JUSTIN BUOL

# Martyred for the Church

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Justin Buol

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## Memorializations of the Effective Deaths of Bishop Martyrs in the Second Century CE

Mohr Siebeck

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# Preface

This monograph represents a revised version of my doctoral dissertation. It has been updated to take into account additional scholarly literature, bring in new argumentation, and shorten some sections for relevance. There are many people I would like to thank for helping me complete this project.

I am first and foremost grateful to my doctoral advisor, Candida Moss, a generous and caring advisor who modeled diligent scholarship. Her incisive feedback inevitably pushed me to return to the text and reconsider my arguments, and my work has been greatly improved as a result.

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grateful to my wife, AnnaLisa, who was not only willing to talk about my research, but also to read and edit this monograph. Her attentive comments and questions have helped me to express my ideas more clearly and concisely. Her constant support, encouragement, and companionship have been a tremendous source of life, and it is to her that I dedicate this work.

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# Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow *The SBL Handbook of Style*, ed. Billie Jean Collins et al., 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). Abbreviations for Greek texts are supplemented by Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. with revised supplement (1968). Abbreviations for Latin texts are supplemented by Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (1879).

Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

Although the study of early Christian martyrs has blossomed in the last couple decades, there remain many open avenues for additional research. There has certainly been a broad spectrum of fruitful research into such topics as the historical realities of martyrdom and persecution,[1] theological aspects of martyrdom,[2] Jewish martyrdoms and Greco-Roman noble deaths,[3] female martyrs,[4] and individual martyrs like Ignatius, Polycarp, and Perpetua. But

[1] There are far more studies than can be included in a single footnote. For a few examples, see Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1921); John R. Knipfing, "The Libelli of the Decian Persecution," *HTR* 16 (1923): 345–90; Geoffrey E. M. de Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?" *Past and Present* 26 (1963): 6–38; Adrian N. Sherwin-White, "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted? – An Amendment," *Past and Present* 27 (1964): 23–27; Geoffrey E. M. de Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted? – A Rejoinder," *Past and Present* 27 (1964): 28–33; Timothy D. Barnes, "Legislation against the Christians," *JRS* 58 (1968): 32–50; idem, "Pre-Decian Acta Martyrum," *JTS*, n.s., 19 (1968): 509–31; James B. Rives, "The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire," *JRS* 89 (1999): 135–54; Candida R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[2] E.g., Eduard Lohse, *Märtyrer und Gottesknecht: Untersuchungen zur urchristlichen Verkündigung vom Sühntod Jesu Christi*, 2nd ed., FRLANT 64 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963); Hans von Campenhausen, *Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964); Candida R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[3] E.g., Daniel Boyarin, *Dying For God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, Figurae: Reading Medieval Culture (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992); Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[4] There are many studies on female martyrs. In additional to numerous articles and monographs on prominent martyrs like Blandina, Perpetua, and Thecla, see, for example, Francine Cardman, "Acts of the Women Martyrs," *AThR* 70 (1988): 144–50; Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self* (London: Routledge, 1995); Anne Jensen, *God's Self-Confident Daughters: Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women*, trans. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Louis-

within known *acta martyra*, although many martyrs occupied positions of leadership within the church, no studies exist that analyze as a group those martyrs who were bishops, presbyters, or deacons. This is surprising, since it is well known that martyrs and confessors possessed great authority, at times even rivaling that of the bishop. But if it is the bishop or another church officer who wears the martyr's crown, does the authority granted by death interact with the authority earlier conferred by his office? A study of the martyrdoms of holders of church office promises a fruitful area of research.

The actual offices these men held underwent great changes from the time of the first references in Paul's letters to the third century, when bishops occupy a much more central, authoritative role, such as that seen in monepiscopacy and monarchical episcopacy. Given the developing role of bishops from the first to the third centuries, one wonders if a study of bishop martyrs would have anything to add to the discussion.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

This monograph aims to fill that gap in scholarship by providing a study of bishop martyrs. As such a study has not been previously conducted, the goal is to lay the groundwork for future research by investigating the origins of bishop martyrs: the earliest known bishop martyrs and the background that shapes either how they understood themselves or how they were understood by the communities that survived them.

Along the way, the present work will also keep an eye on two underlying questions: (1) Are there any unifying traits among the depictions of the bishop martyrs? (2) Can the martyrdoms of bishops contribute to discussions about the development of the role of bishop in the early church? This question is particularly worthwhile in light of the fact that ecclesiastical power began to be consolidated in the episcopal office in a time frame that overlaps

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ville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 81–124; Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 176–85; Brent Shaw, "Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs," *JECS* 4 (1996): 269–312; Stephen Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, "Taking it Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees," *JBL* 117 (1998): 249–73; Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*, Gender, Theory, and Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Gail Streete, "Of Martyrs and Men: Perpetua, Thecla, and the Ambiguity of Female Heroism in Early Christianity," in *The Subjective Eye: Essays in Culture, Religion, and Gender in Honor of Margaret R. Miles*, ed. Richard Valantasis, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 59 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2006), 254–66; eadem, *Redeemed Bodies: Women Martyrs in Early Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009); L. Stephanie Cobb, *Dying to Be Men: Gender and Language in Early Christian Martyr Texts*, Gender, Theory, and Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

with the bishop martyrs I am considering. For the objects of this study, how does their role as bishop work with their fate as martyr? Do these dual statuses augment each other?

It is important to keep in mind at the outset that from the vantage point of the historian, the effects of noble deaths and martyrdoms do not lie in the realm of observed fact so much as they lie in the realm of perception and interpretation. We are not in a position to assess what the deaths of Decius or the φαρμακοί, Jesus or Paul, Ignatius, Polycarp, or Pothinus, actually accomplished when they occurred. We are left instead with what others perceived their effects to be (or in the case of Ignatius, how he interpreted his suffering and impending death), and it is these interpretations of their deaths that will be the subject of analysis in the individual chapters.

## 1.3 Scope of the Study

Before this study begins, a couple important issues relating to its scope are in order. The first matter is which bishops this monograph will cover. The letters of Ignatius of Antioch are well known. A handful of bishops are found within the martyr acts gathered in Herbert Musurillo's collection.[5] Those with a whole martyr act devoted to them include Polycarp of Smyrna, Cyprian of Carthage, Fructuosus of Tarragona, Felix of Thibiuca, Irenaeus of Sirmium, and Phileas of Thmuis. The *Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons* (*Martyrium Lugdunensium*) features an account about Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons, and the *Passio of Marian and James* has a brief story about Agapius and Secundinus, two bishops who were martyred in Numidia.[6] Eusebius records the martyrdoms of Asclepius (a Marcionite bishop martyred in Caesarea), Peleus and Nilus (both Egyptian bishops), and Silvanus of Gaza in his *Martyrs of Palestine*.[7] John Chrysostom relays the post-mortem miracles of Babylas, a martyred bishop of Antioch.[8] There are also several Donatist bishop martyrs from the fourth century (in addition to the aforementioned Felix of

[5] Herbert Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).

[6] For Pothinus, see *Mart. Lugd.* 1.29–35 (= Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.29–35). For Agapius and Secundinus, see *Passio Sanctorum Mariani et Jacobi* 3.

[7] Asclepius, Peleus and Nilus, and Silvanus appear in both the long (L) and short (S) recensions of *Martyrs of Palestine*. Asclepius is described at 10.3 (L / S), where he is described disapprovingly for being a Marcionite (to such an extent that L refuses to name him). Peleus and Nilus appear at 13.3 (L / S), and Silvanus at 13.4–10 (L) / 7.3; 13.4–10 (S). Eusebius also makes note of Silvanus, Peleus, and Nilus at *Hist. eccl.* 8.13.5. Also worth noting is Seleucus, a soldier from Cappadocia, described as an ἐπίσκοπος of orphans, widows, the poor, and the sick (*Mart. Pal.* 11.20–23 [L / S]).

[8] See Chrysostom, *De sancto hieromartyre Babyla*.

Thibiuca), including Marculus and the unnamed bishops of Avioccala and Siciliba.[9]

More remote possibilities for study include the martyr Carpus, who is called a bishop in the Latin recension of his martyr act (though not in the Greek recension), and Eusebius of Cibalae, who is executed in a "less reliable" *Passio of Pollio* (which relates events similar to the *Passio of Irenaeus of Sirmium*).[10] Furthermore, some bishops appear in the martyr acts who are not themselves martyrs, but interact with martyrs in significant ways. Thus the *Passio of Perpetua and Felicity* records a bishop Optatus, who is reconciled with a presbyter, Aspasius, by means of the martyrs. The *Martyrium of Marinus* features bishop Theotecnus of Caesarea, who places the choice before Marinus of choosing the gospel (that is, martyrdom) or his military service. Eusebius also notes many other bishop martyrs at various points throughout his *Historia ecclesiastica*, though most receive fairly short treatment.[11]

Beyond the bishop martyrs just enumerated, other martyred church leaders also feature in popular martyr acts. These include the presbyters Pionius (from his own martyr act), Victor (*Passio of Montanus and Lucius*), Aper (*Passio of Felix*), Saturninus of Abitinae (*Acts of the Abitinian Martyrs*), and perhaps Montanus (from the *Passio of Pollio* mentioned above); deacons James (*Passio of Marian and James*), Augurius and Eulogius (*Passio of Fructuosus*), Flavian (*Passio of Montanus and Lucius*), and Philip, who is greeted in the *Testament of the Forty Martyrs*; lectors Marian (*Passio of Marian and James*), Cyril and Vitalis, who appear before a magistrate but are not martyred (*Passio of Felix*), and perhaps Pollio (*Passio of Pollio*).

Although this monograph is concerned with the martyrdom of leaders in the early church, as early as the mid-second century the episcopacy became a focal point for determining the apostolic legitimacy of certain sees as well as orthodox doctrine. Since presbyters, deacons, and lesser officers were not as central for doctrinal and ecclesiological disputes, early martyrs who occupied these offices will not be considered in this study.[12]

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[9] See the *Passio of Marculus* and *A Sermon on the Passion of Saints Donatus and Advocatus* in Maureen A. Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996).

[10] See Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, xliii.

[11] Those mentioned include Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem (*Hist. eccl.* 3.32); Fabian, bishop of Rome (*Hist. eccl.* 6.39.1); Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem (*Hist. eccl.* 6.39.2–3); Babylas, bishop of Antioch (*Hist. eccl.* 6.39.4); Anthimus, bishop of Nicomedia (*Hist. eccl.* 8.6.6; 8.13.1–2); Tyrannion, bishop of Tyre (*Hist. eccl.* 8.13.3); Silvanus, bishop of Emesa (*Hist. eccl.* 8.13.4; 9.6.1); Peter, bishop of Alexandria (*Hist. eccl.* 7.32.31; 8.13.7; 9.6.2); Phileas, Hesychius, Pachymius, and Theodore, bishops of Egypt (*Hist. eccl.* 8.13.7); and an en masse anonymous reference to various bishop martyrs (*Hist. eccl.* 8.6.9).

[12] They might offer productive ground for future study in their own right, however.

Reducing the list of martyred church officers still leaves a large number of bishops. Although it would be desirable to make the study as complete as possible by including all known bishop martyrs, the length would be prohibitive. Following a similar line of reasoning, the nearly 100 personal letters, several treatises, and multiple accounts of martyrdom that attend Cyprian of Carthage would also make him an unwieldy addition to this study. Of course, a subsequent study on third-century bishop martyrs and their relation to those of the second century would be worthwhile.

With that in mind, this monograph focuses on the second century alone. It is in the second century that we come upon the first texts relating to the martyrdoms of bishops, with the letters of Ignatius, The Martyrdom of Polycarp, and the description of Pothinus in the *Letter of Lyons*.[13] Focusing on the earliest bishop martyrs also allows room to study the noble deaths of leaders within Greek and Roman literature and the Bible, in order to provide context by which we may understand the phenomenon of bishop martyrs.

Having restricted the subject of study to second century bishop martyrs, it is also worth stepping back to discuss more generally the distinction between lay martyrs and bishop martyrs. Can one even claim a special status for bishop martyrs? Does not Christian martyrdom invite alike both noble and slave, male and female, rich and poor, lay and cleric, and render social distinctions meaningless?[14] Indeed, martyrs themselves frequently eschew personal distinctions by identifying themselves only with the phrase Χριστιανός εἰμί or *Christianus sum*. Lay martyrs' deaths have also been memorialized as "effec-

[13] There are in fact other second-century bishop martyrs in addition to Ignatius, Polycarp, and Pothinus. Unfortunately, the accounts of their martyrdoms are little more than passing references. See the Appendix for a brief treatment of these lesser known bishop martyrs.

[14] Jennifer Glancy refers to the "truism" that "that in martyrdom social distinctions were washed away in blood," which she argues against in contrasting the depictions of the slave Blandina and the noble Perpetua. See eadem, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 56. This concept of the equalizing effect of martyrdom and its openness to all, aside from being implicit in the varieties of people numbered among the martyrs, goes back as explicit theory at least as far as Clement of Alexandria in the *Stromata*, where he connects the virtue, discipline, and self-control necessary for enduring martyrdom with practicing philosophy. Clement comments that such philosophy is available to all Christians, slave and free, male and female, Barbarian or Greek, young and old (*Strom.* 4.1.1; 4.8.58). For a discussion, see Gretchen J. Reydam-Schils, "Clement of Alexandria on Woman and Marriage in the Light of the New Testament Household Codes," in *Greco-Roman Culture and the New Testament: Studies Commemorating the Centennial of the Pontifical Biblical Institute*, ed. David E. Aune and Frederick E. Brenk, NovTSup 143 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 113–34 (at 116–22). Elizabeth Castelli (*Martyrdom and Memory*, 62) writes further, "Martyrdom, indeed, comes to stand for the possibility of undermining these social, cultural, and anatomical contingencies precisely because a worthy death definitively uncouples the soul from the body."

tive deaths" (see below on terminology), as I will explore in chapter 7 concerning the martyrs of Lyons.[15]

But the availability of martyrdom to all, and the memorialization of some lay martyrs' deaths as "effective deaths," does not mean that lay martyrs and bishop martyrs were memorialized in the same ways. Martyrs may attempt to minimize their personal identity markers in favor of the identity of "Christian," but that does not obligate hagiographers to consistently maintain such a characterization throughout their narratives.

Of course, it is easy to concede potential differentiation among various memorializations of early Christian martyrs, but determining which aspects of memorialization relate to the martyr's church office is a more difficult task. This study addresses that difficulty methodologically by grounding its findings upon an analysis of the ways that leaders' deaths had been memorialized in Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian literature prior to second-century CE Christian *acta martyra*. If the memorializations of bishop martyrs can be shown to conform to pre-existent traditions for remembering the deaths of other leaders, this will provide a more secure vantage point for categorizing the depictions of bishops' martyrdoms. Consistency with what is otherwise known about bishops' roles, moreover, will further validate our conclusions about the bishop martyrs' memorializations. We will also see that the presentations of the deaths of Ignatius, Polycarp, and Pothinus dovetail with Irenaeus's anti-heretical aims at the close of the second century.

## 1.4 Terminology

The deaths studied in this monograph, spanning from classical Greece and Rome through the early Christian era, are all memorialized for certain special characteristics, such as saving others from danger, providing an example for others, or averting divine anger. One term commonly found in biblical and theological scholarship is "vicarious" death, relating to certain Hebrew Bible sacrificial rites and the death of Jesus in the New Testament. Vicarious death suggests a substitutionary death of one person in place or instead of another. While some noble deaths in antiquity fall under this category of saving, substitutionary death, many do not. Yet many noble deaths that are not, strictly speaking, vicarious, nonetheless record some sort of beneficial effect accruing to others. For that reason, borrowing the language of Hendrik Versnel, I

[15] Similarly, 2 and 4 Maccabees categorize the deaths of the seven brothers, just as much as the elder Eleazar, as effective. My analysis in chapter 2, however, focuses exclusively on Eleazar, the mother of the seven brothers, and the elder Razis.

prefer the term "effective death" and will use it throughout my analysis (except where "vicarious" terminology is specifically warranted).[16]

## 1.5 Structure of the Study

*Part 1: Greek and Roman traditions, Second Temple Judaism, and the New Testament*. The purpose of this section (chapters 2–4) is to look at examples of leaders (military, political, religious, etc) who are memorialized for dying for their people or nation in Greco-Roman literature and the Bible. These analyses provide a variety of concepts and themes to illuminate the martyrological portrayal of bishops to be studied later.

Chapter 2 is devoted to leaders' deaths in Greek and Roman literature, though there is some attention to Second Temple Judaism as well. Coming under analysis are the φαρμακός and *devotio* rituals, Roman philosopher-politicians exiled or executed for defying the emperor, Alexandrian gymnasiarchs who give their lives for their native city, and the Jewish mother of the seven brothers, along with the elders Eleazar and Razis, whose noble deaths for the Law in 2 and 4 Maccabees are meant to inspire Jewish youths to faithfulness. Though these accounts are all very different, we nonetheless find similarities among them: special effects created by their deaths, military contexts in which a noble or "effective" death can defeat one's enemies, and the idea of "dying for" something – in many cases the salvation of the state.

Chapter 3 turns to the presentation of Jesus's death in the New Testament. Important here are Jesus's death as sacrifice, especially Revelation's depiction of the slain lamb who conquers his foes (Rev 5:5–6; 19:11–16); Jesus as ἀρχηγός whose death brings salvation and invites imitation (Acts 5:31; 3:15; Heb 2:10; 10:15); Jesus's death as ransom (Mark 10:45 || Matt 20:28); Jesus as scapegoat and φαρμακός; and Jesus's death as a model for other Christians to follow (John 10, 21; Heb 13:13; 1 Peter).

Chapter 4 takes up Paul's writing about his own suffering and death. As this is a common topic for Paul, this chapter is organized by epistle. Paul describes his suffering as weaknesses that reveal God's power (2 Cor); as a model for imitating Christ (2 Cor; Phil; Gal); as a sacrifice to God (2 Cor; Phil; 2 Tim); as a conduit to bring Christ's comfort to the church (2 Cor); and

[16] See Hendrik S. Versnel, "Quid Athenis et Hierosolymis? Bemerkungen über die Herkunft von Aspekten des 'Effective Death,'" in *Die Entstehung der jüdische Martyrologie*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten, Boudewijn Dehandschutter, and H. J. W. van der Klaauw, StPB 38 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 162–96 (at 178–93); idem, "Making Sense of Jesus' Death: The Pagan Contribution," in *Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament*, ed. Jörg Frey and Jens Schröter, WUNT 1/181 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 213–94 (at 226–27, 230–31).

as a way to delegitimize opponents (Gal). Paul's suffering is also a continuation of Christ's ministry (Col) and a means to help Christians reach salvation (2 Tim).

This material reveals a variety of ways that leaders' deaths had been recorded as bringing benefit to their people, providing patterns of thought that continued to resonate with others in the Mediterranean world as time went on. This is true of the influence of Greek, Roman, and Jewish material on New Testament thought, and it is also true of the impact of all of this literature on how the martyrdoms of early Christian bishops would be understood by the Christian communities they presided over. Especially important is the notion of imitating Christ in death – this impacts Paul's conceptions of his own suffering and death in chapter 4, and also influences the depictions of the bishop martyrs below.

*Part 2: Bishop Martyrs*. The second section (chapters 5–7) turns to the narratives of the deaths of bishop martyrs, or in the case of Ignatius, how he himself writes about his suffering and impending martyrdom. Chapter 5 assesses the letters of Ignatius of Antioch; chapter 6, The Martyrdom of Polycarp; and chapter 7, the portrayal of Pothinus in the *Letter of Lyons*.

Ultimately, I am interested in understanding how their status as bishop relates to their status as martyr. The analysis centers on several themes: (1) What kind of authority is given to the bishop martyr in the writings connected with this death? (2) What benefits does the bishop's martyrdom bring to others? (3) How is the bishop's martyrdom portrayed as imitation of Christ? (4) What benefits does the bishop's martyrdom bring to himself? (5) What happens to the bishop's authority after death? This section also draws upon the previous chapters, which showed the potency of leaders' deaths for the benefit of those under their care. Those earlier insights aid the analysis of these chapters, in order to see if those traditions are alluded to in depictions of bishop martyrs.

The conclusion highlights the individual chapters, focusing especially on the argument that Ignatius, Polycarp, and Pothinus are all memorialized as protectors from false teaching. This important finding is then developed further by exploring the connections of these three bishop martyrs to Irenaeus of Lyons, who uses the concept of episcopal succession from the apostles in order to argue against Gnostic claims to secret apostolic mysteries. Even after death, their authority remained – to be yielded by others in battles over doctrinal legitimacy.

Chapter 2

# Greek, Roman, and Jewish Leaders' Effective Deaths

## 2.1 Introduction

Although this monograph is ultimately concerned with second-century bishop martyrs, they were preceded by centuries of leaders whose deaths were memorialized for achieving special benefits for others – that is, for being effective deaths. These deaths were remembered as having removed sin, averted divine anger, cleansed impurities from a city, resisted tyranny, and brought benefit for fellow citizens. If we are to evaluate how the martyrdoms of early Christian bishops were understood, it may prove beneficial to first study prior leaders' sacrificial deaths and the models they might provide to later generations.

To that end, this chapter will explore a variety of noble deaths which featured the death of a leader or nobleperson, in order to see how these deaths were memorialized. These deaths cover a broad spectrum of time and place, from the nineteenth century BCE to the second century CE, and from Mesopotamia to Rome. We will study the *devotio* ritual of the Roman military, in which a general is consecrated during battle and sacrifices himself to turn the tides of war; mythic and historical examples of the Greek φαρμακός (scapegoat) ritual, in which a nobleperson (or a poor person imitating a nobleperson) sacrifices him- or herself to avert famine, plague, or war from the city; philosophers executed by tyrannical emperors for refusing to compromise their ethics and traditional republican views; Alexandrian gymnasiarchs remembered as heroes of their homeland after their own imperial executions; and several martyrs from 2 and 4 Maccabees who served as *exempla* of faithfulness to Torah to their contemporaries as well as later readers. These examples of how leaders' deaths were memorialized in the Mediterranean and Ancient Near East will provide grounding for the subsequent study of bishop martyrs.

## 2.2 The Roman *Devotio* Ritual

The Latin term *devotio* does not refer to a single ancient rite of the Roman people, but came to represent several different rituals or practices at different times. Underlying the term at all points, however, is the concept of sacrifice.

According to Hendrik Versnel, in the Republican period there were two kinds of *devotio*, both of which occurred at the battlefield: *devotio hostium* and *devotio ducis*.[1] In the case of *devotio hostium*, a Roman general would vow the enemy land and people to the gods of the underworld in exchange for the safety of the Roman army. This was necessary because there needed to be a substitute to attract the harm that formerly would have come upon the Roman army.[2] Versnel suggests that the vow would be fulfilled by destroying the land and killing the enemy, although he points to the example of Carthage, where the populace was taken captive and forced into slavery, to suggest that the necessity of a large-scale slaughter eventually subsided in favor of representative executions.[3] As such a destructive vow could be an act of sacrilege against the gods who inhabited the land about to be leveled, the *devotio* was preceded by an *evocatio* rite, in which the local deities were invited to abandon their current locality in favor of Rome.[4] Several enemy cities are known to have suffered a *devotio hostium*, including Veii and Carthage.[5] Macrobius, the fifth century CE author of the *Saturnalia*, records formulae for both the *evocatio* and *devotio* rite.[6]

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[1] Hendrik S. Versnel, "Two Types of Roman *Devotio*," *Mnemosyne* 29 (1976): 365–410. It should be noted, however, that ancient terminology does not break down *devotio* into such sub-types, as the same term encompassed a variety of meanings. See pp. 369–75 for an exploration of the difficulty with defining the term *devotio*. See also the lexical explorations of L. F. Janssen, "Some Unexplored Aspects of *Devotio Deciana*," *Mnemosyne* 34 (1981): 357–81.

[2] Versnel, "Two Types," 388–95.

[3] Ibid., 383–84.

[4] Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 3.9.2. See Versnel, "Two Types," 380–82.

[5] Veii was destroyed in 396 BCE; Carthage in 146. For references to the *devotiones* that occurred in these battles, see Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 3.9, which mentions other cities as well. See Livy 5.21, which does not use the word *devotio* for Veii, but in its narration describes closely the sequence outlined by Versnel; see also Plutarch, *Cam.* 5–6, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 13.3. For Carthage, Susan Stevens pulls together an impressive list of texts that suggest that the city was subsequently "under religious taboo." See Susan T. Stevens, "A Legend of the Destruction of Carthage," *CP* 83 (1988): 39–41. For further references to the destruction of Carthage, see Ronald T. Ridley, "To Be Taken With a Pinch of Salt: The Destruction of Carthage," *CP* 81 (1986): 140–46. Corinth is also sometimes cited as a victim of *devotio* (occurring as it does in Macrobius's list alongside Veii, Carthage, and the rest), but scholarship has more recently called this into question. See, for example, Sarah A. James, "The Last of the Corinthians? Society and Settlement from 146 to 44 BCE," in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, ed. Steven J. Friesen,

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