

PATRICIA A. DUNCAN

Novel Hermeneutics in the Greek Pseudo-Clementine Romance

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*

395

Mohr Siebeck

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Romance

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For Mom and Dad

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	XI
Preface and Acknowledgements	XIII
Introduction	1
The Plot of the <i>Klementia</i>	19
Overview of the Argument	24
Chapter 1:	
The Frame	27
Peter, in Paul's Book	27
Peter, the Authorized Interpreter of Jesus	30
The Problem of Peter's Books	33
The Reading of the Epistle	36
The Two Maps of the <i>Klementia</i>	40
Dualistic Creation and the Manipulations of the One Creator	42
Two Kings and Two Kingdoms	52
Conclusion	56
Chapter 2:	
Trouble with Texts	57
How to Read the True Prophet	58
Reading in a Time of False Scriptures	62
Be Good Moneychangers	64
The Time of the True Prophet	66
The <i>Klementia</i> 's Digression: Scripture and "Our" Father	69
Jesus and the Seat of Moses	72
Adam, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit of Christ	74
The Seven Pillars of the World	75
The Doctrine of Pairs	77
Moses the True Prophet	79
How Jesus Taught Us to Read	83
True and False Things in Scripture	86
The Teaching that Saves	90
Conclusion	92

Chapter 3:	
Tyre, Sidon, and Tripolis	93
<i>Klementia</i> 4–6: Clement at Tyre	93
Book Seven: A Prelude to the Tripolis Discourses	97
Two Ways and Conversion by Baptism	103
Tripolis, Day One: The Initial Private Discourse	106
Tripolis, Day One: The Public Sermon	110
An Encounter Between the Two Kings	111
An Altered Transition	114
The Parable of the Wedding Feast	118
The Parable and Salvation History According to an Inspired Clement	121
The Defiled Garment and the Remedy of Baptism	123
Conclusion	126
Chapter 4:	
The Family Romance	129
Peter and Clement: An Abortive Family	130
Fasting, Baptism, and De-Hellenization	135
A Temple Visit on the Island of Arados	137
Two Viewings	140
Peter Heals	141
The Double Conversion of Justa	141
The Gospel Stories Converted	143
The Eyewitness Account: An Apostolic Apology	145
The Dialogue Converted	149
The Dialogue in Mark	149
The Dialogue in Matthew	151
The Narrative Exegesis of the <i>Klementia</i>	152
Another Gospel Interpretation: On Turning the Other Cheek	155
Conclusion	159
Chapter 5:	
Final Harmony	161
The Wax Seal Hermeneutic	163
“What was hidden” when “No one knew . . .”	164
The <i>Harmonia</i> of Evil	171
Conclusion	173

Table of Contents

IX

Conclusion	175
Bibliography	179
1. Pseudo-Clementines: Texts and Translations	179
2. Other Ancient Authors	179
3. Modern Authors	180
Index of References	189
Modern Authors	199
Index of Subjects	201

List of Abbreviations

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
<i>AsJT</i>	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ANF</i>	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
APOCR	Apocryphes: Collection de poche de l'AELAC
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BICSSup	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement
BSGRT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAGN	<i>Collected Ancient Greek Novels</i> . Edited by Bryan P. Reardon. Berkeley, 1989
CMOM	Collection de la Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CREJ	Collection de la Revue des Études juives
ECCA	Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity
EPRO	Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAL	Kommentare zur apokryphen Literatur
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LTP</i>	<i>Laval théologique et philosophique</i>
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
<i>NTApoc</i>	<i>New Testament Apocrypha</i> . 2 vols. Revised ed. Edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher. English trans. ed. Robert McL. Wilson. Cambridge: Clarke; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003

N TL	New Testament Library
O ECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
P GL	<i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> . Edited by Geoffrey W. H. Lampe. Oxford: Clarendon, 1961
P IRSB	Publications de l'Institut romand des sciences bibliques
P RSt	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
P TS	Patristische Texte und Studien
S BLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
S C	Sources chrétiennes
S ECA	Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha
S NTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
S NTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
S TAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
S TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
S TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
S WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
S ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

Preface and Acknowledgements

This book, a revised version of my doctoral dissertation, represents countless hours of inquiry into the work of early Christian literature widely known as the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* (but which, as I shall explain below, should instead be called *Klementia*). Given the preoccupation in scholarship with the novel's various layers and sources, it has been my goal to understand this complex and lengthy work as a narrative whole, avoiding, as much as possible, the temptation to interpret simultaneously its sources or its sister novel, the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognition* (or *Recognitions*, as it has been more commonly known). The results may leave some readers wanting, by turns, both more depth on any given part of the novel and more lateral interpretation, comparing the work more extensively with other ancient Christian literature and the other ancient Greek novels. I wish that I could provide both, but in order to satisfy my main goal (i. e., to read and interpret the novel as a literary whole), I simply was not able to go broad and deep throughout. Nonetheless, I hope that what I offer here will provide the spark for new and robust conversations on the rhetoric, the narrative artistry, the fictional world, and the literary and intellectual debts of the Pseudo-Clementine *Klementia*.

There are many to thank, but at the top of the list are my two doctoral advisors. The kind and brilliant Hans-Josef Klauck introduced me to the Pseudo-Clementines in the first place, and his easy command of the literature gave me the courage to pursue my interests in spite of the notorious complexities of Pseudo-Clementine studies. The exceptionally keen criticism and the warm encouragement of Margaret M. Mitchell were indispensable at every step along the way. Many other University of Chicago friends and colleagues stimulated my thinking, as well, but I should like to make special mention of Kristine Culp, Annette Bourland Huizenga, R. Matthew Calhoun, Trevor W. Thompson, and Brandon D. Cline. At the dissertation stage, I received generous financial support as a Junior Fellow in the Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion and in the form of a P. E. O. Scholar Award. My new academic home, Texas Christian University, provided a Junior Faculty Summer Research grant to make necessary additions and revisions to the dissertation, and my wonderful colleagues in the TCU Department of Religion have supplied a wealth of encouragement.

My family, as always, have been a bedrock of support. My mother, Patricia Elaine Duncan, and my maternal grandmother, Edna Frances Littrell, knew how difficult it can be to work through the early years of child-rearing, and they

stepped up to help in ways that can be neither measured nor repaid. My father, Fred Duncan, by some miracle I will never understand, slipped a Rosie the Riveter postcard in the mail to arrive just when I was self-indulgently worrying that I might never be able to finish the project. Rosie's confident "We can do it!" reminded me in an instant that this work, like all work, is deeply communal and that failure was simply not an option. But above all, it was my small tribe of intimates – my husband, Brandon Cline, and our two wonderful daughters, Edy and Vivian – who made the journey consistently meaningful, joyful, and worth the effort.

Finally, I would like to thank Prof. Tobias Nicklas of Universität Regensburg, Prof. Jörg Frey of Universität Zürich, and Dr. Henning Ziebritzki of Mohr Siebeck for the honor of including my work in the esteemed *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* series.

Fort Worth, Texas

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Introduction

This book is about a fascinating work of early Christian literature that, sometime in the early fourth century, issued a bold plea for a rather unorthodox understanding of Christianity.¹ It is one of the two main, extant versions of what has been called the first and last ancient Christian novel² – a lengthy Greek narrative relating, in autobiographical mode, the story of the conversion of Clement of Rome to the faith of the apostle Peter and the story of the providential reunification of Clement’s long-lost family in Syria. Precisely because of its twinned existence in the historical record, this adaptation of the ancient Greek novel has received less attention as a narrative whole than one might expect. The widely accepted view that each of the two main versions of the “Pseudo-Clementine” novel represents an independent reworking of a common, third-century source (now lost) has made the search for earlier writings embedded within the existing works a major preoccupation.³ What is missing in contemporary scholarship is a robust analysis of especially the Greek version of the narrative as a literary and rhetorical whole.⁴ At the risk of stating the obvious, it is not possible really to *read* even the most detailed and comprehensive

¹ The scanty survival of the narrative in the manuscript tradition is perhaps a witness to its boldness. While a more orthodox version of the same tale survives in Latin translation in more than one hundred manuscripts, our text has been preserved in relatively complete form in only two, the sixteenth-century Codex Vaticanus Ottobonianus gr. 443 and the tenth-century Codex Parisinus gr. 930. The question of the date of the work is bound up with the question of its relationship to Ariainism, and it cannot be dated with precision. Most scholars, myself included, regard the Council of Nicea (325 CE) as an approximate *terminus ante quem*. The *terminus post quem* is only vaguely defined by the consensus view that the work revises a third-century version of the tale. See F. Stanley Jones, “The Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research,” in idem, *Pseudoclementina Elchasaiticaque inter Judaeochristiana: Collected Studies* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 86–92. The version of the tale represented in the Latin translation of Rufinus, ca. 407 CE, is usually dated slightly later.

² F. Stanley Jones, “The Genesis of Pseudo-Clementine Christianity,” in idem, *Pseudoclementina Elchasaiticaque*, 204–206, 204. Cf. also M. J. Edwards, “The *Clementina*: A Christian Response to the Pagan Novel,” *CQ* 42 (1992): 459–474, 464. For a current and thorough introduction to this “Pseudo-Clementine” literature, see Jones, “Introduction to the *Pseudo-Clementines*,” in idem, *Pseudoclementina Elchasaiticaque*, 7–49.

³ The situation is somewhat analogous to that of the Synoptic Gospels of the New Testament, though, as Graham Stanton aptly noted (“Jewish Christian Elements in the Pseudo-Clementine Writings,” in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007], 305–324, 308), “Here we have a synoptic problem whose complexity turns the inter-relationship of the synoptic Gospels into child’s play.”

⁴ On the Latin version, see Meinolf Vielberg, *Klemens in den pseudoklementinischen Rekognitionen: Studien zur literarischen Form des spätantiken Romans*, TUGAL 145 (Berlin: Akademie, 2000), and Nicole Kelley, *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines: Situating the Recognitions in Fourth Century Syria*, WUNT 2/213 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006). Both ver-

attempts to reconstruct the source novel, for all sorts of vital information about the narrative as an act of communication are missing. So long as the Pseudo-Clementine *Grundschrift* remains hypothetical, we may be able to discern *that* the text dealt with certain subjects, but *how* it did so will elude us. Efforts to reconstruct the history of the tradition are certainly important, but to fail *also* to read each extant version of the novel as a literary whole is to miss an equally significant opportunity.

Up to this point, I have avoided naming the work in question, because a word about terminology is necessary before we proceed. Names matter, of course, and it was not inconsequential when Stanley Jones suggested that the ancient Greek narrative we have been accustomed to calling the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* should rightly be known as the *Klementia*.⁵ Jones argued persuasively and with characteristic precision that *Klementia* should be regarded as the more original title for the work, but it would seem that the factor of antiquity alone has not provided quite enough impetus to risk bibliographic confusion in contemporary scholarship.⁶ At present, only Jones and Giovanni Bazzana have made the shift in print, but the time is ripe for scholarship to embrace the designation *Klementia* and dispense with *Homilies*.⁷ There are several good reasons to make the change.

On the one hand, the conventional title *Homilies* has been a blight upon the text with which it has been associated in a variety of ways. Not only is it generically incongruous with the work it introduces (sometimes leading to actual confusion about the genre of the text), but it has also been oddly bound up with certain persistent misconceptions about the nature of the differences between the two main versions of the Pseudo-Clementine novel. The conventional

sions of the narrative are treated in Dominique Côté, *Le thème de l'opposition entre Pierre et Simon dans les Pseudo-Clémentines*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 167 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

⁵ F. Stanley Jones, "Photius's Witness to the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in idem, *Pseudoclementina Elchasaïticaque*, 345–355.

⁶ According to Jones ("Photius's Witness," 351–353), the title τὰ Κλεμέντια is not only attested in one of the two main manuscripts of the text, the tenth-century Codex Parisinus gr. 930, but it is also found in two eleventh-century sermons of Nicon Monachos. Photius may provide an even earlier witness (9th c. CE), although it is not possible to establish with certainty which version of the Clementine novel the bibliophile patriarch had in view. On the "slippage" that allowed *Homilies* to emerge as the title of choice in eighteenth-century scholarship, see *ibid.*, 353–354, n. 41.

⁷ Jones, "Introduction to the *Pseudo-Clementines*," 7–49; idem, *The Syriac Pseudo-Clementines: An Early Version of the First Christian Novel*, APOCR 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 32–37; idem, "The Distinctive Sayings of Jesus Shared by Justin and the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in *Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier: The Christian Apocrypha in North American Perspectives*, ed. Tony Burke (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 200–217. Giovanni Bazzana has used the term "Clementia" ("Apelles and the Pseudo-Clementine Doctrine of the False Pericopes," in "Soyez des changeurs avisés": *Controverses exégétiques dans la littérature apocryphe chrétienne*, ed. Gabriella Aragione and Rémi Gounelle, Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 12 [Turnhout: Brepols, 2012], 11–32).

titles for the two main versions, *Homilies* and *Recognitions*,⁸ have together been implicated in a particular theory about the origins of the Pseudo-Clementine novel, namely that it was born when an early Christian author added a family romance plot (signaled in the title *Recognition*) to a set of sermons attributed to the apostle Peter (the “homilies” referenced in the title *Homilies*) in order to make the latter more entertaining.⁹ Probably on the basis of Ben Edwin Perry’s influential work on the Greek novels, it gradually came to be assumed that each title corresponds meaningfully to that component which is *emphasized* in each of the extant revisions of the novel,¹⁰ though there is in fact little difference between the two main versions when it comes either to the extent and shape of the family plot or to the amount of sermons and debates embedded within the story. Unfortunately, this erroneous notion has been repeated in precisely those places where readers interested in the ancient Greek novel might first be introduced to the Pseudo-Clementine literature.¹¹ If it is presumed that the principle difference between the versions is that one finds a better story in the *Recognition* and *more* sermonizing in the so-called *Homilies*, it is easy to imagine how this might work to the disadvantage of the *Klementia*. Indeed one can find this theory of difference invoked as justification for focusing on the “*Recognitions*” to the exclusion of the “*Homilies*” even in quite sophisticated and valuable scholarship.¹²

⁸ I shall also follow Jones (“Photius’s Witness,” 349–51) in referring henceforth to the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* as *Recognition*, in the singular.

⁹ Sophie Trenker (*The Greek Novella in the Classical Period* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958], 101) introduced her summary of the plot by saying, “The following completely irrelevant story is told of Clement’s family, presumably to make the edifying books more attractive.” The sentiment is echoed, with credit to Trenker, in Ben Edwin Perry’s classic on the Greek novels (*The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of their Origins*, Sather Classical Lectures 37 [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967], 291).

¹⁰ Drawing upon the work of Oscar Cullmann, Perry reasoned, on the basis of the different titles, that the “romance” is better preserved in the *Recognition*. Musing over the activity of the editor of the *Recognition*, he writes (*Ancient Romances*, 286), “Much as he may have favored the theology, as a Christian ought to, still he was more impressed by the romantic narrative, and for that reason put it in his title. The romance as such is better preserved in the *Recognitions* than in the *Homilies* (Cullmann, p. 63); and in the *Homilies* the sermons of Peter are preserved more faithfully than they are in the *Recognitions* (Cullman, p. 70).” Incidentally, this statement would seem to suggest that Perry did not perceive the highly unorthodox nature of the “sermons” of Peter in the *Klementia*.

¹¹ For example, Tomas Hägg (*The Novel in Antiquity* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991], 163) writes, “The surviving adaptations differ in the emphasis they lay upon the two types of subject-matter: the novelistic intrigue is more developed in the *Recognitions*, the disputations and sermons of Peter grow more exuberant in the *Homilies*.” Niklas Holzberg (*The Ancient Novel: An Introduction*, trans. Christine Jackson-Holzberg [London: Routledge, 1995], 24) writes, “The respective writers are both more interested in defending the Christian faith than in rendering the original plot of the novel, but they differ, as the titles themselves suggest, in their dosing of theologically instructive passages, so that we learn more about the experiences of the future bishop in the *Recognitions* than in the *Homiliai*.”

¹² For example, Kate Cooper (“Matthidia’s Wish: Division, Reunion, and the Early Christian Family in the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*,” in *Narrativity in Biblical and Related Texts*, BETL 149 [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000], 243–264, 244) describes the *Klementia* as “a series

I would furthermore suggest that the title “*Homilies*” resounds with a stodginess that is ill suited to the narrative. To be sure, not everyone will agree with the claim about the literary quality of the novel that is implicit in this last statement.¹³ No less an authority on early Christian narrative than Richard Pervo once referred to the title *Homilies* as “an adequate consumer warning label” for the lumbering plot and lengthy stretches of didactic discourse found under its cover.¹⁴ While I do not completely disagree with this kind of assessment of the Pseudo-Clementines, I do think the cleverness of the narrative project of the *Klementia* has generally been underestimated and hope to make a case for its ingenuity in the pages that follow.

At the same time, there are good reasons for adopting the title *Klementia* that have less to do with the deficiency of the old title than with the positive value of the “new” one. This is largely because, as Jones has signaled, *Klementia* should be understood not merely as a replacement for the title *Homilies* (i. e., the twenty books of ego narrative).¹⁵ Instead, it must be understood as an umbrella term covering the twenty books of narrative and the three “preliminary” writings conventionally known as the *Epistula Petri*, the *Contestatio* or *Diamartyria*, and the *Epistula Clementis*.¹⁶ It is to be hoped that having a single title for the work as a whole may finally enable scholarship to move beyond the troubled question of the relationship among these various components.¹⁷

of highly developed set-piece theological speeches connected by a tentative narrative thread.” She goes on to say, “Because the genre conventions in question are those of the ancient romance, the present study is centred on the *Recognitions* as the version of the Clementine narrative which has the clearest ties to the genre. One of the most significant differences between the two versions is the elaboration in the *Recognitions* of the romance of Clement and his family” On the contrary, it must be emphasized that the *Klementia* is every bit the family romance that the *Recognition* is, and it even has some significant elaborations on the theme that are *not* found the latter. Especially noteworthy are the encomium of the “chaste” wife and the elaboration on the story of Justa, each of which are treated below, in chapter 4.

¹³ For instance, one detects ambivalence about the literary quality of the work in the ongoing debate about whether to call the writers responsible for the extant Pseudo-Clementines “editors” or “authors.” Although she does not discuss the Pseudo-Clementines *per se*, helpful context for the question and a nudge toward the latter option can be found in Christine M. Thomas, “Stories Without Texts and Without Authors: The Problem of Fluidity in Ancient Novelistic Texts and Early Christian Literature,” in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative*, ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance, and Judith Perkins, SBL Symposium Series 6 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 273–291.

¹⁴ Richard Pervo, “The Ancient Novel Becomes Christian,” in *The Novel in the Ancient World*, rev. ed., ed. Gareth Schmeling (Boston: Brill, 2003), 685–711, 706–707.

¹⁵ Jones, “Introduction to the *Pseudo-Clementines*,” 8–9.

¹⁶ Henceforth, *Epistula Petri* (*Ep. Petr.*), *Diamartyria* (*Diam.*), and *Epistula Clementis* (*Ep. Clem.*).

¹⁷ Admittedly, we are still left with the question of how to cite the twenty books of narrative individually. Even though I understand the title *Klementia* as properly encompassing the prefatory materials and the narrative, I shall cite the prefatory materials as noted in the previous footnote and use the abbreviation *Klem.* with book/chapter citations for the narrative proper.

The three preliminary writings that together form a kind of documentary preface to the ego narrative of Clement have been implicated in a complicated and formidable set of questions in Pseudo-Clementine scholarship. Most influential has been the notion that the *Epistula Petri* and *Diamartyria*, with their reference to books containing the “preachings of Peter” (*Ep. Petr.* 1.2 and 3.1), originally stood at the head of a different document, an early Jewish Christian (or Ebionite) work that went by the name *Kerygmata Petrou* and was incorporated into the third-century *Grundschrift*, the hypothetical source novel revised by the *Klementia*, as one of its key “sources.”¹⁸ The irresistible idea that such an ancient work might lie buried within the Pseudo-Clementine novels generated a great deal of effort toward its extraction and reconstruction,¹⁹ though the quest has now largely been abandoned, either because the methodology seems flawed,²⁰ or because interpreters have come to doubt that such a document was ever a source for the Pseudo-Clementines in the first place.²¹ Nonetheless, reading the *Epistula Petri*, the *Diamartyria*, and the *Epistula Clementis* as integral to

¹⁸ As the entrée to the *Klementia* and the only part of the literature bearing the “living” voice of the apostle Peter himself (even explicitly so; cf. 2.7), the *Epistula Petri* presents itself as a document predating the others, coming from the period before Clement had joined up with Peter and become his scribe. Certain incongruities between the content of the letter and the body of the novel suggest that its greater antiquity may indeed be more than a literary conceit. Perhaps most notable is the somewhat different view of scripture, stopping short of the assertion that its interpretive challenges are the result of “false pericopes,” as the narrative proper will claim. Graham Stanton (“Jewish Christian Elements,” 309–10) presents a balanced and reasonable view on the relationship between the *Ep. Petr./Diam.* and the narrative books: “Perhaps the most plausible theory (and also the simplest) is that they were originally intended to introduce the *Grundschrift* and were retained in the redacted and expanded *Homilies*, but omitted in the slightly later *Recognitions*.” Regarding the latter omission, he muses that perhaps Rufinus, the translator of the *Recognitions* into Latin, was “unimpressed by the ‘Jewish Christian’ character of the *Epistula Petri* and the *Contestatio*.”

¹⁹ Georg Strecker, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen*, 2nd ed., TUGAL 70 (Berlin: Akademie, 1981), 137–220; Johannes Irmscher and Georg Strecker, “The Pseudo-Clementines,” in *NTApoc* 2: 483–541. For a survey of the relevant scholarship, see Jones, “Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research,” 62–66; also Bernard Pouderon, “Aux Origines du Roman Pseudo-Clémentin: Lecture critique de récents travaux,” in idem, *La genèse du Roman pseudo-clémentin: Études littéraires et historiques*, CREJ 53 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 285–316, 300–305.

²⁰ As Stanton observed (“Jewish Christian Elements,” 312), “The circular nature of the theory is apparent: a link between the hypothetical KP source and the *EpPet* and *C* is assumed, and confirmatory evidence is then sought.”

²¹ Jones (“Introduction to the *Pseudo-Clementines*,” 24) writes, “The hypothesis of a source called the *Kerygmata Petrou* has thus unnecessarily drawn the Pseudo-Clementine studies into a mire of speculation and uncertainty; it has also vitiated virtually all modern presentations of the history of Jewish Christianity. The time seems to have come to abandon this hackneyed hypothesis.” The linguistic analysis of Jürgen Wehnert (“Literarkritik und Sprachanalyse: Kritische Anmerkungen zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Pseudoklementinen-Forschung,” *ZNW* 74 [1983]: 268–301) has been instrumental in turning the tide of scholarship. Nonetheless, the idea of the *KP* as a Pseudo-Clementine source has persisted to some degree, even if the quest to reconstruct it out of the *Clementina* has run its course. See, for example, the concluding remarks of François Bovon, “En tête des *Homélie*s clémentines: La *Lettre de Pierre à Jacques*,” in *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines*, ed. Frédéric Amsler et al., PIRSB 6 (Prahins: Éditions du Zèbre, 2008), 335.

the narrative has remained a neglected endeavor. The abruptly shifting perspectives, rough generic juxtapositions, and ideological incongruities found in the opening of the *Klementia* have largely thwarted efforts to see the prefatory materials as meaningfully and coherently part of the narrative.²²

I would like to suggest, however, that it is impossible to understand the *Klementia* well without recognizing the critical place the *Epistula Petri*, the *Diamartyria*, and the *Epistula Clementis* occupy in the narrative project.²³ As we have them, the initial documentary fictions work to position the reader in particular ways for the reading of the books of narrative that follow. Whether the author of the *Klementia* created these materials or received and adapted them matters little. If we enter the interpretive endeavor through the perspective of the reader, we gain a stable footing from which to ask how the shifting perspectives, generic disruptions, and different ideas might work together.²⁴ Admittedly, the *Klementia* can seem to be a rather random and inelegant patchwork of “sources,” but once we decide to read the *entire* work as a coherent narrative project, the plot, so to speak, thickens considerably.

The intrigue begins already with the opening letter from Peter to James and the brief narrative account of the letter’s reception in Jerusalem, which together serve the important function of bringing the reader into the project in the morally uneasy yet titillating position of eavesdropping on things expressly not meant for her ears. As the reader continues into the autobiographical narrative of Clement, she will encounter a kind of progressive unfolding of the teachings of the apostle Peter that rewards a sustained and linear reading of the novel. Not only that, she will also come to witness several levels of telling in the narrative. The many religious and philosophical discourses of the novel are woven into

²² See, for example, the theory of Jürgen Wehnert (*Pseudoklementinische Homilien: Einführung und Übersetzung*, KAL 1/1 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010], 34) that the “Redaktor ad Jacobum” (i. e., the editor of the source novel underlying the two extant versions, who, according to Wehnert, framed the novel as an over-sized epistle to James) began to transform the work as such but rapidly lost interest in his project.

²³ My own thinking about how to read the *Klementia* as narrative rhetoric has been enhanced especially by the “narrative as rhetoric” approach developed by James Phelan in *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1996); *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); and *Experiencing Fiction: Judgments, Progressions, and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* (Columbus: The Ohio State University, 2007).

²⁴ Although the reader I am talking about can, of course, be none other than *me*, I shall often speak of “her” or “him” in the third person, drawing upon Phelan’s formulation of the recursive relationships among authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response. According to Phelan (*Living to Tell about It*, 19; *Experiencing Fiction*, 4), the author designs textual phenomena for a hypothetical audience (the “authorial audience”), and each actual reader, in encountering these phenomena, seeks to become part of this audience. You and I read the *Klementia* from a considerable distance, but we are nevertheless connected with early readers in this common desire to become part of the authorial audience and share in its perspective.

the story such that some knowledge is presented as public, while other teachings are portrayed as esoteric. When Peter is observed saying certain things to the crowds of Syria-Palestine and slightly different things privately, to his own inner circle of disciples, the reader is poised to discern that the way things seem to be to the masses may not be the way things really are. Commonplace knowledge is, in effect, rendered suspicious, and the reader is positioned to undergo some rather radical transformations in understanding.

As the narrative of the *Klementia* unfolds, *what* the reader learns, to a significant degree, is how to read other literature. The novel is, in my view, fundamentally hermeneutical, and the prefatory documents forefront a suspicion about texts, and especially about scripture, that renders right reading a matter of critical importance. The narrative's grave concerns about the scriptures of Israel, as well as its idiosyncratic solution in the doctrine of "false pericopes," are well known,²⁵ but the *Klementia* also betrays an uneasy relationship with the Gospels of the New Testament, and especially the Synoptic Gospels. Scholarship has dealt extensively with the "sayings of Jesus" scattered liberally throughout the narrative, frequently approaching them with the aim of discovering what they suggest about the source(s) employed.²⁶ Did the author of the *Grundschrift* have some version of the four Gospels before him? Or perhaps a gospel harmony? Do "variant" forms of certain sayings betray a relationship with Justin Martyr, his milieu, or his gospel source(s)?²⁷ On a basic level, these kinds of inquiries often appear to be at least as concerned with what can be discovered about the "sources" as they are about the Pseudo-Clementine novels, especially in their final forms. In fact, however, the *Klementia* is a work so deeply involved

²⁵ Cf. Strecker, *Judenchristentum*, 166–187; Kevin M. Vaccarella, "Shaping Christian Identity: The False Scripture Argument in Early Christian Literature" (PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2007); Han J.W. Drijvers, "Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *Loyalitätskonflikte in der Religionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Carsten Colpe*, ed. C. Elsas and H.G. Kippenberg (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1990), 314–323; F. Stanley Jones, "Marcionism in the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in idem, *Pseudoclementina Elchasaïticaque*, 152–171, 167–169; Karl Evan Shuve, "The Doctrine of the False Pericopes and Other Late Antique Approaches to the Problem of Scripture's Unity," in Amsler et al., *Nouvelles intrigues*, 437–445; Donald H. Carlson, *Jewish-Christian Interpretation of the Pentateuch in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 51–75; Bazzana, "Apelles and the Pseudo-Clementine Doctrine of the False Pericopes," 11–32.

²⁶ Cf. Jones, "Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research," 81–86; Strecker, *Judenchristentum*, 117–36; Leslie L. Kline, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, SBLDS 14 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); J. Neville Birdsall, "Problems of the Clementine Literature," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A. D. 70 to 135*, ed. J. D. G. Dunn, WUNT 66 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 347–61; Frédéric Amsler has pressed for a broad interpretation of the way the Gospels are used in the Pseudo-Clementines ("Les citations évangéliques dans le roman pseudo-clémentin: Une tradition indépendante du Nouveau Testament?" in *Le canon du Nouveau Testament: Regards nouveaux sur l'histoire de sa formation*, ed. G. Aragione et al. [Geneva: Labour et Fides, 2005], 141–167), but the results are circumscribed by a restriction of the focus to sayings of Jesus that are explicitly cited as such.

²⁷ Most recently, see Jones, "Distinctive Sayings," 200–217.

with the Gospels of the New Testament that we are not likely to understand it well without attending to the many ways it cites, alludes to, and otherwise interacts with gospel materials. To focus only upon sayings of Jesus is to miss much that is of interest. Take, for example, the miniature encomium of Peter that opens the *Epistula Clementis*, the second prefatory letter of the *Klementia* (*Ep. Clem.* 1.2–3). Nearly every epithet of this remarkable little speech is drawn from the Gospels,²⁸ and through it, the stage is set for a complex work of gospel exegesis executed on the authority of this chief eyewitness tradent of Jesus's words and actions. A focus on sayings and/or citations also misses allusions to narrative episodes and to parables, taking note of them only insofar as they are sealed with apophthegms. Because the full range of the *Klementia*'s interactions with the Gospels has not been thoroughly explored, and especially because the issue is significant for the interpretation of the novel as a whole, the diverse forms of the *Klementia*'s engagement with the Gospels will be a focal point in this study. My analysis of such material will emphasize the distinctive resources for exegesis that are afforded by the genre of narrative fiction and will seek to demonstrate how the many individual moments of interpretation work together to give us a glimpse of the author's overarching view of the narratives about the life and death of Jesus that had already, by the time he wrote, become the authorized accounts of the origins of Christianity for many.²⁹

Given the conceit of the narrative, as a recounting of events that happened during the lifetime of Peter, it is not surprising that the *Klementia* makes no explicit reference to the Gospels *per se*. In fact, much of its exegetical power is derived precisely from the special resources afforded by the genre of narrative historical fiction, granting it the ability to do an end run around the Gospels and to correct them without ever acknowledging them, though they were undoubtedly in view. By conducting its exegesis through its own construction of the apostolic eyewitness Peter, the *Klementia* can seamlessly dislodge authority from the Gospels and present its own interpretations of Jesus and his teachings as both more original and more authoritative. The hermeneutic is striking in comparison with the kinds of exegesis carried out in the contemporaneous

²⁸ On the composition as anti-Pauline polemic, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 309–310.

²⁹ It is worth noting that, if it is our aim to think about the *Klementia* as an act of literary communication, it is an unnecessarily narrow perspective to restrict our focus to the question of what gospel text(s) the author had at his disposal. Also relevant are broader questions about what gospel text(s) might have been a part of the knowledge base brought to the *Klementia* by ancient readers and about the cultural form and status of the Christian myth in milieux where the novel was read.

genres of commentary and homily, where authoritative text is cited, and then, reflection on its meaning ensues.³⁰

The mode of narrative exegesis in the *Klementia* works to interesting effect when we consider broadly the relationship between the novel and the basic plot of the Gospels. While the autobiography narrated by Clement appears to begin during the lifetime of Jesus,³¹ the reader cannot help but know that Jesus is no longer living at the time of the narration, since the *Ep. Clem.* locates the composition of the work after Peter's death. Nonetheless, the event of Jesus's death – never mind his resurrection – does not register on the storyline of the narrative at all. In the discourses of the novel, one finds only a single, passing reference to Jesus's death, captured rather obliquely in a citation formula introducing the prayer of Jesus from the cross found in Luke 23:34 ("For the teacher himself, after he was nailed up, prayed ...").³² In its context in the *Klementia*, the citation serves as a paradigm of intercession on behalf of those who inflict evil. Otherwise, there is a single reference to Jesus's "blood" (*Klem.* 3.19.1), but the term likely functions as metonymy for his kindred.³³ This nearly complete silence on the death and resurrection of Jesus can be only suggestive, of course,

³⁰ In terms defined by David Brakke ("Scriptural Practices in Early Christianity: Towards a New History of the New Testament Canon," in *Invention, Rewriting, and Usurpation*, ed. Jörg Ulrich et al., ECCA 11 [Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012], 263–280, 263), we may perhaps regard the *Klementia* as manifesting a "scriptural practice" that does not lead to or equate with the canon of the New Testament.

³¹ Joseph Verheyden ("Presenting Minor Characters in the Pseudo-Clementine Novel: The Case of Barnabas," in Amsler et al., *Nouvelles intrigues*, 249–257, 255) has observed that Barnabas's mission in Alexandria (*Klem.* 1.9–14) apparently happens while Jesus is alive: "The *Recognitions* and the *Homilies* are not talking about any post-paschal apostolic mission, as one might perhaps have expected, but about the missionary activity that takes place during Jesus' lifetime!" See also F. Stanley Jones, "Clement of Rome and the *Pseudo-Clementines*: History and/or Fiction," in idem, *Pseudo-clementina Elchasaïticaque*, 139–161, 150.

³² "Father forgive them their sins; for they do not know what they are doing" (*Klem.* 11.20.4). The verse has an unstable textual tradition in Luke, on which see François Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28–24:53*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 306–307.

³³ It is certainly possible to read the blood referred to here as an allusion to the violent death of Jesus, especially if the polemics that follow in 3.19.2 are taken as a gesture toward the various conflicts that lead up to Jesus's death in the gospel accounts. More likely, the blood refers to Jesus's kindred, either working to emphasize, by contrast, the mercy he extends to the Gentiles in the preceding participial clause, or perhaps even alluding to Jesus's treatment of his immediate family in the episode in Mark 3:31–35, par., an incident which is perhaps somewhat at odds with the familial ethic of the novel (cf. *Klem.* 12.5, where Clement recalls that Peter instructed his followers not to abandon familial responsibilities for the sake of the itinerant mission). In the end it is really not possible, and perhaps not even desirable, to resolve this question and insist on one meaning to the exclusion of the other. Wehnert, *Pseudoklementinische Homilien*, 89, n. 20, also notes that the phrase is *doppeldeutig*, but the ANF translation obscures the ambiguity by rendering αἷμα as "kindred." Ra'anana S. Boustana and Annette Yoshiko Reed ("Blood and Atonement in the Pseudo-Clementines and *The Story of the Ten Martyrs*: The Problem of Selectivity in the Study of 'Judaism' and 'Christianity,'" *Henoch* 30 [2008]: 333–364, 344) settle firmly on the genealogical reading.

but a number of other factors can be adduced as evidence in support of the hypothesis that the *Klementia* deliberately avoids the subject. Most notably, signs of the death of Jesus are conspicuously absent from the ritual of Peter's group. The closest thing to a Eucharistic meal is described in terms of bread and salt;³⁴ there is not a trace of body/blood symbolism. Baptism is characterized consistently as "rebirth" (*anagenesis*), a concept that lends itself both to the construal of the faith as filial piety (i. e., one is reborn into the family of the divine father) and to the undoing of the fatalistic *genesis* that can be read in the configuration of the stars at the time of one's birth.³⁵ There is no trace of the Pauline idea that baptism amounts to participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (e. g., Rom 6:3–11). Furthermore, one would be hard-pressed to find any indication that the death of Jesus has any soteriological value at all for the *Klementia*. Salvation, insofar as it is linked to Jesus, comes through a dual-pronged Christology built around 1) the authoritative teaching and biblical exegesis of the True Prophet Jesus and 2) the protection of the Good King (also manifest in Jesus), who reigns over all those who believe in God and observe the divine commandments.

Once we endeavor to read the *Klementia* as a progressive, narrative pedagogy in right reading, we are in a better position to see the coherence of the many discourses of the novel and to recognize the distinctive system of thought developed therein.³⁶ What the *Klementia* attempts, I would argue, is essentially a reinscription of the contemporaneous religious landscape through the development of a revised story of Christian origins in the apostolic period. As many have recognized, a key concern appears to be the relationship of "Christianity" to "Judaism."³⁷ Through the extensive teachings of Peter and through countless

³⁴ For example, after the baptism of Clement's mother, Clement reports, "Some time later, Peter came, and, after breaking bread with thanksgiving and adding salt, he gave it first to our mother and, after her, to us, her sons. In this way, we feasted together with her and blessed God" (μετὰ ἰκανῶς δὲ ὥρας ὁ Πέτρος ἐλθὼν, τὸν ἄρτον ἐπ' εὐχαριστία κλάσας καὶ ἐπιθεὶς ἄλας, τῇ μητρὶ πρῶτον ἐπέδωκεν, μετ' αὐτὴν ἡμῖν τοῖς υἱοῖς αὐτῆς. καὶ οὕτως αὐτῇ συνεσιόθημεν καὶ τὸν θεὸν εὐλογήσαμεν) (*Klem.* 14.1.4).

³⁵ Jones, "Eros and Astrology in the ΠΕΠΙΟΔΟΙ ΠΕΤΡΟΥ," in idem, *Pseudoclementina Elchaisiticaque*, 114–137, esp. 121–124, 134–137.

³⁶ Certainly some elements of the *Klementia* have been preserved intact from the source novel, some modified, and some added entirely. I operate with the assumption that all of these activities represent meaningful authorial decisions.

³⁷ The question of the nature and source of the so-called "Jewish-Christianity" of the Pseudo-Clementines has been central to the study of the novels. For a concise summary, see Jones, "Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research," 101–113. In my view, even if the *Klementia* bears traces of earlier "Jewish-Christian" perspectives by virtue of its sources, it nonetheless invents something new out of what it has received. Scholars differ widely on the question of the degree to which the *Klementia* is original. To what extent did its author intervene on the *Grundschrift*? Was the perspective that we find in the *Klementia* already mostly formed in G? In my view, a good deal of innovation can be linked to the author of the *Klementia*, but that perspective will be persuasive only insofar as many of the subarguments of this book, on various portions of the text, are persuasive.

Index of References

Old Testament

<i>Genesis</i>		30:10 LXX	147
1:1	46	40:5, 11 LXX	147
1:1–2	44	53:6 LXX	147
1:26	46	77:2 LXX	168
1:26–27	44	85:3 LXX	147
4	47	93:18 LXX	147
4:21–22	50		
6:4	110	<i>Isaiah</i>	
49:9	85	1:3	170
49:10	77, 84, 85	1:4	170
49:11–12	85	40:26–27	170
<i>Exodus</i>		<i>Jeremiah</i>	
19:9	108	47:4	151
<i>Leviticus</i>		<i>Daniel</i>	
15:19–24	172	12:4	36
19:18	103	<i>Joel</i>	
20:10	132	3:4	151
20:18	172	<i>Zechariah</i>	
<i>Deuteronomy</i>		9:1–4	151
18:21–22	58	<i>4 Esdras</i>	
25:5	91	1:11	151
32:7	70	<i>1 Enoch</i>	
32:39 LXX	55	15–16	110, 111
<i>Psalms</i>			
6:3 LXX	147		
8:3 LXX	108		
9:14 LXX	147		

New Testament

<i>Matthew</i>		5:31–32	147
4:1–11	98, 112	5:34–35	91
4:8–9	113	5:39	156
4:11	114	5:39–41	155
5:17	29, 89	5:43	103
5:18	89	5:43–48	73
5:17–19	19	6:8	91
5:18	29	6:32	91
5:21–48	114	7:2	169
5:22	125	7:12	103

7:13-14	104	19:3-9	147
7:21	110	19:4	91
8:5-13	152	19:8	91
8:10	152	19:13-15	148
8:11	107	19:16-22	165
8:26	152	19:19	103
9:2	152	20:16	107
9:22	152	21:16	108
9:28-29	152	21:21	13, 18
10:5-6	152	21:21-22	152
11:12	112	21:28-32	119
11:21	98	21:33-41	119
11:21-22	151	21:45	119
11:25	108, 166, 167	21:46	119
11:27	26, 164	22:1	119
13:10-15	32	22:1-14	98, 118
13:11	32	22:3	119, 120, 122
13:17	69	22:3-7	120
13:24-30	123	22:5	119
13:35	168	22:6	119, 122
13:36	32	22:7	119, 122
13:40	125	22:9	121
13:42	125	22:14	107
13:47-50	123	22:15-22	88
13:50	125	22:23-32	91
13:51	32, 33	22:29	87, 171
13:52	110	22:39	103
14:15	147	22:41-46	167
14:20	151	23:1-3	89
14:31	152	23:2	71, 73
15	25	23:13	71, 169
15:1-14	90	24:4-36	59
15:1-20	152	25:1-13	123
15:12-14	152	25:14-30	65
15:13	89	25:31-46	123
15:21	145, 147	25:41	125
15:21-28	142	27:15-26	147
15:22	144, 147	28:19-20	33, 121
15:23	147, 148		
15:24	147		
15:25	147	<i>Mark</i>	
15:26	152	1:4	123
15:27	151	1:14-8:26	149
15:28	152, 155	1:15-4:34	150
15:29	152	3:31-35	9
16:8	152	5:1	150
16:13-20	45, 151	5:21-24	150
16:16	45	5:25-34	150
16:17	31, 45	5:35-43	150
16:19	39	6:7-13	150
17:14-20	18, 19	6:35-44	150, 151
17:20	13, 18, 19, 152	6:42-43	150
18:10	33	6:52	150
18:18	39	7	25
18:27	147	7:5	150
19:3	147	7:15	150

7:18–19	150	16:23	107
7:19	150, 152, 155	18:18–23	165
7:24	145, 150	20:41–44	167
7:24–30	142	21:8–36	59
7:26	144	23:34	9
7:27	151, 152		
7:28	151	<i>John</i>	
7:29	151, 152	3:5	126
7:31	150	8:11	132
7:31–37	151	9:1–7	172
8:22–26	151	10:7–9	71
8:27–30	31, 45, 151		
8:27–10:52	149	<i>Acts</i>	
8:31	58	2:38	123
9:30–31	58	8:36	136
10:17–22	165	9:1–19	31
10:32–34	58	9:27	16
11:1–15:47	149	11:25–26	16
12:13–17	88	13–15	16
12:24	87	15:19–20	30
12:35–37	167	15:23–29	101
13:5–37	59	15:28–29	101
14:18	59	15:29	30
14:27	59	15:36–39	16
14:28	59		
14:30	59	<i>Romans</i>	
14:66–72	59	6:3–11	10
<i>Luke</i>		<i>1 Corinthians</i>	
3:3	123	8	150
4:1–13	98, 112	9:6	16
4:5–7	113		
4:13	114	<i>Galatians</i>	
4:16–21	75	1:11–17	31
6:27–28	73	2	27
6:29	155	2:1	16
6:38	169	2:9	16
6:46	108, 109	2:11	31
9:18–21	31	2:11–14	28, 29, 41
10:13	98	2:13	16
10:21	108, 166, 167	2:14	29
10:22	26, 164	3:28	14
10:24	69		
11:52	71, 169	<i>1 Timothy</i>	
13:28–29	107	2:9–10	132
13:29	107	5	91
14:16–24	121		
14:18–19	122		

Pseudo-Clementines

<i>Diamartyria</i>		2.2	37
2–4	37	3.1–4	37
2.1	37	4.3	37

5.1	37	1.3.5	20
5.2-3	38	1.4.4-7	60
5.4	36, 118	1.5	60
		1.6-7	58
<i>Epistula Clementis</i>		1.7	20
1.1	39, 107, 118	1.7-8	121
1.2-3	8	1.9-10	58
1.2-5	39	1.9-14	9
1.7-8	20	1.9.1	107
2.2	73	1.9.2	16
2.4	39	1.10	121
3.1-2	73	1.10.1	16, 123
3.3-4	39	1.10.1-3	16
5-18	39	1.11-12	72
6.3	39	1.11.4-8	16
7-8	129	1.11.8	122
7.1	51	1.11.9-12.2	111, 121
7.5	120	1.11.10-12.2	122
8	91	1.13.2	123
9.1-2	101	1.13.4	17
10.4-6	61	1.14.1	17
11.2	61	1.15.2	20, 29
13.3-14.1	40	1.16.3	17
13.3-15.5	71	1.18-19	68
14.2-5	40	1.19	58, 77
15.1-5	40	1.19.1-2	68
17.1	73	1.19.4	60
19.1	39	1.19.5-7	59
19.1-3	73	1.20.4	61
		1.22.1	105
		1.22.5	21, 105
<i>Epistula Petri</i>		2	25
1.1	39, 118	2-3	24, 35, 47, 88
1.2	5, 34, 36, 62, 73	2-11	21
1.3	17, 35	2.2.3	136
1.3-4	34, 35	2.4.1	58
1.3-5	73	2.4.3	58
1.4	35	2.6.1	60
1.5	34, 35	2.6.2-3	69
2.1	34, 36, 63	2.6.4	88, 103
2.2	29, 79	2.10	79
2.3	28	2.12	64
2.4	28, 29	2.12.1-2	69
2.5	29	2.12.3	60
2.6	29	2.15-17	77
2.7	5, 29	2.15-18	67
3.1	5	2.15.1	46
3.1-2	73	2.15.2	48, 51, 53
		2.15.2-5	48
<i>Klementia</i>		2.15.3	48
1-3	93	2.15.4	77
1-11	20, 94	2.16-17	45, 46, 75
1.1-3	68	2.16.1	46
1.1-4	60	2.16.3	46
1.1.1	20, 39	2.16.3-17.5	78
1.2.1-2	20	2.16.5	120

2.17.3	46	3.8.1	129
2.18.1	45	3.10.4	88, 129, 164
2.18.3-4	145	3.11.2	60
2.19-21	142, 175	3.13.1	59
2.19.1-21.2	142, 143, 144	3.13.2	60
2.19.2	149, 152	3.15.1	59
2.19.3	154	3.16	42
2.19.4	154	3.16.1	75, 82
2.20.1-3	154	3.16.2	43, 68
2.22-32	100, 145	3.17	67, 69
2.22.3	16	3.17-21	47
2.23.1	77	3.17.1	46, 67, 68, 75
2.26	61	3.17.2	69, 70
2.28-31	61	3.17.28	79
2.29	61	3.18-19	67, 68
2.29.1	61	3.18.1	70
2.30.1	61	3.18.2	70, 71
2.32.2	117	3.18.2-3	168
2.33	46	3.18.3	71
2.33.1	45	3.19.1	9, 72, 75
2.33.3	120	3.19.2	9, 73
2.33.2-4	82	3.19.3-4	51
2.35	83	3.20-28	47
2.37.3	63	3.20.1	46, 47, 68, 75
2.38	62, 129	3.20.1-2	74, 75
2.38-52	67	3.20.2	75, 76, 79
2.38.1	62, 79	3.21.1	67, 68, 69
2.38.2	63, 64	3.22-23	67
2.39	86, 162	3.22-27	77
2.39.4	86	3.22-28	47
2.40.3	63	3.22.1	47
2.40.4	63	3.22.1-3	48
2.41.3-42.2	162	3.23.1-4	49
2.42	129	3.24	137
2.42.1	63, 64, 88	3.24.1	49, 50
2.43-44	63, 64, 168	3.24.2	49
2.47.2	86	3.24.3	50
2.49-50	168	3.24.4	49, 50
2.50.2	87	3.25.1	50
2.50.2b	88	3.25.3	50
2.50.3	80	3.25.4	50
2.51	64	3.26	50, 101
2.51.1	65	3.26.1-6	50, 51
2.52	64, 75	3.27	67
2.52.1	76	3.27-28	51, 77
2.52.2	46, 67, 76, 91	3.27.2	51
3	25, 48, 77	3.27.3	51
3.2-3	86	3.28.1-3	52
3.2.2-3	166	3.29.1	49, 52, 68
3.3.1	100	3.29.3-4	105
3.3.2	82	3.29.5	99
3.3.3	63	3.30-37	83
3.4.4	100	3.30.1	99
3.5	54, 62	3.32.1	89
3.5.2-4	153	3.37	83
3.6-8	129	3.38	83

3.38-45	163	4.12.1-2	96
3.39	83, 163	4.14.1	95
3.42-43	80	4.18-19	71, 97
3.44	168	4.18.1-3	97
3.44.1	80	4.19.2-3	136
3.45	51	4.21.2-4	132
3.45.4	43, 83	4.21.4	136
3.46	43	4.24.3	96
3.47-57	62	4.24.3-4	70
3.47.1	62	4.24.4	96
3.47.1-4	80, 81	5	94, 95
3.48-57	57	5.1.1	94
3.48.1	84, 90	5.2.4	95
3.48.2	84	5.3.1	95
3.49.1	90	5.10-19	95
3.49.1-2	84	5.25.1	97
3.49.3	66, 85	5.26.3-4	95
3.50-57	66, 155, 175	5.27.1	95
3.50.1	87, 171	5.28.2	96, 162
3.50.2	64, 87	5.29.1	95
3.51.1	89	6.2.1	96
3.51.2	89	6.2.12	96
3.51.3	89	6.11-16	96
3.52-56	51	6.17-18	164
3.52.2	71, 90	6.18.4	96
3.52.2-53.3	90	6.20-25	97
3.54.1	90	6.20.1	97
3.54.2	91	6.26	97
3.55-57	91	6.26.1	97
3.55.3	91	7	21, 25, 54, 93, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103, 105, 118, 120
3.56.3	91		
3.58	66		
3.59	93	7-8	102
3.59.2	99	7-11	93
3.60.1	73	7.1.2	99
3.61.1-2	65	7.2-4	98
3.62	49	7.2.3	46, 99, 100
3.63	39	7.3	21, 111
3.63.1	73	7.3.1	99
3.68	20, 129	7.3.2-5	100, 101
3.68.1	51	7.3.4	99
3.68.2	51, 136	7.3.4-5	43
3.70.2	73	7.4	88
3.73	131	7.4.1	99
3.73-4.1	145	7.4.2	101, 158
3.73.1	105	7.4.3	102
3.73.2-4.1.1	142	7.4.3-5	102, 103
4-6	13, 16, 20, 21, 25, 70, 93, 94, 95, 96, 142	7.4.5	99
4.7.1	94	7.4.5a	88
4.7.2	16, 20, 94	7.5.1-2	98
4.7.2-3	94	7.5.1-3	105
4.8.5	96	7.6-8	98
4.9	94	7.6.2-7.7.6	104
4.11.1	95	7.7.7	105
4.12	171	7.8.1	101, 158
		7.8.1-2	105

7.11	100	9.3	111
8	25, 98, 118, 121, 123, 170	9.9	101
8-9	106	9.9-10	102
8-11	11, 25, 93, 97, 111, 135	9.9.1-5	125
8.1.1	106, 107	9.9.2	102
8.2.1	11	9.9.4-5	137
8.3.2	106	9.9.5	126
8.4-7	106, 107	9.10	102
8.4.1	60, 106	9.10.3	136
8.4.1-4	106, 107	9.19.2	51, 82
8.5-7	73	10-11	106
8.5.1	107, 108	10.2	71, 170
8.5.2	108	10.3.2	11
8.5.4	88, 108	10.21.4	136
8.6.4	168	10.26.3	107
8.6.5	109	11	21, 30, 117
8.7	21, 109	11.9	51
8.7.1-2	109	11.14-15	18
8.7.3	109	11.15	51
8.7.4	110	11.15.8	11
8.7.5	110	11.16	15, 17, 18, 47, 54, 55
8.8.4	11, 106, 124	11.16.1	11
8.10	77, 101	11.16.2	17
8.10-17	110	11.16.2-4a	11
8.10.1-3	81	11.16.4	13
8.10.2-3	77	11.16.4b-6	19
8.12-20	120	11.20.4	9
8.14.1-2	125	11.21-22	44
8.15-17	101	11.21.22	43, 44
8.18-20	110	11.22.1	44
8.18-23	98	11.22.2	79
8.18.1-2	14, 111	11.22.3	44
8.19	101, 111	11.24.2	126
8.19.1	111, 137, 158	11.26.1-2	126
8.19.2-3	111	11.26.3-4	137
8.20	111	11.26.4	126, 137
8.20.1	111	11.28-30	101
8.20.2	111	11.28-33	51
8.20.4	113	11.28.4-11.29.2	73
8.21	112	11.31.1	114
8.21.1	112	11.32.1	114
8.21.1-2	112, 113	11.35	130
8.21.3-22.1	113, 114	11.35.2-4	116
8.21.4	114	11.35.3-6	60
8.22-23	102, 119	11.35.4	29, 107, 116
8.22.1-2	115	12	126, 130
8.22.2	125	12-13	130, 132
8.22.2-23.3	127	12-15	25, 159
8.22.3	120, 125	12-20	21
8.22.4	120, 121, 123, 124	12.1	22
8.23	124	12.3	22
8.23.1	123, 124, 125	12.3.3	158
8.23.2	120, 125	12.4-7	130
8.24	98	12.4.1	131
9-11	126	12.5	9
9.1.1	111	12.5.5-7	131

12.6	22	14.1-2	125
12.6.4-6	158	14.1-4	10
12.6.7	159	14.2.2	157
12.6.1-3	158	14.2-10	22
12.8-10	22, 131	14.10.2-4	157
12.9.1	131	15	100
12.10.2	131	15.4	138
12.10.3-4	131	15.4.6	171
12.11-12	138	15.5-9	175
12.12-21	22, 137	15.5.4-5	155
12.12.1	138, 139	15.6.2	156
12.12.2	140	15.6.3	156
12.12.3	138	15.7.1	156
12.13	132	15.7.2-3	156
12.13.1-5	140	15.7.3b-4	157
12.13.5	139	15.7.4	155, 157
12.14.4-15.1	139, 141	15.7.6-8.1	157
12.17.3	139	15.9.3	157
12.18.4	139	15.10.5	155
12.19.4	139	16	163
12.23	139	16-19	26, 53, 161, 173
12.23.4-8	141	16.1-14	162
12.23.6	141	16.1-19.25	23
12.23.8	139	16.1.2	161
12.24.3	159	16.2.4	163
12.24.3-4	141	16.3.3	163
12.32.5	103	16.6-7	163
13	124	16.6-8	168
13.2-8	22	16.9.4	163
13.4	135	16.10.1	163, 164
13.4.2	135	16.10.2	163
13.4.3	101, 137	16.10.3-4	164
13.4.3b	135	16.12	47
13.5.1	136, 141	16.12-14	168
13.7.3	13, 16, 142, 154	16.12.1-2	44
13.7.4	13	16.12.2	45
13.9.3	136	16.19.1	164
13.11-12	136	16.21.3-4	60
13.13-14	132	16.21.5	100
13.13-21	51	17	30, 31, 164, 166
13.13.3	132	17.3.1-3	61
13.14.1	136	17.4	75, 79
13.14.3	132	17.4.3	76, 164
13.15-17	132	17.6.3-6	32
13.15-19	20, 130	17.7	33
13.15.1	132	17.7.4	164
13.15.3	132	17.7-12	33
13.16.1-3	132, 133	17.7.1	33, 121
13.16.4	133	17.7.2	33
13.17	133	17.10.4-5	129
13.18.1	133	17.13	30
13.18.3-4	133	17.13-19	30, 31
13.19	51, 132	17.18	45
13.20.4	133	17.18.2	45
13.21.2-3	133	17.18.3	45
14	130, 155	17.19.2	32

4.34.5-35.2a	115	7.17.3	134
4.35.1	116	7.29	135
4.35.3-4	117	7.32.2	134
5.10-12	85	7.32.2-3	142
6.6-7	44	7.34.1	134
6.7.1	44	7.36-37	136
7.12.3	138	9.32.5	130
7.13.1	140		

Modern Authors

- Adler, W. 94, 95
Allison, D. 147, 151, 152
Amersfoort, J. 94
Amsler, F. 7, 86
Appelbaum, A. 155
- Bauckham, R. 29, 117
Baumgarten, A. 15, 34, 35
Bautch, K. Coblentz 109
Bazzana, G. 2, 7, 66
Betz, H. D. 14, 28, 102, 103
Birdsall, J. N. 7
Bockmuehl, M. 28, 31, 42
Boustan, R. 9
Bovon, F. 5, 9, 14, 15, 27, 36
Brakke, D. 9
Bremmer, J. 60, 94
Bultmann, R. 32
Bussell, F. W. 42
- Calvet-Sébastien, M.-A. 139
Carleton Paget, J. 13, 93, 94, 96, 142
Carlson, D. 7, 35, 79, 88, 94, 97
Cha, J.-S. 37
Chapman, J. 37, 38
Cirillo, L. 74
Clark, E. 108
Collins, A. Y. 58, 102, 144, 150
Collins, J. J. 36
Cooper, K. 3, 133, 134, 137, 141
Côté, D. 2, 17, 42, 94, 162
Crossan, J. D. 32, 119
Cullmann, O. 3, 76, 77
- Daniélou, J. 40
Davies, W. D. 147, 151, 152
Davison, C. Cullen 138
Drijvers, H. J. W. 7, 74, 79, 162
Duncan, P. 106
- Edwards, M. J. 1, 12
Ehrman, B. 8, 34
- Geoltrain, P. 15, 35, 138
Gieschen, C. 75, 76, 77, 78
- Hägg, T. 3
Hansen, D. 130, 131, 158
- Harnack, A. 14
Heine, R. 84
Hirshman, M. 34
Holzberg, N. 3
Horn, C. 135
Hutt, C. 65, 66
- Irmscher, J. 5
- Jones, F. S. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 19, 38, 66,
130, 158, 162
- Kaestli, J.-D. 15, 35, 138
Kelley, N. 1, 31, 172
Kerényi, K. 131
Klauck, H.-J. 28, 29, 94, 144
Klijn, A. F. J. 30, 101, 137
Kline, L. 7, 85, 88, 107, 142, 164, 165
- Lanzillotta, L. R. 94
Lieu, J. 14, 17
Lightfoot, J. B. 38
Liverani, P. 138
Lüdemann, G. 30
Luz, U. 18, 90, 123, 146, 148, 152
- Marx-Wolf, H. 153, 154
- Nesterova, O. 94
Nicklas, T. 61
- Olmstead, W. 119
- Perry, B. E. 3
Pervo, R. 4, 16
Pesthy, M. 104
Petersen, N. 59
Phelan, J. 6
Pouderon, B. 5, 13, 38, 96
Preuschen, E. 88
- Räsänen, H. 146
Reardon, B. 139
Reed, A. Y. 9, 15, 108, 118
Rehm, B. 12, 98, 112, 115, 124, 125, 138, 143,
168
Resch, A. 65
Robins, W. 140

- Romm, J. 40
- Shuve, K. 7, 34, 35, 36, 62
- Snowden, J. R. 97, 98, 117, 118
- Stanton, G. 1, 5, 12, 30, 31
- Strecker, G. 5, 7, 12, 18, 30, 40, 42, 62, 67, 71,
73, 74, 79, 88, 107, 112, 115, 124, 125, 138,
143, 168, 170
- Thomas, C. 4
- Tigchelaar, E. 98, 102, 110
- Trenker, S. 3
- Uhlhorn, G. 62
- Vaccarella, K. 7, 62
- Verheyden, J. 9, 17
- Vielberg, M. 1, 40, 171
- Wehnert, J. 5, 6, 9, 20, 28, 30, 35, 67, 79, 105,
114, 161, 163, 168
- Winter, P. 164
- Ziegler, I. 156

Index of Subjects

- Aaron 77, 82, 168
Abel 45, 46, 50, 78, 80
Abraham 64, 75, 76, 78, 91, 107, 120, 165, 167, 168
Adam 24, 25, 46, 47, 51, 56, 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 92, 101, 137, 165, 167, 176
Adultery 20, 50, 51, 52, 94, 95, 102, 111, 114, 125, 132, 133, 136
Agraphon 57, 65, 66, 85, 87, 88, 89
Alexandria 9, 16, 20, 40, 58, 94, 121
Allegory 47, 49, 70, 71, 96, 97, 119, 121
Angel 14, 33, 76, 77, 110, 111, 166
Animal 16, 43, 68, 80, 144, 147, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 163
-bird 43
-dog 144, 149, 151, 152, 154
-elephant 16
-gnat 16
-serpent 82, 163
-sheep 147
Antichrist 45, 78
Antioch 16, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 39, 40, 41, 52, 56, 101, 135, 161, 173, 176
Anti-Paulinism 8, 30, 31
Apelles 66
Aphrodite 139, 140, 141
Apocryphal Acts 126, 134
Apology 28, 33, 40, 68, 122, 123, 138, 148, 152, 154, 158
Apostolic Decree 30, 101
Appion 20, 21, 25, 70, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97
Aquila 13, 16, 21, 22, 23, 25, 61, 131, 132, 135, 145, 146, 154
Arados 22, 25, 131, 134, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 176
Asceticism 100
Astrology 10, 19, 22, 130
Athens 22
Autobiography 1, 6, 9

Baptism 10, 21, 22, 25, 105, 116, 118, 123, 124, 125, 126, 130, 132, 133, 136, 137
Barbarian 16, 21, 94
Bardaisan 74
Barnabas 9, 16, 17, 20, 28, 58, 107, 121, 122, 123
Basil the Great 63

Beauty 20, 54, 129, 132, 140
Berytus 40, 106, 107, 120
Bildungsroman 20, 21, 22, 25, 93, 126
Bishop 3, 13, 20, 21, 29, 37, 38, 39, 40, 65, 73, 83
Blasphemy 25, 62, 63, 168, 175
Blood 9, 10, 49, 50, 51, 72, 101, 137
Body 10, 52, 54, 61, 99, 101, 102, 104, 111, 115, 125, 126, 129, 133, 163
Boundary 11, 12, 26, 40, 49, 53, 54, 93, 102, 104, 111, 126, 134, 138, 142, 149, 153, 157, 159, 176
Bread 10, 149, 150, 151, 152, 154, 157, 158
Bride/Bridegroom 51, 52, 77, 120, 132
Byblus 40, 106, 107, 120

Caesarea 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 40, 59, 65, 66, 67, 73, 82, 83, 89, 92, 93, 99, 105, 131, 134, 146, 163
Cain 45, 46, 50, 78
Callirhoe 25, 138, 139, 140, 141, 176
Cephas 28, 31
Chastity (*sôphrosyne*) 4, 50, 51, 95, 97, 130, 132, 133, 135, 136
Christology 10, 46, 47, 57, 58, 60, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 120
Church Order 39, 61, 129
Circumcision 28, 30, 36
Codex O 1, 112, 124, 143
Codex P 1, 2, 112, 124, 143
Commandment 10, 12, 19, 50, 73, 101, 103, 108, 109, 110, 112, 116, 121, 123, 124, 126, 165
Concealment 26, 41, 45, 96, 106, 108, 109, 110, 168, 169
Conversion 1, 11, 12, 13, 21, 25, 55, 82, 96, 99, 124, 126, 130, 133, 134, 135, 136, 142, 154, 159, 176
Corruption 25, 34, 35, 57, 63, 64, 81, 88, 111, 171, 176

David 147, 167, 168
Death of Jesus 8, 9, 10, 24, 59, 60, 72, 101, 176
Death of Peter 9, 39, 41
Demon 11, 14, 18, 19, 21, 25, 30, 61, 82, 96, 99, 100, 101, 102, 106, 111, 113, 115, 118,

- 119, 120, 124, 125, 126, 135, 136, 137, 142,
153, 154, 158, 159, 172, 176
- Diamartyria* 4, 5, 6, 24, 29, 36, 37, 38, 57, 94,
118, 175
- Digression 11, 67, 68, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 82,
92, 153, 172
- Dowry 49
- Dream 22, 23, 131
- Dualism 15, 24, 41, 42, 45, 46, 47, 48, 53, 54,
56, 92, 98, 100, 112, 153, 155, 173, 176
- Ebionite 5, 77, 168
- Egypt 60, 82, 107, 120, 121, 122, 139
- Elder 29, 34, 36, 37, 70, 71, 91, 108, 109, 116,
150
- Elijah 78, 168
- Encomium 4, 8, 39, 83, 94, 95, 130, 132, 135
- Enoch 75, 76, 78, 110, 165, 167
- Epiphanius 77, 168
- Epistula Clementis* 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 20, 24, 36, 39,
40, 51, 61, 71, 73, 91, 101, 107, 118, 120
- Epistula Petri* 4, 5, 6, 17, 24, 28, 29, 30, 33,
34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 57, 62, 73, 135, 175
- Eucharist 10, 101
- Eusebius 85
- Exorcism 102, 136, 137, 142, 150
- Eyewitness 8, 31, 33, 36, 39, 83, 87, 92, 107,
119, 121, 145, 146, 149, 155, 162, 167, 175
- False Pericopes 5, 7, 21, 25, 35, 56, 62, 63, 64,
65, 66, 67, 68, 74, 83, 85, 86, 87, 92, 153,
155, 162, 163, 164, 170, 171, 175
- Familienroman* 20, 22, 159, 161, 172
- Fasting 105, 136
- Fate 19, 130
- Faustus 23, 52, 129, 131, 138, 155, 156, 157,
159, 163
- Fiction 6, 8, 16, 21, 24, 26, 36, 39, 56, 93,
95, 96, 97, 133, 134, 137, 138, 140, 149,
175, 176, 177
- Fire 18, 43, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 125, 126, 137
- Flashback 13, 20, 95, 96, 162
- Flavius Clemens 13, 38
- Flood 25, 110, 111
- Genesis* 10, 19, 22, 23, 126
- Gentile 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 25,
28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 39, 67, 72, 73, 75, 77, 78,
80, 82, 84, 85, 92, 98, 99, 101, 102, 106,
108, 109, 121, 126, 135, 142, 144, 150, 152,
154, 159, 161, 167
- Giant 110, 111
- Golden Rule 88, 102, 103
- Gospel (canonical) 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 18, 19,
25, 26, 31, 32, 33, 45, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 66,
69, 72, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 98,
107, 109, 112, 113, 118, 119, 121, 123, 132,
142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 151, 152,
154, 155, 157, 159, 165, 167, 172, 175
- Gospel Harmony 7, 71, 142
- Greece 12
- Greek Novel 1, 3, 17, 25, 39, 139, 140, 158,
176, 177
- Grundschrift* 2, 5, 7, 10, 14, 19, 44, 74, 79, 93,
97, 98, 102, 106, 110, 112, 113, 114, 116,
117, 118, 130, 139, 142, 145, 146, 165
- Hand 31, 34, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 54,
55, 67, 68, 69, 74, 83, 99, 100, 101, 105,
123, 133, 137, 138, 140, 150, 152, 153, 166
- Harmony/*Harmonia* 53, 110, 132, 161, 171,
172, 173
- Healing 46, 78, 82, 98, 100, 101, 103, 104,
124, 141, 144, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154
- Hearing 6, 31, 62, 63, 64, 86, 175
- Hebrew 16, 30, 39, 107, 108, 109, 110, 116,
121, 166
- Heliodorus 45
- Heracles 104
- Herod 85
- Hilary 148
- Horoscope 23, 130
- Hypocrisy 28, 29
- Iamblichus 153
- Idol 43, 62, 101, 111, 114, 118, 125, 137
- Idolatry 11, 18, 21, 82, 106, 126
- Interpolation 25, 62, 98, 110, 111, 120
- Irenaeus 85
- Isaac 75, 76, 78, 107, 165, 167, 168
- Ishmael 78
- Israel 14, 15, 18, 99, 107, 144, 145, 147, 150,
151, 152, 154, 169, 170
- Jacob 75, 76, 77, 78, 84, 91, 107, 165, 167,
168, 169
- James 6, 16, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38,
39, 107, 115, 116, 117, 118
- Jerusalem 6, 16, 29, 30, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 59,
107, 115, 116, 150
- Jerome 148, 149
- Jewish Christianity 5, 10, 13, 15, 30, 37, 74,
177
- Jewish Novel 13, 133
- John the Baptist 112, 118, 123
- Joseph 176
- Josephus 94
- Judea 12, 13, 16, 20, 23, 41, 58, 121, 134, 142
- Judgment (final) 19, 52, 60, 61, 64, 90, 104,
122, 123
- Justa 4, 13, 91, 134, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145,
146, 153, 154, 159, 172

- Justin Martyr 7, 85
- Kerygma* 5, 34
- Kerygmata Petrou* 5, 34, 74
- Key 71, 72, 77, 168, 170
- Laodicea 53, 131, 163
- Law 12, 18, 19, 25, 26, 29, 30, 41, 49, 52, 54, 55, 56, 62, 70, 73, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 89, 90, 92, 93, 100, 101, 102, 103, 111, 114, 115, 125, 133, 135, 137, 150, 154, 157, 165, 170, 171, 172
- Longus 45
- Lovesickness 20, 94, 95
- Magic 23, 52, 61, 100, 111, 146
- Marcion 17, 18, 66, 74, 79, 162
- Maroones 11, 21, 106
- Marriage 12, 20, 51, 91, 119, 120, 121, 126, 129, 132, 133, 139, 144
- Mattidia 22, 23, 25, 124, 125, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 159, 172, 176
- Mercy 9, 25, 72, 75, 92, 132, 148
- Micah 54
- Mission 9, 12, 16, 21, 36, 41, 72, 73, 82, 123, 152
- Moderation 102
- Monarchia* 15, 26, 34, 49, 83, 162, 170, 172, 173, 175, 176
- Monotheism 12, 17, 49, 135, 136
- Moses 11, 14, 15, 17, 25, 26, 30, 34, 35, 36, 38, 46, 56, 57, 62, 63, 64, 67, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 91, 92, 93, 101, 102, 103, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 114, 120, 132, 152, 161, 162, 164, 165, 168, 170, 171, 176
- Murder 64, 70, 100, 102, 114, 120, 122, 125
- Myth 18, 21, 70, 95, 96, 97, 136, 171
- Necromancy 60, 61
- Nicetas 13, 16, 21, 22, 23, 25, 61, 131, 132, 135, 145, 146, 154
- Noah 64, 75, 76, 78, 111, 165, 167
- Odysseus 63
- Origen 66, 85, 153
- Paideia 16, 94, 97, 145, 163
- Parable 8, 25, 32, 65, 98, 107, 114, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124, 150, 155, 156
- Paul 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 150, 173
- Pharisees 15, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 82, 89, 90, 119, 121, 147, 150, 152, 165, 167, 168, 169
- Pheidias 22, 138, 140
- Philosopher 16, 60, 121, 122, 153
- Politeia* 15, 25, 34, 83, 88, 89, 102, 103, 114, 115, 135, 143, 154, 169, 170, 172, 176
- Polytheism 11, 12, 17, 18, 26, 49, 56, 82, 98, 106, 126, 142, 154, 162, 176
- Porphyry of Tyre 153, 154
- Poverty 132, 133, 139, 141, 144, 159
- Proselyte 22, 142
- Providence 19, 23, 45, 84, 126, 130, 131, 136, 137, 138, 141, 171
- Pseudonymity 21, 38, 94, 95, 97
- Rebirth 10, 116, 126
- Resurrection 9, 10, 18, 58, 59, 91, 176
- Revelation 23, 26, 31, 33, 41, 45, 108, 109, 130, 166, 167
- Rome 1, 13, 16, 20, 21, 22, 39, 40, 41, 58, 94, 95, 96, 121, 131, 157, 162
- Rufinus 1, 5
- Sacrifice 21, 49, 50, 51, 64, 89, 99, 100, 101, 102, 136, 137, 141, 154, 176
- Sadducee 87, 88, 91, 171
- Salt 10, 101
- Salvation 10, 25, 38, 42, 53, 55, 56, 68, 72, 73, 81, 82, 90, 92, 100, 105, 107, 108, 122, 123, 129, 133, 151, 153, 161, 162, 165, 166, 173, 176
- Scripture (Israel) 7, 12, 26, 34, 56, 57, 59, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 74, 80, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 103, 129, 130, 153, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 168, 170, 171, 173, 175, 176
- Seat of Moses 25, 34, 62, 67, 71, 72, 73, 161, 170
- Sidon 21, 40, 43, 98, 103, 106, 107, 120, 147, 151
- Simon Magus 11, 13, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 31, 35, 39, 40, 41, 43, 46, 48, 52, 53, 60, 61, 63, 66, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 90, 93, 94, 99, 100, 105, 106, 107, 129, 144, 145, 146, 159, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 176
- Son of God 20, 31, 54, 58, 112, 121, 132, 167
- Sophonias 53
- Soul 20, 44, 45, 48, 50, 52, 60, 61, 64, 68, 72, 77, 97, 99, 101, 103, 104, 111, 115, 125, 126, 129, 132, 133, 153, 162
- Spirit 43, 44, 46, 52, 54, 60, 65, 67, 69, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 101, 124, 125, 126, 136, 137, 153
- Suicide 11, 157
- Supersessionism 15, 26
- Syzygies (Pairs) 21, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 68, 77, 78, 79, 82, 93, 100, 120, 145, 173, 176
- Syzygos 47, 48, 50, 67, 77, 83, 137, 176

- Temple 25, 59, 80, 91, 136, 138, 139, 140,
 141, 159, 176
 Tertullian 14
 Theodicy 19, 26, 85, 91, 161
 Third Race/Way 14, 15
 Tiberius 20
 Tripolis 11, 21, 25, 29, 30, 40, 43, 45, 60, 81,
 82, 92, 93, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 105, 106,
 107, 111, 114, 116, 117, 118, 120, 121, 125,
 126, 135, 136, 137, 159
 True Prophet 10, 21, 24, 25, 27, 31, 46, 47,
 48, 51, 52, 56, 58, 59, 60, 62, 64, 66, 67, 68,
 69, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83,
 88, 90, 92, 101, 104, 117, 119, 121, 126,
 145, 146, 155, 156, 159, 161, 162, 164, 167,
 172, 173, 175, 176
 Tyre 21, 40, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 102, 105,
 106, 107, 111, 120, 131, 142, 144, 145, 146,
 147, 150, 151
 Wealth 20, 22, 49, 51, 110, 113, 114, 144,
 154, 157, 159
 Widow 91, 132, 139, 141, 144
 Wisdom 44, 76
 Xenophon 104
 Zacchaeus 13, 39, 65, 73, 105, 129, 144