Acts of Linus

Pseudo-Linus (5th–6th century)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Authorship. These accounts are not by Linus, the first bishop of Rome after Peter; they are legendary Latin acts of a much later date.

Passio Petri

Ps.-Linus, Martyrdom of the Blessed Apostle Peter (Martyrium beati Petri apostoli a Lino conscriptum)
[Translated by Andrew Eastbourne]

TEXT
Lipsius, R. A. (ed.) Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha, part 1, pp. 1-22. Leipzig, 1891. Salonius, A. H. (ed.) Martyrium beati Petri. Helsingfors, 1926. Zwierlein, Otto. Petrus in Rom: Die literarische Zeugnisse. 2 ed. Berlin, 2010.

OTHER BIBLIOGRAPHY
De Santos Otero, A. ”Later Acts of Apostles.” In E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher (eds.), New Testament Apocrypha, vol. 2: Writings Relating to the Apostles; Apocalypses and Related Subjects, rev. ed., ET ed. R. McL. Wilson. Louisville / London, 1992. [On pp. 436-7, ”Martyrium Petri (Ps. Linus)”—the text is described as ”simply a Roman revision of the ancient Acts of Peter closely connected with the Greek Martyrium Petri”; de Santos Otero notes dependence of later texts (Acts of Nereus and Achilles; Ps.-Abdias; Ps.-Hegesippus) on Ps.-Linus, making the 5 century the likely provenance. Nordmeyer, G. ”Der Tod Neros in der Legende.” In Festschrift des Königl. Gymnasium Adolfinum zu Mörs zur Feier der Einweihung des neuen Schulgebäudes am 12. Mai 1896. Mörs, 1896. Thomas, Christine M. The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel: Rewriting the Past. Oxford, 2003. Vouaux, L. (ed., tr., comm.) Les Actes de Pierre. Les Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament. Paris, 1922. [Prints the Greek text of the martyrdom of Peter (pp. 398-467), with apparatus comparing different versions including Ps.-Linus.]

The text appears to be based on the Acts of Peter, which is known primarily in a Latin version (the so-called Actus Vercellenses)and, for the martyrdom itself, in Greek. In the translation that follows, I have indicated places where the Latin text of Ps.-Linus corresponds verbally to the Greek Martyrium [underlined] and with the Actus Vercellenses [boldface]. The Greek text is translated in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha (rev.), 2: 311-17 (see 2: 321 n. 153). [p. 1] [1] It was after many and multifarious examples of the path and way of life of salvation, and extraordinary and famous displays of miracles, adverse (or

rather diverse) contests[1] in the name of the true Christ, against Simon Magus or the other very numerous preachers of the Antichrist; after the harshness too of numerous sufferings and lashes, and the frightful filth of prisons; while the blessed Peter was rejoicing in the Lord and giving thanks both night and day with the brethren, in[2] the crowd of those who were coming to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ—Peter, focused on prayer and teaching and the other duties of piety toward God, was urging those who believed in Christ to [p. 2] conduct themselves chastely and with self-control. For the city, placed at the head of the world with very great abundance and pre-eminence, had mentally raised itself to a haughty arrogance and therefore (as usually happens where there is opulence and lazy security) was dominated by disgraceful dissoluteness. For indeed, very frequently, where there is arrogance of mind, outrage of the flesh follows. Hence, it happened that because of the blessed Peter's sermons a great love of purity was kindled in many powerful or noble women of various ages, to such a degree that even numerous Roman matrons were carefully keeping both their hearts and bodies pure from intercourse in a husband's bed, as far as it was in their power.[3]

[2] But as the time was now approaching when the faith of the blessed Apostle, and his labors, were to be rewarded, the one coming before the "head of destruction,"[4] that is, the Antichrist Nero, the perfection of iniquity, ordered him to be confined and bound with chains in the filthiest prison. There, he began to be visited by the four concubines of the prefect Agrippa, whose names were Agrippina, Eucharia, Euphemia and Dionis.[5] Hearing from him the preaching of chastity and all the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ, they languished and were troubled in Agrippa's bed.[6] Hence, devoting themselves to chastity, they entered a deliberate agreement with each other; having been strengthened by the Lord Jesus Christ, they determined not to agree to sleep with him obediently any longer. As these same women withdrew not only [p. 3] from embracing Agrippa but even from any kind of intimacy with him, he began to be offended and dejected about this; and sending diligent and skillful spies, he learned that they were very zealously bursting forth to [visit] the blessed Peter. When this was reported to him, he spoke, seized by the most violent madness of love: "I know where you have come from. That Christian has taught you not to have relations with me and to withdraw from the bed to which you are bound. But I am certain that he will not be able to weaken your love for me by means of his magic arts.

Although he tried to cajole them by many flatteries, they did not acquiesce to his amatory speech or regard the heat of his passion with an attentive eye, because they had been firmly established by the Apostle's words. The prefect Agrippa, however, seeing that because they were following Peter's teaching they unanimously scorned his lust and refused to go along with his flatteries, began to direct horrifying threats at them, swearing that he would consume them alive with fire and, after torturing Peter with the harshest punishments, would cause him to perish

from the memory of all men under heaven. But he was never able to make them bend to the defilement of intercourse; they said that it was more pleasing to them to submit to any torments for the sake of purity than to reject Christ, to whom they had vowed their chastity. And so Agrippa the prefect was very enraged against the Apostle, and gnashed his teeth over him, as he tried to find an opportunity when he would be able to kill him as though for a good reason. [p. 4]

[3] Meanwhile, [a woman] named Xandips,[7] the wife of Albinus, a very close friend of the emperor, came to Peter with very many of the noblest matrons. Hearing talk from him about the life of chastity, she rejected not only her marriage relation with her husband, but also all the delights of this life. And so Albinus, in the grip of great sadness, was threatening to afflict Peter with many torments, while he attempted, by means of injurious words and then by means of allurements, to turn his wife Xandips away from the struggle she had undertaken. Sending word to Agrippa the prefect, who was joined to him in friendship, he related to him all that he was enduring from his wife at the instigation of Peter, begging that if he was his true and faithful friend, he would take vengeance on Peter for him—otherwise he would avenge himself. Agrippa likewise sent him a message to the effect that he himself was suffering the same things—indeed still harsher things—from him [i.e., Peter]. Hence, it happened that when Albinus went to bed and had caused Xandips to be brought to him, and had not been able to convince her by flattery or fear to have intercourse with him for his enjoyment, he began to consider how he could, with Agrippa's cooperation, catch Peter in a snare like a bird, and put him to death as a sorcerer. But when Xandips, Albinus' wife, heard this, she sent a most faithful messenger to Peter, telling him to leave Rome and get away from this near-inescapable plot. In the same fashion, she revealed the conspiracy of her husband and the prefect Agrippa to Marcellus, the prefect Marcus' son, who after turning away from the noxious teachings of Simon Magus had attached himself to the Apostle faithfully and beneficially in all things, [p. 5] and [she revealed it] to the brethren also.[8]

The next day also, some of the senators got up in the meeting of the Senate and said: "Noble men, we report to your distinguished persons that Peter, for the subversion of the eternal city, is dissolving marriages by divorce, is separating our wives from us, and is introducing for us some sort of strange and unheard-of law." And by saying this, they also spurred on others to disorder and name-calling.[9] Then Agrippa was gratified, because he had found what he wanted regarding Peter with the Senate as his pretext.[10] But this too was not hidden from Peter and the brethren—indeed, those of the senators who had been illuminated by the Lord through Peter had made this known to them by a swift message.

[4] For this reason, Marcellus and the brethren begged Peter to depart. But Peter said: "It is not right, brethren and children, to flee from sufferings on account of

Christ the Lord, since he himself willingly submitted to death on behalf of our salvation. Marcellus, however, and the brethren said with great lamentation: ”Have pity, merciful father, on the youths and on those who are untrained in the faith. Do not leave us and them deserted in the midst of the tempests of the unbelievers. Then Peter said to those who were asking [him this]: ”You are arguing that flight is necessary—you are persuading me to strike fear of suffering into the hearts of the youths and the weak by my example, whereas we ought to be proclaiming the word of God with constancy and preserving the holy foundations of chastity which we have laid. You think flight is necessary in order to avoid death—but we long for death with copious sighs and groans, as the entryway of life, and furthermore, by means of death we ought to glorify the Lord, in keeping with the revelation [we have received] about that [eternal life].”[11] The brethren, however, hearing this, [p. 6] raised a lamentation, saying: ”Most truthful father, where are those words whereby you only recently used to say that you were ready to submit to death for the sake of our life? And now we are not able to convince you to endure living a little bit longer for the sake of our salvation, until we are made strong!

The youths too, whom he himself had been guarding carefully and rearing up diligently in faith and chastity, stretched forth their hands to heaven and fell to the ground, stretched out before him as though they had suddenly died; they cried aloud, shouting with loud lamentation: ”Good Peter, father and shepherd, matchless in mercy after your Lord, why did you lately bring us to birth for the Lord with a mother’s affection, through the sacred font, only to expose us now to the bites of the most monstrous wolves, with solace so premature and in a cruel spirit which you had never had before? Moreover, the matrons also cried out, their hair besprinkled with dust: ”Is this the mercy which you used to extol in reference to your Savior, who had shown kindness to your tears, moved to tenderness for eternity, after you had denied him temporarily? And do you not yield yourself, even for a brief time, to such floods of tears, especially when you are able to serve the Lord in the flesh and win the eternal crown reserved for you?”

[5] Even the guards of the prison, Processus and Martinianus, along with the other functionaries and those attached to them by virtue of their office, were making their request, saying: ”Master, depart and go where you wish, because we believe that the emperor has already forgotten you. But that most wicked Agrippa, inflamed by love of his concubines and by the extravagance of his own lust, is making haste to destroy you. For if he were attacking you by order of the emperor,[12] we would [already] have the sentence regarding your death from Paulinus, a most illustrious man,[13] from whose keeping you were put into our custody. For after you baptized us believers in the name of the holy Trinity in the nearby Mamertine prison, when a spring and the marvellous sign of the cross had been produced from the rock through prayer, [p. 7] you proceeded freely wherever you wished, and no one caused you any trouble—nor would they now, if the demonic conflagration which

is rousing the city had not invaded Agrippa so keenly. For this reason, we beg you, the intermediary of our salvation, to be willing to make us this return: that since you have freed us from the chains of sins and demons, you should go free from the bonds of prison and shackles, whose savagery has been entrusted to us—not so much with our permission as because of our entreaty—for the sake of so many people's salvation.

The widows too, and the orphans and those afflicted with old age, said, while pulling their hair and scratching their cheeks and baring their chests: "You healed others, by whose help we have been tended, from various infirmities; and you even raised some from death—and do you now take yourself away from us, most gracious father? Or else send us all before you, so that our souls may not perish in the absence of your teaching and instruction, and our bodies pass away deprived of the solace of your assistance—only in that circumstance may you hurry to where you desire to go, lest, seeing our lives dying after [the death of] our master, we die miserable by remaining in life."

[6] Then Peter, who was merciful beyond human measure and could never pass by the tears of the afflicted without tears, hearing this from all quarters, was won over by so much weeping and said: "Let none of you come with me; I will go on alone, with changed clothes." Indeed, he did set out alone in the ensuing night, pronouncing a prayer, then bidding farewell to the brethren and commending them to God with a blessing. While he was on his way, the fastenings were removed from the fetters and fell away from his leg. When he wished to go out the city gate, however, he saw Christ coming to meet him. Worshipping him, he said: "Lord, where are you going?" Christ answered him: "I am coming to Rome to be crucified again." [p. 8] And Peter said to him: "Lord, will you be crucified again?" And the Lord said to him: "Certainly, I will be crucified again." But Peter said: "Lord, I will return and follow you." And after these things were spoken, the Lord ascended into the heavens. Peter, however, followed him with a protracted gaze and the sweetest tears, and afterwards, when he returned to himself, he understood that this was said regarding his own passion—that the Lord, who suffers in the chosen ones with the compassion of mercy and the celebration of glorification, was going to suffer in him.

[7] Turning back, he returned into the city with joy, glorifying God and telling the brethren that the Lord had met him on the road, and had made clear to him that he was to be crucified again in him. When he had revealed to them his own passion, they all broke forth in lamentation and wailing. Each one of them mourned and poured forth tears, saying: "Look upon your sheep, good shepherd; support those whose weaker faith seeks to be strengthened by your preaching. Look upon the faltering hearts which we know you ought to make firm." Peter said to them: "It is easy for the Lord to strengthen the hearts of his servants even without my humble

admonishment. For those whom he planted for this purpose, he will cause to grow, so that they may be able to plant others as well. [p. 9] But I, as a servant, must follow my Lord's will. Therefore if he determines that I should still continue in the flesh for your sake,[14] I do not argue with him. And if he decrees that I should suffer for his name, and sees fit to take me up through my suffering, I rejoice and exult in his grace."

[8] While he was comforting the brethren's minds with these and many other words, Hieros arrived with four apparitores[15] and ten other men, who seized him and took him away from the midst of the brethren and brought him bound before the eyes of Agrippa, the prefect of the city. Agrippa said to him: "You have great confidence, wicked man, in the people you are deceiving, and in the women who have withdrawn from the marital bed because of your persuasion. You have even dared to introduce some 'Christ' or other, as an affront to the gods, and to present some silly and vain teachings or other, against the holy Roman rites and against the eternal city's piety." Then the Apostle's face began to shine like the sun, and opening his mouth he said to him: "I see where you are going, you leader of lusts, you lover of defilement, you inventor of savagery, you persecutor of the innocent, you abettor of deceivers, you founder of trickery, you dwelling-place of Satan! [p. 10] Indeed, you are ignorant of the glory I take pride in, and therefore you say that I have confidence in men and women." And Agrippa said to him: "Since you know that I am ignorant of what you take pride in, inform me of it, quickly!" And Peter said to him: "I have no glory except the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose servant I am." And Agrippa said: "Well then, do you wish to be crucified, just as your god was crucified?" Peter too responded: "I am not worthy to make the world a witness of my suffering with an upright cross, but through some sort of punishments I do wish and desire to follow in the footsteps of his suffering." Then the prefect, using the accusation of superstition as a cover for his own disease—a lack of self-control—ordered the Apostle to be crucified.

[9] And behold! A huge crowd suddenly gathered together, of different ages and sexes, of rich and poor, of widows and orphans, of the weak and the powerful, who shouted at the top of their lungs: "Why is Peter being killed? What crime did he commit? How has he harmed the city? It is not lawful to condemn an innocent! Should we not be afraid that God will avenge the death of such a great man and decree the destruction of us all?" And the people began to rage against Agrippa, [p. 11] as they endeavored to seize Peter and preserve him unharmed—and Rome was thrown into confusion by the disordered voices of the vast crowds. Then Peter stood back a little, then, climbing to a higher position and calling the people to silence with a nod, said: "You men[16] and faithful ones of God, who serve in Christ's army! All you who hope in Christ! If your love toward me is true and you demonstrate sincere compassion and kindness toward me, do not call back one who is going to the Lord—do not hinder one who is making haste toward Christ! Stand therefore

in quietness, rejoicing and glad, so that I may offer my sacrifice to the Lord with cheerfulness. For God loves a cheerful giver."[17] And, with these words having been spoken, the uproar and the prefect's dispute were scarcely calmed. For many people were able and were eagerly wishing to drive out the prefect—but they were afraid to sadden the Apostle, who was following the example of his teacher, who said: "I am able now, if I wish, to summon more than twelve legions of angels for myself."[18]

[10] Finally, together with the Apostle and the apparitores, a vast number of people arrived at the place which is called Naumachiae, near the obelisk [p. 12] of Nero on the hill. For there a cross had been put into place. And looking back at the people who were weeping and again wanting to stir up disorder, he said in a clear voice: "I pray you, brethren, do not hinder my offering! Do not rage against Agrippa and be bitter-minded toward him. For he is only an abettor of someone else's action: the devil is the instigator of my condemnation in the flesh—he is taking advantage of the Lord's permission, since it pains him that vessels of dishonor[19] have been taken away from him by me and made into lodging-places of self-control, temples of Christ, homes of honor and grace. And so, my brothers and sons, be obedient, because what was going to happen was made known to me by the Lord Jesus Christ in a revelation. Therefore, the disciple is not above his teacher, nor the slave above his master.[20] So I am hurrying to be freed from the flesh and be entrusted to the Lord. For it is now the time at which I will also offer my sacrifice. Remember the signs and prodigies and healings, which you saw and perceived—as Christ was acting and I was helping. For the sicknesses of very many were healed so that the souls of all might be saved. Dead bodies were raised so that dead souls [p. 13] might live again. But why do I now endure delay, and do not draw near to the cross? Farewell, brethren—be patient and preserve what you have heard. I commend you to the Lord Jesus Christ."

[11] Also, he approached and stood by the cross, and said: "O name of the cross, O secret mystery! O unspeakable grace! For peace [comes] in the name of the cross. O cross, which joined man to God, and separated [people] from the dominion of diabolical captivity! O cross, which with its companion, true faith, always makes manifest to the human race the passion of the Savior of the world, and shows the redemption of human captivity to be safe and secure! O cross, which daily distributes the flesh of the spotless lamb to the faithful, and expels the serpent's horrible venom with the cup of salvation, and extinguishes the flaming sword of Paradise for believers without ceasing! O cross, which daily works to make peace between earthly and celestial [beings], and diligently reproduces the death of the Mediator, who rose from the dead and now dies no more, for the eternal Father, with the Church acting on behalf of its children—reproduces it, renews it, re-establishes it by its most auspicious embassy.[21] I suffer violence for your sake, and now, being very near to release,[22] I will not rest from making known the secret mystery of

God regarding the cross, which my soul once shouted aloud. You who believe in Christ, let that which is visible not be the cross for you; there is a certain other thing, a mystical [meaning], in that which is apparent to you. And now especially, all you who are able to hear, as I am now in the last hour of this life, separate all your senses and your souls from everything that is visible, [directing them] to that which is invisible! And you will know that the mystery of salvation has been accomplished in Christ through the cross. Your obligation, Peter, is to return the body you received to the earth, by means of those whose proper task is to kill the body.[23] [p. 14]

[12] Moreover, he said to the master-executioners: ”Why are you dallying? Why, apparitores, are you allowing delays to be contrived for me? Fulfill the command that was given to you. Divest me of my mortal clothing, so that I may cleave to the Lord in spirit. He did indeed ask, and won the master-executioners over by addressing them as follows: ”I beg you, good servants of my salvation, when you crucify me, to place my head below and my feet above. For it is not fitting that the meanest servant be crucified in the same way as the Lord of the universe deigned to suffer, for the salvation of the whole world—he who, it is clear, is to be glorified by my suffering. It is even possible that I should be able to gaze upon the mystery of the cross with an attentive countenance forever, so that what I say from there can be more easily understood by those who are standing round about it. When this was done,[24] Peter began to comfort and speak to the people who were weeping regarding the cross, speaking in a marvellous manner: ”Great and profound is the mystery of the cross, the ineffable and unbreakable bond of love. [p. 15] Through the cross, God draws all things to himself. This is the tree of life by which the power of death has been destroyed. This you have opened up for me, Lord; open up also the eyes of all those people, so that they may see the comfort of eternal life.

When he had said this, God opened the eyes of those who were lamenting and shedding tears over his suffering, and they saw angels standing with garlands of flowers—roses and lilies—and at the top of the cross that had been set up, Peter, standing and receiving a book from Christ and reading from it the words which he was saying. Seeing this, they began to rejoice and be glad in the Lord, to such a degree that those unbelievers themselves, as well as the executioners, seeing that the ones they had seen sad and lamenting before were now exulting and rejoicing, hid themselves and vanished like smoke.

[13] Peter, moreover, seeing that his glory had been made manifest to many who were weeping before, gave thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ, saying: ”You alone, Lord, were rightly crucified [on a cross] with the top extended on high, [p. 16] you who redeemed the whole world from sin. I desired to imitate you even in suffering; but I did not appropriate to myself an upright crucifixion, since we human beings—

both the pure and the sinners—have been born from Adam, but you [were born as] God from God, and true light from true light, before all ages; at the end of the ages you deigned to become a man on behalf of mankind, without human pollution; you stand forth as the glorious redeemer of mankind. You are always upright, you are always exalted, you are always lofty. We are children of the first man according to the flesh—the one who buried his own ruling faculty[25] in the earth. His fall is symbolized by the appearance of human reproduction: for we are born in such a way that we appear to be ejected head downward toward the ground, and what is on the right is on [our] left, and what is on the left ends up on [our] right—for the very reason that the conditions of this life were transformed by our ancestors. That wicked world, indeed, considers what is left to be right—the world in which you, Lord, found us like the Ninevites, and by your holy proclamation you freed those who were about to perish.

[14] ”But you, brethren, whose proper task is to listen, direct the ears of your hearts, and learn the things which are to be announced to you: [p. 17] namely, the mystery of the whole of nature, and the Beginning of the entire created order.[26] For the first man, whose kind I belong to in form,[27] showed by his down-cast head that the generation had been destroyed long ago. For his generation was dead, and did not even have the movement of life. But the Beginning, drawn by his own mercy, came into the world through corporeal substance, to the one whom he had, by a just sentence, cast down to the earth; and, being hung on the cross as an image of this honorable[28] calling—namely, that of the cross—he restored and established what had been transformed before by the mankind’s wicked mistake: present things, that is, as left, and the eternal things, which were considered as left, glorifying as right.[29] He changed all signs to their proper nature, understanding as good things which were not thought good, and as truly favorable things which were considered unfavorable. Hence, the Lord said in a mystery: ’Unless you make the right as the left and the left as the right, and things above as things below, and things before as things behind, you shall not come to know the kingdom of God.’[30] I have brought forward this view in my own person, brethren;

and this is the figure in which corporeal eyes see me hanging, for it is the shape of the first man. But you, my beloved, as you hear these things and, by converting and turning [them] about, bring them to perfection, [and] just as you have returned from your primal error to the most secure anchorage of faith, even so persevere in running, and strive toward the repose of your calling on high by living[31] well. For the Way by which you must make your journey there is Christ. So then, you ought to ascend above the cross, with Jesus Christ the true God, who was established for us as the one and only Word. For this reason the Spirit says: ’Christ is the word and voice of God’[32]—since the word signifies that upright [p. 18] tree on which I am crucified. And since voice is properly something belonging to the body, because it receives features which are not attributed to divinity, the side-pieces

of the cross are understood as presenting human nature, which suffered the error of transformation in the first man, but recovered true understanding through God and man. For indeed, the very key[33] of the teaching is circumscribed in the middle—that is, by human conversion and turning about and repentance, along with faith."

[15] And as he said these things with an eager visage and a calm face, he cried out, breaking into prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Word of life, you have made these things known to me, and I give thanks to you, who are revealing what I had said about the tree proclaimed by me. I thank you, not with the heart into which something unbecoming often creeps, not with these lips that are fastened shut, not with the tongue through which both truth and falsehood come forth, nor indeed with the utterance that is produced by an articulated and material substance—but rather, good king, with the sort of voice which is understood in silence, which is not heard in the open, which does not come forth through the instrument of a corruptible mouth, which does not strike the ears of flesh, which is not perceived by a corruptible nature, which neither is earthly nor is uttered on earth, which is not written down in material books; it neither allows anyone to be moved materially, nor does it exist materially. With that spirit, I mean, Jesus Christ, my Lord and master, I give thanks to you—the spirit by which I believe in you, by which I understand you, by which I love you, by which I hold you fast—the voice with which I address you, with which I appeal to you—for you can only be understood with a spirit that is whole and calm. [p. 19] To me, Lord, you are father and friend, author and perfector of salvation;

you are my desire, you are my consolation, you are my sufficiency. For me, you are everything, and everything, for me, is in you; to me, you are the all, and all that is, to me, you are: indeed, you are everything to me. In you we live, we move, we exist.[34] And therefore we ought to hold you, like everything, so that you may give us those things you promised, which neither eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor have they come into a human heart, which you have prepared for those who love you.[35] Keep watch over these things for your servants; distribute and bestow these things, because you are the eternal and in the highest degree good shepherd, the true Son of God. To you I entrust the sheep which you put in my care. Gather them together in your sheepfold, and preserve them, because you are the gate of the sheepfold and the gatekeeper, you are the pasture, you are the refreshment of eternal life. Glory be to you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever. [p. 20]

[16] And then, when all the people answered "Amen" in a loud voice, Peter surrendered his spirit. And immediately Marcellus, without waiting for anyone's opinion, but seeing that the blessed Apostle had breathed his last, took down the sacred body from the cross with his own hands, washed it with milk and the best wine, and

grinding 1500 minae of mastic and aloe, with myrrh and silphium (?),[36] and oil of myrrh along with the various other spices—another 1500 minae—he embalmed him most lovingly. He also filled a new sarcophagus with Attic honey and placed the body, anointed with the perfumes, in it. That very night, however, while Marcellus was keeping vigil at the tomb and weeping out of his passionate longing for him—for he had decided never to be separated from the grave of his most loving teacher as long as he lived—the blessed Peter came to him. [p. 21] When Marcellus saw him, and trembled, he quickly rose for him and stood before him. The blessed Apostle said to him: ”Brother Marcellus, haven’t you heard the words of the Lord, who said: ’Leave the dead to bury their own dead’?”[37] And Marcellus said, ”Dear master, I have heard them.” Then Peter said to him: ”Then do not let yourself seem like a dead man who has buried a dead man and weeps, but like a living man rejoicing better with a living, jubilant man; leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, just you have learned through me, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Marcellus made this known to all the brethren with great good-will, and through the favor of holy Peter the faith of the believers was strengthened by God the father in every way, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

[17] But when Nero found out that the blessed Peter had died, whom he had given orders to torment, not to kill, he sent [instructions] that Agrippa be arrested, since without [receiving] his [i.e. Nero’s] sentence [to that effect] he had killed Peter [p. 22]—whom he [i.e., Nero] was planning to punish using various torments. He complained that he had been robbed of Simon, the protector of his salvation, by that man’s tricks, and he grieved for the misfortune of such a great friend, who was supplying him and the state with countless good things. Agrippa, however, by the intervention of his friends, secured the privilege of living at his own home as a private citizen, despised and deprived of his prefect’s office. Thus he avoided Caesar’s fury, but he did not escape the vengeance of divine judgment, which he soon experienced, and perished terribly. Finally, Nero turned his attention to the persecution of those who, he learned, had associated on rather friendly terms with the blessed Peter, so that at least by their punishment he might be satiated regarding Peter. But the blessed Apostle made this known to the brethren by a revelation, and suggested how they might avoid the beast’s savagery. For Nero in a vision saw the holy Peter standing before him, and, after being scourged by someone on that man’s orders, he heard: ”Restrain your hands, most impious one, from the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ; you will not be able to hold them now.” Then, being alarmed, he was quiet for a little. In addition, the brethren were both rejoicing and exulting in the Lord, strengthened often by a vision of the blessed Apostle Peter, glorifying the Lord God, the Almighty Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, to whom belong glory, power, and worship for ever and ever. Amen.

[1] Lat. seu adversa immo diversa...certamina. On the grounds of general usage, adversa certamina would mean ”unsuccessful contests” and diversa certamina, most likely, ”inconclusive contests”—but the struggle against Simon has not been unsuccessful or inconclusive. ”Adverse contests” could conceivably be ”face-to-face encounters”—but there is then no particular point for the addition of diversa. It seems that Ps.-Linus is simply piling on synonyms (as frequently in this text), and both expressions mean simply ”hostile encounters.” Salonius, p. 41, notes that seu…immo... here is basically equivalent to et...et... [2] In the Greek text, this is more clearly expressed: ”giving thanks for the crowd...” [3] Cf. similar phraseology in the Greek text and the Actus Vercellenses after the brief narration about Xant(h)ippe and Albinus (§5/34 [= Ps.-Linus, §3]). [4] The phrase, praeveniens perditionis caput, is difficult; it could alternatively be translated, ”the foregoing ’head of destruction.’” Thomas, Acts of Peter, p. 53, more interpretively renders it ”the font of destruction” (but without addressing the status of praeveniens). Perditionis caput echoes filius perditionis (Jn. 17.12; 2 Thess. 2.3). For discussion of the difficulties, see also Nordmeyer, ”Der Tod Neros in der Legende,” pp. 29-30.

[5] In the Greek version of the passion, the second concubine is Nikaria, the fourth Doris. [6]Following Salonius’ text (molestabantur sub thoro Agrippae); with Lipsius’ text (adding esse), the sense would be ”…were troubled at being in Agrippa’s bed”—but this is linguistically more difficult in Latin. [7] In the Greek and in the Actus Vercellenses, this woman is named Xant(h)ippe. [8] Here a variant reading [atque etiam] would give the meaning ”and also...” more obviously; while a possible correction [sicut] would be comprehensible (”just as [she made known]...”). On seu et, however, see Salonius, p. 44. [9] Lat. appellatio; perhaps ”judicial appeal”? [10] Lat. sub occasione senatus. Lit., ”under the pretext of the Senate”; i.e., he found the Senate’s action a good pretext for himself. [11]Lat., etiam secundum illius revelationem. Lit., ”also / furthermore according to the revelation of that”—where ”that” could be masculine, feminine, or neuter. [12] Lit., ”king.”

[13] Lat. clarissimus; i.e., a senator. [14] Cf. Phil. 1.24. [15] Apparitores were a magistrate’s attendants, used to aid with arrest and punishment. [16] ”Men” is a traditional address in Greek speeches (ὦ ἄνδρες, as here in the Gk. text), frequently with further details identifying the audience, as ”Men of Athens...” [17] Cf. 2 Cor. 9.7. [18] Mt. 26.53. [19] Cf. 2 Tim. 2.20. [20] Cf. Mt. 10.24. [21] This convoluted sentence means that the cross, through the Church’s liturgy, repeatedly renews the efficacy of the Savior’s death; the word ”embassy” continues the metaphor of peace-making from the beginning of the sentence. Cf. the similarly elaborate allusion to the Eucharist in the ”flesh” and ”cup” of the previous sentence. For the thought and expression, cf. also Gregory the Great, Hom. ev. 37.7 (cited by Blaise, Dictionnaire, s.v. ’reparo’): quoties…offerimus, toties nobis…passionem illius reparamus (”As often as we offer…, so often do we renew for ourselves / make present to ourselves his passion.”)

[22] Lat. in finitima absolutione; lit., ”at / in (the) very near release / dissolution.” The Greek here makes it slightly clearer: ”at the end of the release / dissolution.” The ”release” is presumably the separation of soul from body at death, although the ”dissolution” of the world could also be in view. [23] Cf. Mt. 10.28. [24] I.e., when he had been crucified in the manner he requested. [25] Lat. principale, often the equivalent of the Greek ἡγεμονικόν, but the Gk. here has ἀρχή (”rule / beginning”)—it may be that Ps.-Linus here intends a reference not to the internal ”ruling faculty” but to Adam’s status as ruler over the natural world. [26] By ”Beginning” Ps.-Linus is subtly introducing a reference to the Son / Logos, who can be referred to as the ”Beginning” especially through allusion to Gen. 1.1: ”In the beginning God created...” In the next mention of the ”Beginning” Ps.-Linus uses this reference even more explicitly.

[27] Lit., ”whose kind / race / class I have in form / appearance.” This does not mean that he is a human being only in appearance; rather, species (like genus) is used to identify classifications or types of beings. Alternatively, Vouaux, p. 443 (n. 4) argues that the word ”form / appearance” is a reference to the manner in which Peter is being crucified. [28] So with Lipsius, reading honorandae; Salonius prefers the variant horrendae (”horrible / to be shuddered at”). [29] Here I follow Salonius’ emended text: praesentia videlicet pro sinistra, et quae pro sinistra ducebantur aeterna, siquidem ut dextra glorificans et omnia signa ... Lipsius’ text seems too difficult; but a variant reading (f) gives a potentially more acceptable text: praesentia videlicet ut aeterna et aeterna ducebantur ut praesentia et dextra sinistra (”present things, namely, were thought of as eternal, eternal things as present, and right [as] left”)—this, however, seems quite likely to be the result of a scribal attempt at emendation. For the use of pro with the acc. rather than the abl., see Salonius, pp. 52-53.

[30] Lipsius (ad loc.) identifies this as a quotation from the Gospel of the Egyptians, but the precise identification of the source is difficult. Similar but not identical sayings appear in 2 Clement 12.2; Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis 3.13.92 (attributed to the ”Gospel of the Egyptians”); Gospel of Thomas 22; finally, Acts of Philip 140 appears to be dependent on the present quotation. Cf. Vouaux, p. 447; Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha (rev. ed.), 1: 209-10, 212-14. [31] Lat. conversantes (echoing the words translated above as ”convert” and ”turn about”). [32] For this otherwise unknown quotation, Vouaux, pp. 449-51 (n. 5), sees a possible reminiscence of Jn. 1, discounting Harnack’s suggestion that it is related to a citation from the Acts of Paul in Origen, De princ. 1.2.3 (Hic est verbum animal vivens)—and indeed, they have little in common with each other. [33] Lat. clavis; the Gk. text and the Actus Vercellenses have ”nail” (Lat. clavus)—scribal confusion or perhaps authorial wordplay (in Latin) seems likely.

[34] Cf. Acts 17.28. [35] Cf. 1 Cor. 2.9. [36] Lat. folium, which normally means simply a ”leaf”—but the Gk. (φύλλον) likely in the original is used additionally for some specific plant-parts, including the ”leaf-like fruit of silphium” (LSJ s.v.). [37] Mt. 8.22; Lk. 9.60.

Passio Pauli

Ps.-Linus, Martyrdom of the Apostle Paul (Martyrium Pauli apostoli a Lino conscriptum) — [Translated by Andrew Eastbourne] — TEXT
Lipsius, R. A. (ed.) Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha, part 1, pp. 23-44. Leipzig, 1891.

OTHER BIBLIOGRAPHY
De Santos Otero, A. "Later Acts of Apostles." In E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher (eds.), New Testament Apocrypha, vol. 2: Writings Relating to the Apostles; Apocalypses and Related Subjects, rev. ed., ET ed. R. McL. Wilson. Louisville / London, 1992. [On p. 439, "Martyrium Pauli (Ps. Linus)"—the text is described as based on the Acts of Paul, likely in order to make a pair with the Martyrium Petri.] The text appears to be largely a re-working of the martyrdom story in the Acts of Paul, for which see the text in Lipsius, pp. 104-117, and a translation in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha (rev.), 2: 260-65. [p. 23]

[1] When Luke had come to Rome from Galatia, and Titus from Dalmatia, they waited for Paul in the city; and when Paul arrived and saw them, he rejoiced greatly and rented a public storehouse for himself outside the city, where he would talk about the word of life with these and the other brethren. Meanwhile he began to gather together a very great multitude, and many souls were added to the faith by him, with the operation of God's grace, in such a way that the sound of his preaching and his holiness was heard [p. 24], and the talk about him went around throughout the whole neighboring region. For he had already become known to the Roman world by means of signs and portents, by his plentiful teaching and by his amazing holiness. Many also from the household of Caesar came together, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the great joy and exultation of the faithful was increasing every day. Indeed, even the instructor of the emperor [i.e., Seneca], perceiving that divine knowledge was in him, was joined in friendship with him to such a degree that he could scarcely restrain himself from conversation with him—and so, if he was not able to talk with him face to face, he enjoyed that man's sweetness and friendly conversation and counsel by frequent exchanges of letters.[1] Thus, with the operation of the Holy Spirit, his teaching was increased and was loved, such that he was now teaching legally and being heard by many most freely. In-

deed, he was holding discussions with pagan philosophers and was defeating them, and for this reason very many people were yielding to his instruction. In fact, Caesar's instructor read aloud some of that man's writings before him [i.e., Caesar], and made him out to be amazing in all respects. Even the senate expressed an unrestrictedly high opinion of him. [p. 25]

[2] Finally, one day, when Paul, in service to his teaching, was addressing the crowds in the evening in an upper room, a certain Patroclus, a favorite and cupbearer of the Emperor, stole away from his sight and went off to the storehouse where Paul was lodging, in order to hear the teachings about eternal life. For he had been attracted and mentally drawn to this by his own companions and Caesar's close friends who, belonging to his court, were following Paul's counsels. But since he could not enter and approach him because of the great number of people there, he climbed to a higher window and sat down next to it so as to be able to hear the word of God more conveniently. Indeed, he was longing with a passionate spirit to be comforted by Paul's talk. When Paul, however, had drawn out his sermon at length and the young man was almost overcome by sleep, the wicked and envious devil, pained at the love which the youth quite zealously maintained for God's word and for the Apostle himself, caused the young man to doze off a little—and then falling from the window (which was fairly high up) he breathed his last. Soon after, when this had been reported to Nero, who was returning from the baths—Nero very frequently asked after[2] the young man, who was dear to him—the emperor was saddened [p. 26] to his very soul over the death of Patroclus, and he put someone else in place of him for the service of the wine, to present his cup to him.

[3] But Paul, immediately realizing (through the spirit) what had happened, said to the people: "Brethren, the wicked one has found an opportunity for testing you. But the Lord Jesus Christ, in his customary manner, will turn the villainy to his own glory. Go outside, therefore, and you will find that a young man, a favorite of Caesar, has fallen from a height and is now lying lifeless. Lift him up and hasten to bring him to me." They, for their part, went out immediately and speedily brought the dead young man to him. Moreover, the crowds were amazed at how Paul had come to know in detail[3] about what had happened with no one to inform him of it. So Paul said to the crowds: "Now your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will be apparent. For it is time for the seed of eternal life, arriving in good soil, to bear fruit in a hundred-fold harvest. Therefore draw near to the Lord our God with full faith, and let us pray to him that the soul of the man may be restored into this youthful corpse, and that he may live better than he had lived. And after they all groaned while devoting themselves to prayer, Paul said: "Young Patroclus, arise and tell what great things God has done for you." Thereupon, at these words, [p. 27] Patroclus arose as though from sleep, and began to glorify God, who granted such power to human beings. And Paul sent him away with the rest of those who

belonged to the household of Caesar, and they went off, all rejoicing and exulting in the Lord, who carries out the wishes of those who fear him and hearkens to their prayers.

[4] While Nero was lamenting for Patroclus and was engrossed in the immensity of his sadness, those who were standing around him said to Caesar: ”Lord, may Your Magnanimity not be distressed with vexation over the death of the youth. For he is alive and is here at the gates.” But when Caesar heard that Patroclus was alive, of whose death he had heard a little earlier, he was struck with fear and refused to let him enter and stand before his gaze. When, however, he had been persuaded by very numerous friends, he commanded him to enter. Seeing him vigorous and without any signs of death, he was amazed and said to him: ”Patroclus, are you alive?” He answered: ”Caesar, I am alive.” Nero said: ”Who caused you to live?” Patroclus, gladdened in heart and kindled with the heat of faith, said to him: ”The Lord Jesus Christ, the king of all ages. [p. 28]” And Nero, thrown into confusion at the name of the Power of God,[4] said to the young man: ”So then, that man ought to reign forever and dissolve all the kingdoms of the world?” And Patroclus said: ”Indeed, Caesar, he will destroy all the kingdoms which are under heaven, and all that are under heaven will serve him; and he himself alone is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” But Nero struck him and said: ”So then, are you serving as a soldier for that king?” And Patroclus, exulting, said: ”Yes indeed—for he raised me from the dead!”

[5] Then Barnabas, Justus, a certain [other] Paul, Arion the Cappadocian and Festus the Galatian, who were Caesar’s attendants and always stood by him, said to Nero: ”Why, Caesar, do you strike a young man who is authentically wise and answers you most sensibly and most truthfully? For we too are serving as soldiers for that unconquered king, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Nero, however, when he heard them speaking of the unconquered King Jesus with the same meaning and words, he threw them into prison, so as to torture excessively those whom he had loved excessively before. [p. 29] And he ordered that the servants of that great king be searched out, and laid down an edict that all the soldiers of Christ, wherever they were found, without questioning, should be punished with various tortures. Hence, through a major investigation by the officials of the government and the supporters of the storehouse of wickedness, the servants of God were sought and found—and very many were brought into Caesar’s presence.

[6] Among them, Paul too, bearing for the sake of Christ’s name the chains he was accustomed to, was brought there, bound. All those who were bound were directing their attention to him together, so much so that Nero was able to determine, without being informed by anyone, that he was in charge of the soldiers of the great king. And, understanding that he was the leader and the teacher of Christ’s servants, he said to him: ”You, a servant of the great king—but a prisoner

of mine—why did you decide to enter secretly into the kingdom of the Romans and take it away from me, and to assemble soldiers for him from the forces under my command?" Paul, however, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke steadily to Caesar in the hearing of all those who could be present: "Nero, I am assembling soldiers not only from your back-yard, but also from the entire world. For I have orders not to turn away [p. 30] anyone from any nation who wishes to serve as a soldier for my eternal king. For the Lord of all is able to distribute the richest gifts with a generous hand to everyone, in accordance with the merits of each one. Indeed, if you too see fit to believe in him and obey him faithfully, you will not regret it. Do not think, however, that the riches of this world, magnificence or glory should save you; but if you become subject to him, you will be saved forever. For when he comes to judge the living and the dead, he will ravage the form of this world with fire, and will bestow on his soldiers the largesse that was prepared before the foundation of the world and hidden from the ages, which will never fall short and which will remove every deficiency.

[7] Nero, hearing this and becoming inflamed with anger, because Paul had said that the form of the world was to be dissolved with fire, ordered that all the soldiers of Christ be burned with fire, but that Paul be mutilated by decree of the Senate as one guilty of treason, in accordance with Roman laws. He handed him over to the prefects Longinus and Megistus and to Acestus the centurion, so that they would lead him outside the city and would give instructions for his decapitation, making his killing a spectacle for the people. To these men, Paul was preaching about salvation without ceasing. Nero, driven by the activity of the devil, speedily also directed the officials and apparitores in the whole city[5] and the surrounding region, so that they would search out with the greatest care the Christians who were in hiding and those who were known, and kill them. [p. 31] Hence, so numerous a crowd of Christians was killed that the Roman people burst into the palace in strength and, struggling to provoke a rebellion against Caesar, shouted: "Put an end to this most unjust order, Caesar! Moderate your unreasonable fury! Let what has already crossed the bounds of cruelty be enough for your cruelty. They are our fellow citizens whom you are destroying; they guard the Roman empire. Caesar, you are taking away Roman power, which used to be terrifying to all nations by virtue of the great throng of such great soldiers." Then Nero, terrified at the shouts of the people, laid down another decree, that no one should dare to touch the Christians, nor bring any trouble upon them, until the report of a complete legal proceeding, on the basis of a denunciation in each case, should be conveyed to the emperor.

[8] For this reason, Paul was again brought before his presence. When Nero saw him, however, he shouted out most violently, saying: "Take him away! Take away the malefactor,[6] behead the deceiver, do not allow the enchanter[7] to live, destroy the remover of our senses, remove from the face of the earth the modifier of

our minds!" Paul said to him: "Nero, I shall suffer for a short time; but I shall live forever for[8] my God and the eternal king, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to come to judge the world in a conflagration of fire." Nero said [p. 32] to Longinus, Megistus and Acestus: "Quickly, remove his head from him, and so may he flatter himself about eternal life—and perceive that I am the unconquered king, I who have bound him and defeated him by killing him." But Paul said: "Nero, so that you may know that I live for my unconquered king eternally even after decapitation, but that you are defeated even though you believe you are winning—after my head has been cut off, I will appear to you alive, and you will be able to understand that death and life serve my Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belongs every kingdom and who will give it to whom he wills. Every victory belongs to him, and whom he wishes to prevail he causes to triumph magnificently. He himself is alone the unconquered king forever." And with these words having been spoken, Paul was led off for punishment.

[9] Now while he was being led away, Longinus and Megistus and Acestus said to him: "Tell us, Paul, where is that king, and where has he appeared to us, and in what manner did you come to know him, and what good has he done, or will he do, for you?—that you Christians should love him so passionately that you refuse to give your assent to our religion in any fashion, in order to live and enjoy the good things of this life. Instead, you consider it more pleasant than any amusement to die for him [p. 33] in manifold torments. For it seems to us a great error to hate pleasantness and life, and to embrace punishments and death with unmitigated longing."

[10] Paul, however, said: "You wise men, blooming with good sense! Abandon the darkness of ignorance and error, the fog of which is overclouding your understanding, noble gentlemen, so that you are not able to see the truth which lies hidden in you. Turn the eyes of your mind to the eternal and true light, so that you may have the power first to know yourselves, and so to arrive at the knowledge of that king with gladness, and to remain safe and unharmed by the fire that will come upon the whole world. For we are not serving as soldiers for any earthly king, as you believe, but for the living God, the king of the heavens and of all ages, who, on account of the sins which are being committed in this world, will come as judge and will judge it with fire. But happy will the man be who believes in him: He will have eternal life and will live forever. And most unfortunate will that man be (no one is more unfortunate) who spurns the riches of his goodness and long-suffering and does not turn to him: He will perish forever. Indeed, it was for this reason that the one who made heaven and earth descended from heaven to earth; [p. 34] for this purpose that the one who made man was made a man:

So that a man could turn from his iniquity, leaving behind the vain things and mute images which he most wickedly worships in place of God, and serve the one

who made him and revere the one the angels fear and all the powers of heaven revere. When this happens, he will make that true worshipper and venerator his own partner and an associate of his angels—that is, of the holy and blessed spirits. And rightly so, because God is a spirit, and he will make the one who worships and venerates him in spirit and truth an associate of the holy spirits. But the one who refuses to believe in him he will make an associate and partner of the wicked demons in torment and in the burning of eternal fire; he will send that fugitive to this perpetual fire—that is, the fire that is to come, by which God is going to judge the world.

[11] ”Therefore, you wise men, let your sagacity take counsel and discern who made the world—because it did not come forth without a maker. [p. 35] Consider who made man—because, as the divine oracles testify, he did not make himself. Pay heed to the fact that vain images are not gods, but rather human products and the demons that lie hidden in the same products—and they, although they seem to be in accord in that they unanimously desire the destruction of the human race, yet they do disagree with each other in very many ways. ’For the impious do not have peace,’ says the Lord.[9] Indeed, before us is this question: Why do people rush to cause destruction and to hold those associated with them in punishments, since they know that human beings are going to ascend, by the grace of God, into the heavenly habitation from which the very spirits fell through pride. Men of the city, recognize with your understanding that the title of deity is in no way distributed among the many, because there is one God by whom all things [were made], and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things [were made], and one Holy Spirit in whom everything exists—and to this [Trinity] all faithful things faithfully submit; and there is no division in the divinity, because it lacks plurality. Consider well, Roman citizens, whence discord arose, and by what method it has grown and become advanced so far and wide, wretchedly, and why so many—not divinities, but wretched monstrosities of gods—have emerged:

obviously because many began to wish to become leaders and tyrants and rulers—not of vices, but of the people who share in their own nature; and hence, plunged into the tempest of ignorance and cast down into the pit of their own pride, [p. 36] each one either borrowed or established the god of his own power. Thus it is said, ’Fear first in the world created gods.’[10] Wretched men arrived at such a pitch of insanity that in this state they set up the most wretched of men as gods for themselves, so as to become like them in order to avoid destructive death. But some of them too, because they did not think it right to keep the knowledge of God in their minds, were handed over to their own wishes,[11] so as to practice those deeds which the Roman laws punish with curses, and there was fulfilled in them what was said by the most holy words: ’Let those who make them become similar to them.’[12] For they made wretched gods for themselves, and were made wretched themselves—and were tumbled down to such irrationality that they say

to the trunk of a tree, 'You are our god'; and to a stone, 'Help us'; and they worship a manufactured block of wood, they who have been warmed by its shavings."[13]

[12] At this, great crowds of listeners raised their voices in lamentation and said: "We have gone astray; we have sinned; we have acted wickedly; O teacher of salvation and truth, who shows us eternal life, have mercy on us, so that we may be rescued from the snares of sins and may be able to escape [p. 37] from the fire by which the world will be burned and all unbelievers and wicked ones will be tormented. Then Paul said: "Brethren, whose heart God has touched by his Spirit, stand firm like men in the faith. For servants of eternal salvation will come to you, by whom you will be baptized; and if you persevere in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, you shall be saved for eternity. Longinus too, and Megistus and Acestus, speaking to the Apostle more privately, said: "We ask you, Lord: Cause us to be enrolled in the soldiery of the eternal king, so that we may be able to escape the fire that is to come and share in the everlasting kingdom; and we will let you go—or, wherever you prefer to go, we will be your companions on the road, obedient even unto death. Paul said to them: "My brethren, I am not a fugitive but a lawful soldier of my king. For if I knew that I was remaining and was not rather coming to that life and glory by means of this death, I would not only do what you are asking, but I would be begging you for this.

As it is, however, I have not run in vain through much suffering, nor am I suffering now for no reason. For a crown of righteousness awaits me, which he in whom I have believed will give me—he about whom I am certain that I am going to him and that with him I will come in his splendor, and that of his Father and the holy angels, to judge the world. For this reason, I disdain this death, and I shall not obey or carry out your request [p. 38] that I run away. They, for their part, wept and said to him: "What then shall we do? How shall we live, once you have been punished, and shall we have the power hereafter to come to that one in whom you are persuading us to believe?"

[13] And when they were saying these things amongst themselves, and many people were raising their voices on high, Nero sent certain soldiers—Parthenius and Pheretas[14]—to see whether Paul had been killed yet. When they arrived, they found him still living and addressing the crowds at great length. Paul called them to him and said: "Gentlemen, believe in the living God, who will raise from the dead both me and all who believe in him." But they said to him in answer: "First we will go and make our report to Caesar, and then, when what we have been sent for has been accomplished, and once you are dead and have been resurrected, then we will believe in your king. As for you, explain the delays by which you are putting off the order, and go to the designated place where you are to suffer the sentence that has been duly passed." Paul also said to them: "You need me to stay in the

flesh, if you wish to believe, more than I do—I am going to life through death. But now, let us proceed with joy in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

[14] And as they continued on to the place of his suffering, accompanied by countless crowds of people, he came to the gate of the city of Rome, where there came to meet him a most noble matron, named Plautilla, who loved the Apostles zealously and followed the divine religion. In tears, she began to commend herself to his prayers. Paul said to her: "Farewell, Plautilla, daughter of eternal salvation! Lend me the cloth with which you cover your head, and go off a little to the side because of the crowd,[15] waiting for me here until I return to you and pay back the favor. For I will bind it around my eyes like a handkerchief, and I will leave it to you, loving woman, as a token of my love, for the sake of Christ's name, when I go on toward him." She quickly stretched out the cloth to him and did just as the Apostle had commanded. Parthenius and Pheretas scoffed at her, however, saying: "Why do you believe this trickster and magician? Why are you losing a fine cloth, when you will not get such a fine one through him in this world?" But Paul said to her: "Even so, daughter, stand ready here for my arrival, and I will bring you signs of my death in the cloth as I am about to conquer with Christ."

[15] Meanwhile, Longinus, Megistus and Acestus, as they pressed forward resolutely for their salvation, asking about the way in which they would be able to arrive at the true life, heard the blessed Apostle say: "My brothers and sons, soon, when I have been decapitated and you, along with the others who have assisted at my execution, have departed from the place in which the Lord will think it right to summon me, believers will take and bury my body. [p. 40] As for you, take note of the place of my tomb, and come there tomorrow at the break of dawn, and there you will find two men praying—Titus and Luke. You will tell them for what reason I sent you; and they will give you the sign of salvation in the Lord. Do not hesitate, therefore, to carry out your orders, because as soon as you have been dipped in the sacred spring as believers and made holy by the life-giving power of the divine mysteries, immediately you will be purified and cleansed whiter than snow from all pollution of sins, even from this crime which has been perpetrated against me, of which you now stand in awe; you will be enrolled in the ranks of Christ's soldiers, and will be co-heirs of the heavenly kingdom.

[16] This having been said, he arrived at the place of his suffering. There, turned toward the East, with his hands stretched out toward heaven, he prayed at great length with tears in Hebrew, and gave thanks to God. And when he had finished his prayer in his ancestral language, bidding farewell to the brethren he blessed them, and binding his eyes with Plautilla's veil he planted both knees on the ground and extended his neck. The executioner, lifting up his arm on high, struck with force and cut off his head. After it had been cut off from his body, it cried aloud the name of Jesus Christ in Hebrew with a clear voice; and immediately a stream of milk

spurted out from his body onto the clothing of the soldier, and afterwards blood flowed out. When some people were wanting to seize the garment with which he had bound his eyes, [p. 41] it was not to be seen. Furthermore, such an immense light and such a pleasant aroma flashed forth from heaven there at the moment of his decapitation, that the eyes of mortals could not endure that splendor; the human tongue could not tell of the aroma. All those who were present, however, seeing the grace of God in the blessed Apostle, marvelled greatly, praising and extolling[16] until very late the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and unconquered king, whom the magnificent teacher and instructor of the nations had proclaimed.

[17] Those who had been sent to hurry up his execution returned and arrived at the gate of the city, where they found Plautilla praising and glorifying the Lord for all that she had heard and seen through his holy Apostle. They asked her with scorn why she was not covering her head with the veil she had given to her Paul. She, kindled with the heat of faith, answered proudly: ”You vain and miserable men, who do not know how to believe what you see with your eyes and handle with your hands! Truly I do have same cloth which I offered to that man—now precious because of the shedding of his glorious blood. For a company of countless figures in white, attending him, came from heaven and returned it to me [p. 42] in all truth; and rewarding me with thanks for the kindness I did him, he said: ”You, Plautilla, gave me obedience on earth; I will be indulgent to you when you move on with all speed to the heavenly realms. For very soon I will return for you and I will show you the glory of the unconquered king.” And Plautilla, drawing out the cloth, infused with rose-colored blood, from the folds of her garment, showed it to them. They, seized with great fear, went along quickly to Caesar and reported to him what they had seen and heard.

[18] But when he heard this, he was struck with frightful wonder; stupefied with immense amazement, he began to discuss and hold conversations about what had been reported with philosophers and friends and state officials, and also with as many of the senate as he could have there, in fear and mental confusion. And while they were marvelling at these things in turn, and questioning amongst themselves, Paul came around the ninth hour, although the doors were shut, and stood before Caesar and said: ”Caesar, look: Here I am—Paul, soldier of the eternal and unconquered king; now indeed, you should believe that I am not dead, but that I live for my God. But for you, you wretch, unspeakable evils and very great punishment are impending, after not much time, and eternal destruction, because among your other horrible, disgraceful acts you have unjustly shed much blood of the just.” And saying this, he suddenly disappeared. Indeed, Nero, on hearing this, was stricken with indescribable fear [p. 43] and went more or less out of his senses; he did not know what he could have done. But persuaded by his friends, he ordered Patroclus and Barnabas and those who had been shackled with them to be freed and to go wherever they wished.

[19] Finally, Longinus, Megistus and Acestus, just as Paul had instructed, came at first light to his tomb, and saw two men praying—and standing in their midst, Paul. Terrified by this marvellous sight, they trembled and were afraid to approach any nearer. Titus and Luke, however, returning to themselves from the ecstasy of prayer, saw the prefects and the centurion who had been attendants at the slaughter of Paul hurrying toward them; seized with human fear, they turned to run away—and Paul vanished from their sight. But the others shouted after them, saying: ”Blessed men of God, we have not come, as you imagine, to pursue you and kill you, but so that you may transport us as believers to eternal life through the water of baptism, just as the true teacher Paul promised us—he whom just now we perceived standing and praying in your midst.” [p. 44] And indeed, Titus and Luke, when they heard this, stood still with great gladness and spiritual joy; then they laid their hands on them and gave them the mark of everlasting sanctification, and thus, after a fast lasting until evening, they were baptized in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit belong honor and glory, power and authority forever and ever. Amen.

[1] Cf. the apocryphal correspondence of Paul and Seneca, translated in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha (rev.), 2: 46-53. [2] Alternatively, ”needed.” [3] Lat. ex ordine. [4] Cf. 1 Cor. 1:24. [5] Or, ”every city.” [6] Lat. maleficus, which frequently has the sense of ”practitioner of magic.” [7] Lat. carminator. [8] Cf. Rom. 14.8. [9] Is. 48.22. [10] Cf. Statius, Thebaid 3.661; Petronius fr. 27 (= Anth. Lat. 466). [11] Cf. Rom. 1.28. [12] Ps. 115.8; 135.18. [13] Cf. Jer. 2.27. [14] So he is named in the Gk. text; Lat. Feritas. [15] Lat. propter plebis impedimentum. [16] Or ”confessing”; Lat. confitentes.

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