed, his teachings included ideas, metaphors, and texts from both communities, yet still position his God, his belief system, and his actions as superior to those around him. "For what makes Pionius's words intelligible is not an abstraction called 'life,' so much as a certain *way* of life."[309] There is an interaction between the communities, and the Jews and Pagans clearly already have some understandings of Pionius' community. They, however, do require clarifications at times, but the clarifications are not antagonistically offered and do not receive a negative response.

---

[307] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 461.

[308] Castelli, *Martyrdom ad Memory*, 100.

[309] Huebner, "Between Victory," 229.

The Roman governors and the crowds of men plead with the prisoners and attempt to find a compromise with them.[310] Pionius, however, will maintain his stance even when his body is being tortured,[311] because he is a Christian.[312] Thus, the aim of the pleas and the torture was "to make apostates, not martyrs. One could say without exaggeration that a governor who really wanted to execute Christians would be careful to avoid torturing them, lest they should apostatize and go free."[313] That is to say, a martyr is voluntarily dying[314] because he or she could have chosen apostasy, but instead follows his or her ethics and does not conform. Pionius' ethics show that one should respect another for their piety, "honour justice, have a sense of sympathy, and live in accordance with [one's] own laws" (16:6), yet the antagonists in *Mart. Pion.* do not do this. Instead, they repeatedly ask Pionius and his companions to sacrifice and offer cult to the Emperor. "The key element here is the absolute and stubborn refusal to compromise, even when threatened with death."[315]

As a presbyter and teacher of his church, Pionius' position reinforces his actions as authoritative and instructive, so he is consistent and does not diverge from the teachings of his church. Indeed, as a martyr, Pionius' action should be emulated by others from his community[316] and not forgotten, as members of the other communities have

---

[310] An example is "If a Christian refused to eat sacrificial meat, might he [or she] not offer a simple pinch of incense? Could he not sacrifice 'at least' to the Emperor, as if the Emperor was not such an intractable divinity? Perhaps he [or she] could 'swear by the fortune of the Emperor,' just a simple little oath." Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 421; see also *Mart. Pion.* 8:4 and *Mart. Poli.* 9-10.

[311] *Mart. Pion.* 15:5-7, 20:2, and 21:3-4.

[312] *Mart. Pion.* 8:2, 8:4, and 9:2.

[313] de Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians," 20.

[314] Droge and Tabor, *A Noble Death*, 153.

[315] Droge and Tabor, *ibid.*, 71.

[316] *Mart. Pion.* 7:1 and 22:4.

done.[317] Sabina, before her interrogation by Polemon, accepts Pionius' counsel and lies about her name.[318] This lie will protect Sabina from being returned to "the hands of the immoral Politta, who had been her former mistress" (9:3). However, when Asclepiades (potentially) offers a sacrifice, Pionius is not protective, rather he is quick to state, "[e]ach man has his own life to lead. This has nothing to do with me." (10:5-6). That is to say, the actions of Asclepiades are his own and are not reflective of Pionius' or those of the other members of his community.[319]

Pionius is being tortured for his religious beliefs, which include his refusal to sacrifice, and this places Pionius' identity at the forefront of this text. Had he denied his faith and sacrificed to anything, this story would no longer be of value as a text that forms Christian identity. The act of identifying with Christ forms a unity with others in the community who have suffered and provides encouragement to those who will. Indeed, Pionius' body will not be presented as experiencing pain: "[h]is ears were not distorted; his hair lay in order on the surface of his head; and his beard was full as though with the first blossom of hair. His face shone once again" (22:3-4a). In addition to this, Pionius' physical appearance changed and became brighter once he knew of his impending martyrdom.[320] On the basis of this, the martyrologist argues "Christians were all the more confirmed in the faith, and those who had lost the faith returned dismayed and with fearful consciences" (22:4).

---

[317] *Mart. Pion.* 4:4-6.

[318] *Mart. Pion.* 9:2.

[319] Another example from *Mart. Pion.* is 15:2-3, when Eutemon, one of the leaders from the church, is persuaded and offers sacrifice, but Pionius who does not directly address this but states that he will "await the arrival of the proconsul" (15:3).

[320] "Lui [Pionius] qui est toujours pâle, comment a-t-il maintenant le visage si ardent" (10:2).

This martyrium is a paraenesis since it functions as an exhortation for Christians to resist the Roman powers even to the point of death. In addition to this they will be vindicated both by their death as witness and at the eschaton. Thus, martyria do not focus on the suffering of the individual but rather on their lack of pain. The martyr becomes a being who can cross boundaries, a kind of traveller. S/he is in control of his or her own destiny and will later assist in the destiny of others, by assisting them to enter Heaven. A martyr, however, can never return to their original position. They must die to complete the act and are no longer a part of society, but can affect the relationships of others.

The authorities inflict sufferings upon the martyr's body in an attempt to control their individual actions and those of the others in the community who hold a similar belief system. These kinds of physical narratives inform and locate the martyr's body "as a field of combat on which the torturers and their victims duel."[321] This duel was actively anticipated and foreshadowed in *Mart. Pion.* when Pionius receives his vision and accepts his (and his companions') fate and starts preparing by fastening chains to their bodies.

These sufferings locate the martyr's body on a battlefield whereby the martyr will forgo his or her life in order to win the battle. This is a paradoxical battle with the nature of the martyr's body as being victorious only when it succumbs to the ruling authorities. "In presenting himself and his companions as soldiers, athletes, and sacrifices in the conflict between two societies and their religions, Pionius repeats and modifies earlier themes in the literature of martyrdom – and in the performance of martyrdom."[322] That is to say, martyrs altered how death in the amphitheatre is perceived, away from that of a

[321] Tilley, "The Ascetic Body," 467.

[322] Young, *In Procession*, 30.

criminal dying with shame and dishonour. They construct a new memory of death in the amphitheatre as a honourable and respected place to die for not only themselves but also for any other potential martyr.[323]

This battle is also political in that people in society, rulers and lay, impose claims on an individual's body regarding policies for both the public and private spheres of life. These claims restrict the ethical and moral actions of all individuals and instruct their physical performances. Furthermore, the individuals who attempt to present their goals as corrective to society are those who write these policies.

These policies are restrictive and create a contextual struggle over their ethical and moral meanings and significance. Pionius' refusal is political and includes the restructuring of the religious frame of reference that is both moral and theological. The religious frame of reference is unique to an individual, although it should be adhered to communally.[324] In addition, the policies are always rewritten through the manipulation of bodies. The martyrs, as part of their punishment, were paraded naked in the amphitheatre in front of the communities and their bodies were then tortured. These actions were meant to degrade Christians and present them as criminals and social outcasts.

This shift effectively subverts the power of the Empire and transforms its negative decree into a Christian decree that encompasses the rites of martyrdom. This transformation affirms the tortures of the present martyr but also that of those others who

---

[323] Shaw proposes this when he writes, "The body was indeed the site of a struggle. The spectacular trials and executions of the Christians are but an extreme instance of the use of force to elicit a certain public behaviour from subject bodies, to inscribe one sort of ideology on the body. In this case, it was rejected. Not only did such attempts fail in individual cases – the cumulative effect of individual acts of resistance compelled a final failure in the long term. This observation would suggest that bodies could be self-inscribed with ideologies that ran wholly contrary to those of the dominant power" ("Body/Power/Identity," 311).

[324] These claims are also based on Pionius' understandings of punishment in the afterlife (see *Mart. Pion.* 7:3-6).

are mentioned in the martyria, in this case Polycarp, Pionius' companions, and of course, Jesus. *The Martyrdom of Pionius* has the ability to speak multi-vocally on the basis of the presentation of the protagonist's construction of morality and justice. This construction is influenced by the eschaton. That is to say, the act of writing and rewriting is done not only by and to the martyr's body but also by the edited text (as well as the journal) that they composed for future use in their community. As Peter Brown notes, "*Hic locus est*: 'Here is the place, '"[325] which is to say that the function of the martyria was to retain the memories of the past, including people and events, but these stories also convey for anyone an accessible understanding of the present. Texts, therefore, create an interpretive dialogue that transcends time by allowing the past to remain present through memory.

Memories produce constructions of individual identity and of systems of power, which are never complete and are never obsolete. There is an active understanding that the memorialized events happened in a different time but that they remain important in the present. Similarly, these memories or memory-texts, like other decrees, were consistently structured and became standardized, with the notion of refusing to sacrifice. This refusal, like politics, holds religious and ethical implications.

IV.1 Possibilities for Future Research

The Martyrdom of Pionius as a text presents many areas of future research into discussions of the body, notions of writing, ethics, and of course, the ideas of community presented therein. Unfortunately, scholars tend to use it as a supportive text and not to read it on its own terms. The three main objectives of this thesis focus on notions of

---

[325] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Late Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 86.

writing with and through the actions of the body and these constitute my attempt at beginning this task.

My first objective was to show how martyria function to create an individual and cultural memory. To accomplish this objective I called attention to key events and discussions in *Mart. Pion.*, focusing my attention, though not exclusively, on *Mart. Pion.* as a case study, and I showed this text as representative of the topics of martyrdom, writing, memory and the construction of communal identity.

My second objective showed communal memory as being able to influence the ideas of the communities who are presented within the text. The accomplishment of this objective uses two forms of analysis. The first analysis engaged the act of martyrdom from a sociological perspective, showing Pionius' actions throughout *Mart. Pion.* as those of a martyr. The second analysis characterizes the interactions of the Jewish, Christian, and Pagan communities throughout individual sections of *Mart. Pion.* (the interrogations, conversations, and orations). Scholars' assumptions concerning the parting of the Jewish and Christian community affect their readings of *Mart. Pion.* and therefore inaccurately depict these interactions as anti-Judaic. By focusing on the individual sections and how each presents these three communities, I show that the second oration does not fit in the context of the remainder of the text and that the character, Pionius, presents his community not in opposition to, but instead, differentiating from the others.

Finally, my third objective shows martyria and martyrdom as acts that function in relation to Roman edicts based on the ethical ideals presented. By conjoining the two analyses of martyrs and martyrdom with the interactions of the Jewish, Christian, and

Pagan communities, this objective is met. The result presents *Mart. Pion.* as a text that writes the memories for a community; these are both politically and pedagogically salvific.

Power discourses, as I show, affect the body and how it is used as a channel for communication while locating the process of writing as a form of resistance. Future research should broaden the scope of this idea and consider how all forms of writing are acts of (political) resistance. More specifically, future work will analyze how other communities' writings passively and actively intrude on the text (that is, the written account and the martyr's body). Indeed, understanding the passivity of the Christian martyr's body, which voluntarily accepts death, is essential to the power discourse that is never entirely silent, because even though there are no screams of pain at the moment of torture, there is an oration and a text left behind to be read again.

In addition to the above project, a further might assess how texts that broach the sociological, religious, and political ideas of communities (such as, Christians, Jews, and Romans) interact with the question of membership. That is, work needs to be done to explore how a sect is formed and stabilized on the basis of notions of individual and communal memory. This discussion requires specificity with regard to how the communities are described individually and in relation to others. Each text must be read to separate the scholarly suppositions of the compositional era from the actual events being depicted in the text proper. This will create a balanced construction of how an individual author depicts membership in relation with, and in opposition to, idealized memory.

Finally, I would suggest that research needs to assess how the genealogical language, which is not unique to *Mart. Pion.* but found throughout other martyria, reinforces social bonds and influences the dominant understandings of religion as ethnic and regional. Indeed, this genealogical focus relates to understanding of membership and must also explore the impact of female martyrs and textual presentation of women. This comparison is needed because, like the paradoxical nature of the martyr's body, females are generally understood as being dominated by ruling forces. However, one should question the female's level of acceptance as a means to obtain control and perhaps even rewrite their role in history.

LITERATURE CITED

Alexander, Patrick H., John F. Kutsko, James D. Ernest, Shirley Decker-Lucke, and David L. Petersen. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, Mass.: 1999.

Amat, Jacqueline. *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité; suivi des Actes.* Source chrétienne 417. Paris: Les éditions Cerf, 1996.

Arditi, George. "Role as Cultural Concept." *Theory and Society* 16.4 (1987): 565-91.

Attwater, Donald. *Martyrs: From St Stephen to John Tung*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1957.

Ball, Allan. *Modern Politics and Government.* London: Macmillan Education, 1988.

Barnes, T. D. "Legislation Against the Christians." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 58 (1968): 32-50.

Barton, Carol A. "Savage Miracles: The Redemption of Lost Honor in Roman Society and the Sacrament of the Gladiator and the Martyr." *Representations* 45 (1994): 41-71.

Becker, Adam H. and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003.

Bowersock, Glen. W. *Martyrdom and Rome*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Repr., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Boyarin, Daniel. *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Brown, Peter. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Late Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Burnet, Regis. *Epitres et lettres, I et II siècle: de Paul de Tarse à Polycarp de Smyrne*. Paris: Les éditions Cerf, "Lectio Divina, 192," 2003.

Cadoux, C. J. *Ancient Smyrna: A History of the City From the Earliest Times to 324 A.D.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Castelli, Elizabeth. *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Colardelle, M. "Églises et sépultures dans les Alpes du Nord (Aoste, Genève, Grenoble, Lyon et Vienne)." *Actes du XIe Congrès International d'Archéologie Chrétienne, 2. Rome: École Française*. [S.l]: Pontificio Ist di Archeologia Chr, (1989): 1535-1549.

Davies, Paul E. "Early Christian Attitudes toward Judaism and the Jews." *Journal of Bible and Religion* 13.2 (1945): 72-82.

de Ste. Croix, G. E. M. "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution." *The Harvard Theological Review* 47.2 (1954): 75-113.

---------. "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?" *Past and Present* 26 (1963): 6-38.

Dehanschutter, Boudewijn. *Martyrium Polycarpi: een literair-kritische studie*. Leuven: University Press & Peeters, 1979.

Delehaye, Hippolyte. *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*. Rev. et cor. ed. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1966.

den Boeft, Jan. "Are you their Teacher? (Mart Pionii 19.6)." *Studia Patristica* 21 (1989): 60-5.

den Boeft, Jan and Jan Bremmer. "Notiunculae Martyrologicae." *Vigiliae Christianae* 35.1 (1981): 43-56.

---------. "Notiunculae Martyrologicae III. Some Observations on the Martyria of Polycarp and Pionius." *Vigiliae Christianae* 39.2 (1985): 110–30.

Dodds, E. R. *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.

Droge, Arthur J. and James D. Tabor. *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews In Antiquity*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.

Easton, David. *A Framework for Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965.

Eriner, Eugine and Anita Weiner, *The Martyrs Conviction: A Sociological Analysis.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.

Feldman, Louis H. *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Francis, James A. Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

Fredriksen, Paula and Adele Reinhartz, eds. *Jesus, Judaism, and Christian anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

Frend, W. H. C. *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus*. New York: New York University Press, 1967.

---------. "The Failure of the Persecutions in the Roman Empire." *Past and Present* 16 (1959): 10-30.

Gebhardt, O von. "Das Martyrium des heiligen Pionius." *Archiv für slavische Philologie* 18.1-2 (1896): 156-71.

Gero, Stephen. "Jewish Polemic in the Martyrium Pionii and a 'Jesus' Passage from the Talmud." *Journal of Jewish Studies* 29 (1978): 164-8.

Gibson, E. Leigh. "Jewish Antagonism or Christian Polemic: The Case of the Martyrdom of Pionius." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9.3 (2001): 339-58.

Grant, R. M. *Early Christianity and Society*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977.

Grégoire, H. "Les Persécutions dans l'Empire Romain." *Académie royale de Belgique, Mémoires* 46 (1951).

Hecht, Richard. "Studies on Sacrifice, 1970-1980." *Religious Studies Review* 8 (1982): 253-259.

Hilhorst, A. "L'Ancien Testament dans la polémique du martyr Pionios." *Augustinianum* 22 (1982): 91-6.

Hubert, Henri and Marcel Mauss. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Huebner, Chris K. "Between Victory and Victimhood: Reflections on Culture and Martyrdom." *Direction* 34:2 (2005): 228-40.

Jones, C. P. "Flavia Politta and Manilius Fuscus." *Classical Philology* 84.2 (1989): 129-36.

Jungmann, Josef A. *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great*. Translated by Francis A. Brunne. Notre Dame, India: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *The Journals of Kierkegaard*. Translated by Alexander Dru. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959.

Kreider, A. *Worship and Evangelism in Pre-Christendom*. Cambridge: Grove Books, 1995.

Lane Fox, Robin. *Pagans and Christians*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986.

Lieu, Judith. *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*. New York: T & T Clark, 2002.

MacMullen, Ramsay. *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400)*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984.

---------. "The Historical Role of the Masses in Late Antiquity." Pages 250-76 in *Changes in the Roman Empire: Essays in the Ordinary*. Edited by Ramsay MacMullen. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.

MacMullen, Ramsay and Eugene N. Lane, eds., *Paganism and Christianity, 100-425 C.E.: A Sourcebook*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

McLynn, Neil B. "Christian Controversy and Violence in the Fourth Century." *Kodai* 3 (1992): 15-44.

Mertens, C. "Les Premiers Martyrs et leurs rêves: Cohésion de l'histoire et des rêves dans quelques 'Passions' Latines de l'Afrique du Nord." *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 81 (1986): 5-46.

Momigliano, Arnaldo. *The Development of Greek Biography: Four Lectures by Arnaldo Momigliano*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Mühlenberg, Ekkehard. "The Martyr's Death and its Literary Presentation." *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997): 85-93.

Musurillo, Herbert Anthony. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs: Introduction, Texts and Translations by Herbert Musurillo*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Norris, Richard A. Jr. "Apocryphal Writings and Acts of the Martyrs." Pages 28-35 in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Olick, K. and Joyce Robins. "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-40.

Perkins, Judith. "The 'Self' as Sufferer." *The Harvard Theological Review* 85.3 (1992): 245-72.

---------. *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Potter, D. S. "Martyrdom and Spectacle." Pages 53-88 in *Theatre and Society in the Classical World*. Edited by R. Scodel. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993.

---------. *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1990.

Preux, R. "Réflexions sur l'histoire des communatés chrétiennes de Lyon et de Vienne au second siècle." *Littérature et religion; mélanges offerts à Monsieur Joseph Coppin.* [S.l]: Mélanges de science religieuse, 23e année, Supplement (1966): 3-6.

Price, S. R. F. *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Riddle, Donald W. *The Martyrs: A Study in Social Control*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931.

Rives, J. B. "Human sacrifice among Pagans and Christians." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995): 65-85.

---------. "The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999): 135-54.

Robert, Louis. *Hellenica: recueil d'épigraphie, de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques,* I-XIII. Limoges-Paris, 1940-65.

---------. *Le martyre de Pionios prêtre de Smyrne: Édité, traduit et commenté par Louis Robert*. Edited by Glen W. Bowersock and C. P. Jones. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994.

---------. *Les Gladiateurs dans L'Orient Grec*. Paris, 1940.

---------. "Une vision de Perpétue martyre à Carthage en 203." *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* (1982): 228-76.

Schäfer, Peter. *Judeophobia: Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient World.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Schoedel, William R. *Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragments of Papias.* Camden, N.J.: Thomas Nelson, 1967.

Schwartz, Seth. *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Shaw, Brent, D. "Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4:3 (1996): 269-312.

---------. "Judicial Nightmares and Christian Memory." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* II (2003): 533-63.

Sherwin-White, A. N. "The Early Persecution and Roman Law Again." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 3 (1952): 199-213.

---------. "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted? – An Amendment." *Past and Present* 27 (1964): 23-7.

Simon, Marcel. *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135-425)*. Translated by H. McKeating. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Smelik, K. A. D. "The Witch of Endor, I Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis till 800 A.D." *Vigiliae Christianae* 33.2 (June 1979): 160-79.

Société Bollandistes. "Christian Hagiography." No pages. Cited 12 June 2007. Online: http://www.kbr.be/~socbooll/.

Srapian, M. "Das Martyrium des hl. Pionios. Aus dem Altarmenischen übersetzt." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 28 (1914): 376-405.

Tabbernee, W. "Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian ministry in Carthage c. 203 C.E." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32.4 (2005): 421-44.

Tilley, Maureen A. "The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59.3 (1991): 467-79.

Trites, Allison A. "Μάρτυς and Martyrdom in the Apocalypse." *Novum Testamentum* 15.1 (1973): 72-80.

Turcan, Robert. *The Cults of the Roman Empire*. Translated by Antonia Nevill. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Valantasis, Richard. "Constructions of Power in Asceticism." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63.4 (1995): 775-821.

van Henten, Jan Willem and Friedrich Avemarie. *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity*. London: Routledge, 2002.

van Henten, Jan Willem and Athalya Brenner, eds., "Families and Family Relations as Represented in Early Judaisms and Christianities: Texts and Fictions: Papers Read at a NOSTER colloquium in Amsterdam June 9-11, 1998." Leiden: Deo, 2000.

Wantage, Cyrilla, "Pionius of Smyrna." Studia Patristica X (1967): 281-4.

Wilken, Robert Louis. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. 2nd ed. London: Yale University Press, 2003.

Yerkes, Royden K. *Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.

Young, Robin Darling. *In Procession Before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity*. Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2001.

Zelizer, Barbie. "Reading the Past Against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies." *Studies in Mass Communication* 12 (1995): 214-39.

Zizek, Slavoj. *The Fragile Absolute, or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* London: Verso, 2000.