The Beheading of John the Baptist in the First Three Centuries: Memory, Violence, and Reception

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of Liverpool Hope University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy:

Nathan L. Shedd

Centre for the Social Scientific Study of the Bible

Institute of Theology

St. Mary's University (Twickenham, London)

01 August 2019

ABSTRACT

St. Mary's University
Nathan L. Shedd
"The Beheading of John the Baptist in the First Three Centuries: Memory, Violence, and Reception"

This study focuses on the reception of John the Baptist's beheading in the first three centuries. The primary question that drives this investigation is: What impact did John's beheading have on its reception during this time period? To answer this question, the study breaks into five chapters. Chapter one reviews previous scholarship on John's death and asks how the question of reception compares to other scholarly efforts. This review shows that scholars have largely overlooked this question. Chapter two asks how historians might conceptualize and approach reception history. I argue that social memory theory offers helpful theoretical and analytical frameworks in this regard. Specifically, traditions of bodily violence become sites of contestation in commemorative activity. Those who harness a violent past in identity formation often transform the degrading potential of bodily mutilation so that the symbolically freighted violence is not debilitating to present needs. Chapter three traces the symbolic potential of beheading in John's general context. I argue that beheading constituted a degrading form of bodily violence that not only emasculated the victim, but also interrupted proper burial and reincorporation in life in the hereafter. Chapters four and five proceed to ask how early recipients of John's beheading engage this social script. Chapter four argues that Mark contests the degrading potential of John's beheading. Although Mark acknowledges the degrading social script of beheading, he brings it into tension with other elements that cast John and Herod respectively as positive and negative figures: (i) the moral corruption of the Herodian court as those whose "will" is opposed to God's will; (ii) the emasculation of Antipas and the masculinity of John the Baptist; (iii) the keying of John's beheading to Jesus' crucifixion; (iv) the portrayal of Herod as entertaining the ludicrous notion of a beheaded man's resurrection (or the depiction of Herod as paranoid because of John's improper burial). Chapter five argues that the contest over John's degrading death takes anti-Jewish turns. Particularly salient in this respect are Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* and Origen's *Commentary on Matthew*. Both authors redeploy the tradition so that Herod Antipas' actions against the prophet become symbols for contemporary Jewish action. Justin and Origen activate the negative characterization of Antipas, making Antipas' moral coloration emblematic of "the Jews." In so doing, they perpetuate an image of "the Jews" as killers of God's prophets. What impact, therefore, did John's beheading have on its early reception history? In light of these commemorative maneuvers underlying the tradition's history, this study argues that the impact of John's death is characterized by a dangerous synchroneity. On the one hand, John's beheading was a salient image that early recipients harnessed and contested in their works of self-definition. On the other hand, as part of the work of identity formation, the tradition developed in anti-Jewish directions. In this respect, the memory of John's beheading became "violent."

Word Count: 98,703

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare the following to be true:

1. This thesis and the work to which it refers are the results of my own efforts.

2. This thesis has not been previously submitted for an award of this University or any other institution.

3. The content of this thesis is legally allowable under copyright legislation.

Signed: .....

Print Name: ..... Nathan L. Shedd .....

Date: ..... 01 Aug. 2019 .....

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would never have seen the light of day if not for the constant encouragement, support, and financial assistance of certain individuals and institutions. I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor James Crossley and Professor Chris Keith. Both were ideal mentors and conversation partners throughout every stage of this project. They struck the perfect balance of offering encouragement in moments of dejection and blunt critique in times of overconfidence. St. Mary's University generously sponsored my studies, providing a full EU-tuition scholarship and annual stipend, which allowed me the unique opportunity to study in residence in London. I am also grateful for the DAAD grant, provided by Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, which allowed me the honor of participating in the "German and Theology" program at Mainz in their 2017 Summer School.

Thanks also to the numerous family and friends who showed an interest in my studies and offered frequent encouragement: Alan Shedd, Dottie Shedd, Greggory Shedd, Stephanie Shedd, Matthew Shedd, Kylie Shedd, Curtis Shedd, Carolyn Shedd, Chance Smith, John Collins, Arlene Collins, Sarah Warren, Mark Warren, Noel Beach, Carolyn Beach, Richard Frank, Jon Wooden, Rachel Wooden, Emily Wooden, Esther Wooden, Annick Shaswar, and Mash Shaswar. I also wish to express my thanks to my New Testament colleague, Justin Daneshmand, who lifted me out of the pit at the moment of my deepest despair.

Portions of chapter three were presented at conferences in Twickenham, London (the Centre for the Social-Scientific Study of the Bible's "Christian Origins and Social-Scientific Criticism: Past, Present, and Future," May 2018), Bertinoro, Italy (CISSR's annual meeting of Christian Origins, September 2018), and Denver, Colorado (Annual SBL, November 2018). And research from chapter four was presented in Rome, Italy (Annual ISBL, July 2019). My thanks to the participants at these conferences for their thoughtful responses and questions.

I especially want express my gratitude to the individuals who carefully read (portions of) this manuscript in the midst of their busy schedules and offered helpful feedback: Dr. Sarah Rollens, Grace Emmett, Brandon Massey, Arlene Collins, Matthew Shedd, Scott Robertson, and Dani Robertson. Additionally, I would like to convey a warm thanks to Dr. L. D. Campbell and Dr. Rafael Rodríguez: I am truly honored to have you both as mentors. I hope this manuscript not only impresses you, but makes you proud. I would like to express my love to my cats, Opal and October, and *the* best dog in the world, Meatloaf. Finally, I dedicate this work to my best friend and wife, Kristen. You are the Pam to my Jim. I hope I am worthy of being the Dwight to your Michael.

Nathan Shedd

Twickenham, London

28 July 2019

ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations used in this work follow the *SBL Handbook of Style* (2nd ed.). The following is a list of abbreviations not found therein.

Africa	*Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*
Annu. Rev. Anthropol.	*Annual Review of Anthropology*
ARS	*Annual Review of Sociology*
ASR	*American Sociological Review*
BG	Biblische Gestalten
BibAn	*The Biblical Annals*
BibH	Bibliothèque Historique
CAHS	Clarendon Ancient History Series
CSR	Contributions to the Study of Religion
DJCR	*A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*
EC	*Early Christianity*
EDEJ	*The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*
EJD	*Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*
Gend Hist	*Gender and History*
HerdBS	Herders Biblische Studien
ISIM	*Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World*
JFS	*Journal of Forensic Science*
J. Hum. Rights	*Journal of Human Rights*
J South Hist	*Journal of Southern History*
JUS	*Journal of Unification Studies*
LibTT	The Library of Theological Translations
MCM	Medien und kulturelle Erinnerung/Media and Cultural Memory
MAQ	*Medical Anthropology Quarterly*
Millennium-J Int	*Millennium: Journal of International Studies*
Mem Stud	Memory Studies
MSAW	Münchner Studien zur Alten Welt
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NLF	*Natural Law Forum*
NTMo	New Testament Monographs
PaThSt	Paderborner Theologische Studien
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PMMS	Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies
PrTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
REHJ	*The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus*
RJF3C	The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries
SJHC	Studies in Jewish History and Culture
Soc Sci Q	*Social Science Quarterly*
SSRH	Sociological Studies in Roman History
STr	Scriptural Traces
SVC	Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*

INTRODUCTION

Immediately, the king ordered the executioner
to bring his [John the Baptist's] head.
Having departed, he beheaded him in the prison
and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl;
and the girl gave it to her mother.
When his disciples heard,
they came and took his body and placed it in a tomb.[1]

Because history is about effects and consequences
as much as it is about the causes and conditions,
an account of its impact and aftermath is indeed
an integral part of all good historiography.[2]

Focus, Inquiry, and Argument

This study concentrates on the memory of the beheading of John the Baptist in the first three centuries. "Memory surrounds us and defines us."[3] As J. Assmann claims: "There is no understanding without memory, no existence without tradition."[4] The present's mobilization of the apical past is essential to the formation and preservation of collective identities (tribes, families, nations, religious groups, etc.). Individuals and collectivities invoke their salient past to solidify social bonds and reinforce boundary demarcations in their present horizons.[5] As the past can be approached only from the vantage point of the ever-shifting horizon of the present, significant social memories are in constant fluctuation. In this regard, the salient past resembles "moving pictures," to borrow Capps' metaphor.[6] Archetypal memories thus iteratively shape—and are repeatedly (re)shaped in—the present, as they are re-*present*ed.

1 Mark 6:27–29. All translations of primary sources are my own unless otherwise indicated.

2 Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study*, STI (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 168.

3 J. Shawn Landres and Oren Baruch Stier, "Introduction," in *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, ed. Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1.

4 Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 27.

5 Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 20.

6 Walter H. Capps, *Religious Studies: The Making of a Discipline* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 343.

Because our view of the past is always in motion (by virtue of our coterminous relationship with the present), history is not merely about a static image of the "actual past." Nor is historiography only about the reconstruction of originating stimuli of the past. History must also be about the reverberations of the past in multiple presents. Historians, consequently, must give attention to dynamic temporalities, not merely stationary time.[7] Put otherwise, scholars must offer an account of the reception of the past in its previous presents.

In this vein, *this study focuses on the reverberations of the beheading of John the Baptist in its early reception history*. The principal question that drives this investigation is: What *impact* did John's beheading have on its reception?[8] This question does not imply isolating, in distinction from other socio-cultural influences, the empirical effectiveness of a text (Mark 6:17–29) on a receiver.[9] Nor is this question primarily concerned with charting the *Auslegungsgeschichte* ("exegetical history") or the potential meanings of the textualized traditions of John's death.[10] Rather, in recognition of the observation that present social conditions activate and frame individuals' and groups' recollections of salient pasts—especially in efforts of self-definition—the question of reception, for this study, is concerned with early appropriations of John's beheading in identity articulation.[11]

Particularly since the time Ulrich Luz began publishing his four-volume commentary on Matthew in the series Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, an

[7] Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, "Introduction," in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 37.

[8] My employment of the unqualified "John" in this study will be in reference to "John the Baptist" unless otherwise made explicit.

[9] Cf. Heikki Räisänen, "The Effective 'History' of the Bible: A Challenge to Biblical Scholarship?," *SJT* 45 (1992): 303–24.

[10] See, Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 30, who suggests that in the reception of a literary work one can discern "the successive unfolding of the potential for meaning."

[11] In other words, I focus on the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of John's beheading—the negotiation between (or the co-presence of) the past and the present in the instances in which John's decapitation is recalled. On *Wirkungsgeschichte* as a principle of the interconnection between the past and the present—and not a method of investigation—in Gadamer's usage, see, Robert Evans, *Reception History, Tradition and Biblical Interpretation: Gadamer and Jauss in Current Practice*, STr 4; LNTS 510 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 1–9. On treating receptions of the past as instances of memory, see chapter two of this study.

explosion of "reception" publications has surfaced in biblical scholarship.[12] For example, in 1995, Bockmuehl traced the reception of Phil 2:5–11 in patristic literature.[13] In his 1999 study Blomquist focused on patristic interpretations of Luke 14:1–24.[14] Parris' 2009 monograph included analysis of the post-history of Matt 17:15 and Matt 22:1–14.[15] In 2011, Joynes examined the post-history of the silence of the women at the tomb (Mark 16:8).[16] In 2012, Edwards studied the reception of the ransom logion (Mark 10:45//Matt 20:28).[17] In his 2014 monograph, R. Evans traced the reception of a series of texts containing the Pauline imperative "be subject to."[18] In 2018, Akiyama tracked the post-history of Lev 19:18 in Second Temple Jewish and NT texts.[19] Also in 2018, Crossley produced a monograph on the reception of the Bible and religion in English political discourse.[20]

These works are just the "tip of the iceberg" of scholarly research on the reception of the Bible. In 2002, Christopher Rowland and Christine Joynes founded Oxford University's *Centre for Reception History of the Bible*.[21] By my count, sixteen volumes have emerged in the *Blackwell Bible Commentary* series, a series chiefly dedicated to the reception of the

[12] Ulrich Luz, *Das Evangelium Nach Matthäus*, 4 vols., EKKNT (Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1985–2002). Interest in the influence of the NT, of course, predates Luz. See, e.g., Ernst von Dobschütz, "Bible in the Church," ed. James Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1909), 2:579–615.

[13] Markus Bockmuehl, "A Commentator's Approach to the 'Effective History' of Philippians," *JSNT* 60 (1995): 57–88.

[14] Gregory L. Blomquist, "Patristic Reception of a Lukan Healing Account: A Contribution to a Socio-Rhetorical Response to Willi Braun's Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14," in *Healing in Religion and Society From Hippocrates to the Puritans*, ed. J. Kevin Coyle and Steven C. Muir (Lewiston: Mellen, 1999), 105–34.

[15] David Paul Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, PrTMS 107 (Eugene: Pickwick, 2009), esp. 202–74.

[16] Christine E. Joynes, "The Sound of Silence: Interpreting Mark 16:1–8 through the Centuries," *Int* 65 (2011): 18–29.

[17] J. Christopher Edwards, *The Ransom Logion in Mark and Matthew*, WUNT 327 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

[18] Evans, *Reception History, Tradition and Biblical Interpretation*.

[19] Kengo Akiyama, *The Love of Neighbour in Ancient Judaism: The Reception of Leviticus 19:18 in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, the Book of Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament*, AGJU 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

[20] James G. Crossley, *Cults, Martyrs, and Good Samaritans: Religion in Contemporary English Political Discourse* (London: Pluto, 2018).

[21] For a report on the Centre's activity since its inception see, Christine E. Joynes, "Changing Horizons: Reflections on a Decade at Oxford University's Centre for Reception History of the Bible," *JBRec* 1 (2014): 161–71.

Bible. The appearance of the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, the *Journal of the Bible and Its Reception*, Bloomsbury's annual volume in their *Biblical Reception* series, and the 2018 launch of the *Visual Commentary on Scripture* online project (funded by a two-million USD donation by billionaires Roberta and Howard Ahmanson) all attest to this burgeoning area of inquiry. As Joynes rightly claims, reception history is no longer "'*terra incognita*'" as Bockmuehl had previously described it in 1995.[22]

Although reception history captivates much scholarly interest, the early reception of John's beheading has received little attention by NT scholars (see chapter one). This gap is not indicative of John's insignificance as a historical figure. The historical Baptist, as many scholars suggest, was "the prime mover of the Jesus movement."[23] Nor does this gap suggest that John's importance waned in the decades and centuries following his death. In the preface of his 2018 monograph, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, Marcus rightly recognizes that "John the Baptist was a key figure in the parting of the ways."[24] He proceeds to confess, however, that he does not know "how to make the parting-of-the-ways project gel into a book" and so he "wrote this book" instead.[25] The present study does not steer clear of John's impact on the "parting of the ways," but steps into these tumultuous waters. I propose, moreover, that social memory theory offers a helpful way to navigate this terrain (see chapter two).

[22] Joynes, "Changing Horizons," 168, quoting Bockmuehl, "A Commentator's Approach," 60.

[23] Knut Backhaus, "Echoes from the Wilderness: The Historical John the Baptist," in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, ed. Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2:1747. See also, Jens Schröter, *Jesus of Nazareth: Jew from Galilee, Savior of the World*, trans. Wayne Coppins (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 86: "The encounter with John is the first historically certain event of the life of Jesus." On the problems of asserting—by means of the criterion of embarrassment—the historicity of Jesus' baptism by John, see, Rafael Rodríguez, "The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus: The Criterion of Embarrassment and the Failure of Historical Authenticity," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, ed. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 132-151. For a recent study that questions the historian's ability to access the historical John the Baptist, see, Rivka Nir, *The First Christian Believer: In Search of John the Baptist*, NTMo 38 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2019).

[24] Joel Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018), ix.

[25] Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, ix.

The question of reception arises with respect to John's death in particular because of the *violence* of his demise. As chapter four will observe, the earliest written account of John's death (Mark 6:17–29) fixates on the bodily harm applied to John's person during Herod's birthday banquet: (1) Herodias compels her daughter to ask Herod for John's "head" (κεφαλήν, 6:24); (2) the girl requests Herod to give her "on a platter, the head (κεφαλήν) of John the Baptist" (6:25); (3) Herod obliges and orders an executioner to deliver John's "head" (κεφαλήν, 6:27); (4) the executioner "beheads" (ἀπεκεφάλισεν) John in prison (6:27); (5) the executioner brings "his head (κεφαλήν) on a platter" (6:28); (6) Herod (or the executioner) delivers "it [the head]" (αὐτήν) to the girl (6:28); (7) the girl "gives it [the head]" (αὐτήν) to Herodias (6:28); (8) John's head is separated from its body's entombment—John's disciples take his "body" (πτῶμα) and entomb "it [the body]" (αὐτό, 6:29). Mark 6:24–29 employs no less than nine finite verbs to describe the desired or implemented action taken with respect to John's whole person, bodiless head, or headless body. Mark's introduction of the story, moreover, portrays Herod contemplating the bodily violence of John's death ("He whom I beheaded [ἀπεκεφάλισα], John," 6:16).

Memory and identity readily orbit around such narratives of violence. Many instances of bodily injury and violent catastrophes have a seemingly intrinsic gravitational pull in this direction.[26] "Powerful collective memories—whether real or concocted—can be at the root of wars, prejudice, nationalism, and cultural identities."[27] This study will show that the tradition of John's beheading constituted a "powerful" social memory. *Its early reception history, I argue, is characterized by a dangerous synchroneity.* On the one hand, the memory of John's

[26] See, e.g., Steven D. Brown, Matthew Allen, and Paula Reavey, "Remembering 7/7: The Collective Shaping of Survivors' Personal Memories of the 2005 London Bombing," in *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, ed. Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen (London: Routledge, 2016), 428–41. For further examples and discussion, see chapter two.

[27] James W. Pennebaker, "Introduction," in *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*, ed. James W. Pennebaker, Dario Paez, and Bernard Rimé (New York: Psychology Press, 1997), vii.

beheading is a key locus of early "Christian" expressions of identity. For instance, John's severed head on a platter, for Justin Martyr, is a salient image that demonstrates John's identity as Elijah and reinforces Jesus' identity as the Christ. On the other hand, however, recipients also exploit John's beheading *to inscribe anti-Jewish sentiments* as rememberers wield the beheading in the social context of early "Jewish-Christian relations." Both Justin and Origen, for example, ascribe Antipas (the "king/tetrarch" [cf. Mark 6:14–29; Matt 14:1–12]) a "Jewish" identity—even though the Herodian dynasty's Jewish identity was disputed in antiquity—and perpetuate an image of "the Jews" as killers of God's prophets. In this respect, the memory of John's beheading becomes invisibly violent.[28]

Structure

This argument develops across five main chapters. The first chapter asks how the present investigation compares to previous research on the death of John the Baptist. I argue that three questions tend to pull the weight of scholarly efforts: the question of "function," the question of "historical accuracy," and the question of "chronology." By comparison, a fourth question—the question of "reception"—has failed to receive the attention it deserves, especially as it pertains to the first three centuries. Accordingly, I position the present work as one that fills this lacuna and thus, I limit the scope of analysis to textual receptions of John's beheading in the pre-Constantine era. This chapter also highlights three lines of scholarly discourse that I return to in subsequent chapters: (1) Mark's characterization of the Herodian court, (2) the interconnection between John's beheading and Jesus' crucifixion, and (3) John's death as distinguishing the Baptist from Jesus.

[28] Throughout this work, I employ the metaphor of "invisible violence" to describe (1) other forms of violence besides bodily harm and (2) the social conditions that structure and enable violent conflict. Specifically, I use the term in reference to "anti-Jewishness" to highlight the inherent *dangerousness* of anti-Jewish ideology as an enabler of violent conflict. See further, chapter two.

Having identified the early reception of John's death as underexplored terrain, chapter two asks how scholars might conceptualize and approach this landscape. I argue that social memory theory—with its discourse acutely devoted to understanding the complex relationship between the past and the present—is especially helpful for conceptualizing an investigation of the past's reception in the present. Thus, I also claim that the social contours involved in the remembering of violence provide a useful heuristic framework for analyzing the impact of John's beheading. I set forth four features that underlie the social remembering of violence: identity formation, interpretive keying, the violence of memory, and contestation.

While some violent events resist integration in individual and collective memory, many violent events are the locus of self-definition precisely because of their perceived threat to the stability of the self. In the formation of identity, memories of violence often take on normative significance as individuals and groups attempt to overcome a difficult past by redeploying it as a didactic frame of reference to exemplify, and thereby direct, good or bad behavior. An important commemorative maneuver in understanding, and thus overcoming, a violent past is interpretive keying: the pairing of an event with a significant symbol.[29] Keying is not merely a comparison of one event to another event; it is the infusion of one primary event with the semantic and moral coloration of a known cultural script.

Memories of violence can also become invisibly violent. The commemorative resonances of a violent past carry along in their wake—and thus inscribe in shifting present horizons—the social conditions (e.g. moral configurations, group estrangements) that enable violence. As B. Lincoln notes, invoking a figure from the past in present moments of

[29] On interpretive "keying," see, Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 225–29.

recollection involves evoking "a correlated social group."[30] This correlation between the past and the present holds the dangerous capacity to recreate violence as opposing group identities in the present are separately infused with positive or negative characteristics from the past. Finally, at work in many constructions of identity is the contest over the memory of bodily mutilation. Extreme forms of bodily violence are often perceived as freighted with degrading symbolic potential. Those who harness past instances of such violence in the work of self-definition, therefore, are often compelled to reframe (i.e. contest) the script of degradation so that the script is not debilitating to the needs of the present. I close the chapter by suggesting that the reception history of John's beheading similarly possesses these commemorative features.

Before proceeding to demonstrate how the reception of John's beheading bears these marks, chapter three asks what the social script of beheading consisted of in John's general context. Two observations motivate this effort. First, many NT scholars have surprisingly overlooked understanding John's death in light of ancient discourses on beheading. Second, historians frequently categorize beheading in the Greco-Roman world as a method of death that "honored" the beheaded individual. The ensuing discussion then proceeds to offer seven points of qualification to this commonplace assertion. I argue that the severed head signified a degrading form of bodily violence that not only emasculated the victim, but could also interfere with proper burial and interrupt the dead's reincorporation in life in the hereafter.

Chapters four and five shift the focus to the reception history proper. These chapters proceed to ask how early recipients of John's beheading engage the social script of beheading in their commemorative operations. The penultimate chapter concentrates on the memory of John's beheading in the Gospel of Mark (6:14–29). In the first main section, I argue that at

[30] Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 20. Although Lincoln makes this assertion to claim that this correlation can enable the "reawaken[ing]" of group "affinity," his discussion presumes that it can also recreate "estrangement" and "hostility."

work in Mark's narration is the *contest* over the degrading potential of John's bodily mutilation. In one respect, Mark acknowledges the degrading potential of John's beheading by stressing features of his decapitation that typically highlight the emasculation of the victim. But Mark also counterbalances these features by bringing them into tension with other narrative elements that characterize John and Herod Antipas as positive and negative figures, respectively. Specifically, Mark *keys* John's beheading to Jesus' crucifixion, infusing his death with the semantic and moral coloration of Jesus' death. Mark's Herod, furthermore, affirms John's masculinity: "Herod knew him [John] [to be] a righteous and holy man (ἄνδρα)" (6:20). In short, Mark creates a distance between the characterizations of John and Herod.

The second main section of the chapter critiques two streams of scholarly argumentation regarding the function of Mark 6:17–29 (which I initially highlight in chapter one). First, I respond to Kraemer's argument that Mark 6:17–29 functions to subvert the idea that Jesus is John raised from the dead.[31] Kraemer likens this function to Luke 9:9 ("John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?"), which clearly differentiates John from Jesus on the basis of John's beheading: a beheaded person cannot be resurrected. I counter by observing that Mark 6:16 can be understood as depicting either Herod *questioning* the efficacy of John's beheading ("He whom I beheaded, John, has this one been raised?") or *affirming* that the beheading did not work ("He whom I beheaded, John, this one has been raised!").[32] Second, I respond to Crossley's gendered reading of Mark 6:17–29, which he

[31] Ross S. Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias and Her Daughter in the Death of John the Baptizer: A (Christian) Theological Strategy?," *JBL* 125 (2006): 321–49.

[32] The former option acknowledges that beheading under normal circumstances rendered the resurrection of the beheaded as an impossibility (see chapter three). To portray Herod as doubting the efficacy of beheading may reveal a hint of Markan mockery in that Herod inexplicably considers that John overcame a method of death designed to violate the integrity of the body. The latter option raises the possibility that the separation of John's head from its body's burial (Mark 6:27–29) propelled Herod to fear that John had returned to the land of the living. As chapter three observes, improper burial ran the risk of not securing safe separation from the dead.

(rightly) regards as a pre-Markan tradition.[33] Crossley argues that the tradition is apologetic toward Herod and lays the blame for John's death principally on the shoulders of the Herodian women. I counter by arguing that Herod's apologetic posture toward John is designed to *sharpen* the portrayal of Herod as a "king" who lacked (self-)control: Mark emasculates Herod (who is controlled by women) while affirming the masculinity of John. Both discussions, moreover, reinforce that Mark characterizes Herod in negative terms. The negative characterization of the Herodian court—and particularly Herod—becomes significant in its reception.

Chapter five contributes the final piece to this study's argument that the memory of John's beheading is characterized by a dangerous synchroneity: in their projects of self-definition, recipients begin to morph John's beheading into an anti-Jewish story. Like chapter four, chapter five asks how early handlers of the tradition engage the social script of John's beheading. I divide the chapter into three main parts, with a preliminary section dedicated to delineating the chapter's employment of the term "anti-Jewish" (and "anti-Jewishness"). The first main part briefly discusses the reception of John's beheading in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. I concentrate the majority of attention, however, on Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* and Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* in the second and third main parts, because they show clearly how later readers could capitalize on the tradition's portrayal of the Herodian court. I argue that Justin and Origen redeploy the tradition in anti-Jewish directions.

Justin's contestation of John's beheading takes anti-Jewish turns in two ways. First, he imposes on Antipas (who is merely a "king" or "tetrarch" in the Synoptic Gospels) an explicit Jewish identity (cf. Mark 6:14–29//Matt 14:1–12). In effect, he perpetuates a motif of *contemporary* Jews as those who kill God's prophets. Second, John's severed head on a

[33] James G. Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History: Redirecting the Life of the Historical Jesus*, Biblical Refigurations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 147–62.

platter—which for Justin proves that John was Elijah—forms a key part in Justin subverting the adoptionistic Christology of his Christian rivals. Justin is careful to assign John this Elijanic identity without lending credence to the idea that John (as Elijah) anointed (i.e. adopted) Jesus as the Christ. This takes an anti-Jewish turn because Justin aligns his competitors' ideology with Jewish ideology (which held that Elijah would anoint the Christ): Justin makes denigrating Jewish ideology an essential component of his establishing the superiority of his own version of Christian identity over competing versions.

Origen's contestation of John's beheading also takes on anti-Jewish layers. Similar to Justin's commemorative maneuver of assigning Herod a Jewish identity, Origen superimposes a Jewish identity onto the entire Herodian court: Herod, Herodias, the dancing girl, and even the banquet guests at Herod's birthday celebration all function as symbols of *contemporary* Jews. These figures' moral fiber, their actions, and the consequences their actions incur are emblematic of the ethical character, actions, and status of the present Jewish people. I show the contours of these maneuvers by means of a sweeping analysis of five passages in *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22. In short, Origen perpetuates an image of contemporary Jews as the killers of prophets/prophecy who stand below Christians who possess "the [gift] greater entirely than [the gift of prophecy]" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).

To close the present investigation, I offer a conclusion that summarizes the main argument. With the main contours of this discussion in place, I now turn to asking how the question of reception compares to previous research on John's death.

CHAPTER ONE

PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP ON THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

In [the] account of John's execution,
the narratee is prompted
to see this depiction of John's fate
as a precursor of Jesus' fate.[34]

Introduction

Scholarship on John the Baptist concentrates on various facets of this figure, including: his infancy and youth;[35] his possible connection to the Essenes (and relatedly the Qumran community);[36] his socio-religious identity as a prophet;[37] the context and meaning of his

[34] Gary Yamasaki, *John the Baptist in Life and Death: Audience-Oriented Criticism of Matthew's Narrative*, JSNTSup 167 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 132.

[35] See, e.g., A.S. Geyser, "The Youth of John the Baptist: A Deduction from the Break in the Parallel Account of the Lucan Infancy Story," *NovT* 1 (1956): 70–75; Paul Winter, "The Proto-Source of Luke I," *NovT* 1 (1956): 184–99; Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977); Stephen Farris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives: Their Origin, Meaning, and Significance*, JSNTSup 9 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

[36] See, e.g., W. H. Brownlee, "A Comparison of the Covenanters of the Dead Sea Scrolls with Pre-Christian Jewish Sects," *BA* 13 (1950): 50–72; Geyser, "Youth of John the Baptist"; W.H. Brownlee, "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls," in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendahl (London: SCM, 1958), 33–53, 252–56; Jean Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1958); Jean Steinmann, *Saint John the Baptist and the Desert Tradition*, trans. Michael Boyes (London: Longmans, 1958), esp. 49–79; Charles H. Scobie, *John the Baptist* (London: SCM, 1964), 58–59; Otto Betz, "Was John the Baptist an Essene?," *BRev* 6 (1990): 18–25; Hershel Shanks, "Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Was John the Baptist an Essene?*, ed. Otto Betz (New York: Random House, 1992), 205–16; Joan E. Taylor, "John the Baptist and the Essenes," *JJS* 47 (1996): 256–85; Joan E. Taylor, "John the Baptist," *EDEJ*, 819–21; Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); J. I. H. McDonald, "What Did You Go Out to See? John the Baptist, the Scrolls and Late Second Temple Judaism," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. T. H. Lim et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 53–64. For a recent study that argues that John once belonged to the Qumran community, see, Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 27–45.

[37] See, e.g., Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 135–89; Robert Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study*, JSNTSup 62 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), esp. 219–378; Michael Tilly, *Johannes der Täufer und die Biographie der Propheten: die synoptische Täuferüberlieferung und das jüdische Prophetenbild zur Zeit des Täufers*, BWANT 7 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994); Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 101–54; David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 129–32.

baptism;[38] the relationship between John and Jesus;[39] and—the general subject of this current study—his imprisonment and execution during the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas (tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, c. 4 BCE–39 CE).[40]

This chapter sets forth previous research on John's death and divides into three main sections. Each section is devoted to a general question that drives critical discussions of John's death, namely, the questions of (1) function, (2) "historical accuracy," and (3) chronology. Cumulatively, this review demonstrates that, while a considerable amount of scholarly research has focused on matters of "origin," by comparison the matter of "reception" has received far less attention. Throughout, moreover, I will identify how

[38] See, e.g., Ernst Lohmeyer, *Johannes der Täufer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1932), 67–81; Webb, *Baptizer and Prophet*, 95–216; Taylor, *The Immerser*, 49–100; James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, vol. 1 of Christianity in the Making (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 355–79; Daniel W. McManigal, *A Baptism of Judgment in the Fire of the Holy Spirit: John's Eschatological Proclamation in Matthew 3*, LNTS 595 (London: T&T Clark, 2019).

[39] See, e.g., Maurice Goguel, *Au seuil de l'Évangile: Jean-Baptiste*, BibH 40 (Paris: Payot, 1928), 235–57; John A.T. Robinson, *Twelve New Testament Studies*, SBT (London: SCM, 1962), 28–52; Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 142–62; Jürgen Becker, *Johannes der Täufer und Jesus von Nazareth*, BibSN 63 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972); Morton Scott Enslin, "John and Jesus," *ZNW* 66 (1975): 1–18; Pierson Parker, "Jesus, John the Baptist, and the Herods," *PRSt* 8 (1981): 4–11; Paul W. Hollenbach, "The Conversion of Jesus: From Jesus the Baptizer to Jesus the Healer," *ANRW* 2.25.1:196–219; Josef Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer: Interpretation, Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte*, BZNW 53 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989); William B. Badke, "Was Jesus a Disciple of John?," *EvQ* 62 (1990): 195–204; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "John the Baptist and Jesus: History and Hypotheses," *NTS* 36 (1990): 361–66; Knut Backhaus, *Die "Jüngerkreise" des Täufers Johannes: Eine Studie zu den religionsgeschichtlichen Ursprüngen des Christentums*, PaThSt 19 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991), 22–112; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Vol. 2, Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 116–30; Robert Webb, "John the Baptist and His Relationship to Jesus," in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, NTTS 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 179–229; Laurent Guyénot, "A New Perspective on John the Baptist's Failure to Support Jesus," *JUS* 1 (1997): 71–92; John W. Pryor, "John the Baptist and Jesus: Tradition and Text in John 3.25," *JSNT* 66 (1997): 15–26; Dale C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), esp. 39-106; Bruce Chilton, "Friends and Enemies," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*, ed. Markus Bockmuehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 72–86; Dale C. Allison, "The Continuity Between John and Jesus," *JSHJ* 1 (2003): 6–27; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 348–55; Daniel S. Dapaah, *The Relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth: A Critical Study* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2005); Graham H. Twelftree, "Jesus the Baptist.," *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 103–25; Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010); Maurice Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth: An Independent Historian's Account of His Life and Teaching* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 171–97, 282–83; Max Aplin, "Was Jesus Ever a Disciple of John the Baptist? A Historical Study" (PhD thesis., University of Edinburgh, 2011); Roberto Martínez, *The Question of John the Baptist and Jesus' Indictment of the Religious Leaders: A Critical Analysis of Luke 7:18–35* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2011); Joan E. Taylor and Federico Adinolfi, "John the Baptist and Jesus the Baptist: A Narrative Critical Approach," *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 247–84; Federico Adinolfi, "Gesù continuatore di Giovanni. Studio storico-esegetico sulla relazione tra Gesù di Nazaret e Giovanni il Battista" (PhD thesis., University of Bologna, 2014).

[40] On Antipas' appointment as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, see Josephus, *Ant.* 17.188; *J.W.* 2.93–95. On Emperor Gaius stripping him of his tetrarchy and his ensuing exile in Gaul (or Spain), see, *Ant.* 18.252–255; *J.W.* 2.183.

different aspects of scholarly research intersect with the interests of this study. Thus, I reserve in-depth qualification of scholarly discourse for subsequent chapters.

1. The Question of Function

A major research question on John's death is understanding what it means and how it functions in the primary evidence of the first century, particularly with respect to the Markan and Matthean traditions (Mark 6:14–29//Matt 14:1–12; cf. Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9).[41] Accordingly, this section presents three lines of interpretation that appear frequently in scholarly debate regarding the social and literary function of John's beheading in the Synoptic Gospels.[42] The first line of interpretation views John's death through an "anti-Herodian lens." The second line of interpretation observes that John's beheading

[41] Although some attention on this matter is dedicated to Josephus' episode as well (*Ant.* 18.116–119), the bulk of critical inquiry is angled by the Synoptic Gospels. On the function of John's death in Josephus' account, see, e.g., Webb, *Baptizer and Prophet*, 34, who identifies two contributions that John's death makes to Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*: (1) it provides another example of unrest among the Jewish people in Palestine and (2) it offers a "popular Jewish explanation" for Aretas' defeat of Antipas. See further, John P. Meier, "John the Baptist in Josephus: Philology and Exegesis," *JBL* 111 (1992): 233.

[42] This question seems to attract attention, at least in part, because of the seemingly odd structural placement of John's death in both Mark and Matthew. In the former, it appears as the interior of an intercalation between Jesus sending out the twelve disciples to preach repentance and heal the sick and demon-possessed (6:7–13) and their subsequent return (6:30–32). In both the former (Mark 6:17) and the latter (Matt 14:3), it appears to interrupt the linear progression of the narrative by offering a glimpse into a past event. Interestingly, John's death occurs as a "flashback" in Josephus' narration as well (*Ant.* 18.116–119). Christos Karakolis, "Narrative Funktion und christologische Bedeutung der markinischen Erzählung vom Tod Johannes des Täufers (Mk 6:14–29)," *NovT* 52 (2010): 135, suggests that John's death is the only episode presented in Mark as a glimpse into the past. Similarly, Goguel, *Au seuil de l'Évangile*, 51, refers to John's death as a "récit rétrospectif." Moreover, by the time he finishes narrating John's death, Matthew appears to forget that he has flashbacked in his sequence, since he notes in 14:13a that Jesus withdrew to a secluded place "having heard" (about John's death, presumably). See, John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 588. On the implications and inherent difficulties of this observation for establishing Markan or Matthean priority, see further, Lamar Cope, "The Death of John the Baptist in the Gospel of Matthew; Or, the Case of the Confusing Conjunction," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 515–19. In Luke's Gospel, on the other hand, the banquet scene is notably absent and Luke records only the speculation concerning Jesus' identity and Antipas' claim that he beheaded John (9:7–9; cf. Mark 6:14–16; Matt 14:1–2; Luke 3:19–20).

Accordingly, these structural observations are met with stylistic explanations. Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), 301–02, suggests that Mark introduced the story in order to "fill the gap" between the sending and return of the Twelve. Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1952), 307, treats the story as an "interlude." R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 18, 255, classifies it as a "digression." A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St Mark* (London: Methuen & Co, 1925), 79, vibrantly expresses it as Mark's "artistic 'dove-tailing'" designed to "occupy the reader's attention" while the twelve disciples perform their mission. Likewise, Goguel, *Au seuil de L'Évangile*, 52, views John's death as "en marge de la narration" that is so positioned in order to occupy the lapse of time between the twelve's departure and return. The interpretations that follow, however, identify connections beyond these cursory explanations.

foreshadows or anticipates Jesus' crucifixion. And the third line of interpretation asserts that John's beheading functions to disentangle Jesus from the speculation that he was the risen John the Baptist.[43] Relevant to present purposes, these lines of discourse underscore two phenomena in particular that early recipients of the tradition employ in their present social frameworks, as chapter five will show: (1) the critique of one or more members of the Herodian court and (2) the relation of John's beheading to Jesus' crucifixion.

[43] See, Mark 6:14–16; Matt 14:1–2; Luke 9:7–9. At this juncture, it is worth noting that the question of function poses itself differently to scholars who approach the Synoptic Gospels with different critical methodologies. Scholars differentiate between the function of John's death at the narrative level of the Synoptics and its function in its pre-Synoptic form(s). See, e.g., Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, EKK (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1998), 1:246. The early form critics tended to conceptualize the role of the Synoptic Evangelists in the composition of the Gospels primarily as mere collectors or editors of isolated (anonymous) units of tradition. Only secondarily—if at all—were they creative authors. See, e.g., Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, trans. Bertram Lee Woolf, LibTT (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co Ltd, 1971), 3: "The composers are only to the smallest extent authors. They are principally collectors, vehicles of tradition, editors. Before all else their labour consists in handing down, grouping, and working over the material which has come to them." Cf. Vincent Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London: Macmillan, 1933), 1–43. Consequently, the orientation of their method was principally focused on tradition-historical matters (e.g. tracing the origin and development of units of tradition). See, e.g., Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 6: "The aim of form criticism is to determine the original form of a piece of narrative, a dominical saying or a parable. In the process we learn to distinguish secondary additions and forms, and these in turn lead to important results for the history of the tradition." Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, 1, however, maintained that, in addition to penetrating into a period previous to the written Gospels, a further objective of *Formgeschichte* was "to make clear the intention and real interest of the earliest tradition." In other words, his interest as a form critic in understanding the function of tradition was not a narrative-level concern, but a concern oriented toward the interpretation of units of tradition in and of themselves in their pre-Synoptic form(s). See further, Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, v–vi: "The present-day reader should learn to read the individual passages of the early tradition in the way they were meant, before the time when, more or less edited, they were included in the Gospels." Cf. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 245, who remarks that "legends" are not themselves unified but "gain their entry point only when set in their context." Unfortunately, Bultmann does not seem to offer what this specifically entails with respect to John's death which he later discusses in the same chapter and classifies as one of these "legends" (*History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 301–2).

The rise of redaction criticism in the 1950s—with the works of Willi Marxsen on Mark, Günther Bornkamm (et al.) on Matthew, and Hanz Conzelmann on Luke—re-conceptualized the role of the Evangelists in the composition of the Gospels. The redaction critics no longer viewed the Evangelists merely as collectors of traditions, but creative individuals who shaped the theology of their respective Gospels. Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969), 18-19, contends: "While the scope and limit of our evangelists' sources and their share in the revision of the material can scarcely be determined with final certainty (unfortunately, we cannot get a glimpse of their writing desk); while ultimately we cannot know even the names of our authors, their backgrounds, or their careers, we must still emphasize that we are dealing with authors." Likewise, Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (London: SCM, 1963), 11: "[The Synoptic Evangelists] are by no means mere collectors and handers-on of the tradition, but are also interpreters of it." See Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961), 9–17, for similar comments. The rise of narrative criticism in the early 1980s, moreover, only increased the conceptualization of the Gospels as intimately woven narrative webs. As a result, for redaction and narrative critics, the answer to the question as to what John's death means and how it functions in the primary data is intimately related to ascertaining its various connections to its narrative context.

1.1. Anti-Herodian Interpretations of John's Death

Many scholars postulate that the Synoptic tradition of John's beheading is designed to criticize the political figure(s) responsible for his execution. Dibelius claims that the point of the pericope in Mark and Matthew is to stress that Antipas gets entangled in his oath; Dibelius thus classifies the account as an "Anekdote über Herodes."[44] Gnilka postulates that the purpose of the Markan account could have been "zu brandmarken" Antipas and his court.[45] While acknowledging that the historian can only speculate as to the historical development of Mark 6:17–29, Davies and Allison think that its intention was possibly "to criticize the Herodian court."[46] Likewise, Meier posits that the tradition exhibits "folklore tinged with strong anti-Herodian feeling" that early Christians or John-the-Baptist followers "reformulated" into a martyrdom.[47] In his study on the pre-history of Synoptic tradition, Theissen classifies the death of John the Baptist as a "court legend" that portrays the abuse of power with John as the victim.[48] A few pages later, he categorizes the account as a "popular folk tradition" and claims: "there is nothing here to point to the Baptizer as a precursor of Jesus."[49]

In an important study, Smith argues that Mark 6:14–29 exposes tyrannical behavior.[50] En route to this contention, Smith forwards what he calls "stock-features" that exemplify ancient tyrant-types: "1) the tyrant's paranoia; 2) the tyrant's possession of a bodyguard; 3) the tyrant's display of excess; and 4) the tyrant's encounter with a philosopher."[51] Then, he

[44] Martin Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911), 79–80 (quotation, p. 80).

[45] Gnilka, *Markus*, 1:246.

[46] William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1988), 2:465.

[47] Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:173.

[48] Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 81–96 (quotation, p. 81).

[49] Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 85.

[50] Abraham Smith, "Tyranny Exposed: Mark's Typological Characterization of Herod Antipas (Mark 6:14–29)," *BibInt* 14 (2006): 259–93.

[51] Smith, "Tyranny Exposed," 271.

demonstrates that these stock-features are at work in Mark's portrayal of Antipas.[52] Mark thus characterizes Antipas as an ancient tyrant-type. Culpepper builds on Smith's schematic of ancient tyrant-types and similarly contends that Mark constructs Antipas as a type of "King."[53] Significantly, Culpepper observes that the term βασιλεύς occurs twelve times in Mark's narrative, with five occurrences in the present passage with reference to Antipas (6:14, 22, 25, 26, 27) and six times in Mark 15 with reference to Jesus as "King" of the Jews (15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32). For Culpepper, this distribution establishes the "antithesis" between Antipas and his kingdom with Jesus' Kingdom.[54] Chapter four will return to this distribution and highlight it as a component of Mark's interpretive keying of John's beheading to Jesus' crucifixion. Chapter five, moreover, will demonstrate that Justin Martyr and Origen superimpose a Jewish identity into Antipas, making him "king" of the Jews. With this and other maneuvers, they rework the tradition to take on anti-Jewish overtones.

Whereas some scholars stress that John's death criticizes the Herodian court in general and Herod Antipas in particular, other scholars argue that the Markan tradition primarily derides the female antagonists: Herodias and her daughter. Collins postulates that "the probable intent (or effect) of the pre-Markan story [was] to disparage the Herodian women."[55] Similarly to Collins, Crossley views the tradition as placing the blame for John's death on the shoulders of Herodias and Salome.[56] He maintains that the pre-Markan version serves as a "plea for survival in the face of a very real and deadly political threat from political rulers of Palestine."[57] I will revisit Crossley's argument in chapter four.

[52] For example, Mark 6:20 identifies Antipas as paranoid (Smith, "Tyranny Exposed," 277–79).

[53] R. Alan Culpepper, "Mark 6:17–29 in Its Narrative Context: Kingdoms in Conflict," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner, SBLSBS 65 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 145–63.

[54] Culpepper, "Mark 6:17–29 in Its Narrative Context," 154. For similar observations, see, M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 177.

[55] Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 313.

[56] James G. Crossley, "History from the Margins: The Death of John the Baptist," in *Writing History, Constructing Religion*, ed. J. G. Crossley and C. Karner (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 147–61.

[57] Crossley, "History from the Margins," 149.

These "anti-Herodian" interpretations have much precedent in the history of interpretation. In the mid-fourth century, Hilary of Poitiers, in his *Commentary on Matthew* viewed Antipas as an analogue to Israel whose unbelief led to lustfulness.[58] Later in the same century in his own *Commentary on Matthew*, Jerome suggests that Antipas' fidelity to his oath reveals his impiety "under the pretext of piety."[59] Jerome does not take at face value Antipas' supposed grief at the daughter's request in Matt 14:9. He argues that Antipas "was hiding his true thoughts" and thus "feigning sadness in his countenance, while he had joy in his heart."[60] In the early fifth century, Augustine regards Herodias as more wicked than Antipas, referring to her as "[t]hat detestable woman."[61] In contradistinction to Jerome, he views Antipas as having a more positive inclination toward John ("Herod loved John"[62]). Antipas, according to Augustine, was torn between his lust for Herodias and his reverence for the Baptist until he positioned himself—via his oath—in a situation where he had to make a decision between two evil choices.[63] Calvin observes the dissonance between the Markan and Matthean portrayals of Antipas' disposition toward John (Mark 6:20, 26; Matt 14:5, 9). He attempts to harmonize the depictions by positing an elaborate sequence. Antipas progresses from someone unwilling to put John to death, to someone willing but unable to do so, and finally to someone with an insufficient disposition to commit murder, whom Herodias took advantage of in her scheme to strike down the Baptist.[64]

[58] Hilary of Poitiers, *Comm. Matt.* 14.7–8.

[59] Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 14.9 (Scheck, FC).

[60] Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 14.9 (Scheck, FC). See also Jerome's previous comments regarding Matt 14:7: "I do not excuse Herod by saying that he committed murder reluctantly and against his will on account of the oath. For he perhaps took the oath *in order to create the conditions for this future occasion*" (*Comm. Matt.* 14.7 [Scheck, FC; italics added]).

[61] Augustine, *Serm.* 307.1 (Hill).

[62] Augustine, *Serm.* 308.1 (Hill).

[63] Augustine, *Serm.* 307.1; 308.1. Augustine views it as the lesser of two evils for Antipas to break his oath than to keep it by having the Baptist murdered (see, *Serm.* 308.2).

[64] John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, trans. Rev. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 222–23.

The negative characterization of the Herodian court, moreover, often takes on normative significance in these precedents. For example, in his letter to Amphilochius, Basil draws attention to Antipas' "wickedness under a pretext of piety" as substantiation for his prohibitions against (1) making oaths and (2) keeping wicked oaths already sworn.[65] Appealing to Herodias' and Antipas' involvement in John's death, Ambrose pleads (1) to women to teach their daughters modesty and (2) to men to avoid banquets.[66] In one of his homilies on the Gospel of Matthew, Chrysostom too employs both Antipas and Herodias as examples of the dangers of oaths, dancing, and banquets. Like Augustine, he especially views Herodias as the most wicked character: "But albeit [Antipas] was so wicked, that base woman was more wicked than all of them, both the damsel and the tyrant."[67] Finally, in the nineteenth century, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Euphemia Johnson Richmond, Mrs. Donaldson, and Margaret Black all appeal to Herodias and/or Salome as negative examples to dissuade the misuse of power among women.[68]

Interpreters, therefore, have long differed in their estimations of the guilt of the members of Herod's court (relative to one another) with respect to John's execution. Some have emphasized the negative portrayal of Antipas in the primary data. Others (e.g. Crossley) have argued that the Markan tradition is apologetic to Antipas. In chapter four, I will critique Crossley's argument by showing that Mark's seemingly apologetic stance toward Antipas is designed to heighten his lack of masculinity. This critique, moreover, will reinforce a feature of John's death that is particularly important for its early reception history: the distancing between the characterizations of the Herodian court and John the Baptist.

[65] Basil, *Letters*, 199.29 (Way, FC).

[66] Ambrose, *Concerning Virgins*, 3.5.25–3.6.31.

[67] John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 48 (quotation, 48.5; *NPNF*$_1$ 10:299). See further, Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 48.8 (*NPNF*$_1$ 10:301): "Let us weep for Herodias, and for them that imitate her."

[68] Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir, eds., *Women in the Story of Jesus: The Gospels through the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century Female Biblical Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 163–76.

1.2. John's Death Anticipates Jesus' Death

Historically, in addition to the anti-Herodian readings noted above, the most frequently offered interpretation of John's death is that it foreshadows or anticipates Jesus' own demise. As early as the second century CE, Justin Martyr relates John's beheading to Jesus' crucifixion.[69] Steinmann describes John's death as a "martyrdom" designed to "prefigure the passion of the servant of Yahweh."[70] A decade later, E. Schweitzer, in his commentary on Mark, entitled his discussion of Mark 6:14–29, "The Destiny of the Baptist as Prophetic of the Destiny of Jesus."[71] The language of Steinmann and Schweitzer is typical in scholarship. These sorts of comments are normally anchored in two types of references: (1) appeals to the parallels (verbal, thematic, etc.) between John's and Jesus' deaths and (2) appeals to John as the forerunner to Jesus.

1.2.1. References to Parallels between John's and Jesus' Deaths

Scholars have long detected the parallels between the so-called two "passions" of John and Jesus.[72] In 1925, for example, Rawlinson entertains this possibility by observing that the same Greek word for the corpse of John in Mark 6:29 (πτῶμα) is the same word used

[69] Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 49.1–7. See further, chapter five of this present study.

[70] Steinmann, *Saint John the Baptist and the Desert Tradition*, 99.

[71] Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark* (Atlanta: Knox, 1970), 131.

[72] Some scholars have helpfully set forth general points of convergence between the two so-called passions. With respect to the Gospel of Matthew, Davies and Allison (*Saint Matthew*, 2:476), for example, succinctly compare these links between John and Jesus: both were apprehended (14:3; cf. 21:46), both were bound (14:3; cf. 27:2), both Antipas and the chief priests and Pharisees feared the crowds (14:5; cf. 21:46), Antipas grieved John's death and Pilate displayed reticence to kill Jesus (14:6–11; cf. 27:11–26), and both John and Jesus were buried by (a) disciple(s) (14:12; cf. 27:57–61). They conclude that Matt 14:1–12 "portends in some detail exactly what is to happen in the passion narrative" and that the redactional activity of the Evangelist makes it likely that he was consciously aware of these equivalences (*Saint Matthew*, 2:476). With respect to the Gospel of Mark, Karakolis ("Narrative Funktion," esp. 146–52) enumerates at length the similarities and differences between John's and Jesus' respective passion narratives. For others who appeal to the parallels to assert a connection between the deaths of John and Jesus, see, e.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, CGTC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 208–9; Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer*, 28–29; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 397–404.

for Jesus' corpse in Mark 15:45.[73] In her narrative and reader-response analysis of the Gospel of Matthew, Anderson devotes a portion of a chapter to Matthew's characterization of John the Baptist.[74] She observes a paralleling vacillation between Antipas, who sought to kill John but feared the crowds (Matt 14:5), and the chief priests and Pharisees, who sought to seize Jesus but feared the crowds (Matt 21:46).[75] Moreover, she observes that the "verbal repetitions" sharpen the links between the fates of John and Jesus.[76] Comparably, France reasons that the Markan portrayal of Antipas' "wavering" and being "tricked into pronouncing sentence against his better judgment" corresponds to Pilate's inability to re-direct the chief priests hostility away from Jesus (Mark 15:1–15). Thus, this reveals "Mark's desire to link together the fates of John and of Jesus."[77]

Like France, McVann argues that Mark's account of John's death foreshadows Jesus' fate by aligning Mark's characterization of certain authority figures, namely: Antipas and Pilate.[78] Both Antipas and Pilate positively estimate John and Jesus (Mark 6:20; cf. 15:5, 9, 13) and attempt to save them (Mark 6:20; cf. 15:4–14) but fail to do so because they fall victim to the manipulation of external influences (Mark 6:19; cf. 14:1, 15:9–14).[79] In both cases, McVann suggests, Mark characterizes the authority figures as "morally reprehensible" concerned with preserving "false honor."[80] McVann's comments are significant because they reveal that Mark's alignment of John's death to Jesus' death coexists with a moral indictment

[73] Rawlinson, *St Mark*, 83. Not only do the burials of the corpses of John and Jesus encourage comparison, but Morna Hooker (*The Gospel According to Saint Mark* [London: Black and Peabody, 1991], 161–62) maintains that Mark thereby intends to draw a contrast between the two figures: the former figure is buried and only rumors surface about his resurrection while the latter figure is buried but is indeed raised from the dead.

[74] Janice C. Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again*, JSNTSup 91 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 83–90.

[75] Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 89.

[76] Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 89–90 (quotation, p. 90).

[77] France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 257.

[78] Mark McVann, "The 'Passion' of John the Baptist and Jesus before Pilate: Mark's Warnings about Kings and Governors," *BTB* 38 (2008): 152–57.

[79] McVann, "The 'Passion' of John the Baptist and Jesus before Pilate," 153.

[80] McVann, "The 'Passion' of John the Baptist and Jesus before Pilate," 156.

of the political figures involved in their executions. I will make a similar observation in chapter four. However, in chapter five, we will also see that Origen *contrasts* John's beheading and Jesus' crucifixion to elevate Christians at the expense of Jews.

1.2.2. References to John as the Forerunner of Jesus

Scholars also establish John's death as a foreshadowing by appealing to John's role as a precursor or Elijah-type figure who foreruns Jesus.[81] Marxsen, in his seminal redaction-critical work, devotes an entire chapter of his analysis to Mark's shaping of John-the-Baptist traditions.[82] Marxsen claims that Jesus' passion narrative was the first written unit of Jesus tradition. In turn, tradition "developed backward," so that Mark "prefixes" Jesus' passion with life-of-Jesus and life-of-John traditions.[83] By applying early Christian terminology (παραδίδωμι, 1 Cor 11:23) to John the Baptist (παραδίδωμι, Mark 1:14), the precursor's end is tied to Jesus' fate.[84] Wink argues in his 1968 classic redaction-critical analysis of John-the-Baptist traditions that the suffering of the Baptist in Mark 6:17–29 is not explained until the descent from the transfiguration in Mark 9:9–13.[85] Jesus' connection therein between John and Elijah (9:13) necessitates that "the suffering of John is as necessary and inevitable as the suffering of Christ."[86] As such, "John's suffering as Elijah-incognito prepares the way for the

[81] In the early third century CE, Hippolytus intimates that Jesus would preach in Hades since Jesus' forerunner, John, also preached in Hades when Antipas executed him (*Antichr*. 45). In the same century, Origen also indicates that John the Baptist died and descended into the underworld as Jesus' precursor in order to proclaim the coming of Jesus (*Hom. Luc.* 4.5). On the intertextual connections between the beheading of John in Mark 6:14–29 and the stories of Elijah, Ahab, and Jezebel in the HB, see, e.g., David M. Hoffeditz and Gary E. Yates, "Femme Fatale Redux: Intertextual Connection to the Elijah/Jezebel Narratives in Mark 6:14–29," *BBR* 15 (2005): 199–221. Cf. Gnilka, *Markus*, 1:247–52, who thinks that Mark understands John as the returned Elijah (9:13), but is not certain that this connection necessitates that Mark aligns Elijah and Jezebel with John and Herodias in Mark 6:14–29.

[82] See, Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 30–53.

[83] Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 31.

[84] Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 40. While Marxsen revolves his discussion of John's fate mostly around Mark 1:14 he does suggest that the "aim of Mark 6:17ff. is to give expression to christological elements" (p. 40, n. 35). The idea is that by the time John's death is narrated in 6:17–29, Mark has already established John as Jesus' forerunner and that 6:17–29, as a consequence, enhances the link between their fates.

[85] Walter Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 13.

[86] Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*, 16.

fate of Jesus."[87] Further, Webb remarks in his 1991 monograph *John the Baptizer and Prophet* that Mark's implicit identification of John the Baptist as Elijah-*redivivus* in 9:13 underscores John as a forerunner, paving the way for Jesus' fate with his own fate.[88]

Scholars, therefore, make different appeals to assert that John's death anticipates Jesus' death. While some accentuate the parallels between their respective "passions," others underscore John's role as a type of Elijah-figure. John's identity as the returned Elijah becomes particularly important in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. As we will see in chapter five, the identity of Elijah stands at the heart of the competitive Christology that marks Justin's social context.

1.3. John's Death as a Demarcating Event

In addition to establishing the interconnection between the deaths of Jesus and John, scholars have also argued that John's end clearly distinguishes him from Jesus. Before his pioneering work on form criticism, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, Dibelius subjected the death of John the Baptist to form-critical analysis in his 1911 work *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer*.[89] Dibelius concludes that the people's inability to verify John's death led to their belief that John had not in fact died ("Das Volk glaubt nicht an den Tod seines Helden").[90] Rather, they believed "daß der Heros in Wahrheit noch lebe"

[87] Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*, 17. So also, Hooker, *Mark*, 158–59; William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 215, 223; Karakolis, "Narrative Funktion," 135–55.

[88] Webb, *Baptizer and Prophet*, 53–54. The alignment of John and Elijah *across* the Synoptics, however, is not monolithic. Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*, 43: "Luke divests John of the role of Elijah *redividus* which Mark had suggested and Matthew had developed." So also, Catherine M. Murphy, *John the Baptist: Prophet of Purity for a New Age* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 41–83. Similarly, Mark Goodacre, "Mark, Elijah, the Baptist and Matthew: The Success of the First Intertextual Reading of Mark," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, Volume 2: Matthew*, ed. Tom Hatina, LNTS 310 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 73–84, contends that Matthew strengthens Mark's John/Elijah identification but Luke downplays it. Cf. Webb, *Baptizer and Prophet*, esp. 62–65, who argues that Luke (like Mark and Matthew) does portray John as Elijah-*redivivus*.

[89] Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, 77–87.

[90] Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, 86.

and hence can recognize the Baptist in Jesus (Mark 6:14–16; 8:28).[91] Wink claims that Dibelius argued that the account of John's death (Mark 6:17–29) served to "counteract" the people's belief in John's resuscitation.[92] He argues against Dibelius' apparent proposal by contending that, had Mark been concerned with subverting the belief in John's revitalization, then he would have "suppressed 6:14–16 and 8:28" since they "lend credence to the belief in John's resuscitation."[93]

The idea that Mark 6:17–29 combats the speculation surrounding Jesus' identity as John in 6:14–16 has not, however, completely disappeared from consideration. Delorme, for instance, argues that the story of John's death works on two levels.[94] On one level, it serves as a corrective to the identities prescribed to Jesus in Mark 6:14–16.[95] Attaching Jesus to these great figures of the past potentially undermines what makes Jesus unique. John's death, therefore, "dispel[s] these images" but, at the same time and, on a second level, underscores the relationship between John and Jesus.[96] Dibelius' supposed argument has also re-surfaced in Kraemer's 2006 article.[97] She maintains that the Gospel narratives' accounts of John's death are fabrications designed to refute early "concerns about the vexing relationship between John and Jesus, most particularly the unnerving possibility that Jesus might have

[91] Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, 86.

[92] Wink, *John the Baptist*, 11. Wink's conceptualization of Dibelius is misleading because Dibelius never explicitly states that Mark 6:17–29 subverts the belief in John's revitalization (strictly speaking, Dibelius does not use resurrection/resuscitation language with respect to Mark 6:14–16). At best, Dibelius implies the embryo of this notion when he (1) suspects that Mark 6:17–29 supplants an original lost conclusion to 6:14–16, and (2) states that the "synoptischen Berichte(n)" are shaped by the two poles of venerating the Baptist on the one hand and combatting his standing alongside Jesus, on the other hand. See, Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, 83, 86–87 (quotation, pp. 86–87).

[93] Wink, *John the Baptist*, 11.

[94] Jean Delorme, "John the Baptist's Head—The Word Perverted: A Reading of a Narrative (Mark 6:14–29)," *Semeia* 81 (1998): 126–27.

[95] Cf. Lane, *Mark*, 215, who passingly comments that 6:17–29 clarifies the reports in 6:14 and 6:16. Lane, however, does not specify what he means. Does 6:17–29 clarify 6:14 and 6:16 in that it relates to the reader a past event that had not been mentioned up to this point (Mark 1:14 only mentions that John had been handed over, not that he had been executed)? Or does 6:17–29 clarify the apparent confusion surrounding the precise relationship between John and Jesus?

[96] Delorme, "John the Baptist's Head—The Word Perverted," 127.

[97] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 341, n. 57, likens her argument to Dibelius' but cites Wink's conceptualization of Dibelius' argument.

been John raised from the dead."[98] Specifically, the narration of beheading John and then burying his corpse, as his head remains with Herodias, rebuts the notion that Jesus is the resurrected John.[99]

The modern manifestations of Dibelius' supposed argument view John's beheading as unambiguously distinguishing John from Jesus. Thus, whereas some interpreters have emphasized how the Synoptic Gospels compare John's beheading to Jesus' crucifixion, these other proposals have emphasized how the Gospels contrast John from Jesus. In chapter four, I will qualify this latter emphasis in light of the ideology of beheading, which I will set forth in chapter three.

2. The Question of "Historical Accuracy"

The second broad question that drives discussions of John's arrest and execution is the question of "historical accuracy."[100] Scholars variously estimate the accuracy of the first-century primary data. Scholarly discourse in this regard tends to revolve around two kinds of arguments: (1) appeals to cultural traditions that parallel John's death and (2) appeals to "contentious details."

[98] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 322. If Kraemer is correct, this could provide one possible (or an additional) explanation for why Luke does not detail the banquet scene that led to John's execution: Luke 9:7–9 accomplishes in three verses what Mark sought to accomplish in sixteen verses (and Matthew in twelve). However, the progression of her argument is too awkward to convince since it still relies on reasserting the beheading to dispel the notion that John overcame beheading and rose from the dead. For further critique of Kraemer's argument, see chapter four.

[99] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 341.

[100] Scholars tend to evince a certain stance along a spectrum between arguing for or against the accuracy of the Markan and Josephan accounts of John's execution. The notion of "historical accuracy" is multi-dimensional and perhaps in that sense it is inherently ambiguous and unhelpful. In discussions of John's death, it is certainly the case that the expression, and other related terminology (e.g. historicity, plausibility, etc.), varies in scholars' usage so much so that it is often difficult (1) to infer what aspect(s) of historical accuracy scholars affirm or deny and (2) to ascertain if they mischaracterize the nature of one another's arguments. But, since the terminology is so prevalent, it is inescapable to utilize the term in discussing previous research. Three interconnected dimensions of meaning tend to operate in scholarly approaches to the question of "accuracy," though these are by no means hard and fast categories: historicity, primitivity, and plausibility. In this survey, therefore, (1) the term *historicity* refers to the idea that the accounts of John's death closely approximate "what actually happened." (2) The term *primitivity* refers to the notion that the Markan and/or Matthean tradition of John's execution is pre-Synoptic and emerged relatively early. (3) The term *plausibility* refers to the idea that John's death as presented in the primary data is believable as a hypothetical possibility given what historians know of the social and cultural milieu of first-century Galilee and Judea.

2.1. Appeals to Cultural Traditions

Some scholars argue against the accuracy of the Markan account of John's beheading by appealing to cultural traditions that resemble the narrative.[101] For example, Murphy argues that since the story appears to be crafted out of the HB, especially the conflict between Elijah, Ahab, and Jezebel (1 Kgs 19:1–2; 21:17–26), it does not pass the criterion of discontinuity.[102] In his monograph *Water into Wine and the Beheading of John the Baptist*, Aus makes the case that John's execution in Mark 6 is directly influenced by Jewish haggadic traditions on Esther.[103] He suggests that the "historically false" appellation of Antipas as a "King" in Mark's account "can very well be due to dependence on the original narrator's prototype, Esther 1" in which "King" Ahasuerus, like Antipas, gave a banquet for his leading officials.[104] Likewise, Aus argues that Antipas' offer of up to half of his kingdom to Salome "has nothing to do with historical reality" but it rather "derives from the Esther narrative" and most ostensibly from the first targum of Esther 5:3 where Ahasuerus offers Esther half of his kingdom.[105] These and other parallels lead Aus firmly to doubt the historicity of Mark 6:17–29: "There was no birthday banquet of a 'King' Herod Antipas, no dancing of a 'little girl' Salome before drunken men, no head dripping of blood brought in on a platter."[106]

[101] The parallels between John's death and other stories from the HB and Greco-Roman literature are frequently documented and so I will not enumerate a comprehensive list of the parallels here. For the parallels to the Elijah-Ahab-Jezebel conflict, see, e.g., Hoffeditz and Yates, "Femme Fatale Redux"; Boring, *Mark*, 178. For the parallels to the story of Esther see, e.g., R. Aus, *Water into Wine and the Beheading of John the Baptist: Early Jewish-Christian Interpretation of Esther 1 in John 2.1–11 and Mark 6.17–29*, BJS 150 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988). For Greco-Roman parallels see, e.g. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 301, n. 5; Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 402. Cf. Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 183.

[102] Murphy, *John the Baptist*, 72–73.

[103] For his full discussion of the ten affinities that he identifies in this capacity, see Aus, *Beheading of John the Baptist*, 41–66.

[104] Aus, *Beheading of John the Baptist*, 42.

[105] Aus, *Beheading of John the Baptist*, 55–56 (quotations, p. 55). Similarly, Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 99.

[106] Aus, *Beheading of John the Baptist*, 73.

Aus, however, probably does not intend to convey the idea that the mere presence of cultural parallels renders the tradition ahistorical, but rather that the amount of or the precision of the parallels has a bearing on judging historicity.[107] This logic underlies other works as well. For Crossley, the parallels between Mark 6:17–29 and the haggadic traditions associated with Esther (as set forth by Aus) suggest that Mark's version of John's death "did not happen."[108] Theissen connects the "motif of the free request" with his contention that Mark 6:17–29 is a "legendary retelling of events."[109] In her monumental 1997 monograph on John the Baptist, J. Taylor makes the following assertion: "The long story in Mark's Gospel should probably not be considered historical in many of its details. It has marked literary characteristics that seem rooted in biblical precedents."[110] Similarly, Dibelius forwards the dance of the girl and the king's promise as based on "Sagenmotive" rather than on "geschichtlich richtigen Voraussetzungen" or "geschichtlichen Traditionen."[111] The two elements thus fit "in den Palast eines Märchenkönigs als an den Hof des Antipas."[112] Finally, Bultmann classifies the story of John's death as "a legend" that had its pre-history in "Hellenistic Jewish tradition."[113] He bolsters this contention by appealing to its "heathen parallels."[114]

[107] See, Aus, *Beheading of John the Baptist*., 67, where he claims that the parallels "provide too many exact word and motif similarities for [Mark 6.17–29] to be dismissed as mere 'reminiscences' of [Jewish traditions about Esther]."

[108] Crossley, "History from the Margins," 148.

[109] Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 86. Theissen does not necessarily deny the historicity of the substance of Mark's account (whatever that substance may be), only that its form is legendary. Similarly, Joachin Gnilka, "Das Martyrium Johannes' des Täufers (Mk 6, 17–29)," in *Orientierung an Jesu: Zur Theologie der Synoptiker*, ed. P. Hoffmann, Norbert Brox, and Wilhelm Pesch (Freiburg: Herder, 1973), 78–92.

[110] Taylor, *The Immerser*, 246. In 2010, Taylor, "John the Baptist," 821, likewise remarks: "The story of Antipas' reluctance to kill John as given in Mark (Luke [*sic*] 6:17–29; Matt. 14:3–12) is highly indebted to motifs in the book of Esther and may reflect popular speculation."

[111] Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, 79.

[112] Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, 79.

[113] Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 301. Bultmann (*History of the Synoptic Tradition*,, 244–45, n. 1) acknowledges that although the strict definition of the term "legend" does not imply a negative judgment on the question of historicity, in his work the operative definition of the term does involve this implication. Cf. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, xv: "The term 'legend' does not in itself raise the question of historicity."

[114] Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 301. Here, therefore, one can observe Bultmann exemplifying his contention that form criticism both presumes and results in judgments of historicity: "I am indeed convinced that form-criticism, just because literary forms are related to the life and history of the

Alternatively, Scobie contends that the similarities between the story of John's death and the stories of Elijah and Esther "are not *close enough* to warrant the conclusion that the New Testament story is a *pure fiction*."[115] Although Scobie's remark reveals that he questions the precision or the amount of the parallels, it nevertheless suggests that he would conclude John's execution story as some sort of literary creation *had* the parallels aligned more considerably. V. Taylor concedes a certain amount of literary freedom in light of the parallels, but contends: "creation on the basis of these stories is exposed to formidable difficulties."[116] Lane regards the resemblances with Esther as typical "in the depiction of an oriental court scene."[117] Nolland, finally, takes an intermediary position. He asserts that the story of John's death in the Gospels has "clearly not been spun out of" the Esther allusions.[118] He concedes, however, that the "court intrigue" that these allusions establish nevertheless means "that confidence in this account cannot be put on the same level as for the main body of Gospel tradition."[119]

To summarize, the presence of cultural archetypes in the tradition affects scholarly evaluations of the "historical accuracy" of John's execution. This study, with its focus on reception, is not concerned with reconstructing "what actually happened." Nevertheless, my approach's conceptualization of the early reception of John's death as instances of social memory (see chapter two) shares the concern to identify how early handlers of the tradition relate John's death to their significant cultural traditions of the past. In chapter five, for instance, I will show that Origen contrasts the outpouring of the spirit in Acts 2:1–41 with the

primitive Church not only presupposes judgments of facts alongside judgements of literary criticism, but must also lead to judgements about facts" (*History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 5).

115 Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 180, n. 1 (italics added).

116 Taylor, *St Mark*, 311. Similarly, Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 208.

117 Lane, *Mark*, 217.

118 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 581.

119 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 581.

removal of John's head in a bid to highlight the preeminence of Christians at the expense of Jews.

2.2. Appeals to "Contentious Details"

Scholars also question the historical accuracy of first-century portrayals of John's death on the basis of what I will collectively refer to as "contentious details." Many of these difficulties surface when juxtaposing Josephus' version of John's death (*Ant.* 18.116–119) with the Synoptic Gospels' portrayals. The contentious details include: (1) Antipas' identification as βασιλεύς in Mark but as merely τετραάρχης in Josephus, Matthew, and Luke;[120] (2) Mark's claim that Philip (the tetrarch?) was Herodias' first husband on the one hand and Josephus' claim, on the other hand, that Salome, Herodias' daughter, married Philip the tetrarch;[121] (3) the name and parentage of the dancing daughter;[122] (4) the (im)-

[120] See Mark 6:14, 22, 25, 26, 27. Cf. Matt 14:1; Luke 3:19; 9:7; Acts 13:1; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.188; 18.241–56; *J.W.* 2.178–83. Interestingly, Matt 14:9 refers to Herod Antipas as ὁ βασιλεύς whereas he had previously referred to Antipas in Matt 14:1 as ὁ τετραάρχης. Mark Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* (London: T&T Clark International, 2001), 73, categorizes this feature of Matt 14:9 as an example of "editorial fatigue." Moreover, Collins, *Mark*, 303, observes that the title "tetrarch" is applied to Antipas by two inscriptions (Cos and Delos). Similarly, Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 338–44, observes that Antipas minted coins with his title "tetrarch" on the reverse side and with a reed plant on the front side. In addition to the Cos and Delos inscriptions, Morton Jensen, *Herod Antipas in Galilee: The Literary and Archaeological Sources on the Reign of Herod Antipas and its Socio-Economic Impact on Galilee* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 203–14, notes a recently identified coin of Antipas (dated to 4 CE) that reads "Tetrarch, Herod" on the front. Some scholars suggest that Mark's utilization of the term "king" derives from "local custom." See, e.g., Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 206. Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 398–99 (quotation, p. 398), recognizes that the "title 'king' is technically inaccurate" but attributes its usage to Markan irony.

[121] See Mark 6:17. Matthew 14:3 likewise mentions that Herodias was the wife of Philip. Josephus (*Ant*. 18.109, 136) indicates that Herodias was married to "Herod" (Antipas' half-brother) before she married Antipas. (In the same passage, moreover, Josephus claims that Herodias and Herod had a daughter named Salome who married Philip the tetrarch before his death in 33/34 CE; Salome subsequently married and had three sons with Aristobolus [*Ant*. 18.136–137]). The difficulty lies in the observation that no ancient source indicates that this "Herod" was also named "Philip." Moreover, if Mark and Matthew both have Philip *the tetrarch* in view (both do not explicitly identify him as "tetrarch" in this passage), then this is incompatible with Josephus who clearly identifies Philip the tetrarch as the husband of Salome, not Herodias. Furthermore, Codex Bezae (D) at Matt 14:3 omits the name Φιλίππου to read that Herodias was married to Antipas' brother. The codex thus portrays the familial relationship similarly to Josephus' portrayal. Likewise, Luke 3:19 refers to Herodias' former husband as merely Antipas' brother. See further, Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 209.

[122] Matthew 14:6 does not explicitly name the dancing daughter but refers to her as "the daughter of Herodias" (ἡ θυγάτηρ τῆς Ἡρῳδιάδος). The evidence in Mark 6:22, however, is more convoluted. Some manuscripts (e.g. ℵ, B, D, L) indicate that this dancing figure was Antipas' daughter and named Herodias (like her mother). If Mark understands this daughter to be born of Antipas and Herodias (cf. 6:24), then this comes into tension with Josephus. Josephus does not indicate that Antipas and Herodias had any children together. Other manuscripts at Mark 6:22 (e.g. A, C) indicate that the girl is Herodias' daughter (presumably from her

plausibility of a Herodian princess (sensuously) dancing at an elitist banquet;[123] (5) the age of Salome at the time of the dance;[124] (6) the different explanations that Mark, Matthew, and Josephus provide for why John died, including the liable individuals;[125] (7) the plausibility of Antipas, a client-ruler of Rome, having authority in himself to offer half his kingdom to the dancing daughter;[126] and (8) Tiberias or some other Galilean locale as the tacit location of

previous marriage) and also named Herodias (θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς τῆς Ἡρῳδιάδος). This also presents problems in relation to Josephus. He indicates that Salome was the name of Herodias' daughter from her previous marriage (*Ant*. 18.136–137). Still other manuscripts at Mark 6:22 (e.g. 205) are grammatically ambiguous in their reading: θυγατρὸς τῆς Ἡρῳδιάδος. The genitive τῆς Ἡρῳδιάδος could be rendered appositionally ("the daughter, *that is, Herodias*") or as a genitive of relationship ("the daughter *of Herodias*"). This same grammatical ambiguity with respect to the genitive case is also at work in the manuscripts (again, e.g. א B D L) that read θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἡρῳδιάδος ("his daughter, that is, Herodias" or "his daughter of [i.e. whom he had with] Herodias"). See further, Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 396.

123 Enslin, "John and Jesus," 13: "That a royal princess should dance in such a gathering is hardly likely." Cf. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 180: "But when we remember the moral standards of the Herodian family, we can believe anything." Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 396, sees several inaccuracies in the Markan pericope, but argues that the feature of the dancing girl "is not one of them." Like Scobie, he appeals to the moral depravity of the Herodian lineage to substantiate his claim. See further, Ezra P. Gould, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1896), 113.

124 Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 330, captures the heart and potential reach of this issue: "This problem is important because it speaks to the historical plausibility of the Gospels' claim that Herodias and her daughter (presumed to be Salome) played some role in the death of John, prompted by John's critique of Herodias' marriage to Herod. If the Gospels' claim is meritorious, it must be consistent with what we know about the chronology of all these events: at the time of John's death, Herodias must be married to Herod Antipas; her daughter, Salome, must be of an age to dance before Antipas; Salome must also be of an age that allows her to be married to Philip before he dies in 33 C.E., and subsequently married to Aristobulus in the early 50s C.E., and to have borne him three sons. And this is without even considering the potential implications of all this for dating the deaths of John and Jesus." See further, Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 90–91.

125 Mark's Antipas arrests John to protect him from Herodias (6:17, 19–20). But Herodias takes advantage of an "opportune day" (6:21) and urges the daughter to have Antipas fulfill his oath by beheading John (6:21–28). Matthew indicates that Antipas *wants* to execute John but refrains from doing so because "he feared the crowd" (14:5). Thereafter, however, Herodias urges the daughter to have Antipas fulfill his oath by beheading John (14:6–11). Luke suggests that (1) Antipas arrests John because of the latter's repudiation of the former's marriage to Herodias (3:19–20) and that (2) Antipas had John beheaded (9:7–9). Josephus portrays Antipas as preemptively executing the Baptist before the Baptist's activity led to a revolt (*Ant*. 18.118). Three scholars in particular, whose works attempt to situate Jesus and John within the social and political context of Second Temple Judaism, exemplify the concern to converge these dissonant explanations regarding why John died: E.P. Sanders, Robert Webb, and Joan Taylor. For their full discussions, see, Webb, *Baptizer and Prophet*, 373–77; E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993), 92–94; Taylor, *The Immerser*, 213–41. Recently, Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 98–112 has also argued along these lines. On this matter, all three argue that Mark and Josephus do not directly contradict one another, but represent two sides of a multi-faceted complex that led to John's arrest and execution (Webb, *Baptizer and Prophet*, 375; Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 93; Taylor, *The Immerser*, 213). Their approach is enlightening as it underscores the socio-political dimensions of John's seemingly mere moral rebuke of Antipas. Cf. Taylor, *St Mark*, 311; Lane, *Mark*, 216–17; Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC 34A (Dallas: Word, 1989), 331; Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew*, 2:465.

126 Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 179–80: "To object to the promise of Antipas that he would give to the dancing girl 'up to half my kingdom' (Mark 6:23) is to misunderstand the nature of the story in which exaggeration plays a part." Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 212: "To object that Herod was not in a position to give half his kingdom away, as he was dependent on Rome, is to take his words prosaically." Cf. Enslin, "John and Jesus," 13: "That the politically astute Antipas, tipsy though he may have been, would have made such an impossible offer of repayment as 'half my kingdom' is simply absurd."

Antipas' banquet but the explicitly identified fortress of Machaerus in Perea as the location where John was executed in Josephus' account.[127]

Murphy observes that the element of the sensuous dance does not pass the criterion of multiple-attestation since only one independent witness attests to it.[128] Surprisingly, Meier includes a brief section on John's death without explicitly discussing the criteria of authenticity in the second volume of his behemoth project, *A Marginal Jew*.[129] His discussion is brief in part because the "legendary tone" and the differences with Josephus' account lead him to conclude that Mark 6:17–29 "contains little historical worth, even with reference to the historical John."[130] He poses the rhetorical question: "If Mark can be so wrong about the basic familial relationships that are the driving engine of the plot of his story about John's execution, why should we credit the rest of the story as historical?"[131] Furthermore, Meier favors Josephus' claim that John was executed at Machaerus. Since Josephus is so well informed in his information on Machaerus, he is not therefore likely to be wrong in his presentation.[132] Meier does not altogether dismiss Mark's account, however, but confirms that it "has a historical core."[133] His overall assessment, though, is to regard the Synoptic

[127] Mark 6:21 indicates that Antipas held the banquet "for the leading [ones] of Galilee" (τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς Γαλιλαίας). This may imply that the banquet was held *in* Galilee, and perhaps at Tiberias—Antipas' base of operations. Josephus claims that the Baptist was incarcerated and executed at Machaerus in Perea (*Ant.* 18.119). If John was incarcerated at Machaerus, then it would be impossible for Antipas to have had the Baptist's head delivered to the banquet in Tiberias (a multi-day trip) within a single day's journey.

[128] Murphy, *John the Baptist*, 72.

[129] Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:171–76.

[130] Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:171.

[131] Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:172. Meier poses this question specifically in relation to two Markan familial claims that Josephus contradicts: (1) that Herodias' first husband was named Philip (Mark 6:17), and (2) that Antipas and Herodias had a daughter named Herodias (Mark 6:22).

[132] Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:173. See also, W. Barnes Tatum, "John the Baptist and Jesus: A Report of the Jesus Seminar" (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1994), 160, who reports that the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar voted 100 percent "red" on Machaerus as the site of John's execution.

[133] Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:172. Meier identifies the "historical core" as (1) the fact that John was arrested and executed by Antipas and (2) that Antipas' marriage to Herodias functioned as "background or motivation" for John's death. Cf. Murphy, *John the Baptist*, 72–73, who identifies the multiply-attested core as the fact that Antipas had John executed.

Gospels as more reliable in their presentations of the aspects of John's ministry but Josephus as more reliable in his portrayal of John's death.[134]

Likewise, Enslin argues that Mark's details abound in difficulties if viewed "as the accurate report of an actual historical incident."[135] Enslin concludes that Mark does not portray an actual historical occurrence on account of contentious details two, four, and seven mentioned above.[136] Josephus, on the other hand, offers a less "flashy" but more probable contrast.[137] Like Enslin and Meier, Cope argues that Josephus' account presents a "historically more plausible account of the death of John."[138] Cope adds that John's death in Josephus lacks "any special bias and is probably wholly correct or may be supplemented by the more lurid, and perhaps apocryphal, account of John's death told in the gospels."[139]

Crossley posits two pieces of evidence that render the historicity of the episode as unlikely. First, neither in Josephus' account of John's death (*Ant.* 18.116–119) nor in the rest of the Gospels—except in Mark 6:17–29—is there any hint that (1) John the Baptist and Herod Antipas had any sort of reconciliation, (2) Herod Antipas felt remorse for John's death, or (3) someone other than Antipas was responsible for John's death.[140] Second, since Antipas' authority was reliant upon Rome, his oath to the dancing daughter (Mark 6:22–23) "would have been impossible."[141] While doubting the plausibility and historicity of Mark's account, Crossley proceeds to argue for the tradition's primitivity: he dates the emergence of the pre-Markan tradition to the late 30s or early 40s CE.[142] Thus, Crossley dates the tradition to a period when portraying Herodias and Salome as dangerous and manipulative women

134 Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:173. This conclusion is strengthened, according to Meier, by a literary analysis of Mark 6:17–29 whereby Marks' story is embedded with resonances from the HB, particularly the stories of Elijah and Esther.

135 Enslin, "John and Jesus," 12.

136 Enslin, "John and Jesus," 12–13.

137 Enslin, "John and Jesus," 13.

138 Cope, "Death of John the Baptist," 515. So also, Boring, *Mark*, 178.

139 Cope, "Death of John the Baptist," 516.

140 Crossley, "History from the Margins," 148.

141 Crossley, "History from the Margins," 148.

142 Crossley, "History from the Margins," 156–57.

would not have amounted to "suicide."[143] Similarly to Crossley, Theissen identifies five "displacements" in Mark's account that probably reflect a later socio-political climate than the actual circumstances at the time of John's death.[144]

Crossley and Theissen, therefore, both seek to identify the factors that distorted Mark's tradition. This study's approach similarly shares the conviction that the memory of the past is always localized in the social frameworks of the present (see chapter two). I thus agree with Crossley's and Theissen's assumption that present social factors impact the shape of tradition. My study augments theirs, however, by inverting the orientation of inquiry: theirs is a pre-Synoptic tradition history, whereas mine is a post-Synoptic tradition history.

Whereas some scholars seem to doubt the plausibility or historicity of Mark's presentation on account of the contentious details, others argue for the plausibility or historicity of the episode or display varying postures of ambivalence. V. Taylor recognizes that the contentious details represent "a formidable case" but attempts to demonstrate that "much of it falls away when it is submitted to cool appraisal."[145] In his 1989 commentary on the Gospel of Mark, Guelich attempts to alleviate the tensions between Mark and Josephus that lead many to conclude that Mark's version derives more from "folklore" than from "how it actually happened."[146] Sollertinsky argues for the historical credibility of the Markan version rather than Josephus' version.[147] He substantiates his case by asserting that Josephus did not wish to cast an unfavorable light on Herodias since she, Agrippa, and Josephus shared

[143] Crossley, "History from the Margins," 156: "Such a story would be downright suicidal when Herod Antipas and Herodias were pulling the strings of power."

[144] Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 86–89.

[145] Taylor, *St Mark*, 310–17 (quotation, p. 310). Taylor's defense of the credibility of many of Mark's contentious details does not amount to claiming historicity. Instead, he argues that the account reveals Mark's "fidelity" to early perceptions of Antipas and John (*St Mark*, 311). Similarly, Lane argues that the arguments against the "historical integrity" of Mark's narration "are not substantial and should be set aside" (*Mark*, 217). He reasons that since John's disciples did not have access to perceive John's actual execution, it was only "inevitable" that the report of John's death "would first be whispered about, and then take shape in a popular report." Thus, although Lane argues for the "integrity" of Mark's account, he does not necessarily argue for its historicity.

[146] Guelich, *Mark*, 326.

[147] S. Sollertinsky, "The Death of St. John the Baptist," *JTS* 1 (1900): 507–28.

the same Hasmonean lineage.[148] Thus, Sollertinsky makes his case by arguing quite the opposite of Cope (see above). The latter assigns bias to the Gospels whereas the former assigns bias to Josephus.

Finally, in a remark frequently quoted, Rawlinson upholds the general plausibility of both Mark and Josephus and further surmises that Mark's presentation reflects early rumors surrounding Johns' death:

> Both are no doubt *bona fide* and independent; it is a mistake to try to harmonize the two. Josephus' version will give the facts as they presented themselves to an historian who wrote sixty years later, and who was concerned to trace the political causes of a war. The story in Mk will be an account, written with a certain amount of literary freedom, of what was being darkly whispered in the bazaars or market-places of Palestine at the time: it has at least the value of reflecting faithfully the opinion entertained of Herod by his subjects, the shock to public opinion caused by his adulterous marriage, and the thrill of horror aroused by his execution of the great ascetic prophet of repentance.[149]

Regardless of the accuracy of Rawlinson's assessment, his implicit claim that the portrayals of John's death are impacted by their socio-political matrix is a recognition shared by the present study. In chapter four, for instance, I will suggest that many first-century readers of Mark likely understood the account as framed according to ancient discourses on beheading.

2.3. Summary

To summarize, some scholars appeal to the striking parallels between John's death and cultural traditions from antiquity (e.g. Esther) to estimate the "historical accuracy" of Mark's account of John's beheading. Others make this same appeal but argue that the Markan story has a historical core that has been diachronically embedded with legendary layers of material. Some critics refer to one or more "contentious details" to evaluate the question of "historical accuracy." Many scholars, therefore, at least implicitly recognize that the past is

[148] Sollertinsky, "The Death of St. John the Baptist," 509–12.
[149] Rawlinson, *St Mark*, 82.

not recalled as such. The past emerges in textual artifacts bearing the shape of the archetypal past as well as the marks of the various present social horizons in which the tradition is recalled. Chapter five in particular will take this recognition further by arguing that Justin Martyr and Origen localize John's beheading in "Jewish-Christian" relations (of the second and third centuries, respectively) in anti-Jewish ways.

3. The Question of Chronology

What year did John die? This is the third question that drives discussions of John's death. The complexity of this problem is readily apparent to anyone who dives into the depths of configuring a precise date for seemingly any event from antiquity. John's death is no exception to this rule.[150] Scholars have demonstrated how pinpointing the date of his death ebbs and flows as different pieces of evidence are interpreted and prioritized.[151] As the present work focuses on reception, we will not return to this question in subsequent chapters, and so, the following survey is brief. The question of chronology is nevertheless discussed here in order to highlight a feature of this discourse that intersects with my study: John's death occurred *before* Jesus' death. As primary sources position John's beheading as a foreshadowing of Jesus' crucifixion, they implicitly make the sequential claim that John died ahead of Jesus.[152] As aforementioned, the interconnection between John's beheading and

[150] Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 121, remarks that identifying the year of John's death is "more complicated" than determining when John was born and when John began his public ministry.

[151] Cf., e.g. Harold W. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 125–31, 169–71; Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 327–30.

[152] Relatedly, when Historical Jesus scholars claim that Jesus initially adhered to but later rejected—after the Baptist's death—John's apocalyptic message, they tacitly affirm the chronological sequence of the Synoptic Gospels that John died before Jesus. In turn, they must adopt a date of John's death before the date Jesus' death. See, e.g., John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 230, 236–38, 259, who appeals to the historical Jesus uttering both Luke 7:24–27 (//Matt 11:7–10) and Luke 7:28 (//Matt 11:11) to assert that, after John died, Jesus no longer accepted John's apocalyptic vision. Crossan further dates John's death to the early 30s CE, that is, to a date amicable to his supposition that Jesus outlived John. Some Historical Jesus scholars, to be sure, are quick to affirm that John died before Jesus without addressing the chronological complexity inherent to this claim. See, e.g., Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 110, 127–28.

Jesus' crucifixion is a feature of the Synoptic tradition that early recipients implement in their present social contexts.

Also, the question of chronology reinforces the important structural observation that in every first-century source in which John's death is narrated it appears as a "flashback," interrupting the linear progression of the narration. How "far back" this flashback seems to look, therefore, ultimately affects when scholars date his death. For my own purposes, that John's death occurs as a "flashback" in Mark raises the question of its narrative function, a question I will return to in chapter four.

3.1. Standard Proposals of the Date of John's Death

Scholars often date John's death to c. 30 CE. J. Taylor, for example, follows this commonplace assertion.[153] Her argument consists of multiple moves. First, she observes that John's death, as a "flashback" in Josephus, should be dated prior to 34 CE (the date often assigned to Antipas' war with Aretas).[154] Second, she affirms the chronological parameters set forth in Luke 3:1–3 where Luke portrays John's emergence on the public scene occurring in the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign (c. 27–29 CE).[155] Moreover, since Philip the tetrarch died c. 34 CE (i.e. the twentieth year of Tiberius' reign), and if Mark is correct in dating John's death to a time before Salome was married to Philip, then John's death must have occurred prior to 34 CE.[156] Therefore, Taylor concludes that John died between 28/29 CE and 34 CE and further observes: "Jesus continued with his own mission and was executed sometime between the death of John and the recalling of Pilate in early 37."[157]

[153] See Taylor, *The Immerser*, 255–59.
[154] Taylor, *The Immerser*, 255, n. 77.
[155] Taylor, *The Immerser*, 255.
[156] Taylor, *The Immerser*, 257.
[157] Taylor, *The Immerser*, 257–58 (quotation, p. 258).

Similarly to Taylor, Hoehner argues that Luke 3:1 requires the death of John to "have occurred between A.D. 28 and 32."[158] Hoehner, however, observes that Josephus' narration makes "it [seem] that John's death occurred not much before the defeat of Antipas' army by Aretas in A.D. 36."[159] Rather than proposing a late date for John's death, however, he argues that a late date proposal is "an inference from Josephus that the Baptist's death must have occurred very shortly before the time of Antipas' defeat by Aretas."[160] For Hoehner, Josephus' account does not set a strict parameter on the date of John's death: it only indicates that John's death occurred at an *indefinite* time before Antipas' defeat by Aretas.[161] Like Taylor and Hoehner, Theissen and Merz date John's death to "an indefinite time before the defeat of Herod Antipas by the Nabataean king Aretas in 36 CE."[162] Since the Baptist emerged during the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign (28 CE), then John probably died early in 30 CE.[163] John died, therefore, "even before Jesus."[164]

Many scholars, therefore, date John's death between 28/29 CE and 34 CE. This range is based on appealing to (1) the parameter provided by Luke 3:1–3, (2) the Gospels' impression that John's death occurred soon after his emergence on the public scene, and (3)

158 Hoehner, *Antipas*, 125.

159 Hoehner, *Antipas*, 125.

160 Hoehner, *Antipas*, 126.

161 Josephus (*Ant*. 18.116) indicates that some Jews interpreted Antipas' defeat as divine retribution for Antipas' arrest and execution of John the Baptist. Rather than seeing this as implying that John's death occurred closer to the Antipas-Aretas conflict (c. 35/36 CE), Hoehner (*Antipas*, 126, n. 1) argues that "Jews felt God's revenge did not always occur immediately at the time of the misdeed." As an example, Hoehner cites the Jews' connection of Antiochus Epiphanes' desecration of the Temple with Antiochus' death three years later (see *Ant*. 12.248–253, 357; 1 Macc. 1.29, 54; 6.8–13). Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 124, argues similarly to Hoehner: "And we certainly cannot conclude that Antipas's murder of the Baptist must have occurred shortly before the disastrous war that was popularly believed to be a punishment for that murder. After all, if Christians could think that the desecration of the Temple in 70 CE was a punishment for the execution of Jesus in the thirties, it does not seem implausible that Palestinian Jews known to Josephus could think that Antipas's defeat around 36 CE was a punishment for his execution of John several years earlier." Similarly, Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 89–90; Ulrich B. Müller, *Johannes der Täufer: Jüdischer Prophet und Wegbereiter Jesu*, BG 6 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2002), 79–82. Cf. Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 327, n. 9, who characterizes Hoehner's argument as an effort to "mitigate any conflicts."

162 Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1998), 197.

163 Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 197.

164 Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 198.

Josephus' clear but indefinite indication that John's death occurred before Antipas' defeat by Aretas.

3.2. Alternative Proposals of the Date of John's Death

Other scholars, however, date John's death differently. Some scholars argue that it occurred in the early 20s CE.[165] Others suggest that John's death did indeed occur closer to Antipas' defeat by Aretas around 34–36 CE.[166] Still others suggest that it is impossible to know for certain precisely when John died.[167] Despite this divergence, many scholars still recognize that John's death is presented as a "flashback" in Josephus and that John preceded Jesus in death.[168]

Chilton, for example, dates John's death to 21 CE.[169] He pinpoints Antipas' visit to Rome (*Ant.* 18.110–111) and ensuing marriage to Herodias to 19 CE.[170] Moreover, he observes that Josephus' account of John the Baptist (*Ant*. 18.116–119) is a "flashback."[171] Further, a lapse of fifteen years or so between Herodias' divorce from Philip around 19 CE and Philip's death in 34 CE, followed by the war with Aretas around 36 CE, explains Philip's soldiers joining Antipas' forces in the latter's struggle against Aretas.[172] Chilton's early date provides room for his claim that Jesus "apprenticed himself to [John] as a youth."[173] After

[165] See, e.g., Chilton, "Friends and Enemies"; Bruce Chilton, "John the Baptist: His Immersion and His Death," in *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 25–44; Bruce Chilton, "John the Baptist," *REHJ*. Cf. Bruce Chilton, "John the Purifier," in *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 203–20.

[166] See, e.g., Wolfgang Schenk, "Gefangenschaft und Tod des Täufers Erwägungen zur Chronologie und ihren Konsequenzen," *NTS* 29 (1983): 453–83.

[167] See, e.g., Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 290.

[168] Clare K. Rothschild. *Baptist Traditions and Q* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 46–52, concludes that John died probably before Jesus sometime between 28–36 CE.

[169] Chilton, "John the Baptist," 340–41.

[170] Chilton, "Immersion and Death," 43.

[171] Chilton, "John the Baptist," 341.

[172] Chilton, "John the Baptist," 341.

[173] Chilton, "Friends and Enemies," 72.

John's death, Jesus ceased from immersing others and moved out of the geographical location of John's ministerial activity.[174]

Kraemer, however, displays more reticence in dating John's death. In her excellent analysis of the complexity of reconciling the chronologies that Josephus and the Gospels provide, she ultimately concludes that their differences "cannot and should not be amalgamated."[175] Moreover, Kraemer accentuates the internal chronological tension within Josephus' narration of events. On the one hand, the report of John's death implies that John's death occurred within a few years before Antipas' defeat by Aretas in 36 CE and Tiberius' death in 37 CE.[176] On the other hand, *Ant.* 18.145–160 indicates that Antipas had already joined Herodias in marriage by the time that Agrippa I returned from Rome (24/25 CE) upon the death of Tiberius's son, Drusus (d. 23 CE).[177] Consequently, John could have repudiated Antipas' marriage to Herodias around the early 20s CE and died soon afterward. Strictly speaking, however, Kraemer is quick to note that John's death in Josephus "need not postdate" their marriage. The only strict sequential parameter that Josephus provides for John's death is that it occurred before Antipas' military conflict with Aretas.[178]

In a similar vein, Sanders reaches a reticent conclusion: "We do not know when Antipas met Herodias, when his former wife fled to her father, and when John was executed."[179] Sanders acknowledges that *Ant.*18.116–119 is a "flashback" since Josephus recounts it "after the event that it is said to have caused."[180] As such, Sanders claims that Josephus does not narrate events sequentially but rather topically.[181] Sanders observes that Josephus narrates Jesus' life (*Ant.* 18.63–64) in between events that occurred around 19

[174] Chilton, "Friends and Enemies," 74–76.
[175] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 340.
[176] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 327.
[177] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 327–28.
[178] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 328.
[179] Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 290.
[180] Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 289.
[181] Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 287–88.

CE.[182] Therefore, to propose that Jesus died around 36 CE requires the historian "to accept that Josephus sequenced the Baptist's death correctly, but Jesus' life incorrectly."[183] Equally, to assert that Jesus died around 21 CE requires the historian "to accept that Josephus sequenced Jesus' life correctly, but John the Baptist's death incorrectly."[184] Sanders' maneuver reveals that he maintains the Gospels' sequence of John's and Jesus' deaths regardless of whether Jesus died early in the 20s or later in the mid-30s. He adjusts the date of John's death on the basis of when he dates Jesus' death. The assumption that John died before Jesus thus runs through his reasoning.

In contrast to Sanders, Schenk unravels the assumption that John died before Jesus. Rather than prioritizing the Synoptic Gospels' narrative frameworks (e.g. Mark 1:14; 6:14; Matt 11:12//Luke 7:16), Schenk prioritizes evidence from Josephus in estimating the date of John's death and its sequence in relation to Jesus' death.[185] He dates Antipas' defeat by Aretas to 36 CE and thusly reasons with respect to *Ant.* 18.116–119:

> Die Deutung der Antipas-Niederlage als göttliche Rehabilitierung des hingerichteten Täufers weist auf enge sachliche wie chronologische Zusammenhänge. Diese Beseitigung eines Störenfrieds läßt kaum damit rechnen, daß Antipas ihn mehrere Jahre vorher verhaftet und dann eingekerkert gelassen hätte.[186]

Whereas Hoehner (see above) views the temporal proximity of John's death to Antipas' defeat as indefinite, Schenk suggests that the populace's interpretation of Antipas' defeat as divine rehabilitation necessitates that John died in close proximity to 36 CE. In turn, this allows him to remain open to the idea that John may have outlived Jesus by 4–5 years.[187]

[182] Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 287.
[183] Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 287.
[184] Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 288.
[185] Schenk, "Gefangenschaft und Tod des Täufers."
[186] Schenk, "Gefangenschaft und Tod des Täufers," 463. "The interpretation of the defeat of Antipas as divine rehabilitation/restoration for the executed Baptist points at narrow, factual, and chronological coherences. This elimination of a disturber hardly allows [us] to reckon/calculate that Antipas had arrested him several years prior and then left [him] incarcerated" (translation mine).
[187] Schenk, "Gefangenschaft und Tod des Täufers," 463–64.

Scholars, therefore, do not necessarily hold fast to Luke 3:1–3 (or the Gospel narratives' frameworks in general) as an incontrovertible way of identifying when John died. Some view *Ant*. 18.145–160 as indicating that Antipas had married Herodias in the early 20s CE and that, as a result, John may have likewise died in the early 20s. Others, however, view *Ant*. 18.109–119 as intimating that John died closer to the mid-30s. Schenk, moreover, claims a late date for John's death and concludes that John may have actually died after Jesus.

Conclusion: A Neglected Fourth Question

The previous survey set forth three primary questions that drive scholarly research on the death of John the Baptist. First, we observed multiple ways that scholars have interpreted John's death. Some view John's death as anti-Herodian in its function while others have observed how it relates John to Jesus or differentiates the two figures. Second, scholars have argued for or against the accuracy of the Markan version on the basis of (1) its employment of cultural traditions and (2) the presence of "contentious details." Third, much scholarship has attempted to pinpoint when John died. Some argue that John must have died between 28/29 CE and 34/35 CE. Others propose that John died in the early 20s CE or even after Jesus died. Cumulatively, whereas past research has focused extensive attention on these three questions, a fourth question has received far less consideration: the question of reception.

I am not suggesting that scholars pay no attention to the post-history of John's death. In his 2001 monograph, Hartmann includes a brief treatment of samples of the reception of Mark 6:14–21, including in the nineteenth-century paintings of Gustave Moreau.[188] In 2013, Neginsky studies the reception of Salome in texts, iconography, paintings, sculptures, poetry, etc., especially from the fourth century through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and

[188] Michael Hartmann, *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers: Eine exegetische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studie auf dem Hintergrund narrativer, intertextueller und kulturanthropologischer Zugänge*, SBB 45 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2001), 356–64.

nineteenth century.[189] Further, in her 2015 article, Stichele includes an analysis of the fifteenth-century artist Giovanni di Paolo's six panels on the life and death of John the Baptist.[190] And, in her 2017 essay, Joynes performs an analysis of the reception of Mark 6:14–29 in Hinrik Funhof's late fifteenth-century painting *The Feast of Herod.*[191] Clearly, scholarship has focused on the post-history of John's death to an extent. However, what these studies illustrate is that when scholars focus on the reception of John's death, the selection of texts and artifacts under investigation often encompasses an expanse of one or two millennia.

Additionally, there is a notable lack of emphasis on the reception of John's death in the second and third centuries in particular. The volume dedicated to the Gospel of Mark in the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* series concentrates mostly on interpreters from the fourth century onwards in regards to Mark 6:14–29.[192] A similar focus is apparent in Luz' work with respect to the parallel account in Matt 14:1–12.[193] In Neginsky's analysis of the reception of Salome, she notably claims: "a religious and theological interest in [Salome] came only in the fourth century."[194] In a section entitled "Wirkungsgeschichte," Gnilka discusses the critical tone against Herod that Calvin and Luther hold in their discussions of John's death.[195] The present study, therefore, steps into this lacuna by analyzing the reception history John's of beheading in the first three centuries. How might one conceptualize and approach such an analysis? We thus now turn to chapter two to further explore this matter.

[189] Rosina Neginsky, *Salome: The Image of a Woman Who Never Was* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

[190] Caroline Vander Stichele, "The Head of John and Its Reception or How to Conceptualize 'Reception History,'" in *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, ed. Emma England and William John Lyons, STr 6; LHBOTS 615 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 79–93.

[191] Christine E. Joynes, "The Reception of the Bible and Its Significance," in *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*, ed. Michael J. Gorman (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), esp. 160–63.

[192] Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, ed., *Mark*, ACCS 2 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 82–88.

[193] Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 308–09.

[194] Neginsky, *Salome*, 23.

[195] Gnilka, *Markus*, 1:252–53. Gnilka briefly notes the reception of the populace's identification of Jesus as John (Mark 6:14) in Origen before proceeding to Erasmus and Calvin.

CHAPTER TWO

A HEURISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR RECEPTION: MEMORY AND VIOLENCE

Every encounter with tradition that takes place within historical consciousness involves the experience of a tension between the text and the present.[196]

Collective memory continuously negotiates between available historical records and current social and political agendas.[197]

Introduction

Chapter one's identification of the reception of John's death as an underexplored area in scholarly discourse leads naturally to a consideration of how one might conceptualize such an examination. Drawing on social theories of memory and violence, this second chapter addresses this concern and, in turn, constructs a heuristic framework for analyzing the reception of John's death according to the dynamics involved in the social remembering of violent events.

1. Social Memory Theory

Hübenthal has demonstrated that biblical scholarship "has a backlog to work off when it comes to understanding and using social memory theory."[198] She reaches two conclusions. First, social memory theory needs to be brought to bear on biblical studies more fully than it has in the past.[199] Second, the need exists to explain what the theory has to offer at the exegetical level in particular.[200] In consideration of her two conclusions, this section (1)

[196] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 317.

[197] Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 5.

[198] Sandra Hübenthal, "Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis: The Quest for an Adequate Application," in *Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Pernille Carstens, Trine Bjornung Hasselbach, and Niels Peter Lemche, PHSC 17 (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2012), 196.

[199] Hübenthal, "Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis," 196.

[200] Hübenthal, "Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis," 196.

traces the emergence of social memory as a theory and its advent in NT scholarship, and (2) argues for its adoption as a category for understanding reception and for analyzing the reception of violence in particular. Although social memory theory should not be equated with an "exegetical method," it does aid in conceptualizing and structuring analysis of narrations of violence.

1.1. Maurice Halbwachs and His Legacy

Social memory theory is an interdisciplinary area of inquiry whose theorists study the social dimensions of individual and collective remembering.[201] Despite the interdisciplinary makeup of its practitioners,[202] social memory theory—in large measure—traces its roots back to the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who in 1925 published his seminal work on the social frameworks of memory.[203] For Halbwachs, all instances of remembrance, including individual recollections, are triggered by and localized in group identities (e.g. families,

[201] Barry Schwartz, "Iconography and Collective Memory: Lincoln's Image in the American Mind," *Sociological Quarterly* 32 (1991): 302, defines "collective memory" as "a metaphor that formulates society's retention and loss of information about its past in the familiar terms of individual remembering and forgetting." On the similarities and differences between the terms "social memory," "collective memory," and "cultural memory" in critical discourse, see especially Hübenthal, "Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis," 175–99. Since all three terms share a common interest in the social dimensions of memory, this study will utilize the term "social memory" to refer to individual or group memory localized in and formative for a social group. For helpful introductions to the theory, see Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 1990); James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*, New Perspectives on the Past (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *ARS* 24 (1998): 105–40; Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, MCM 8 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008); Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, "Introduction," 3–62. See also, Susannah Radstone, ed., *Memory and Methodology* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

[202] Olick and Robins, "Social Memory Studies," 106, describe social memory studies as "a nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centerless enterprise."

[203] Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: Librarie Félix Alcan, 1925). Astrid Erll, "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, MCM 8 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 8, considers it unquestionable that Halbwachs' "studies of *mémoire collective* have emerged as the foundational texts of today's memory studies." Similarly, Jeffrey K. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman: The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943–1949* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 336, refers to Halbwachs as the "founding father of the sociology of collective memory." Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, ix, too describe Halbwachs as "the first theorist" of collective memory. The study of memory, including its social aspects, however, predates the French sociologist. For examples, see Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, "Introduction."

religious groups, social classes) to which the rememberer(s) belongs in the present.[204] Because of these "social frameworks" that encompass recall, "the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present."[205] Thus, Halbwachs argues against a perspective of memory that views recollection as simply replicating the past as such. Instead he advocates for a view that understands recollection as embedded within the language and ideas one appropriates by virtue of existing within a social matrix. Coser, therefore, is correct when he claims that Halbwachs construed the relationship between the past and the present as one where "the past is a social construction mainly, if not wholly, shaped by the concerns of the present."[206]

The recognition of memory as a social construct is axiomatic for memory theorists. In 1932, seven years after Halbwachs' publication of *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, psychologist Bartlett argued that recollection is enabled by the construction of "schemata."[207] For Bartlett, "schemata" are structures of memory that individuals inherit by virtue of their connection to the past:

> [Remembering] is thus hardly ever really exact, even in the most rudimentary cases of rote recapitulation…. [This imprecision is] an effect of the organism's capacity to turn round upon its own "schemata," and is directly a function of consciousness…. So, since many "schemata" are built of common materials, the images and words that mark some of their salient features are in constant, but explicable, change. They, too, are a device made possible by the appearance, or discovery, of consciousness, and without them no genuine long-distance remembering would be possible.[208]

[204] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 37–40. See, Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, "Introduction," 19. Anthony Le Donne, "Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition," in *Memory and Remembrance in the Bible and Antiquity*, ed. Stephen C. Barton, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Benjamin G. Wold, WUNT 212 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 164, reminds us: "This is why amnesia patients are often advised to return to a familiar environment for recovery. External environments prompt the memories required to operate within them."

[205] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40.

[206] Lewis A. Coser, "Introduction: Maurice Halbwachs 1877–1945," in *On Collective Memory*, by Maurice Halbwachs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 25.

[207] Frederic C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

[208] Bartlett, *Remembering*, 213–14.

Bartlett was skeptical of the notion that collectivities possessed a literal mental capacity to recall, but was receptive to Halbwachs' idea that an individual's membership in a social group stimulated and conditioned an individual's recollection.[209] Recently, Schwartz has argued that individuals do not remember the past in isolation but "they do so with and against others situated in different groups and through the knowledge and symbols that predecessors and contemporaries transmit to them."[210]

This recognition, however, captures only "half the truth" of memory, as Schudson (and Schwartz following him) puts it.[211] Schudson argues that the past is under certain circumstances resistant to present manipulation.[212] He maintains, for instance, that traumatic pasts often force themselves upon the present as events that must be remembered.[213] I would add that certain individual and cultural traumas can force themselves upon the present as events that must, for whatever reason, be repressed.[214]

Like Schudson, Schwartz contends that the past constrains the degree of present manipulation of the past. In reference to the Gospels, he writes: "No successful historical writer, however, is free to create any conversation he or she likes; the writer must construct talk that readers find plausibly motivated, consistent with the subject's actions, and hence objectively possible."[215] In this light, it is quite possible for an individual or collective entity to recall erroneously the words of a historical figure's speech and yet still capture an "accurate" initial impression of that figure's message. Conversely, as different aspects of a

[209] Bartlett, *Remembering*, 294–96.

[210] Barry Schwartz, "Where There's Smoke, There's Fire: Memory and History," in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, ed. Tom Thatcher, SemeiaSt 78 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 9.

[211] Michael Schudson, "The Present in the Past versus the Past in the Present," *Communication* 11 (1989): 113; Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, 25.

[212] Schudson, "The Present in the Past versus the Past in the Present."

[213] Schudson, "The Present in the Past versus the Past in the Present," esp. 109–10.

[214] See, e.g., Janet Jacobs, "The Memorial at Srebrenica: Gender and the Social Meanings of Collective Memory in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Mem Stud* 14 (2017): 423–39.

[215] Schwartz, "Where There's Smoke, There's Fire," 9. See also, Le Donne, "Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition," 166: "In order for images associated with the past to make sense in the present state of mind, the localization process must reinforce memories with plausibility and integrity."

record are selectively emphasized, suppressed, or varyingly contextualized, it is quite possible for an accurate transcription of a figure's actual words to obscure considerably the essence of the speaker's originating message.[216]

Importantly, therefore, Schwartz does not regress to what Casey categorizes as a "photographic paradigm" or "passivist" view of memory where the "remembering subject" replicates the past with minimal manipulation.[217] Schwartz does not deny that social institutions, differing economic statuses, or competing power structures distort our narrations of the past.[218] He affirms that "[r]ecollection of the past is an active, constructive process, not a simple matter of retrieving information. To remember is to place a part of the past in the service of conceptions and needs of the present."[219] Nor does he emphasize exclusively the instrumentality of memory for advancing present ideologies. Rather, as Zerubavel observes, Schwartz critiques an "overemphasis" on the adaptive capability of the present—an overemphasis that "undermines the notion of historical continuity."[220] In short, Schwartz' paradigm of memory construes the relationship between the past and the present in instances of remembrance as reciprocal.[221]

[216] Cf. Chris Keith, *Jesus' Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee*, LNTS 413 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 64, who argues that the historical Jesus was likely someone capable of producing both accurate and inaccurate memories of himself.

[217] Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 269.

[218] Cf. Le Donne, "Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition," 166: "Social Memory theorists use the term 'distortion' to mark the difference between memory of the past and past actuality."

[219] Barry Schwartz, "The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory," *Social Forces* 61 (1982): 374.

[220] Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 5. Likewise, Tom Thatcher, "Preface: Keys, Frames, and the Problem of the Past," in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, ed. Tom Thatcher, SemeiaSt 78 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 2: "Schwartz' work is characterized by a fierce commitment to the principle that the actual past and its subsequent commemorations are interfluential—interfluential to such an extent that one is never eclipsed by the other in any specific act of memory." Similarly, Rafael Rodríguez (*Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance, and Text*, LNTS 407 [London: T&T Clark, 2010], 55, italics original) asserts: "In collective memory, neither the past nor the present precede the other; they are mutually affecting and dialectic. Our present is determinative for our image of the past (i.e., the past is made to reflect the present) *even as* our past is determinative for our image of the present (i.e., the present is shaped by and framed within the past)."

[221] Thus, in his work on the reception of Abraham Lincoln in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (*Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*), Schwartz demonstrates that continuity accompanies vicissitudes with respect to Lincoln's image across generations.

In this respect, the mobilization of memory in various media (oral testimonies, textual artifacts, monuments and tombs, rituals and festivals, music, iconography, etc.) represents the culmination of a complex, continuous negotiation between the past (including the actual past and subsequent representations of that past) as a constraint and the present (itself a product of the past) as a manipulator of the past.[222] But, this mobilization of memories into durable forms does not mean that memories consequently "assume immobile form" (to borrow Kirk's language), even if they are physically a "*frozen moment* of the collective processes of establishing memory and identity."[223] This is not to deny, for example, that the textualization of the Gospel of Mark constituted an attempt to stabilize a particular understanding of Jesus or to minimize competing understandings.[224] Undeniably, the coalescing of memory into vehicular modes may imply the presence of a social group hoping to maintain an enduring sense of identity in light of a shared, agreed-upon past.[225] Nevertheless, even relatively stabilized pasts undergo evolution precisely because they are the location of constant visitation, evaluation, analysis, and thus, reconfiguration of a group's identity and ethos in the shadow of ever-shifting present demands.

[222] Jeffrey K. Olick and Daniel Levy, "Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics," *ASR* 62 (1997): 934; Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 5; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, ix–40.

[223] Alan Kirk, "Memory Theory and Jesus Research," in Porter and Holmén, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1:816; Hübenthal, "Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis," 195 (italics original), respectively.

[224] On the textualization (and its significance) of the Gospels, see, e.g. Werner Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); Chris Keith, "Prolegomena on the Textualization of Mark's Gospel: Manuscript Culture, the Extended Situation, and the Emergence of the Written Gospel," in Thatcher, *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, 161–86; Chris Keith, "Early Christian Book Culture and the Emergence of the First Written Gospel," in *Mark, Manuscripts, and Monotheism: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado*, ed. Chris Keith and Dieter T. Roth, LNTS 528 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 22–39; Chris Keith, "The Competitive Textualization of the Jesus Tradition in John 20:30–31 and 21:24–25," *CBQ* 78 (2016): 321–37. See also, Larry Hurtado, "Greco-Roman Textuality and the Gospel of Mark: A Critical Assessment of Werner Kelber's The Oral and the Written Gospel," *BBR* 7 (1997): 91–106.

[225] Consider Schwartz' description of commemorative ritual: "As a standardized, repetitive, and symbolic activity that allows participants to define their relation to the past, commemorative ritual fixes in mind the events of the past, a process facilitated by the emotional assembling of the community itself" ("Where There's Smoke, There's Fire," 10).

Furthermore, the emergence of memory in media *perpetuates and further enables* a fluid reception history of memory across generations regardless of a social group's hope of maintenance. Egyptologist J. Assmann argues that the materialization of tradition in the medium of writing—the transition of memory from living communication (communicative memory; *kommunikatives Gedächtnis*) to tradition (cultural memory; *kulturelles Gedächtnis*)—permits "the horizon of symbolically stored memory to grow far beyond the framework of knowledge functionalized as bonding memory…. In certain circumstances cultural memory liberates people from the constraints of bonding memory."[226] This recognition of a complex interchange between past and present in commemorative activity is highly significant for this study's understanding of reception, and I will return to it.

1.2. The Emergence of Social Memory Theory in New Testament Studies

Kirk and Thatcher formally introduced social memory theory to NT scholarship in their 2005 co-edited volume, although applications of the theory had appeared in German scholarship several years previously.[227] Since the volume's publication, several studies have surfaced applying the theory's concepts. To provide one example, in 2006 Bockmuehl privileged "living memory" to understand the relationship between early Petrine and Pauline Christianity. He expanded to up to one hundred fifty years the threshold of living memory that J. Assmann had previously estimated at 40–100 years.[228] Several other applications to

[226] Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 21. On *kommunikatives Gedächtnis* and *kulturelles Gedächtnis* see, Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München: Beck, 1992), 48–56.

[227] Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, eds., *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, SemeiaSt 52 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005); Jens Schröter, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas*, WMANT 76 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997). Keith has written an overview of the emergence of social memory theory in NT studies. The sixth volume of *Early Christianity* divides this overview into two parts. See, Chris Keith, "Social Memory Theory and Gospels Research: The First Decade (Part One)," *EC* 6 (2015): 354–76; Chris Keith, "Social Memory Theory and Gospels Research: The First Decade (Part Two)," *EC* 6 (2015): 517–42.

[228] Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 169–70. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 50–56, suggests a forty year threshold for *kommunikatives Gedächtnis*. In other works, Assmann has suggested a three to four

various subjects could be cited.[229] More pertinent to present purposes is the fact that the theory so far has found the most traction in Gospels research, principally historical Jesus studies, as is frequently observed.[230]

Some historical Jesus scholars argue for conceptualizing the Gospels as textual artifacts that have emerged from commemorative activity. Kirk, for example, has written:

> [M]emory analysis puts the proper complexion on the core datum of research, the gospel traditions. They are artifacts of memory; they have circulated along memorializing pathways; and by finding their way into the written medium they have navigated the major crisis of memory. The gospels, we might say, are the deep pools of early Christian memory.[231]

In a similar fashion, Keith considers "the written Gospels" to be instances of "Jesus memory."[232] In my estimation, this categorization of the Gospels as memory by Kirk and Keith should be uncontroversial. They are not advocating for treating the Gospels as instances of historically accurate replications of the past or eye-witness testimonies (as if autobiographical memory was not susceptible to subjectivity). Nor are they denying that the Jesus of history contributed to the formation of variegated perceptions of him, including "accurate" and "inaccurate" ones. Keith is emphatic when he explains that viewing the written narratives about Jesus as artifacts of processes of memory is not *a priori* to establish their accuracy or inaccuracy.[233] Other leading voices in the discourse likewise operate with a

generation threshold. See, Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 30; Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in Erll and Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 111, 117.

[229] For references, see, Keith, "Social Memory Theory (Part Two)," 518.

[230] Hübenthal, "Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis," 176: "The only area in biblical research where social memory theory has gained reasonable currency is in historical Jesus research and even there it is treated highly critically and discussed extremely controversially." Keith, "Social Memory Theory (Part Two)," 518: "It is undeniable that social memory theory's most demonstrable inroads into New Testament scholarship reside in Jesus studies." For more recent similar comments, see e.g., Sandra Hübenthal, "Reading the Gospel of Mark as Collective Memory," in *Social Memory and Social Identity in the Study of Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Samuel Byrskog, Raimo Hakola, and Jutta Jokiranta, NTOA/SUNT 116 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 69; Alan Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*, RJF3C (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 1.

[231] Kirk, "Memory Theory and Jesus Research," 1:842.

[232] Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 61.

[233] Keith, "Social Memory Theory (Part Two)," esp. 537–38.

similar understanding of the theory.[234] What these advocates are encouraging is for scholars to work out the historiographical implications of viewing the transmission of Jesus traditions as a dynamic, active, and ebbing and flowing interplay between the actual past, subsequent appropriations of the past, and the ever-shifting horizons of the present.

With this clarification in view, we can observe that this new paradigm in historical Jesus research has bred two chief historiographical consequences. The first consequence has been a methodological critique of the so-called criteria of authenticity with their indebtedness to form-critical conceptions of memory and tradition. Kirk summarizes the form-critical paradigm thusly:

> The form critics equated memory with individual eye-witness recollection. While memory traces of this sort lay at the origins of the tradition, they were a residuum, largely inert with respect to developments in the tradition itself. The salient image was of so-called authentic memories of Jesus coming to be buried under multiple layers of 'tradition.'[235]

Put otherwise, genuine glances at the Jesus of history, according to the form-critical paradigm, resided—if anywhere—behind several strata of interpreted material, material that reflected the *Sitz im Leben* of early Christian communities. Hence the rise of criteria that historical Jesus scholars employed to sift and separate authentic from inauthentic Jesus material. Although the criteria have not been immune from attacks outside of memory discourse,[236] historical Jesus scholars who advocate for a "Jesus memory" approach have led the charge in the early twenty-first century in effecting what Bernier calls "the criteria approach's obituary."[237] Keith and Le Donne's co-edited volume published in 2012, which dealt the final blow to the criteria, included contributing essays of Schröter, Rodríguez, and

[234] See, e.g., Jeffrey K. Olick, "Products, Processes, and Practices: A Non-Reificatory Approach to Collective Memory," *BTB* 36 (2006): 13; Rodríguez, *Structuring Early Christian Memory*, 41–80; Kirk, "Memory Theory and Jesus Research," 1:839; Hübenthal, "Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis," 192.

[235] Kirk, "Memory Theory and Jesus Research," 1:809.

[236] See, e.g., Morna Hooker, "Christology and Methodology," *NTS* 17 (1971): 480–87; Morna Hooker, "On Using the Wrong Tool," *Theology* 75 (1972): 570–81.

[237] Jonathan Bernier, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus after the Demise of Authenticity*, LNTS 540 (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 1, n. 3.

Allison, in addition to their own.[238] All five of these scholars have written monographs importing memory theory into the study of Christian Origins (and Keith has actually written two).[239] In essence, many of those who advance a memory paradigm reject the criteriological approach's notion of uncovering a pristine, unfiltered memory of the historical Jesus. Memory, as we have seen, is always localized in and shaped by subjectivity. Therefore, to search for a memory of Jesus external to localization or social shape, and thus purely formative of the present is puzzling, to put it euphemistically.[240]

If the first consequence of the Jesus-memory approach was a methodological dismantling of the tool scholars utilized to uncover Jesus, then the second consequence was to rethink how the historian could appropriately construct the historical Jesus moving forward. Importantly, the memory approach's rejection of the criteria on the basis of viewing Jesus material as thoroughly subjective has not led these theorists to campaign for a new "No Quest" period. Similar to Gadamer who viewed subjectivity as the phenomenon that rendered both objectivity impossible and understanding possible,[241] some memory theorists have considered (at least implicitly) subjectivity both the problem of constructing the historical Jesus and (part of) its solution.[242] For Keith, the interpretive portrayals of Jesus—both

[238] Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne, eds., *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity* (London: T&T Clark International, 2012). For other serious blows to the criteria, see e.g., Rafael Rodríguez, "Authenticating Criteria: The Use and Misuse of a Critical Method," *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 152–67; Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 27–70; Dale C. Allison, "How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria of Authenticity," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1:3–30.

[239] Schröter, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte*; Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009); Rodríguez, *Structuring Early Christian Memory*; Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus*; Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*; Chris Keith, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014).

[240] Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 61, puts it more forwardly: "From the perspective of social memory theory, scholars in search of authentic Jesus traditions might as well be in search of unicorns, the lost city of Atlantis, and the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Not only are there no longer Jesus traditions that reflect solely the actual past, there never were." Cf. Le Donne, "Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition."

[241] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 311–18.

[242] Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 62, 63–64: "The broader social memory of first-century Jews provided categories for their initial reception/remembering of Jesus.… [63–64] Whatever happened in Jesus' life and death, events to which we have no direct access but nevertheless happened, those historical realities set into motion interpretations/memories of him by those who encountered him." Put otherwise, the initial interpretations of Jesus in his social milieu were limited precisely because Jesus himself was located within a particular social matrix with its own symbolic universe that he invoked. Cf. also, Le Donne, "Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition," 167, who rightly qualifies the negative potential of subjectivity:

accurate and inaccurate ones—are historical phenomena that, precisely because they do exist, must be explained in terms of this dynamic interaction between present and past. In this vein, Keith argues that any construction of Jesus must elucidate the various memories of him in light of the ever-shifting socio-historical contexts which these memories continually shaped and in which they took shape.[243] Relatedly, Le Donne proposes identifying multiple commemorative trajectories in a bid to triangulate a mnemonic origin in the life of Jesus.[244]

Social memory theory has not received an altogether warm welcome by scholars, however. In his 2012 article, Foster refers to memory theory as one of three "dead-ends" in historical Jesus research.[245] In his two-part overview of the first decade of social memory research in Gospels studies, Keith has issued a lengthy correction to many of Foster's claims that lead Foster to his conclusion.[246] However, despite the shortcomings in Foster's argument, his article raises the question of what social memory theory offers not only historical Jesus research, but also other related fields within the discipline of NT studies. In this vein, I contend that social memory theory can be applied to reception-historical analysis as a useful conceptual and analytical category. Similar to social memory's import in Jesus studies, treating the Gospels as artifacts of memory not only results in a methodological complication

"Distortion is, most commonly, a natural and benign function of memory selection … memory distorts the past to render it intelligible to the present.… Our memories demand a high degree of continuity in order to tie all of our shifting frames of meaning together. It is the integrity of this chain that determines its reliability." Le Donne continues on the next page: "It must be stated in no uncertain terms that *memory is distortion*. This is so regardless of any claims to veracity. If the criteria for veracity were defined by a given memory's *lack of distortion* all discussion about the past would be rendered futile" (p. 168, italics original).

[243] Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 61–68.

[244] Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David*, 86; Anthony Le Donne, "Memory, Commemoration and History in John 2:19–22: A Critique and Application of Social Memory," in *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture*, ed. Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher, LNTS 426 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 186–204.

[245] Paul Foster, "Memory, Orality, and the Fourth Gospel: Three Dead-Ends in Historical Jesus Research," *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 191–227.

[246] Keith, "Social Memory Theory (Part One)"; Keith, "Social Memory Theory (Part Two)." Interestingly, a search of Bauckham's author index and bibliography reveals that the second edition of his work does not directly respond to Foster's criticisms levelled against the first edition. See, Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

of previous conceptualizations of the reception of the Gospels. It also provides a heuristic tool for performing reception analysis, and in particular, the reception of violence.

1.3. The Significance of Social Memory Theory for Reception History

For many scholars, reception is construed as an account of the impact, or aftereffects, of an originating text in various media (commentaries, homilies, art, etc.). For instance, Luz defines reception history as follows: "Reception history of the Bible is the history of the reception of biblical texts in periods subsequent to New Testament times."[247] As a further example, Räisänen went so far as to reconceptualize *Wirkungsgeschichte* in terms of isolating the empirical effectiveness of a text in history.[248] J. Assmann is correct when he argues that reception history should not be simplistically conceptualized as the present receiving the past.[249]

Indeed, in light of our understanding of the written Gospels as commemorative artifacts, the text-receiver paradigm of reception runs into two interrelated complications. First, the division between the Gospels (as originating texts) and reception (as receivers of such texts) is problematic. It is not merely the case that the written Gospels became catalysts that enabled subsequent receptions in periods after their textualization. The written Gospels themselves, as commemorative texts, constitute, in social memory terminology, the results of complex processes between the influences of multiple pasts and ever-shifting present horizons. Put succinctly, the Gospel narratives form part of the reception history of precipitating stimuli *and* stimulate further reception.[250]

[247] Ulrich Luz, "The Contribution of Reception History to a Theology of the New Testament," in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: Essays in Honour of Robert Morgan*, ed. Christopher Rowland and Christopher Tuckett (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 123.

[248] Räisänen, "The Effective 'History' of the Bible, 303–24.

[249] Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 9.

[250] To his credit, Luz (*Matthew in History: Interpretation, Influence, and Effects* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994], 23) recognizes that "biblical texts themselves are the result of a history of effects because they are not the ultimate point of departure … but products of human reception, human experiences, and human history."

Here is precisely where Gadamer's principle of *Wirkungsgeschichte* intersects with social memory theory. His principle recognizes that the subject is always already impacted by the course of history by virtue of her own historicity. For Gadamer, "the central problem of hermeneutics" is the task of "historically effected consciousness" (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*), that is, coming to an awareness of our own situation as beings already impacted by the course of history.[251] Our situation as "already affected by history" "determines in advance both what seems to us worth inquiring about and what will appear as an object of investigation."[252] To deny this inherent subjectivity in the process of understanding in order to feign objectivity is tantamount to denying one's own historical existence.[253] Or, to articulate the previous statement in Halbwachsian terms: denying that "the individual borrows from society everything that enables conceptualization of the past"[254] is tantamount to rejecting that one is—or has ever been—located within or in opposition to a social framework.[255] In this sense, instances of remembrance embody *Wirkungsgeschichte* because they are always localized in and impacted by the course of history.

Second, because "historical representations are negotiated, selective, present-oriented, and relative … [and simultaneously] cannot be manipulated at will,"[256] viewing reception history through the theoretical framework of social memory theory allows historians to observe how social groups form and reinforce their identities. It permits us "to shift our focus from time to temporalities and thus to understand what categories people, groups, and cultures employ to make sense of their lives, their social, cultural, and political attachments,

[251] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 311–18 (esp. 312, 317–18). For the German text, see Hans-George Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 305–12 (esp. 307, 312).

[252] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 311.

[253] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 312.

[254] Keith, "Social Memory Theory (Part One)," 360.

[255] Cf. Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 27, who notes the absence of "understanding without memory" and "existence without tradition." See further, Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, "Introduction," 44–45.

[256] Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *HistTh* 41 (2002): 195.

and the concomitant ideals that are validated."[257] In this sense, social memory theory conceives of reception not only as the receiving and interpretation of a precipitating text, but as a fluid and dynamic process of identity formation.

Social memory theory also provides a heuristic framework for analyzing this vibrant process of identity formation. Since (1) identity formation is perhaps none more acute than in reference to violence and (2) John's beheading represents an obviously violent event, we turn presently to constructing the contours involved in the social remembering of violence.

2. A Heuristic Framework: The Social Remembering of Violence

This section details four features involved in the social remembering of violence: identity formation, interpretive keying, selectivity (the violence of memory), and contestation. I close the chapter by explaining the significance of these features for the reception of John's death. A necessary word on the key term "violence," however, is first in order.

2.1. Visible and Invisible Violence

"Violence is a slippery concept—nonlinear, productive, destructive, and reproductive."[258] So opens the 2004 anthology of influential voices on the study of violence co-edited by Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois. Their description is at once incredibly vague and acutely sensible. Any study on violence immediately runs into the problem of defining "violence" amidst all of its possible valences.[259] This study adopts a bipartite metaphor in its

[257] Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, "Introduction," 37.

[258] Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, "Introduction: Making Sense of Violence," in *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, ed. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 1 (italics removed).

[259] What one social context considers a legitimate application of violence is subject to contestation in another, as John Kloppenborg, "The Representation of Violence in the Synoptic Parables," in *Mark and Matthew I: Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in Their First Century Settings*, ed. Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson, WUNT 271 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 323, observes. In contrast to the German *Gewalt* ("force"), the English term "violence" largely functions as a category of criminal designation—to ethically label something as evil, terrible, or horrific. According to Ari Z. Bryen, *Violence in Roman Egypt: A Study in Legal Interpretation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 54–55,

discourse: visible and invisible violence. Visible violence refers to those types of violent outbursts that, in general, are obvious, explicit, and often involve a transference of bodily harm by one or more co-present human agents. Visible violence thus largely corresponds to what Žižek designates "subjective violence."[260] Physical acts of injury, homicide, assassinations, rape, abuse, war, assault, execution, genocide, torture, and bodily mutilation all would fall under this term. For analytical purposes, I thus treat John's beheading as an instance of visible, bodily violence.

Several anthropologists, philosophers, and sociologists, however, have observed that violence is not merely an instance of physical harm or injury to the body. Violence also exists in the social structures that frame everyday existence. It is the banal violence of poverty, rhetoric and ideology, racial oppression, disease, hunger, exclusion, boundary demarcations, and social hierarchies. Hence, theorists draw on a multiplicity of metaphors to conceptualize these different facets of violence, including, for example, Farmer's "structural violence,"[261] Bourdieu's "symbolic violence,"[262] Lawrence and Karim's "rhetorical violence,"[263] Scheper-Hughes' "everyday violence,"[264] Žižek's notions of "objective and systemic violence,"[265] and

ὕβρις ("violence") in Roman Egypt was "always understood to be prima facie wrong" and thus was often used to describe unjustifiable force against the human body or against one's dignity. But, the term βία ("harm" or "damage") was the more appropriate term to categorize harm against a slave, since slaves were regarded as property (Bryen, *Violence in Roman Egypt*, 55; Kloppenborg, "Representation of Violence," 323). In contrast to the Greek ὕβρις, the Latin *vis* ("force" or "violence") did not necessarily carry a morally egregious connotation. In the Roman Empire, for example, a legitimate excuse for one's absence in a legal hearing was *vis fluminis* ("the force of a river"). See, Jill Harries, "Violence, Victims, and the Legal Tradition in Late Antiquity," in *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, ed. H. A. Drake (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 88.

260 Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (New York: Picador, 2008), 1.

261 Paul Farmer, "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below," *Daedalus* 125 (1996): 261–83; Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), esp. 29–50; Paul Farmer, "An Anthropology of Structural Violence," *Current Anthropology* 45 (2004): 305–25; Paul Farmer, "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below," *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 3 (2009): 11–28.

262 Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, "Language, Gender, and Symbolic Violence," in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), esp. 167–74; Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 2001).

263 Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim, "General Introduction: Theorizing Violence in the Twenty-First Century," in *On Violence: A Reader*, ed. Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 11–12.

264 Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

265 Žižek, *Violence*, esp. 9–39.

others.[266] For this study, invisible violence (so named because it is not always readily perceptible as "violence"), refers to those social structures and cultural ingredients that can nurture and enable visible forms of violence.

Thus, visible and invisible violence are not strictly dichotomous: they are deeply intertwined. As Farmer elucidates in reference to extreme suffering in Haiti: "Life choices are structured by racism, sexism, political violence, and grinding poverty."[267] Social matrixes crystallize into visible cases of violence. These paradigms and group structures create the social, economic, and cultural conditions necessary for conflict to manifest in forms of visible harm and injury. Violence, in this light, "is not opposed to structure as something that exists external to structure; it is another form of structure, of processes, of practices."[268]

This interrelation of visible and invisible violence is important for this study's focus on the *memory* of John's visibly violent death. As chapters four and five will argue, while early recipients press John's beheading into the service of identity formation, they also begin to redeploy his beheading in *anti-Jewish* directions. In this regard, *the memory itself of John's beheading becomes "violent.*" The dissemination and inscribing of anti-Jewish ideology is appropriately understood as a specific example of invisible violence. Anti-Jewish attitudes can legitimize, lend approval to, and crystallize into acts of physical harm and injury against Jews. In other words, anti-Jewishness—as a nurturer of violence—is a social structure impregnated with dangerous potential (see chapter five). Unless otherwise made explicit, visible types of violence will be in view throughout this study when I employ the unqualified term "violence."

[266] See e.g., Mark S. Hamm, "Apocalyptic Violence: The Seduction of Terrorist Subcultures," *Theoretical Criminology* 8 (2004): 323–39.

[267] Paul Farmer, "On Suffering and Structural Violence," in Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, *Violence in War and Peace*, 282.

[268] Lawrence and Karim, "Theorizing Violence," 7.

2.2. Violence and Identity

Some occurrences of violence present us with a paradox: they defy "integration or dissolution" in terms of memory.[269] On the one hand, violence threatens our sense of continuity with our past and thus calls into question conceptions of personhood, membership, and affiliation.[270] It renders identity dubious, under siege, in danger of dissolution. When violence bursts onto the scene we experience it precisely as such—a bursting, an eruption, a rupture of normalcy, an anomaly of everyday existence.[271] Kirk refers to such events as a "social disruption,"[272] a fracture between the past and the present that unsettles our sense of "equilibrium."[273] To be sure, the appearance of violence as anomalous is fundamentally illusory. For, as indicated above with our notion of invisibility, violence "lives in the shapes that it appears to subvert."[274]

[269] Flora A. Keshgegian, "Finding a Place Past Night: Armenian Genocidal Memory in Diaspora," in Stier and Landres, *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, 102.

[270] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (London: Penguin, 2006), 19, observes that the anxiety one feels "about losing one's past and one's historical identity" reveals the "importance people tend to attach to a shared history and a sense of affiliation based on this history."

[271] Of course, trauma theorists are quick to point out that traumatic effects of individual and cultural traumas—including instances of physical violence—vary depending on (1) one's relationship to the trauma, and (2) if the trauma is a simple or prolonged event. Susannah Radstone, "Trauma Studies: Contexts, Politics, Ethics," in *Cultural History and Literary Imagination: Other People's Pain: Narratives of Trauma and the Question of Ethics*, ed. Martin Modlinger and Philipp Sonntag (Oxford: Peter Lang, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2011), 64, helpfully sets forth the notion of "secondary witness" to describe "those whose encounters with catastrophe or disaster take place at (at least) one remove." She includes interviewers, oral historians, readers of trauma fiction, and television audiences as examples of secondary witnesses. As such, she argues that these secondary witnesses are vulnerable to the same symptoms (even if in less concentrated levels of intensity) that are typically associated with the surviving victim of trauma. See also, Renato Rosaldo, "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage," in Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, *Violence in War and Peace*, 150 (italics removed): "The emotional force of a death … derives less from an abstract brute fact than from a particular intimate relation's permanent rupture." Judith Herman, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, and Philippe Bourgois, "Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror," in Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, *Violence in War and Peace*, 368–71. Cf. Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weilnböck, "Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma (or How I Learned to Love the Suffering of Others without the Help of Psychotherapy)," in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 229–40, who are wary of the metaphor of "cultural trauma" insofar as it overlooks the concrete suffering of individuals who experience trauma.

[272] Alan Kirk, "The Memory of Violence and the Death of Jesus in Q," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 191.

[273] Arthur Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk: Sharpe, 1998), 12. See also, Žižek, *Violence*, 1–2.

[274] Lawrence and Karim, "Theorizing Violence," 7.

Nevertheless, the perception of violent events as glitches in the normal mechanisms of society renders violence an ostensibly unique phenomenon, one capable of preventing individuals and groups to return to a state of normalcy. When U.S. President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, this shocking incident ruptured any sense of normalcy in communities across the country:

> The central preoccupation of the nation was with the details of what had happened and whether or not the president would live. University classes were interrupted and canceled, factory workers left their jobs and went home, stores closed their doors, and the everyday activities of the nation ground to a halt. Continuation of business as usual seemed to make little sense in view of the extraordinary events that were happening. Regular television programming was suspended and news coverage continuously reported on the events surrounding the assassination.[275]

The massacre at Wounded Knee in late December 1890 (when U.S. soldiers opened fire on nearly 400 unarmed Lakota refugees) quelled (at least temporarily) the eschatological hopes of the Lakota who "had embraced the spirit dance in 1889 because it provided hope and renewal in the form of cleansing the earth of the whites and returning the spirits of deceased relatives and the buffalo."[276] Moreover, the division between the past and the present also elicits uncertainty concerning the future. Neal observes, for instance, that the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor occasioned "intense levels of fear that the attack was simply a forerunner of a planned invasion of California."[277] In essence, certain violent events thrust individuals and collectives to the extremities of existence because they appear to destabilize continuity between the past, present, and future. Žižek, therefore, is on point when he contends that prose, not poetry, is impossible after Auschwitz. He reasons: "Poetry is always by definition, 'about' something that cannot be addressed directly, only alluded to."[278]

[275] Neal, *National Trauma*, 111.

[276] Michelene E. Pesantubbee, "Wounded Knee: Site of Resistance and Recovery," in Stier and Landres, *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, 79.

[277] Neal, *National Trauma*, 4.

[278] Žižek, *Violence*, 5.

On the other hand, however, personhood, membership, and affiliation are forged through violent encounters and crystallized in narrations about the past. Thus, the memory of violence frequently becomes the locus of expressing identity. Buckley-Zistel notes that the 1994 Rwandan genocide remains a crucial matter to remember for all Rwandans, Hutu and Tutsi alike, and this is in part due to the fact that many Hutu and Tutsi are still coping with its aftereffects.[279] She observes: "The individual and the collective *raison d'être* of the nation and its people is built around the genocide."[280] Similarly, Pesantubbee explains that the Lakota "needed to incorporate the gravesite [at Wounded Knee] into their ceremonial cycle" in order to overcome the generations of despair and depression that the Wounded Knee massacre triggered.[281] Writing in 2004, Nytagodien and Neal allude to the role of memory in overcoming violence. They observe that many Japanese soldiers, who had committed heinous acts against civilians in occupied countries during WWII, continue to struggle with "unwanted memories" that "can only be alleviated through achieving some degree of closure."[282] Malkki, as a further example, in her ethnographic research on Hutu refugees in Tanzania who had fled from Burundi as a result of the 1972 genocide, observes that the massacre "represented an end or a culmination in [their] mythico-history insofar as 'the past' that lived in Burundi stopped at the moment of flight."[283] Their "mythico-history" was thus

[279] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "Between Pragmatism, Coercion and Fear: Chosen Amnesia after the Rwandan Genocide," in *Memory and Political Change*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, PMMS (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 78–79. In her earlier 2006 article, she observes that many victims of rape, who were purposefully raped by those aware of their own HIV positive status, continue to die as a result of the genocide. See, Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget: Chosen Amnesia as a Strategy for Local Co-Existence in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Africa* 76 (2006): 139.

[280] Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget," 136; Buckley-Zistel, "Chosen Amnesia."

[281] Pesantubbee, "Wounded Knee," 79.

[282] Ridwan Nytagodien and Arthur Neal, "Collective Trauma, Apologies, and the Politics of Memory," *J. Hum. Rights* 3 (2004): 466.

[283] Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 58.

divided into pre-massacre years and post-massacre years and this not merely in a strict chronological sense, but also in "spatial, social, and symbolic" senses.[284]

Furthermore, violent events often become didactic frames for directing behavior. In the formation of commemorative narratives, we witness "the indelible infusion of constituent events and personae with categorical moral meanings."[285] This is especially discernable in commemorations of violent deaths of significant figures as mnemonic communities highlight the virtues of the victims and/or vices of the perpetrators to exemplify good and bad behavior respectively. For example, in the fourth century CE, Basil recalled Antipas' role in John the Baptist's death for the sake of forbidding his readers to swear oaths.[286] Winter describes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as "a normative statement of a standard against which to measure the behavior of the states in which we live."[287] As a further example, Buckley-Zistel provides the statement below by a survivor of the Rwandan genocide:

> We have to remember people who died in 1994. It is important to remember someone that you love, a relative, a friend. We have to commemorate it *in order to put a mechanism of prevention in place*, and to ask God to help us. For me, we cannot forget what happened.[288]

Further still, in the decades following WWII, Japan has repeatedly looked back to their actions in WWII "as a major referent for what to avoid in the future."[289] Similarly, the Lakota look to the gravesite at Wounded Knee as a source of motivation "to continue to struggle against cultural loss."[290]

[284] Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 58–59 (quotation, p. 59). Cf. Neal, *National Trauma*, 12: "Events that occurred in the personal lives of individuals prior to a trauma become mentally separated from the events that occurred after the trauma."

[285] Kirk, "The Memory of Violence," 200. For similar comments, see Neal, *National Trauma*, 17; Nytagodien and Neal, "Collective Trauma," 473–74; Alan Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Kirk and Thatcher, *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, 11–12; Buckley-Zistel, "Chosen Amnesia," 73; Wulf Kansteiner, "Genocide Memory, Digital Cultures, and the Aesthetization of Violence," *Mem Stud* 7 (2014): 407.

[286] Basil, *Letters* 199.29.

[287] Jay Winter, "Foreword: Rememberance as a Human Right," in Assmann and Shortt, *Memory and Political Change*, viii. Similarly, Nytagodien and Neal, "Collective Trauma," 465.

[288] Buckley-Zistel, "Chosen Amnesia," 78.

[289] Neal, *National Trauma*, 28.

[290] Pesantubbee, "Wounded Knee," 75.

In light of these examples, the threat of violence to divest individuals and groups of their identities often creates the impulse to combat such rupture. Violent events force themselves upon the present as phenomena that must be overcome in terms of memory. Thus, social groups tend to commemorate violent catastrophes, solidifying them "into durable forms" with a view toward combatting "the danger of rupture."[291] Of course, traces of this rupture will never disappear fully:

> When traumatic injury is profound, as in the case of genocide or physical threat and torture, survivors are not able to put the pieces back together without retaining signs of breakage. There will always be scars.… [What] seems like "past" trauma shapes the present by its outstanding demands to be attended to and to have its losses and pain acknowledged. It manifests itself in current lives not simply as reminder and remainder but as present reality. The memories and presence of such trauma may exact a fierce loyalty around which identity may constitute itself. In other words, the trauma, even though it is not fully articulated or even recognized as trauma, may become the guiding force of identity and meaning formation.[292]

From this perspective, certain violent events possess gravitational power. Identity formation readily orbits around such events. Wagner-Pacifici, therefore, is surely correct when she suggests that events embedded in "conflict and contradiction" have an "intrinsic draw on us."[293]

2.3. Interpretive Keying

An important aspect of remembering violence involves what Schwartz designates interpretive "keying."[294] For Schwartz, crisis in the present represents the strongest incentive for social groups to invoke the past in a bid to understand the crisis.[295] Schwartz' model of

[291] Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," 7. In multiple publications, Schwartz describes "commemoration" as a social activity whereby co-rememberers recognize happenings as particularly embedded with significance for groups, especially at the level of society (e.g. family, community). See, e.g. Schwartz, "Social Context of Commemoration," 377; Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, 9–12. For similar comments, see Neal, *National Trauma*, 207.

[292] Keshgegian, "Finding a Place Past Night," 102.

[293] Robin Wagner-Pacifici, "Memories in the Making: The Shape of Things That Went," *Qualitative Sociology* 19 (1996): 306.

[294] Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, 225–29.

[295] Similarly, Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 139: "Traumas, representing the extremities of human experience, are the occasions on which collective identities are most intensively engaged."

keying rests on the rudimentary, but solid, premise that perception is an act of identification, where one recognizes an object, event, or emotion by pairing it alongside a known symbol.[296] Thus, understanding keying involves considering how "participants in one primary event … interpret their experience by aligning it to another primary event."[297] He defines keying in this way:

> Keying transforms the meaning of activities understood in terms of one event by comparing them with activities understood in terms of another. Reactions to Woodrow Wilson's death in 1924, for example, assume new meaning when keyed to reactions to Lincoln's death in 1865. "Keying" is more than a new word for analogical thinking, more than a way individuals mentally organize their social experience; keying transforms memory into a cultural system because it matches publicly accessible (i.e., symbolic) models of the past (written narratives, pictorial images, statues, motion pictures, music, and songs) to the experiences of the present.… Keying is communicative movement—talk, writing, image- and music-making—that connects otherwise separate realms of history.[298]

To articulate it more succinctly, keying transforms the semantic and moral coloration of an event by filtering it through the lens of culturally significant scripts, narrative templates, tropes, or images from the archetypal past.[299] For his part, Schwartz shows that Americans during the Great War summoned the image of Abraham Lincoln to articulate America's "role in the conflict as being on God's side against Satan."[300] The image of Lincoln paired to the war thus served to mobilize and moralize the war-time efforts.[301]

Outside of Schwartz' work, further examples that correspond to his notion of interpretive keying abound. In his 2012 essay, Winter draws attention to the presentation of

[296] Cf. Angela H. Gutchess and Maya Siegel, "Memory Specificity Across Cultures," in Assmann and Shortt, *Memory and Political Change*, 202, who note that the perception of the external world is influenced by culture in that people "reconcile [the external world] with existing knowledge and schemas."

[297] Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, 226.

[298] Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, 226.

[299] Kirk, "The Memory of Violence," 193–94, 197; Le Donne, "Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition," 172; James V. Wertsch, "Deep Memory and Narrative Templates: Conservative Forces in Collective Memory," in Assmann and Shortt, *Memory and Political Change*, 175.

[300] Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, 227.

[301] Moreover, at the outset of his monograph Schwartz observes that, in an attempt "to make sense of their grief," Bobby and Jackie Kennedy arrived at the Lincoln Memorial on the same day that U.S. President Kennedy was buried (Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, ix). On the alignment of Kennedy and Lincoln, see also, Neal, *National Trauma*, 32, 118.

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the United Nations in Paris during early December 1948, a few years removed from the end of WWII:

> Here they were, in the Palais de Chaillot, a few metres from the spot where Hitler had stared out across the Seine at the Eiffel Tower, and surveyed his new dominions a brief eight years before. The Place de la Concorde, the geographical heart of the Revolution, was only a few kilometres away. Nearby the deputies of 1789 and 1793 framed their call to arms in not one but two earlier Universal Declarations of the rights of man and the citizen. To announce a new Universal Declaration in Paris 150 years later was an act of memory, but also of transition from the humiliations of Nazi occupation to the reassertion of the universal principles on which the French revolutionary tradition rested.[302]

To use Schwartzian language, one can observe that the commemorative document was keyed to the foundational principles of the French Revolution (including the locales associated with those principles in the French collective imagination). The French summoned the tradition of the Revolution in order to articulate their overcoming of the yoke of Nazi rule that had interrupted their sense of continuity with their past. Winter thus further describes the declaration as "a set of principles framed because of a historical catastrophe which preceded it."[303] According to Jacobs, at Auschwitz commemorative images of women are keyed according to the tropes of maternal and sexual suffering, creating a semantic context that understands the genocide as one that targeted even women and children.[304] Finally, consider also the testimony that Aretxaga records of a prisoner attempting to express the humiliating prison conditions in Northern Ireland that eventually led to the so-called Dirty Protest (1978–1981): "It just reminded me of the Jews in the concentration camps because every man in the [visiting] room was bald and we were all very thin and frightened."[305] This idea of

[302] Winter, "Remembrance as a Human Right," vii.

[303] Winter, "Remembrance as a Human Right," vii.

[304] Janet Jacobs, "Gender and Collective Memory: Women and Representation at Auschwitz," *Mem Stud* 1 (2008): 211–25. Jacobs argues that these frames hold the capacity to (1) reify the stereotype of a Jewish male as one who is absent and incapable of protecting his family and (2) promote voyeurism and thus re-victimize the dead.

[305] Begoña Aretxaga, "Dirty Protest: Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic Violence," in Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, *Violence in War and Peace*, 247 (brackets original). Social groups do not only comb the past to comprehend a violent present. They also look to the future. The meaning of violent events is thus constantly re-visited in light of what continues to unfold. Writing in 2006, five years after the events of September 11, 2001, James E. Young, "The Stages of Memory at Ground Zero," in Stier and

interpretive keying transforming the meaning of violent events will play a significant role in our analysis of the reception of John's death and I will return to it in chapters four and five.

2.4. Selective Remembering and the Violence of Memory

As should be clear by now, selectivity characterizes individual and collective forms of remembering. Inherent to this idea of selectivity is the concept of forgetting. As A. Assmann and Shortt put it: "Every act of remembrance, whether individual or collective, necessarily involves selective, partial, or otherwise biased forms of forgetting."[306] It is here that we must abandon the perceived strict dichotomy between remembering and forgetting. The latter does not necessarily imply failure and the former does not always imply success. Rather, the former presupposes the latter because, as Le Donne contends, "it is impossible to see an object from every vantage-point."[307] Emphasizing one vantage point necessarily entails forgetting other possible perspectives.

Undoubtedly, not all instances of remembering/forgetting are made from the same cloth. Connerton, for example, distinguishes between seven types of forgetting.[308] A. Assmann details four models of remembering/forgetting for navigating a violent past.[309] And Ricoeur speaks of active and passive forgetting as representing two extremes along a continuum of forgetting.[310] For present purposes, however, I leave aside the issue of classifying different episodes of memory according to sub-categories of remembering and/or forgetting. Instead, I wish to highlight *what is at stake* in how a violent past is selectively

Landres, *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, 214, argued that memorializing those events was no simple matter, since their meaning was still continuing to unfold, as they were when they first occurred.

306 Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, "Memory and Political Change: Introduction," in Assmann and Shortt, *Memory and Political Change*, 5.

307 Le Donne, "Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition," 168.

308 Paul Connerton, "Seven Types of Forgetting," *Mem Stud* 1 (2008): 59–71.

309 Aleida Assmann, "From Collective Violence to a Common Future: Four Models for Dealing with a Traumatic Past," in Modlinger and Sonntag, *Cultural History and Literary Imagination*, 43–62.

310 Paul Ricoeur, "Memory—Forgetting—History," in *Meaning and Representation in History*, ed. Jörn Rüsen (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), 9–19.

remembered: remembering/forgetting violence is dangerous. This danger is apparent in two respects.

In one respect, remembering or forgetting violence risks (re)creating invisible and visible forms of violence. B. Lincoln once stated: "If war is the continuation of politics by other means … violence is the continuation of conflict by means of physical force."[311] Building on his apodosis, we may formulate another thesis: while violence is the continuation of conflict by means of physical force, the memory of violence perpetuates the social conditions necessary for conflict to spark instances of physical harm. To quote Pennebaker again: "Powerful collective memories—whether real or concocted—can be at the root of wars, prejudice, nationalism, and cultural identities."[312] Indeed, B. Lincoln continues:

> When social groups constitute their identity in religious terms and experience themselves as a sacred collectivity (the faithful, the righteous, or God's chosen people, for instance), as a corollary they tend to construe their rivals in negative fashion (heretics, infidels, apostates, evil, bestial, demonic, satanic, etc.). Under such circumstances, the pursuit of self-interest—including vengeance for slights to one's pride (a.k.a. "honour")—can be experienced as a holy cause, in support of which any violence is justified.[313]

In her research on the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, Buckley-Zistel argues that Rwandans engage in what she terms "chosen amnesia."[314] Chosen amnesia is a deliberate refusal to remember certain aspects of the genocide, including the racial antagonisms between Hutu and Tutsi that fueled the massacres. To remember the causes of the genocide would have inevitably constructed the perpetrators and victims into antagonistic group identities. Consequently, chosen amnesia was viewed as (1) enabling peaceful co-existence between Hutu and Tutsi, and thus (2) a necessary deterrent of aggravating peaceful co-existence and of repeating the atrocity.[315] From this perspective, to remember certain aspects

311 Bruce Lincoln, "Theses on Religion and Violence," *ISIM Review* 15 (2005): 12.
312 Pennebaker, "Introduction," vii.
313 Lincoln, "Theses on Religion and Violence," 12.
314 Buckley-Zistel, "Chosen Amnesia." See also, Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget."
315 Buckley-Zistel, "Chosen Amnesia," 74–83.

of the difficult past between Hutu and Tutsi was tantamount to recreating the antagonistic and invisible social structure that had sowed the seeds of visible violence.[316] Buckley-Zistel reveals a dark irony, however, when she contends that "chosen amnesia" fails to resolve social antagonisms. The strategy of deliberately forgetting the causes of the genocide may inadvertently "lead to the very thing it is designed to prevent" if another dictatorship arises and aggravates these unresolved social antagonisms.[317] From this perspective, *not* to remember certain aspects of the genocide runs the risk of recreating violence.

Germany has faced similar difficulties in how to approach remembering WWII. After the Nuremberg Trials, Winston Churchill advocated forgetting, that is, not confronting Germany with the horrific memories of their past as a means of overcoming the war.[318] In German eyes during the 1950s, forgetting the past represented "openness towards the future."[319] In later decades, however, the policy of forgetting from the 1950s "became negatively associated with denial and cover-up."[320] Thus, remembering in the 1980s and 1990s became viewed "as a therapeutic tool to cleanse, to purge, to heal, to reconcile."[321] In this light, A. Assmann's claim that memories are "double edged" in that they have the capacity both to overcome and perpetuate violence is especially poignant.[322]

In a second respect, remembering or forgetting a violent event—or rather certain aspects of that past—risks divesting a social group of their identity. Jacob's research of gender representations at the memorial to genocide at Srebrenica regarding the 1990s conflict

316 On the Rwandan genocide exemplifying antagonistic social relations, see, Philip Gourevitch, "We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda," in Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, *Violence in War and Peace*, 136–42 (esp. 140).

317 Buckley-Zistel, "Chosen Amnesia," 85.

318 Aleida Assmann, "To Remember or to Forget: Which Way Out of a Shared History of Violence?," in Assmann and Shortt, *Memory and Political Change*, 58–59.

319 Assmann, 59. Cf. Olick and Levy, "Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint," 928, n. 10.

320 Assmann, "To Remember or to Forget," 61.

321 Assmann, "From Collective Violence," 47–54 (quotation, p. 50). See further, Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*.

322 Assmann, "From Collective Violence," 59. Cf. Duncan Bell, "Introduction: Violence and Memory," *Millennium-J Int St* 38 (2009): 358: "Memory can bind people as well as driving them apart, catalyse and sustain the search for justice as well as motivating violence."

in Bosnia-Herzegovina will help clarify this idea.[323] According to Jacobs, the Serbian intent to destroy Bosnian culture, and thereby assert Serbian supremacy, motivated the sexual violence against Bosnian Muslim women:

> Within the Serbian project of cultural and biological annihilation, gender informed the goals of genocide in a number of specific ways. While Bosnian Muslim men were enslaved, tortured, mutilated, and killed, women were enslaved, raped, tortured, mutilated, impregnated, and, in some cases, murdered. Rape and forced pregnancy were carried out as a means to expand the Serbian nation through the birth of Serbian soldiers whose paternity, under the patriarchal norms of Serbian society, would define their ethnic superiority and strength.[324]

However, Jacobs observes that the commemorative narratives and texts at Srebrenica omit the trope of genocidal rape against Bosnian Muslim women. Instead, "the tropes of virtue and goodness" underscore gendered representation of women as "that of the grieving mother and wife."[325] Accordingly, she argues:

> Because the memory of the raped body is marked by personal, familial, and national degradation, memorializing this suffering and honoring those who survived the violence are antithetical to the project of nation building and ethnic pride. Remembering rape brings to public consciousness the specter of thousands of "spoiled bodies" and the loss of virtue among Bosnian Muslim women, threatening the viability of an ethnonationalist movement upon which notions of women's goodness and men's protective manhood rely. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the absence of sexual crimes as a trope of national remembrance thus illuminates a politics of memory that is entwined with the restoring of patriarchal order and the revitalization of traditional Muslim society.[326]

By "forgetting" about the genocidal rape, the commemorative site circumvented a detail of the past that would have presumably impeded the reconfiguration of traditional Muslim identity, had it been remembered. From this perspective, to "remember" the genocidal rape would have comprised a threat to the reconstitution of the collective self.

Even if Jacobs' interpretation of this particular site is wrong (it is after all an argument from silence), her argument highlights an important axiom regarding memory and

[323] Jacobs, "The Memorial at Srebrenica."
[324] Jacobs, "The Memorial at Srebrenica," 3–4.
[325] Jacobs, "The Memorial at Srebrenica," 12.
[326] Jacobs, "The Memorial at Srebrenica," 12.

identity: identity in the present is largely sustained by memory of the past that evaluates that past as (ultimately) positive. A positive self-image of the past is necessary for the self's continued existence, at least under some circumstances. Thus, when confronted with a violent past that is humiliating, degrading, or positions the self (whether perpetrators or victims) in a negative light, two impulses are possible in terms of memory selectivity. First, the event or the degrading aspects of it are repressed (whether actively or passively).[327] Second, the degradation is acknowledged but contested so as not to be debilitating.

2.5. Memory Contestation and Bodily Mutilation

Remembering a violent past is hardly ever apolitical.[328] Lawrence and Karim argue: "Violence always has a context. Context shapes not just the actors or victims but also those who represent them. What is celebrated in one place may be mourned in another. Memory is never an equal balance, or a neutral lens, of human experience and history."[329] To paraphrase Wertsch, a social group's embrace of a narrative about their past implies the dispelling of alternative or competing narrations.[330] Indeed, A. Assmann demarcates "national memories" in general as "not dialogic but monologic" since they enhance identity and acclaim the

[327] See, e.g., Sigmund Freud, "An Autobiographical Study," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (London: Vintage, 1989), 17, who observed the following regarding what his patients had forgotten in their lives: "Everything that had been forgotten had in some way or other been distressing; it had been either alarming or painful or shameful by the standards of the subject's personality. It was impossible not to conclude that that was precisely why it had been forgotten—that is, why it had not remained conscious." See also, Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 141: "Freud's focus on forgetting, or the selective omission of events, as an example of the reconstructive labour of memory, is in some respects similar to Halbwachs' emphasis on the normative nature of collective memory, seen as biased towards a positive image of the past. Because of the normative nature of collective memory aimed at defending group identity, a common response to a traumatic past is silence and inhibition. Studies suggest that forgetting and silence is a very frequent reaction as groups organize forgetting, reconstruction and positive distortion of the past in order to defend group values and their own image." See also, Juanjo Igartua and Dario Paez, "Art and Remembering Traumatic Collective Events: The Case of the Spanish Civil War," in Pennebaker, Paez, and Rimé, *Collective Memory of Political Events*, 80: "Halbwachs implicitly coincided with Freud in the fact that collective memory is biased toward forgetting that which is negative, and toward having a positive image of the past."

[328] See, K. Stephen Prince, "Remembering Robert Charles: Violence and Memory in Jim Crow New Orleans," *J South Hist* 83 (2017): 297–328.

[329] Lawrence and Karim, "Theorizing Violence," 1.

[330] Wertsch, "Deep Memory," 182. Lawrence and Karim, "Theorizing Violence," 10: "No representation of violence exists apart from its rhetorical opposite or sublimated counterpart."

collective self.[331] Insofar as narrations of violence are embedded in (re)configuring subjectivities, memories of violence are thus subject to contestation.[332]

The narration of violence as a site of contestation takes on particular significance when specific techniques of bodily violence are in view. Henry explains: "Bodies do not simply express trauma; they are a place where identity and meaning can be actively reconfigured into socially and personally acceptable ways for understanding, coping, and creatively managing trauma."[333] Human bodies signify. As Douglas notes: "The human body is the most readily available image" of a social structure.[334] Undeniably, the body (including its constituent parts) is a ready-to-use conduit of socially constructed meaning(s). Since human bodies can function as channels of explicit and implicit discourse, they are "expressions of the social world they inhabit," vehicles of symbolic communication.[335]

To touch,[336] adorn,[337] modify,[338] or imprison[339] the body, therefore, conveys or elicits information specific to a socio-historical context. Likewise, to mutilate or subject the body to

[331] Assmann, "From Collective Violence," 54. See also, Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 55; Neal, *National Trauma*, 205–06.

[332] Consider, for example, the varying conceptualizations of Timothy McVeigh's intentions in the Oklahoma City bombing. Whereas McVeigh viewed himself as a patriot fulfilling his duty, American society has largely externalized his actions as one of an extremist, not a patriot. See, Kenneth Foote, "On the Edge of Memory: Uneasy Legacies of Dissent, Terror, and Violence in the American Landscape.," *Soc Sci Q* 97 (2016): 115–22; Hamm, "Apocalyptic Violence."

[333] Doug Henry, "Violence and the Body: Somatic Expressions of Trauma and Vulnerability during War," *MAQ* 20 (2006): 391. On the human body as a "site" of memory, see Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 141–45.

[334] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1973), 17.

[335] Erica Reischer and Kathryn S. Koo, "The Body Beautiful: Symbolism and Agency in the Social World," *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* 33 (2004): 299.

[336] João De Pina-Cabral, "Tamed Violence: Genital Symbolism in Portuguese Popular Culture," *Man* 28 (1993): 101–20, shows that, during festivals in Amarante, Portugal, teenage boys prod teenage girls (on the head or backside) with phallic-shaped cakes to publicly demarcate their personal gender identity.

[337] Although most Americans would recognize the (un)-adorned third finger on the left hand as an indicator of marital status, Reischer and Koo, "The Body Beautiful," 300, argue that they likely would not possess the requisite cultural knowledge to recognize that white robes in India designate a woman's widowhood.

[338] As Asian facial features are frequently the object of pejorative stereotyping in American culture, Reischer and Koo, "The Body Beautiful," 305, notes that many Asian Americans actually surgically modify their eyes to reflect more clearly those qualities associated with a capitalistic work-ethic (e.g. attentiveness).

[339] Miranda Aldhouse-Green, "Chaining and Shaming: Images of Defeat, From Llyn Cerrig Bach to Sarmitzegetusa," *OJA* 23 (2004): 319–40, argues that the utilization of the gang-chain publicly signifies the change in status and shame of the captive.

physical forms of violence is to freight such violence with symbolic potential.[340] For example, in Anglo-Norman England, Norman rulers utilized castration as a penalty for treason.[341] According to Van Eickels, masculinity constituted a prerequisite of political efficacy. Thus, to castrate a political enemy comprised "an appropriate form of royal revenge."[342] Further, Connerton argues that the French revolutionaries who executed Louis XVI of France chose beheading as the mode of execution because of its fitting symbolism.[343] For a millennium, France's kings received the anointing of oil and the crown on their heads as the bodily enactment of their coronation. To decapitate the anointed head, therefore, amounted to a "ritual revocation" of that coronation.[344] It both expressed the people's detestation of the old dynastic regime and their intent to constitute a new social order moving forward. Connerton thus notes: "Not simply the natural body of the king but also and above all his political body was killed."[345]

Thus, perpetrators often harness physical forms of violence, such as torture or disfigurement, to humiliate and divest individuals of their identities. Torture often infantilizes its victims.[346] In the words of Scarry:

> Whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language.… Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a

[340] See, Kirk, "The Memory of Violence," 192; Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 94. The symbolism of somatic violence is observable in pop-cultural phenomena as well. Viv Burr ("'Oh Spike You're Covered in Sexy Wounds!' The Erotic Significance of Wounding and Torture in Buffy the Vampire Slayer," in *Sex, Violence, and the Body: The Erotics of Wounding*, ed. Viv Burr and Jeff Hearn [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008], 137–56) has shown, for instance, that the cult-classic television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (starring Sarah Michelle Gellar) has several scenes of bodily torture throughout the series that are erotically charged.

[341] Klaus Van Eickels, "Gendered Violence: Castration and Blinding as Punishment for Treason in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England," *Gend Hist* 16 (2004): 588–602.

[342] Van Eickels, "Gendered Violence," 591.

[343] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 9–13.

[344] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 13. By contrast, Ilongot men of northern Luzon in the Philippines decapitate human heads in order to cast away the rage that is born of personal loss. See, Rosaldo, "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage."

[345] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 9.

[346] See e.g., Begoña Aretxaga, "Dirty Protest: Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic Violence," *Ethos* 23 (1995): esp. 129; Aretxaga, "Dirty Protest," (2004): esp. 246.

> state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned.[347]

Furthermore, Malkki provides numerous graphic accounts of violent techniques used by Tutsi against Hutu in the 1972 Burundi genocide:

> The manners that the Tutsi employed—if, for example—yes, we are adults, well … for example: a pregnant woman (Hutu). There was a manner of cutting the stomach. Everything that was found in the interior was lifted out without cutting the cord. The cadaver of the mama, the cadaver of the baby, of the future, they rotted on the road. Not even burial. The mother was obliged to eat the finger of the baby. One cut the finger, and then one said to the mother: Eat! […].[348]

She provides similarly disturbing accounts on the same page:

> The girls in secondary schools, they killed each other. The Tutsi girls were given bamboos. They were made to kill by pushing the bamboo from below [from the vagina] to the mouth … For the pregnant women, the stomach was cut, and then the child who had been inside—one said to the mama: "Eat your child"—this embryo. One *had* to do it. And then, other women and children, they were put inside a house—like two hundred—and then the house was burned.[349]

As Malkki persuasively indicates throughout her discussion, these methods of killing are not random acts of violence.[350] *How* people suffer is of utmost importance—violent atrocities of bodily mutilation are not void of meaning. The focus on specific body parts (e.g. vagina) and social relationships (e.g. mother-embryo) symbolically corresponds the procedures of killing to the socio-political intent "to destroy the procreative capability, the 'new life,' of the Hutu people."[351] Indeed, forcing women to consume their own children signified "a complete reversal of the 'progress of nature' in which the mother's body nurtures, forms, and brings into the world 'new life.'"[352] Similarly, Hutu viewed other methods of disfigurement—demolishing skulls, connecting the vagina/anus to the skull via bamboo, forcing fathers and

[347] Elaine Scarry, "The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World," in Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, *Violence in War and Peace*, 366.

[348] Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 91 (see 86–102 for her wider discussion).

[349] Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 91 (italics original).

[350] Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 95–96, mentions that the Tutsi did not kill Hutu with bullets because that would have represented an honorable death.

[351] Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 92.

[352] Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 93.

daughters to drown together in incestuous positions—as stressing their powerlessness and dehumanization.[353] Especially with these accounts' emphasis on reproductive methods of torture, it is not surprising that the Hutu viewed the minority Tutsi as seeking "'to equalize the population, up until 50 percent.'"[354]

In commemorative activity, however, the symbolic meanings associated with bodily violence are subject to affirmation or contestation, "as those with competing claims over meaning try to inscribe their own version of reality onto individuals."[355] The embedded meaning of violence in some cases becomes inverted or significantly altered in how it is narrated.[356] Bringing a violent past to bear on the present often compels social groups to vilify or cast as heroes the perpetrators or victims of past violence. As Malkki observes, the Hutu refugees framed their descriptions of bodily harm by underscoring the guilt of the perpetrators thereby shifting "the dehumanizing gaze" to the Tutsi.[357] Thus, perpetrators and victims are marked into separate group identities. In such instances, the mutilated body becomes a key rhetorical instrument of asserting social autonomy, of transforming (or confirming) symbolic potentials, and setting apart antagonistic social groups from one another.

Conclusion

With this theoretical framework in place, we can now identify its significance for analyzing the reception of the beheading of John the Baptist. Representations of bodily violence in the ancient world "do not simply reflect past realities."[358] They are fundamentally memory distortions, shaped by moral judgments that cast socio-political figures in negative

353 Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 91–93.
354 Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 91.
355 Henry, "Violence and the Body," 385.
356 Cf. Neal, *National Trauma*, 17, notes that remembering groups assign to a violent past "strong moralistic judgments in terms of right or wrong, good or bad, true or false."
357 Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 93.
358 Walter Pohl, "Perceptions of Barbarian Violence," in Drake, *Violence in Late Antiquity*, 22.

or positive terms. Zimmermann's analysis of literary descriptions of "Formen extremer körperlicher Gewalt" ("extreme forms of physical violence") highlights the excessive violence attributed to Roman emperors by ancient Roman historians.[359] He argues that these literary narratives are designed as "Horrorszenarien" ("horror scenarios") that instill disgust in the reader because of the "Absurdität" ("absurdity") of the forms of violence described.[360] He comments that these narrations reflect Roman historians' "politische Auseinandersetzungen oder die zeitgenössische Einschätzung einer politischen Konstellation" ("political disputes or the contemporary assessment of a political constellation").[361]

This political slanting is not unlike the memory distortion that characterizes the memory of John's beheading in the first three centuries. Underlying these traditions are the mechanisms of the social remembering of violence that this chapter has theorized. As chapters four and five will show, at work in the reception history is the contest over the memory of John's beheading. The separation of the head from its body constituted a form of somatic violence in the ancient world that was freighted with degrading symbolic potential. Just as the crucifixion of Jesus forced early Christians to contest the negative symbolism of the script of crucifixion when they remembered Jesus' death (e.g. Phil 2:5–11), so also those who remembered John's beheading show signs of the commemorative impulse to reshape its social script in their configurations of self-definition.[362] The Gospel of Mark, Justin Martyr, and Origen all acknowledge the degrading symbolism of John's beading. However, they also

[359] Martin Zimmermann, "Extreme Formen physischer Gewalt in der antiken Überlieferung," in *Extreme Formen von Gewalt in Bild und Text des Altertums*, ed. Martin Zimmermann, MSAW (München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2009), 155–92 (quotation, p. 155). Zimmermann distinguishes these "Formen extremer körperlicher Gewalt" ("extreme forms of physical violence") from "einfachen Gewaltszenen" ("scenes of simple violence") (p. 155).

[360] Zimmermann, "Extreme Formen physischer Gewalt," 155.

[361] Zimmermann, "Extreme Formen physischer Gewalt," 192.

[362] See, Kirk, "The Memory of Violence," 198–200.

key John's beheading to the crucifixion of Jesus. In so doing, they shift the degrading potential of the decapitation away from John and onto his attackers.

Chapter five in particular will argue that, as the boundary lines between "Jews" and "Christians" become more readily recognizable in the second and third centuries, the contestation of John's beheading takes on "anti-Jewish" reconfigurations. Whereas the Gospel of Mark, for instance, passes a negative moral judgment on "king" Antipas—and the Gospel of Matthew on Antipas the "tetrarch"—Justin Martyr and Origen superimpose a Jewish identity onto Herod Antipas. In effect, they redeploy the negative characterization of Antipas to implicate Jews in the beheading of God's prophet, John. In this regard, the memory of John's beheading becomes "violent." It perpetuates invisible violence as it inscribes an ideological conceptualization of the Jews as manifest killers of the prophets. Before proceeding to chapters four and five, however, it is necessary in chapter three to substantiate the claim that beheading in the ancient world constituted a humiliating technique of bodily mutilation. As we will see, some historians misleadingly categorize beheading as an "honorable" method of death in the ancient Greco-Roman world.

CHAPTER THREE

CULTURES OF BEHEADING IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Human beings have often cut off one another's heads.
They do not always cut off another's head.
They often strenuously disapprove cutting off heads,
yet someone somewhere is always cutting off someone else's head for some reason.
Why?[363]

The deliberate separation of a head from
its body is exclusively cultural.[364]

Arya Stark: *Could you bring back a man without a head?*
Not six times. Just once.
Thoros of Myr: *I don't think it works that way, child.*[365]

Introduction

Prior to chapter four's presentation of the contestation of John's decapitation, it is necessary in this third chapter to offer a cultural analysis of the ideology of beheading in the ancient world. Two observations prompt this analysis. First, interpreters have considerably neglected bringing the social discourse of beheading to bear on interpreting John's decapitation. Major monographs on the Baptist sparingly (if at all) appeal to ancient beheadings in their discussions of his death.[366] Likewise, a review of several commentaries on Mark 6:14–29//Matt 14:1–12 shows that many scholars have devoted little or no attention to this consideration.[367] Even Malina and Rohrbaugh's social-scientific analysis of Mark 6:14–29

[363] Regina Janes, *Losing Our Heads: Beheadings in Literature and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1.

[364] Janes, *Losing Our Heads*, 2. Cf. Werner Riess, "Introduction," in *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Werner Riess and Garrett G. Fagan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 1: "Violence is an intrinsic part of every human society and is always culturally defined."

[365] Alex Graves, "Kissed by Fire," *Game of Thrones* (HBO, April 28, 2013).

[366] See, e.g., Goguel, *Au seuil de l'Évangile*, 51–56; Carl H. Kraeling, *John the Baptist* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1951), 83–93; Steinmann, *Saint John the Baptist and the Desert Tradition*, 101–09; Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*, 8–13; Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet*, 366–78; Dapaah, *The Relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth*; Taylor, *The Immerser*, 213–59; Roland Schütz, *Johannes der Täufer*, ATANT 50 (Zürich: Stuttgart, 1967), 103–05. One exception of this omission is Hartmann, *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers*, 155, 159, 187–98.

[367] Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 206–13; D. E. Nineham, *Saint Mark* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 171–76; Schweizer, *Mark*, 131–35; Lane, *Mark*, 210–23; C. S. Mann, *Mark*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1986), 293–98; Guelich, *Mark*, 324–34; Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 157–62; Karl Kertelge, *Markusevangelium*, NEchtB (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1994), 64–67; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, WBC 33B (Dallas: Word, 1995),

does not once mention either John's beheading, the postmortem manipulation of John's head, or the burial of John's headless body.[368]

This lacuna is especially palpable when compared to the abundance of scholarship that interprets the death of Jesus in light of the sociology of ancient crucifixion. Hengel's comment from 1977—"There is still an urgent need for a comprehensive study of crucifixion and capital law in antiquity, including the Jewish world"—no longer rings true, at least not as an *urgent* need.[369] German and English works on crucifixion in antiquity, for example, by Kuhn, Chapman, Samuelsson, and Cook in 1982, 2008, 2011, and 2014, respectively, and the collaborative effort by Chapman and Schnabel in 2015 have largely answered Hengel's call.[370] Accompanying these labors is a host of articles and essays dedicated to (Jesus') crucifixion in reference works[371] and peer-reviewed journals.[372] Despite the chorus of voices

409–13; Gnilka, *Markus*, 1:243–53; Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 212–16; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 251–59; Frances J. Maloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 125–28; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, SP (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2007), 214–18; Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 298–308; Craig A. Evans, *Matthew*, NCBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 290–92. Some commentators have considered (to varying extents) some facets of ancient beheadings. See, e.g., Erich Klostermann, *Das Markusevangelium*, HNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 60–61; John R. Donahue and Daniel Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 199–200; Collins, *Mark*, 311–13. Collins cites Livy (*Ab urbe cond.* 39.43) at Mark 6:24–25 to claim that "the probable intent (or effect) of the pre-Markan story [is] to disparage the Herodian women" (p. 313).

368 Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 216–17.

369 Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), xii.

370 Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, "Die Kreuzesstrafe während der frühen Kaiserzeit: Ihre Wirklichkeit und Wertung in der Umwelt des Urchristentums," *ANRW* 2.25.1:648–793; David W. Chapman, *Ancient Jewish and Christian Perceptions of Crucifixion*, WUNT 224 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Gunnar Samuelsson, *Crucifixion in Antiquity: An Inquiry into the Background and Significance of the New Testament Terminology of Crucifixion*, WUNT 310 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); John Granger Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World*, WUNT 327 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); David W. Chapman and Eckhard J. Schnabel, *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus*, WUNT 344 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

371 See, e.g., E. Brandenburger, "σταυρός," *NIDNTT* 1:391–405; Gerald G. O'Collins, "Crucifixion," *ABD* 1:1207–10; G. R. W. and A. W. L., "Crucifixion," *OCD*, 396; Michael O. Wise, "Crucifixion," *EDEJ*, 500–01; Dale C. Allison et al., "Cross," *EBR* 5:1042–63; John Granger Cook et al., "Crucifixion," *EBR* 5:1084–1115; J. Dennis, "Death of Jesus," *DJG*, 172–93.

372 See, e.g., John Granger Cook, "Envisioning Crucifixion: Light from Several Inscriptions and the Palatine Graffito," *NovT* 50 (2008): 262–85; John Granger Cook, "Crucifixion and Burial," *NTS* 57 (2011): 193–213; John Granger Cook, "Crucifixion as Spectacle in Roman Campania," *NovT* 54 (2012): 68–100; John Granger Cook, "Roman Crucifixions: From the Second Punic War to Constantine," *ZNW* 104 (2013): 1–32; Steven Muir, "Vivid Imagery in Galatians 3:1—Roman Rhetoric, Street Announcing, Graffiti, and Crucifixions," *BTB* 44 (2014): 76–86.

that has joined the discussion, widespread agreement persists that the shame of Jesus' crucifixion represented an obstacle to overcome in early Christianity's proclamation(s) of Jesus as ὁ Χριστός.[373] In a field dominated by studies that emphasize the severity of Roman crucifixion, understanding the severity of ancient beheading is largely uncharted territory for NT scholars.

Second, historians frequently categorize beheading in the Greco-Roman world as simple, unaggravated, or an honorable form of violence. Berkowitz' characterization of Roman decapitation as "its most honorable method [of execution]" is typical in this regard.[374] Relatedly, some NT scholars have been quick to contrast the extremeness of crucifixion with the simplicity of other forms of punishment.[375] However, as the following discussion

[373] Consider Paul's first correspondence with the Corinthians: "the word of the cross" (ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ; 1 Cor 1:18)—Paul's proclamation of "Christ crucified" (Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον; 1 Cor 1:23)—was a "stumbling block" (σκάνδαλον) for the Jew and "foolishness" (μωρίαν) for Gentiles (1 Cor 1:23), but, at the same time, the "power" (δύναμις) and "wisdom" (σοφίαν) of God for both Jews and Gentiles being saved (1 Cor 1:18, 24). Elsewhere Paul attests to the humility of Jesus' crucifixion (θανατοῦ δὲ σταυροῦ, Phil 2:8) and, in his next breath, claims an exalted status of Jesus on account of this humility (διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, Phil 2:9). Similarly, the author of Hebrews asserts that "[Jesus] endured the cross" (ὑπέμεινεν σταυρόν) and now sits at the right hand of God's throne "having despised the shame [of the cross]" (αἰσχύνης καταφρονήσας, Heb 12:2). Then there is Justin Martyr's defense against claims of "madness" (μανίαν) in giving "to a crucified person" (ἀνθρώπῳ σταυρωθέντι) "second place" (δευτέραν χώραν) behind only God (*1 Apol.* 13). For the various hermeneutical strategies early Christians employed in transforming the shame of Jesus' crucifixion, see, e.g., Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ*, 123–26; Joel B. Green, "The Death of Jesus and the Ways of God: Jesus and the Gospels on Messianic Status and Shameful Suffering," *Int* 52 (1998): 24–37; Mark T. Finney, "Christ Crucified and the Inversion of Roman Imperial Ideology in 1 Corinthians," *BTB* 35 (2005): 20–33; Joel Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," *JBL* 125 (2006): 73–87; Allan T. Georgia, "Translating the Triumph: Reading Mark's Crucifixion Narrative against a Roman Ritual of Power," *JSNT* 36 (2013): 17–38. See further, Tom Holmén, "Crucifixion Hermeneutics in Judaism at the Time of Jesus," *JSHJ* 14 (2016): 197–222. Cf. Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 392–433. Specific points of controversy still emerge. As one example see, Kelli S. O'Brien, "The Curse of the Law (Galatians 3.13): Crucifixion, Persecution, and Deuteronomy 21.22–23," *JSNT* 29 (2006): 55–76, who argues against the notion that the "curse of God" (קְלֻלַת אֱלֹהִים Deut 21:23; cf. κεκατηραμένος ὑπὸ θεοῦ LXX) comprised the main reason for non-Christian Jewish objections to Jesus' messianic status. Importantly, O'Brien's argument does not imply a denial of Jews objecting to a crucified messiah, as he makes clear: "It seems natural and clear that many Jews *did* object to a crucified messiah.… Our question, however, is not whether a crucified messiah per se is a problem for Jews. It is whether the crucified messiah is a problem because Deut. 21.23 indicates that those who are crucified are also cursed" (63, italics original). Cf. Mark T. Finney, "*Servile Supplicium*: Shame and the Deuteronomic Curse—Crucifixion in Its Cultural Context," *BTB* 43 (2013): 124–34.

[374] Beth A. Berkowitz, *Execution and Invention: Death Penalty Discourse in Early Rabbinic and Christian Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 162. See also, Peter Garnsey, "Why Penalties Become Harsher: The Roman Case, Late Republic to Fourth Century Empire," *NLF* 143 (1968): 147; Kathleen M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," *JRS* 80 (1990): 55; Thomas Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London: Routledge, 1992), 69; Donald G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 1998), 53.

[375] See, e.g., Lane, *Mark*, 556. Cf. Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 484.

demonstrates, these assertions need to be met with significant nuance. I argue that the severed head, in the general context of John the Baptist, not only represented a degrading form of bodily violence, but also one that could interrupt proper burial and impact the victim in life in the hereafter.

With these two preliminary observations in place, the following discussion accordingly breaks into two parts. The first section sets forth a grouping of primary data of beheadings in the ancient world. This data suggests that inhabitants of the ancient Greco-Roman world were familiar with the social script of beheading. The second section then details the nature of this script by offering several points of modification to the assertion that beheading comprised an honorable death in ancient Rome. The chapter closes by previewing how the contours of this script affect this study's interpretation of early memories of John's beheading.

1. The Severed Head: A Familiar Social Script

That the ideology of beheading has been largely underexplored is unfortunate. A sampling of the primary sources relevant to John's context reveals that the severing of the head (or in many cases the already severed head) was a familiar social script for those who lived in the ancient Greco-Roman world.

1.1. Beheadings in Jewish Literature

Many Jewish occupants of the Roman Empire who read the HB or LXX for themselves (or listened as others read for them), were likely familiar with the traditions of beheading that formed part of their cultural heritage. Joseph interprets the baker's dream as

signifying that Pharaoh would cut off the baker's head.[376] Judges recounts that the Ephraimites brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon.[377] When the Philistines captured the ark of YHWH and placed it in the temple of Dagon, they woke up on the second morning to behold Dagon's head and hands cut off before the ark.[378] First Samuel also narrates that David cut off Goliath's head with Goliath's own sword and brought the head to Jerusalem.[379] After King Saul died on Mount Gilboa he was beheaded by the Philistines.[380] Two Benjamites attack, behead, and then present the head of Ishbosheth (Saul's son) to David at Hebron.[381] An unnamed woman had Sheba's head cut off and thrown to Joab when Joab pursued Sheba to Abel.[382] During a severe famine in Samaria, the King of Israel sought Elisha's head: "So may God do to me, and more, if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat stays on his shoulders today" (2 Kgs 6:31 NRSV; similarly, 4 Kgdms 6:31 LXX). Jehu had Ahab's seventy sons decapitated and their heads stacked in two heaps before the gate of Jezreel.[383] Finally, Isaiah conveys that YHWH cut off from Israel both head and tail (Isa 9:13; Isa 9:13 LXX; see also 4Q163).

Many Jewish texts retell these traditions. Josephus depicts David cutting off Goliath's head "with the sword [of Goliath]" (τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τῇ ἐκείνου) (*Ant.* 6.191). Thereafter, David

[376] בעוד שלשת ימים ישא פרעה את ראשך מעליך ("In three days Pharaoh will take up your head from upon you") (Gen 40:19). Genesis 40:19 LXX: ἔτι τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἀφελεῖ Φαραω τὴν κεφαλήν σου ἀπὸ σοῦ ("In yet three days Pharaoh will take off your head from you").

[377] Judg 7:25; Judg 7:25 LXX.

[378] 1 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgdms 5:4 LXX.

[379] 1 Sam 17:51, 54; 1 Kgdms 17:51, 54 LXX. First Samuel 17:51 has David stand over Goliath and grasp "his sword" (חרבו) (1 Kgdms 17:51 LXX τὴν ῥομφαίαν αὐτοῦ) but without grammatically indicating the antecedent of either the possessive particle ו in Hebrew or the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ in Greek. Both versions, however, clarify in other ways that these pronouns refer to Goliath (not David). Specifically, they (1) indicate earlier in the narrative that David removed his own sword and armor before entering the battle (1 Sam 17:39; 1 Kgdms 17:39 LXX) and (2) stress throughout the account that YHWH does not save by means of the sword (1 Sam 17:45–47; 1 Kgdms 17:45–47 LXX). The Hebrew text, moreover, stresses in 17:50 that David did not have a sword in his hand (וחרב אין ביד דוד) when he struck down the Philistine. Psalm 151:7 LXX commemorates David's defeat of Goliath by claiming that David used the Philistine's sword to behead him: ἐγὼ δὲ σπασάμενος τὴν παρ᾽αὐτοῦ μάχαιραν ἀπεκεφάλισα αὐτόν ("But I, having withdrawn the short-sword from him, beheaded him").

[380] 1 Sam 31:9; 1 Chr 10:9–10; 1 Chr 10:9–10 LXX; cf. 1 Kgdms 31:9 LXX.

[381] 2 Sam 4:1–12; 2 Kgdms 4:1–12 LXX.

[382] 2 Sam 20:10–22; 2 Kgdms 20:10–22 LXX.

[383] 2 Kgs 10:1–11; 4 Kgdms 10:1–11 LXX.

takes Goliath's head to his tent.[384] Like 1 Sam 31:8–9, *Ant.* 6.368–378 conveys that the Philistines "cut off" (ἀποτέμνουσιν) Saul's head the morning after his death. Then there is Philo who recounts Joseph's interpretation of the baker's dream from Gen 40:19: "And after three days the king will command you to be crucified (ἀνασκολοπισθῆναι), and your head to be cut off (τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτμηθῆναι), and the birds will fly down and feast upon your flesh, until you are wholly devoured."[385] Josephus also recasts two stories as beheadings that were not portrayed as beheadings in the HB.[386] According to *Ant.* 6.193–204, Saul pledges his daughter to David if David would bring Saul the heads (κεφαλάς) of six hundred Philistines. By contrast, 1 Sam 18:25 (1 Kgdms 18:25 LXX) claims that Saul asked David to bring him one hundred "foreskins" (ערלות) (ἀκροβυστίαις). In *Ant.* 2.310 Pharaoh "threatened to behead (τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτεμεῖν) [Moses], should he ever again come and pester him" concerning letting the Hebrews go.[387] By contrast, Exod 10:28 does not specify the type of death with which Pharaoh threatened Moses, only that Pharaoh threatened Moses with death:

כי ביום ראתך פני תמות

"For, on the day you see my face you will die."[388]

Conversely, Josephus in one instance recasts a beheading from the HB as a mere crucifixion. In *Ant.* 2.73, he portrays Joseph predicting Pharaoh's baker would be crucified: τῇ τρίτῃ δ᾽αὐτὸν ἀνασταυρωθέντα βορὰν ἔσεσθαι πετεινοῖς ("and on the third day, having been crucified, he would be food for the birds"). By contrast, Gen 40:19 has Joseph predict that the baker would be beheaded and then impaled.

[384] Josephus, *Ant.* 6.192; cf. 1 Sam 17:54.

[385] Philo, *Ios*. 96 (Yonge).

[386] Similarly, *Esth. Rab.* 7:10 indicates that Haman would be beheaded and crucified (cf. Esth. 7:10). For the midrashic text and its translation, see Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World*, 345.

[387] Josephus, *Ant.* 2.310 (Thackeray, LCL).

[388] The Septuagint does not specify the type of death either: ᾗ δ᾽ἂν ἡμέρα ὀφθῇς μοι, ἀποθανῇ ("Now, on whatever day you are seen by me, you will die") (Exod 10:28 LXX).

Further examples of decapitation from Jewish literature abound. According to Jdt. 13–16, Judith cut off the head of the Assyrian general Holofernes. Judah Maccabee had the defeated Seleucid commander Nicanor beheaded and his head publicly displayed.[389] "Zabdiel the Arab cut off (ἀφεῖλεν) the head (τὴν κεφαλήν) of Alexander and sent it to Ptolemy" (1 Macc 11:17). Josephus mentions several other first-century (B)CE beheaded persons, including Herod the Great's brother Joseph, Antigonus' general Pappus, Antigonus himself, the tribune Celer, Herod's slave Simon, the self-designated prophet Theudas, and an unnamed soldier who had destroyed certain laws of Moses.[390] Josephus also recounts that a captured Roman trooper escaped beheading during the siege of Jerusalem.[391]

1.2. Beheadings in Greco-Roman Literature

Others in the Greco-Roman world not familiar with Jewish traditions also likely understood the social script of beheading. The severed head was a prevalent cultural trope and a common site in war, public displays of violence, and city sieges. *Iliad* 18.176–180 portrays the struggle for the corpse of Patroclus and mentions Hector's eagerness to sever Patroclus' head from his cadaver. Xerxes had Leonidas' corpse beheaded.[392] Euphorion makes reference to the Romans using an axe (πέλεκυς) in beheadings.[393] Polybius mentions a certain prince whose body was impaled after his head was cut off and sewn up in ass's skin.[394] At *Hist.* 1.7.11–12, Polybius also describes the mass beheading of three hundred soldiers after the city Rhegium fell.[395] Perseus cut off Medusa's head, careful only to glance at her face through the reflection of his shield.[396] Dionysius of Halicarnassus recounts

[389] 1 Macc 7:39–50; 2 Macc 15:28–36.
[390] See, respectively, *J.W.* 1.323–326 (*Ant.* 14.448–450); *J.W.* 1.342–343 (*Ant.* 14.464); *Ant.* 15.8–9; *J.W.* 2.246; *Ant.* 17.273–277; *Ant.* 20.97–99 (cf. Acts 5:36); *Ant.* 20.117.
[391] *J.W.* 6.360–362.
[392] Herodotus, *Pers. Wrs.* 7.238.
[393] *Pr. Frgmts.* 194.
[394] *Hist.* 8.21.3.
[395] Livy, *Ab. urbe cond* 3.9.3, numbers this mass beheading at three thousand.
[396] Ovid, *Metam.* 4.765–785.

beheadings in the public sphere (ἐν τῷ φανερῷ) and in the forum (ἀγορά) at Rome.[397] Velleius Paterculus (*Comp. Rom. Hist.* 2.27.3), Lucan (*Civ. W.* 2.160–173), and Appian (*Rom. Hist. Civ.* 1.10.93) hold varying reports of beheading in the aftermath of the Battle at the Colline Gate in Rome (82 BCE). Cassius prematurely offered his neck to the sword after he had sent an orderly to identify whether an approaching military force was a friend (Brutus) or foe (Caesar and Antony).[398]

Hannibal beheaded Vesulus "by a swift (rapido) sword cut."[399] Germanic tribes cut off Varus' head from his dead body after the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE.[400] In his account of the execution of Dareius, Plutarch refers to the Persian custom of using a knife (ξυρόν) to behead the condemned.[401] Some reports, according to Plutarch, claim that Galba had his head cut off.[402] Plutarch indicates that Antony had Antigonus the Jew beheaded.[403] Describing events in the latter half of the first century CE, Tacitus mentions a certain Sabinus whose body was dragged to the Gemonian stairs in Rome after having his head cut off.[404] Tacitus also recounts that Claudia Octavia's head was transported to Rome after her

397 *Ant. rom.* 2.29; 3.58.4; 6.30.1–2.

398 Velleius Paterculus, *Comp. Rom. Hist.* 2.70.2–3.

399 Silius Italicus, *Pun.* 10.145–146 (Duff, LCL).

400 Velleius Paterculus, *Comp. Rom. Hist.* 2.119.1–5. Dio Cassius, *Rom. hist.* 56.21.5, indicates that Varus took his own life, but does not comment on the postmortem treatment of his body by the Germanic tribes.

401 "He turned back, and with one hand clutching Dareius by the hair, dragged him to the ground, and cut off (ἀπέτεμε) his head (τὸν τράχηλον) with the knife (τῷ ξυρῷ)" (Plutarch, *Art*. 29 [Perrin, LCL]). Perrin's rendering of τράχηλον as "head" in English is appropriate in that it conveys that this passage refers to a beheading. At first glance, "he cut his throat" may seem like the natural translation of τράχηλον (lit. "neck" or "throat") as the direct object of ἀποτέμνω (lit. "cut from" or "cut off"). However, three reasons make this option unlikely in this particular instance. First, the executioner clearly enters the chamber with the intent of beheading Dareius, as the context makes clear beforehand: ὁ δὲ δήμιος κληθεὶς ἦκε μὲν ξυρὸν ἔχων, ᾧ τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀποτέμνουσι τῶν κολαζομένων (*Art.* 29). Second, although Plutarch portrays the executioner initially refusing to behead Dareius, at the pressure of those outside the chamber the executioner concedes and fulfills his duty. The text and context do not convey that he slit Dareius' throat *instead of* beheading him. Third, the notion of slitting a throat is more frequently conveyed by other means, particularly in the usage of σφάζω and its cognates (see, e.g., Euripides, *Andr.* 410; *Cycl.* 399; *El.* 813). I am not aware of a single clear reference in Plutarch where τράχηλον is used to communicate a slit throat. Plutarch uses σφάζω and its cognates to communicate this idea. See Plutarch, *Dion.* 57.2; *Oth.* 2.3; *Vit. pud.* 4; *Amat. narr.* 3 (twice).

402 *Galb.* 27.2–4.

403 *Ant.* 36. Dio Cassius (*Hist. rom.* 49.22.6) does not explicitly mention that Antigonus was decapitated: "But Antigonus he bound to a cross and flogged,—a punishment no other king had suffered at the hands of the Romans—and afterwards slew him" (Cary and Foster, LCL).

404 *Hist.* 3.74.

gruesome execution involving steam from a hot bath and her veins being cut.[405] For his role in the assassination of Julius Caesar, Trebonius was decapitated and soldiers rolled his head on the pavement until it was crushed entirely.[406] Dio Cassius writes that the head of Brutus was sent to Rome but lost at sea during a storm.[407] And Herodian even reports that Commodus beheaded ostriches by shooting arrows at them in the Roman amphitheater. The birds continued to run swiftly after their heads had been cut off.[408]

1.3. Clarification

A deluge of other examples could be cited. Two points of clarification, however, are necessary. First, I am not suggesting that ancient people were more inclined toward violence than modern societies. This impression "dominates the popular and non-scholarly perception of antiquity."[409] To an extent, this assumption surfaces from the observation that violence in the ancient world was a public phenomenon, invading public spaces such as amphitheaters, arenas, roads, forums, city walls, and citadels.[410] The public performance of a phenomenon can certainly enable the perception of its pervasiveness. However, a shift in the spatial performance of violence—from public to private—in the modern period does not necessarily imply a decline in its scope.[411] Rather, the shift just as easily implies ideological changes about the legitimate use of, goals of, and culturally appropriate locations for such performances.[412] In this respect, the dubious contemporary assumption that antiquity was

[405] *Ann.* 14.64.

[406] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 3.26.

[407] *Hist. rom.* 49.2–3.

[408] *Hist. Emp.* 1.15.5.

[409] Martin Zimmermann, "Violence in Late Antiquity Reconsidered," in Drake, *Violence in Late Antiquity*, 350.

[410] One is reminded of Quintilian's remark about crucifixion: "When we crucify criminals the most frequented roads are chosen, where the greatest number of people can look and be seized by this fear. For every punishment has less to do with the offence than with the example" (*Decl. min.* 274.13 [Bailey, LCL]).

[411] Zimmermann, "Violence Reconsidered," 350–51.

[412] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977), 11–12, argues that the modern period's practice of execution (characterized by the "disappearance of the spectacle and the elimination of pain") indicates "a whole new morality concerning the

especially prone toward violence reflects more the modern West's insulation from enactments of violence than it presents a cogent differentiation between ancient and modern predispositions.[413]

Second, I am not proceeding under the assumption that all accounts of beheading from the HB and Greco-Roman literature "actually occurred" (as portrayed). In constructing an ideology of beheading in the ancient world, it is not necessary to ascertain and rely on "real" accounts, on the one hand, and to discard "idealistic" ones, on the other hand. It is best to abandon such a strict dichotomy altogether. The theoretical approach advocated by Hölscher for investigating Greek and Roman culture in images of war is illuminating on a comparative basis:

> Firstly, all artistic images are of course mental constructs. As far as they represent the world of reality, they select specific subjects and motifs relevant for their purpose, focus on particular aspects of them, and enhance the expressive power of those chosen aspects. Images are thus reflections of cultural imagination. Secondly, reality too is a construct. The reality of war is determined and formed by particular technical conditions—arms and armour, logistical equipment, tactical and strategic concepts, patterns of behavior and social ideals. Such conditions affect fundamentally the concrete and visual conduct of fighting. Reality in this sense is an image. Thirdly, the perception of reality is also a construct. A war or a battle can be perceived, for example, as a collective enterprise or as a series of individual achievements, as a glorious event or as a theatre of suffering and death. Perception in this sense creates images. And finally, such mental constructs are determined by cultural circumstances, specific to individual societies in different historical periods.[414]

act of punishing." For instance, the move to strict capital punishment means that execution no longer specifies the crime committed; nor does it identify the social status of the culprit.

[413] Furthermore, it is not possible to arrive at such a differentiation. In his work on interpersonal violence in the Roman Empire, Garrett G. Fagan, "Violence in Roman Social Relations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. Michael Peachin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 469, observes that the requisite documentation to quantify "rates of domestic violence, or muggings, or bandit/pirate raids, or even violent conflicts between supposedly 'law-abiding' inhabitants of the empire" does not exist. He claims: "The best we can hope for is to arrive at a kind of Roman 'etiquette of violence,' insofar as we can glimpse the sort of violence that was done, by whom and to whom, and under what circumstances." Fagan reasserts these comments in his more recent study, "Urban Violence: Street, Forum, Bath, Circus, and Theater," in Riess and Fagan, *The Topography of Violence*, 231–47. Relatedly, the fluctuation in the amount of violence reported between various ancient authors does not decisively indicate a corresponding fluctuation in rates of violence across different temporal matrices. As Zimmermann, "Violence Reconsidered," 353, puts it: "If there are more reports of violence for a particular time span, then this may simply mean that—for whatever reason or political aim—there was more reporting on violence in this time, not necessarily more violence."

[414] Tonio Hölscher, "Images of War in Greece and Rome: Between Military Practice, Public Memory, and Cultural Symbolism," *JRS* 93 (2003): 2.

Hölscher's approach rightly complicates the dichotomy between realism and idealism.[415] It thus shares an affinity with social memory theory's complication of the relationship between the past and the present. On the one hand, those who create images or narrate instances of "real" violence from the past inevitably distort these events. Their portrayals are distorted by culturally specific motifs and conditioned by present social contexts. In this sense, "real" portrayals of violence reflect and advance the ideology of a social group—their attitudes, emotions, convictions, judgments, and core values presumed essential for existence.[416]

On the other hand, those who create "idealistic" accounts of violence nevertheless rely on existing social structures and purvey real historical attitudes and judgments. As Fagan explains: "Ancient anecdotes and fiction can act as mirrors that reflect social attitudes, assumptions, and realities, even if the immediate context is highly dubious or even fantastical. This is because in order to be effective, satires or novels have to present their audience with recognizable social paradigms."[417] Narrations of violence obscure and communicate reality by distorting it.

[415] Hölscher, "Images of War in Greece and Rome," 7–8, exemplifies his approach in his discussion of the "powerful male body, trained by naked exercise in the palaestra" as a core factor in ancient Spartan conceptualizations of "successful warriorship" (quotations, p. 7). His discussion begins by observing the numerous ancient Greek vase paintings and reliefs of naked warriors. These images contrast with the reality of archaic battles that were fought in full hoplite armor. He then proceeds to juxtapose two texts about fourth-century Sparta. The first text, from Xenophon (*Hellenica* 1.28), details a decisive Spartan victory over a larger Persian force. The Spartan leader Agesilaos had eradicated his troopers' initial despair by stripping Persian captives of their clothes. He thus revealed their "pale bodies that had never trained in a Greek palaestra" (p. 7). The second text, from Plutarch (*Agesilaos* 34.6–8), details a Theban invasion of Sparta. According to Hölscher's summary, "a certain Isidas ran out from his house, totally naked, his body rubbed with oil like an athlete, and put the enemy to flight" (p. 7). Such a maneuver was not a military custom. However, as Hölscher contends, the trained male body was a real factor in military conflict. This reality of warfare was thus "made visible" in ancient Greek paintings and reliefs of naked warriors even though it was perhaps not actually "visible in battle" (pp. 7–8). Conversely, if these paintings had depicted armored warriors (as opposed to naked warriors), then they would have communicated a real military custom. But, they would not have communicated "the full reality of warfare" (p. 7). Hölscher thus arrives at two conclusions. (1) "The nude body of Greek warriors in art is therefore not a phenomenon of idealization: the body was a real factor in the conception of war" (p. 7). (2) The scarcity of nude bodies of warriors in Hellenistic Greek art does not reflect a shift from idealism to realism in the Hellenistic age as much as it reflects a shift away from seeing the body as the central factor in successful military action.

[416] For similar comments, see Zimmermann, "Violence Reconsidered," 357.

[417] Fagan, "Violence," 469–70.

It is with these clarifications in place that I make the assertion that inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world were familiar with the social script of beheading. They could "read" this script not because everyday rates of violence were necessarily high. Rather, many likely understood the sight of the severed head because of their access to traditions about decapitation(s). This familiarity underlines the importance of engaging this script to understand the tradition of John's beheading. As chapters four and five will show, some of the early tradition history of John's death acutely dwells on the contours of his decapitation. Those who remembered his beheading in the early centuries CE engage this script and redeploy it in their commemorative operations of self-definition. What, then, were the ideological contours of beheading?

2. The Social Script of Beheading

The act of severing and separating a head from its body was performed with the intention of degrading and dishonoring the beheaded. Repeated assertions in critical scholarship, however, run the risk of painting a misleading picture about the degrading potential of beheading in the ancient world. According to Kyle in his *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*: "Quick and unaggravated, decapitation at the edge of town was the most discreet form of execution, a privilege for citizens of status. For a host of crimes Rome punished criminals of low status with aggravated or ultimate punishments (*summa supplicia*), which included exposure to wild beasts, crucifixion, and burning alive."[418] Garnsey refers to "death by decapitation" as "the least painful and degrading form of execution."[419] Like Kyle and Garnsey, Coleman differentiates between the "'aggravated' forms of capital punishment"

[418] Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 53.
[419] Garnsey, "Why Penalties Become Harsher," 147.

(crucifixion, *crematio*, and *damnatio ad bestias*) and "simple execution by decapitation."[420] According to Wiedemann:

> Beheading by the sword came to be a privilege reserved only for the so-called *honestiores* (senators, soldiers and others in the emperor's service, and members of municipal councils, with their families).… But the rest of the population (the *humiliores*) found themselves subject in late antiquity to the forms of the death penalty to which only non-citizens had been liable in earlier centuries. These were: crucifixion, being torn to death by animals (*ad bestias*), and being burnt to death (*ad flammas* or *crematio*).[421]

Also, some NT scholars have been quick to establish the extremeness of crucifixion by contrasting it with the simplicity of other forms of punishment. In reference to Mark 15:12–14, Lane comments: "Both the leaders of the people and the inflamed crowd demanded not simply capital punishment, but the most ignominous [*sic*] form of death, crucifixion."[422]

Collectively, these assertions rightly underscore that Rome often distributed punishment unequally between those of varying social statuses in order to maintain these distinctions even in death.[423] Executions in the Roman arena in the early Empire, for example, upheld such stratifications by allocating types of punishment according to the statuses of the performers.[424] Kyle is convincing when he contends that the Epicurean concept of death as the great equalizer of individuals is not altogether true of ancient Roman

[420] Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 55.

[421] Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators*, 69.

[422] Lane, *Mark*, 556. Cf. Evans, *Mark*, 484.

[423] Berkowitz, *Execution and Invention*, 153: "A criminal condemned to death in the Roman Empire might, among other penalties, end up either decapitated, exposed to wild beasts, crucified, burned alive, or condemned to be a gladiator, depending on his or her social status and on the nature of the crime." Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 55: "A crucial factor in the Roman penal system was the evolution of differentiated penalties for offenders of different status: *humiliores* and *honestiores*.… Increasingly under the Empire the pool of persons treated as *humiliores* grew, so that penalties previously reserved for slaves became applicable to free aliens and perhaps even to citizens of low status."

[424] J. C. Edmondson, "Dynamic Arenas: Gladiatorial Presentations in the City of Rome and the Construction of Roman Society during the Early Empire," in *Roman Theatre and Society*, ed. W. J. Slater (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 96–97: "To be condemned *ad gladium* (i.e. to decapitation by the sword) was less demeaning socially than to be crucified or burnt alive, which in turn were less demeaning punishments than to be condemned *ad bestias.* The normal result was death in all cases, but the niceties of social stratification had to be preserved even in death."

ideologies.[425] Further, it is true that Romans could—and probably did—appeal to their status to gain what was sometimes considered a more favorable death in beheading.[426]

Such claims, however, need to be qualified by the surplus of primary evidence that situates beheading as a degrading form of bodily mutilation. In this vein, the remainder of this chapter offers seven points of nuance that accentuate this feature of ancient beheading discourses. The last three points are particularly important for the present study as they underscore elements of beheading vital for understanding the early reception of John's death.

2.1. Degradation of the Victim

First, severing a head from its body was not necessarily a "quick" undertaking. The employment of swords, axes, or knives in the moment of severing a head from the body did not by default imply a clean, "painless" cut with one swift stroke of the instrument. Epictetus mentions a certain Lateranus (whom Nero ordered to be beheaded) who had to offer his neck a second time because the first blow did not achieve its purpose: "For he stretched out his neck and received the blow, but, as it was a feeble one, he shrank back for an instant, and then stretched out his neck again."[427] Further, in some circumstances beheading formed part of a complex enactment of violence, such as when it was combined with other forms of

[425] Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 128.

[426] Cf. Acts 16:37–38; 22:25–28; 25:1–27. It is common to explain the variegated executions of Peter (crucifixion) and Paul (decapitation) by detailing the different forms of punishment imposed on Roman citizens versus non-citizens. See, Valerio Marotta, "St. Paul's Death: Roman Citizenship and *summa supplicia*," in *The Last Years of Paul: Essays from the Tarragona Conference, June 2013*, ed. Armand Puig i Tàrrech and John M. G. Barclay, WUNT 352 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 247–69.

[427] Epictetus, *Disc.* 1.1.19–20 (Oldfather, LCL). Judith's decapitation of Holofernes took more than one cut: "And she struck into his neck twice in her strength and took off his head from him" (Jdt 13:8 LXX). Archaeological evidence of decapitated inhumations in early and late Roman Britain correspond to the literary descriptions of beheadings varying between one or more strokes. For details, see, Dorothy Watts, *Religion in Late Roman Britain: Forces of Change* (London: Routledge, 1998), 74–95; Katie Tucker, "'Whence This Severance of the Head?': The Osteology and Archaeology of Human Decapitation in Britain" (PhD thesis., University of Winchester, 2012), 109–133. Modern case studies likewise observe that severing a head from its body was not necessarily easy. See, e.g., Kamil Hakan Dogan, "Decapitation and Dismemberment of the Corpse: A Matricide Case," *JFS* 55 (2010): 542–45, who reports seventy-one wounds to the head and back of a decapitated victim.

degrading harm: flogging,[428] crucifixion and/or impalement,[429] dragging,[430] and the dismemberment and mutilation of other parts of the body.[431] In these respects, beheading could conform to the ancient correspondence between a slow death and a shameful death.[432]

Second, decapitation was not universally recognized as an "unaggravated" form of execution in Rome. Following crucifixion and burning someone alive, Callistratus describes beheading as an extreme punishment (*Dig.* 48.19.28). Similarly, the *Pauli Sententiae* indicates crucifixion, burning, and beheading as the *summa supplicia* (*PS*. 5.17.2). Thus, O'Collins' description of *decollatio* as one of the "aggravated methods of execution" in Roman society is not without ancient precedent.[433]

Third, Rome could behead citizens or those who held a high social status in a bid to dishonor them. Emperor Claudius once sentenced a Roman tribune named Celer to beheading: "Celer he sent back to Hierosolyma in chains, and directed that he be handed over to the Judeans for torture and that, after he had been dragged around the city, in this way (οὕτω) his head be hacked off."[434] Mason observes the implication that the adverb οὕτω ("in this way") makes explicit: "This beheading, after torture and humiliation by foreigners, following the months-long journey back to Judea in anticipation, would be an extreme form

[428] See, e.g., Appian, *Samn. Hist.* 3.9.3; Diodorus of Sicily, *Lib. Hist.* 36.4; 38.8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 3.58.4; 5.61.3; Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 2.5; Plutarch, *Publ.* 6.99; Polybius, *Hist.* 1.7.12. In the Greek examples, the "scourging" appears as an aorist circumstantial participle and the "beheading" appears as an aorist (in)finite verb. Both actions are thus linked together as a coterminous event. I refrain from including P.Oxy. 22.2339 among these examples. It mentions that a judge was "about to behead" (μέλλοντες κεφαλίσαι) a certain Apollodotus (1.6). The judge then orders him to be scourged: καὶ ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν φλαγέλλας μαστιγωθῆναι (1.10–11). The two punishments are thus not combined. For a helpful transcription of the papyrus and for links to high resolution images, see http://www.papyri.info/hgv/25937.

[429] See, e.g., Gen 40:19; Philo, *Ios.* 96, 98; *Somn.* 2.213; Josephus, *Ant.* 6.374; 15.8–9; Herodotus, *Hist.* 8.21.3; Polybius, *Hist.* 8.21.3; cf. Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 49.22.6; Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.

[430] See, e.g., Josephus, *J.W.* 2.246.

[431] See, e.g., 2 Macc 15:30–33; Tacitus, *Hist.* 3.74.

[432] Zimmermann, "Violence Reconsidered," 356, quoting Seneca, *Ira.* 1.6.4, claims: "[Seneca] took it for granted that the criminal should not die quickly but should suffer for a period commensurate to the gravity of his deed. The good lawmaker and statesmen should provide for a 'shameful and slow end' of those sentenced to death." Cf. Rhiannon Graybill, *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3, who observes concerning Isa 20:1–5: "The complement to pain in Isaiah 20 is shame.… The abstract sign of shame depends upon the specific shaming of the prophet's body, through its exposure, its vulnerability, and its suffering."

[433] O'Collins, "Crucifixion," 1207. Cf. Tertullian, *Mart.* 4.9.

[434] Josephus, *J.W.* 2.246 (Mason).

of degradation for the tribune."[435] Another example is Lucan's account of the aftermath of the Battle at the Colline Gate (82 BCE): "The heads of the chief men were borne on pikes through the terrified city and piled in the centre of the forum."[436]

Further still, Antony's decision to behead Antigonus the Jew emanated directly from the need to disgrace his memory:

> He [Antony] was the first Roman who decided to behead a king, since he believed that in no other way could he change the attitude of the Jews so that they would accept Herod, who had been appointed in his [Antigonus'] place. For not even under torture would they submit to proclaiming him king, so highly did they regard their former king. And so he thought that the disgrace (τὴν ἀτιμίαν) would somewhat dim their memory of him and would also lessen their hatred of Herod.[437]

According to Josephus, Antony beheaded Antigonus with the specific intent of shaming Antigonus, even though the latter held a socially prominent status.[438] Appian makes the following remark in his portrayal of the beheading of two Roman generals: "Sulla did not spare them because they were Romans, but killed them both and sent their heads (τὰς κεφαλάς) to Lucretius at Praeneste to be displayed round the walls."[439] This text presupposes that their identity as Romans elicited the expectation that they could have been *spared* from this type of public humiliation.

Fourth, even if some ancients carried out certain beheadings with the intent of minimizing the shame that the victim faced, this did not preclude that others would perceive it through the filter of shame. Berkowitz appeals to *m. Sanh.* 7 to bolster her argument that the Jewish experience of Roman execution influenced rabbinic laws of execution.[440] According to *m. Sanh.* 7:3, decapitation was carried out thusly by the Jewish court:

[435] Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Volume 1B. Judean War 2.*, trans. Steve Mason (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 199, n. 1545.

[436] Lucan, *Civ. W.* 2.160–162 (Duff, LCL).

[437] Josephus, *Ant.* 15.9–10 (Marcus and Wikgren, LCL).

[438] Cf. Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 49.22.6; Plutarch, *Ant.* 36. Cicero criticizes Verres (governor of Sicily) because "he [Verres] had men of high rank and stainless character actually beheaded" (*Ag. Verr.* 4.64.144 [Greenwood, LCL]).

[439] Appian, *Rom. Hist. Civ.* 1.10.93 (White, LCL). See also, Velleius Paterculus, *Comp. Rom. Hist.* 2.27.3.

[440] Berkowitz, *Execution and Invention*, 153–79.

B. They would cut off his head with a sword,
C. just as the government does.
D. R. Judah says, "This is disgusting."
E. "But they put his head on a block and chop it off with an ax."
F. They said to him, "There is no form of death more disgusting than this one."[441]

Berkowitz contends that the respective disputants—the Sages on the one hand and Rabbi Judah on the other—"each wish to protect the criminal's body from indignity as best as possible."[442] However, what is important to underline for present purposes is that the Sages' proposal for the proper method of carrying out beheading is perceived by another (Rabbi Judah) as most disgraceful, and vice versa.

2.1.1. Degradation of the Victim into the Afterlife

Fifth, beheading held the potential to humiliate the victim not only at the moment of death, but also into the afterlife. The importance of properly disposing of the dead in the ancient world is a well-known truism.[443] "All societies use culturally appropriate rituals of separation or rites of passage to come to terms with the emotional intensity of killing and death, to lay the dead to rest, and—more importantly, since societies privilege the living above the dead—to restore the social fabric and let the living move on."[444] It is not necessary

[441] *M. Sanh.* 7:3 (Neusner).

[442] Berkowitz, *Execution and Invention*, 160.

[443] Homer, *Il.* 22.337–343, indicates that Hector begged Achilles to return his body home for proper disposal instead of letting the dogs devour it. The Levitical code allowed Israelite priests—who were otherwise instructed not to have contact with a corpse—to bury their close family (Lev 21:1–9; cf. 21:10–15). The Twelve Tables' injunction on burning or burying bodies within the city limits, the tombs and monuments on the peripheries that visitors first saw when visiting Rome, the elaborate funeral procession for the death of noblemen, and the popularity of burial clubs for those with modest means—all of these features attest to the weight ancient Romans placed on properly caring for the dead. See, Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, SSRH 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 201–55; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 13. See also, Matt 8:21–22//Luke 9:59–60. In addition to ancient Greece, Rome, and Israel, the importance of coming to terms with death is similarly palpable in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Anatolia, and Syria. See, Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death* (London: Duckworth, 1985), 1–37; Hiroshi Obayashi, ed., *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions*, CSR 33 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992); Byron R. McCane, *Roll Back the Stone: Death and Burial in the World of Jesus* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003); John J. Collins et al, "Death, the Afterlife, and Other Last Things," in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, ed. Sarah Iles Johnston (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 470–95.

[444] Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 1–2.

here to set forth a comprehensive analysis of the variegated ancient beliefs about death, burial, and life after death.[445] Important for present purposes is that some beliefs about the nature of life after death motivated the anxiety to properly dispose of the dead.[446]

As Metcalf and Huntington explain: "Life becomes transparent against the background of death, and fundamental social and cultural issues are revealed."[447] One such social and cultural issue that mortuary rituals reveal specifically in the Greek and Roman worlds is that many people believed they could influence their circumstances of life in the hereafter.[448] With respect to Petronius, *Sat.* 71, Kyle observes: "The pre-need [*sic*] arrangements of the gauche and pompous Trimalchio for his funeral and the care of his grave reveal a common Roman perception that people could influence their status and care after death."[449] Similarly, Hopkins comments: "In Rome, as in many other societies, tombs were often equipped with goods which would make the dead person's life after death more pleasant: toys for children, mirrors and cosmetics for women, dice and drinking cups for men."[450]

[445] In addition to the studies cited in this discussion, see, e.g., Alan F. Segal, *Life after Death: A History of the Afterlife in Western Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 2004); Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Alexander Achilles Fischer, *Tod und Jenseits im Alten Orient und Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2005); Nicola Laneri, ed., *Performing Death: Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007).

[446] To be sure, ideologies of the afterlife varied in the Greco-Roman world. Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 227: "Pagan beliefs ranged from the completely nihilistic denial of after-life, through a vague sense of souls' ghostly existence, to a concept of the individual soul's survival and of personal survival in a recognisable form." Cf. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 129: "Most Greeks and Romans accepted some idea of the soul and some at least a shadowy sort of afterlife. The finality of death, the belief that the dead just die and decompose, was known but not widely accepted." For primary data on the range of Roman beliefs concerning the afterlife, see especially, Valerie M. Hope, *Death in Ancient Rome: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2007), 211–47.

[447] Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntington, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 2. Similarly, Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 217: "Death is a protracted social process." Douglas J. Davies, *A Brief History of Death* (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 1: "The history of death is a history of self-reflection. Who are we?"

[448] Cf. William J. Murnane, "Taking It with You: The Problem of Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt," in *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions*, ed. Hiroshi Obayashi, CSR 33 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 35, observes that the ancient Egyptian Pharaohs had endowments established "to pay the mortuary priests who provided for the eternal well-being of the deceased's spirit."

[449] Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 141. On p. 128 of the same study, Kyle writes: "Ancient cemeteries show that the kingdom of the dead was not an egalitarian realm."

[450] Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 229.

Significantly, therefore, when the living did not bury the dead they prevented the dead from possessing a favorable transition into the afterlife.[451] Vernant contends that the goal of funerary practices is elucidated in instances of burial denial and corpse abuse: "Cette finalité des pratiques funéraires se révèle avec le plus de netteté là où, précisément, elles font défaut et surtout là où elles sont rituellement déniées, dans les procédures d'outrage au cadavre ennemi."[452] After his death, the spirit of Patroclus visited Achilles as the latter slept beseeching Achilles to bury him in speed so that he may "pass within the gates of Hades."[453] Patroclus was thus unable to join the other dead on the other side of the river until he had been buried. In his *Satires* (3.254–67), Juvenal describes a man whose body was crushed by a wagon-full of rocks. No trace of remaining limbs or bones were found. Accordingly, Juvenal writes that the man "is already a newcomer sitting on the bank, shuddering at the hideous ferryman. The wretched man has no hopes of a bark across the muddy torrent, because he doesn't have a coin in his mouth to offer."[454] Similarly, Virgil recounts that the ferryman Charon is not able to transport the unburied dead across the banks of the waters "until their bones have found a resting place."[455]

In such contexts where properly burying the dead was a vital social requirement and a factor in the social status of the deceased in the afterlife, beheading could be perceived as: (1) tarnishing the social well-being of the victim past the point of death and (2) interrupting normal mortuary practices surrounding the deceased. "Treatment of corpses remained one of

[451] J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 43: "All Roman funerary practice was influenced by two basic notions—first, that death brought pollution and demanded from the survivors acts of purification and expiation; secondly, that to leave a corpse unburied had unpleasant repercussions on the fate of the departed soul."

[452] Jean-Pierre Vernant, "La belle mort et le cadavre outragé," in *La mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes*, ed. Gherardo Gnoli and Jean-Pierre Vernant (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1990), 67. "The purpose of funerary practices is revealed with the most clearness precisely where they are failing, and chiefly where they are ritually denied, in the procedures of insulting the enemy's cadaver" (translation mine).

[453] Homer, *Il.* 23.65–74 (Murray, LCL).

[454] Juvenal, *Sat.* 3.264–267 (Braund, LCL).

[455] Virgil, *Aen.* 6.327–328 (Fairclough, LCL).

the means by which men could hurt, humiliate, or honour one another, express contempt or respect."[456] Homer portrays at length the repercussions of Hector's defeat of Patroclus, the beloved comrade of Achilles. In the midst of his portrayal, the two sides struggle for Patroclus' corpse. As the struggle continues, Iris arrives from Olympus imploring Achilles to protect Patroclus' dead body. Iris stresses Hector's eagerness "to cut the head from the tender neck and fix it on the stakes of the wall" and Achilles' consequent "reproach, if [Patroclus] comes to us a corpse mutilated in any way."[457] Kyle relates that executions in the Roman forum (which frequently included beheadings) "often led to denials of burial and the dumping of corpses into the Tiber" and that "the denial of even minimal burial" amounted to "a form of damnation beyond death."[458]

In this vein, it is important to emphasize that beheading was not always a method "of execution" in the ancient world. The ancients frequently beheaded those who had *already*

[456] Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 46. Herodotus, *Pers. Wrs.* 7.238, writes about Xerxes' treatment of the dead body of Leonidas: "Having thus spoken, Xerxes passed over the place where the dead lay; and hearing that Leonidas had been king and general of the Lacedaemonians, he bade cut off his head and impale it. It is plain to me by this especial proof among many others, that while Leonidas lived king Xerxes was more incensed against him than against all others; else had he never dealt so outrageously with his dead body; for the Persians are of all men known to me the most wont to honour valiant warriors" (Godley, LCL).

[457] Homer, *Il.* 18.176–180 (Murray, LCL).

[458] Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 218, 131.

died,[459] and cast away their heads and/or bodies unburied, often as food for birds.[460] *Such corpse abuse violated the integrity of the body and prevented or interfered with the proper disposal of the corpse.* Consider the description of Sulla's proscriptions in the aftermath of the Battle at the Colline Gate in Rome (82 BCE) in Lucan's *De Bello Civili*:

> When the heads, dissolving in corruption and effaced by lapse of time, had lost all distinctive features, their wretched parents gathered the relics they recognized and stealthily removed them. I remember how I myself, seeking to place on the funeral fire denied them the shapeless features of my murdered brother, scrutinised all the corpses slain by Sulla's peace: round all the headless bodies I went, seeking for a neck to fit the severed head.[461]

Significantly, this text connects the quest to *reunite* the severed head and headless body with the intent to *properly* dispose of the dead. The separation of the head from its body represents

[459] See, e.g., Herodotus, *Pers. Wrs.* 7.238; Velleius Paterculus, *Comp. Rom. Hist.* 2.119.1–5; Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.64; Josephus, *Ant.* 9.125–131; 14.448–450, 464; *J.W.* 1.323–326, 342–343. An example from the HB is the explicit beheading of Saul's corpse in 1 Sam 31:1–13 (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 6.368–378). The corresponding passage in 1 Chr 10:1–14 (1 Chr 10:1–14 LXX) implicitly makes this suggestion. First Chronicles 10:10 does make it clear that Saul did indeed lose his head (the Philistines display it in their temple). But, the verbal expression וישאו ("and they took") in relationship to the direct object ראשו ("his head") in 1 Chr 10:9 does not readily translate into "they took *off* his head." Admittedly, נשא appears in a <verb + direct object> relationship with ראש in Gen 40:19 to describe the beheading of Pharaoh's chief baker:
בעוד שלשת ימים ישא פרעה את ראשך מעליך ("In three days Pharaoh will take up your head from upon you"). In the context of Gen 40:19, however, the notion of separation—that is, taking the head up-and-off the chief baker—is supplied by the prepositional phrase מעליך ("from upon you"). Compare Gen 40:13 where the chief cupbearer's head is "lifted up" in the sense that he is restored to office. Thus, the imagery of a beheading disappears from Gen 40:19 without the presence of מעליך. Comparably, 4Q163, *Frags.* 4–6 1.6 (4Qpap pIsa^{c}), has the preposition מן prefixed to ישראל to convey the idea of separation, that is, cutting off a head *from* Israel:
ויכרת יהוה מישראל רואש וזנב ("And YHWH has cut off from Israel head and tail" [Martínez and Tigchelaar]). In this respect, since the clause in 1 Chr 10:9 lacks the idea of separation, it is best to conclude that 1 Chr 10:9 does not portray the moment of Saul's beheading.

In attempting to infer when Saul lost his head in this account, therefore, one option is to suppose the Chronicler expects the reader to "fill in the gaps" of the narrative by assuming the Philistines first beheaded Saul before "they took his head" to the temple. A second option is also to "fill in the gaps" and suppose that Saul managed to behead himself when he "fell on his own sword." In this light, it is interesting to notice that the Babylonian Talmud contains a tradition claiming that when Saul "fell on his own sword" he fell with his "neck" on the sword (see, *b. Sotah* 10a). No Jewish interpretive tradition to my knowledge, however, explicitly claims that Saul lost his head the moment he hit his neck on the sword. It seems best, therefore, to treat 1 Chr 10:1–14 as implying that the Philistines beheaded Saul's corpse. See further, Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 287: "The Chronicler has reworded his *Vorlage* in 1 Sam 31:9.… The rest of the Chronicler's account, in any case, presupposes that Saul's head had been cut off and no further attention is given to the stripping of the king." By contrast, 1 Kgdms 31:1–13 LXX does not portray Saul losing his head at all. In this text, the Philistines take and fasten Saul's body (σῶμα) to the wall of Beth Shan (31:10).

[460] See, e.g., Gen 40:19; 2 Macc 15:30–33; Appian, *Samn. Hist.* 3.9.3; Tacitus, *Hist.* 3.74. On birds preventing burial by consuming the human body, see, Suetonius, *Aug.* 13.2: "For instance, to one man who begged humbly for burial, [Octavian] is said to have replied: 'The birds will soon settle that question'" (Rolfe, LCL).

[461] Lucan, *Civ. W.* 2.166–173 (Duff, LCL). See, Elaine Fantham, ed., *Lucan. De Bello Civili. Book II.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 111: "An individual survivor, not the poet, is reporting."

an obstacle to such intentions.[462] Likewise, the anxiety for the integrity of the body in burial is apparent in Tacitus' description of the burials of Piso and Titus Vinius (69 CE):

> He [Otho] was then carried through the heaps of dead bodies, while the forum still reeked with blood, first to the Capitol and then to the Palatine; after that he allowed the bodies to be given up for burial and burning. Piso was laid to rest by his wife Verania and his brother Scribonianus, Titus Vinius by his daughter Crispina, after they had discovered and redeemed their heads, which the assassins had kept for profit.[463]

According to Asconius' first-century CE commentary on Cicero's *Oratio in senatu in toga candida*, Catiline cut off the head of Marcus Marius Gratidianus and carried it throughout the city of Rome.[464] Hinard sees the following intention in the bodily mutilation of Gratidianus: "pour priver l'adversaire de tout statut dans le monde des morts" ("to deprive the enemy of all status in the world of the dead").[465] In the same way Hinard interprets the other decapitations during the proscriptions of Sulla in 82 BCE. These beheadings involved the public exhibition of the severed heads to the point where they lost their facial features, their recognition, and therefore, their status in the afterlife.[466] As Aldhouse-Green explains: "Decapitation is symbolically important: heads are essentially linked with identity; despoiling a corpse (and particularly robbing it of its head) may be perceived to prevent 'proper' burial and reincorporation in the next world."[467]

[462] As Mark Thorne, "*Memoria Redux*: Memory in Lucan," in *Brill's Companion to Lucan*, ed. Paolo Asso (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 372, puts it, the severed head undercuts "attempts to memorialize the dead."

[463] Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.47 (Moore, LCL). For further evidence that demonstrates the importance of reuniting a head with its body for burial, see, Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.41, 49; Suetonius, *Galb*. 20; Plutarch, *Galb.* 28.

[464] Q. Asconius, *Cic. Comment.* 84C. For the Latin text and translation of Asconius' commentary, see, R. G. Lewis, ed., *Asconius: Commentaries on Speeches of Cicero*, trans. R. G. Lewis, revised by Jill Harries et al. CAHS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 164–89. See also, Plutarch, *Sull.* 32.2.

[465] François Hinard, "La male mort. Exécutions et statut du corps au moment de la première proscription," in *Du châtiment dans la cité. Supplices corporels et peine de mort dans le monde antique*, Table ronde de Rome (9–11 novembre 1982) (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1984), 309.

[466] See, Hinard, "La male mort," 308–09.

[467] Miranda Aldhouse-Green, "Chaining and Shaming: Images of Defeat, From Llyn Cerrig Bach to Sarmitzegetusa," *OJA* 23 (2004): 330. Cf. A. J. L. Van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-Killing in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1990), 77: "In modern times self-killers wish to save finder and relatives from a shocking scene. In antiquity the appearance of the mortal remains has everything to do with the way and degree in which one is supposed to live in the hereafter. The art of dying should be a worthy fulfilment of life." On the connection between the head and identity, see Virgil's account of Priam's death: "He lies, a huge trunk upon the shore, a head severed from the neck, a corpse without a name (sine nomine corpus)!" (*Aen.* 2.557–8 [Fairclough, LCL]). Thus, the separation of the head from the body anonymized Priam.

Some images of life in the hereafter involved the idea that the dead carried with them into the afterlife their physical wounds and shame from their moment of death. In his discussion of the Greeks' views of life in Hades, Garland vividly describes fallen warriors as "eternally blood-bespattered."[468] The dead who converse with Odysseus in Hades are preoccupied with "the memory of their life or the shame they experienced in the manner of their death."[469] Kyle argues that the many Romans and Greeks thought that the soul retained "the marks and mood of the moment of death."[470]

This idea that mutilating the body could affect the victim in the afterlife finds expression in a late second- or early third-century CE anonymous text from Egypt. Garland claims the papyrus offers "the grisliest description of the underworld to come down to us from antiquity."[471] The text mentions the visitor in the underworld at the Shores of Ugliness beholding the corpses of those beheaded:

> So swiftly he came to that toilsome land, the Shores of Ugliness. There, sitting on a rock, when he had bound a reed with corpse's hair, he took bait and feeding the hook sent it down to the deepest depths. Yet when he drew forth the swimming hair, since he could then catch nothing at all, … For stretched around there lay a vast plain, full of corpses of dreadful doom, beheaded (πελεκιζομένων) or crucified. Above the ground stood pitiable bodies, their throats but lately cut. Others, again, impaled, hung like the trophies of a cruel destiny. The Furies, crowned with wreaths, were laughing at the miserable manner of the corpses' death. There was an abominable stench of gore.[472]

Two observations about this narration are in order. First, the dead bear a recognizable form of existence: the marks of mutilation they received in the moments of their deaths are perceptible. Something about the dead's appearance made the manner of their death not only

[468] Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, 74. Similarly, Alan E. Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (London: UCL Press, 1993), 30, observes that, while in Hades Odysseus saw those slain in battle who were still clothed in their blood-stained armor (Homer, *Od.* 11.41).

[469] Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell*, 23–33 (quotation, p. 26).

[470] Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 129.

[471] Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, 76.

[472] Denys L. Page, trans., *Select Papyri, Volume III: Poetry*, LCL 360 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941), 421.

perceptible to the visitor but also distinguishable from other types of mutilated corpses.[473] Those that were beheaded in death retained such a mutilated existence beyond death. Second, the text notes that the corpses were the subject of continued mockery because of the manner of their death. Those that were beheaded in death retained the shame associated with beheading beyond death.[474]

That beheading—with its violation to the integrity of the body—could be viewed as a form of burial denial and humiliation beyond death is not without further significance. In a chapter entitled "Porous Death," Bernstein demonstrates that many Greeks and Romans believed the barriers between the living and the realm(s) of the dead to be "porous."[475] The unburied dead can visit the living in order to (1) haunt or punish the living for neglect of burial, (2) implore the living to bury them, (3) request the living to correct an imperfect burial, and (4) demand vengeance on those who murdered them.[476] Accordingly, Bernstein comments: "The dead were neither as fully dead nor as fully alive as the living might wish.… Death itself was no absolute boundary.… The spirit knows what happens to the corpse."[477] In this respect, denying full or partial burial ran the risk of not securing safe separation from the dead.[478]

Related to the idea that beheading could disrupt reincorporation in life in the hereafter is the notion that decapitation prevents the possibility of "resurrection." Kyle claims that Christian conceptualizations of resurrection fueled Romans in their abuse of Christian

[473] Cf. Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell*, 27, who notes that, in Odysseus' journey to the underworld, the dead do not have flesh or bone because the funeral pyre consumed them. Nevertheless, they do have a soul and an image that makes them recognizable.

[474] As another example of the dead maintaining the wounds from their death, consider Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas in the region of the underworld known as the Fields of Mourning (*Aen.* 6.440–476). The Trojan sees (1) Eriphyle "pointing to the wounds her cruel son had dealt" (*Aen.* 6.445–446) and (2) Dido "with wound still fresh" (*Aen.* 6.450) (Fairclough, LCL).

[475] Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell*, 84–106.

[476] Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell*, 93–100.

[477] Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell*, 98.

[478] Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell*, 93: "Burial worked in two ways. It provided access to the underworld for the dead, but also, in principle at least, it safely isolated them from human habitation."

corpses.[479] The second-century *Acts of Justin and His Companions* contains the following exchange between Rusticus and Justin:

> The prefect turned to Justin: "If you are scourged and beheaded (ἀποκεφαλισθῇς), do you believe that you will ascend to heaven (μέλλεις ἀναβαίνειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν)?" "I have confidence from my perseverance," said Justin, "if I endure. Indeed, I know that for those who lead a just life there awaits the divine gift even to the consummation." The prefect Rusticus said: "You think, then, that you will ascend (ἀναβήσῃ)?" "I do not think," said Justin, "but I am fully convinced of it." The prefect Rusticus said: "If you do not obey, you will be punished." Justin said: "We are confident that if we suffer the penalty we shall be saved (σωθῆναι)." The prefect Rusticus passed judgement: "Those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods are to be scourged and executed in accordance with the laws."[480]

The question posed by Rusticus presumes that beheading quelled the possibility of Justin's resurrection. Significantly, however, Justin's response attests to the notion that beheading did not *necessarily* work in this regard.[481] Thus, in a single text, we have two characters reflecting antithetical ideologies as to the efficacy of beheading.

One is also reminded of the late second-century *Martyrdom of Paul*, where we read Paul telling Nero that he will appear to Nero even after Paul's head is severed:

> When Paul was brought to him in accordance with the edict, he stood by his sentence, saying, "Decapitate (τραχηλοκοπήσατε) this man, lest he should take on strange ideas as his own." And Paul said, "Caesar, it is not for a short time that I live for my king. Know that even if you cut off my head (τραχηλοκοπήσῃς), I will do this: I will appear to you after I have been raised (ἐγερθείς) again, so that you may know that I did not die but am alive in my king Jesus Christ, who judges the entire world."[482]

Thus, Paul's address to Caesar acknowledges but combats the presumption that the severed head would prevent his resurrection and ensure separation from Caesar. Converged in both the *Acts of Justin and His Companions* and the *Martyrdom of Paul*, therefore, are antithetical ideologies regarding the efficacy of beheading. The co-presence of these antitheses is not

[479] Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 243. On the conundrum of the bodily resurrection of the mutilated dead in early Christian theology, see, e.g., Dale C. Allison, *Night Comes: Death, Imagination, and the Last Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 19–44; Candida R. Moss, *Divine Bodies: Resurrecting Perfection in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

[480] *Acts Justin* Recension A.5 (Musurillo, 46–47).

[481] The author of Revelation similarly sees "the souls of those beheaded" (τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν πεπελεκισμένων) alive and with Christ: "They lived (ἔζησαν) and reigned with the Christ for a thousand years" (Rev 20:4).

[482] *Mart. Paul* 4 (Eastman, 132–33).

dissimilar to the contours of these ideas in the Synoptic portrayals of John's death. As the next chapter will show, Mark 6:14–16 and Luke 9:7–9 contradictorily depict Herod Antipas' estimation of the success of John's decapitation with respect to the possibility of John's resurrection.

2.1.2. The Public Nature of Beheading

Sixth, the public nature of beheading also accentuates the degradation of the beheaded. The severed head as a sight in public spaces is a pervasive theme in ancient literature. Many texts highlight the public display and visibility of the beheading-proper.[483] Other texts stress the public manipulation or presentation of a previously severed head.[484] Decapitated heads can communicate, and effectively so, even though they can no longer control their faculties.[485] Zimmermann classifies Rome's public displays of violence as a "category of rhetoric" that "could generate the strongest emotional response" and "have the

[483] See, e.g., Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 2.5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 2.29; 6.30.1–2; Polybius, *Hist.* 1.7.11–12; Josephus, *Ant.* 6.191–192; *J.W.* 2.246; 6.360–362. See also Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 3.58.4. The prepositional phrase ἐν τῷ φανερῷ in this text either modifies the adverbial participle αἰκισθέντες ("having been scourged") or the finite verb ἀπεκόπησαν ("they beheaded"). This ambiguity does not suggest that a private beheading took place after a public scourging. Rather, even though the aorist participle conveys that the scourging occurred before the beheading, the two actions are presented as a single complex by virtue of their grammatical linkage. As a result, ἐν τῷ φανερῷ is best seen here as modifying both actions. Therefore, Cary's LCL translation ("scourged and beheaded in public") is apropos.

[484] Hector was eager to behead Patroclus' corpse "and fix it on the stakes of the wall" (Homer, *Il.* 18.177 [Murray, LCL]). Telesinus' head was placed on a spear and paraded around the walls of Praeneste (Velleius Paterculus, *Comp. Rom. Hist.* 2.27.3). According to Josephus, David presented six hundred heads to King Saul (*Ant.* 6.203–204). The Philistines "fastened [Saul's] head in the temple of Dagon" (1 Chr 10:10). So also, 1 Chr 10:10 LXX; cf. 1 Kgdms 31:9 LXX. Jehu had the heads of Ahab's seventy sons displayed "before the gate" (πρὸ τῆς πύλης) in two heaps (Josephus, *Ant.* 9.127). Nicanor's head was transported to Jerusalem and there displayed: "they stretched out [the head and hand] among Jerusalem" (ἐξέτειναν παρὰ τῇ Ιερουσαλημ) (1 Macc 11:47). According to 2 Macc 15:28–36, Nicanor's head was sent to Jerusalem (15:30–31), its tongue cut out (15:33), and exhibited on the citadel: "He fastened (ἐξέδησεν) Nicanor's head from the citadel, manifest for all (ἐπίδηλον πᾶσιν) and an apparent (φανερόν) sign (σημεῖον) of the Lord's help" (15:35). The NRSV translation of 2 Macc 15:35b ("a clear and conspicuous sign to every one of the help of the Lord") understands both ἐπίδηλον and φανερόν as modifying σημεῖον, whereas my translation suggests an adverbial understanding of the first adjective and an attributive understanding of the second adjective. Whichever option one prefers in unraveling the text's grammatical ambivalence, neither translation hinders the clear emphasis on the visibility of Nicanor's displayed head.

[485] In Celtic tradition, however, the severed head could speak and sing. See, Watts, *Religion in Late Roman Britain*, 79–80. Ovid's portrayal of the beheading of Emathion has Emathion's severed head uttering curses on the altar: "Chromis struck off his head with his sword: the head fell straight on the altar, and there the still half-conscious tongue kept up its execrations and the life was breathed out in the midst of the altar-fires" (*Metam.* 5.103–106 [Miller, LCL]).

deepest impact."[486] "[Violence] was an important basis for [Rome's] existence, pertaining as it did not only to victoriousness over external enemies but also to the internal order of the state."[487] In this context, the public nature of beheading was a preventative and deterrent mechanism aimed at ensuring socio-political stability.[488] It conveyed a strong message to the beholder(s): the same fate awaits those who emulate the victim.[489] By beheading or displaying the severed heads of criminals and revolutionaries, Rome not only prevented culprits from repeating offences, but also sought to quell current insurgencies, dissuade future revolutionaries, and thus to restore social order and control.[490]

For example, Polybius, *Hist.* 11.27–30 recounts Scipio summoning an assembly in the marketplace where he addresses a multitude of mutineers. Toward the end of his speech, Scipio metaphorically differentiates between the leaders and the rest of the mutineers by comparing the latter to the sea and the former to the violent winds that fall upon the sea (11.29.9–13). The sea appears to share the same harmful character as the winds when the wind stirs it (11.29.10). Accordingly, Scipio determines to punish the leaders of the revolt and grant amnesty to the rest: without the wind's influence, the sea's power is tamed. Polybius mentions the perceptible fear on the insurgents' countenance as the leaders of the revolt were punished in their sight:

[486] Zimmermann, "Violence Reconsidered," 345. Cf. Martha Malamud, "Pompey's Head and Cato's Snakes," *CP* 98 (2003): 33: "The point of decapitation as a weapon of terror is that it is at once terrifyingly concrete and powerfully metaphorical."

[487] Zimmermann, "Violence Reconsidered," 347.

[488] See, Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 48, who distinguishes between prevention and deterrence in the Roman penal system. For Coleman, prevention concerns eliminating the culprit's behavior and deterrence concerns inhibiting potential culprits.

[489] Cf. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 7: "Some [anthropologists and sociologists] suggest that all social order is ultimately based on violence. To reinforce the social order violence must be performed or proclaimed in public, and public violence tends to become ritualized into games, sports, and even spectacles of death." On violence as a spatially charged phenomenon, see Josiah Osgood, "The Topography of Roman Assassination, 133 BCE–222 CE," in Riess and Fagan, *The Topography of Violence*, 209–27; Werner Riess, "Where to Kill in Classical Athens: Assassinations, Executions, and the Athenian Public Space," in Riess and Fagan, *The Topography of Violence*, 77–112; Fagan, "Urban Violence: Street, Forum, Bath, Circus, and Theater."

[490] On beheading as an instrument of ensuring socio-political stability, see, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 20.117; Polybius, *Hist.* 1.7.12; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 2.29; Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 2.5; 4.10. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 17.273–277; 20.97–99.

> The multitude of mutineers were so thoroughly cowed by fear of the surrounding force and the terror that looked them in the face, that while some of their leaders were being scourged and others beheaded, none of them changed his countenance or uttered a word, but all remained dumbfounded, smitten with astonishment and dread."[491]

After the leaders were punished, the remaining mutineers "took their oath to the tribunes that they would obey the orders of their officers and be guilty of no disloyalty to Rome. Scipio then by successfully nipping in the bud what might have proved a great danger restored his forces to their original discipline."[492]

It is important to observe, however, that the demeaning nature of a public beheading—either in the beheading-proper or in the post-mortem manipulation of the severed head—does not imply that a private beheading was void of symbolism. As chapter five will show, Origen invests John's beheading-proper in prison with symbolic potential.

2.1.3. Emasculation of the Victim and Elevation of the Perpetrator

Seventh, while the removal of the head from its body constituted a loss of identity and self-control on the part of the victim, it simultaneously represented an assertion of victory, power, and domination on the part of the perpetrator. Insofar as "self-control" over one's body and "control" over others was the hallmark characteristic of many ideals of masculinity in the Greco-Roman world, beheading was an inherently gendered phenomenon.[493] It highlighted (1) the emasculation of the victim, who now lacked somatic autonomy, and (2) affirmed the manliness of the victor, who now possessed power over the victim's head and

[491] Polybius, *Hist.* 11.30.2–3 (Paton, LCL).

[492] Polybius, *Hist.* 11.30.4–5 (Paton, LCL). Similarly, Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 28.29: "Such was the end and outcome of the mutiny of the soldiers which began at Sucro."

[493] On "self-control" as the chief virtue of many Greco-Roman conceptualizations of masculinity, see, Colleen Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 15–34; Brittany E. Wilson, *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 39–75; Susanna Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men: Ideal Masculinities in the Synoptic Gospels*, BibInt 159 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 19–45. See further, this study's section in chapter four entitled "The Masculinity of Herod Antipas."

body.[494] As Riess explains: "Whoever dominates another person or exerts violence against him or her is often physically and maybe also socially and economically superior and, thus, constructs the victim as weaker and inferior."[495] In this vein, honor and shame go hand-in-hand in the act of decapitation. To cast the shadow of shame on someone involves shining the light of honor on someone else.

This understanding of beheading is due in no small part to the symbolic importance of the head. As the locus of recognition, one's head and one's identity are indelibly linked.[496] Hartmann similarly states: "Es [Haupt] symbolisiert wie kein anderes Körperteil die Person als ganze" ("It [the head] symbolizes, like no other body-part, the person as a whole").[497] In this respect, to remove someone's head anonymizes the dead and acclaims the identity of the self.[498] It symbolizes the prestige of the victor at the expense of the loser.

This hierarchical positioning of the perpetrator over the beheaded victim is recognizable in several cases. Plutarch refers to a report that held a certain Fabius Fabulus as the one who beheaded Galba (*Galb.* 27). Due to his inability to carry Galba's head by his hair (Galba was bald), he wraps it in his cloak. Fabius' companions urge him to publicly display his "deed of valour" (ἀνδραγαθίαν), or as I would translate it, his "*manly* virtue."[499] Fabius then proceeds to impale the head on a spear.

Judith's heroics in cutting off Holofernes' head lead her to be blessed by the elders and every woman of Israel (Jdt 15:8–10, 12), afforded plunder (Jdt 15:11), celebrated in song (Jdt 16:1–17), and honored for the rest of her life (Jdt 16:21). "The all-controlling

[494] See, Rita Dolce, *"Losing One's Head" in the Ancient Near East: Interpretation and Meaning of Decapitation* (London: Routledge, 2018), 3, who rightly claims that "a 'loss of self-control'" is "a meaning inherent from the outset in the condition of anyone who 'loses their head,' in either the metaphorical or the real sense."

[495] Riess, "Introduction," 3.

[496] Aldhouse-Green, "Chaining and Shaming," 330.

[497] Hartmann, *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers*, 191 (translation mine).

[498] Virgil, *Aen.* 2.557–558 describes the separation of Priam's head from his body as that which anonymizes him: "He lies, a huge trunk upon the shore, a head severed from the neck, a corpse without a name (sine nomine corpus)!" (Fairclough, LCL).

[499] Plutarch, *Galb.* 27 (Perrin, LCL). LSJ, s.v. "ἀνδραγαθία" defines the noun as "manly virtue."

(παντοκράτωρ) Lord has set them aside by the hand of a woman (ἐν χειρὶ θηλείας)" (Jdt 16:5). Here, the "masculinity" of the Lord is enhanced by Judith's beheading of Holofernes. By contrast, the Assyrians react in horror at the sight of the general's headless body (Jdt 14:14–19; 15:1–3). According to Jdt 14:18, the eunuch Bagoas exclaims: "One woman (μία γυνή) of the Hebrews has brought shame (αἰσχύνην) into the house of King Nebuchadnezzar, because (ὅτι) behold, Holofernes [is] on the ground and his head is not on him (ἡ κεφαλὴ οὐκ ἐστιν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ)."

First Samuel 5:1–5 paints a picture of the superiority of YHWH to Dagon. After the Philistines capture the ark of God and place it in the house of Dagon, they awake on two occasions to witness Dagon fallen in a position of inferiority before the ark. On the second occasion, the text reads: "Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off upon the threshold" (1 Sam 5:4 NRSV).

Psalm 151 LXX juxtaposes David's beheading of the foreigner (i.e. Goliath) with removing "the disgrace" (ὄνειδος) from Israel.[500] Similarly, the Syriac text of the Psalm reads: "But after I unsheathed his sword, I cut off his head; and I removed the shame from the sons of Israel."[501] Josephus' account of the death of Jebosthos (*Ant.* 7.46–52) mentions that the two Benjamites killed and beheaded Jebosthos in order to elevate their social status and security:

> [They] reckoned that if they killed Jebosthos they would receive great gifts (δωρεῶν) from David and that their deed would bring them a military command (στρατηγίας) or some other mark of confidence (τινος ἄλλης πίστεως) from him.… They made their way into the particular room where Saul's son lay asleep, and killed him. Then they cut off his head and, travelling a whole night and day with the thought of fleeing from those whom they had wronged to one who would accept their deed as a kindness and offer them security (ἀσφάλειαν), they came to Hebron. Here they showed the head of

[500] BDAG, s.v. "ὄνειδος," offers the following definition for the term ὄνειδος: "loss of standing connected with disparaging speech."

[501] Ps 151B (5ApocSyrPs 1b) (Charlesworth).

> Jebosthos to David and presented themselves as his well-wishers, who had removed his enemy and rival for the kingdom.[502]

Further, Seneca refers to the boast of Volesus: "Only recently Volesus, governor of Asia under the deified Augustus, beheaded three hundred persons in one day, and as he strutted among the corpses with the proud air of one who had done some glorious deed worth beholding, he cried out in Greek, 'What a kingly act!'"[503] When Perseus utilizes Medusa's severed head to defeat Andromeda (the sea-serpent), as Malamud says, Ovid makes it clear that "Perseus, new owner of the head, has assumed the Gorgon's petrifying power."[504] The owner of the severed head has procured power by divesting the victim of control. Or as Voisin puts it in reference to Roman head-hunting, "trancher la tête de l'ennemi revient à s'approprier une énergie autre qui s'ajoute et renforce sa propre supériorité."[505]

As a final example, the tombstone of Insus son of Vodullus similarly exhibits triumphalism at the expense of the defeated. The stone, unearthed in Lancaster, England in 2005 by the University of Manchester Archeological Unit, measures between two and three meters in height, nearly one meter in width, and weighs nearly fifteen hundred pounds.[506] It depicts a Roman horseman holding both a sword and a barbarian's decapitated head in his right hand. Beneath the victor's right foot kneels the barbarian's headless corpse. The inscription written beneath the depiction commemorates Insus by using triumphant terminology:

> DIS MANIBVS INSVS VODVLLI […] CIVE TREVER EQVES ALAE AUG [.] VICTORIS CVRATOR DOMITIA […]
>
> To the shades of the dead. Insus son of Vodullus, citizen of the Treveri, cavalryman of the *ala Augusta*, troop of Victor, *curator*, his heir had this set up.[507]

[502] Josephus, *Ant.* 7.47–49 (Marcus, LCL).
[503] Seneca, *Ira.* 2.5.5 (Basore, LCL).
[504] Malamud, "Pompey's Head and Cato's Snakes," 31.
[505] Jean-Louis Voisin, "Les Romains, chasseurs de têtes," in *Du châtiment dans la cité*, 274. "To cut off the head of an enemy is to appropriate an other's energy that adds to and reinforces one's own superiority" (translation mine).
[506] Stephen Bull, *Triumphant Rider: The Lancaster Roman Cavalry Tombstone* (Lancaster: Lancashire Museums, 2007).
[507] Inscription and translation provided by Bull, *Triumphant Rider*, 10.

Bull summarizes how the postures of the two figures casts them in a superior-inferior relationship:

> Apart from the decapitated condition, the fallen barbarian['s] … position of abasement, crumpled, small, and partially naked is deliberate. The beard and long hair of his decapitated head … show his barbarism and uncivilized status. His abject defeat is further emphasised by the foot of Insus which appears to rest on the small of his back.[508]

This commemorative artifact, therefore, can be categorized according to what Aldhouse-Green (in reference to Trajan's Column and the Bridgeness slab from the Antonine Wall) calls "the triumph of *romanitas*" and the "'grammar' of defeat."[509]

Conclusion: Flipping the Script

With these seven considerations in mind, we should be careful not to jump to the conclusion that (1) beheading was void of dishonor, (2) beheading constituted an ideal manner of death, or (3) the "privilege" of decapitation was equivalent to an honorable death. Although beheading *could* represent one's preferred manner of death on occasion—especially when confronted with what is perceived to be a more severe alternative—we are not dealing with a spectrum from dishonorable to honorable bodily injury, but with varying degrees of degradation.[510]

However, while the (public) sight of the severed head often implies the elevation of the perpetrator, whose victory the decapitated head signifies, this hierarchical positioning does not necessitate that those who witness, are a party to, or remember the beheading agree

[508] Bull, *Triumphant Rider*, 18.

[509] Aldhouse-Green, "Chaining and Shaming," 328–30.

[510] According to Plutarch, *Art.* 14, the mother of Artaxerxes objects to the king regarding his command to have a certain Carian beheaded: "O, King, do not let this accursed Carian off so easily, but leave him to me, and he shall receive the fitting reward for his daring words" (Perrin, LCL). Upon the mother's appeal, the executioners instead rack the Carian on a wheel for a duration of ten days, gouge out his eyes, and then pour molten brass into his ears until he dies. The mother's comment does not reveal that beheading lacked severity, only that beheading in this particular circumstance was not a severe enough penalty.

that the perpetrator *truly* stands in an honorable or superior position. For example, when the two Benjamites brought the head of Jebosthos to David in anticipation of receiving δωρεῶν, David reacted strongly against their expectations:

> He did not, however, receive their deed in the manner which they had expected, but cried, "Vile wretches, you shall suffer instant punishment! … Perhaps you suspected that I have changed and am no longer the same man, so that I take pleasure in evildoers and consider your regicidal deed a favour—when you slay in his own bed a righteous man who has done no one a single wrong and even showed you great friendliness and honour. You shall, therefore, make amends to him by being punished and shall give satisfaction to me for having slain Jebosthos in the belief that I should be glad of his death, for you could not have done my reputation a greater wrong than by supposing such a thing."[511]

David specifically insists that the victim was "a righteous man" (ἄνδρα δίκαιον) and characterizes their deed as that of "evil-doing men" (κακούργοις ἀνδράσι). Not only did David view the beheading as casting an unfavorable shadow over the Benjamites, he also reckoned it tarnished his own "reputation" (δόξα). This text demonstrates, therefore, that when the victim is perceived as undeserving of the beheading, the possibility arises that the perceiver will not agree with the social script that casts perpetrator and victim in a respective superior-inferior relationship. In such instances, the perceiver can attempt to flip the script of degradation by shifting the shame away from the victim.[512]

This counterbalancing maneuver is significant because, as we will see in chapters four and five, early memories of John's death similarly attempt to *contest* the stigma of John's beheading by transferring the stigma elsewhere. Chapters four and five together will argue that early Christian memory of John's beheading is characterized by a dangerous synchroneity. On the one hand, the memories of his decapitation operate as the loci for

[511] Josephus, *Ant.* 7.50, 51–52 (Marcus, LCL).

[512] Comparably, Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, 13, suggests that Rome's concept of violence required ancient Rome to justify the violence performed in the arena: "The condemnation of persons to the arena to face death in ways tantamount to torture and corpse abuse raised concerns about justification, purification, and avoidance of contamination or religious pollution. It was not difficult, but it was necessary that the Roman community somehow assured itself that the killing was acceptable and even positive and therapeutic—that the victims were justly executed criminals, traitors, prisoners of war, paid volunteers, or dangerous heretics."

expressing and constituting identity. As chapter two demonstrated, group identity is often sustained by a positive self-assessment of a shared past. Hence, individuals and groups often transform, however subtly, the humiliation of a violent past so as not to be debilitating to their ideological needs in the present. Early handlers of the tradition of John's beheading contest its humiliation so that it sheds a negative spotlight on the Herodian court, and especially Herod. On the other hand, the tradition's judgment on political figures perpetuates a culture of invisible violence. In chapter five, we will see that the vilifying of John's attackers allows Justin Martyr and Origen to associate contemporary Jews who reject Jesus with the Herodian dynasty who had rejected the prophet John. Thus, the main point in chapter five is that, when taken together, these memories flip the script of John's decapitation in such a way that enabled some early Christians to maintain antagonistic social relations with those Jews who had rejected Jesus as the Christ. We thus now turn in chapters four and five to explore how the early reception history of John's decapitation engages the social script of beheading.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEGRADATION CONTESTED: MARK'S MEMORY OF JOHN'S BEHEADING

If John's beheading is a castration,
it is Herod's phallus on the platter, not John's.[513]

Introduction

The Synoptic Gospels contain the earliest traditions related to the beheading of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14–29; Matt 14:1–12; cf. Luke 9:7–9; 3:19–20).[514] This chapter focuses on the earliest written tradition of John's death: Mark 6:14–29. I argue that Mark acknowledges but contests the degrading potential of John's beheading. In this text, Mark keys John's beheading to Jesus' crucifixion and shifts the dehumanizing gaze of the violence of John's death away from John and onto his attackers. In short, Mark's memory of John's death distances John from the Herodian court by aligning John with the protagonist of Mark's story. The tradition positions Herod as a paranoid and emasculated figure while affirming the masculinity of John the Baptist.

1. Contesting the Beheading of John the Baptist in Mark 6:14–29

According to Mark 6:14–16, Jesus' "name" instigates diverging speculation about the identity of Jesus and the source of his powers.[515] The explanatory conjunction γάρ in 6:17 connects this speculation to a narrative "flashback" about the beheading of John the Baptist (6:17–29). Herod arrests and binds John in prison "because of Herodias," whom Herod had

[513] Nicole Wilkinson Duran, "Return of the Disembodied or How John the Baptist Lost His Head," in *Reading Communities Reading Scripture: Essays in Honor of Daniel Patte*, ed. Gary A. Phillips and Nicole Wilkinson Duran (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002), 287.

[514] Josephus (*Ant.* 18.116–119) also narrates John's death. Josephus' account, however, makes no mention of decapitation as the method of John's execution.

[515] Some credit his powers to the idea that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead: "And they were saying: 'John the Baptist has been raised from the dead (ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν) and because of this the powers are at work in him'" (6:14). Others associate Jesus with Elijah or one of the prophets (6:15). At 6:16 Mark reveals Herod's perception to be parallel with the opinion expressed by the unarticulated subject of ἔλεγον from 6:14: "But when Herod heard, he was saying: 'He whom I beheaded (Ὃν ἐγὼ ἀπεκεφάλισα), John, this one has been raised (ἠγέρθη).'"

married (6:17). Mark 6:19 indicates that Herodias "held a grudge" against John and sought "to kill" him, presumably because of his critique of her marriage to Herod (see 6:18). Herodias, however, could not actualize her desire "because"—as Mark details with a series of imperfect verbs—Herod "was fearing" John, "kept protecting" him, "was being greatly perplexed" by him, and "gladly kept hearing him" (6:20). Nevertheless, an "opportune day" (ἡμέρας εὐκαίρου) arrived on Herod's birthday when he held an elitist banquet (6:21). At the banquet, Herod swears an oath and promises his daughter whatever she would ask (up to half his kingdom, 6:22–23), after she had danced and pleased him (6:22). Goaded by her mother, Herodias, the girl asks for "John the Baptist's head on a platter" (ἐπὶ πίνακι τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ, 6:25). Not wishing to break his oath in front of his elite guests, Herod proceeds to actualize the girl's request (6:26–28). The flashback sequence ends on the note that John's disciples collected John's "body" (πτῶμα) and laid it in a tomb (6:29).

Two features of the Markan narration of John's death are significant for present purposes. The first significant feature is the structural relationship of the episode to its wider narrative context. This feature involves two elements. (1) John's death is intercalated between Jesus' sending of the twelve (6:6b/7–13) and their return (6:30). (2) Mark's sequence involves a narrative retrospection, introduced by the explanatory conjunction γάρ in 6:17. These structural elements invite the interpreter to understand (1) how 6:14–29 connects with its wider narrative context,[516] and (2) the functional relationship of the flashbacked sequence in 6:17–29 to the reported speculation of Jesus' identity/powers in 6:14–16. As we will see, this contextualization is vital for understanding how Mark characterizes the major figures in the story of John's death, and thus how Mark contests the potential shame of John's ignominious death.

[516] Duran, "Return of the Disembodied or How John the Baptist Lost His Head," 278."

The second significant feature of the Markan narration is that it acutely dwells on the violence of the beheading. According to 6:14, some attributed the powers at work in Jesus to the notion that John the Baptizer "has been raised from the dead" (ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν). Herod's opinion recounted in 6:16 ("This one has been raised" [οὗτος ἠγέρθη]) reflects this idea but is qualified with a fronted relative clause that emphasizes the fact of the beheading: ὅν ἐγὼ ἀπεκεφάλισα Ἰωάννην ("He whom I myself beheaded, John"). For Herod, *it is the presumed raising of a beheaded man that allows, or at least does not prevent, him to align Jesus with John the Baptizer*.[517]

Not only does the account begin with a focus on decapitation, it also ends with attention on corpse abuse. The girl to whom Herod swore an oath makes her request known: "I wish that at once you would give to me on a platter (ἐπὶ πίνακι) the head (τὴν κεφαλήν) of John the Baptist" (Mark 6:25). Thereafter, Mark carefully notes how John's head is handled:

- Herod orders an executioner "to bring" (ἐνέγκαι) John's head (Mark 6:27).[518]
- The executioner (or Herod) "brings" (ἤνεγκεν) John's head (τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ) on a platter (Mark 6:28).[519]
- The executioner (or Herod) "gives" (ἔδωκεν) the head (αὐτήν) to the girl (Mark 6:28).[520]
- The girl then "gives" (ἔδωκεν) the head (αὐτὴν) to her mother (Mark 6:28).[521]

The narrative proceeds by juxtaposing this fate of John's head vis-à-vis his headless body—his head (κεφαλή) and body (πτῶμα) are separated at burial:

[517] Similarly, Gould, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 110: "Herod dwells upon the thought, that this prophet who has now risen from the dead was beheaded by himself. Hence the relative clause, which contains the statement of the beheading, is placed first and ἐγώ is expressed."

[518] Cf. Matt 14:9—Herod orders for John's head "to be given" (δοθῆναι).

[519] Cf. Matt 14:11—John's head (ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ) "was brought" (ἠνέχθη) on a platter.

[520] Cf. Matt 14:11—John's head "was given" (ἐδόθη) to the girl.

[521] Cf. Matt 14:11—The girl then "brings" (ἤνεγκεν) the head to her mother.

- "His [presumably John's] disciples came and took his body (τὸ πτῶμα αὐτοῦ) and placed it (αὐτό) in a tomb" (Mark 6:29).[522]

This differentiation between the respective fates of John's head (κεφαλή) and body (πτῶμα) largely escapes the purview of biblical scholars.[523] Despite their commentary's social-scientific perspective, Malina and Rohrbaugh, for instance, overlook this element: their analysis on John's death fails to comment *in toto* on 6:27–29.[524] Similarly, Cranfield's commentary on the passage ends after a brief linguistic note on σπεκουλάτορα in 6:27.[525] And Kertelge's 1994 commentary does not examine 6:29 at all.[526] Relatedly, many scholars who devote attention to the depiction of John's burial in 6:29 focus on discursive matters.[527] Witherington utilizes 6:29 to speculate that the tradition of John's death originates within the circle of John's disciples, since John's disciples apparently continued to exist even after the Baptist's demise (referring to Acts 19:1–12).[528] Klostermann merely makes a two-fold observation: (1) Mark does not specificy where the disciples bury John's "Rumpf" ("hull"), but (2) Jerome thinks they buried it in Samaria-Sebaste.[529]

[522] Cf. Matt 14:12: "His [presumably John's] disciples came, took the body (τὸ πτῶμα) and buried it (αὐτό)."

[523] An exception is Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 321–49, whose argument I critique below. Cf. Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and the Ossuaries: What Jewish Burial Practices Reveal about the Beginning of Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2003), 13–14; Edmondo Lupieri, "John the Baptist in New Testament Traditions and History," *ANRW* 2.26.1:436, n. 17. For examples of medieval poets who wrote about the different fates of John's head and body, see Greti Dinkova-Bruun, "The Beheading of John the Baptist in Medieval Poetic Discourse," in *Decapitation and Sacrifice. Saint John's Head in Interdisciplinary Perspectives: Text, Object, Medium*, ed. Barbara Baert and Sophia Rochmes (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), esp. 45–46.

[524] See, Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 216–17.

[525] See, Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 204–13.

[526] Kertelge, *Markusevangelium*, 64–67.

[527] To be fair, some scholars make the important observation that Mark 6:29 foreshadows Mark 15:43–46. See, e.g., Nineham, *Saint Mark*, 176; Josef Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1981), 185; Gnilka, *Markus*, 251; Maloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 127; Stein, *Mark*, 307.

[528] Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 216. For an argument that Mark 6:14–29 originates in John the Baptist circles, see, Joseph Thomas, *Le Mouvement Baptiste en Palestine et Syrie* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1935), 110–11. Backhaus, *Die "Jüngerkreise" des Täufers Johannes*, 169, argues, however, that Mark 6:14–29 shows no serious interest in John's disciples.

[529] Klostermann, *Das Markusevangelium*, 61. Cf. Mann, *Mark*, 298: "Whatever later tradition may suggest, it is to be presumed that the body was buried near Machaerus (assuming this to be the place of execution)."

Other scholars, alternatively, tend to make the problematic assertion that John's burial stresses that he was honored in death. Along this line, Donahue and Harrington's claim is typical: "Since *proper* burial was a sign of honor and of divine favor John is honored in death."[530] Schnackenburg even refers to the burial of John at Mark 6:29 as "ein tröstlicher Abschluß" ("a comforting conclusion").[531] Collins refers to it as "an act of piety" on the part of John's disciples.[532]

Such readings, however, fail to understand 6:29 in light of 6:27–28. In other words, they fail to notice or parse the significance of the separation of John's head from its body. Hartmann rightly observes that "der Sieg über Johannes und seine Entehrung" are demonstrated by means of the display of John's head on the platter.[533] But when Hartmann immediately proceeds to say, "Wo das Haupt danach verbleibt, sagt der Text nicht," he misses the sharp contrast the text draws between the fates of John's head (κεφαλή, 6:27–28) and body (πτῶμα, 6:29).[534] From this perspective, the text *does* indicate, albeit by subtraction, where the head remains: not with the body.[535] To reiterate a main point from chapter three, in the ancient world beheading and the manipulation of the head could be perceived as (1) a form of corpse abuse that interrupted *proper* burial, thereby (2) preventing full reincorporation of the deceased in life in the hereafter. Since these notions were relatively common in antiquity, it is vital to note at the outset that some first-century readers would likely understand the Markan account of John's death as framed along these lines of discourse.

[530] Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 200 (italics added). Similarly, Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 121; Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 185; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1984), 343.

[531] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1966), 156.

[532] Collins, *Mark*, 314.

[533] Hartmann, *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers*, 198.

[534] Hartmann, *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers*, 198.

[535] The same observation can be made of Matt 14:11–12. See, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 585, who merely asks the question: "Are we to think of John's body as buried headless?"

The plot to decapitate John, therefore, was not likely an attempt to show John a kindness on the part of the Herodian family. The public parade of John's head on a platter and the separation of his head from his body at burial freighted John's death with symbolic potential.[536] This postmortem manipulation of John's head can be understood as casting the Herodian family and John in a superior-inferior relationship, respectively, as John's head and body are controlled and his identity divested by Antipas and the Herodian women.

Yet, while Mark includes narrative elements that invoke the degradation of the beheaded victim, he remembers John's beheading in such a way that its symbolic potential does not reflect poorly on John the Baptist. Mark attempts to restrain this negative symbolism by contesting it. In this section, we will focus on interpretive keying (see chapter two) as a feature of this pericope's contestation of John's degradation. Mark pairs John's beheading to Jesus' crucifixion. In so doing, John is *distanced* from the Herodian court and the degrading symbolic capacity of his bodily mutilation is brought into tension with the negative portrayal of those responsible for putting him to death.

Following the ensuing discussion, two prominent plot-lines in scholarly discourse that we introduced in chapter one will be met with qualification. The first is the function of John's beheading (6:17–29) in its relationship to the speculation surrounding Jesus' identity (6:14–16). Scholars have largely overlooked how an ideology of beheading provides a key lens through which to view the narrative function of John's death. The second is the scholarly assessment of the guilty parties involved in John's beheading. Both discussions, moreover,

[536] Commenting on Mark 6:14–29, Hartmann, *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers*, 195, rightly observes that the public display of John's head is highly symbolic: "Erst im öffentlichen Raum zeigt sich auch die eigentliche symbolische Tiefendimension der Enthauptung.… Die Demonstration bzw. Präsentation des Hauptes stellt dann den sichtbaren Sieg über den Gegner dar" ("The actual symbolic depth dimension of the beheading only becomes evident in the public space.… The demonstration or presentation of the head then presents the visible triumph over the opponent" [translation mine]). Importantly, however, the idea that the postmortem public display of a severed head is freighted with symbolism does not correspondingly mean that private beheadings are less emblematic. As we will see in the next chapter, Origen freights the secrecy (i.e. privacy) of the moment of John's beheading in prison with symbolic potential. Thus, it is important to observe that, although John's head is publicly displayed, his "beheading-proper" occurs in prison.

will reinforce the central idea of the present chapter that Mark drives a wedge between John and the Herodian court.

1.1. Keying John's Beheading to Jesus' Crucifixion

Mark 6:14–29 reflects the chief characteristics of interpretive keying. The pericope analogically pairs John's beheading with Jesus' crucifixion. This alignment, however, does not merely serve to compare the two's deaths. Rather, their convergence transforms the memory of John's beheading into a "cultural system" (to use Schwartz' language)[537] as John's beheading is integrated into an emerging cultural script. The effect of this integration is that the potential rupture that beheading can instigate is displaced; the ideological script of beheading is flipped. The group(s) associated with Mark's narration overcomes the degradation of John's violent end by weaving it into the tapestry of Jesus' death. In this way, the maintenance of John's honor and identity are contingent on Jesus' honor and identity. Thus, John's identity as the prophetic forerunner of Jesus (1:1–15) is exemplified in his death, not divested. Setting forth the various interconnections between 6:14–29 and Jesus' death will help elucidate this mechanism of commemorative activity.

(1) Mark's recurrent designation of Herod Antipas as a "king" (βασιλεύς) in the present passage (6:14, 22, 25, 26, 27) corresponds to his designation of Jesus as "king" (βασιλεύς) in the passion narrative (15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32). Of the twelve occurences of the substantive βασιλεύς in Mark, eleven refer either to Antipas or Jesus.[538] Antipas and Jesus are

[537] Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, 226.
[538] See, Culpepper, "Mark 6:17–29 in Its Narrative Context, 145–63.

the only specific characters described as such in Mark's narrative.[539] Linguistically, then, Mark enables a juxtaposition of the two kings:[540]

- Antipas orders the violent death of John the Baptist having been manipulated into an oath by the dancing girl (6:22–27), whereas Jesus voluntarily lays down his life for the benefit of many (10:45).[541]
- Antipas' "sending" (ἀποστείλας) (6:17) of persons to arrest John and his "sending" (ἀποστείλας) (6:27) of an executioner to behead John contrasts sharply with Jesus who sends (ἀποστέλλειν) (6:7) the twelve disciples to proclaim repentance, to exorcise demons, and to heal the sick (6:12–13).[542]

With just these two points of contrast between Jesus and Antipas,[543] we can already see that in aligning John to Jesus, Mark distances them from Antipas. (2) The speculation as to Jesus' identity in 6:14–16 (John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets) parallels the speculation regarding Jesus' identity in 8:28. The speculation of 8:28, moreover, prompts Peter to declare Jesus as the Messiah (8:29) and leads to Jesus' first passion prediction of Mark's Gospel: "And he began to teach them that it is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer greatly, to be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, to be killed, and—after three days—to be raised" (8:31). (3) Similarly, the observation in 9:9–13 that Elijah has already suffered and that the Son of Man would suffer recalls that Mark has already closely associated John the Baptist with Elijah.[544] John's prophetic denouncement of king Herod's marriage

[539] The occurrence of βασιλεύς in Mark 13:9 is generic and does not specify the identities of those who receive this title.

[540] Geoffrey D. Miller, "An Intercalation Revisited: Christology, Discipleship, and Dramatic Irony in Mark 6.6b–30," *JSNT* 35 (2012): 182: "Mark's reference to Herod as a king should immediately grab the reader's attention; the title is inaccurate, for Herod was merely a 'tetrarch' (τετράρχης) [*sic*]."

[541] Culpepper, "Mark 6:17–29 in Its Narrative Context," 163.

[542] Similarly, Stein, *Mark*, 302.

[543] For a contrast between Herod's and Jesus' masculinity in their roles as dinner hosts (6:14–29; 6:32–44), see, Peter-Ben Smit, *Masculinity and the Bible: Surveys, Models, and Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 62, who argues that Herod's "loss of self-control is precisely what initiates his downfall as a credible and masculine ruler." On Herod's lack of self-control, see further below.

[544] Likewise, in reference to Mark 9:11–13, Brian C. Dennert, *John the Baptist and the Jewish Setting of Matthew*, WUNT 403 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 40–41: "The disciples do not seem to have

resembles Elijah's prophetic repudiation of king Ahab (1 Kgs 17–19, esp. 18:17–19).[545] And, Herodias' plot against John is similar to Jezebel's plot against Elijah (1 Kgs 19, esp. 19:2 where Herodias swears to kill Elijah).[546] Thus, John's connection with Elijah simultaneously aligns Herodias and Herod to Jezebel and Ahab, respectively, both of whom are characterized negatively in the HB.[547]

(4) Herodias "kept wishing" (ἤθελεν) "to kill" (αποκτεῖναι) John (6:19) after he criticizes Antipas' marriage to her (6:18), but was prevented from doing so because Antipas "was fearing" (ἐφοβεῖτο) John (6:20). In a similar manner, Jesus' opponents seek to arrest and/or kill Jesus (after he criticizes them), but their strategies are foiled or regulated by fear:

A. 11:18: "And the chief priests and scribes heard it and they kept seeking how they might destroy him; for they were fearing (ἐφοβοῦντο) him, because the crowd was amazed at his teaching."

B. 12:12: "And they [the chief priests, scribes, and elders—see 11:27] kept seeking to arrest him, but they feared (ἐφοβήθησαν) the crowd, for they knew that he spoke this parable against them. And they left him and departed."

recognized John as Elijah, as their question points to a belief that Elijah has not yet come. While Jesus does not explicitly name John as Elijah, the description that 'they did to him whatever they wanted' (9:13) combined with the allusions in the death of John and use of Mal 3:1 to introduce John identifies him as the 'Elijah to come.' The passage thus defends the Elijanic identity of John, using the suffering of the Son of Man to substantiate a suffering Elijah." Strictly speaking, Mal 3:1 does not specify that the "messenger" is Elijah (cf. Mal 4:5–6). However, Mark's (1) insinuation that John the Baptist is the messenger of Mal 3:1 (1:2–4), (2) alignment of Jesus with the one who "is coming after" John (1:7, 9; cf. Mal 4:5–6; see also 4 Kgdms 19:20 LXX—ἀκολουθήσω ὀπίσω σου), (3) close approximation of the clothing worn by John and Elijah (1:6; cf. 2 Kgs 1:8), and (4) idea that Elijah has already come "first" (9:9–13; cf. Mal 4:5–6) makes it clear, albeit indirectly, that the Markan John the Baptist embodies the messenger of Mal 3:1 and Elijah of Mal 4:5–6. See, Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer*, 34, who attributes "das Fehlen einer offenen Identifizierung des Täufers mit Elija" in 9:9–13 to Mark's narrative technique of indirectness. On John the Baptist's identification with Elijah in Matthew, Luke, and the Gospel of John, see chapter five.

[545] In his *Commentary on Matthew*, Jerome claims that John the Baptist rebuked Herod and Herodias "with the same authority with which Elijah had rebuked Ahab and Jezebel" (*Comm. Matt.* 14.3–4 [Scheck, FC]).

[546] For the parallels between 1 Kgs 17–19 and Mark 6:14–29 see, Silvia Pellegrini, *Elija—Wegbereiter des Gottessohnes: Eine textsemiotische Untersuchung im Markusevangelium*, HerdBS 26 (Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 280–81.

[547] See 1 Kgs 16:30–31, 33; 18:4, 13; 19:1–2; 21:23, 25 ("Indeed, there was no one like Ahab, who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord, urged on by his wife Jezebel" [NRSV]); 2 Kgs 9:7, 10, 22, 36–37; cf. also Rev 2:20.

C. 14:1: "And the chief priests and the scribes kept seeking how in cunning they might arrest and kill (ἀποκτείνωσιν) him; for they were saying, 'Not during the festival, or else there may be a riot among the people.'"

Thus, Herodias' ongoing plot to kill John analogically maps her onto the opponents of Jesus who ongoingly stirred similar schemes.[548] (5) A fifth, and related, analogical mapping is the connection between Herodias and Judas Iscariot. Just as Herodias managed to initiate John's death on an "opportune" (εὐκαίρου, 6:21) day,[549] Judas "was seeking" an "opportune time" (εὐκαίρως) to hand Jesus over (14:11). (6) Sixthly, John the Baptist is "handed over" (παραδοθῆναι, 1:14), "grasped" (ἐκράτησεν, 6:17), and "bound" (ἔδησεν, 6:17). Jesus also is "handed over" (παραδίδωμι, 3:19; 9:31; 10:33 [twice]; 14:10–11, 18, 21, 41–42, 44; 15:1, 10, 15; cf. 13:9, 11–12), "grasped" (κρατέω, 14:44, 46; cf. 12:12; 14:1, 49), and "bound" (δέω, 15:1). (7) Antipas initially listens to John the Baptist "gladly" (ἡδέως, 6:20) but later demands John's beheading in the midst of social pressure (6:26–27). In a similar reversal, a crowd initially listens to Jesus "gladly" (ἡδέως, 12:37) in Jerusalem but later demands Jesus' crucifixion after the chief priests stir them up (15:11, 13–14). (8) Following the respective deaths of John and Jesus, their bodies (πτῶμα, 6:29; 15:45) are "placed" (τίθημι, 6:29; 15:46, 47; 16:6) "in a tomb" (ἐν μνημείῳ, 6:29; 15:46). (9) The opinion that John the Baptist has been raised (6:16; from the dead—6:14) "foreshadows belief in the resurrection of Jesus" (8:31; 9:9–10, 31; 10:34).[550]

(10) Both John and Jesus are portrayed as innocent but nevertheless put to death as a political leader navigates social pressure. According to 6:20: "For Herod feared John because he knew (εἰδώς) that he was a righteous and holy man (ἄνδρα δίκαιον καὶ ἅγιον) and he was

[548] See also Mark 14:55 where the chief priests and Sanhedrin "kept seeking" (ἐζήτουν) testimony in order to put Jesus to death.

[549] Mark draws attention to this element of the story in 6:21 by means of a genitive absolute construction: γενομένης ἡμέρας εὐκαίρου.

[550] Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 201.

protecting him." This recognition in 6:20 is connected to Herodias' inability to kill John in 6:19. Despite this recognition, and "although he was deeply grieved," Antipas "did not wish" (οὐκ ἠθέλησεν) to reject the girl's wish for John's head because of his oaths and dinner guests; and so he has John beheaded (6:26–27). Similar to Antipas, Pilate, according to 15:10, "knew (ἐγίνωσκεν) that the chief priests had handed him [Jesus] over because of envy." This recognition is connected to Pilate's opportunity he presents to the crowd for him to release "the King of the Jews" (15:9). After the crowd's insistence for him to crucify Jesus (15:12–13), Pilate asks them: "Why? What evil (κακόν) has he done?" (15:14). Thus, in response to Bond's argument that "nothing in Pilate's previous behaviour has given any hint that the governor does regard Jesus as innocent," it must be emphasized that the Markan Pilate does not explicitly indicate that Jesus was truly guilty of the charges brought against him.[551] Pilate "wishes" (βουλόμενος) to satisfy the crowd; and so he has Jesus flogged and handed over to be crucified (15:15) in accordance with the crowd's "wish" (θέλετε, 15:9, 12). With Mark's alignment of John's innocence to Jesus' innocence, a moral judgment is passed on the death of John the Baptist: by keying John's death to Jesus' death, Mark infuses John's beheading with the moral coloration of Jesus' crucifixion. John is viewed as unjustly executed insofar as Jesus is unjustly executed.[552] Thus, again, as John is aligned to Jesus he is distanced from Antipas.

(11) The repetition of the verb θέλω ("I want/wish") in this pericope in reference to Herod, Herodias, and the girl integrates the "wishes" of the Herodian court into the Markan theme of the (in)appropriate orientation of one's "wish" (or "will"), a theme particularly

[551] Helen Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation*, SNTSMS 100 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 112.

[552] Cf. Stein, *Mark*, 304, who writes in reference to 6:20: "The turmoil in Herod's mind makes his action all the more damnable." On Mark's presentation of Pilate as a weak ruler see, Susan Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, JSNTSup 259 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 83. Cf. Bond, *Pontius Pilate*, 105–19, who argues that, although Mark does not portray Pilate as a weak ruler, he is still implicated in the death of Jesus. So also, Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men*, 70–71.

prominent in the three passion predictions (Mark 8–10) and in the passion narrative itself (Mark 14–15).[553] According to Mark 6:19, Herodias has a grudge against John the Baptist and "was/kept wanting" (ἤθελεν) to kill him. After swearing to give to the girl whatever she "wishes" (θέλῃς, 6:22), Herod did "not wish" (οὐκ ἠθέλησεν, 6:26) to refuse the girl's "wishing" (θέλω, 6:25) for John's head on a platter. Herod's desire is grounded in part on account of "those reclining" (6:26) at the "banquet" (6:21), whom Mark had previously portrayed as "his great persons," "the rulers of a thousand," and "the first ones" of Galilee (6:21).

The various "wishes" of the Herodian court diverge from other characters who appropriately wish in Mark's Gospel.

A. 1:40–41: "A leper comes to him [Jesus] imploring him, and kneeling says to him, 'If you wish (θέλῃς), you are able to cleanse me.' And, moved with compassion, he [Jesus] stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I do wish (θέλω). Be cleansed.'"
B. 3:35: "For whoever does the will of God (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ), this one is my brother, sister, and mother."
C. 8:34: "He [Jesus] summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, 'If someone wishes (θέλει) to follow after me, let them deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me.'"
D. 10:51: "And Jesus answered and said to him, 'What do you want (θέλεις) me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My rabbi, let me see again.'"
E. 14:36: "He [Jesus] was saying, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for you; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want (θέλω), but what you [want/θέλεις]."

[553] See, Abraham Smith, "Tyranny Exposed: Mark's Typological Characterization of Herod Antipas (Mark 6:14–29)," *BibInt* 14 (2006): esp. 281–86.

Miller's contrast is helpful: "Unlike the Herodians, those who suffer diseases and live as social outcasts express desires which are compatible with the will of God.… The desires of Herodias, her daughter and Herod bring torment and death to others."[554] Further, the last example above (14:36) plainly identifies Jesus as one whose focus is on effecting the will of God. The second example (3:35) designates those who do the will of God as Jesus' (true) family.

Switching vantage points will help further illuminate the contrast between Jesus and Antipas in this respect. The "wishes" of the Herodian court in 6:14–29 accord with others who inappropriately "wish" in Mark's Gospel. Consider the following examples:

A. 9:13: "But I tell you that even Elijah has come, and they did to him as many things as they wished (ἤθελον), as it is written about him."
B. 12:38–40: "And in his teaching he was saying, 'Beware of the scribes, who want (τῶν θελόντων) to walk in long robes, [who want] greetings in the marketplaces, [who want] the first-seats (πρωτοκαθεδρίας) in the synagogues, and [who want] the first-seats (πρωτοκλισίας) at banquets (τοῖς δείπνοις).… They will receive the greater condemnation.'"[555]
C. 15:9, 11: "And Pilate answered them, 'Do you want (θέλετε) me to release for you the King of the Jews?'… But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead."
D. 15:12–13: "Pilate again was saying to them, 'What, then, do you wish (θέλετε) me to do with the one whom you call 'the King of the Jews'?' And again, they cried out, 'Crucify him!'"

[554] Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 84.

[555] Cf. Mark 9:35: "If someone wishes (θέλει) to be first (πρῶτος), they will be last of all and servant of all."

In this regard, we might also observe Pilate's "wishes" that are described in 15:15 using a near synonymn of θέλω: "Pilate, wishing (βουλόμενος) to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas and handed over Jesus, after flogging him, to be crucified."[556] Further still, as a response to the disciples' discussion on the road about who is "greatest" (μείζων, 9:34), Jesus indicates that whoever "wishes" (θέλει) to be "first" (πρῶτος) will/must be last (9:35). Similarly, in 10:35–37, James and John make known their "wish" (θέλομεν, 10:35; θέλετε, 10:36), namely, to "sit" (καθίσωμεν, 10:37) in places of honor at Jesus' glory. Soon thereafter, Jesus constructs two indefinite relative sentences. He says in 10:43: "But, whoever wishes (θέλῃ) to become great (μέγας) among you will/must be your servant." In like manner, he says in 10:44: "Whoever wishes (θέλῃ) to be first (πρῶτος) will/must be everyone's slave." Jesus makes these two statements as a contrast (notice the adversative conjunction ἀλλ' in 10:43) to the "rulers" (ἄρχειν) and the "great ones" (μεγάλοι) (10:42).[557] Thus, the appearance of key terms—θέλω, μέγας, ἄρχω, πρῶτος—in Mark 9–10, 12:38–40, and 15:9–13 parallels the "wishing" Herodian court and Antipas who dined with "his great persons" (τοῖς μεγιστᾶσιν αὐτοῦ), "the rulers of a thousand" (τοῖς χιλιάρχοις), and "the first ones" (τοῖς πρώτοις) of Galilee (6:21). In connecting John's death to the passion prediction units and the passion narrative, the Herodian court is paired with those whose "wishes" are improperly focused.

With these examples in place, we can clearly notice that John's death is thoroughly integrated into the narrative web of Jesus' death. Concurrently, this keying aligns the Herodian court with those whose "wishes" are not of a proper focus, including Jesus' antagonists who want Jesus crucified and the scribes who want social prestige. As we will see in the next chapter, subsequent handlers of the tradition of John's death weaponize the

[556] See, BDAG, s.v. "βούλομαι."

[557] Jesus' statement in Mark 10:40 presupposes that the expectation of being granted places of honor at Jesus' right and left is not unrealistic for James and John to wish for. But, as 10:38–39, 43–44 clarify, such expectation needs refocused.

negative characterization of the Herodian court by making their moral coloration emblematic of contemporary Jews.

2. Qualifications of Scholarly Discourse

The previous discussion places us in a better position to qualify two particular streams of scholarly discourse surrounding the death of John the Baptist. The first stream is the relationship between the narrative of John's beheading in 6:17–29 and the report of the speculation about Jesus' identity in 6:14–16. The second stream is the scholarly assessment of the relative blame Herod and Herodias deserve in putting the Baptist to death. Both discussions, moreover, will sharpen the negative characterization of Antipas at work in Mark's account.

2.1. The Function of Mark 6:17–29

As Culpepper says: "The story [of John's beheading] is recalled almost as an afterthought to explain Herod's response to the reports of Jesus' activities."[558] Indeed, Goguel once remarked that the story has a "caractère épisodique" and that it sits "en marge de la narration."[559] In her classic commentary on the Gospel of Mark, Hooker writes:

> Between the account of the sending out of the Twelve and that of their return, Mark inserts an account of Herod's reaction to the rumours about Jesus, together with the story of his beheading of John the Baptist. There seems no logical connection between the two themes, but the somewhat artificial insertion provides an interlude for the disciples to complete their mission.[560]

The marginal character of the episode has sparked considerable attention, as scholars have sought to identify what further connections the pericope has to 6:14–16 (and to the Gospel as a whole) beyond merely occupying the lapse of time between the sending out of the disciples

[558] Culpepper, "Mark 6:17–29 in Its Narrative Context," 146.
[559] Maurice Goguel, *Au seuil de l'Évangile*, 52.
[560] Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 158.

and their return. A frequent connection that scholars make is the numerous parallels John's death has with Jesus' death, as we have already seen.

A steady current of scholarship, however, has argued that 6:17–29 also functions to clarify that Jesus was not John the Baptist. Janes, for example, writes: "Is Jesus John raised from the dead? Is Jesus the returned John? That question—which no one thinks any longer to ask—Mark is intent on making sure we never ask again."[561] Witherington advocates for this understanding as well: "What prompts this story is that, as we are told in v. 14, some thought Jesus was John the Baptizer redivivus.… This story then clarifies matters *for the Markan audience* by distinguishing between the two men, while at the same time foreshadowing the sort of violent end that Jesus would also come to."[562] Later in his analysis, Witherington is more emphatic: "The point is that people with their own speculations were not coming up with the notion that Jesus was Messiah or Lord, and in a biography this story about the Baptist is crucial, *for it clears up once and for all that Jesus is not John*."[563] According to Pellegrini, since John is "enthauptet und begraben" ("beheaded and entombed"), the story of 6:17–29 dispels the hypotheses entertained in 6:14 and 6:16.[564] Following Pellegrini, Dennert likewise asserts that John's death "shows that Jesus cannot be the resurrected John."[565]

In my estimation, the best advocate of this position is Kraemer. She summarizes her position as follows:

> In my view, these narratives respond to early Christian anxieties and contestations about the relationship between Jesus and John: they are fashioned to refute not simply the suggestion that John the Baptist has been resurrected but more precisely the possibility that Jesus is John raised from the dead by telling a narrative in which the body of John is desecrated in a manner that makes it impossible to resurrect it, at least

[561] Regina Janes, "Why the Daughter of Herodias Must Dance (Mark 6.14–29)," *JSNT* 28 (2006): 446–47.

[562] Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 212 (italics added).

[563] Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 214 (italics added).

[564] Pellegrini, *Elija*, 284, 287 (quotation, p. 287).

[565] Dennert, *John the Baptist*, 37.

> physically, by severing the head from the body, and by leaving the head with Herodias while burying the corpse.[566]

Kraemer defends this claim with an important observation. Antipas' evaluation of the Baptist's identity in 6:16 can be read as a question ("Has John, whom I beheaded, been raised?") and not necessarily an indicative statement ("John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."). In fact, Kraemer insists, this is "exactly" how Luke 9:9 ("I beheaded John: who is this one about whom I hear such things?") understands Antipas' response to the rumors: "The author of Luke thus implies that Antipas thinks that Jesus cannot be John, because Antipas had previously beheaded him."[567] Hence, she reasons: "Further implicit in Antipas's objection is precisely the notion that something about beheading John makes it impossible for him to be resurrected in the body of Jesus."[568] For Kraemer, therefore, 6:17–29 "is constructed to provide a compelling answer to the question not of why John was *executed* but of why John was *executed by decapitation*, or why, following his execution by some other means, his head was then severed from his body."[569]

Perhaps the greatest strength in Kraemer's thesis is her recognition that the rumors regarding Jesus' identity recounted in 6:14–16 are central for understanding the function of the narrative.[570] It is no overstatement to claim that the central theme around which Mark's entire Gospel narrative pivots is Jesus' identity.[571] Related to this recognition is her acknowledgement that something about beheading John—and particularly, the separation of the head from the body—is crucial for understanding the function of the narrative.

[566] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 341. Similarly, Lupieri, "John the Baptist in New Testament Traditions and History," *ANRW* 2.26.1:436, n. 17.

[567] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 342.

[568] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 342.

[569] Kraemer, "Implicating Herodias," 342.

[570] Miller, "An Intercalation Revisited," 177: "These three verses serve as the interpretive crux of the passage, highlighting Christology as the overarching theme."

[571] See, e.g., 1:1, 11, 24–25, 34; 3:11, 21–22; 4:41; 5:6–7; 6:2–3, 14–16; 8:27–29; 9:7; 10:46–52; 11:27–33; 14:61–62; 15:2, 39.

Despite these strengths, the position Kraemer advocates is complicated by two insights. First, readers of Mark's Gospel are already aware of the fact that Jesus is not John the Baptist. The Markan prologue begins by delineating Jesus' messianic identity: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ [the Son of God]" (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [υἱοῦ θεοῦ]) (1:1). After a scant five-verse indication of John's baptizing activity and preaching in 1:4–8, readers encounter simultaneously Jesus and John at the River Jordan (1:9–11). The former is baptized by the latter (1:9). Moreover, as Jesus ascends from the water, the voice from heaven makes Jesus' identity plain for the reader: "You are my beloved son (ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός), in you I am well pleased" (1:11).

Informed by the prologue, readers who arrive at 6:14–16 hardly take seriously the possibility entertained by Herod (6:16) and the populace (6:14) that Jesus was John raised from the dead.[572] Scholars, like Witherington, who adamantly claim that John's beheading conclusively clarifies for readers that Jesus is not John miss that this conclusion was definitively reached at the very opening of Mark's narrative.

One can entertain the counterargument that Mark is reinforcing what should already be clear for the audience. This counter, however, is not *necessarily* true when we consider the other complication: Kraemer's conflation of Mark 6:16 and Luke 9:9 obscures that these two verses have incongruent semantic forces. Across these two verses, Herod's speech is not, as Kraemer claims, precisely the same:

> Mark 6:16 (as a declarative statement): "Having heard, Herod was saying: 'The one whom I beheaded, John, this one has been raised!'"
>
> Mark 6:16 (as a question): "Having heard, Herod was saying: 'The one whom I beheaded, John, has this one been raised?'"
>
> Luke 9:9: "Herod said: 'John I myself beheaded. But who is this about whom I hear such things?'"

[572] Similarly, Maloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 126: "The reader … knows that all suggestions miss the point, but the question 'Who is Jesus?' continues to be raised by the characters in the story." So also, Miller, "An Intercalation Revisited," 181–82.

Kraemer is correct to state that, for Luke's Herod, the beheading of John renders the Baptist's association with Jesus as an impossibility. According to Luke 9:7, Herod heard that some thought that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead. Herod's response here in Luke 9:9 clearly differentiates Jesus from John *on the basis of* John's mutilated body.[573] The same, however, cannot be said of Mark 6:16. Rather, as medieval scholar Masciandaro puts it: "John's decapitation is introduced through Herod's confusion as *not having worked*."[574]

There are two plausible ways of understanding Herod's comment in Mark 6:16. Each way is distinguishable from the sense of Luke 9:9. In one respect, Herod's remark may reveal his doubts as to the efficacy of John's beheading. This understanding presupposes that severing a head from its body could, under normal circumstances at least, inhibit the "resurrection" of the body. For Herod to envision that John somehow overcame his mutilation to embody and empower Jesus (in whatever sense) accentuates the dramatic characterization of Herod. It is no surprise to observe that interpreters often portray Antipas' statement as revealing his superstitious fear, despite the fact that neither the substantive "fear" nor its cognates are mentioned in 6:16. Consider C. Evans' comments in this regard: "Herod's declaration that Jesus must be John, whom he beheaded, attests to the despot's fearful respect of the power he sensed was at work in Jesus, a power that not only must be from beyond the confines of the mortal realm, but a power not limited by the conventions of death, burial, and resurrection."[575] At the same time as accentuating Jesus' power, this option

[573] I thus disagree with Nathanael Vette and Will Robinson's criticism of Kraemer: "The comment of Antipas in Luke 9:7 [*sic*], 'John I beheaded etc.' (Ἰωάννην ἐγὼ ἀπεκεφάλισα) is best seen as expressing skepticism towards resurrection, not the resurrection of a beheaded person *per se*" ("Was John the Baptist Raised from the Dead? The Origins of Mark 6:14–29" *BibAn* 9 [2019], 337, n. 5). Their critique falters on their ignorance of the ideology of beheading, which they acknowledge two sentences previously in the same footnote: "We are not aware of tradition stipulating that beheaded persons could not be resurrected." See chapter three where we identified traditions that are evidence of this stipulation.

[574] Nicola Masciandaro, "*Non potest hoc corpus decollari*: Beheading and the Impossible," in *Heads Will Roll: Decapitation in the Medieval and Early Modern Imagination*, ed. Lariss Tracy and Jeff Massey, MRAT 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 20 (italics original).

[575] Evans, *Jesus and the Ossuaries*, 14. See, Collins, *Mark*, 304. See also, Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 81, who appeals to Mark 6:26 (where Herod is "deeply troubled" [περίλυπος]) to claim that "the residual conflict within Herod is illustrated by Herod's fear that Jesus is John risen from the dead." In reference

reveals a hint of mockery behind Mark's portrayal of Herod in that Herod incredulously believes John overcomes a type of death designed not to be overcome. As the previous chapter demonstrated, some ancients believed bodily mutilation such as beheading thwarted hopes of "resurrection." In this respect, Kraemer's core argument that 6:17–29 refutes the idea that Jesus is John is entirely plausible, but not for the reasons she puts forward. That John is not merely beheaded (6:27) but his head and body separated in burial (6:28) only *reinforces* the ludicrousness of Herod's belief first implicitly criticized in 6:16.

The other plausible explanation is not categorically different from the first, but it nevertheless alters the sense of the passage. Its divergence is a matter of estimating the doubt of Herod to a different degree. Rather than supposing that Antipas held a measure of doubt regarding the efficacy of beheading, this option reads his comment in 6:16 as confidently affirming—without a doubt we might say—that Jesus was indeed the beheaded John risen from the dead. In other words, it is *on the basis of* John's mutilated body that leads Herod to associate John with Jesus (or at least it does not prevent Herod from aligning John with Jesus), and not, as in Luke 9:9, untangle their being equated.

This understanding of Herod's remark *also* accords well with what we learned in the previous chapter about the ideology of beheading in the ancient world. Some ancients applied violence to the body to subvert hopes of "resurrection."[576] For some ancients, however, the separation of a head from its body prevented proper burial. The mutilated dead could return to the land of the living.[577] From this perspective, far from proving that Jesus was not John

to the parallel saying in Matt 14:2, John Chrysostom suggests that Herod is so fraught with horror that he is attempting to remind himself that he had John beheaded (*Hom. Matt.* 24.4).

576 This idea is not limited to antiquity. In the medieval period, for example, Jacobus de Voragine compiled a tradition in the *Legenda aurea* that portrays Herodias as burying John's head separate from his body as a safeguard "because she feared that the prophet would return to life if his head was buried with his body" (see, Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012], 523).

577 Scholarship on decapitated inhumation in Roman Britain has fluctuated between interpreting decapitated burials as hindering or aiding the dead's entry into the underworld. For discussion and citations, see Watts, *Religion in Late Roman Britain*, 74–95.

the Baptist raised from the dead, 6:17–29 *explains why* Herod held that belief in the first place: the separation of John's head (6:27–28) from its body's burial (6:29) enabled Herod's speculation.[578] From this vantage point, the logic of Kraemer's position does not hold weight. We can rightly ask: how does narrating John's beheading (6:17–29) clarify that Jesus is not John *when it is precisely the fact of John's beheading that enables the two figures being aligned in the first place* (6:16)? The answer in this case is obvious—it does not. According to this interpretation, moreover, one can also rightly detect a hint of fear in Herod's declaration.

Regardless of which explanation one deems more likely, however, two conclusions remain defensible. (1) The Markan and Lukan narrations about John's death are undergirded by differing ideologies of beheading—one that upholds resurrection as an impossibility for the decapitated (Luke) and one that has room for the possibility of the decapitated partaking in resurrection, despite their mutilation (Mark). (2) Both explanations reinforce Mark's negative characterization of Antipas. The former explanation portrays Antipas entertaining ludicrous notions and the latter option presents Antipas as paranoid that John had overcome his beheading. Not all scholars, however, are convinced that Mark 6:17–29 characterizes Antipas negatively.

2.2. Gender and Blame in Mark 6:17–29

In his 2015 monograph, *Jesus and the Chaos of History: Redirecting the Life of the Historical Jesus*, Crossley sets forth a careful reading of the dynamics of gender at work in the account of John's death in Mark 6:17–29, which he treats as a pre-Markan tradition.[579] In Crossley's view, the tradition all but exonerates Herod Antipas of blame in John's

[579] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 147–62.

decapitation while placing the guilt squarely on the shoulders of Herodias and Salome.[580] In so doing, the tradition reinscribes "stereotypical gender constructions."[581] Crossley is not alone, moreover, in understanding one or more of the Herodian women as primarily at fault in the Markan tradition. In her 2006 article, Janes argues: "the episode lays the blame principally on Herodias, who sought John's death and told her daughter what to ask."[582] Prior to Janes, Anderson asserted that "more extended comments and inside views of Herod seem designed to win sympathy for Herod … [but Herodias is presented] unsympathetically as a woman with a grudge."[583]

This line of argumentation departs from other interpreters who claim that Mark casts a negative shadow primarily over Herod Antipas. Murphy, for example, writes that "the story leaves one angry with Herod, who has elevated pleasure, indiscretion, and his own honor above the righteousness of [John]."[584] Donahue and Huntington claim that "the ultimate blame falls on Herod."[585] Similar to Crossley, but taking this different stance, is Glancy, who all but exonerates the Herodian women from blame while highlighting how scholars have underappreciated Antipas' responsibility.[586]

The strategy of locating the blame for John's death primarily on one party of Herod's court at the expense of—or even relative to—the other, however, is dubious. The tradition paints *both* Antipas *and* the Herodian women with a dark brush. "The truth is that the threads

[580] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, esp. 148, 153–54, 158. For an earlier version of his argument, see, Crossley, "History from the Margins," 147–61.

[581] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 147.

[582] Janes, "Why the Daughter of Herodias Must Dance," 449.

[583] Janice Capel Anderson, "Feminist Criticism: The Dancing Daughter," in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 120.

[584] Murphy, *John the Baptist*, 127.

[585] Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 199.

[586] Jennifer A. Glancy, "Unveiling Masculinity. The Construction of Gender in Mark 6:17–29," *BibInt* 2 (1994): 34–50. To be clear, Glancy does not suggest that Mark approves of the Herodian women's actions in the story, only that "Herodias herself is not represented as a monster, nor is there any hint that the desire of mother and daughter grows out of their sexuality" (Glancy, "Unveiling Masculinity," 42). The only "hint of a grotesque edge to female subjectivity and desire" that Glancy detects is Mark 6:24–25 where the daughter makes the additional requirement of John's head *on a platter* (Glancy, "Unveiling Masculinity," 50). Thus, Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 78–79, who argues that Glancy "ignores the cruelty of the women" is not altogether accurate. One may argue that Glancy downplays the women's cruelty, but she does not ignore it.

of guilt here are tangled."[587] There is good reason to suppose that, for first-century readers, determining which character's shade is darker would be very much in the eye of the beholder. A critical review of Crossley's argument is instructive in this regard.

2.2.1. The Dangerousness of Female Seduction

As an initial remark, it must be emphasized that Crossley cogently demonstrates that Mark blames the Herodian women for their role in John's death in 6:17–29. After all, Mark depicts Herodias as the one who held the grudge against John and "was wishing" (ἤθελεν) to kill him (6:19).[588] Despite her mother expressing only the desire for John's head (6:24), the daughter supplies what Asikainen calls a "macabre addition,"[589] namely the requirement of John's head "on a platter."[590] And, as Miller observes: "The account of Herodias and her daughter offers an evil counterpart to the faithful women we see elsewhere in the Gospel (5.21–43; 7.24–30; 14.3–9)."[591]

Crossley points to Josephus (*Ant.* 18.240–255), who identifies Herodias as "the main reason for Antipas' eventual downfall," as an example of a potential first-century reader who would have been positively inclined toward Mark's portrayal of Herodias.[592] Crossley may well be right. Josephus is not kind in his *Antiquities of the Jews* to Herodias. Yet, according to Josephus, God also punishes Antipas for listening to Herodias in her bid to promote

[587] Duran, "Return of the Disembodied or How John the Baptist Lost His Head," 290.

[588] This depiction contrasts sharply, of course, with Matt 14:5 where it is Antipas who "wishes" (θέλων) to kill John. Also, in Mark's portrayal, it is not beyond reason to suppose that Antipas imprisons John in order to protect John from Herodias (notice the series of explanatory indicators in Mark 6:17–18: διά, ὅτι, and γάρ).

[589] Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men*, 63.

[590] Indeed, notice that Mark draws attention to this additional element by fronting the prepositional phrase ἐπὶ πίνακι before the accusative construction in 6:25: θέλω ἵνα ἐξαυτῆς δῷς μοι ἐπὶ πίνακι τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ ("I wish that, immediately, you would give me, on a platter, the head of John the Baptist"). See also, Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 79: "The girl, therefore, is responsible for the associations of John's death with a cannibalistic meal."

[591] Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 81.

[592] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 148–49 (quotation, p. 149). Page 149: "Josephus, for one, would have accepted the idea that Herodias was deceptive and manipulative and more than capable of fooling Antipas."

Antipas' status in the eyes of Rome: "And thus did God punish Herodias for her envy at her brother, and Herod also for giving ear to the vain discourses of a woman."[593] Thus, in response to Crossley we might say that Josephus, for one, would have been congenial to the idea that Antipas lacked self-control in being manipulated by a woman.

In fact, we can level a similar argument in regard to Crossley's comments about the perceived dangerousness of female sexual seduction. According to Crossley: "In first-century Palestine there was an established association between evil and seductive female sexuality."[594] He appeals to a number of relevant texts to illustrate this claim, including Prov 7:25–26 where wrongdoing takes on the persona of a seductive woman: "Do not let your hearts turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths; for many are those she has laid low, and numerous are her victims" (NRSV).[595] Moreover, wisdom was also associated with the luring sexuality of a woman, as in 11Q5 XXI, 11–18.[596] These synonomously gendered personifications of evil and wisdom form what Crossley terms a "dangerous ambiguity."[597] Accordingly, he reasons:

> And Antipas was indeed lured and in the context of the construction of dangerous ambiguity Mark 6.17–29 is relieving Antipas of some of the blame in that it was hardly his fault he was attracted to the 'young girl'.… With these cultural constructions understood, it should be no surpise that Salome has Antipas under her control.[598]

Again, Crossley may well be right, at least to a limited extent. In light of the ideology of female sexuality in the first century, some first-century readers would hardly blame Antipas on account of his attraction to the "young girl" (κοράσιον, 6:22). Yet, this reasoning is not entirely convincing for at least two reasons. First, in some early manuscripts, including

[593] Josephus, *Ant.* 18.255 (Whiston).
[594] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 151.
[595] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 151–52.
[596] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 152.
[597] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 152–53. Page 152: "Wisdom may be construed as sexually appealing but this is also, of course, how the female personification of evil is constructed and, in Proverbs, the language to describe both is clearly overlapping and it is potentially difficult to distinguish between the two (Prov. 7.11–12; 8.1–3)."
[598] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 152–53.

Codices Sinaiticus (א) and Vaticanus (B), the daughter whose dance apparently arouses[599] Antipas and his dinner guests is described as "his" (αὐτοῦ) daughter, i.e., Antipas' daughter (6:22).[600] Thus, Antipas' pleasure and ensuing promise to his daughter potentially takes on incestuous overtones. But caution is in order here. As Stiebert explains:

> Anthropological literature acknowledges incest taboos as universal, or near-universal among human societies (with any exceptions having dubious legitimacy)… What precisely constitutes incest is, however, variously understood. Incest, therefore, is a cultural concept and what is incestuous (and illegal) in one society may be a close-kin marriage (and legal) in another.[601]

The *specific* prohibition of a father from having sexual relations with his daughter is conspicuously absent in the rather detailed incest prohibitions lists of Lev 18 and 20.[602] This absence contrasts sharply, for instance, from Hittite law that expressly forbids men from incestuous relations with their daughters.[603] One possible explanation for this omission in the Levitical Code is, of course, that in a patriarchal society the father's lordship over his daughter extended to the sexual arena as well. Another explanation is that such a prohibition is so self-evident that there is no need to commit it to writing. In this vein, one is reminded of

[599] Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 396, observes that the verb ἤρεσεν ("pleased") (Mark 6:22) often has sexual connotations in the Septuagint (e.g. LXX: Gen 19:8; Job 31:10). See also, Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 153. Cf. Hartmann, *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers*, 162–68, 177–78, who argues that the daughter's dance and the verb ἤρεσεν do not have erotic overtones. For Hartmann, the banquet scene reflects the benevolent response of a superior (Herod) to his inferior (the girl) who paid him homage. Hence, he describes the motif of Herod's wish as the "freundliche Zuwendung" ("friendly devotion") of the powerful (p. 177). See also, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 582, who notes that "dancing need not be erotic to give delight and to stir gratitude." Crossley does not interact with Hartmann whose argument could potentially bolster Crossley's overarching assessment of Herod' guilt in that it eliminates the idea of sexual passion motivating Herod's promise. Even if Hartmann is correct, the elimination of this feature of the story does not detract from the other ways argued in this chapter that Mark negatively characterizes Antipas.

[600] Uncials that also reflect this reading include D, L, and Δ. The ninth-century minuscule 565 also follows this reading.

[601] Johanna Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 102–03.

[602] Genesis makes no explicit condemnation, moreover, against Lot or his daughters for their sexual intercourse with their father while Lot was drunk (Gen 19:30–38). Interestingly, the reception of this tradition in rabbinic literature tends to treat Lot unsympathetically for this episode, with the incest viewed as Lot's punishment for sexual promiscuity (*m. Tan.* 12; *m. 'Ag. Ber.* 25:1). Indeed, *Gen. Rab*. 51:8–9 may imply that Lot secretly enjoyed having sex with his daughters—he was cognizant of the one daughter arising (cf. Gen 19:33) and did not thwart his daughters' attempt to intoxicate him again on the following day.

[603] Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters*, 106.

Plato *Leg*. 8.838b where such incest is prevented by means of an "unwritten law" (νόμος ἄγραφος; on this text, see further below).[604]

Regardless, the injunction in Lev 18:6 against sexual relations with "any flesh of his relative" (כל שאר בשרו) may constitute an umbrella prohibition that, by implication, extends to the father-daughter relationship (Lev 18:6).[605] Similarly, Lev 18:17 prohibits a man from sexual intimacy with "a woman and her daughter" (אשה ובתה), which may be understood as referring to daughters and stepdaughters.[606] Some early manuscripts at Mark 6:22, including Codices Alexandrinus (A) and Ephraemi Rescriptus (C), alternatively read that the dancing girl was "her" (αὐτῆς) daughter, i.e., Herodias' daughter.[607] So, whether a first-century reading of 6:22 constituted αὐτοῦ or αὐτῆς, the possibility remains that this tradition could generate suspicions of incestuous lust motivating Antipas' actions.

Furthermore, for those readers in the Greco-Roman world whose ideology of incest was not necessarily informed by Torah, Mark's specification of a kinship between Antipas and the daughter (whether by blood or through marriage) would likely at least raise the question of permissable sexual encounters between men and women. Classical Greek authors frequently spew invectives against intercourse with daughters. Euripides characterizes such sex as barbaric:

> That is the way all barbarians are: father (πατήρ) lies with daughter (θυγατρί), son with mother, and sister with brother, nearest kin murder each other, and no law prevents any of this. Do not introduce such customs into our city. For it is also not right for one man to hold the reigns of two women. Rather, everyone who wants to live decently is content to look to a single mate for his bed.[608]

Consider also Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*: "Neither does a father (πατήρ) fall in love with (ἐρᾷ) his daughter (θυγατρός), but somebody else does; for fear of God and the law of the land are

[604] Similarly, Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.4.19–23.

[605] HALOT, s.v. "בָּשָׂר" renders שְׁאֵר בְּשָׂרוֹ as "his close relative."

[606] See, Stiebert, *Fathers and Daughters*, 107.

[607] Uncials that also reflect this reading include W and Θ. The "family thirteen" manuscripts, several minuscules, and the eleventh-century lectionary 253 also follow this reading.

[608] Euripides, *Andr*. 173–180 (Kovacs, LCL).

sufficient to prevent such love (ἔρωτα)."[609] In Plato, sexual union between a man and his daughter receives a series of vitriolic vituperations:

> Whenever any man has a brother or sister who is beautiful. So too in the case of a son or daughter, the same unwritten law is most effective in guarding men from sleeping with them, either openly or secretly, or wishing to have any connexion with them,—nay, most men never so much as feel any desire (ἐπιθυμία) for such connexion.… [T]hese acts are by no means holy (μηδαμῶς ὅσια), but hated of God (θεομισῆ) and most shamefully shameful (αἰσχρῶν αἴσχιστα).[610]

Plato, moreover, excludes sexual intercourse with a daughter for men even after the men are no longer of the age to procreate:

> When the women and men cease to be of the age to have children, we shall leave the men free, I think, to have intercourse with whoever they wish, except with a daughter, a mother or the daughter's children or the mother's mothers; and the women likewise except with a son, a father and their sons and fathers.[611]

The first-century CE Stoic philosopher, Musonius Rufus, in some of his lectures, discusses how men should treat their wives and daughters. Lecture 12 (entitled "On Sexual Indulgence"), argues that those men who indulge in sex outside of marriage do so out of a lack of self-control.[612] This idea of self-control leads to the next reason to question Crossley's claim: Mark 6:14–29 *emasculates* Antipas by casting him as a man without self-control. Insights from the burgeoning field of masculinity studies will help articulate the significance of this point.

2.2.2. The Masculinity of Herod Antipas

As this chapter has shown, the Markan narration of John's death attempts to control the potential degradation of John's beheading by keying John to the sympathetic protagonist

[609] Xenophon, *Cyr*. 5.1.10 (Miller, LCL). BDAG, s.v. "ἐράω" lists *Cyr.* 5.1.10 as conveying "sexual attraction." LSJ, s.v. "ἔραμαι" describes the verb as "of the sexual passion." The cognate noun ἔρως is likewise defined as "love, mostly of the sexual passion" (LSJ, s.v. "ἔρως").

[610] Plato, *Leg*. 8.838b–c (Bury, LCL).

[611] Plato, *Resp*. 5.461b–c (Emlyn-Jones and Preddy, LCL).

[612] See, Beryl Rawson, *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 208. Other examples of primary data that criticize sexual relations with daughters abound (e.g. Virgil, *Aen.* 6.623; Sextus Empiricus, *Pyr.* 3.246).

Jesus and molding a shadow over Antipas. In this respect, Mark flips the script of John's decapitation. The beheading does not portray outright Antipas and John in a superior-inferior relationship respectively. The picture of Antipas in "control" of John's head (6:27–28) and body (ἐκράτησεν, 6:17; cf. 6:29) is brought into tension with key elements that demonstrate Antipas' inferiority as a "king."[613] This degradation of Antipas takes on gendered nuances.

Conway has shown that the "specter of lost manliness, of a slide into effeminacy, was frequently raised before the eyes of the literate male audience."[614] In this sense, to be truly a "man" (*vir*; ἀνήρ) in the Greco-Roman world was proven not so much by one's innate biological sex, but on one's lived-out "virtue" (*virtus*; ἀνδρεία), and thus "manliness."[615] In short, "masculinity" was a performance indelibly linked to virtue.[616] Accordingly, Conway asserts: "Acting like a man required one to assume the active role in private sexual practice as well as one's public life. At the same time, such a role also required the careful display of control and restraint, both with respect to one's passions—sexual and otherwise—and in terms of treatment of the other."[617] Wilson elucidates the connection between self-control and power, and thus reaches a similar conclusion:

> In the Greco-Roman world, masculinity and power go hand in hand, with a manly man exercising power over others in terms of sexual, paternal, political, and military power, and exercising power—or self-control—over himself in terms of controlling his own body and emotions. In brief, to be a man in the ancient world meant to wield power over others and power over oneself.[618]

[613] Simultaneously, of course, John the Baptist is acknowledged as a "righteous and holy *man* (ἄνδρα)" (Mark 6:20).

[614] Conway, *Behold the Man,* 15–34 (quotation, p. 17).

[615] See, Conway, *Behold the Man,* 22–23.

[616] Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men*, 30: "The quintessential masculine virtue was ἀνδρεία or *virtus*. Both the Greek word ἀνδρεία and the Latin word *virtus* derive from the gender-specific terms for 'man' (ἀνήρ and *vir*, respectively), and they can thus be translated as 'manliness' or 'manly behavior.' Both words characterize the ideal behavior of a man." On gender performativity in modern critical discourse, see, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[617] Conway, *Behold the Man*, 22.

[618] Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 59.

Thus, *mastery* of the self (i.e. "self control" [αὐτοκράτωρ])—pertaining as it did to moderation in one's sexual behavior, emotions, luxury, and control over others—comprised *a* or *the* chief virtue of ideal masculinity in this cultural context.[619]

From this perspective, then, it is striking to observe briefly six features of 6:14–29 that underscore Antipas' deficiency of this essential component.[620] (1) To use Marcus' words:

> Throughout the passage, moreover, we see that this supposed "king" is not even in control of himself, much less of his subjects; he is rather *overmastered* by his emotions which swing wildly from superstitious dread (6:14, 16) to awe, fascination, and confusion (6:20), to a sexual arousal that seems to border on insanity (6:22–23) to extreme depression (6:26).… Herod is merely one who appears to rule (cf. 10:42), whereas actually his strings are pulled by others.[621]

(2) Antipas neither prevents his (step)-daughter from performing a dance that is received erotically nor ultimately protects John from Herodias' desire to kill John.[622] (3) He shows no restraint in offering the dancing girl a wish, namely, the immoderate "*half* of [his] kingdom" (ἡμίσους τῆς βασιλείας μου) (6:23; emphasis mine).[623] Further, as previously mentioned, Antipas' promise to the daughter stems from his sexual arousal (6:22), regardless of whether the dance itself was intentionally erotic.[624] Mark thus portrays Antipas as one whose behavior

[619] See, Conway, *Behold the Man*, 15–34; Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 39–75 (esp. 64–75); Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men*, 19–45 (esp. 29–35). Undoubtedly, competing versions of what constituted the truly masculine man existed in this cultural climate, as Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men*, 19–45, has shown. The present contention that Antipas does not exemplify the ideal man does not stand or fall on envisioning one construction of "hegemonic" masculinity in the ancient world (with "self-control" as its hallmark characteristic). Rather, the point is that "self-control" is demonstrably present as a or the chief ingredient in many constructions of the ideal man. In turn, this enables us to interpret how some first-century readers would have gauged Antipas' credibility as a masculine ruler. On "hegemonic masculinity" in modern critical discourse, see, Tim Carrigan, Bob (R. W.) Connell, and John Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," *Theory and Society* 14 (1985): 551–604; R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 76–81; R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19 (2005): 829–59.

[620] See also, Smith, "Tyranny Exposed," whose identification of stock features of an ancient tyrant-type largely intersects with ancient conceptualizations of emasculating behavior outlined in this section.

[621] Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 398 (italics added and removed). Similarly, Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 83: "Herod is presented as a man who is torn apart by conflicting desires, and is depicted as the antithesis of a true ruler because others manipulate his emotions."

[622] Cf. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 216: "In non-elite eyes, honorable males would not allow a female family member to perform such a display; their failure to prevent her from doing so pegs them as shameless." Similarly, Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men*, 66: "Instead of controlling the women of his family, Herod is manipulated by them."

[623] This immoderate offer is all the more poignant for first-century readers who are aware that Antipas was a tetrarch (not a king), and thus did not have the authority (i.e. control) of fulfilling such an offer.

[624] Ambrose, *Concerning Virgins*, 3.6.27, thinks that the girl exposed her nakedness.

was dictated by sexual passion. (4) His excessiveness could also be perceived from the observation that he held a luxurious banquet, inviting his "great ones," "rulers of a thousand," and "the first ones of Galilee" (6:21).[625] (5) The swiftness (εὐθύς, 6:27) with which he commands is dictated by the urgency of the daughter (εὐθὺς μετὰ σπουδῆς, 6:25). (6) His corpse abuse of John in not allowing John's head and body to be reunited in burial speaks to his excessive treatment of the other (6:27–29).[626]

Asikainen is correct: "Herod [Antipas] does not exemplify the ideal of masculine self-control."[627] Consequently, Crossley's contention that some first-century readers would hardly blame Antipas on account of his attraction to the κορασίον must be met with an important qualification: many first-century readers likely *would* blame him on account of not exercising proper control, including over his sexual passion. In this light, Antipas' apologetic stance toward John in Mark 6:20 *sharpens* Antipas' lack of control as he is ultimately incapable of protecting John effectively.

2.2.3. Oath Ideology

Finally, Crossley's appeal to the ideology of oaths and vows in the ancient world also comes up against problems. For Crossley: "The background of binding oaths and vows would have provided Mark 6.17–29 with further reasons to maintain Antipas' innocence and blame Salome-Herodias because Antipas, obviously, must do the honourable thing and keep his word."[628] At first appearance, Crossley's reasoning makes a great deal of sense. According to Num 30:3 LXX (MT: Num 30:2): "Whoever vows a vow to the Lord or swears an oath

[625] Smith, "Tyranny Exposed," 278: "Mark's depiction of Antipas' dinner party (to which Herod Antipas invites Romans among his guests) in juxtaposition to the languishing imprisonment of a prophet elsewhere described as a wilderness ascetic thus marks Antipas' sumptuary excess."

[626] Cf. Hartmann, *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers*, 187–89, who (citing Seneca, *Controversiae* 9.2.4; *Ep.* 83.25; Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, 9.2.2; Plutarch, *Crass.* 33.4) argues that the ancient literary motif of bringing a head to a feast functions to demonstrate the excessive cruelty of the one responsible (directly or indirectly) for the executed person's death.

[627] Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men*, 65.

[628] Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 154.

(ὀμνύω) or determines with determination about his soul shall not profane his word; *all* things that come out of his mouth, he shall do" (Num 30:3 LXX).[629] And, as Crossley observes, even the Roman emperor Gaius Caligula is not exempt from the cultural requisite of keeping his word to Agrippa (referring to Josephus, *Ant.* 18.289–304).[630] Thus, when Antipas "swears an oath" (ὀμνύω) to the daughter (6:23) and fulfills it (6:27–28), there is no indication that Antipas' oath-*keeping* was foolish or his prioritization of his own honor dishonorable.[631] Or so it seems. Three qualifying comments are in order.

First, despite the binding quality of oaths and vows, at least some ancients could understand certain cirumstances that render (1) breaking an oath permissible, or (2) breaking or keeping an oath a choice between two evils, particularly when fulfilling an oath or vow conflicts with another moral imperative. Cicero indicates "clear understanding in one's own mind that [the oath] should be performed" as a criterion in discerning perjury.[632] Cicero also once said regarding Agammenon: "He ought to have broken his vow rather than commit so horrible a crime."[633] Josephus specifies that Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter as a burnt offering (see Judg 11:29–40) was "neither sanctioned by the law (νόμιμον) nor well-pleasing to God (θεῷ κεχαρισμένην); for he had not by reflection probed what might befall or in what aspect the deed would appear to them that heard of it."[634] Thus, for Josephus, Jephthah's

629 I have italicized "all" to reflect the grammatical emphasis on the all-encompassing nature of the construction πάντα ὅσα ἐάν (lit. "all things, as many things as").

630 Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History*, 154–55. See also, Deut 23:21–23; Eccl 5:5; Sir 23:11; cf. Mark 14:71.

631 Cf. Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 83: "There is an implication that Herod's company of guests are more likely to think badly of Herod for breaking his oath than for his murder of John."

632 Cicero, *Off.* 3.29: "Furthermore, we have laws regulating warfare, and fidelity to an oath must often be observed in dealings with an enemy: for an oath sworn with the clear understanding in one's own mind that it should be performed must be kept; but if there is no such understanding it does not count as perjury if one does not perform the vow" (Miller, LCL).

633 Cicero, *Off.* 3.25 (Miller, LCL).

634 Josephus, *Ant.* 5.266 (Thackeray and Marcus, LCL). In his account of Jephthah's daughter, moreover, Josephus (*Ant.* 5.263–266) omits Judg 11:29 ("Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah" [NRSV]). Accordingly, Tal Ilan, "Flavius Josephus and Biblical Women," in *Early Jewish Writings*, ed. Eileen Schuller and Marie-Theres Wacker (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 176, writes: "Because being equipped with divine power should have made Jephthah's vow superfluous, this could be the reason why Josephus skips over the verse. In so doing Jephthah loses in the eyes of Josephus the favor or grace of God."

fulfillment of his vow conflicts with Torah.[635] Josephus' note about Jephthah's lack of forethought implies that others would have objected to him carrying out the vow.

In this light, even though Mark does not explicitly denounce Antipas for keeping his oath, specific elements in Mark's story would likely enable some early recipients of the tradition to condemn Antipas for not breaking it. The Markan tradition clearly stresses the Baptist's innocence. John, for example, is characterized as one concerned with fidelity to Torah (6:22).[636] And Antipas recognizes that John is a "righteous and holy man" (ἄνδρα δίκαιον καὶ ἅγιον) (6:20). Moreover, the concessive participial construction in 6:26 (περίλυπος γενόμενος; "although [the King] became deeply distressed) indicates a measure of reluctance to fulfill the girl's desire for John's head. Although commenting on the Matthean account, Origen's remarks are heuristically illustrative in this respect: "And the prophet was beheaded because of oaths, in relation to which the right thing to do was to break the oaths rather than keep them. For the accusation of rashness when making an oath and of breaking an oath because of rashness, and the accusation of putting a prophet to death to keep an oath are not the same."[637] Augustine, as a further example, views it as the lesser of two evils for Antipas to break his oath than shed the Baptist's blood (*Serm*. 308.1–2).[638]

Second, even if Crossley is right that Antipas' fulfillment of his oath *does not* paint him negatively, (1) the content of the oath—up to half of his kingdom—and (2) the motivation behind the oath—sexual arousal—*do*, as we have already shown. To this second qualification we can add the third, and final, one. Even if we concede to Crossley regarding

[635] Josephus fails to state how the sacrifice is not sanctioned by Torah, but it is possible that the Torah's moral imperatives against child sacrifice (Lev 18:21; 20:2; Deut 12:31; 18:10) inform his comments.

[636] See Lev 18:16; 20:21; cf. Deut 25:5–10. See, Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 58–59.

[637] Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 10.22 (Heine, OECT).

[638] Bede (Oden and Hall, *Mark*, 85–86) insinuates, by appealing to 1 Sam 25:2–39, that Herod should have broken his oath: "There is an urgent necessity for us to break our oath, rather than turn to another more serious crime in order to avoid breaking our oath. David swore by the Lord to kill Nabal, a stupid and wicked man, and to destroy all his possessions. But at the first entreaty of the prudent woman Abigail, he quickly took back his threats, put back his sword into its scabbard, and did not feel that he had contracted any guilt by thus breaking his oath in this way."

the honor of oath-keeping, many first-century readers would likely view Antipas through a negative lens on account of him swearing an oath at all. The Matthean Jesus is an obvious example that comes to mind:

> Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord." But I say to you, Do not swear at all.… [5:37] Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No"; anything more than this comes from the evil one.[639]

According to Josephus, the Essenes view swearing at all worse than perjury: "Any word of theirs has more force than an oath; swearing (τὸ ὀμνύειν) they avoid, regarding it as worse than perjury (τῆς ἐπιορκίας), for they say that one who is not believed without an appeal to God stands condemned already (ἤδη)."[640] While the Essenes view swearing worse than swearing falsely, Philo considers swearing worse than even "to swear truly" (εὐορκεῖν):

> To swear not at all is the best course and most profitable to life, well suited to a rational nature which has been taught to speak the truth so well on each occasion that its words are regarded as oaths; to swear truly (εὐορκεῖν) is only, as people say, a "second-best voyage," for the mere fact of his swearing (ἤδη γὰρ ὅ γε ὀμνύς) casts suspicion on the trustworthiness of a man.[641]

Thus, for Philo and the Essenes (if Josephus is to be believed), swearing an oath itself "already" (ἤδη) casts a suspicious gaze on the one who swears.

We might also point to Sir 23:11 where a "much-swearing man" (ἀνὴρ πολύορκος) is viewed as filled with "lawlessness" (ἀνομίας).[642] And again Philo says that "[the habit of] much-swearing" (ἡ πολυορκία) casts suspicion on one's credibility (*Spec*. 2.8). According to the Mishnah, one should not be "profuse in [making] vows."[643] In this vein, it is perhaps not insignificant that Mark portrays Antipas as making *multiple* oaths to the daughter:

639 Matthew 5:33–34, 37 (NRSV).
640 Josephus, *J.W.* 2.135 (Thackeray, LCL).
641 Philo, *Decal*. 17.84 (Colson, LCL).
642 Sirach 23:11 continues: "If he disregards [the oath], he sins doubly." In contradistinction to the Essenes and Philo, then, Sir 23:11 seems to indicate disregarding one's oath worse than swearing an oath in the first place. Nevertheless, swearing itself is still characterized negatively. Cf. Eccl 5:5 (MT: Eccl 5:4): "It is better that you should not vow (לֹא־תִדֹּר) than that you should vow and not fulfill it" (NRSV).
643 Mishnah, *Demai* 2.3 (Neusner).

- 6:22: “The king said to the girl, ‘Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.’”
- 6:23: “And he swore to her, ‘Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.’”

Mark 6:26 indicates that Antipas did not wish to reject the daughter’s wishes out of regard for his “oaths” (τοὺς ὅρκους). As Duran succinctly puts it, Herod “talks too much.”[644]

In light of this discussion, it is best to conclude that the pre-Markan tradition’s recognition of John’s masculinity—“a righteous and holy man (ἄνδρα)” (6:20)—is designed to underscore Antipas’ lack thereof. The arguments levelled here against Crossley pertain precisely to his emphasis on the tradition blaming primarily Herodias and the daughter for John’s death. His principal contention that the tradition reflects early gendered reactions that attempt to reinscribe “stereotypical gender constructions” is not wrong, in my estimation, insofar as it is understood that this reinscribing does not preclude a construct of an emasculated Antipas.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the interrelation of two features in the earliest written memory of John’s beheading. One feature is Mark’s intricate interconnection between the deaths of John and Jesus. The second feature is a wedge, or distance, between the respective characterizations of John and the Herodian court that this interconnection creates. With these maneuvers, the Gospel of Mark acknowledges but also contests the negative potential that remembering bodily violence risks evoking. This commemorative text thus functions as the locus of identity construction, where shame is mastered and ideology is expressed and reinforced.

[644] Duran, “Return of the Disembodied or How John the Baptist Lost His Head,” 284.

Paradoxically, however, the constructive process of overcoming the violence of John's beheading risks creating invisible violence (see chapter two). The dangerousness of narrating acts of bodily violence is noticeable when the reception history of such violence is brought into view. Subsequent handlers of the tradition of John's beheading perpetuate such a culture of invisible violence as they localize the wedge created between John/Jesus and the Herodian court in their present social frameworks. The dangerous impact of this distancing is most clearly observable in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* and Origen's *Commentary on Matthew*. As we will see in chapter five, both recipients weaponize the distance Mark first created between John and the Herodians by activating this feature in the context of early "Jewish-Christian relations."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE VIOLENCE OF MEMORY: JOHN'S BEHEADING AND THE JEWS

Introduction

This fifth chapter provides the final pieces to this work's argument that the memory of John's beheading becomes invisibly violent in its early reception. As chapter four demonstrated, the Gospel of Mark contests the degradation of John's beheading by keying John's death to Jesus' death and vilifying the Herodian court, thereby creating a distance between the characterizations of victim and perpetrators. Many other handlers of the tradition in the first three centuries similarly create such a wedge, albeit in their own ways. In this regard, the first part of this chapter focuses on the reception of John's beheading in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The bulk of this chapter, however, concentrates on the reception of John's decapitation in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* (second century) and in Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* (third century).

I center the majority of attention on these latter two texts for three reasons. First, as indicated in the introduction and first chapter, a key contribution of this study is filling NT scholarship's noticeable lack of attention on second- and third-century sources concerning John's beheading. To focus primarily on first-century texts would represent more of the same work that has already been done. Second, limiting this study to two prominent texts enables a more in-depth study than a cursory survey of all second- and third-century texts that mention John's beheading would otherwise allow. Third, Justin's and Origen's works are most salient in demonstrating the dangerous potential of John's beheading in early "Jewish-Christian relations."[645]

[645] John T. Pawlikowski, "Anti-Judaism," *DJCR*, 19–20: "The most important and comprehensive anti-Judaic document was Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. It became a model for discussions about Judaism in the ancient Church and sowed the seeds for an anti-Judaic attitude that would come to dominate the thinking of the churches from the fourth to the twentieth century." Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of*

Accordingly, the present chapter separates into three main parts. The first part briefly analyzes Matt 14:1–12 and Luke 9:7–9 to highlight two features of these texts that intersect with the interests that are evident in Justin's and/or Origen's works: (1) the differing characterizations of Herod and John the Baptist and (2) the matter of Elijah. The second part concerns Justin Martyr's contestation of John's beheading and argues that Justin redeploys John's beheading in two anti-Jewish directions. First, Justin carefully assigns Herod a Jewish identity by making him a royal symbol of contemporary Jews. Justin activates the characterization of Herod as a prophet-killer and makes him another example of the Jews who kill God's prophets. Second, Justin harnesses the image of John's severed head on a platter to assert John's Elijanic identity. But, in order to cast his version of Elijanic ideology as superior to competing Christian ideas, Justin aligns his Christian rivals' arguments to Jews' Elijanic ideology: he makes countering Jewish ideology an integral component of elevating his own version of Christology. The third part concerns Origen's contestation of the Baptist's decapitation and contends that Origen massages the negative portrayal of the Herodian court into an analogue of contemporary Jewish rejection of Jesus and of prophecy. However, Origen also treats John as a symbol of prophecy among the Jews. Accordingly, he will also retain the degradation of John's beheading to assert the superiority of Christians at the expense of Jews. Thus, both Origen and Justin localize John's beheading in their present social frameworks, weaponizing John's beheading to advance anti-Jewish polemics. Both authors infuse contemporary Jews with the moral character of Herod, inscribing the Jews as killers of God's prophet(s). In so doing, Justin and Origen perpetuate a culture of invisible

the Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 227: "It is in the *Commentary on Matthew* especially that Origen reflects on the relationship between the Church and the Synagogue." Already in the late fourth century we can observe the influence that Origen's anti-Jewish interpretation of John's beheading had on Jerome in the latter's own *Commentary on Matthew*, which relied heavily on Origen's commentary on the same work. See Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 14.11.

violence. Before proceeding, however, it is necessary first to clarify some terminological matters.

1. Terminological Remarks

By the time of Justin Martyr in the second century, it is appropriate to conceptualize "Christian" and "Jew" as distinguishable social identities, at least in a restricted sense. Both Justin and Origen participate in self-definition by distancing themselves from Jews in the past who did not (and Jews in their own lifetimes who do not) follow Jesus. This work of self-differentiation in their writings takes on anti-Jewish characteristics. Although our discussions of Justin and Origen will particularize these statements, explanation regarding this position's relationship to the so-called "parting of the ways" and "anti-Jewishness" is necessary here at the outset.

1.1. The "Parting of the Ways"

By adopting the perspective that by the mid-second century "Christian" and "Jew" were more or less distinguishable social identities to at least some contemporary commentators, I am not suggesting a clean break at a specific place and time between Christianity and Judaism that the metaphor of a singular "parting" seemingly implies.[646] Previous generations of scholars tended to view the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE as the decisive moment in the apparent partition.[647] Others do not prefer to speak of Christianity and Judaism as individually bounded institutions, distinct from one another, until

[646] Judith Lieu, "'The Parting of the Ways': Theological Construct or Historical Reality," *JSNT* 56 (1994): 101, describes the metaphor of "the parting of the ways" as a "short-hand for speaking of the separation between Judaism and Christianity understood not as a T junction but as a Y junction—two channels separating from a common source."

[647] For examples, see those cited in Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire AD 135–425*, trans. H. McKeating (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1986), x.

the fourth century.[648] Some scholars continue to operate under the paradigm of a parting, albeit with varying levels of sophistication. Dunn, for example, voices the idea of multiple partings (hence the pluralized title of his monograph) and argues that the end of the Bar Kokhba Revolt (c. 135 CE) serves as the crucial point when "Christian and Jew were clearly distinct and separate."[649] Dunn, therefore, recognizes the separation as a lengthy and complex process, but he neverthless postulates a point of no return, when the partition became irreversible.

Others, however, question the utility of a parting paradigm.[650] Fredriksen is critical of Dunn in this regard.[651] Limiting the import of her conclusions to the first seven centuries, she responds to the question "When was the Parting of the Ways?" with her own rhetorical question: "*What* Parting of the Ways?"[652] The force of Fredriksen's rhetoric is driven by her awareness that alongside clear assertions of separation (by e.g. Justin Martyr) are perceptible indications of continuous social interactions between Jews and Christians.[653] Indeed, even in the fourth century—a century for which Kraft makes the claim: "It is quite obvious that the 'ways' … did indeed 'part'"[654]—vehement expressions of distinction can be indelibly interwoven with hints of intimate proximity of Christians and Jews to one another. In Chrysostom's efforts to dissuade Judaizing Christians from participating in Jewish festivals, his vilification of Jews presupposes the reality of close interactions between Jews and Christians. Consider this excerpt from his eighth homily:

[648] For examples, see those cited in Daniel Boyarin, "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/'Christianity,'" in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 66, n. 4. See also, Robert A. Kraft, "The Weighing of the Parts: Pivots and Pitfalls in the Study of Early Judaisms and Their Early Christian Offspring," in Becker and Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted*, 87–94.

[649] James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM, 2006), 318 (italics removed).

[650] Most notably, Lieu, "'The Parting of the Ways,'" 101–19.

[651] Paula Fredriksen, "What 'Parting of the Ways'?: Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City," in Becker and Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted*, 35–36, n. 1.

[652] Fredriksen, "What 'Parting of the Ways'?," 63 (italics added).

[653] Fredriksen, "What 'Parting of the Ways'?," 61.

[654] Kraft, "The Weighing of the Parts," 87.

> Sit down and speak with him, but begin with another topic so that he does not suspect you came to set him straight. Then say, "Tell me, do you agree with the Jews who crucified Christ and who blaspheme him to this day and call him a transgressor of the law?" Surely he will not dare say—if he is a Christian, and even if he has been judaizing countless times—"I agree with the Jews." But he will cover his ears and say to you, "Of course not; hush up, man." When you have gotten him to agree to this, continue with the topic and say, "Tell me, how can you participate in their activities? How can you join in their feasts, or fast with them?" Next, accuse the Jews of ingratitude. Tell him of every transgression, which I have narrated to your charity in recent days, and which has been proven from the place, from the time, from the temple, and from the predictions of the prophets. Show him how the Jews do everything without purpose and in vain, that they will never return to their former way of life and that it is illegitimate to keep their former way of life outside of Jerusalem.… Tell him that Jewish fasting, just like circumcision, casts the one who fasts out of heaven even though he might have a thousand other good deeds. Tell him that we are Christians and are called Christians for this reason, that we obey only Christ, not that we run to his enemies. If some healing remedies are shown to you, and someone says that they are able to heal, and for this reason he *goes to the Jews*, expose their magical tricks, their spells, their amulets, their potions. The Jews appear incapable of healing in any other way; for they do not truly heal. Far from it! I'll go even further and say this: if they truly heal, it is better to die than run to the enemies of God and be healed in this way.[655]

Similar to Chrysostom in the fourth century is Cyril of Jerusalem's polemics in the fifth century: "Now the Greeks plunder you with their smooth tongues, 'for honey distils from the lips of a strange woman,' while the circumcision lead you astray by means of the Holy Scriptures, which they wrest vilely, *if you go to them*. They study Scripture from childhood to old age, only to end their days in gross ignorance."[656] Both Chrysostom and Cyril attest that, well into the fourth and fifth centuries, some Christians visited Jews (for varying reasons). Are we to presume that at least some of these Christians also understood themselves, in whatever sense, as Jews? Secure answers are difficult to ascertain. As Lieu notes: "In most cases we cannot know whether those involved would have adopted the label 'Jew' and/or

[655] John Chrysostom, *Adv. Jud.* 8.5. Col. 934–935 (Meeks and Wilken, pp. 115–16; italics added). On Chrysostom's rhetoric, see, F. J. Elizabeth Boddens Hosang, "Attraction and Hatred. Relations between Jews and Christians in the Early Church," in *Violence in Ancient Christianity*, ed. Albert C. Geljon and Riemer Roukema, SVC 125 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 102–03.

[656] Cyril, *Catechetical Lectures*, 4.2 (Telfer, LCC; italics added).

'Christian', or would have felt constrained to choose between them, while the labels that they may have been ascribed by others might be different again."[657]

Moreover, the problem of answering such a question lies precisely on the theoretical acknowledgment that these (and other) texts are mediated and do not necessarily indicate a one-to-one correspondence to reality.[658] If archaeologists were to unearth the writings of those whom Chrysostom hoped to dissuade, scholars would rightly be eager to observe whether they share the conceptual distance between Christians and Jews that Chrysostom invigorates. But the perspectives of these people are lost between the pages of history, evading the historian's grip. However, the fact that Chrysostom's perspective subsisted must surely indicate that at least some continued to have their own identity expressed and reinforced by his words.[659]

This discussion raises, therefore, the complexity of determining what characterizes a separation between Judaism and Christianity. Is such a break characterized by social antagonism, social isolationism (and thus the absence of mixed congregations), or distinct theological categories of thought? If one were to postulate a parting, for example, in the mid-second century, (s)he would necessarily need to account for the apparent fact that some in the fifth century, who were construed as Christians, evidently participated in Jewish festivals and maybe even sought out Jewish input for interpreting Scripture.

Not only does this discussion raise the difficulty of what characterizes difference, it also raises the issue of power: *Who* determines the separation? Is it appropriate to postulate a

[657] Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 305.

[658] On the difficulty of negotiating the relationship between mediated texts and social realities, see, Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 300–02.

[659] Cf. John Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 7: "The voice of the Judaizing Christians—those who saw no need to tie their acceptance of Christianity to a repudiation of Judaism—is scarcely heard at all. The conception of early Christian history as governed by a progressive de-Judaization is true only for the victorious minority whose position is reflected in the surviving literature. The New Testament and other extant Christian writings represent and reinforce the views of the ultimate winners."

parting only once pagans who wielded a measure of political authority could identify someone as ostensibly Christian? Or is it appropriate to speak of Christianity (in the sense of an entity extrinsic to Judaism) only when social exclusivity of Christians from Jews became the statistically dominant position? And when can we be sure that this supremacy occurred, given the prescriptive nature of much of the textual evidence? In this respect, if one were to postulate a post-Constantine parting in the fourth century, (s)he would need to account for certain earlier pagan perceptions, such as Suetonius who can speak of "Christians" (*Christiani*) as following "a new (*novae*) and wicked superstition."[660] In light of this complexity, Lieu's comments are quite reasonable:

> Both "Judaism" and "Christianity" have come to elude our conceptual grasp; we feel sure that they are there, and can quote those "others," outsiders, who were no less sure. How else are we to understand the *fiscus judaicus*, how else to make sense of the death, if not of the myriads of whom Eusebius speaks, at least of some who would not let go of their conviction about Jesus, as they understood it? Yet when we try to describe, when we seek to draw boundaries which will define our subject for us, we lack the tools, both conceptual and material. It seems to me equally justifiable to "construct" "Christianity" in opposition to "Judaism" at the moment when Jesus "cleansed the Temple," at least in the literary representation of that event, and to think of that separation only in the fourth century, stimulated by dramatic changes in access to power—and I could call to my defence advocates of both positions, no doubt determined by their own starting-points and definitional frameworks.[661]

Adding to this convolution is Boyarin's recognition that the term Ἰουδαϊσμός ("Judaism") in non-Christian Jewish usage in antiquity—see, 2 Macc 2:21; 8:1; 14:38—conveys the ways of Judeans or Jews, and thus "Jewishness," not "Judaism" the religion.[662] The occurrence of Ἰουδαϊσμός in 2 Macc thereby contrasts with the appearance in 2 Macc 4:13 of Ἑλληνισμός ("Hellenism"), a term that marks the ways and manners of the Greeks, and thus, we might add, "Greekness."[663] In fact, Boyarin convincingly argues that "Judaism" as a bounded institution mainly came into existence as a needed Christian construct to erect Christian

[660] Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2 (Rolfe, LCL).

[661] Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew Nor Greek?: Constructing Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 239. Likewise, Lieu, "'The Parting of the Ways,'" 108.

[662] Boyarin, "Semantic Differences," 67–68.

[663] See, Boyarin, "Semantic Differences," 68.

orthodoxy over and against heresy.[664] Hence the tendency of many early Christians to define heresy "with reference to *Judaism*."[665]

The purpose of this chapter is not to issue an argument that satisfactorily solves these and related issues. Rather, raising these difficulties helps situate my analysis of two primary texts as ideologically focused, while respecting the inherent complexity of early Jewish-Christian interactions. Thus, when I claim that "Christian" and "Jew" were *more or less* distinguishable social identities by the mid-second century, I am not making a statement underpinned by a paradigm of a meta-level parting between Judaism and Christianity. The descriptor—"more or less"—therefore, is essential insofar as it captures that the fault lines between Jews and Christians in antiquity shifted gradually, sporadically, and fluctuated according to place.

Further, this recognition of relativity does not undercut that particular individuals (and segments of society) could self-define themselves as Christians and not Jews. Hence my intimation that "Christian" and "Jew" are distinguish*able* by the second and third centuries. Boyarin is again apropos:

> But a partial answer to the paradox that, as early as the first century, Christians were, nevertheless, recognizable at least in some places as not-Jews (Tacitus, the *fiscus judaicus*, other evidence) is to note that whether or not there were Christianity and Judaism, there were, it seems, at least some Christians who were not Jews, and, of course, many Jews who were not Christians.[666]

In my analysis below, it will become clear that Justin and Origen create a vast structural gulf, at least at the discourse level, between Christians and Jews (and align themselves with the former). Again, that Justin or Origen ideologically distance "Christians" from "Jews" does not assume that their sentiments were representative of the lived reality and ideology of all segments of Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire at large. Thus, my claim that

[664] Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 11–13.

[665] Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 12 (italics original).

[666] Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 6–7.

"Christian" and "Jew" were more or less distinguish*able* social identities speaks rather to the capacity of individuals to make even contested distinctions and is, therefore, anchored with respect to Justin's and Origen's self-differentiating activity in particular.

1.2. Anti-Jewishness

Another complicated terminological matter is delineating this chapter's employment of the adjective "anti-Jewish" (or the nouns "anti-Jewishness" and "anti-Judaism") to describe the memory of John's death in Justin Martyr and Origen. "The search for a pure and unbiased vocabulary is probably doomed from the start."[667] Nevertheless, efforts must be made to minimize the potential confusion surrounding the use of such language. As an initial remark, I utilize the term "anti-Jewish" instead of "anti-Semitic" to avoid, inasmuch as possible, anachronistic overtones that the latter expression tends to elicit in a post-Holocaust world. Reinhartz will remind historians that while "some degree of anachronism is inherent to the study of the past," some anachronisms are more acceptable than others.[668] Although "anti-Semitism" is employed in a variety of ways[669] (including as a synonymn of "anti-Judaism"[670]), in general its usage communicates "racist discrimination against Jews for the simple reason that they are Jews," a racial polemic particularly associated with the rise of Nazi Germany.[671] The term "anti-Jewish" is less anachronistic—in that it does not tend to carry these associations—and thus, the more viable option to label the texts under

[667] Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, 7.

[668] Adele Reinhartz, review of *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*, by Daniel Boyarin, *Reading Religion* [http://www.readingreligion.org] (2018).

[669] See, Ritchie Robertson, "Varieties of Anti-Semitism," *EJD*, 103–07, who mentions numerous types, including theological, economic, racial, and nationalist anti-Semitisms. See also Mark H. Gelber, "Literary Anti-Semitism," *EJD*, 107, defines "literary anti-Semitism" as "the potential or capacity of a text to encourage or positively evaluate anti-Semitic attitudes or behaviors in accordance, generally, with the delineation of such attitudes and behaviors by social scientists and historians."

[670] Pawlikowski, "Anti-Judaism," 19.

[671] Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann*, SJHC 20 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 5–8 (quotation, p. 7). Frederick Schweitzer, "Persecution of Diaspora Jews: History of Jewish Persecution and Expulsion," *EJD*, 95: "Anti-Semitism may be defined basically as fear and hatred of the Jews."

consideration here. I do not detect any overt hatred of "Jews" as such in Justin Martyr's and Origen's treatments of John's death; and so I abstain from using "anti-Semitic" to eschew this accusation.

However, the employment of "anti-Jewish" at the expense of "anti-Semitic" does not presuppose that these terms are strict, unrelated, binaries. Gerdmar observes in his monumental 2009 monograph, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*, that "anti-Judaism" typically indicates criticism of Judaism without necessarily denoting hatred of Jews for the simple fact that they are Jews.[672] In this respect, it is the more innocuous term. But its degree of severity in relation to "anti-Semitism" does not mitigate its inherent dangerousness. As Gerdmar convincingly argues: "Anti-Judaism may be 'fertilised' and develop into anti-Semitism."[673] Gerdmar thus detects an indelible link between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, with the former often acting as "a *praeparatio antisemitica*."[674] My usage of "anti-Jewish," therefore, is not intended to overlook that notions which Justin Martyr and Origen both voiced—e.g. that "Jews" killed prophets like Jesus and John the Baptist—have fueled anti-Semitic sentiments and acts of physical violence against Jews. In fact, that anti-Jewish attitudes have actualized into visible violence against Jews over the course of history adds credence to the idea of conceptualizing anti-Jewishness as invisible violence, and thus impregnated with dangerous potential.[675]

Moreover, distinguishing "anti-Jewishness" from racial hatred of Jews does not carry the implication that Justin Martyr and Origen refrain from strong polemics vis-à-vis Jews who had rejected Jesus as Messiah. To take Justin Martyr as an example, throughout his

672 Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*, 6–7.

673 Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*, 8.

674 Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*, 8. Similarly, Hosang, "Attraction and Hatred," 106–07.

675 Cf. Gelber, "Literary Anti-Semitism," 111: "The Shoah made perfectly clear, by way of actualization, that the distance between literary anti-Semitism and other varieties of anti-Semitism is not that great, given political power and a willingness to commit crimes against humanity or, in this case, against Jewry."

Dialogue with Trypho he refers to Trypho and Jews (like Trypho) who did not follow Jesus as ignorant (*Dial.* 9.1), "full of deceit and all wickedness" (*Dial.* 14.2), "a hard-hearted, foolish, blind, and crippled people (λαός), and children in whom there is no faith" (*Dial.* 27.4), among other invectives. At one juncture, Trypho even remarks to Justin:

> "It would be better for us," Trypho concluded, "to have obeyed our teachers who warned us not to listen to you Christians (ὑμῶν),[676] nor to converse with you on these subjects, for you have blasphemed many times in your attempt to convince us that this crucified man was with Moses and Aaron, and spoke with them in the pillar of the cloud; that He became man, was crucified, and ascended into Heaven, and will return again to this earth; and that He should be worshipped."[677]

Soon thereafter, Trypho similarly retorts: "Don't you realize … that you are out of your mind to say such things?"[678] In light of these representative examples, Barnard's contention that Justin's and Trypho's discussion is "friendly and docile" and "amicable" is to state only half the truth.[679] Rajak is entirely correct: "In the *Trypho*, the polemic is both sustained and intense, even if punctuated by moments of genuine interaction."[680]

Although Justin hopes that some Jews will believe in Jesus as the Christ,[681] this prospect does not diminish the fact that his polemics drive a sharp contrast between non-Christian Jews and non-Jewish Christians.[682] The issue in conceptualizing Justin Martyr or

[676] Falls' translation obscures that the Greek term Χριστιανός ("Christian") is absent here. Nevertheless, his rendering of ὑμῶν as "you Christians" captures the rhetorical distance between Jews and Christians Justin creates in his recurring juxtaposition of the second-person plural and first-person plural throughout his dialogue, as we will see.

[677] Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 38.1 (Falls, FC).

[678] Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 39.3 (Falls, FC).

[679] L. W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 21, 40 (respectively). Similarly, Theodore Stylianopoulos, *Justin Martyr and the Mosaic Law*, Dissertation Series 20 (Missoula: SBL and Scholars Press, 1975), 35–36, speaks of the "irenic disposition" and "conciliatory tone" of Justin's dialogue. Cf. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, 165, who responds to Barnard's and Stylianopoulos' claims: "But Justin's polite tone and gentle manner are only part of the story. The other part is a sustained theological anti-Judaism." Scholars make similar remarks regarding Origen's tone about the Jews. See, e.g., Nicholas de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine*, UCOP 25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 76: "His [Origen's] remarks about them [the Jews] are on the whole surprisingly free from the ill-informed rancor which pervades much of the literature on the subject which survives from the early Church. But it would be misleading to overlook entirely such traces of acrimony as do appear."

[680] Tessa Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction*, AGJU 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 513.

[681] See e.g., *Dial.* 8.1–2; 32.2; 142.2–3; cf. 39.1–2.

[682] As Susan Wendel, *Scriptural Interpretation and Community Self-Definition in Luke-Acts and the Writings of Justin Martyr*, NovTSup 139 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 184 (italics added) astutely observes: "Justin still

Origen as "anti-Jewish" is not a matter of their inner disposition toward Jews.[683] For this study, "anti-Jewish" is employed to describe a distancing between Jews and Christians, a wedge that pits Jews in an (ideological) inferior position to Christians. Casting Jews in an inferior light can happen even by those, such as Justin Martyr, with presumed "positive" or "harmless" intentions of "evangelization." As chapter two demonstrated, violence exists even in the banal and seemingly innocuous mechanisms of self-definition. For this reason, it is appropriate to categorize Justin's and Origen's anti-Jewishness as a type of invisible violence—both authors engage in identity formation at the expense of Jews.

2. John's Beheading in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke

Outside the Gospel of Mark, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke are the only extant texts from the first century that mention the beheading of John the Baptist.[684] As is frequently observed, Matt 14:1–12 follows Mark 6:14–29 in its general outline but heavily abbreviates the story.[685] Luke 9:7–9 follows Matt 14:1–2 and Mark 6:14–16 in narrating that speculation surrounded the identities of John and Jesus, but departs from Matt 14:3–12 and Mark 6:17–29 by not narrating the account of John's beheading at all. Earlier in Luke 3:19–20, however, Luke had

identifies Jews who believe in Jesus as *an exceptional few* whom God spared so that the Jewish race would not be completely obliterated (*1 Apol.* 53.7–8; *Dial.* 55.3; 32.2).… [Justin] frequently contrasts non-Jewish Christ-believers with Jews, as if these two designations served as fitting labels for insiders and outsiders to the Christ-believing community, respectively." Similarly, that Origen envisions an ultimate future in which "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:25) does not neutralize the dangerous potential of the bleak assessment of the Jews in the meantime that Origen propagates. See, Joseph S. O'Leary, "The Recuperation of Judaism," in *Origeniana Sexta*, BETL 118 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), 378: "Anti-Judaism is a structural necessity of his [Origen's] thought, which systematizes the previous efforts to judge and recuperate Judaism and which in turn was inherited by all subsequent Christian theology." On the ultimate salvation of the Jews in Origen, see Heine, *Origen*, 2010, 227–31; Peter W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 136, n. 10. On Origen driving a sharp wedge between Jews and Christians, see, e.g., Origen, *Cels.* 2.8.

[683] See, Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, 167.

[684] Josephus mentions John's death, but not the beheading of John (see, *Ant.* 18.116–119). The Gospel of John does not mention John's death, let alone his beheading. But, see Augustine, *Tract. Ev. Jo.* 14.5.3 where he claims that Jesus' crucifixion and John's beheading exemplified the saying in John 3:30 ("He must increase, but I must decrease"). So also, Augustine, *Serm.* 307.1.

[685] See, e.g., John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 581; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 216–17; Evans, *Matthew*, 291; Dennert, *John the Baptist*, 244.

linked Herod's arrest of John with the latter's rebuke of Herod concerning Herodias (cf. Mark 6:17–18; Matt 14:3–4).[686] Two matters regarding John's death in Matthew and in Luke are particularly important for the present study: (1) the gap between the characterizations of John and Herod and (2) the matter of Elijah.

2.1. John and Herod

Like the Gospel of Mark, both Matthew and Luke distance John the Baptist from Herod Antipas. In this distancing, both Gospels follow Mark in connecting John's death to Jesus' death. In his *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present*, Allison observes that "fewer" scholars "have spoken of Matthew" in the same way that many—following Kähler—have evaluated the Gospel of Mark: "as a passion narrative with an extended introduction."[687] Despite Matthew's passion narrative occupying "a proportionately smaller amount of space," Allison contends that Matthew's "entire narrative leans forward, so to speak, to its end, so that the reader of Matt. 1–25 is never far from thinking of the ensuing chapters, 26–28."[688]

As part of this overall narrative effect, John's beheading "leans forward" to Jesus' crucifixion in Matthew's narration. Matthew 14:1–2 excludes the populace's speculation as to Jesus' identity (Mark 6:14–15) and instead focuses exclusively on Herod's conjecture that Jesus is the resurrected John. The elimination of these other opinions "offers a stronger focus on the link between John and Jesus."[689] Just as John is "grasped" (κρατέω, Matt 14:3) and "bound" (δέω, Matt 14:3), so also Jesus is "grasped" (κρατέω, Matt 21:46; 26:4, 48, 50, 55,

[686] Also, as Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I–IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 476, observes, Luke does not mention John's death in Luke 3:19–20 "because of the tradition he will make use of in the episodes of 7:18–30."

[687] Dale C. Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 217.

[688] Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 217.

[689] Dennert, *John the Baptist*, 239.

57) and "bound" (δέω, Matt 27:2). According to Matt 14:5, Herod "wished" (θέλω, cf. Matt 17:12) to "kill" (ἀποκτείνω) John the Baptist, but "feared" (φοβέω) the "crowd" (ὄχλος) "because they held him as a prophet (προφήτης)." The chief priests and Pharisees sought to grasp Jesus, but "feared" (φοβέω) the "crowds" (ὄχλος) "because they held him as a prophet (προφήτης)" (Matt 21:46).[690] Similarly, the "crowd(s)" (ὄχλος, Matt 27:15–23) "want" (θέλω, Matt 27:15, 17, 21) Barrabas released, but Jesus crucified.[691] John's "disciples" (μαθητής, Matt 14:12) bury John; Joseph of Arimathea was "discipled" (μαθητεύω, Matt 27:57) by Jesus and placed Jesus' corpse in a tomb (Matt 27:57–61).[692] Finally, of course, "John prepares the way for Jesus even in the manner of his execution."[693] John suffers an ignomonious death in beheading as Jesus similarly suffers a shameful end in crucifixion.

Luke 9:7–8 follows Mark 6:14–15 in recounting the various speculation that Jesus might be (1) John raised from the dead (Luke 9:7), (2) Elijah (Luke 9:8), or (3) one of the ancient prophets (Luke 9:8). Like Mark, Luke inserts this speculation into his narrative as the interior of an intercalation between the sending out of the twelve (Luke 9:1–6) and their return (Luke 9:10). According to Luke 9:9, Herod responds to the populace's speculation about the identity of Jesus first with an observation, followed second by a rhetorical question: "Herod said: 'John I myself beheaded; but who is this about whom I am hearing such things?" As the previous chapter argued, in contrast to Mark's Herod, Luke's Herod disassociates Jesus from John on the basis of the method with which Herod had John executed. This fact, however, does not negate that this saying connects John's death to Jesus' death in two ways. First, Herod's rhetorical question "foreshadows Jesus' question and

690 Dennert, *John the Baptist*, 247: "Matthew has inserted the behavior of the Jewish leaders into the portrayal of Herod, linking these groups together."

691 Cf. Matt 21:23–27.

692 For further possible thematic links between John's death and Jesus' death in Matthew, see, e.g., Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 225–26; Dennert, *John the Baptist*, 238–54. David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 365: "Antipas's reluctance to behead John may anticipate Pilate's reluctance to crucify Jesus (14:9; 27:18–24)."

693 Turner, *Matthew*, 365.

Peter's confession, which Jesus interprets through the suffering of the Messiah (9:18–22)."[694] Second, the disassociation between the two figures allows the narrator to add a final remark to Luke 9:9: "And he [Herod] was seeking to see him." Thus, Luke 9:9 prepares the narrative for Jesus' future interaction with Herod.[695] Herod "will reappear in connection with the plot against Jesus and in connection with Jesus' death (13:31–33; 23:7–11; Acts 4:27)."[696]

Matthew develops the differing characterizations between John and Herod in further ways. Herod's desire to kill John in Matt 14:5 connects him with his father, Herod the Great, who similarly sought to kill Jesus in Jesus' infancy (Matt 2:1–18).[697] The Matthean Jesus' command not to swear oaths (Matt 5:33–37) positions Herod in a negative spotlight, as his oath to the dancing daughter results in John's beheading (Matt 14:7–12). Matthew portrays John the Baptist, on the other hand, in a positive light. The Matthean Jesus indicates that John is the greatest human (Matt 11:11). Prior to Matt 11:11, Matthew's Jesus "has already affirmed the prophetic identity of John in 11:9."[698] In conjunction with Matthew's reminder that the crowd thought of John as a prophet (Matt 14:5), Matthew situates Herod as one who is hostile to God's prophets. Indeed, Matthew heightens this theme. Rather than narrating John's death as the interior of an intercalation between the sending and return of the twelve (as does Mark and Luke), he inserts the account directly after the episode of Jesus' rejection by his hometown (Matt 13:53–58).[699]

Similar to Mark and Matthew, Luke views John the Baptist positively and Herod negatively. As Kinman puts it, Luke's John "was a prophet without equal."[700] According to

[694] François Bovon, *Luke: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1—9:50*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 349.

[695] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 355; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 362.

[696] Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 360–61.

[697] Dennert, *John the Baptist*, 239.

[698] Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 583.

[699] On the rejection of the prophets in Matthew, see also Matt 5:12; 17:12–13; 23:29–37.

[700] Brent Kinman, "Luke's Exoneration of John the Baptist," *JTS* 44 (1993): 595. See also, Richard J. Erickson, "The Jailing of John and the Baptism of Jesus: Luke 3:19–21," *JETS* 36 (1993): 455–66.

Luke 1:76, John the Baptist "will be called a prophet of the Most High." The characterization of John as a prophet continues as John receives his prophetic call in Luke 3:2: "During the highpriesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came upon John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness." Given Luke's positive estimation of John, then, it is not surprising that Luke's antipathies reside with Antipas in the episode of John's imprisonment: "And Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him [John] concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and concerning all the evil things which he did, Herod also added this to them all: he locked up John in prison" (Luke 3:19–20).[701] Finally, Herod's question in Luke 9:9 ("John I myself beheaded; but who is this about whom I am hearing such things?") "leads the reader to class Herod as yet another character who 'hears but does not understand' (8.10)."[702]

These elements of Matthew and Luke, therefore, despite their different emphases, nevertheless share the common thread of driving a sharp divide between John the Baptist and Herod. Although stressing that the Gospels portray John positively and Herod negatively largely states the obvious, this divide takes an interesting turn in its reception history in the second and third centuries. Thus, understanding how this thread is woven into the contentious fabric of early "Jewish-Christian relations" is the task of the two main sections of this chapter. As we will see, Justin Martyr and Origen redeploy the negative characterization of Antipas in order to place Christians in a superior position to Jews.

2.2. John and Elijah

The second matter regarding John's death in Matthew and Luke is that of John's relationship to Elijah. In the previous chapter, I made the observation that the Gospel of Mark indirectly portrays John as the returned Elijah. The resemblance between Herodias' desire to

[701] See, Erickson, "The Jailing of John," 455: "Luke's sympathies clearly lie with John the Baptist in John's encounter with Herod Antipas (Luke 3:19–20)."

[702] John A. Darr, *Herod the Fox: Audience Criticism and Lukan Characterization*, JSNTSup 163 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 164.

kill John (Mark 6:19) and Jezebel's resolve to kill Elijah (1 Kgs 19:1–3)—both of which are connected to the prophets' respective criticisms of their marriages (Mark 6:17–18; 1 Kgs 16:31–33; 18:17–18; 21:25)—has led scholars to conclude that this portrayal is at work in the episode of John's death in Mark 6:14–29.[703] Matthew's account of John's death follows Mark in indicating that John denounced Herod's marriage to Herodias (Matt 14:3–4). Matthew departs from Mark, however, by casting Herod as John's chief antagonist.[704] According to Matt 14:5, it is Herod who wants to kill John (cf. Mark 6:19). Absent in Matthew's portayal is the Markan Herod's rather positive appraisal of John (Mark 6:20). Thus, Matthew "reduces the John/Elijah and Herodias/Jezebel typology of Mark by making Herod, not Herodias, the one who wants to kill John."[705]

Overall, however, the Gospel of Matthew is the most explicit of the Synoptic Gospels in identifying John the Baptist as Elijah.[706] The Matthean parallel (Matt 17:9–13) to Mark 9:9–13 explicitly equates John the Baptist with Elijah: "Then the disciples understood that he [Jesus] spoke to them concerning John the Baptist" (Matt 17:13).[707] The Matthean Jesus at 11:15 identifies John as Elijah: "If you are willing to accept [it], he [John] is Elijah who is to come." Luke, interestingly, has a "mixed" portrayal of John and Elijah.[708] In the infancy narrative, Luke associates John the Baptist with the "spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17). Luke also affiliates Jesus with Elijah (e.g., raising of the widow's son—Luke 7:7–17 [cf. 1

[703] See, e.g., Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 54.

[704] Similarly, Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 215.

[705] Dennert, *John the Baptist*, 244–45. Dennert's ensuing claim that Matthew's account thereby "paints Herod in a more negative light" (*John the Baptist*, 245), however, is overstepping. As the previous chapter argued, the Markan Herod's positive appraisal of John and desire to protect him from Herodias *heightens* Herod's lack of masculinity—he is ultimately unable to control the Herodian women. On the softening of the Elijah and Jezebel typology in the Matthean account, see, Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 214–18.

[706] In this respect, the reduction of the Elijah-typology in Matt 14:1–12, as Dennert, *John the Baptist*, 244, remarks, is "somewhat surprising." This mysteriousness is compounded in light of Matt 17:12–13 where John and Elijah are associated together in connection with John's death.

[707] Erickson, "The Jailing of John," 457: "Matthew improves on Mark by actually interpreting Elijah as John the Baptist (Matt 17:13)."

[708] Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 47. At odds with the Synoptic Gospels' portrayals is the Gospel of John's depiction. At John 1:21, John the Baptist "issues his flat denial that he is Elijah," to use Goodacre's phraseology. See Mark Goodacre, "Mark, Elijah, the Baptist and Matthew," 83.

Kgs 17:17–24]; fire from heaven—9:51–56 [cf. 2 Kgs 1:10–14]).[709] Yet Luke also distances John from an Elijanic status. Luke omits certain traditions where Mark and Matthew make a connection between John and Elijah. The note on John's clothing (Mark 1:6//Matt 3:4) that parallels the appearance of Elijah in 4 Kgdms 1:8 LXX has no Lukan counterpart. Nor does Luke recount the descent from the transfiguration where Mark 9:9–13 implies John is Elijah and Matt 17:9–13 makes this identification explicit. In this light, the absence of a Lukan counterpart to Mark 6:17–29//Matt 14:3–12 may reflect a redactional impulse to moderate Elijanic associations with John.[710]

John's relationship to Elijah, therefore, varies from one Gospel to the next. The Baptist's identity as Elijah is significant in the reception history of John's death, particularly in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. As we will see, the matter of Elijah stands at the heart of the competitive Christology that characterizes Justin's social context. For Justin, John's beheading is indicative of his Elijanic identity. Establishing John's Elijanic identity is crucial if Justin is to assert the superiority of his version of Christology over competing versions. To Justin we now turn.

3. John's Beheading in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho

[709] See further, Goodacre, "Mark, Elijah, the Baptist and Matthew," 83; James A. Kelhoffer, *The Diet of John the Baptist: "Locusts and Wild Honey" in Synoptic and Patristic Interpretation*, WUNT 176 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 129–32.

[710] Likewise, the Gospel of John's distancing of John from Elijah (John 1:21) may also explain the absence of a Johannine counterpart to Mark 6:17–29//Matt 14:3–12. For alternative theories on this Lukan and Johannine omission, see Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 213–14, n. 1. See also, Janes, "Why the Daughter of Herodias Must Dance," 456: "Luke's motive for deleting the story seems to be its misogyny." For a study that argues that Luke portrays John as Elijah, see Jaroslav Rindos, *He of Whom It Is Written: John the Baptist and Elijah in Luke*, ÖBS 38 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2010). For a rebuttal of Rindos, see Clare K. Rothschild, review of *He of Whom It Is Written: John the Baptist and Elijah in Luke*, by Jaroslav Rindos, *RBL* [http://www.bookreviews.org] (2012): "[Rindos] never considers the possibility that attributing *only* Elijah's spirit and power to John *denies* him Elijah's identity, as does Luke's omission of (1) John's clothing, (2) John's diet, (3) Jesus' statement that John was the Elijah who was to come (Mark 9:11–13||Matt 17:10)" (italics original). Rothschild's rebuttal is reminiscent of Origen's interpretation of Luke 1:17: "Luke does not say, 'in the soul of Elijah,' but, 'in the spirit and power of Elijah.' Power and spirit dwelt in Elijah as in all the prophets and, with regard to his humanity, in the Lord and Savior as well" (*Hom. Luc.* 4.5, Lienhard).

Composed in the middle of the second century (c. 160 CE), Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* records a debate (spread out over two days) between a Christian philosopher (Justin himself)[711] and a Jew named Trypho.[712] This section will explore Justin's contestation of John the Baptist's beheading in this conversation (*Dial.* 49.4).[713] Similar to the Gospel of Mark before him, Justin counterbalances the potential stigma of John's bodily mutilation by vilifying "King Herod."[714] This contestation, however, takes on anti-Jewish layers in two

[711] At *Dial.* 120.6 (cf. *2 Apol.* 15.1) Justin identifies himself as of the Samaritan people. Throughout the debate he aligns himself with τὰ ἔθνη ("the Gentiles") in distinction from "you" (Jews), as we will see.

[712] Trypho identifies himself as a Hebrew refugee of the recent war (*Dial.* 1.3), a likely reference to the Bar Kokhba Revolt (c. 132–135 CE). According to Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 4.18.6), the debate occurred in the city of Ephesus. Together, these two pieces of evidence suggest a setting for the purported conversation in Ephesus around the end of the revolt (c. 135 CE). Written decades later (*Dial.* 120.6 refers to the *First Apology* [c. 153 CE]), Justin's account of the debate raises a number of critical issues that occupy scholarly attention. These issues include the question of the "historicity" of the episode, to what extent the conversation reflects "typical" interactions between Jews and Christians in the second century, how fairly Justin portrays Jewish polemics in such interactions, among other issues. Helpful introductions to Justin's life and works include, e.g., Barnard, *Justin Martyr*; E. Glenn Hinson, "Justin Martyr," in *ER* (2005), 7:5043–5045; Paul Parvis, "Justin Martyr," *ExpTim* 120 (2008): 53–61; Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, eds., *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, OECT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 32–70; Denis Minns, "Justin Martyr," in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 258–69; David E. Nyström, *The Apology of Justin Martyr: Literary Strategies and the Defence of Christianity*, WUNT 462 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 1–18. See also the various contributing essays in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, eds., *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). For an excellent review of previous scholarship on Justin's *Apologies* and the *Dialogue with Trypho*, see, Michael Slusser, "Justin Scholarship: Trends and Trajectories," in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 13–21. For a review focused on Justin's *Apologies*, see, Nyström, *The Apology of Justin Martyr*, 8–10.

[713] In this study, I employ the Greek text and versification of Justin Martyr's work provided by the following critical edition: Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914). For a critical edition of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* with a French translation, see, Philippe Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue avec Tryphon: Édition critique, traduction, commentaire*, 2 vols. (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2003). For a history of the manuscript and print traditions of Justin's works, see, Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 3–31.

[714] The exact referent of "King Herod" in *Dial.* 49.4 is not immediately clear. The royal appellation could reflect Justin's dependence on Markan tradition, since the Gospel of Mark characterizes Antipas as "King" (Mark 6:14–29; see also, Matt 14:9). But establishing such dependence on the basis of a shared designation is tenuous; an overlap does not necessarily indicate causation. Further, Justin's narration of the story of John's head on a platter (*Dial.* 49.4) is truncated in comparison to Mark and Matthew, making it difficult to ascertain his knowledge of the Markan and Matthean versions of the tradition. See, Hoehner, *Antipas*, 123, who notes that in *Dial.* 49.4 "only twelve words out of fifty-six … have verbal correspondence with Matthew and Mark. All twelve words appear in both synoptic accounts." The royal designation could also reflect Justin's impression that Herod the Great (Antipas' father) reigned during the death of John the Baptist. After all, Justin does not specify this "King Herod" in *Dial.* 49.4 as "Antipas." According to Josephus, Herod the Great did hold the title "King of the Jews" (*Ant.* 14.381–385), whereas Antipas did not. As Frank E. Dicken, "Herod as Jesus' Executioner: Possibilities in Lukan Reception and *Wirkungsgeschichte*," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, ed. Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Snyder, LNTS 548 (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 203–05, suggests, Justin may anachronistically indicate at *Dial.* 52.3 that Herod the Great, was ruling when Jesus was crucified. But, elsewhere Justin shows an awareness that King Herod (the Great) who had slaughtered the innocents (*Dial.* 77–78; cf. Matt 2:16–18) was a different "King Herod" than the one to whom Pilate sent Jesus (cf. Luke 23:6–12) prior to the latter's crucifixion (*Dial.* 103.3–4). If Justin thought that John the Baptist died during the same Herodian reign that Jesus died under, then it is probably best to conclude that "King Herod" in *Dial.* 49.4 refers

respects. First, simultaneous to his vilification of Herod, Justin assigns "King Herod" a Jewish identity by aligning him with "you (Jews)." Herod becomes another example of Jewish maltreatment of God's prophets. In so doing, Justin perpetuates a motif of the Jews as those who kill God's prophets. Second, Justin combats the adoptionistic Christology of his Christian rivals by aligning his competitors' ideology with Jewish ideology (which held that Elijah would anoint the Christ). In other words, Justin makes denigrating Jewish ideology an essential component of his establishing the superiority of own version of Christian identity over competing versions.

3.1. Contextual Observations

Two features of the literary context of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* are significant for the present discussion: the sustained differentiation between the first and second person and the coming of Elijah before the Christ. Both features stand at the heart of how Justin's contestation of John's beheading takes anti-Jewish turns.

3.1.1. "We/Us" and "You"

The first feature is the sustained differentiation between "we/us" (Christians) and "you" (Jews) throughout the dialogue. Bobichon is right to assess the relationship between Christians and Jews in the *Dialogue with Trypho* in this way: "L'image des juifs est liée à celle des chrétiens par un rapport d'antithèse univoque et définitif : Justin oppose constamment les uns et les autres sur le plan intellectuel, moral et religieux, sans prendre en compte aucune particularité susceptible d'atténuer son propos."[715] This antithetical

to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee during Jesus' death. Regardless of the precise referent, however, the important point for this chapter's argument is *that* Justin vilifies "King Herod."

[715] Bobichon, *Justin Martyr*, 90–91. "The image of the Jews is linked to that of Christians through an unambiguous and definitive antithetical relationship: Justin constantly opposes one and the other on the intellectual, moral, and religious plane, without taking into account any particularity that might mitigate his purpose" (translation mine).

relationship in the discourse is achieved on the threshold of the first and second person. In large measure, both Justin (the Christian) and Trypho (the Jew) employ (1) the first-person plural to self-define themselves (and those who belong to their group of thought) and (2) the second-person plural to distance themselves from one another (and the larger group whom the other represents).

For Justin, the first and second person serves as a chief threshhold of his anti-Jewish ideology. From his perspective, "you" (plural) consists of non-Christian Jews (like Trypho) who "are the sources of evil prejudice" against Christ and Christ-followers (*Dial.* 17.1),[716] killed/crucified the Christ,[717] killed or caused God's prophets to suffer,[718] regard "Christians" (Χριστιανῶν) as advocates of a "godless heresy" (*Dial.* 17.1), do not understand the Scriptures and/or prophets,[719] are unwise and foolish children,[720] have uncircumcised hearts,[721] have no memory of worshipping God,[722] are without prophetic gifts,[723] "sacrifice your own children to the demons" (*Dial.* 19.6; 133.1),[724] and do not repent.[725]

[716] Cf. *Dial.* 133.6.

[717] E.g., *Dial.* 14.8; 16.4; 17.1; 32.2; 133.6. See also, *Dial.* 72.3 where Justin is explicit in his specification that "(the) Jews" (Ἰουδαῖοι) determined to crucify the Christ. Cf. *Dial.* 40.4 ("the elders of your people [τοῦ λαοῦ ὑμῶν] and the priests laid hands on him and put him to death").

[718] E.g, *Dial.* 16.4; 39.1; 112.5; 120.5; cf. *1 Apol.* 49.1–5.

[719] E.g., *Dial.* 29.2; 120.5; cf. *1 Apol.* 31.5. See, Wendel, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 184: "Justin … aligns his differentiation between those who understand the Jewish scriptures and those who do not with a distinction between Jews and non-Jews, as if these two types of contrasts were complementary."

[720] E.g., *Dial.* 32.5.

[721] E.g., *Dial.*16.1.

[722] E.g., *Dial.* 46.6.

[723] E.g., *Dial.* 82.1.

[724] Similarly, in *Dial.* 46.6 Justin claims that Isaiah rebuked you (ὑμᾶς) for sacrificing "your (ὑμῶν) children to idols" (cf. Isa 57:5).

[725] E.g., *Dial.* 133.6.

Conversely, "we/us" largely refers to Gentile Christians whose identity revolves around a proper regard of the Christ,[726] and who may be regarded as the true Israelite and Judahite.[727] As Wendel maintains:

> Justin attempts to claim Israel's identity and inheritance for Gentile Christ-believers. The corollary of this assertion appears to be a denunciation of the Jewish nation. According to Justin, ethnic Israel rightfully incurred punishment in the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. and after the Bar Kokhba revolt (*Dial.* 16.1–4, 25.5, 108.3; *1 Apol*. 47–49); their culpability, especially in killing Christ, led to their ultimate disinheritance.[728]

Justin asserts that God "is well pleased toward the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) also, and receives the sacrifices from us (παρ᾽ ἡμῶν) more glady than from you (παρ᾽ ὑμῶν)" (*Dial.* 29.1). "We rejoice (χαίρομεν) even though we die, because we believe God will raise us (ἡμᾶς) up through his Christ and make [us] incorruptible, unfeeling, and immortal" (*Dial.* 46.7). The prophetic gifts "formerly among your (ὑμῶν) people" "were transferred to us (ἡμᾶς)" (*Dial.* 82.1). Additionally, in a passage cited above, Justin denies Jews of their ownership of the Scriptures and reclaims it: "Do you recognize (ἐπιγινώσκεις) them, Trypho? They are contained in your (ὑμετέροις) Scriptures, or rather not in yours (ὑμετέροις) but in ours

[726] In addition to the ensuing discussion, two caveats undergird this definition of Justin's use of "we/us" as "largely" Gentile Christians who hold a specific Christology. First, Justin indicates his awareness of some contemporary Jews who are "leaving the way of error" and becoming disciples of Christ (*Dial.* 39.2). According to *Dial*. 47.3, Justin remains open to receiving Jews into the ranks of "us" as long as they do not compel Gentile Christians to be circumcised or to keep the Sabbath. And, in the closing chapter, Justin prays that Trypho and Trypho's companions would believe "like us" (ἡμῖν ὅμοια) that "ours is the Christ of God" (*Dial.* 142.3). Thus, Wendel, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 184, is right that "even though Justin recognizes that some Jews believe in Jesus, he frequently contrasts non-Jewish Christ-believers with Jews, as if these two designations served as fitting labels for insiders and outsiders to the Christ-believing community, respectively." Second, Justin distinguishes "us" who are "the disciples of the true and pure teaching of Jesus Christ" from those who "confess themselves to be Christians (Χριστιανούς)—and confess the crucified Jesus as both Lord and Christ—and do not teach his doctrines, but the [doctrines] of the spirits of error" (*Dial* 35.2). Thus, for Justin, "we/us" is not a shorthand inclusive of all Christians (whether Jewish or Gentile). Rather, it consists predominately (but not exclusively) of Gentile Christians and excludes those "Christians" whom Justin regards as teachers of error.

[727] E.g., *Dial*. 11.5; 123.6–9; 125.5; 135.3.

[728] Susan Wendel, "Interpreting the Descent of the Spirit: A Comparison of Justin's Dialogue with Trypho and Luke-Acts," in Parvis and Chilton, *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, 95. Similarly, Frédéric Manns, "Justin's Dialogue with Trypho," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. Jack Pastor and Menachem Mor (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2005), 365–75; Bruce Chilton, "Justin and Israelite Prophecy," in Parvis and Chilton, *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, 82–84. See also Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome*, 514, who claims that the dialogue's "militant supersessionism undoubtedly contributed to the construction of the fence between Judaism and Christianity."

(ἡμετέροις). For we (ἡμεῖς) trust in them, but you (ὑμεῖς), although you read [them], you do not understand (νοεῖτε) the mind in them" (*Dial.* 29.2). In this passage in particular, moreover, Justin's seamless shift from the second-person singular ἐπιγινώσκεις in addressing Trypho to the second-person plural shows that he views Trypho as representative of a larger group identity, one that departs from Justin's.

Justin's employment of the second-person plural does not derive merely from the presence of Trypho's companions in the conversation. It would indeed be odd for Justin to accuse *only* Trypho and his companions of crucifying Jesus, considering Jesus died approximately one-hundred years prior to this apparent dialogue. It is also preferable to view Trypho as (for Justin) typical of a broader collectivity because Justin tends to incorporate Trypho (and Trypho's companions presumably) into a collective frame of reference. Repeatedly, Justin draws on Jewish Scripture and tradition to identify disobedient Israel there spoken of with "you" (plural) who reject Jesus as the Christ.[729] Justin relates the suffering of "you" Jews after the Bar Kokhba Revolt, including their exclusion from Jerusalem, to the disobedient Israelites in Lev 26:40–41 whom God "will destroy in the land of their enemies" (*Dial.* 16.1).[730] Again, Justin claims the Jews' suffering derives from their treatment of their prophets and the Christ: "Therefore, these things rightly and justly have happened to you (ὑμῖν). For you killed (ἀπεκτείνατε) the righteous one and his prophets before him" (*Dial.* 16.3–4). Justin contrasts the "you" (plural) who killed Christ and the prophets and who curse Jesus-followers "in your (ὑμῶν) synagogues" with "us" (ἡμῶν) on whom "you (plural) do not have (ἔχετε) authority to lay hands" (*Dial.* 16.4). Justin again brings the past to bear upon the present—and maps the present onto the past—in his appropriation of Isa 29:14 LXX in *Dial.* 32.5:

[729] By contrast, Justin identifies "us" who "have been led to God through this crucified Christ" as "the true spiritual Israelite and descendant of Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham" (*Dial.* 11.5).

[730] See also, Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 82.

> And all these things which I was saying in digression I am speaking to you (ὑμᾶς), so that you may be persuaded at length by that which has been spoken against you (ὑμῶν) by God, namely, that you are (ἐστε) foolish children: "Therefore, behold, I will proceed to remove this people (λαόν), and I will remove them, and I will take away the wisdom of their wise ones and hide the understanding of their understanding ones." Will you stop (παύσησθε) deceiving both yourselves (ἑαυτούς) and those who hear you (ὑμῶν), and [instead] learn from us (ἡμῶν) who were made wise from the grace of the Christ?

Justin thus identifies the Jewish "people" (λαός) God speaks against in Isa 29:14 LXX as "you" (plural) and contrasts this "you" with "us" whose identity revolves around Christ. In a similar vein, Justin classifies "you" (plural) who hate "us" as those Israelites who, according to Elijah in 1 Kgs 19:10, killed God's prophets and altars.[731] Justin identifies the Gentiles of Mal 1:11 as "us" who "bring to him sacrifices—the bread of the eucharist and the cup of the eucharist" (*Dial.* 41.3)—and draws on Mal 1:10–12 to contrast "us" with "you" who profane God's name (*Dial.* 41.2–3). Numerous other examples could be discussed,[732] but these suffice to demonstrate that Justin relates Trypho to a larger social network, one that he distances from his own.[733]

[731] *Dial.* 39.1.

[732] See e.g., *Dial.* 22.1–11; 46.6–7; 82.4; 133.1–6.

[733] That Justin's usage of the second-persona plural is capable of enveloping more than the co-present interlocutors is perceptible when we consider matters from Trypho's perspective (or rather, Justin's portrayal of Trypho's perspective). Unlike Justin, Trypho has only one interlocutor present in the conversation, namely, Justin. Yet, Trypho will communicate to Justin in the second-person plural as well. Similar to Justin's use of the second-person plural, Trypho's use of the second-person plural is not due to the presence of Trypho's companions. Trypho does not address them in his dialogue with Justin. The companions are clearly not Christians (see, *Dial.* 8–9). Trypho associates "you" with those whose identity revolves around the Christ. Speaking directly to Justin alone at *Dial.* 10.4, Trypho says: "If, therefore, you have (ἔχεις) a defense on these points and can show on what place you hope (ἐλπίζετε), even though you do not observe the law, this we will very gladly hear (ἀκούσαιμεν) from you (σου)." Trypho's seamless shift between the singular verb ἔχεις, the plural verb ἐλπίζετε, and back to the singular pronoun σου indicates his perception that Justin's ideology is representative of a larger group of thought. Moreover, the usage of the first-person plural verb ἀκούσαιμεν in opposition to the singular σου intimates that Trypho does not see himself (and Jews like him) as belonging to this other group's ideology. This distinction is all the more perceptible when we observe that Trypho identifies Justin (and Justin-like Christians) in this pericope as not observant of the law. This identification is significant because elsewhere in the dialogue Trypho is an advocate for observing the law (*Dial.* 8.3–4; 10.1; cf. 47.1). At *Dial.* 32.1, Trypho similarly views Justin as representative of a larger group when he responds to Justin: "Oh person (ἄνθρωπε), these and such scriptures compel us to wait for the glorious and great one who, as Son of Man, receives the eternal Kingdom from the ancient of days. But this so-called Christ of yours (ὑμέτερος) has come without honor and without glory." According to *Dial.* 77.1, Trypho urges Justin to show that Isa. 7:14 refers to Justin's Christ: "Carry on for us, then, so that we may see how you demonstrate (ἀποδεικνύεις) that [passage] speaks of this Christ of yours (ὑμέτερον)." With Trypho's flunctuation between the second-person singular and plural, both *Dial.* 32.1 and 77.1 show that Trypho locates Justin's individual thoughts within a

It is vital to observe, finally, that this rhetorical distance between "you" and "we/us" is at work in the introductory unit—*Dial.* 49.1—that precedes Justin's discussion of John the Baptist's beheading.

3.1.2. The Role of Elijah

The second feature of the literary context is the importance of Elijah in the competitive Christologies of Trypho and Justin:

> Καὶ ὁ Τρύφων· Ἐμοὶ μὲν δοκοῦσιν, εἶπεν, οἱ λέγοντες ἄνθρωπον γεγονέναι αὐτόν, καὶ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν κεχρῖσθαι, καὶ Χριστὸν γεγονέναι, πιθανώτερον ὑμῶν λέγειν τῶν ταῦτα ἅπερ φὴς λεγόντων. καὶ γὰρ πάντες ἡμεῖς τὸν Χριστὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων προσδοκῶμεν γενήσεσθαι, καὶ τὸν Ἠλίαν χρῖσαι αὐτὸν ἐλθόντα. Ἐὰν δὲ οὗτος φαίνηται ὢν ὁ Χριστός, ἄνθρωπον μὲν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον ἐκ παντὸς ἐπίστασθαι δεῖ· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ μηδὲ Ἠλίαν ἐληλυθέναι, οὐδὲ τοῦτον ἀποφαίνομαι εἶναι. (*Dial.* 49.1)
>
> And Trypho said: "Those who are saying he was a person, was anointed according to choice, and became Christ seem to speak more credibly than you (plural) who are saying these things which you (singular) are expressing. For, all of us also are expecting the Christ to be a person of persons, and Elijah to anoint him, having come. But if this one appears to be the Christ, it is necessary to understand [him] to be a person of persons in everything. But, from the [fact that] Elijah has not yet come, I am not declaring this one to be [the Christ]." (*Dial.* 49.1)

As an initial observation, Trypho understands that Justin's Christology is not idiosyncratic, but indicative of a larger group of thought. Hence Trypho portrays Justin (or rather, Justin portrays Trypho as portraying Justin) as singularly expressing (φής) what "you" (plural) claim (ὑμῶν … τῶν … λεγόντων). According to the previous chapter of the dialogue, Trypho describes Justin's Christology in the following way:

> Τὸ γὰρ λέγειν σε προϋπάρχειν Θεὸν ὄντα πρὸ αἰώνων τοῦτον τὸν Χριστόν, εἶτα καὶ γεννηθῆναι ἄνθρωπον γενόμενον ὑπομεῖναι, καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἀνθρώπου, οὐ μόνον παράδοξον δοκεῖ μοι εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ μωρόν. (*Dial.* 48.1)
>
> For you to say that this Christ pre-existed, being God before the ages, and then endured to be begotten and become a person, and [was] not a person from a person not only seems to me to be paradoxical, but also foolish. (*Dial.* 48.1)

wider network. The larger network, moreover, is identified by a certain recognition of the Christ, one that departs from Trypho's own social network of thought.

Justin's three-fold belief that the Christ "pre-existed" as God, then was begotten and became a person, and was not "a person from a person" thus differs from those Christians to whom Trypho alludes using the third-person in *Dial.* 49.1. Whereas Justin holds to the pre-existence of the Christ as God, these Christians hold an adoptinistic Christology. They believe "he is a person," "was anointed" (κεχρῖσθαι), and thus "became Christ." Trypho specifies that he finds this adoptinistic Christology more persuasive than Justin's viewpoint because it aligns well with Jewish opinion ("all of us")[734] that the Christ will be "a person of persons" and anointed (χρῖσαι) by Elijah (*Dial.* 49.1).[735] In other words, Christ's anointing by Elijah is bound up in and suggestive of his thoroughly human origin—not his pre-existence. His pre-existence precludes the necessity of his anointing.[736]

[734] The πάντες ἡμεῖς ("all of us") is not inclusive of Justin, since Trypho has already indicated in *Dial.* 48.1 that Justin does not believe Jesus is "a person of persons" (ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων). Justin himself states as much in *Dial.* 54.2: οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ("The Christ is not a person of persons").

[735] This alignment is significant because, as Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 38, rightly argues: "Justin is a writer fighting, as it were, on two fronts, against heresy and against Judaism. Arguably in his writing as well, these two battles are deeply implicated in one another. Justin is obsessed with the question of those who call themselves Christians and are not (*Dialogue* 35:80). This work of self-definition is carried out through a contrast with something called *Ioudaismos*." Likewise, more recent scholarship on Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* has departed from the traditional understanding of the work merely "as an extended argument for the superiority of 'Christianity' over against 'Judaism'" (Matthijs den Dulk, *Between Jews and Heretics: Refiguring Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho* [London: Routledge, 2018], 2). In his 2018 monograph, den Dulk suggests that "virtually every topic in the *Dialogue* … is immediately pertinent to the contest between Justin's kind of Christianity and those of his demiurgical rivals" (p. 5). Thus, for den Dulk, Justin's rhetorical maneuver of casting Jewish ideology in an inferior light is intimately interwoven with his aim of asserting the superiority of his version of Christianity over competing versions. By implication, in making the Christology of "us" (Jews) resemble Justin's competitors, Trypho enables Justin's repudiation of Trypho's position in *Dial.* 49.2–8 to implicate his other (Christian) competitors. Their ideology is inferior by association. That Justin's rhetoric is not merely aimed at "Judaism" (so to speak) raises a potential objection to this chapter's argument that, in the hands of Justin, John's death perpetuates anti-Jewishness: should the *Dialogue with Trypho* be regarded as anti-Jewish if the "real" recipients of Justin's rhetoric are Christians, not Jews? The answer is a resounding yes. Whether they are the envisioned recipients of Justin's polemics or not, Justin makes denigrating the Jews a vital component of his argumentation.

[736] This line of reasoning is confirmed by Trypho's rhetoric elsewhere in the dialogue. According to *Dial.* 87.1–2, Trypho appeals to the Spirit *empowering* the Messiah in Isa 11:1–3 to question Justin's belief in the pre-existence of the Messiah. See, Wendel, "Interpreting the Descent," 97: "Trypho wonders why Jesus would need the powers of the Spirit to fulfill this messianic mission if he was in fact preexistent." Jesus' pre-existence as the Christ, in other words, is at odds with the expectation that the Christ would be anointed with the Spirit. Justin's rebuttal in *Dial.* 87.3–88.2 carefully avoids describing the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus as a messianic anointing. Wendel, "Interpreting the Descent," 98, explains that the descent serves a different purpose in Justin's reasoning: "Rather than presenting the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus as a messianic anointing by John, a Jewish prophet and type of Elijah, Justin asserts that the Spirit-baptism of Jesus had the effect of removing the Spirit from Jews and their prophets. In this way, the Spirit-baptism of Jesus represents a transfer of the very presence and powers of God from the Jewish people to Jesus." See also, Wendel, *Scriptural Interpretation*, 268–71.

This unit that introduces Justin's discussion of John's death, therefore, hints at three groups whose relationship is characterized by what we might call socio-religious contention. Put otherwise, *the literary context speaks to a social context marked by competitive Christology*. An integral element defining this contention is the idea that Elijah would precede the coming of the Messiah. For Trypho, moreover, the coming of Elijah was accompanied by Elijah's action of *anointing* someone to become the Christ. Since Justin, however, held that Jesus already pre-existed as the Christ, the idea of Elijah coming *and* anointing someone to be the Christ represented a challenge to Justin's Christology. The anointing directly opposed his belief in the Christ's pre-existence.

Trypho's argument in *Dial.* 49.1 continues. He entertains the notion of Jesus' identity as the Christ by means of a third-class conditional statement. The protasis ("If this one appears to be the Christ") assumes the reality of the premise for the sake of argument. The apodosis consists of two clauses, introduced by the correlative conjunctions μέν and δέ: (1) "it is necessary to understand [him] to be a person of persons in everything," but (2) "from the [fact that] Elijah has not yet come, I am not declaring this one to be [the Christ]." The latter clause occupies our attention here. For Trypho, Elijah has not yet come; consequently, Jesus cannot be the Christ, even from an adoptionistic vantage point.[737] Trypho's objection to Jesus' messianic identity rests on his expectation that Elijah would precede and anoint the Messiah, but has yet to do so.

The centrality of Elijah to the contention between Trypho and Justin is apparent also from the observation that *the matter of Elijah arguably stimulates the entire dialogue*. In the opening chapter, Trypho introduces himself to Justin as "a Hebrew of the circumcision, having fled from the recent war" (*Dial.* 1.3). Trypho, in turn, inquires as to Justin's

[737] Similarly, Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 195.

philosophy.[738] After a lengthy autobiographical account detailing his philosophical background,[739] Justin finally reveals in chapter eight that he is a Christian philosopher.[740] This revelation sparks both Justin's and Trypho's attempts to convince the other of the truth of their viewpoints (*Dial.* 8.2–4). Significantly, Trypho's objection to Justin's position centers on Elijah: "But if Christ has become, and exists somewhere, he is unknown, nor does he yet know of himself, or have any power until Elijah comes to anoint him and make him manifest to all. But you, having received an empty report, fashion some Christ for yourselves, and for his sake you are being destroyed without purpose" (*Dial.* 8.4). As in *Dial.* 49.1, in *Dial.* 8.4 Trypho links his rejection of the actuality of the Christ's advent to the apparent fact that Elijah has not yet come to anoint and empower him.

It is not the case that Trypho believes Elijah will precede the coming of the Christ and Justin does not. The first part of Justin's response (*Dial.* 49.2) to Trypho's objection (*Dial.* 49.1) will illuminate this point:

> Κἀγὼ πάλιν ἐπυθόμην αὐτοῦ· Οὐχὶ Ἠλίαν φησὶν ὁ λόγος διὰ Ζαχαρίου ἐλεύσεσθαι πρὸ τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης καὶ φοβερᾶς τοῦ Κυρίου; Κἀκεῖνος ἀπεκρίνατο· Μάλιστα. Ἐὰν οὖν ὁ λόγος ἀναγκάζῃ ὁμολογεῖν, ὅτι δύο παρουσίαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ προεφητεύοντο γενησόμεναι, μία μὲν ἐν ᾗ παθητὸς καὶ ἄτιμος καὶ ἀειδὴς φανήσεται ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα, ἐν ᾗ καὶ ἔνδοξος καὶ κριτὴς ἁπάντων ἐλεύσεται, ὡς καὶ ἐν πολλοῖς τοῖς προλελεγμένοις ἀποδέδεικται, οὐχὶ τῆς φοβερᾶς καὶ μεγάλης ἡμέρας τοῦτ᾽ ἔστι τῆς δευτέρας παρουσίας αὐτοῦ πρόοδον γενήσεσθαι τὸν Ἠλίαν νοήσομεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ κεκηρυχέναι; Μάλιστα, ἀπεκρίνατο. (*Dial.* 49.2)
>
> And I again inquired of him: "Does not the word through Zechariah say Elijah is to come before the great and terrible day of the Lord?" And he answered: "Certainly." "If, then,[741] the word compels [you] to confess that two advents of the Christ to occur were being prophesied—one in which [the Christ] will appear in suffering, without honor, and without beauty, but the other in which [the Christ] will come in glory and [as] judge of all (as has been shown by the many things that have been foretold)—[then] shall we not suppose [that] the word of God to have proclaimed [that] Elijah is

[738] *Dial.* 1.6.
[739] *Dial.* 2–7.
[740] *Dial.* 8.1–2.
[741] At first sight, Justin's inference introduced by the conditional particle ἐάν and inferential conjunction οὖν appears to be logically fallacious. How does Trypho's acknowledgement of Elijah to forerun the day of the Lord mean that he has agreed to the idea of two advents of the Christ? The answer is that it does not. Instead of building on the previous sentence, Justin appears to be drawing on their wider discussion in which Trypho has already conceded to Justin that the prophets speak of two advents of the Christ (*Dial.* 36.1; 39.7).

> to be forerunner of the terrible and great day, that is, of his second advent?" "Certainly," he replied. (*Dial.* 49.2)

With one exception, Justin does not introduce any new idea into his argument, but reiterates notions he and Trypho hold in common at this juncture in the debate. Trypho has already conceded to Justin's claims that the prophets foretold two advents of the Christ—the first characterized by suffering, shame, and dishonor; the second by glory and honor (*Dial.* 36.1; 39.7). And, as we have seen, Trypho indicates in *Dial.* 8.4 and 49.1 his belief that Elijah will forerun the Christ. The new supposition Justin builds toward is the assimilation of these elements.[742] That Elijah will come as a forerunner more specifically of the *second* advent of the Christ (i.e. the day of the Lord), although perhaps not a radically novel idea at this point in the debate, is a new supposition Justin makes that Trypho is quick to affirm ("Certainly" is his response [*Dial.* 49.2]).[743] Both Justin and Trypho believe Elijah will be the forerunner of the Messiah's second advent.

Ideology regarding Elijah, therefore, is fundamental to Justin's and Trypho's respective Christologies *and* a key source of their disagreement concerning Jesus' status as the Christ. For both, Elijah will come before the Messiah's second coming. For Trypho, Elijah has not yet come ahead of the first coming. As a consequence, neither has the Christ arrived. Trypho thus calls into question Justin's claim that Jesus is the Christ. At both *Dial.* 36.1 and 39.7 Trypho follows up his acquiescence to the claims of two messianic advents by imploring Justin to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. Furthermore, in *Dial.* 49.1 Trypho issues his argument that the anointing of the Christ by Elijah is more compatible with an adoptionistic Christology. Navigating these tricky waters, then, becomes vital if Justin is to highlight the insufficiency of Trypho's position, and correspondingly, the superiority of his

[742] Grammatically, the culmination of Justin's thought in this regard is apparent in that this new supposition constitutes the apodosis of a lengthy conditional construction, whereas the already-agreed-upon elements are relegated to the protasis.

[743] Justin expects Trypho to affirm this new supposition, as the negative particle οὐχί at the beginning of the apodosis insinuates.

own Christology vis-à-vis his opponents. As we will see, in *Dial.* 49.4–5 Justin's strategy is to harness John's beheading to claim that Elijah *has* already come ahead of the Christ's first advent but without also affirming that Elijah anointed the Christ.

3.1.3. Summary

To summarize, self-definition and self-differentiation are intimately conjoined in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. The rhetorical distance between Justin-like Christians and non-Christian Jews, inscribed through the recurring use of the first and second person, is a major nexus of the text's anti-Jewish polemics. This distance constitutes the immediate literary context of Justin's appropriation of John's beheading. It is also evidence of a social context marked by competitive Christology. A key component of this social contention is the matter of Elijah. For Justin to convince Trypho the Jew of the "error" of his ways—his unbelief that Jesus is the Christ—Justin must provide proof of Jesus' messianic status. An acknowledgement of John the Baptist as Elijah, then, becomes an integral piece of Justin's aim of demonstrating the superiority of his position.

3.2. Dialogue with Trypho 49.3–5: Contesting John's Beheading

Since we have already examined *Dial.* 49.1–2, we will focus our attention now on *Dial.* 49.3–5:

> **49.3** Καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος οὖν Κύριος, ἔφην, τοῦτο αὐτὸ ἐν τοῖς διδάγμασιν αὐτοῦ παρέδωκε γενησόμενον, εἰπὼν καὶ Ἠλίαν ἐλεύσεσθαι· καὶ ἡμεῖς τοῦτο ἐπιστάμεθα γενησόμενον, ὅταν μέλλῃ ἐν δόξῃ ἐξ οὐρανῶν παραγίνεσθαι ὁ ἡμέτερος Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, οὗ καὶ τῆς πρώτης φανερώσεως κῆρυξ προῆλθε τὸ ἐν Ἠλίᾳ γενόμενον Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐν Ἰωάννῃ τῷ γενομένῳ ἐν τῷ γένει ὑμῶν προφήτῃ, μεθ᾽ ὃν οὐδεὶς ἕτερος λοιπὸς παρ᾽ ὑμῖν ἐφάνη προφήτης· ὅστις ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην ποταμὸν καθεζόμενος ἐβόα· Ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν· ἥξει δὲ ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου, οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι· αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί. οὗ τὸ πτύον αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ διακαθαριεῖ τὴν ἅλωνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸν σῖτον συνάξει εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην, τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ.

> **49.4** Καὶ τοῦτον αὐτὸν τὸν προφήτην συνεκεκλείκει ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑμῶν Ἡρώδης εἰς φυλακήν, καὶ γενεσίων ἡμέρας τελουμένης, ὀρχουμένης τῆς ἐξαδέλφης αὐτοῦ τοῦ Ἡρώδου εὐαρέστως αὐτῷ, εἶπεν αὐτῇ αἰτήσασθαι ὃ ἐὰν βούληται. Καὶ ἡ μήτηρ τῆς παιδὸς ὑπέβαλεν αὐτῇ αἰτήσασθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ· καὶ αἰτησάσης, ἔπεμψε, καὶ ἐπὶ πίνακι ἐνεχθῆναι τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου ἐκέλευσε.
> **49.5** διὸ καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος Χριστὸς εἰρήκει ἐπὶ γῆς τότε τοῖς λέγουσι πρὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἠλίαν δεῖν ἐλθεῖν· Ἠλίας μὲν ἐλεύσεται καὶ ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα· λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι Ἠλίας ἤδη ἦλθε, καὶ οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἠθέλησαν.” καὶ γέγραπται ὅτι “τότε συνῆκαν οἱ μαθηταὶ ὅτι περὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς. (*Dial.* 49.3–5)
>
> **49.3** Therefore, in his teachings he handed on, our Lord was also saying this same thing would occur, when he said Elijah is also to come. And we understand this is to occur whenever our Lord Jesus Christ is about to appear in glory from the heavens, whose first manifestation a herald—the spirit of God which was in Elijah—preceded in [the person of] John who was a prophet among your (plural) people, after whom no other remaining prophet has appeared with you (plural). He, while sitting by the Jordan River, was crying out: “On the one hand, I baptized you (plural) in water for repentance; on the other hand, the one stronger than me will come, whose sandals I am not sufficient to carry. He will baptize you (plural) in the holy spirit and fire. Concerning him, his winnowing shovel [is] in his hand. He will clean out his threshing floor. He will gather the grain into the barn, but the chaff he will burn up in unquenchable fire.”
> **49.4** And this same prophet your (plural) king Herod had shut up in prison. As the birthday celebrations were finishing [and] the niece of Herod himself was dancing suitably for him, he said to her to ask for whatever she wishes. And the mother of the girl was instigating her to ask for the head of John who was in the prison. And after she asked, he sent and commanded for the head of John to be brought in on a platter.
> **49.5** Therefore, our Christ had also said on earth at that time to those who were saying it was necessary for Elijah to come first: “On the one hand, Elijah will come and restore all things. On the other hand, I say to you that Elijah already came and you did not recognize him, rather they did to him as many things as they wished.” And it is written: “Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them concerning John the Baptist.” (*Dial.* 49.3–5)

How Justin contests the shame of John’s death is quite intricate. We will break down our analysis by reading the passage on three intersecting levels.

3.2.1. The Degradation of John’s Beheading

On one level, Justin implicitly acknowledges the degrading potential of John the Baptist’s beheading. As previously mentioned, throughout the *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin claims the prophets spoke of two advents of the Christ. In stark contrast to the second of

these,[744] the first advent is described as inglorious, dishonorable, and full of suffering.[745] Before Trypho concedes this distinction,[746] he utilizes the violent death of Jesus—the crucifixion—to argue that "this so-called Christ of yours was dishonorable and inglorious" (*Dial.* 32.1), thereby questioning Jesus' identity as the Christ. Trypho's underlying logic is that, since the Christ's coming is to be full of honor and glory, Jesus' crucifixion *ipso facto* discounts him from a claim to this status. Justin also readily acknowledges Jesus' suffering and crucifixion as contemptible, but as a reflection of the shameful nature of his first advent and, therefore, an indicator of his messianic status.[747] Just as Justin posits two advents of the Christ, so also, he expects Elijah to forerun the Christ at each advent.[748] As a corollary, Elijah's first advent, like Christ's, is characterized as "inglorious" (*Dial.* 49.7). The identification in *Dial.* 49.3 and 49.5 of John the Baptist as the Elijah of the first advent, therefore, implicitly signals this characterization.[749]

In fact, this signaling is all the more evident in light of the connection Justin draws between *Dial.* 49.4 and 49.5. At *Dial.* 49.4 Justin's reference to John's death is truncated, at least in comparison to the parallel references in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. Noticeably absent in Justin's account are the following elements: (1) the speculation surrounding Jesus' identity,[750] (2) Herod's or Herodias' motivation for seeking John's death,[751] (3) the identity of the guests invited to Herod's birthday banquet,[752] (4) the conflict in Herod because of his oaths and invited guests,[753] and (5) the tradition that certain disciples

744 E.g., *Dial.* 14.8; 31.1; 32.1–2; 35.8; 45.4; 54.1; 69.7; 110.2; 120.4.
745 E.g., *Dial.* 14.8; 31.1; 32.1–2; 36.1; 52.1; 121.3.
746 See, *Dial.* 36.1; 39.7.
747 See, *Dial.* 32.1–2; 40.1–5; 49.7–8; 110.2.
748 See, *Dial.* 49.3.
749 Similar to *Dial.* 49.3, *Dial.* 88.2 refers to John the Baptist as the "herald" (κῆρυξ) of the Christ's advent and "forerunner" (προϊών) of "the way of baptism." See also, *Dial.* 51.3 (cf. Matt 11:12–15//Luke 16:16) where John is identified as the Elijah to come.
750 Mark 6:14–16//Matt 14:1–2; cf. Luke 9:7–9.
751 Mark 6:17–20//Matt 14:3–5; cf. Luke 3:19–20; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116–119.
752 Mark 6:21; cf. Matt 14:6.
753 Mark 6:26//Matt 14:9.

arrived and buried John's body.[754] Instead, Justin largely dwells on the violent treatment of John's person, culminating in the public display of John's decapitated head on a platter.[755] The inferential conjunction διό ("therefore") that begins *Dial.* 49.5, then, makes it clear that Justin bases (at least in part) the identification of John the Baptist as the Elijah of the first advent in Matt 17:10–13 on John's beheading. The public presentation of John's severed head enables Justin to make this connection.

3.2.2. Degradation Contested

On a second level, however, Justin contests the potential shame of John's beheading. Just as Jesus' crucifixion is a signpost of the Christ's inglorious first coming in Justin's reckoning, so also John's beheading is a reflection of the shame of Elijah's first forerunning. Put otherwise, rather than the shame of John's beheading and Jesus' crucifixion *ipso facto* discounting them from their respective identities (Elijah and Christ), Justin flips the script by making their violent ends essential reinforcements of their identities. Justin will go even further in *Dial.* 49.7–8 to argue that the first advent of Elijah and Christ only held the *appearance* of ignominy; the "concealed" reality is that God's power was at work in the first advent.

More pertinent to the present discussion, however, is that Justin contests John's beheading in such a way that its negative potential is brought into tension with other elements. Specifically, Justin pits a distance between John the Baptist and Herod by rendering them as positive and negative figures, respectively. In *Dial.* 49.3, he introduces John by describing him as "a prophet among your (plural) people" (ἐν τῷ γένει ὑμῶν προφήτῃ), inculcated with God's Spirit (*Dial.* 49.3). Justin holds the Jewish prophets in high

[754] Mark 6:29//Matt 14:12.

[755] Although *Dial.* 49.4 does not specify the identities of the guests presumably present at Herod's birthday celebration, the preposition prefixed to the infinitive ἐνεχθῆναι ("to be brought *in*") suggests that the presentation of John's head occurred in the midst of the celebrations, open to the gaze of those present.

esteem.[756] They are "holy" (*Dial.* 82.1; 120.5[757]), "blessed" (*Dial.* 48.4; 112.3), and will inherit—alongside Christians—the Kingdom of God.[758] And Justin implies in *Dial.* 8.1–2 that his "affection for the prophets" was a factor that compelled him to become a Christian philosopher. Clearly, in labeling John a prophet, Justin positions the Baptist in a positive light.

In distinction from the Baptist, Justin positions Herod in a negative light. In *Dial.* 49.4 Justin depicts Herod as rejecting and killing *God's prophet.* The text draws particular attention to this phenomenon by fronting the adjectival construction τοῦτον αὐτὸν τὸν προφήτην in the independent clause "this same prophet (τοῦτον αὐτὸν τὸν προφήτην) your King Herod had shut up in prison." In his employment of αὐτός ("This *same* prophet"), moreover, Justin brings his characterization of John the Baptist as God's Spirit-endowed prophet in *Dial.* 49.3 to bear upon the sequence of actions Herod takes against the Baptist in *Dial.* 49.4. In so doing, John's status as prophet reverberates throughout the passage and vilifies Herod as the one who had God's prophet imprisoned and beheaded. Further, whereas Mark 6:25 and Matt 14:8 portray the daughter as urging the grisly supplement of John's head "on a platter" (ἐπὶ πίνακι), *Dial.* 49.4 depicts Herod as commanding this addition. The Herodian women here merely ask for John's head. Clearly, therefore, Justin creates a divide in his characterizations of the prophet John and Herod.

[756] To be sure, Justin is also aware of "false prophets" alongside the "holy prophets" in Israel's history (see, e.g. *Dial.* 82.1). He does not categorize John the Baptist, however, as a false prophet. Rather, he seems to count John among the holy prophets since the Baptist was instilled with "God's Spirit which was also in Elijah" (*Dial.* 49.3). Elsewhere in the *Dialogue with Trypho,* Justin regards Elijah as one of God's empowered prophets (*Dial.* 87.4) and not a false prophet (*Dial.* 69.1).

[757] The adjective ἁγίοις in the prepositional phrase σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πατριάρχαις καὶ προφήταις ("with the holy patriarchs and prophets") modifies "the prophets" and not merely the "the patriarchs." This is evident from the observation that the article τοῖς governs both nouns (cf. *Dial.* 26.1 where each noun is governed by its own article: μετὰ τῶν πατριαρχῶν καὶ τῶν προφητῶν). Regardless, the prophets are paired in this text with Israel's patriarchs who will partake in God's "eternal kingdom."

[758] See, *Dial.* 26.1; 120.5.

3.2.3. Anti-Jewish Turns

On a third level, Justin's contestation takes on anti-Jewish layers. He weaponizes the divide between John the Baptist and Herod by integrating it into his anti-Jewish polemics. As aforementioned, the literary context of the *Dialogue with Trypho* alludes to a socio-religious context marked by competitive Christology. Within this rivalry, Justin advances his anti-Jewish rhetoric across the threshhold of "you" and "us." It is not without significance, then, that Justin designates Herod in *Dial.* 49.4 as the *Jews'* King: "*Your* (ὑμῶν) king Herod had this same prophet shut up in prison." Justin maps John's death onto the threshhold of "you" and "us" by closely aligning Herod with "you (Jews)." This alignment is especially conspicuous because the Herodian dynasty's background as "Jews" was highly suspect from the first century onwards.[759] And Justin demonstrates an awareness of this polemic.[760] But, with this maneuver, Justin incorporates Herod into the vast network of actions characterstic of disobedient Israel. Herod, more precisely, becomes yet another example of the Jews who put their own—indeed God's—prophets to death. Justin shifts the dehumanizing gaze of John's death onto Herod *and* the Jews, making the latter bear the moral complexion of the former.

Justin also relates John's death to a key component of his competitive social context: the matter of Elijah. Justin appeals to Matt 17:10–13 in *Dial.* 49.5 to establish that, contrary to Trypho's viewpoint, Elijah *has* come. Indeed, the pronoun ἡμέτερος ("our") qualifying the noun Χριστός ("Christ") makes it clear that Justin aligns his ideology to that of Jesus (and Jesus' disciples, Matt 17:13). Simultaneously, Justin elevates his position over that of Trypho and the Jews by distancing their Elijanic ideology from Jesus'. A brief analysis of his appeal to Matt 17:10, 12 in *Dial.* 49.5 will clarify this claim:

[759] See, Josephus, *J.W.* 1.123; *Ant.* 14.9; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 1.6. On this issue, see, e.g. Hoehner, *Antipas*, 5–6, n. 2. See also, Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 103–05.

[760] See, *Dial.* 52.3.

> A. Matt 17:10, 12: τί οὖν οἱ γραμματεῖς λέγουσιν ὅτι Ἠλίαν δεῖ ἐλθεῖν πρῶτον; …. [12] λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι Ἠλίας ἤδη ἦλθεν
>
> A. Matt 17:10, 12: "Why, then, are the scribes saying that it is necessary for Elijah to come first?…. [12] But I say to you that Elijah already came."
>
> B. *Dial.* 49.5: διὸ καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος Χριστὸς εἰρήκει ἐπὶ γῆς τότε τοῖς λέγουσι πρὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἠλίαν δεῖν ἐλθεῖν …. λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι Ἠλίας ἤδη ἦλθε.
>
> B. *Dial.* 49.5: "Therefore our Christ had also said on earth at that time to those who were saying it was necessary for Elijah to come first …. But I say to you that Elijah already came."

Whereas in Matt 17:10 those who speak of the necessity of Elijah coming first are expressly classified as "the scribes" (οἱ γραμματεῖς), *Dial.* 49.5 anonymizes this specification. This anonymizing, however, allows Jesus' claim that "Elijah already came" (Ἠλίας ἤδη ἦλθε[ν]) to speak directly to Justin's present social framework—itself comprised of Jews (like Trypho) whose denial of Jesus' identity as the Christ is based on their claim that "Elijah has *not* yet come" (μηδὲ Ἠλίαν ἐληλυθέναι) (*Dial.* 49.1).

The direct link Justin establishes between John and the prophet Elijah in *Dial.* 49.3–5, grounded on John's decapitation (*Dial.* 49.4), does not merely serve to overcome the potential shame of John's beheading. It also weaves his death into the intricate tapestry of Justin's rhetorical aim of asserting the superiority of his ideology over his competitor's Elijanic ideology. Justin presses John's death into the present horizon of attacking the validity of his Jewish opponents' ideology as part of his larger project of subverting the adoptionistic Christology of his Christian opponents. In other words, Justin makes refuting Jewish ideology integral to the construction of his own version of Christian identity.

At this juncture one might expect Justin to claim that Elijah not only came but also anointed Jesus with the spirit of God. "That would be a perfect answer to Trypho's challenge in *Dial.* 8:3 and 49:1."[761] For Justin, however, admitting that John anointed Jesus would

[761] Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy*, 196.

support the adoptionistic Christology of his opponents and hinder his own. So, he stops short of making this contention. Instead, his strategy is to acknowledge the coming of Elijah but ignore the anointing. Justin will not ignore the descent of the spirit on Jesus altogether, however. Later in his argument, as Skarsaune rightly observes, Justin contends that Jesus' reception of the spirit at his baptism signified, not the empowering of Jesus, but the removal of the spirit among the Jews:

> The elaborate exposition about Elijah's spirit being transferred to John (*Dial.* 49:3–8), and the Jewish kings being anointed by the spirit present in the prophets—runs out into nearly nothing in *Dial.* 52–54. There is no question of John anointing Jesus; on the contrary, what happens is that Jesus does something to John: He makes him stop prophesying and baptizing (*Dial.* 51:2; 52:3f)! …. Just as Jesus made John cease prophesying and baptizing, so he puts an end to the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit among the Jews.[762]

While Justin attributes the cessation of prophecy among the Jews to Jesus' baptism, Origen links the the cessation of prophecy to the beheading of John.[763] To Origen we now turn.

4. John's Beheading in Origen's Commentary on Matthew

Origen (c. 186–255 CE) left Alexandria and took up residence in Caesarea Maritima in 232 CE.[764] "This was to be his only real home for the rest of his life."[765] By the end of the second century—and continuing through the third century—Caesarea had a thriving Jewish presence and was a major center of rabbinic study.[766] Heine thinks it is probable that Origen had "contact and conversations" with Jews there, including Rabbi Hoshaya who had established a

[762] Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy*, 196, 197.

[763] Similarly, Tertullian claims that John the Baptist possessed the spirit of God until the instant that Jesus was baptized. See, Edmondo Lupieri, "John the Gnostic: The Figure of the Baptist in Origen and Heterodox Gnosticism," *StPatr* 19 (1989): 324.

[764] For helpful studies and introductions on Origen's life and works, see, e.g., Pierre Nautin, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977); Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen*, ECF (London: Routledge, 1998), 1–66; John A. McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 1–44; Henning Graf Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation. Volume 1: From the Old Testament to Origen*, trans. Leo G. Perdue, RBS 50 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 174–99; Ronald E. Heine, "Origen," in *The Routledge Companion to Early Christian Thought*, ed. D. Jeffrey Bingham (London: Routledge, 2010), 188–203.

[765] Trigg, *Origen*, 36.

[766] Heine, *Origen*, 147.

rabbinic school in the city two years prior to Origen's arrival.[767] "In Caesarea Origen was forced to think theologically about the relationship between Jews and Christians in ways that he had not had to do in Alexandria."[768] While Origen's anti-Jewish polemics are not as obviously abusive as other early church fathers (e.g. Melito of Sardis, Tertullian, John Chrysostom), his assessment of Jews and Judaism as inferior to Christians and Christianity "proved all the more dangerous for the future, in that it is so thoroughly argued, on a broad textual basis."[769]

This section will analyze one such textual basis on which Origen advances anti-Jewish polemics: the account of John's beheading (Matt 14:1–12) in what is perhaps Origen's final exegetical work in Caesarea, the *Commentary on Matthew* (c. 244–249 CE).[770] The passage in question "rumbles with the undertones of the debate between the Church and the Synagogue."[771] Similar to his predecessors, Origen contests the potential shame of John's beheading by vilifying the Herodian court. His vilification, like Justin Martyr's, takes on anti-Jewish overtones. He massages the Matthean account into an analogue of *contemporary* Jewish rejection of Christ, the prophets, and prophecy.[772]

4.1. Commentary on Matthew 10.21–22: Contestation of John's Beheading

In *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22, Origen fixates on narrative elements in Matt 14:3–12 that hold the capacity to stress the humiliating circumstances of John's beheading. The

[767] Heine, *Origen*, 148.

[768] Heine, *Origen*, 174. See, Trigg, *Origen*, 11, who claims that the Jewish presence in Alexandria during Origen's time was apparently weak. Cf. Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 135.

[769] Joseph S. O'Leary, "Judaism," in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. John A. McGuckin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 135. See also, O'Leary, "The Recuperation of Judaism," 373, where he claims that Christianity's absorption, in Origen's thought, of all facets of Jewish identity "had a more enduring negative effect than the ill-considered vituperations of a Chrysostom."

[770] For an argument claiming that Origen wrote the *Commentary on Matthew* after *Contra Celsum*, see, Ronald E. Heine, "Introduction," in *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St Matthew*, OECT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 24–28.

[771] Heine, *Origen*, 227.

[772] Cf. Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 14.13: "After the head of the prophet was cut off by the Jews and by the king of the Jews, prophesying among them lost its tongue and voice" (Scheck, FC).

confinement of John in prison (Matt 14:3) mitigates the Baptist's sense of self-control as he is no longer able to function "in freedom" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21). The postmortem public display of John's severed head during Herod's birthday dinner (Matt 14:11) situates the head as an object of disdain.[773] The beheading renders him perpetually "dead, divided, and not unbroken" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22; cf. Matt 14:10–12).[774] Although he dwells on the violent treatment of John's person, Origen contests the degradation of it. He brings the degrading capacity of John's death into tension with a thorough repudiation of the Herodian court. The following four sections will show how Origen accomplishes this moral indictment against the court. Thereafter, we will show that Origen redeploys this negative moral coloration in anti-Jewish directions: he infuses contemporary Jews with the moral wretchedness of the Herodian court.

4.1.1. John the Prophet

Origen casts John the Baptist in a positive light. Lupieri is right to insinuate that in this passage, John, and particularly his head, is a symbol of the prophecy of God among the Jewish people.[775] Collectively, the adjective προφητικός ("prophetic") and its cognates (the nouns προφήτης ["prophet"] and προφητεία ["prophecy"]; the verb προφητεύω ["I prophesy"]) occur in reference to—or in close association with—John no less than fifteen times in *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22:

1. "Just as 'the law and the prophets (οἱ προφῆται) [were] until John,' after whom the prophetic (προφητική) gift ceased from among the Jews" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21)

[773] *Comm. Matt.* 10.22: καταφρονεῖται δὲ προφητεία ἐπὶ πίνακι ἀντὶ ὄψος προσαγομένη ("[The people] despise prophecy which is brought on a platter instead of prepared food").

[774] I describe the division of John's head and body as a perpetual state in order to bring out the sense of the present tense verb ἔχουσιν in Origen's statement: "They have (ἔχουσιν) it [the prophetic word, i.e. John] dead, divided, and not unbroken."

[775] Lupieri, "John the Gnostic," 325.

2. “Because the last of the prophets (τῶν προφητῶν) was executed lawlessly by Herod” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21)
3. “The binding and the locking up of the prophetic (τὸν προφητικόν) word/reasoning” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21)
4. “Therefore, John, adorned with prophetic (προφητικῇ) boldness” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
5. “Herod seized, bound, and put away John in prison, not daring to kill entirely the prophetic (προφητικόν) word/reasoning” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
6. “[Her] seemingly graceful movements … are the reason there is no longer a prophetic (προφητικήν) head/source among the people” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
7. “Concerning him [John] the savior says: ‘But why did you go out? To see a prophet (προφήτην)? Indeed, I say to you—and more than a prophet (προφήτου)’” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
8. “But we must give thanks to God because, although the prophetic (προφητική) gift was removed from the people” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
9. “But [the people] despise prophecy (προφητεία) which is brought on a platter instead of prepared food” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
10. “And the prophet (ὁ προφήτης) is beheaded because of oaths” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
11. “For the accusation of recklessness of making oaths, of breaking oaths because of recklessness, and the accusation of prophetic (προφητικῆς) execution in order to keep oaths are not the same” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
12. “And not for this reason only is he [John] beheaded, but also because of those reclining who wanted the prophet (τὸν προφήτην) to be executed rather than to live” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

13. “Having locked up the prophetic (τὸν προφητικόν) word/reasoning in prison” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

This enumeration increases from fifteen to twenty if we include the five occurrences where, although not applying the terms directly to John himself, Origen is relating John to Jesus, the prophets, and prophecies, more generally:

14. “But the Jews do not have the head/source of prophecy (τῆς προφητείας) because they deny the head/summation of all prophecy (προφητείας), Christ Jesus” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
15. “Not in openness do the present Jewish people deny the prophecies (τὰς προφητείας), but implicitly and in secret they deny them and are convicted by not believing them” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
16. “‘In the same way if they had believed the prophets (τοῖς προφήταις), they would have accepted the one being prophesied (τὸν προφητευόμενον)’” (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

The inventory continues to grow if one were to count the instances where the terms function as the grammatical antecedents of pronouns, as with τὰς προφητείας in numeral fifteen above (“in secret they deny them [αὐτάς] and are convicted by not believing them [αὐταῖς]”).[776]

As a prophet, John is “a herald of the truth” who criticizes Herod’s marriage to Herodias on account of its contrariness to the law (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21). At *Comm. Matt.* 10.22, Origen evaluates John’s actions in this regard positively. He carefully describes John with a series of four participial clauses that emphasize that John’s criticism stems from his identity as God’s prophet:

> Therefore, John—adorned (κεκοσμημένος) in prophetic boldness, not terrified (καταπληττόμενος) of Herod’s royal position, nor passing over in silence (παρασιωπῶν) so great a transgression (as if out of awe of death), full (πληρωθείς) of

[776] I exclude one occurrence from this entire inventory: the appearance of the term προφητεία at the end of *Comm. Matt.* 10.22. Here Origen uses the term to introduce a “prophecy” (see John 19:36; Exod 12:46; Ps 33:21) he understands as referring particularly to Jesus and emphatically *not* John.

> God's will—was reasoning (ἔλεγε) to Herod: "It is not lawful for you to have her, for it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

Undeveloped in Origen's description are any hints of potential ramifications that rebuking a royal marriage could stimulate (e.g. political instability).[777] Such ramifications could garner the reader's sympathy for Herod if Origen were to stress them. Instead, Origen reinforces his understanding of John as "the prophetic reasoning" (τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον) who "was reasoning" (ἔλεγε) to Herod as such.

Origen's comparison of Herod's execution of John to Pharaoh's execution of the chief baker in Gen 40:20–23 (see numeral seven above) makes Origen's effort to showcase John in a positive light all the more apparent:

> Ἄδικος γὰρ μᾶλλον ἐκείνου τοῦ Φαραὼ ὁ Ἡρώδης καὶ γὰρ ὑπ᾽ ἐκείνου μὲν ἐν γενεθλίῳ ἀρχισιτοποιὸς ἀναιρεῖται, ὑπὸ δὲ τούτου Ἰωάννης, οὗ μείζων ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν οὐδεὶς ἐγήγερται, περὶ οὗ ὁ σωτὴρ λέγει Ἀλλὰ τί ἐξεληλύθατε; προφήτην ἰδεῖν; ναὶ λέγω ὑμῖν, καὶ περισσότερον προφήτου.
>
> For, more unrighteous than that Pharaoh [was] Herod. For, by the former, on the one hand, the chief baker was executed on a birthday, but on the other hand, by the latter John [was executed], concerning whom "no one greater among those born of women has arisen," concerning whom the savior says: "But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Indeed, I say to you—and more than a prophet." (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

Using two relative clauses, Origen carefully describes John as an exceptional figure. The first relative clause resembles Matt 11:11a//Luke 7:28a. Origen stops short of quoting Matt 11:11b//Luke 7:28b ("But the least in the Kingdom of the Heavens/God is greater than he [John]"). This latter logion has enabled some scholars to understand Matt 11:11/Luke 7:28 as moderating John the Baptist's prestige.[778] In this excerpt, however, Origen makes use of those elements of Matt 11:7–11//Luke 7:24–28 that enhance the Baptist's character. The second relative clause is an allusion to Matt 11:9//Luke 7:26 that bolsters John's identity not

[777] See, Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 103: "In a colonial system in which imperial authorities exercise their dominion through local client rulers, an attack on the religious validity of the client ruler's marriage comes close to open sedition, since such rulers depend not only on imperial force but also on the support of a native populace strongly influenced by religion."

[778] See, e.g., Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 451–52; Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology*, 90–91. See also, Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, 13; Turner, *Matthew*, 293.

only as a prophet, but also as someone greater than a prophet. Origen, moreover, appeals to an authority whose judgment is reliable in his estimation. That is, he is careful to place these words on the lips of "the savior."[779]

Origen's methodical characterization of John as prophet serves to underscore the gravity of the actions the Herodian court takes against him. John's symbolism as the prophetic source situates the court's character as the imprisoners, killers, and despisers God's prophets. It also underscores that the Herodian court's actions are motivated by something other than, indeed contrary to, "prophetic reasoning." Origen casts a shadow over the Herodian court altogether: Herodias and her daughter, the dinner guests, and Herod. We will consider these figures in that order.

4.1.2. Herodias and Her Daughter (Herodias)

After indicating that Herod imprisoned John the Baptist because of the latter's rebuke of Herod's marriage to Herodias (his brother Philip's wife), Origen says:

> Ὁ μὲν Ἡρώδης, κρατήσας τὸν Ἰωάννην, δήσας ἀπέθετο ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ, μὴ τολμῶν πάντη ἀποκτεῖναι τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον καὶ ἀνελεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ. Ἡ δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως τῆς Τραχωνίτιδος γυνή, πονηρά τις οὖσα δόξα καὶ μοχθηρὰ διδασκαλία, θυγατέρα ἐγέννησεν ὁμώνυμον, ἧς τὰ δοκοῦντα εὐρυθμα κινήματα ἀρέσαντα τῷ Ἡρώδῃ τὰ γενέσεως ἀγαπῶντι πράγματα, αἴτια γεγένηται τοῦ μηκέτι εἶναι ἐν τῷ λαῷ κεφαλὴν προφητικήν. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
>
> On the one hand, Herod, having grasped and bound John, put [him] away in prison, because he did not dare kill the prophetic word/reasoning entirely and remove it from the people. On the other hand, the wife—who is evil glory and a wretched teaching—of the king of Trachonitis gave birth to a daughter who had the same name, whose seemingly graceful movements—which pleased Herod who loves the matters of birth—are the reason why a prophetic head/source is no longer among the people. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

[779] We will return to Origen's appropriation of Matt 11:7–11//Luke 7:24–28 below, where we will see that, instead of quoting Matt 11:11b//Luke 7:28b ("But the least in the Kingdom of the Heavens/God is greater than he [John]") immediately after this present excerpt, he massages Matt 11:11b//Luke 7:28b into a symbol of the preeminence of Christians at the expense of Jews.

Two features of this pericope highlight that Origen characterizes the Herodian women negatively. First, Origen classifies Herodias as a "wretched teaching" (μοχθηρὰ διδασκαλία) before indicating that her daughter "had the same name." According to Matt 14:6, however, the daughter's name is not provided; she is merely called "the daughter of Herodias" (ἡ θυγάτηρ τῆς Ἡρῳδιάδος). Here, Origen rather appears to be harnessing the Markan tradition that claims the daughter's name was Herodias (Mark 6:22).[780] This biographical detail, moreover, is not a random piece of data. By claiming that Herodias and her daughter share the same name, Origen is making a not too clandestine assertion that the daughter also shares her mother's wretchedness.

Second, the text pits a slight contrast—introduced grammatically via the correlatives μέν and δέ— between Herod, on the one hand, and Herodias and her daughter, on the other hand. Herod abstains (initially at least) from executing John although, as Origen implies, he likely entertained this notion as a possibility.[781] For Origen, the daughter's "movements" (an allusion to her dance in Matt 14:6) are the cause of the prophet's decapitation. He refers to her dancing as "seemingly graceful." The implication is that her graceful dance was only ostensibly so. His assessment is more direct two sentences later: "The dance of Herodias was contrary to holy dancing" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22). Birthday celebrations are the occassions when those who dance are ruled by "lawless reasoning" (παρανόμου … λόγου); "their motions" seek to satisfy "that [lawless] reasoning" (ἐκείνῳ τῷ λογῷ) (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).[782] Therefore, Origen's initial depiction of the daughter's movements as "seemingly graceful" constitutes an ironic moral indictment of the daughter.

[780] Origen is clearly aware of the Gospel of Mark (see, e.g., *Comm. Matt.* 10.20).

[781] That Herod imprisoned John "because he did not dare" execute him assumes that he wanted him dead (as Matt 14:5 claims) or that he at least considered killing him.

[782] Origen does not object to all dancing. For Origen, the logion, "We piped for you and you did not dance" (see, Matt 11:17//Luke 7:32), supports the categorical existence of "holy dancing." See, *Comm. Matt.* 10.22.

4.1.3. The Dinner Guests

Similar to his assessment of the "wretched" Herodian women is Origen's description of the dinner guests at Herod's birthday celebration. After detailing that John was beheaded because of the oaths Herod made to the dancing daughter, Origen claims the guests wanted John to be executed: "And not for this reason only is he [John] beheaded but also because of those reclining, who want the prophet to be executed rather than to live. And those who celebrate his birthday recline and stand by with the wretched reasoning which was ruling the Jews" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22). Whereas Mark 6:26 and Matt 14:9 do not explicitly identify the inner motivations of the dinner guests—only that Herod did not want to break his oath "because of those reclining"—Origen seems to presume that Herod's reasoning was elicited by the dinner guests making their opinions known on the matter.

Origen presents the Herodian women and the dinner guests in a united front against the Baptist. Just as Herodias (and her daughter) is a "wretched teaching" (μοχθηρὰ διδασκαλία) and birthdays are the occasions "when lawless reasoning rules" (παρανόμου βασιλεύοντος λόγου) those—like the daughter—who dance, so also the guests participate in the festivities "with the wretched reasoning that rules (λόγῳ μοχθηρῷ βασιλεύοντι) the Jews." (Herod too acts lawlessly: John categorizes his marriage to Herodias as contrary to the law, as we have already seen.) Thus, throughout *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22, Origen formulates a striking contrast between John, the "prophetic reasoning" (τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον) who speaks to Herod in accordance with God's will, and the Herodian court that acts in accordance with lawless, "wretched reasoning."

4.1.4. Herod

Origen devotes considerable attention to portray Herod negatively. (1) He interprets Herod's imprisonment of John symbolically as maltreating prophecy: "Now, Herod bound

and put away John in prison, providing (insofar as in himself and the evil of the people) a symbol (σύμβολον) of the binding and locking up of the prophetic reasoning (λόγον τὸν προφητικόν) and of the prevention of it from remaining in freedom as a herald of the truth, as it had been formerly" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21). (2) Origen is highly critical of Herod's marriage to Herodias, but not for the same reason that others put forward:

> On the one hand, some suppose that Herod married Herodias (the wife of the brother) after Philip died and left behind a daughter, although the law permits marriage [only] in the case of childlessness.[783] On the other hand, having not found any clear indication Philip had died, we consider Herod's transgression to be greater still because he took away the brother's wife while he was even alive. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21)

Mark 6:18 and Matt 14:4 do not specify *how* Herod's marriage to Herodias was unlawful, only *that* it was unlawful. Further, as I observed in chapter one, many manuscripts at Mark 6:22 (א, B, D, L, Δ, 565) identify the daughter in this account as Herod's daughter. Matt 14:6 does not state who the daughter's father is. Origen, however, makes a reference to others who apparently claim that Herod's marriage to Herodias violated Deut 25:5–6 LXX, which permits a man to marry his brother's wife insofar as the brother had died and had not produced a child with his wife.[784] Origen uses this reference to exacerbate the severity of Herod's "transgression." Herod married his brother's wife not only despite the fact that Philip *had* produced a child with Herodias, but also despite the apparent fact that Philip had not yet *died*.[785]

[783] I follow Heine in supplying the word "only" in my translation, but place it in brackets to indicate that the word does not strictly appear in the Greek text. See, Heine, *Commentary of Origen*, 1:56.

[784] Heine, *Commentary of Origen*, 1:56, n. 158: "If Philip had died and he and Herodias had only a daughter, then the marriage would have been acceptable according to the law in the Massoretic [*sic*] text of Dt 25:5, which specifies not having a 'son' to continue the name of the brother. The LXX, however, which Origen read, has 'seed' instead of 'son.'"

[785] Caesarius of Arles, *Serm.* 218, similarly claims that John the Baptist repudiated Herod for taking "the wife of a man who was still living" (Mueller, FC). So also, Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 14.3–4. Additionally, Origen specifies that the marriage was Herod's "transgression" (παρανόμημα). Like the Herodian women and the dinner guests, therefore, Origen again identifies Herod as one who acts contrary to the law.

(3) Herod is "more unrighteous" than the Pharaoh of Gen 40:20–23 precisely because of *whom* Herod killed: John, the one Jesus characterizes as "more than a prophet" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22). We thus return to the alignment of the executions of John and the chief baker:

> One of our predecessors, on the one hand, kept a written record in Genesis of Pharaoh's birthday and he explained that the base person—who loves matters of birth—celebrates a birthday. But we on the other hand, having found this as an opportunity from that predecessor, found in no scripture a birthday celebration being led by a righteous person. For, more unrighteous than that Pharaoh [was] Herod. For, by the former, on the one hand, the chief baker was executed on a birthday, but on the other hand, by the latter John [was executed], concerning whom "no one greater among those born of women has arisen," concerning whom the savior says: "But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Indeed, I say to you—and more than a prophet." (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

"The base person," for Origen's predecessor, is one "who loves matters of birth" (τὰ γενέσεως ἀγαπῶν πράγματα). This designation immediately recalls Origen's description earlier in *Comm. Matt.* 10.22 of "Herod" (τῷ Ἡρώδῃ) "who loves matters of birth" (τὰ γενέσεως ἀγαπῶντι πράγματα). By repeating this participial construction, Origen configures Herod as one such "base person." He augments this negative portrayal by claiming that there is no scriptural precedent of "a righteous person" leading a birthday celebration.[786] Origen is not about to depict Herod as an exception to this rule. (4) "Consider further that not with boldness (οὐ μετὰ παρρησίας) but secretly and in prison Herod murders John" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).[787] Herod's lack of "boldness" (which Origen stresses by fronting it in its clause) with respect to John thus contrasts with the fullness of it in John, who was "adorned in prophetic

[786] This augmentation is achieved grammatically via Origen's use of the correlative conjunctions μέν ("on the one hand") and δέ ("on the other hand"). See also, Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 14.6: "We have found that no other people observed their birthdays except Herod and Pharaoh. Thus, there was a single feast day for those whose impiety was on the same level" (Scheck, FC).

[787] This is the only occurrence of the verb φονεύω ("I murder") in *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22. Thus, Origen here departs from his preference to use the verbs ἀποκεφαλίζω ("I behead"), ἀφαιρέω ("I cut off"), or ἀναιρέω ("I execute/take away") in referring to John's execution/decapitation (the verbs ἀποκτείνω ["I kill"] and ἀποτέμνω ["I behead"] are used only once each). Coupled with the recognition that Origen is offering a thorough critique of Herod in *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22, which includes the recurring theme of Herod's lawlessness in particular, this departure more likely than not reflects an attempt on Origen's part to depict Herod in violation of the Decalogue. After all, φονεύω occurs in both Exod 20:15 LXX (Exod 20:13 MT) and Deut 5:18 LXX (Deut 5:17 MT): "You shall not murder (οὐ φονεύσεις)." But, since Origen does not specifically invoke the Decalogue, this contention remains an informed guess. At minimum, however, Origen's word choice is evocative of the Decalogue. Cf. Matt 14:10: "He beheaded (ἀπεκεφάλισεν) John in prison."

boldness" (προφητικῇ παρρησίᾳ κεκοσμημένος) while criticizing Herod (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).

(5) Origen views Herod's beheading of John as a crucial event in that it marks a shift in the political power that Herod's royal position wielded:

> When Herod contrary to the law, destroyed (ἀναιρεθέντος) the last prophet, the king of the Jews was deprived (ἀφῃρέθη) of the authority to take a life. For if Herod had not been deprived of this authority, Pilate would not have condemned Jesus to death; Herod, with the council of the chief priests and elders of the people, would have sufficed for this action.[788]

Heine's translation aptly conveys the political reversal that the participle ἀναιρεθέντος and finite verb ἀφῃρέθη signify. However, his rendering fails to capture adequately that Origen is using language that plays on the severing of John's head.[789] A more fitting translation would draw out Origen's coarse phraseology: "When the last of the prophets was executed lawlessly by Herod, the king of the Jews was *cut off* of the authority to execute." Thus, although John is the one who lost his head, Herod too underwent a type of beheading: the removal of his power to authorize executions. Furthermore, since Herod lawlessly executed "the last of the prophets," this excerpt also reinforces Origen's portrait of Herod who acts in accordance with wretched reasoning and kills God's prophets.

(6) Finally, Origen casts a shadow over Herod on account of his oaths (see Matt 14:7–9). Origen argues that Herod was under obligation to break his oath rather than to kill John:

> And the prophet is beheaded because of oaths, concerning which it was necessary rather to break the oaths than to keep [them]. For the accusation of recklessness of making oaths, of breaking oaths because of recklessness, and the accusation of executing a prophet in order to keep oaths are not the same.… Now, you may at times make elegant use of the [following] saying with respect to those who swear oaths recklessly and who want to uphold [their] oaths that were taken in lawlessness: not every keeping of oaths is fitting, just as Herod's oath [was] not. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

[788] Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 10.21 (Heine, OECT).

[789] Parthenius, *Suffering in Love*, 8.9 (Lightfoot, LCL), for example, employs ἀφαιρέω to refer to the severing of a head from its body: καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς ἀφαιρεῖ ("And he cut off her head"). The same verb occurs in Triple Tradition material to refer to the "cutting off" of an ear (Matt 26:51//Mark 14:47//Luke 22:50).

In this text in particular, moreover, the normative dimensions of commemorative activity come into focus. To re-articulate points made in chapter two, many violent events impose themselves upon social memory. Violence ruptures the presumed normalcy of the everyday. It forces individuals and collectives to restore a sense of moral intelligibility to the violence experienced or perceived. Rememberers cast perpetrators and victims in terms of "good" and/or "bad," "right" and/or "wrong," and "positive" and/or "negative." Commemorative activity can forge these characterizations into paradigms of (in)appropriate behavior in a group's present social horizon. Stated otherwise, "social memory has an indelible ethical colouration; its images of archetypal persons and events embody a community's moral order."[790] Origen, we have shown, remembers Herod in largely negative terms throughout *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22. The present passage forges and *promotes* Herod as a didactic frame of reference to deter erroneous behavior in Origen's present social context. Origen thus brings the past to bear on the present. He harnesses the negative example of Herod to perpetuate an oath ideology that differentiates between circumstances that require one to keep an oath or that obligate one to break it.

4.1.5. Summary

Underlying *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22 is the contest over the memory of John the Baptist's beheading. Origen recalls those circumstances of John's death that are consistent with the socio-political methods of decapitation in the ancient world that often emphasize the degradation of the one beheaded: the destruction of the integrity of the body and the public display of the previously severed head. Origen distances John from the Herodian court. In so doing, he constructs a moral evaluation on John's death, exonerating John and damning his attackers as morally wretched killers of God's prophet. Origen invests Herod in particular

[790] Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*, 31.

with normative significance by promoting him as a negative didactic example. In so doing, Origen *begins* to shift the stigma of John's beheading away from John and onto his attackers. Origen, however, is not finished in this project of contestation. He will also redeploy the tradition in anti-Jewish directions.

4.1.6. Anti-Jewish Turns

The contest over the memory of John's death underlying *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22 takes on anti-Jewish layers. For Origen, the Herodian court functions as a symbol of "the Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι).[791] Coupled with our prior observation that John symbolizes the presence of prophecy among the Jews, the court's actions as well as the repercussions of those actions are emblematic of (1) contemporary Jewish activity and (2) the consequences contemporary Jews incur vis-à-vis prophets and prophecy. Christians, by contrast, are the beneficiaries of Israel's self-inflicted wounds. Origen thus harnesses the negative portrayal of the Jews as a foil to bolster a positive portrayal of Christians. Further, Origen's integration of the Jews into the actions of the Herodian court infuses them with the moral character of those who kill God's prophets: they are driven by "wretched reasoning." Origen views John's death as just one example among others when the Jews are at fault for the death of one of the prophets. Thus, *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22 perpetuates an image of contemporary Jews as those who reject and kill the prophets of God by pairing them to a known script.[792] Five passages in *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22 collectively illustrate these dynamics.

The first passage concerns Origen's comments on Matt 14:3 and establishes a baseline for understanding some of these anti-Jewish dimensions more clearly:

> Ἔχει δὲ οὕτως ἡ τοῦ Ματθαίου λέξις · Ὁ γὰρ Ἡρώδης κρατήσας τὸν Ἰωάννην, ἔδησεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ. Εἰς ταῦτ᾽ οὖν δοκεῖ μοι ὅτι, ὥσπερ ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται μέχρι Ἰωάννου μεθ᾽ ὅν ἔληξεν ἡ προφητικὴ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων χάρις, οὕτως ἡ

[791] Lupieri, "John the Gnostic," 325: "In Origen's view, Herod, as the king of the Jews, was a symbol for all of them."

[792] On "the Jews" as killers of God's prophets in Origen's writings, see e.g., *Cels.* 5.43; *Comm. Matt.* 10.18; 16.3. See also, de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 76–81.

> τῶν βασιλευσάντων ἐν τῷ λαῷ ἐξουσία μέχρι τοῦ ἀναιρεῖν τοὺς νομιζομένους ἀξίους θανάτου αὐτοῖς ὑπάρχουσα ἕως Ἰωάννου ἦν, καὶ ἀναιρεθέντος τοῦ τελευταίου τῶν προφητῶν παρανόμως ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἡρώδου ἀφῃρέθη ὁ Ἰουδαίων βασιλεὺς τῆς τοῦ ἀναιρεῖν ἐξουσίας.… Τάχα δὲ καὶ ἀφῃρέθησαν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην Ἰουδαῖοι, τῆς θείας παρασχούσης προνοίας τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διδασκαλίᾳ ἐν τῷ λαῷ νομήν, ἵνα, κἂν κωλύηται ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων αὕτη, ἀλλὰ μὴ μέχρι ἀναιρέσεως τῶν πιστευόντων χωρῇ, δοκούσης κατὰ νόμον γίγνεσθαι. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21)
>
> Now, the word of Matthew has it thusly: "For Herod, having grasped John, bound him in the prison." Therefore, in reference to these things, it seems to me that just as "the law and the prophets [were] until John," after whom the prophetic gift ceased from the Jews, in this way the authority (up to the execution of those thought to them worthy of death) of those ruling among the people was existing until John. When the last of the prophets was executed lawlessly by Herod, the king of the Jews was cut off of the authority to execute.… Perhaps the Jews also were cut off of this authority because divine foresight allowed the teaching of the Christ spreading among the people so that even if this [the teaching] was hindered by the Jews, it would not reach the point of the execution of the believers, thinking to act according to the law. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.21)

Several observations are in order. First, Herod's imprisonment of John temporally marks the cessation of "the prophetic gift" (ἡ προφητικὴ χάρις) among "the Jews" (Ἰουδαίων). Origen relates Luke 16:16 ("the law and the prophets [were] until John") to Matt 14:3 in this regard.[793] Second, Origen draws a parallel conclusion: the beheading of John temporally marks the end of Herod's political power to authorize executions.

Third, Origen asserts that "the Jews" (Ἰουδαίοι) likewise were deprived of this same political power.[794] Thus, the Jews are integrated into the consequences that Herod's execution of the Baptist incurred. Origen makes this assertion using language that specifically invokes John's beheading. Just as Herod "was cut off" (ἀφῃρέθη), so also the Jews "were cut off" (ἀφῃρέθησαν) from possessing this power. In this respect, although John is the one physically executed, Origen divests his beheading of its symbolic potential by reallocating it. In Origen's reasoning, it is Herod and the Jews that undergo a self-inflicted beheading.

[793] Cf. Matt 11:13 ("For, all the prophets and the law until John were prophesying").

[794] In other words, if Herod was deprived of the power to authorize executions, the Jewish populace at large was accordingly deprived of the impulse to approach Herod specifically to execute those they wanted dead. Hence, Origen goes on to say, Jesus was condemned to death by Pilate. The logic, in Origen's thought, is that Roman avenues of execution would not have been needed in Jesus' case if Jewish avenues had still been authorized. Cf. John 18:31.

Fourth, God passes a moral judgment on the Jews, suspecting them by divine foresight of lawlessly executing "the believers." Origen speculates that the removal of power from the Jews was rooted in divine foreknowledge to enable the "spreading" of "the teaching of the Christ" while safeguarding "believers" from the risk of death. Thus, Origen suggests the removal of power from the Jews was designed by God to protect Christ-followers.[795] The protection of believers, ensured by divine foresight, implies that God assumed the worst of the Jews. If their authority had been left in place, they *would* execute believers, erroneously "thinking" (δοκούσης) they acted "according to the law" (κατὰ νόμον).[796]

Many of these observed phenomena place Jews in an inferior light. Origen aligns the Jews with Herod and both undergo a self-inflicted "beheading." Origen renders the Jews' moral legitimacy dubious in that they would execute "believers" if they continued to enjoy the same political authority they possessed prior to John. It would be imprecise, however, to call the eradication of Jewish power in this regard an act of divine restriction on "Jews" to the benefit of "Christians." That is to say, this restriction is not anti-Jewish in the sense of placing non-Christian Jews in an inferior position to non-Jewish Christians. On this particular issue, Origen is commenting on the *immediate* political consequences this restriction had *within Jewish circles in the first century*. For Origen, the removal of the power from the Jews to execute perceived criminals was an intra-Jewish phenomenon, one that protected Christ-following Jews from other Jews.[797]

[795] In grammatical terms, the genitive absolute construction—τῆς θείας παρασχούσης προνοίας τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διδασκαλίᾳ ἐν τῷ λαῷ νομήν—seems to be indicating a causal circumstance ("*because* divine foresight allowed the teaching of the Christ spreading among the people") under which the main verb ἀφῃρέθησαν ("they [the Jews] were cut off") takes place, not merely a temporal circumstance ("*when* divine foresight allowed the teaching of the Christ spreading among the people").

[796] Origen's depiction of the Jews "thinking" their execution of Christ-following Jews would occur "according to the law" is an ironic indictment of their reasoning. The implication in Origen's rhetoric is that such hypothetical executions would in reality *not* be in accordance to the law (even if legally sanctioned by Jewish authority). The irony here parallels another instance we already alluded to in our analysis: Origen's characterization of the daughter's dance movements as "seemingly (δοκοῦντα) graceful" but in reality driven by "lawless (παρανόμου) reasoning" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).

[797] The present pericope indicates that the removal of this political authority occurred in the context of "the teaching of Christ" disseminating "among the [Jewish] people" (ἐν τῷ λαῷ). The purpose of the removal,

What makes this specific phenomenon take on dangerous anti-Jewish overtones is that it is expressed in a third-century social context where boundaries between "Christians" and "Jews" as such were more readily recognizable than they were in Jesus' first-century Jewish context. For Origen to perpetuate a demeaning configuration of "the Jews" that questions their moral legitimacy—and positions them as those whose power is fatal to "believers" if left unchecked—holds the dangerous capacity to inculcate and map (1) the characterization of these Jews onto Jews in his own social context and likewise (2) the characterization of "believers" onto Christians. As B. Lincoln says: "*Invocation* of an ancestor [is] simultaneously the *evocation* of a correlated social group."[798] Such a fusion of separate groups in the past and separate groups in the present contains the dangerous potential to aggravate social estrangements, animate conflict, and inscribe attitudes that legitimize conflict.

Similarly, that John's death is equated with the cessation of prophecy among the Jews is not necessarily an anti-Jewish claim in itself. Jewish sources propagate the idea of the absence of prophecy, even if only a temporary absence.[799] If Matt 11:13 ("For all the prophets and the law were prophesying until John") has any semblance to sentiments the Jesus of history expressed, assigning John temporal significance as the "last of the prophets" is a maneuver that originates in Jewish ambits. But, Origen's development of this theme elsewhere in *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22, as we will show, takes on anti-Jewish characteristics in four respects. First, Origen expressly aligns the Jews with Herodian actions of removing prophecy from the people. The Jews are portrayed as the killers of God's prophet. Second, *that* the Jews are a people without "the gift" (ἡ χάρις) of prophecy rhetorically lowers their

then, was "so that" (ἵνα) Christ-following Jews—"believers" (τῶν πιστευόντων)—would not face the suppression of their ideology to the extent that they would be physically killed. On Origen's general use of the terms Ἰουδαῖος ("Jew"), Ἑβραῖος ("Hebrew"), and Ἰσραηλίτης ("Israelite"), see de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 29–33.

798 Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, 20 (italics original).

799 See, Frederick E. Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," *JBL* 108 (1989): 37–49.

social position. Third, this degradation of the Jews is set in contrast to the elevation of Christians who possess "the [gift] greater entirely than that [gift]" (ἡ πάσης ἐκείνης μείζων). Christian prestige is bolstered at the expense of the Jews. Fourth, and relatedly, whereas with the removal of Jewish political authority Origen does not explicitly draw a parallel between first-century Jews and Jews in his own social context, on the issue of prophecy he is explicit in mapping the degradation of first-century Jews onto contemporary Jews and vice versa.

The second passage concerns the dance of Herodias' daughter in Matt 14:6. Our earlier analysis of her dance demonstrated that Origen's portrayal constitutes an ironic moral indictment of the daughter. Her "seemingly graceful movements" (τὰ δοκοῦντα εὔρυθμα κινήματα) prove to be (1) motivated by "lawless (παρανόμου) reasoning" and (2) the reason why "a prophetic head/source is no longer among the people" (μηκέτι εἶναι ἐν τῷ λαῷ κεφαλὴν προφητικήν) (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).[800] Origen then says: "And until now, I suppose, the seemingly lawful movements (τὰ δοκοῦντα κατὰ τὸν νόμον κινήματα) of the Jewish people (τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαῖων) turn out to be not anything other than Herodias' daughter" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22). Origen expressly activates his portrayal of Herodias' daughter in his present social context ("And until now"). He extends the same ironic indictment of Herodias' dance "movements" to the Jews' "movements." Thus, he condenses Jewish actions to "not anything other than Herodias' daughter." With these maneuvers, Origen draws a direct line between Herodias and contemporary Jews. He inscribes the latter with the moral incompetence of the former and incriminates the Jews in the beheading of the prophet

[800] As Heine, *Commentary of Origen*, 1:56, n. 161, suggests, Origen is playing on the word κεφαλή ("head" or "source) "since Herod had 'beheaded' John and sent his head to Herodias."

John.[801] *Origen thereby insinuates that Jews from the time of John's death to the present time continue to cause the absence of prophecy among the Jewish people*.[802]

While the second passage emphasizes the Jews' status as a people without the gift of prophecy, the third passage contrasts this absence with the presence of a greater gift among Gentile Christians. The pericope in question follows Origen's comparison of Herod and Pharaoh. Herod was "more unrighteous" than the Pharaoh of Gen 40:20–23 because he executed the greatest person ever born, John, who was "more than a prophet" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22; see Matt 11:11a//Luke 7:28a). Immediately thereafter, Origen reacts to John's beheading by keying it to Jesus' crucifixion:

> Ἀλλὰ εὐχαριστητέον τῷ θεῷ ὅτι, εἰ καὶ ἡ προφητικὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ ἦρται χάρις, ἡ πάσης ἐκείνης μείζων ἐξεχύθη εἰς τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, ὅς ἐγένετο ἐν νεκροῖς ἐλεύθερος. Ἐι γὰρ καὶ ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ ζῇ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
>
> However, we must give thanks to God because, although the prophetic gift was taken away from the people, the [gift] greater than that [gift] entirely was poured out on the Gentiles through our savior Jesus, who became free among the dead. For although he was crucified in weakness, he lives in the power of God. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

Instead of citing Matt 11:11b//Luke 7:28b ("But the least in the Kingdom of the Heavens/God is greater than he [John]") after quoting Matt 11:11a//Luke 7:28a, Origen symbolically charges the methods of the two deaths by contrasting their respective outcomes. John's beheading is tantamount to the *loss* of the presence of prophecy among the Jews ("the

[801] Origen also invests the dinner guests with the moral incompetence of the Jews. He writes: "And those celebrating his birthday recline and stand by with the wretched reasoning (λόγῳ μοχθηρῷ) that rules the Jews (Ἰουδαίων)" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).

[802] Just as the daughter's movements *are* the reason for the absence of prophecy, that Jewish movements *are* Herodias' daughter implies, therefore, that Jewish actions *continue to be* the reason for the absence of prophecy. That Origen is making this implicit suggestion is further corroborated by the fact that he develops this idea in the remaining passages we will analyze below. Cf. *Comm. Matt.* 16.3 (see Matt 16:20–21) where Origen claims that the Jews continue to crucify Jesus in Jerusalem: "But if, according to a certain way of signifying things, humans are the city, even now Jesus is delivered in Jerusalem (and by Jerusalem, I mean those people whose hopes are centred on this earthly place) to the Jews who claim to be serving God. And those who are high priests, as it were, and the scholars, who boast that they interpret the divine Scriptures, condemn Jesus to death by their evil speech against him. They are always handing Jesus over to the Gentiles, mocking him and his teaching among themselves, and tongue-lashing the worship of God through Jesus Christ. They themselves crucify him by their anathemas and their desire to destroy his teaching" (Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 16.3 [Heine, OECT]).

prophetic gift was taken away [ἦρται] from the people").[803] Jesus' crucifixion, on the other hand, constitutes the *gain* of a superior gift for the Gentiles ("the [gift] greater than that [gift] entirely was poured out [ἐξεχύθη] on the Gentiles through our savior Jesus").[804] Thus, whereas Matt 11:11b//Luke 7:28b mitigates the Baptist's prestige in relation to those who enter the Kingdom, Origen harnesses the symbolism of beheading and crucifixion to assert the preeminence of Christians—who possess a superior gift—at the expense of Jews. In this respect, Origen does not distract attention from the degradation of John's beheading: he weaponizes it to underscore the superiority of Jesus' crucifixion.

The superior gift Origen alludes to here is the outpouring of God's spirit in Acts 2:1–41. Peter's address to the Jewish crowd in Acts 2:17–18 twice specifies that the outpouring enables *prophesying*: "And in the last days it will be, God says, that I will pour out (ἐκχεῶ) of my spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughters will prophesy (προφητεύσουσιν).… In those days I will pour out (ἐκχεῶ) of my spirit, and they [male and female slaves] will prophesy (προφητεύσουσιν)."[805] Whereas Acts 2:1–41 presents this outpouring of the spirit on Christ-following Galilean Jews in Jerusalem (and Diaspora Jews visiting Jerusalem),

[803] Origen's word choice of ἦρται ("was taken away") is puzzling. On the one hand, its basic meaning of "take up/away" evokes the physicality of the method of John's death: his head is taken up and away from his body. On the other hand, the verb αἴρω is a *hapax legomenon* in *Comm. Matt.* 10.21–22. Not only does this word depart from Origen's preferred language in describing John's beheading/execution (ἀποκεφαλίζω, ἀφαιρέω, and ἀναιρέω), it is also the same word used in Matt 14:12 in reference to the removal of John's headless *body* for burial (so also Mark 6:29). Matthew 14:12, moreover, comprises the only occurrence of αἴρω in the Matthean account of John's death (so also in Mark 6:14–29). Origen's word choice, therefore, presents the interpreter with three general ways of understanding this saying: (1) as a reference to John's beheading-proper, (2) as alluding to the removal of John's body for burial, or (3) a combination of both ideas and thus a reference to the totality of John's death. I prefer the third option because it makes the contrast with Jesus' death more pointed: John was beheaded and his body buried, whereas Jesus "was crucified" (ἐσταυρώθη) "yet lives" (ἀλλὰ ζῇ).

[804] Origen is converging two images in this text. First, the verb ἐκχέω ("I pour out") alludes to the outpouring of God's spirit in Acts 2:1–41. Second, given (1) Origen's emphasis on John's beheading throughout *Comm. Matt.* 10.22, and (2) the explicit mention of Jesus' crucifixion in this passage (ἐσταυρώθη "he was crucified"), it is difficult not also to see in this saying an allusion to the image of Jesus' blood shed on the cross. Elsewhere, moreover, Origen utilizes ἐκχέω in reference to Jesus' "blood" (αἷμα) that "was poured out" at his crucifixion (*Cels.* 8.42; cf. 1 Clem. 7.4). Hence, my emphasis on Origen charging Jesus' crucifixion by stressing its outcome is intended to capture Origen's marriage of these two images in the passage.

[805] Cf. Joel 2:28–29 LXX, where the verb προφητεύω occurs once.

Origen describes the outpouring "on the Gentiles" (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη).[806] He further heightens the contrast between Jews and Gentiles by mapping his present social horizon onto the past: the outpouring is accomplished through the agency of "our (ἡμῶν) savior Jesus." Moreover, John's incomparability—as the greatest person ever born and "more than a prophet"— serves to enhance the preeminence of this "greater gift" that Gentile Christians enjoy. The death of this incomparable figure amplifies the austerity of the Jews' present condition. Overall, therefore, the pairing of John's and Jesus' deaths in this excerpt is less analogical than it is a foil that elevates Gentile Christians—who have the presence of prophecy—at the expense of Jews, who are void of it.

The fourth passage concerns the public presentation of John's severed head on a platter (Matt 14:11):

> Ἔτι δὲ ὅρα τὸν λαὸν παρ᾽ ᾧ καθαρὰ μὲν καὶ ἀκάθαρτα ἐξετάζεται βρώματα, καταφρονεῖται δὲ προφητεία ἐπὶ πίνακι ἀντὶ ὄψου προσαγομένη. Τὴν δὲ κεφαλὴν τῆς προφητείας Ἰουδαῖοι οὐκ ἔχουσι, τὸ κεφάλαιον πάσης προφητείας Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀρνούμενοι. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
>
> But consider further the people who, on the one hand, examine food [to see whether it is] clean or unclean, but on the other hand, despise prophecy which is brought on a platter instead of prepared food. And, the Jews do not have the source/head of prophecy, because they deny the summation/head of all prophecy, Christ Jesus. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

Origen's remarks here are striking. Matthew 14:3–12 identifies Herod's dinner guests only as "those reclining" (τοὺς συνανακειμένους) (Matt 14:9). The Matthean account does not identify them as Jews. Nor does the Gospel of Matthew identify Herod Antipas, Herodias, or Herodias' daughter as Jewish.[807] Origen superimposes a Jewish identity onto these figures: they are "the people" (τὸν λαόν) who scrutinize their sustenance to observe if it is "clean"

[806] Of course, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Christ-following Jews in Acts 2:1–4, followed by their speaking to Diaspora Jews "from every nation" in their respective languages (Acts 2:5–13), anticipates Luke's emphasis on the mission to the Gentiles. See, Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary. Volume 1. Introduction and 1:1—2:47* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 780–837.

[807] See, Matt 14:1, 3, 6, 9, 11. As we noted previously in this chapter, the Herodian dynasty's identity as Jews was a matter of dispute from the first century onwards.

(καθαρά) or "unclean" (ἀκάθαρτα). Introduced by the correlative conjunctions μέν ("on the one hand") and δέ ("but on the other hand"), Origen contrasts their concern for cleanliness, with their disregard for prophecy: the severed prophetic head of John on a platter is the object of their contempt. Further, Origen portrays their actions against John as prototypical. "The Jews" (Ἰουδαῖοι) continue to be a people without prophecy "because they deny the summation (τὸ κεφάλαιον) of all prophecy, Christ Jesus." Origen, therefore, aligns the Jews' treatment of John and Jesus, making their treatment of one reflective of their response to the other.[808]

The final passage concerns the setting of John's execution "in prison" (Matt 14:10).

> Ἔτι δὲ πρόσχες ὅτι οὐ μετὰ παρρησίας, ἀλλὰ κρύφα καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ φονεύει τὸν Ἰωάννην ὁ Ἡρώδης καὶ γὰρ οὐ μετὰ παρρησίας ἀρνεῖται ὁ νῦν Ἰουδαίων λαὸς τὰς προφητείας, δυνάμει δὲ καὶ ἐν κρυπτῷ αὐτὰς ἀρνεῖται καὶ ἐλέγχεται αὐταῖς ἀπιστῶν. Ὥσπερ γὰρ εἰ ἐπίστευον Μωσῇ, τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπίστευσαν ἄν, οὕτως εἰ ἐπίστευον τοῖς προφήταις, προσήκαντο ἄν τὸν προφητευόμενον. Ἀπιστεῦντες δὲ τούτῳ κἀκείνοις ἀπιστοῦσι καὶ ἀποτέμνουσιν ἐν φυλακῇ κατακλείσαντες τὸν λόγον τὸν προφητικόν, καὶ ἔχουσιν αὐτὸν νεκρὸν καὶ διαιρεθέντα καὶ μηδαμοῦ ὑγιῆ ἐπεὶ μὴ νοοῦσιν αὐτόν. Ἀλλ᾽ ἡμεῖς ὁλόκληρον ἔχομεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, πληρωθείσης τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ λεγούσης προφητείας, Ὀστοῦν αὐτοῦ οὐ συντριβήσεται. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)
>
> Consider further that not in openness but secretly and in prison Herod murdered John. For also, not in openness are the present Jewish people denying the prophecies, but in power and in secret they are denying them, and they are convicted by their disbelieving in them. For just as if they had believed Moses they would have believed Jesus, so also if they had believed the prophets, they would have accepted the one who was prophesied. And because they do not believe this one, they disbelieve those [prophets] and they behead [them], having locked up the prophetic word in prison. And they [the Jews] have it [the prophetic word] dead, divided, and not unbroken, because they do not understand it [the prophetic word]. But we [Christians] have Jesus whole, since the prophecy which says about him "A bone of him will not be broken" has been fulfilled. (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22)

This passage contains several moving parts. Of principal importance is Origen's fusion of the horizons of the past and the present. He unequivocally manipulates the beheading in his present social framework ("the *present* Jewish people" [ὁ νῦν Ἰουδαίων λαός]), so that it is

[808] Likewise, Jerome in the late fourth century writes concerning Matt 14:11: "But down to the present day we discern in the head of the prophet John the fact that the Jews destroyed Christ, who is the head of the prophets" (*Comm. Matt.* 14.11 [Scheck, FC]).

emblematic of contemporary Jewish denial of "the prophecies." For Origen, the manner and location of John's death—"not in openness but secretly and in prison" (οὐ μετὰ παρρησίας, ἀλλὰ κρύφα καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ)—signals the nature of the Jews' denial: "not in openness" (οὐ μετὰ παρρησίας) but rather "in power and in secret" (δυνάμει καὶ ἐν κρυπτῷ).[809]

One naturally asks: how do the Jews *secretly* reject "the prophecies" in Origen's reasoning? Origen is not suggesting that the Jews affirm prophecies in public settings but deny them in private. His next comments build on John 5:46 ("For if you had believed Moses, you would believe me") and provide an answer: the Jews' manifest unbelief in Jesus is an implicit (i.e. secret) denial of the prophets/prophecies. Because Origen envisages an essential link between the prophets and Jesus, patent unbelief in the latter inherently involves a covert denial of the former.

The rest of the passage provides a bleak assessment of the "the present Jewish people." Origen contrasts the different methods of John's and Jesus' deaths in this respect. For Origen, the irreparable damage of a head divided from its body makes John's death more degrading than Jesus' death which left the latter's body fully intact.[810] However, Origen massages this portrayal into a picture of Jews and Christians writ-large. The Jews have the prophetic word "dead, divided, and not unbroken" (νεκρὸν καὶ διαιρεθέντα καὶ μηδαμοῦ ὑγιῆ). "We" (ἡμεῖς), however, "have Jesus whole (ὁλόκληρον)." In this respect, Origen does not so much negate the degradation of John's beheading so much as he harnesses it, reallocates it to underscore the austerity of the Jews, and thereby bolster the preeminence of Christians. Lupieri's summary works well in this regard: "In cutting off John's head, the Jews separated the prophecy of God from their religious body: the Jews lie down, now, as a

[809] Cf. Caesarius of Arles, *Serm.* 218: "John remained in chains and in a prison. The law, too, was kept locked up in the minds of the Jews as though in places of condemnation, and spiritual understanding was restrained by the letter of the law as in a hidden, secret place" (Mueller, FC).

[810] On Jesus' unbroken body, see John 19:31–37 (cf. Exod 12:46 LXX; Ps 33:21 LXX).

headless corpse, while the Christians can worship Jesus, the totality of revelation, of whom not even a bone had been broken!"[811]

Conclusion

To summarize, the memories of John's beheading in the first three centuries are the loci for self-definition. The Synoptic Gospels, Justin Martyr, and Origen all showcase commemorative operations designed to transform a negative past into a positive present. Moreover, for Justin, John's beheading is integral in proving that the Elijah of the first messianic advent had indeed come. Origen's Herod takes on normative signification. Origen promotes Herod as a negative didactic frame of reference in his bid to impart a particular oath ideology in his own social horizon. Yet, the memory of John's beheading also came to perpetuate anti-Jewishness. The identification of John with Elijah enables Justin to assert the superiority of his version of Christology over and against competing versions. Justin aligns his Christian competitors with Jewish ideology, thereby making Jewish ideological inferiority part and parcel with his own Christian ideological preeminence. As "the ways begin to part," so to speak, Justin and Origen weaponize the negative portrayals of the Herodian court (particularly Herod) in their social contexts. Across his intricate threshold of the first and second person, Justin activates the differing characterizations between John and Herod, affiliating "you Jews" with the actions of Herod against John that led to the prophet's death. Origen massages those elements that hold the capacity to stress the humiliation of John's beheading into symbols of Jewish confining, despising, rejecting, and killing God's

811 Lupieri, "John the Gnostic," 325. As a final note, Origen bases his evaluation of the Jews on the claim that "they do not understand it [the prophetic word]" (μὴ νοοῦσιν αὐτόν). With this assertion Origen comes full circle in his argument in this passage: (a) the Jews do not believe Jesus, nor as a corollary, the prophets, (b) the Jews behead the prophetic word, (c) the Jews have a headless prophetic word, because (d) the Jews do not understand the prophetic word. The progression of Origen's rhetoric reveals a close association between Jewish (a) unbelief in Jesus and (d) misunderstanding of the prophets. Thus, at work in this passage is akin to what de Lange, (*Origen and the Jews*, 82), refers to as "Origen's principal complaint" against his Jewish contemporaries, namely, misunderstanding because of their adherence to a literalist understanding of scripture. Origen intimately links "Jewish rejection of Jesus" "with the literal interpretation of the law" (de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 83). See also, Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 107–60 (quotation, p. 107), who argues that Origen's "charge of literalism" was "profoundly doctrinal" and not a "procedural" criticism of Jewish exegesis.

prophet(s) and prophecy. This treatment of prophecy, moreover, is related by Origen to contemporary Jewish rejection of Jesus. The reception of John's beheading in Justin and Origen in particular, therefore, are the sites of a complex interaction between the past and the present. John's death is pressed into the service of their presents while their presents are simultaneously mapped onto the past. The dangerous upshot of this commemorative activity is that the Jews are inscribed as killers of God's prophet(s) by two prominent and influential early Christian thinkers.

CONCLUSION

"John's career … was meteoric. Suddenly he appeared upon the horizon, and quite as suddenly he was gone again."[812] The same cannot be said of the impact of his beheading in the early centuries following his death. It reverberated in the ever-shifting horizon of the present. His impact, I have argued, is characterized by a dangerous synchroneity: (1) *the beheading of John the Baptist constituted a salient image that individuals and groups harnessed to organize and sculpt their identity*. Mark 6:14–29 contests the degradation of John's beheading: the beheading is keyed to Jesus' crucifixion and the Herodian court is infused with the moral complexion of those whose "will" do not accord with God's "will."

Herod is emasculated in Mark's portrayal as he is controlled by the Herodian women. His apologetic posture toward John in Mark 6:20 heightens the portrayal of his emasculation as he is ultimately unable to control his subjects. Herod's doubt regarding the efficacy of John's beheading ("He whom I beheaded, John, has this one been raised?" Mark 6:16) shows him as a paranoid figure who entertains the impossible notion of a decapitated person's resurrection. (Alternatively, Herod's affirmation that John overcame his violent death ["He whom I beheaded, John, this one has been raised!" Mark 6:16] depicts him as a figure paranoid about John's improper burial [Mark 6:27–29].) According to Luke 9:9, John's beheading clearly distinguishes John the Baptist and Jesus as two different figures. For both the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew, John's beheading is indicative of his identity as the Elijanic forerunner of Jesus (Mark 9:9–13//Matt 17:9–13). The Gospel of Luke, however, distances John from this role (Luke 9:37). And the Gospel of John denies John this identity altogether (John 1:21).

[812] Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 94.

Justin Martyr and Origen, furthermore, contest the degradation of John's beheading. Both authors accentuate John's identity as God's prophet and position Herod as the killer of God's prophet. John's severed head on a platter, for Justin, makes John's identity as Elijah apparent—a particularly important component of Justin's Christology as it proves that Elijah *had* come (*Dial.* 49.4–5). John's death takes on normative significance in Origen's usage as he harnesses the negative example of Herod to advance an oath ideology that does not make oath-keeping an absolute requirement. Moreover, for Origen, John's beheading temporally marked the end of Jewish power to authorize criminal executions and the end of the prophetic gift among the Jewish people.

However, (2) *John's beheading was also a significant image that early recipients utilized to construct Christian identity over and against Jewish identity*. The emergence of anti-Jewish turns in the tradition-history is particularly evident in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* and Origen's *Commentary on Matthew*. Both recipients utilize the beheading in the context of "Jewish-Christian relations" and infuse contemporary Jews with the moral coloration of Herod (or in Origen's case, the moral wretchedness of the Herodian court altogether). While the Synoptic Gospels merely identify Herod Antipas as a "king" or a "tetrarch," Justin renders Antipas as a royal symbol of "you (Jews)" who kill God's prophets (*Dial.* 49.3–5; see also *Dial.* 16.4; 39.1; 112.5; 120.5; *1 Apol.* 49.1–5). Justin also combats the adoptionistic Christology of his Christian rivals by aligning their ideology with Jewish Elijanic ideology. Thus, he navigates Christian controversy by making Jewish inferiority an integral part of his rhetoric.

Origen, like Justin, makes Herod a symbol of "the Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι). As such, Herod's imprisonment and beheading of John in prison correspond to contemporary Jews' ("the *present* Jewish people" [ὁ νῦν Ἰουδαίων λαός]) treatment of the prophets and prophecy (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22). Unlike Justin, however, Origen extends this symbolism to the entire

Herodian court. The "wretched reasoning" that (1) motivated Herodias, (2) inspired the daughter's dance "movements," and then (3) resulted in the loss of prophecy among the Jews is likened to contemporary Jews: "And *until now*, I suppose, the seemingly lawful *movements* (τὰ δοκοῦντα κατὰ τὸν νόμον κινήματα) of the Jewish people (τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαῖων) turn out to be not anything other than Herodias' daughter" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22). Origen thus insinuates that contemporary Jews continue to be a people adverse to and in opposition to God's prophets and prophecy. This symbolism even encompasses the dinner guests present at Herod's birthday party. Whereas Matt 14:9 identifies the guests as "those reclining" (τοὺς συνανακειμένους), Origen claims that they shared the "moral wretchedness" of the Jews and wanted John killed: "And not for this reason only is he [John] beheaded but also because of those reclining, who want the prophet to be executed rather than to live. And those who celebrate his birthday recline and stand by with the wretched reasoning which was ruling the Jews" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).

Finally, while Origen frequently *shifts* the gaze of John's degrading beheading onto the Herodian court to highlight the moral wretchedness of contemporary Jews,[813] Origen is also content to *affirm* the degradation of John's beheading when it can be used to underscore the austerity of the Jews in comparison to the preeminence of Christians. That is, John, as the symbol of *prophecy* among *the Jews* has a dual function in regard to his beheading: (1) his positive moral coloration accentuates the gravity of the Jews' moral ineptitude in putting the prophet(s) to death; (2) the degradation of his beheaded—and thus broken—body reveals the superiority of Christ (whose body is "whole") and Christians (who possess "the [gift] greater

[813] "But consider further the people who, on the one hand, examine food [to see whether it is] clean or unclean, but on the other hand, despise prophecy which is brought on a platter instead of prepared food. And, the Jews do not have the source/head of prophecy, because they deny the summation/head of all prophecy, Christ Jesus" (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).

entirely than that [gift]"), while symbolizing the brokenness of Jews (who have the prophetic word "dead, divided, and not unbroken") (*Comm. Matt.* 10.22).

Together, therefore, Justin and Origen turn John's beheading into (1) a moral indictment of contemporary Jews—the killers of God's prophets—and (2) a picture that demonstrates the superiority of Christians. Such sentiments, expressed in the context of "Jewish-Christian relations," had the immediate dangerous potential of inflaming hostilities between estranged social groups—provoking, animating, and condoning conflict. Such sentiments also, of course, perpetuated into the future the hazardous motif of the Jews as prophet-killers.[814] What *impact*, then, did John's beheading have in its reception? Insofar as it enabled the advancement of anti-Jewish ideology in the context of "Jewish-Christian relations," and inscribed it for the future, John's severed head had a dangerous impact: the memory of his violent end became invisibly violent.

[814] See, e.g., Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 14.11.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CRITICAL BIBLICAL TEXTS

Aland, Barbara et al., eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.

Elliger, K. and W. Rudolf, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Revised by A. Schenker. 5th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.

Rahlfs, Alfred, ed. *Septuaginta*: Editio altera. Revised by Robert Hanhart. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Appian. *Roman History*. Translated by Brian McGing and Horace White. 4 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912–1913.

Augustine. *Sermons 306–340A*. Edited by John E. Rotelle. Translated by Edmund Hill. The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, 3/9. Hyde Park: New City Press, 1994.

Bobichon, Philippe. *Justin Martyr, Dialogue avec Tryphon: Édition critique, traduction, commentaire*. 2 vols. Fribourg: Academic Press, 2003.

Caesarius of Arles. *Sermons Volume III.* Translated by Sister Mary Magdeleine Mueller. FC 66. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1973.

Calvin, John. *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. Translated by Rev. William Pringle. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005.

Charlesworth, James, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Volume 2*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1985.

Chrysostom, John. *Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*. In vol. 10 of *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. *First Series.* Edited by Philip Schaff. 1886–1889. 14 vols. Repr., New York: Cosimo, 2007.

Cicero. *On Duties*. Translated by Walter Miller. LCL 30. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913.

———. *The Verrine Orations*. Translated by L. H. G. Greenwood. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928–1935.

Dio Cassius. *Roman History*. Translated by Earnest Cary and Herbert B. Foster. 9 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914–1927.

Diodorus Siculus. *Library of History*. Translated by Francis R. Walton et al. 12 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933–1967.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus. *Roman Antiquities*. Translated by Earnest Cary. 7 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937–1950.

Epictetus. *Discourses*. Translated by W. A. Oldfather. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925–1928.

Euripides. *Children of Heracles. Hippolytus. Andromache. Hecuba*. Translated by David Kovacs. LCL 484. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Girod, Robert. *Origène. Commentaire sur l'Évangile selon Matthieu*. Vol. 1. Livres 10–11. SC 162. Paris, 1970.

Goodspeed, Edgar J. *Die ältesten Apologeten*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914.

Herodotus. *The Persian Wars*. Translated by A. D. Godley. 4 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920–1925.

Homer. *Iliad*. Translated by A. T. Murray. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924–1925.

———. *Odyssey*. Translated by A. T. Murray. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919.
Jerome. *Commentary on Matthew*. Translated by Thomas P. Scheck. FC 117. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008.
Josephus. *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Volume 1B. Judean War 2.* Translated by Steve Mason. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
———. *Jewish Antiquities*. Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray et al. 9 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930–1965.
———. *The Jewish War*. Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray. 3 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927–1928.
Juvenal and Persius. *Juvenal and Persius*. Translated by Susanna Morton Braund. LCL 91. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
Lightfoot, J. L., ed. *Hellenistic Collection: Philitas. Alexander of Aetolia. Hermesianax. Euphorion. Parthenius.* Translated by J. L. Lightfoot. LCL 508. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.
Livy. *History of Rome*. Translated by B. O. Foster et al. 14 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919–1959.
Lucan. *The Civil War (Pharsalia)*. Translated by J. D. Duff. LCL 220. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928.
Lucian. *How to Write History. The Dipsads. Saturnalia. Herodotus or Aetion. Zeuxis or Antiochus. A Slip of the Tongue in Greeting. Apology for the "Salaried Posts in Great Houses." Harmonides. A Conversation with Hesiod. The Scythian or The Consul. Hermotimus or Concerning the Sects. To One Who Said "You're a Prometheus in Words." The Ship or The Wishes*. Translated by K. Kilburn. LCL 430. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959.
Martinez, Florentino Garcia, and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
Martyr, Justin. *Dialogue with Trypho*. Translated by Thomas B. Falls. FC 6. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1948.
Neusner, Jacob. *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
Origen. *Homilies on Luke*. Translated by Joseph T. Lienhard. FC 94. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996.
———. *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St Matthew*. Translated by Ronald E. Heine. 2 vols. OECT. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Translated by Frank Justus Miller. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.
Page, Denys L., trans. *Select Papyri, Volume III: Poetry*. LCL 360. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941.
Philo. *On the Decalogue. On the Special Laws, Books 1–3*. Translated by F. H. Colson. LCL 320. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937.
Plato. *Laws*. Translated by R. G. Bury. LCL 192. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.
———. *Republic*. Translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
Plutarch. *Lives, Volume I: Theseus and Romulus. Lycurgus and Numa. Solon and Publicola.* Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. LCL 46. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914.
———. *Lives, Volume VII: Demosthenes and Cicero. Alexander and Caesar*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. LCL 99. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919.

———. *Lives, Volume XI: Aratus. Artaxerxes. Galba. Otho. General Index.* Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. LCL 103. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.
Polybius. *The Histories*. Translated by F. W. Paton and S. Douglas Olson. 6 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010–2012.
Quintilian. *The Lesser Declamations*. Translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
Saint Basil. *Letters*. Translated by Sister Agnes Clare Way. 2 vols. FC 28. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1955.
Seneca. *Moral Essays, Volume I: De Providentia. De Constantia. De Ira. De Clementia*. Translated by John W. Basore. LCL 214. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928.
Silius Italicus. *Punica*. Translated by J. D. Duff. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934.
St. Ambrose. *Ambrose: Select Works and Letters*. Translated by Rev. H. De Romestin. NPNF 10. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.
St. Hilary of Poitiers. *Commentary on Matthew*. Translated by D. H. Williams. FC 125. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012.
Suetonius. *Lives of the Caesars*. Translated by J. C. Rolfe. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914.
Tacitus. *Histories*. Translated by Clifford H. Moore. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925–1931.
Velleius Paterculus. *Compendium of Roman History. Res. Gestae Divi Augusti.* Translated by Frederick W. Shipley. LCL 152. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924.
Virgil. *Aeneid*. Translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916–1918.
Whiston, William, trans. *The Works of Flavius Josephus*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987.
Xenophon. *Cyropaedia*. Translated by Walter Miller. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Adinolfi, Federico. "Gesù continuatore di Giovanni. Studio storico-esegetico sulla relazione tra Gesù di Nazaret e Giovanni il Battista." PhD thesis., University of Bologna, 2014.
Akiyama, Kengo. *The Love of Neighbour in Ancient Judaism: The Reception of Leviticus 19:18 in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, the Book of Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament*. AGJU 105. Leiden: Brill, 2018.
Aldhouse-Green, Miranda. "Chaining and Shaming: Images of Defeat, From Llyn Cerrig Bach to Sarmitzegetusa." *OJA* 23 (2004): 319–40.
Allison, Dale C. *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
———. "The Continuity Between John and Jesus." *JSHJ* 1 (2003): 6–27.
———. "How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria of Authenticity." In *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, edited by Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter, 1:3–30. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
———. *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.
———. *Night Comes: Death, Imagination, and the Last Things*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
———. *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Allison, Dale C., et al. “Cross.” In *EBR*, edited by Dale C. Allison, 5:1042–63. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.

Anderson, Janice C. “Feminist Criticism: The Dancing Daughter.” In *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, 103–34. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

———. *Matthew’s Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again*. JSNTSup 91. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994.

Aplin, Max. “Was Jesus Ever a Disciple of John the Baptist? A Historical Study.” PhD thesis., University of Edinburgh, 2011.

Aretxaga, Begoña. “Dirty Protest: Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic Violence.” *Ethos* 23 (1995): 123–48.

———. “Dirty Protest: Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic Violence.” In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 244–52. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

Asikainen, Susanna. *Jesus and Other Men: Ideal Masculinities in the Synoptic Gospels*. BibInt 159. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Assmann, Aleida. “From Collective Violence to a Common Future: Four Models for Dealing with a Traumatic Past.” In *Cultural History and Literary Imagination: Other People’s Pain: Narratives of Trauma and the Question of Ethics*, edited by Martin Modlinger and Philipp Sonntag, 43–62. Oxford: Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2011.

———. “To Remember or to Forget: Which Way Out of a Shared History of Violence?” In *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, 53–71. PMMS. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Assmann, Aleida, and Linda Shortt. “Memory and Political Change: Introduction.” In *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, 1–14. PMMS. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Assmann, Jan. “Communicative and Cultural Memory.” In *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, 109–18. MCM 8. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008.

———. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. München: Beck, 1992.

———. *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*. Translated by David Lorton. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

———. *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

———. *Religion and Cultural Memory*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Aune, David E. *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003.

Aus, R. *Water into Wine and the Beheading of John the Baptist: Early Jewish-Christian Interpretation of Esther 1 in John 2.1–11 and Mark 6.17–29*. BJS 150. Atlanta: Scholars, 1988.

Backhaus, Knut. *Die “Jüngerkreise” des Täufers Johannes: Eine Studie zu den religionsgeschichtlichen Ursprüngen des Christentums*. PaThSt 19. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991.

———. “Echoes from the Wilderness: The Historical John the Baptist.” In *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, edited by Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter, 2:1747–85. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Badke, William B. “Was Jesus a Disciple of John?” *EvQ* 62 (1990): 195–204.

Barnard, L. W. *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966.
Bartlett, Frederic C. *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932.
Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.
Bauer, Walter, and F. W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
Becker, Jürgen. *Johannes der Täufer und Jesus von Nazareth*. BibSN 63. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972.
Berkowitz, Beth A. *Execution and Invention: Death Penalty Discourse in Early Rabbinic and Christian Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
Bernier, Jonathan. *The Quest for the Historical Jesus after the Demise of Authenticity*. LNTS 540. London: T&T Clark, 2016.
Bernstein, Alan E. *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds*. London: UCL Press, 1993.
Betz, Otto. "Was John the Baptist an Essene?" *BRev* 6 (1990): 18–25.
Blomquist, Gregory L. "Patristic Reception of a Lukan Healing Account: A Contribution to a Socio-Rhetorical Response to Willi Braun's Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14." In *Healing in Religion and Society From Hippocrates to the Puritans*, edited by J. Kevin Coyle and Steven C. Muir, 105–34. Lewiston: Mellen, 1999.
Bockmuehl, Markus. "A Commentator's Approach to the 'Effective History' of Philippians." *JSNT* 60 (1995): 57–88.
———. *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study*. STI. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
Boddens Hosang, F. J. Elizabeth. "Attraction and Hatred. Relations between Jews and Christians in the Early Church." In *Violence in Ancient Christianity*, edited by Albert C. Geljon and Riemer Roukema, 90–107. SVC 125. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
Bond, Helen. *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation*. SNTSMS 100. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
Boring, M. Eugene. *Mark: A Commentary*. NTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
Bornkamm, Günther, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held. *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*. London: SCM, 1963.
Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Polity, 2001.
Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc Wacquant. "Language, Gender, and Symbolic Violence." In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 140–74. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Bovon, François. *Luke: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1—9:50*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.
Boyarin, Daniel. *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
———. "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/'Christianity.'" In *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, edited by Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, 65–85. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
Brown, Colin, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1978.

Brown, Raymond E. *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1977.

Brown, Steven D., Matthew Allen, and Paula Reavey. "Remembering 7/7: The Collective Shaping of Survivors' Personal Memories of the 2005 London Bombing." In *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, edited by Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen, 428–41. London: Routledge, 2016.

Brownlee, W. H. "A Comparison of the Covenanters of the Dead Sea Scrolls with Pre-Christian Jewish Sects." *BA* 13 (1950): 50–72.

———. "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls." In *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, edited by K. Stendahl, 33–53, 252–56. London, 1958.

Bryen, Ari Z. *Violence in Roman Egypt: A Study in Legal Interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Buckley-Zistel, Susanne. "Between Pragmatism, Coercion and Fear: Chosen Amnesia after the Rwandan Genocide." In *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, 72–88. PMMS. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

———. "Remembering to Forget: Chosen Amnesia as a Strategy for Local Co-Existence in Post-Genocide Rwanda." *Africa* 76 (2006): 131–50.

Bull, Stephen. *Triumphant Rider: The Lancaster Roman Cavalry Tombstone*. Lancaster: Lancashire Museums, 2007.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Translated by John Marsh. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963.

Burr, Viv. "'Oh Spike You're Covered in Sexy Wounds!' The Erotic Significance of Wounding and Torture in Buffy the Vampire Slayer." In *Sex, Violence, and the Body: The Erotics of Wounding*, edited by Viv Burr and Jeff Hearn, 137–56. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Capps, Walter H. *Religious Studies: The Making of a Discipline*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

Carrigan, Tim, Bob (R. W.) Connell, and John Lee. "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity." *Theory and Society* 14 (1985): 551–604.

Casey, Edward S. *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Casey, Maurice. *Jesus of Nazareth: An Independent Historian's Account of His Life and Teaching*. London: T&T Clark, 2010.

Chapman, David W. *Ancient Jewish and Christian Perceptions of Crucifixion*. WUNT 224. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

Chapman, David W., and Eckhard J. Schnabel. *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus*. WUNT 344. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

Chilton, Bruce. "Friends and Enemies." In *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*, edited by Markus Bockmuehl, 72–86. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

———. "John the Baptist." In *REHJ*, edited by Craig A. Evans, 339–42. New York: Routledge, 2008.

———. "John the Baptist: His Immersion and His Death." In *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, 25–44. JSNTSup 234. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

———. "John the Purifier." In *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration*, edited by Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans, 203–20. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

———. "Justin and Israelite Prophecy." In *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, edited by Sara Parvis and Bruce Chilton, 77–87. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

Coleman, Kathleen M. “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments.” *JRS* 80 (1990).
Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Mark: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
Collins, John J. and Daniel C. Harlow, eds. *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
Collins, John J. et al. “Death, the Afterlife, and Other Last Things.” In *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, edited by Sarah Iles Johnston, 470–95. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.
Connell, R. W. *Masculinities*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
Connell, R. W., and James W. Messerschmidt. “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept.” *Gender and Society* 19 (2005): 829–59.
Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
———. “Seven Types of Forgetting.” *Mem Stud* 1 (2008): 59–71.
Conway, Colleen. *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
Conzelmann, Hans. *The Theology of St. Luke*. London: Faber & Faber, 1961.
Cook, John Granger. “Crucifixion and Burial.” *NTS* 57 (2011): 193–213.
———. “Crucifixion as Spectacle in Roman Campania.” *NovT* 54 (2012): 68–100.
———. *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World*. WUNT 327. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.
———. “Envisioning Crucifixion: Light from Several Inscriptions and the Palatine Graffito.” *NovT* 50 (2008): 262–85.
———. “Roman Crucifixions: From the Second Punic War to Constantine.” *ZNW* 104 (2013): 1–32.
Cook, John Granger, et al. “Crucifixion.” In *EBR*, edited by Dale C. Allison, 5:1084–1115. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.
Cope, Lamar. “The Death of John the Baptist in the Gospel of Matthew; Or, the Case of the Confusing Conjunction.” *CBQ* 38 (1976): 515–19.
Coser, Lewis A. “Introduction: Maurice Halbwachs 1877–1945.” In *On Collective Memory*, by Maurice Halbwachs, 1–34. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Cranfield, C. E. B. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. CGTC. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.
Crossan, John Dominic. *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.
Crossley, James G. *Cults, Martyrs, and Good Samaritans: Religion in Contemporary English Political Discourse*. London: Pluto, 2018.
———. “History from the Margins: The Death of John the Baptist.” In *Writing History, Constructing Religion*, edited by J. G. Crossley and C. Karner, 147–61. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.
———. *Jesus and the Chaos of History: Redirecting the Life of the Historical Jesus*. Biblical Refigurations. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
Cubitt, Geoffrey. *History and Memory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.
Culpepper, R. Alan. “Mark 6:17–29 in Its Narrative Context: Kingdoms in Conflict.” In *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner, 145–63. RBS 65. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.
Daniélou, Jean. *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity*. Baltimore: Helicon, 1958.
Dapaah, Daniel S. *The Relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth: A Critical Study*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2005.
Darr, John A. *Herod the Fox: Audience Criticism and Lukan Characterization*. JSNTSup 163. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Davies, Douglas J. *A Brief History of Death*. Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.
Davies, William D., and Dale C. Allison. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. 3 vols. ICC. London: T&T Clark, 1988.
De Pina-Cabral, João. "Tamed Violence: Genital Symbolism in Portuguese Popular Culture." *Man* 28 (1993): 101–20.
Delorme, Jean. "John the Baptist's Head—The Word Perverted: A Reading of a Narrative (Mark 6:14–29)." *Semeia* 81 (1998): 115–29.
Dennert, Brian C. *John the Baptist and the Jewish Setting of Matthew*. WUNT 403. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.
Dennis, J. "Death of Jesus." In *DJG*, edited by Joel B. Green, 172–93. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013.
Dibelius, Martin. *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911.
———. *From Tradition to Gospel*. Translated by Bertram Lee Woolf. LibTT. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co Ltd, 1971.
Dicken, Frank E. "Herod as Jesus' Executioner: Possibilities in Lukan Reception and Wirkungsgeschichte." In *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, edited by Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Snyder, 199–211. LNTS 548. London: T&T Clark, 2016.
Dinkova-Bruun, Greti. "The Beheading of John the Baptist in Medieval Poetic Discourse." In *Decapitation and Sacrifice. Saint John's Head in Interdisciplinary Perspectives: Text, Object, Medium*, edited by Barbara Baert and Sophia Rochmes, 41–59. Leuven: Peeters, 2017.
Dogan, Kamil Hakan. "Decapitation and Dismemberment of the Corpse: A Matricide Case." *JFS* 55 (2010): 542–45.
Dolce, Rita. *"Losing One's Head" in the Ancient Near East: Interpretation and Meaning of Decapitation*. London: Routledge, 2018.
Donahue, John R., and Daniel Harrington. *The Gospel of Mark*. SP. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002.
Douglas, Mary. *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1973.
Dulk, Matthijs den. *Between Jews and Heretics: Refiguring Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho*. London: Routledge, 2018.
Dunn, James D. G. *Jesus Remembered*. Christianity in the Making: Volume 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
———. *The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*. 2nd ed. London: SCM, 2006.
Duran, Nicole Wilkinson. "Return of the Disembodied or How John the Baptist Lost His Head." In *Reading Communities Reading Scripture: Essays in Honor of Daniel Patte*, edited by Gary A. Phillips and Nicole Wilkinson Duran. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002.
Eastman, David L. *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts of Peter and Paul*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.
Edmondson, J. C. "Dynamic Arenas: Gladiatorial Presentations in the City of Rome and the Construction of Roman Society during the Early Empire." In *Roman Theatre and Society*, edited by W. J. Slater, 69–112. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
Edwards, J. Christopher. *The Ransom Logion in Mark and Matthew*. WUNT 327. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.

Ehrlich, M. Avrum, ed. *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009.
Enslin, Morton Scott. "John and Jesus." *ZNW* 66 (1975): 1–18.
Erickson, Richard J. "The Jailing of John and the Baptism of Jesus: Luke 3:19–21." *JETS* 36 (1993): 455–66.
Erll, Astrid. "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction." In *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, 1–15. MCM 8. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008.
Erll, Astrid, and Ansgar Nünning, eds. *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. MCM 8. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008.
Ernst, Josef. *Das Evangelium nach Markus*. Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1981.
———. *Johannes der Täufer: Interpretation, Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte*. BZNW 53. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989.
Evans, Craig A. *Jesus and the Ossuaries: What Jewish Burial Practices Reveal about the Beginning of Christianity*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2003.
———. *Mark 8:27–16:20*. WBC 34B. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000.
———. *Matthew*. NCBC. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
Evans, Craig A., ed. *The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
Evans, Robert. *Reception History, Tradition and Biblical Interpretation: Gadamer and Jauss in Current Practice*. STr 4; LNTS 510. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014.
Fagan, Garrett G. "Urban Violence: Street, Forum, Bath, Circus, and Theater." In *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, edited by Werner Riess and Garrett G. Fagan, 231–47. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.
———. "Violence in Roman Social Relations." In *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, edited by Michael Peachin, 467–95. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
Fantham, Elaine, ed. *Lucan. De Bello Civili. Book II.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
Farmer, Paul. "An Anthropology of Structural Violence." *Current Anthropology* 45 (2004): 305–25.
———. "On Suffering and Structural Violence." In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 281–89. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
———. "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below." *Daedalus* 125 (1996): 261–83.
———. "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below." *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 3 (2009): 11–28.
———. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
Farris, Stephen. *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives: Their Origin, Meaning, and Significance*. JSNTSup 9. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.
Fentress, James, and Chris Wickham. *Social Memory*. New Perspectives on the Past. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
Finney, Mark T. "Christ Crucified and the Inversion of Roman Imperial Ideology in 1 Corinthians." *BTB* 35 (2005): 20–33.
———. "Servile Supplicium: Shame and the Deuteronomic Curse—Crucifixion in Its Cultural Context." *BTB* 43 (2013): 124–34.
Fischer, Alexander Achilles. *Tod und Jenseits im Alten Orient und Alten Testament*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2005.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Gospel According to Luke (I–IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. AB 28. Garden City: Doubleday, 1981.
Foote, Kenneth. "On the Edge of Memory: Uneasy Legacies of Dissent, Terror, and Violence in the American Landscape." *Soc Sci Q* 97 (2016): 115–22.
Foster, Paul. "Memory, Orality, and the Fourth Gospel: Three Dead-Ends in Historical Jesus Research." *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 191–227.
Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1977.
France, R.T. *The Gospel of Mark*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
Fredriksen, Paula. *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
———. "What 'Parting of the Ways'?: Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City." In *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, edited by Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, 35–63. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
Freud, Sigmund. "An Autobiographical Study." In *The Freud Reader*, edited by Peter Gay, 3–41. London: Vintage, 1989.
Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. Translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
———. *Wahrheit und Methode*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990.
Gager, John. *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
Garland, Robert. *The Greek Way of Death*. London: Duckworth, 1985.
Garnsey, Peter. "Why Penalties Become Harsher: The Roman Case, Late Republic to Fourth Century Empire." *NLF* 143 (1968): 141–62.
Gelber, Mark H. "Literary Anti-Semitism." In *EJD*, edited by M. Avrum Ehrlich, 107–111. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009.
Georgia, Allan T. "Translating the Triumph: Reading Mark's Crucifixion Narrative against a Roman Ritual of Power." *JSNT* 36 (2013): 17–38.
Gerdmar, Anders. *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann*. SJHC 20. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
Geyser, A.S. "The Youth of John the Baptist: A Deduction from the Break in the Parallel Account of the Lucan Infancy Story." *NovT* 1 (1956): 70–75.
Glancy, Jennifer A. "Unveiling Masculinity. The Construction of Gender in Mark 6:17–29." *BibInt* 2 (1994): 34–50.
Gnilka, Joachim. *Das Evangelium nach Markus*. 5th ed. 2 vols. EKK. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1998.
———."Das Martyrium Johannes' des Täufers (Mk 6, 17–29)." In *Orientierung an Jesu: Zur Theologie der Synoptiker*, edited by P. Hoffmann, Norbert Brox, and Wilhelm Pesch, 78–92. Freiburg: Herder, 1973.
Goguel, Maurice. *Au seuil de l'Évangile: Jean-Baptiste*. BibH 40. Paris: Payot, 1928.
Goodacre, Mark. "Mark, Elijah, the Baptist and Matthew: The Success of the First Intertextual Reading of Mark." In *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, Volume 2: Matthew*, edited by Tom Hatina, 73–84. LNTS 310. London: T&T Clark, 2008.
———. *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze*. London: T&T Clark International, 2001.
Gould, Ezra P. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1896.

Gourevitch, Philip. “We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda.” In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 136–42. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
Graves, Alex. “Kissed by Fire,” *Game of Thrones*. HBO, April 28, 2013.
Graybill, Rhiannon. *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
Green, Joel B. “The Death of Jesus and the Ways of God: Jesus and the Gospels on Messianic Status and Shameful Suffering.” *Int* 52 (1998): 24–37.
———. *The Gospel of Luke*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
Green, Joel B., et al. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013.
Greenspahn, Frederick E. “Why Prophecy Ceased.” *JBL* 108 (1989): 37–49.
Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1–8:26*. WBC 34A. Dallas: Word, 1989.
Gutchess, Angela H., and Maya Siegel. “Memory Specificity Across Cultures.” In *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, 201–15. PMMS. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
Guyénot, Laurent. “A New Perspective on John the Baptist’s Failure to Support Jesus.” *JUS* 1 (1997): 71–92.
Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 14–28*. WBC 33B. Dallas: Word, 1995.
Halbwachs, Maurice. *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. Paris: Librarie Félix Alcan, 1925.
———. *On Collective Memory*. Edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Hamm, Mark S. “Apocalyptic Violence: The Seduction of Terrorist Subcultures.” *Theoretical Criminology* 8 (2004): 323–39.
Harries, Jill. “Violence, Victims, and the Legal Tradition in Late Antiquity.” In *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, edited by H. A. Drake, 85–102. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
Harrington, Daniel J. *The Gospel of Matthew*. SP. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2007.
Hartmann, Michael. *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers: Eine exegetische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studie auf dem Hintergrund narrativer, intertextueller und kulturanthropologischer Zugänge*. SBB 45. Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2001.
Heine, Ronald E. “Introduction.” In *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St Matthew*, 1–31. OECT. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
———. “Origen.” In *The Routledge Companion to Early Christian Thought*, edited by D. Jeffrey Bingham, 188–203. London: Routledge, 2010.
———. *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
Hengel, Martin. *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
Henry, Doug. “Violence and the Body: Somatic Expressions of Trauma and Vulnerability during War.” *MAQ* 20 (2006): 379–98.
Herman, Judith, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, and Philippe Bourgois. “Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror.” In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 368–71. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
Hinard, François. “La male mort. Exécutions et statut du corps au moment de la première proscription.” In *Du châtiment dans la cité. Supplices corporels et peine de mort dans le monde antique*, 295–311. Table ronde de Rome (9–11 novembre 1982), Rome: École Française de Rome, 1984.

Hinson, E. Glenn. “Justin Martyr.” In *ER*, 7:5043–5045, 2005.
Hoehner, Harold W. *Herod Antipas*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.
Hoffeditz, David M, and Gary E. Yates. “Femme Fatale Redux: Intertextual Connection to the Elijah/Jezebel Narratives in Mark 6:14–29.” *BBR* 15 (2005): 199–221.
Hollenbach, Paul W. “The Conversion of Jesus: From Jesus the Baptizer to Jesus the Healer.” *ANRW* 2.25.1. Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase, 196–219. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982.
Holmén, Tom. “Crucifixion Hermeneutics in Judaism at the Time of Jesus.” *JSHJ* 14 (2016): 197–222.
Hölscher, Tonio. “Images of War in Greece and Rome: Between Military Practice, Public Memory, and Cultural Symbolism.” *JRS* 93 (2003): 1–17.
Hooker, Morna. “Christology and Methodology.” *NTS* 17 (1971): 480–87.
———. “On Using the Wrong Tool.” *Theology* 75 (1972): 570–81.
———. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. London: Black and Peabody, 1991.
Hope, Valerie M. *Death in Ancient Rome: A Sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 2007.
Hopkins, Keith. *Death and Renewal*. SSRH 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
Hornblower, Simon and Antony Spawforth, eds. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
Horsley, Richard A., and John S. Hanson. *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Winston, 1985.
Hübenthal, Sandra. “Reading the Gospel of Mark as Collective Memory.” In *Social Memory and Social Identity in the Study of Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, edited by Samuel Byrskog, Raimo Hakola, and Jutta Jokiranta, 69–87. NTOA/SUNT 116. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016.
———. “Social and Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis: The Quest for an Adequate Application.” In *Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis*, edited by Pernille Carstens, Trine Bjornung Hasselbach, and Niels Peter Lemche, 175–99. PHSC 17. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2012.
Hurtado, Larry. “Greco-Roman Textuality and the Gospel of Mark: A Critical Assessment of Werner Kelber’s The Oral and the Written Gospel.” *BBR* 7 (1997): 91–106.
Igartua, Juanjo, and Dario Paez. “Art and Remembering Traumatic Collective Events: The Case of the Spanish Civil War.” In *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*, edited by James W. Pennebaker, Dario Paez, and Bernard Rimé, 79–101. New York: Psychology Press, 1997.
Ilan, Tal. “Flavius Josephus and Biblical Women.” In *Early Jewish Writings*, edited by Eileen Schuller and Marie-Theres Wacker, 167–85. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017.
Jacobs, Janet. “Gender and Collective Memory: Women and Representation at Auschwitz.” *Mem Stud* 1 (2008): 211–25.
———. “The Memorial at Srebrenica: Gender and the Social Meanings of Collective Memory in Bosnia-Herzegovina.” *Mem Stud* 14 (2017): 423–39.
Janes, Regina. *Losing Our Heads: Beheadings in Literature and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.
———. “Why the Daughter of Herodias Must Dance (Mark 6.14–29).” *JSNT* 28 (2006): 443–67.
Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Translated by Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.
Jensen, Morton. *Herod Antipas in Galilee: The Literary and Archaeological Sources on the Reign of Herod Antipas and its Socio-Economic Impact on Galilee.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.

Joynes, Christine E. “Changing Horizons: Reflections on a Decade at Oxford University’s Centre for Reception History of the Bible.” *JBRec* 1 (2014): 161–71.
———. “The Reception of the Bible and Its Significance.” In *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*, edited by Michael J. Gorman, 155–67. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
———. “The Sound of Silence: Interpreting Mark 16:1–8 through the Centuries.” *Int* 65 (2011): 18–29.
Kansteiner, Wulf. “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies.” *HistTh* 41 (2002): 179–97.
———. “Genocide Memory, Digital Cultures, and the Aesthetization of Violence.” *Mem Stud* 7 (2014): 403–8.
Karakolis, Christos. “Narrative Funktion und christologische Bedeutung der markinischen Erzählung vom Tod Johannes des Täufers (Mk 6:14–29).” *NovT* 52 (2010): 134–55.
Keener, Craig S. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary. Volume 1. Introduction and 1:1—2:47*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
Keith, Chris. “The Competitive Textualization of the Jesus Tradition in John 20:30–31 and 21:24–25.” *CBQ* 78 (2016): 321–37.
———. “Early Christian Book Culture and the Emergence of the First Written Gospel.” In *Mark, Manuscripts, and Monotheism: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado*, edited by Chris Keith and Dieter T. Roth, 22–39. LNTS 528. London: T&T Clark, 2015.
———. *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.
———. *Jesus’ Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee*. LNTS 413. London: T&T Clark, 2011.
———. “Prolegomena on the Textualization of Mark’s Gospel: Manuscript Culture, the Extended Situation, and the Emergence of the Written Gospel.” In *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, edited by Tom Thatcher, 161–86. SemeiaSt 78. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.
———. “Social Memory Theory and Gospels Research: The First Decade (Part One).” *EC* 6 (2015): 354–76.
———. “Social Memory Theory and Gospels Research: The First Decade (Part Two).” *EC* 6 (2015): 517–42.
Keith, Chris, and Anthony Le Donne, eds. *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*. London: T&T Clark International, 2012.
Kelber, Werner. *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
Kelhoffer, James A. *The Diet of John the Baptist: “Locusts and Wild Honey” in Synoptic and Patristic Interpretation*. WUNT 176. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.
Kertelge, Karl. *Markusevangelium*. NEchtB. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1994.
Keshgegian, Flora A. “Finding a Place Past Night: Armenian Genocidal Memory in Diaspora.” In *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, edited by Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres, 100–12. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
Kessler, Edward and Neil Wenborn, eds. *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
Kinman, Brent. “Luke’s Exoneration of John the Baptist.” *JTS* 44 (1993): 595–98.
Kirk, Alan. *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*. RJF3C. London: T&T Clark, 2018.
———. “The Memory of Violence and the Death of Jesus in Q.” In *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, edited by Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, 191–206. SemeiaSt 52. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.

———. “Memory Theory and Jesus Research.” In *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, edited by Tom Holmén and Stanley Porter, 1:809–842. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
———. “Social and Cultural Memory.” In *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, edited by Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, 1–24. SemeiaSt 52. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.
Kirk, Alan, and Tom Thatcher, eds. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. SemeiaSt 52. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.
Klein, Ralph W. *1 Chronicles*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
Kloppenborg, John. “The Representation of Violence in the Synoptic Parables.” In *Mark and Matthew I: Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in Their First Century Settings*, edited by Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson, 323–51. WUNT 271. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.
Klostermann, Erich. *Das Markusevangelium*. HNT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971.
Kraeling, Carl H. *John the Baptist*. New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1951.
Kraemer, Ross S. “Implicating Herodias and Her Daughter in the Death of John the Baptizer: A (Christian) Theological Strategy?” *JBL* 125 (2006): 321–49.
Kraft, Robert A. “The Weighing of the Parts: Pivots and Pitfalls in the Study of Early Judaisms and Their Early Christian Offspring.” In *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, edited by Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, 87–94. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
Kuhn, Heinz-Wolfgang. “Die Kreuzesstrafe während der frühen Kaiserzeit: Ihre Wirklichkeit und Wertung in der Umwelt des Urchristentums.” *ANRW* 2.25.1. Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase, 648–793. New York: de Gruyter, 1982.
Kyle, Donald G. *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*. London: Routledge, 1998.
Landres, J. Shawn, and Oren Baruch Stier. “Introduction.” In *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, edited by Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres, 1–12. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
Lane, William L. *The Gospel According to Mark*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.
Laneri, Nicola, ed. *Performing Death: Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007.
Lange, Nicholas de. *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine*. UCOP 25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
Lawrence, Bruce B., and Aisha Karim. “General Introduction: Theorizing Violence in the Twenty-First Century.” In *On Violence: A Reader*, edited by Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim, 1–15. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
Le Donne, Anthony. *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009.
———. “Memory, Commemoration and History in John 2:19–22: A Critique and Application of Social Memory.” In *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture*, edited by Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher, 186–204. LNTS 426. London: T&T Clark, 2011.
———. “Theological Memory Distortion in the Jesus Tradition.” In *Memory and Remembrance in the Bible and Antiquity*, edited by Stephen C. Barton, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Benjamin G. Wold, 163–77. WUNT 212. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.
Lewis, R. G., ed. *Asconius: Commentaries on Speeches of Cicero*. Translated by R. G. Lewis. Revised by Jill Harries et al. CAHS. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.

Lieu, Judith. *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
———. *Neither Jew Nor Greek?: Constructing Early Christianity*. 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.
———. "'The Parting of the Ways': Theological Construct or Historical Reality." *JSNT* 56 (1994): 101–19.
Lincoln, Bruce. *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
———. "Theses on Religion and Violence." *ISIM Review* 15 (2005): 12.
Lohmeyer, Ernst. *Das Evangelium des Markus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.
———. *Johannes der Täufer*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1932.
Lupieri, Edmondo. "John the Baptist in New Testament Traditions and History." *ANRW* 2.26.1. Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase, 430–61. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992.
———. "John the Gnostic: The Figure of the Baptist in Origen and Heterodox Gnosticism." *StPatr* 19 (1989): 322–27.
Luz, Ulrich. *Das Evangelium Nach Matthäus*. 4 vols. EKKNT. Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1985.
———. *Matthew 8–20*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
———. *Matthew in History: Interpretation, Influence, and Effects*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
———. "The Contribution of Reception History to a Theology of the New Testament." In *The Nature of New Testament Theology: Essays in Honour of Robert Morgan*, edited by Christopher Rowland and Christopher Tuckett, 123–34. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
Malamud, Martha. "Pompey's Head and Cato's Snakes." *CP* 98 (2003): 31–44.
Malina, Bruce J., and Richard L. Rohrbaugh. *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
Malkki, Liisa H. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
Maloney, Frances J. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002.
Mann, C. S. *Mark*. AB. New York: Doubleday, 1986.
Manns, Frédéric. "Justin's Dialogue with Trypho." In *The Beginnings of Christianity*, edited by Jack Pastor and Menachem Mor, 359–78. Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2005.
Marcus, Joel. "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation." *JBL* 125 (2006): 73–87.
———. *John the Baptist in History and Theology*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018.
———. *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 27. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
Marotta, Valerio. "St. Paul's Death: Roman Citizenship and Summa Supplicia." In *The Last Years of Paul: Essays from the Tarragona Conference, June 2013*, edited by Armand Puig i Tàrrech and John M. G. Barclay, 247–69. WUNT 352. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.
Marshall, I. Howard. *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978.
Martens, Peter W. *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life*. OECS. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
Martínez, Roberto. *The Question of John the Baptist and Jesus' Indictment of the Religious Leaders: A Critical Analysis of Luke 7:18–35*. Cambridge: James Clarke, 2011.
Marxsen, Willi. *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel*. Translated by Roy A. Harrisville. Nashville: Abingdon, 1969.

Masciandaro, Nicola. “Non potest hoc corpus decollari: Beheading and the Impossible.” In *Heads Will Roll: Decapitation in the Medieval and Early Modern Imagination*, edited by Lariss Tracy and Jeff Massey, 15–36. MRAT 7. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

McCane, Byron R. *Roll Back the Stone: Death and Burial in the World of Jesus*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003.

McDonald, J. I. H. “What Did You Go Out to See? John the Baptist, the Scrolls and Late Second Temple Judaism.” In *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, edited by T. H. Lim et al., 53–64. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.

McGuckin, John A., ed. *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

McManigal, Daniel W. *A Baptism of Judgment in the Fire of the Holy Spirit: John’s Eschatological Proclamation in Matthew 3*. LNTS 595. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

McVann, Mark. “The ‘Passion’ of John the Baptist and Jesus before Pilate: Mark’s Warnings about Kings and Governors.” *BTB* 38 (2008): 152–57.

Meeks, Wayne A., and Robert L. Wilken. *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978.

Meier, John P. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Vol. 2, Mentor, Message, and Miracles*. ABRL. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

———. “John the Baptist in Josephus: Philology and Exegesis.” *JBL* 111 (1992): 225–37.

Metcalf, Peter, and Richard Huntington. *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Miller, Geoffrey D. “An Intercalation Revisited: Christology, Discipleship, and Dramatic Irony in Mark 6.6b–30.” *JSNT* 35 (2012): 176–95.

Miller, Susan. *Women in Mark’s Gospel*. JSNTSup 259. London: T&T Clark International, 2004.

Minns, Denis. “Justin Martyr.” In *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, edited by Lloyd P. Gerson, 258–69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Minns, Denis, and Paul Parvis, eds. *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*. OECT. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Misztal, Barbara. *Theories of Social Remembering*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 1990.

Moss, Candida R. *Divine Bodies: Resurrecting Perfection in the New Testament and Early Christianity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.

Muir, Steven. “Vivid Imagery in Galatians 3:1—Roman Rhetoric, Street Announcing, Graffiti, and Crucifixions.” *BTB* 44 (2014): 76–86.

Müller, Ulrich B. *Johannes der Täufer: Jüdischer Prophet und Wegbereiter Jesu*. BG 6. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2002.

Murnane, William J. “Taking It with You: The Problem of Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt.” In *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions*, edited by Hiroshi Obayashi, 35–48. CSR 33. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992.

Murphy, Catherine M. *John the Baptist: Prophet of Purity for a New Age*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003.

Murphy-O’Connor, Jerome. “John the Baptist and Jesus: History and Hypotheses.” *NTS* 36 (1990): 361–66.

Musurillo, Herbert. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Nautin, Pierre. *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1977.

Neal, Arthur. *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century*. Armonk: Sharpe, 1998.

Neginsky, Rosina. *Salome: The Image of a Woman Who Never Was*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.
Nineham, D. E. *Saint Mark*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963.
Nir, Rivka. *The First Christian Believer: In Search of John the Baptist*. NTMo 38. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2019.
Nolland, John. *The Gospel of Matthew*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
Nyström, David E. *The Apology of Justin Martyr: Literary Strategies and the Defence of Christianity*. WUNT 462. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018.
Nytagodien, Ridwan, and Arthur Neal. "Collective Trauma, Apologies, and the Politics of Memory." *J. Hum. Rights* 3 (2004): 465–75.
Obayashi, Hiroshi, ed. *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions*. CSR 33. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992.
O'Brien, Kelli S. "The Curse of the Law (Galatians 3.13): Crucifixion, Persecution, and Deuteronomy 21.22–23." *JSNT* 29 (2006): 55–76.
O'Collins, Gerald G. "Crucifixion." In *ABD*, edited by David Noel Freedman, 1:1207–10. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. *Mark*. ACCS. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
O'Leary, Joseph S. "Judaism." In *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, edited by John A. McGuckin, 135–38. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
———. "The Recuperation of Judaism." In *Origeniana Sexta*, 373–79. BETL 118. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995.
Olick, Jeffrey K. *In the House of the Hangman: The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943–1949*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005.
———. "Products, Processes, and Practices: A Non-Reificatory Approach to Collective Memory." *BTB* 36 (2006): 5–14.
Olick, Jeffrey K., and Daniel Levy. "Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics." *ASR* 62 (1997): 921–36.
Olick, Jeffrey K., and Joyce Robins. "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices." *ARS* 24 (1998): 105–40.
Olick, Jeffrey K., Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy. "Introduction." In *The Collective Memory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, 3–62. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
Osgood, Josiah. "The Topography of Roman Assassination, 133 BCE–222 CE." In *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, edited by Werner Riess and Garrett G. Fagan, 209–27. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.
Parker, Pierson. "Jesus, John the Baptist, and the Herods." *PRSt* 8 (1981): 4–11.
Parker, Robert. *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.
Parris, David Paul. *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*. PrTMS 107. Eugene: Pickwick, 2009.
Parvis, Paul. "Justin Martyr." *ExpTim* 120 (2008): 53–61.
Parvis, Sara, and Paul Foster, eds. *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
Pawlikowski, John T. "Anti-Judaism." In *DJCR*, 19–21. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
Pellegrini, Silvia. *Elija—Wegbereiter des Gottessohnes: Eine textsemiotische Untersuchung im Markusevangelium*. HerdBS 26. Freiburg: Herder, 2000.

Pennebaker, James W. “Introduction.” In *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*, edited by James W. Pennebaker, Dario Paez, and Bernard Rimé, vii–xi. New York: Psychology Press, 1997.

Pesantubbee, Michelene E. “Wounded Knee: Site of Resistance and Recovery.” In *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, edited by Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres, 75–88. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Pesch, Rudolf. *Das Markusevangelium*. Freiburg: Herder, 1984.

Pohl, Walter. “Perceptions of Barbarian Violence.” In *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, edited by H. A. Drake, 15–26. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

Prince, K. Stephen. “Remembering Robert Charles: Violence and Memory in Jim Crow New Orleans.” *J South Hist* 83 (2017): 297–328.

Pryor, John W. “John the Baptist and Jesus: Tradition and Text in John 3.25.” *JSNT* 66 (1997): 15–26.

Radstone, Susannah, ed. *Memory and Methodology*. Oxford: Berg, 2000.

———. “Trauma Studies: Contexts, Politics, Ethics.” In *Cultural History and Literary Imagination: Other People’s Pain: Narratives of Trauma and the Question of Ethics*, edited by Martin Modlinger and Philipp Sonntag, 63–90. Oxford: Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2011.

Räisänen, Heikki. “The Effective ‘History’ of the Bible: A Challenge to Biblical Scholarship?” *SJT* 45 (1992): 303–24.

Rajak, Tessa. *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction*. AGJU 48. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Rawlinson, A. E. J. *St Mark*. London: Methuen & Co, 1925.

Rawson, Beryl. *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Reinhartz, Adele. Review of *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*, by Daniel Boyarin. *Reading Religion*, 2018. http://www.readingreligion.org.

Reischer, Erica, and Kathryn S. Koo. “The Body Beautiful: Symbolism and Agency in the Social World.” *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* 33 (2004): 297–317.

Reventlow, Henning Graf. *History of Biblical Interpretation. Volume 1: From the Old Testament to Origen*. Translated by Leo G. Perdue. RBS 50. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009.

Ricoeur, Paul. “Memory—Forgetting—History.” In *Meaning and Representation in History*, edited by Jörn Rüsen, 9–19. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006.

Riess, Werner. “Introduction.” In *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, edited by Werner Riess and Garrett G. Fagan, 1–16. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.

———. “Where to Kill in Classical Athens: Assassinations, Executions, and the Athenian Public Space.” In *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, edited by Werner Riess and Garrett G. Fagan, 77–112. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.

Rindos, Jaroslav. *He of Whom It Is Written: John the Baptist and Elijah in Luke*. ÖBS 38. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2010.

Robertson, Ritchie. “Varieties of Anti-Semitism.” In *EJD*, edited by M. Avrum Ehrlich, 103–107. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009.

Robinson, John A.T. *Twelve New Testament Studies*. SBT. London: SCM, 1962.

Rodríguez, Rafael. “Authenticating Criteria: The Use and Misuse of a Critical Method.” *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 152–67.

———. “The Embarrassing Truth About Jesus: The Criterion of Embarrassment and the Failure of Historical Authenticity.” In *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, edited by Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne, 132-151. London: T&T Clark, 2012.
———. *Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance, and Text*. LNTS 407. London: T&T Clark, 2010.
Rosaldo, Renato. “Grief and a Headhunter’s Rage.” In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 150–56. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
Rothschild, Clare K. *Baptist Traditions and Q*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.
———. Review of *He of Whom It Is Written: John the Baptist and Elijah in Luke*, by Jaroslav Rindos. *RBL*, 2012. http://www.bookreviews.org.
Samuelsson, Gunnar. *Crucifixion in Antiquity: An Inquiry into the Background and Significance of the New Testament Terminology of Crucifixion*. WUNT 310. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.
Sanders, E. P. *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. London: Penguin, 1993.
Scarry, Elaine. “The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World.” In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 365–67. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
Schenk, Wolfgang. “Gefangenschaft und Tod des Täufers Erwägungen zur Chronologie und ihren Konsequenzen.” *NTS* 29 (1983): 453–83.
Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Philippe Bourgois. “Introduction: Making Sense of Violence.” In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 1–31. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
Schnackenburg, Rudolf. *Das Evangelium nach Markus*. Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1966.
Schröter, Jens. *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas*. WMANT 76. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997.
———. *Jesus of Nazareth: Jew from Galilee, Savior of the World*. Translated by Wayne Coppins. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014.
Schröter, Jens et al., eds. *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–.
Schudson, Michael. “The Present in the Past versus the Past in the Present.” *Communication* 11 (1989): 105–13.
Schütz, Roland. *Johannes der Täufer*. ATANT 50. Zürich: Stuttgart, 1967.
Schwartz, Barry. *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
———. “Iconography and Collective Memory: Lincoln’s Image in the American Mind.” *Sociological Quarterly* 32 (1991): 301–19.
———. “The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory.” *Social Forces* 61 (1982): 374–402.
———. “Where There’s Smoke, There’s Fire: Memory and History.” In *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, edited by Tom Thatcher, 7–37. SemeiaSt 78. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.
Schweitzer, Frederick. “Persecution of Diaspora Jews: History of Jewish Persecution and Expulsion.” In *EJD*, edited by M. Avrum Ehrlich, 95–103. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009.
Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News According to Mark*. Atlanta: Knox, 1970.
Scobie, Charles H. *John the Baptist*. London: SCM, 1964.

Segal, Alan F. *Life after Death: A History of the Afterlife in Western Religion*. New York: Doubleday, 2004.
Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. London: Penguin, 2006.
Shanks, Hershel. "Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls." In *Was John the Baptist an Essene?*, edited by Otto Betz, 205–16. New York: Random House, 1992.
Simon, Marcel. *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire AD 135–425*. Translated by H. McKeating. Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1986.
Skarsaune, Oskar. *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile*. Leiden: Brill, 1987.
Slusser, Michael. "Justin Scholarship: Trends and Trajectories." In *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, edited by Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, 13–21. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
Smit, Peter-Ben. *Masculinity and the Bible: Surveys, Models, and Perspectives*. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
Smith, Abraham. "Tyranny Exposed: Mark's Typological Characterization of Herod Antipas (Mark 6:14–29)." *BibInt* 14 (2006): 259–93.
Sollertinsky, S. "The Death of St. John the Baptist." *JTS* 1 (1900): 507–28.
Stegemann, Hartmut. *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
Stein, Robert H. *Mark*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
Steinmann, Jean. *Saint John the Baptist and the Desert Tradition*. Translated by Michael Boyes. London: Longmans, 1958.
Stichele, Caroline Vander. "The Head of John and Its Reception or How to Conceptualize 'Reception History.'" In *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, edited by Emma England and William John Lyons, 79–93. STr 6; LHBOTS 615. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.
Stiebert, Johanna. *Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
Stylianopoulos, Theodore. *Justin Martyr and the Mosaic Law*. Dissertation Series 20. Missoula: SBL and Scholars Press, 1975.
Talbert, Charles H. *Matthew*. PCNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
Tatum, W. Barnes. "John the Baptist and Jesus: A Report of the Jesus Seminar." Sonoma: Polebridge, 1994.
Taylor, Joan E. *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
———. "John the Baptist." In *EDEJ*, edited by John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow, 819–21. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
———. "John the Baptist and the Essenes." *JJS* 47 (1996): 256–85.
Taylor, Joan E., and Federico Adinolfi. "John the Baptist and Jesus the Baptist: A Narrative Critical Approach." *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 247–84.
Taylor, Marion Ann, and Heather E. Weir, eds. *Women in the Story of Jesus: The Gospels through the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century Female Biblical Interpreters*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
Taylor, Vincent. *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*. London: Macmillan, 1933.
———. *The Gospel According to St Mark*. London: Macmillan, 1952.
Telfer, William, ed. *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa*. LCC. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Thatcher, Tom. “Preface: Keys, Frames, and the Problem of the Past.” In *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, edited by Tom Thatcher, 1–5. SemeiaSt 78. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.
Theissen, Gerd. *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
Theissen, Gerd, and Annette Merz. *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*. Translated by John Bowden. London: SCM, 1998.
Thomas, Joseph. *Le Mouvement Baptiste en Palestine et Syrie*. Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1935.
Thorne, Mark. “*Memoria Redux*: Memory in Lucan.” In *Brill’s Companion to Lucan*, edited by Paolo Asso, 363–81. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
Tilly, Michael. *Johannes der Täufer und die Biographie der Propheten: Die synoptische Täuferüberlieferung und das jüdische Prophetenbild zur Zeit des Täufers*. BWANT 7. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994.
Toynbee, J. M. C. *Death and Burial in the Roman World*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.
Trigg, Joseph W. *Origen*. ECF. London: Routledge, 1998.
Tucker, Katie. “‘Whence This Severance of the Head?’: The Osteology and Archaeology of Human Decapitation in Britain.” PhD thesis., University of Winchester, 2012.
Turner, David L. *Matthew*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
Twelftree, Graham H. “Jesus the Baptist.” *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 103–25.
Van Eickels, Klaus. “Gendered Violence: Castration and Blinding as Punishment for Treason in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England.” *Gend Hist* 16 (2004): 588–602.
Van Hooff, A. J. L. *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-Killing in Classical Antiquity*. London: Routledge, 1990.
Vernant, Jean-Pierre. “La belle mort et le cadavre outragé.” In *La mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes*, edited by Gherardo Gnoli and Jean-Pierre Vernant, 45–76. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 1990.
Vette, Nathanael, and Will Robinson. “Was John the Baptist Raised from the Dead? The Origins of Mark 6:14–29.” *BibAn* 9 (2019): 335–54.
Voisin, Jean-Louis. “Les Romains, chasseurs de têtes.” In *Du châtiment dans la cité. Supplices corporels et peine de mort dans le monde antique*, 241–93. Table ronde de Rome (9–11 novembre 1982), Rome: École Française de Rome, 1984.
Von Dobschütz, Ernst. “Bible in the Church.” In *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, 2:579–615. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1909.
Voragine, Jacobus de. *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*. Translated by William Granger Ryan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
W., G. R., and A. W. L. “Crucifixion.” In *OCD*, edited by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, 396. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
Wagner-Pacifici, Robin. “Memories in the Making: The Shape of Things That Went.” *Qualitative Sociology* 19 (1996): 301–21.
Watts, Dorothy. *Religion in Late Roman Britain: Forces of Change*. London: Routledge, 1998.
Webb, Robert. “John the Baptist and His Relationship to Jesus.” In *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, edited by Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, 179–229. NTTS 19. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
———. *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study*. JSNTSup 62. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.
Wendel, Susan. “Interpreting the Descent of the Spirit: A Comparison of Justin’s Dialogue with Trypho and Luke-Acts.” In *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, edited by Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, 95–103. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

———. *Scriptural Interpretation and Community Self-Definition in Luke-Acts and the Writings of Justin Martyr*. NovTSup 139. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
Wertsch, James V. "Deep Memory and Narrative Templates: Conservative Forces in Collective Memory." In *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, 173–85. PMMS. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
Wiedemann, Thomas. *Emperors and Gladiators*. London: Routledge, 1992.
Wilson, Brittany E. *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
Wink, Walter. *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.
Winter, Jay. "Foreword: Rememberance as a Human Right." In *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, vii–xi. PMMS. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
Winter, Paul. "The Proto-Source of Luke I." *NovT* 1 (1956): 184–99.
Wise, Michael O. "Crucifixion." In *EDEJ*, edited by John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow, 500–01. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
Witherington, Ben. *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
Yamasaki, Gary. *John the Baptist in Life and Death: Audience-Oriented Criticism of Matthew's Narrative*. JSNTSup 167. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
Yonge, Charles D. *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.
Young, James E. "The Stages of Memory at Ground Zero." In *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, edited by Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres, 214–34. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
Zerubavel, Yael. *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
Zimmermann, Martin. "Extreme Formen physischer Gewalt in der antiken Überlieferung." In *Extreme Formen von Gewalt in Bild und Text des Altertums*, edited by Martin Zimmermann, 155–92. MSAW. München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2009.
———. "Violence in Late Antiquity Reconsidered." In *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, edited by H. A. Drake. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
Žižek, Slavoj. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador, 2008.