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P.Oxy. 1.5 and the *Codex Sangermanensis* as "visionary living texts": visionary *habitus* and processes of "textualization" and/or "scripturalization" in Late Antiquity

Abstract: This paper aims at analyzing two cases of individual scribal interventions on visionary texts of late antiquity: the Papyrus from Oxhyrhynchus n. 5 (3rd–4th century CE), a text containing a passage from Hermas' *Mand*. 11.9—10, and a manuscript of *IV Ezra*, the so-called Sangermanensis Codex (9th century CE). Both the cases reveal figures of entrepreneurs (the scribe? or the customer?) engaged in related typologies of individual acquisition/intervention, appropriation, modification, and transposition. Both the analyzed manuscripts reveal cases of re-formulation connected to a specific late-antique "religious" habitus, i.e. the visionary habitus, a cognitive and socio-cultural pattern from which processes of re-proposition and re-contextualization of previous authoritative accounts in and for specific environments seem to stem.

1 Introduction

The texts normally classified as "apocalyptic"[1] by scholars provide evidence for a close correlation between accessing the supernatural and textuality (see Güttgemanns 1987, 19–27; Rüpke 2014, 65–66). Certainly based on authoritative models, textuality is here conceived as a sign of the process of composition and transmission of visionary accounts as actual "living texts".[2] Textuality allows us to

1 In this paper, I take into account a wide definition of "apocalyptic text", which transcends a literary genre distinction. My evaluation is purely functional, hence I am classifying as apocalyptic every text which focuses on the "seeing" of particular individuals who describe events of contact with the other-world in first person. In my evaluation, "apocalyptic" is a synonym of "account of a mediatory experience," and it stands apart from the particular theological content that this revelation intends to convey.

2 Parker 1997 has utilized the concept of living text as a necessary antidote against the desire for a single "original" text of the "New Testament", stemming from the churches' need for an authoritative, and consequently fixed text, and from the scholars' need for a sure foundation for their theories (see especially 209). The concept of living text, as a result of the New Testament scholarly debate, takes into account the fact that for ancient texts, at least at the earliest stages, there are several texts, in an uncertain relation to each other and to the various media of

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face a complex world, where different media are associated and outline social and cultural stratifications: the supremacy of textual practice involves specialists who address both people who usually do not have literacy skills, who can only access the account by listening to it, and groups of "peers" who are capable to read, access and transmit the accounts themselves through its reading.[3] Textuality recalls a further aspect of the composition or the re-elaboration of visionary accounts, a difficult aspect of which only the final effects can be seen. What stands out is that apocalyptical texts often present themselves as veritable traditional mosaics. They appear as a set of re-used materials coming from different sources, a sort of construction comparable to numerous late-antique monuments and buildings (e.g. the

transmission (oral and/or written forms) from which they stem; these texts vary from one another far more than can be explained by any process of scribal miscopying. In my approach, the concept of "living text" is used as a means to understand the process of textualization (and/or formation) of visionary accounts. These writings are capable of triggering experiences of contact with the other-world by themselves and traces of this process are to be found in their multifaceted textual and linguistic transmissions. The concept of "textualization" focuses also on the dynamic system in which reading and writing, as well as re-writing and re-reading live together (see Cavallo 2016; Grafton and Most 2016). On social dynamics connected to the processes of textualization and/or "scripturalization" in Late Antiquity, see the recent works by Mroczek 2016 and Stroumsa 2016.

3 This interaction between textuality and transmission in socially varied backgrounds seems to be evident in some scenes described in apocalyptic texts. In *4 Ezra*, the visionary tells a supernatural being, almost certainly YHWH himself, that he is endowed with the holy spirit so that he can write "all that has been in the world since the beginning" (14.22; English translation in Henze and Stone 2013, 79), an allusion to what he is about to know through direct contact with the supernatural. The supernatural being asks the mediator to gather a lot of tablets to write on and says that, once the revelation will be completed, some things will be made public and some others will be kept secret for the wise (14.26). In *2 Enoch*, a particularly difficult text to locate in space and time, the testamentary discourse emerges as a means to clarify the transmission and the reception of the visionary account. In 47.1–2 the dimension of listening is clearly highlighted, but then in 48.5–8 we find again the theme of the transmission and the distribution of the "book" (see Andersen 1983, 174). In John's *Revelation* there are many references to the act of writing, or to the book, or roll (for instance, see 10.4; 14.13; 19.9); however, what acquires a main role is the necessity to preserve in written word and spread what the mediator experienced. In the letters sent directly to the seven *ekklesiai* in Asia Minor (*Revelation* 2–3), the presence of elements connected to the writings and their diffusion justifies the presence of the letters as an integral part of the visionary accounts. However, in the preface, the revelation/prophecy is announced as something to be read and listened to at the same time (see *Rev*. 1.3). The mediator himself, whom we know as John, is invited to write what he sees in a book (see 1.11). The admonishment is made again at the end of the introduction, before the letter is sent to the *ekklesia* of Ephesus. Here a figure similar to a "son of man" invites John to "write [. . .] the things that you saw, and the things that are, and the things that are to take place after these" (1.19; transl. by Lupieri 2006, 49), with an evident reference to the content of the account as a whole.

Arch of Constantine). In the light of the close correlation between orality and writing (as an actual process of "textualization"), apocalyptic texts appear as the final result of a complex process in which, after having had peculiar experiences of contact with the other-world, a mediator employs the memory patterns he found in his traditional context to verbalize and confer authority upon his own life experience. "Living visionary text" and "textualization" are terms meant to highlight this continuous process of use and adaptation of social contexts in which orality lives together with other media and elitist communicative forms, mostly connected to layered groups that include specialized as well as specializing conveyors of knowledge.

The relationship between visionary experience, textualization and production of living visionary texts within the varied late-antique backgrounds, highlights, in my opinion, a fundamental aspect of what I call "visionary" *habitus* (I will clarify the sense of this terminology in the conclusion of the paper). Likewise, it allows us to consider the circulation of the apocalyptic and/or visionary accounts in different social-cultural contexts. Both these elements are very often linked to a process of "re-actualization" of experiences by specific readers, who perceive themselves as directly affected by particular texts. Visionary texts therefore become objects of appropriation, rearrangement, transposition, translation and, more generally, of re-adaptation. The study of papyri and of the single manuscripts acquires a particular relevance in this respect. With this paper, I refer in particular to distinct forms of using and re-using specific visionary accounts as they emerge from two particular textual artifacts. These materials show *in itinere* the action of individuals who, working within various technical environments (such as the scribal one), carry out practices of manipulation of actual "living texts".

In the majoritarian scholarly debate on processes of transmission and re-uses of ancient texts in new historical contexts, concepts as "interpretation", "exegesis", "symbolism", "metaphor", "allegory" assume a pivotal role (for example, see Norton 2013 and Teeter 2014). In this essay, I will consider the multifaceted processes of transmission of texts in the theoretical framework of "relevance theory" (RT) of Deidre Wilson and Dan Sperber (see Sperber and Wilson 1995; 2004; 2012).[4] Against semiotic understandings of communication and/or interpretation, in which a speaker's/text's thoughts are duplicated in the mind of the hearer and/or the reader, RT holds that communication involves the modification of the cognitive environment of the recipient. This theory is a

4 This theory has been further developed by Carston 2002. Some years ago, Ernst-August Gutt applied RT to biblical texts as part of his endorsement of RT as a stand-alone translation theory (see Gutt 2000), and in recent years scholars such as Gene L. Green have strongly advocated the adoption of RT for "biblical" studies (Green 2009; 2012). For the application of RT theory to New Testament studies, see Lappenga 2015.

consequence of the advent of cognitive pragmatics, specifically of the relevance-theoretic approach, which has brought a rather different orientation: pragmatics is a "capacity of the mind, a kind of information-processing system, a system for interpreting a particular phenomenon in the world, namely human communicative behavior" (Carston 2002, 128–129).

Language is a code, but it is only part of the intended communication, which the hearer or the reader must infer based on a wide range of "implicatures" or "explicatures". Since a speaker's meaning is linguistically underdetermined, the fundamental insight of RT is that "[h]uman cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance" (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 260). Human cognition, and therefore interpretive processes, occur as a balance between minimal processing effort and maximum cognitive effect. There are two extent conditions, the first is that an assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that the positive cognitive effects achieved when it is optimally processed are large; the second is that an assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that the effort required to achieve these positive cognitive effects is small (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 265). Within this framework, Sperber and Wilson argue convincingly that very little of a communicator's conceptual repertoire is lexicalized (see also Sperber and Wilson 1998, 185). As Benjamin J. Lappenga has brilliantly summarized, "Pragmatic enrichment of encoded meaning (semantics) takes place at every level, so that what is expressed by an utterance (the 'truth-conditional proposition') cannot be obtained by semantic means alone. This is known as 'semantic underdeterminacy' and has received wide acceptance from advocates of RT" (Lappenga 2015, 42). RT theory claims that, given the phenomenon of semantic underdeterminacy, concept construction is *ad hoc*. That is, "[w]ords uttered in a particular context provide access to concept schemas but, in any and every particular utterance, the concepts themselves shift and morph" (Green 2012, 321). This includes the narrowing or broadening of concepts, as well as category extension (metaphors). So in a given context, the hearer or reader is constantly creating meaning, down to the level of the very words themselves. Carston has further stated that the term *ad hoc* concept "is used to refer to concepts that are constructed pragmatically by a hearer in the process of utterance comprehension. [. . .] The description of such concepts as 'ad hoc' reflects the fact that they are not linguistically given, but are constructed online (on the fly) in response to specific expectations of relevance raised in specific contexts" (Carston 2002, 322).

According to such a theoretic framework, what previous scholars have meant with terms like "interpretation", "exegesis", "symbolism", "metaphor", and "allegory" consist in a pragmatic process of searches in memory in order to find a relevant place for new information in the preexisting database, not of finding a meaning. Interpretation is best viewed as a cognitive mechanism that participate

in the construction of knowledge as well as in the functioning of memory (Sperber 1978, xi–xii and 146–147). As Ilkka Pyysiäinen has summarized (2014, 21–22), interpretation has two aspects: a displacement of attention (focalization) and a search in memory (evocation). In focalization, attention shifts from the new information in question to the unfulfilled conceptual conceptions. In evocation, the new information is reviewed and tested against the information in one's long-term memory. When the invocation of relevant background information fails, evocation begins. It is this evocation that is substituted for "meaning" in RT model: the "meaning" of a symbol (i.e. a text) is the same as its evocative processing. Thus, for example, the "exegetical" meaning of an authoritative text consists of an individual (and/or collective) evocative search that an agent undertakes for a relevant place in memory for this piece of information. The interpretive mechanisms create their own pathways in memory, and this process may become endless. "Religious representations, for example, are never given a final definition; the symbolic exegesis rather is an endless process" (Pyysiäinen 2014, 22; see also Sperber 1978, 119–123, 141–145).

In the first part of this paper I will discuss the process of circulation of visionary narratives as living scriptures. In the following section, I refer to two visionary manuscripts as illustrations of RT model: the first transmits a passage from Hermas' *Mandate* 11.9–10 included in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, i.e. the Papyrus from Oxyrhynchus n. 1.5, and the second contains the complete Latin text of *4 Ezra*, i.e. the *Codex Sangermanensis*. Both are considered as examples of the circulation process of living visionary scriptures as well as products of interpretive process as carried out by Sperber and Wilson. In the conclusion of the essay, I discuss whether Jewish and proto-Christian visionary accounts, in their *longue durée* of transmission, can be read as evidence of a late-antique visionary *habitus*.

2 Visionary living scriptures and forms of "critical spatiality" adapting visionary accounts in and for new contexts

In a very intriguing paper, A.K. Harkins argues that "The rhetorical use of embodiment language, through the construction of spatial realms and the generation of subjectivity (including phenomenal bodies and affect), can create a religious experience for the reader who seeks to re-enact the text" (Harkins 2012, 223). Harkins refers to the critical classification of spatiality articulated into "first, second and third" spaces (see Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996; see also Schofield 2012). These are understood as elaborate ways in which language about space and physical experience can facilitate a reader's re-enactment of a text. According to Harkins'

analysis, while "first space" refers to the bodily experience of space as it is perceived empirically, "second space" hints at the religiously "fabricated" geography, like that found in prayers and authoritative narrations. "Third space" is the realm "where transformation is possible and power is reconfigured" (Harkins 2012, 226). This refers not only to a site of resistance, where alternative realities are produced, but also to a locus of simultaneity: a sort of counteraction to the position occupied by a reflected figure, like in mirror images. "Third space" as heterotopia, according to Foucault's terminology (Foucault 1986, 24), makes the space occupied by a person at the same time real and unreal. In this sense, "third space" experiences are liminal spaces "that are real world experiences and so have real world consequences, but they allow for full participation in other worlds" (Harkins 2012, 227).

Such a critical theory has important consequences for the study of the *Nachleben* of apocalyptic and/or visionary narrations. The process of textualization of a visionary account, as well as its fixation in the writing medium, imply the use of forms and methodologies based on such a medium. This necessarily considers the on-going re-uses and re-formulations of these narrations by groups and/or individuals that transmit them in and for new experiences of re-visualization. In Foucauldian heterotopic terms, visionary texts function as "a physical portal to a world constructed by the religious imagination," producing heterotopic experiences of re-enacting that have the potential "to transform a reader into a full participant in the religious event" (Harkins 2012, 228).

This process is represented in some ancient texts connected with visionary experiences, and two examples can be given to illustrate it.[5] *1 Enoch* 104.10–11, according to Nickelsburg's interpretation (Nickelsburg 2001, 534), speaks about people who "copy", or simply attach their own names to a pre-existent literary composition, probably alluding to authors who claim a pseudepigraphical authority for specific writings. This text offers a glimpse of the impact of textualization on the transmission of a particular visionary experience based on "Enochic" streams of transmission. The visionary, in this case, seems to counter possible uncontrolled forms of textualization of his account, but, in so doing, she/he[6] casts light on the

5 The case lamented by both these texts finds a clearer illustration if we look at the complex history of their textual transmission. For *1 Enoch*, see Nickelsburg 2001, 12–21; for the process of textualization (or re-textualization?) of *Revelation*, as it emerges especially from P^{47}, see Royse 2007, 359–398. On the legacy of Jewish apocalyptic writings in early Christianity in a "regional" perspective, see Frankfurter 1996.

6 As remarked by P. van Minnen, "This is not merely deference to feminism" (van Minnen 2003, 19). The only documentary attestation of a Greek reading public for apocalyptic texts in Egypt happens to relate to a woman: P.Oxy. 63.4365 is a 4th-century letter in which the writer asks a woman to lend him/her a copy of *4 Ezra* in exchange for a copy of the *Book of Jubilees*. On this text see Hagedom 1997.

possibilities which are connected to this process, possibly alluding to on-going reuses and re-formulations by groups and/or individuals that transmit these narrations in and for new contexts.

The conclusion of *Revelation* highlights the importance of writing itself as an element capable to define a main aspect of a visionary account. John is the one to have seen and listened to the other-world; at the end of the experience, he would like to bow down to the feet of the angel who has shown him everything, but he does not let him do it. Instead, he says: "I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brothers the prophets, and of those who keep *(syndoulos)* the words of this scroll *(bibliou)*" (22.9; transl. by Lupieri 2006, 95). The angel also recommends not to "seal closed the words of the prophecy in this scroll, for the moment is near" (22.10; transl. by Lupieri 2006, 95). In the last exchanges, the angel reminds the prophet of the fact that he can witness the words of the account himself (called more often "prophecy", but also "revelation", intended as synonyms: see *Rev*. 1.1–3): "if someone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues, those written in this scroll" (22.18; transl. by Lupieri 2006, 95). Equally, he goes on: "if someone takes away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take away his share from the wood/tree of life and from the holy city, that is, the things written in this scroll" (22.19; transl. by Lupieri 2006, 95). Despite the prohibition and the associated anathema, the reference to the possible modification of the content of the *Revelation* alludes to a mechanism which may have been quite frequent, for this type of material. The text also informs us that John intends to contrast the practice of modifying and/or re-adapting the experience of contact of the mediator with the other-world.

Both the mentioned texts can be interpreted in light of processes of rereading and re-functionalization as evident characteristics of visionary writings. They convey visionary accounts and contribute to the definition of the processes of textualization which are linked to actual *living scriptures*.

3 Late-antique visionary manuscripts as living texts: P.Oxy. 1.5 and the *Codex Sangermanensis*

The on-going interdisciplinary debate on ancient literary manuscripts as artifacts and individual texts, and the methodical reflections on reconstructions of fragmentary papyri and a systematization of manuscripts labeled as "amulets"

and/or "sacred" texts (see Bremmer 2015) have at least one thing in common: they support critical research on ancient texts as material objects for a contextual study of ancient practices and experiences. In the earliest centuries of Christianity, scribes living throughout the Mediterranean world were entrusted with the task of copying and re-adapting documents that were, or would become, generators of authority. The subject here does not only concern some of the artifacts that these scribes created, but also their forms of religious communication, giving prominence to the individual as a meaningful actor who emphasizes *his* religious options.[7]

My approach starts from the necessity to allow for permeable boundaries between Jewish, Greek, and Roman scribal enterprises.[8] After all, what we call Christianity inherited its text-centric religious practices from Jewish textual practices, no matter how tenuous the relationship became in later centuries. Furthermore, developments in Jewish scribal approaches toward religious texts during the process of canonization of the Hebrew Bible interacted with the larger Greek-speaking world, in Alexandria as well as in the entire Roman Empire. This is why some Jewish scribes spoke Greek and inherited Greek writing practices, while some Greek-speaking Christian scribes and scholars were aware of Jewish scholarship and could read Hebrew texts.

Concerning visionary texts, textual practices documented in fragments and translations, as well as in quotations and transcriptions, confirm the idea that the written form "is not primarily a medium of dissemination aimed at broadcasting or 'publishing' thoughts, but a medium for the intensification of complexity" (Rüpke 2014, 157). Written visionary accounts, according to Jörg Rüpke, have "a systematizing function, providing further levels of detail and helping to establish intellectual consistency, thus serving to conclude rather than initiate a communication process" (Rüpke 2014, 157). Therefore, the use of the written medium explains also the survival of these texts in various translations and *recensiones*, as well as their dissemination in religious circles with different aims and worldviews.

7 On the materiality of communication, see Rüpke 2014, 153–168 (and the bibliography quoted there). On the scribal *habitus* in the transmission of the texts later on included in the "New Testament" see Ehrman 1996; Hernández 2006; Hurtado 2006; Royse 2007.

8 On this topic, see Bremmer 2014, esp. 353: "In the Hellenized world of the Near East after Alexander the Great there was a coming together of all kinds of traditions that often can be separated only artificially."

3.1 P.Oxy. 1.5: the Shepherd of Hermas and its "prophetic" specialization

This small papyrus (12.0 x 11.4 cm) originates from a 3rd or 4th century codex that contains, on the recto, 16 lines of a Christian text that quotes a few lines of the *Mandates* from the *Shepherd of Hermas* (the text on the verso is not all legible). Found during the first year of excavation in Oxyrhynchus, this papyrus was originally published in the first volume of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (Grenfell and Hunt 1898, 8–9 n. 5). The fragment initially generated some interest in Adolf von Harnack, who thought it was written at the end of the 2nd century by Melito of Sardis (d. c. 180; see Harnack 1898). In an essay published almost a century later, Henning Paulsen has rightly questioned Melito's authorship and Harnack's main idea that the papyrus represents a text originating from disputes with Montanists (see Paulsen 1979).

In the first lines that are available to us, the papyrus quotes a brief text from the eleventh *Mandate* of the *Shepherd of Hermas*. The lines of the papyrus, as reconstructed in contemporary scholarship in comparison with the critical edition of *Herm*. 43.9–10, read as follows:

Herm. 43.9–10 = Simonetti 2015, 328	P.Oxy. 1.5, ll. 1–9 = Blumell, Wayment 2015, 334
τότε ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ προφητικοῦ ὁ κείμενος ἐπ' αὐτῷ πληροῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ πλησθεὶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ λαλεῖ εἰς τὸ πλῆθος καθὼς ὁ κύριος βούλεται. οὕτως οὖν φανερὸν ἔσται τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς θεότητος.	[. . .] [ὁ ἄγελ-] λος τοῦ πν(εύματο)ς τοῦ προφητ[ι-] κοῦ ὁ κείμενος ἐπ' αὐτῷ π[..] . [ ] . ν, καὶ πλησθεὶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ- νος τῷ πν(εύματ)ι τῷ ἁγίῳ λα- λεῖ καθὼς ὁ κ(ύριο)ς βούλεται, οὕτως φανερὸν ἔστε τὸ πν(εῦμ)α τῆς θεότητος.
[. . .] then the angel of the prophetic Spirit, who is destined for him, fills the man; and the man being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the multitude as the Lord wishes. Thus, then, will the Spirit of Divinity become manifest.	[. . .] [the an-] gel of the prophetic Sp(iri)t who is destined for him f[..] . [ ] . n, and the man being filled with the Holy Sp(iri)t speaks as the Lord wishes, thus the Spirit of Divinity will become manifest.

However, in the following lines, after the phrase *houtōs phaneron este to pneuma tēs theotētos*, the papyrus continues with an unattested portion of text, thus including it in the known narration of the *Shepherd*.

Herm. 43.10 = Simonetti 2015, 328	P.Oxy. 1.5, ll. 8–16 = Blumell, Wayment 2015, 334
[. . .] **οὖν φανερὸν ἔσται τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς θεότητος**. ὅση οὖν περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς θεότητος τοῦ κυρίου ἡ δύναμις, [. . .].	[. . .] **οὕτως φανερὸν ἔστε τὸ πν(εῦμ)α τῆς θεότητος**. τὸ γὰρ προφητικὸν πν(εῦμ)α τὸ σω- μάτειόν ἐστιν τῆς προ- φητικῆς τάξεως, ὅ ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τῆς σαρκὸς Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ τὸ μιγὲν τῇ ἀνθρωπότη- τι διὰ Μαρίας.
[. . .] **Thus, then, will the Spirit of Divinity become manifest**. Whatever power therefore comes from the Spirit of Divinity, [. . .].	[. . .] **Thus, then, the Spirit of Divinity will become manifest**. For the prophetic Spirit is the corporate body of the prophetic order, which is the body of the flesh of J(esu)s Christ which was mingled with human nature through Mary.

In his essay, Paulsen has raised the question of whether inquiring into the history of the reception of the *Shepherd* would shed further light on the origins of this papyrus (see Paulsen 1979). There is enough evidence to suggest that the papyrus has incorporated a sort of "commentary" centered on specific practices of contact with the other-world, as it emerges from the use of a typical explicative technique *(to gar)*.[9] The interpretive work carried out by the papyrus aims to appropriate, transpose and reshape the episode of the eleventh *Mandate* of the *Shepherd* concerning the man who, coming into the assembly of righteous

9 On the use of *gar* as a typical exegetical instrument in the commentary attested by the Derveni Papyrus, especially after a quotation of a passage from the commented hymn, see *Papyrus of Derveni* 10.1; 3; 13.2; 18.13 (according to the new edition by A. Bernabé and V. Piano).

men, is touched by the angel of the prophetic spirit and, according to the Lord's will, starts to speak to the multitude. When the reconstructed text of the *Shepherd* describes the way the Spirit of the deity becomes manifest, at this point the scribe of the papyrus inserts his new section, employing a vocabulary that is similar to other proto-Christian texts (see especially *Didache* 11 and *Ascension of Isaiah* 6).

Starting from a comparison with the reconstructed "original" text of the eleventh *Mandate* of the *Shepherd*, P.Oxy. 1.5 essentially shows two techniques of reproduction: interpolation and modification. The first aims at offering a claim of self-representation in the process of reception of the *Shepherd*. Hence, the vocabulary associated with practices of contact with the supernatural is quite revealing: *to sōmateion* and *profētikē taxis*, a terminology that may imply an institutionalized prophetic order. *Sōmateion* seems to allude to the particular collective self-definition of the religious agent who is behind the fragment, clearly based on the word-play *sōmateion* > *sōma* – in fact, a similar self-definition on the basis of the association with the body of Christ is attested in Paul (see *1 Corinthians* 12.12–27).[10] With the phrase *profētikē taxis*, the technical terminology of ordering assumes a prominent role. The text of the *Shepherd* opens to the explicit self-representative reference to the reader of the text, offering to him/her the possibility to find an actual place in the space of the text. Although there is no evidence of the actual social composition of the text's user(s), its explicit mention in a collective dimension, or somehow connected to a collective dimension, in a visionary discursive space assumes a clear performative role in and for a new religious context. This seems to be confirmed by the final legible lines of P.Oxy. 1.5, where we find, according to Paulsen's reconstruction, the noun *diadochē*, perhaps an allusion to the "prophetic" succession (Paulsen 1979, 446).[11] It is hard to determine whether this *diadochē* concerns a theological reflection in the light of the authoritative traditions on the prophetic succession, or both the user and her/his successors' prophetic identities considered within their in-group discursive dimensions (see Norelli 1994, 243).

The second technique of intervention attested in P.Oxy. 1.5 is that of modification. In transmitting the phrase *ton anthrōpon kai plēstheis ho anthrōpos*

10 Like other ancient philosophical writers, Paul employs the image of the body to challenge the anti-group behavior of some of his readers. The image of the body provides the vehicle for reinforcing a sense of unity in a variegated group entity, and in so doing he shares the common concept of the body at work in the Greco-Roman philosophical universe: see Martin 1999, xiii.

11 This reconstruction is accepted by Norelli 1994, 242–243. In the recent edition by Blumell and Wayment 2015, 334 we found *de doxēi (d)e(k)tikon estin* ("That the glory is acceptable . . . ").

ekeinos tōi pneumati tōi agiōi lalei eis to plēthos kathōs ho kyrios bouletai, P. Oxy. 1.5 seems to omit *to plēthos* perhaps because the author intentionally wants to restrict the practice of contact with the supernatural to the activity of a mediator who speaks to equal mediators rather than to a multitude. This specialization of the visionary agency in a "Christian" sense implies a form of institutionalization of Christian groups that fosters a separation of roles and ritual activities as a self-definition strategy and builds this on a continuous process of re-appropriation and re-functionalization of authoritative past traditions. Thus P.Oxy. 1.5 seems to keep the meaning of the eleventh *Mandate* of the *Shepherd* restricted to the dimension of an in-group prophetic discourse, and in so doing it considers the reread text as a kind of generator for this "new" prophetic self-definition. Both the above-mentioned interventions on the text of the *Shepherd* may refer to "specialized" dimension of mediatory practices and their being "structured" in an institutional complexity that is parallel to other institutionalizing attempts in organizing in-group and out-group activities.

On this point, I will shortly go back to an element already referred *en passant*, that is the interpretive character of the intervention attested in P.Oxy. 1.5.[12] It is well-known that in polymorphic late-antique interpretive techniques and textual re-productions, even though the ancients did distinguish between different types of texts (as we also do, at least from a formal point of view), boundaries between different types of interventions and genres of interpretation of a pre-existent text were easily crossed (on what follows, see Schironi 2012). In this complex textual (and communicative) world, the genre of the commentary was generally supposed to follow a text line by line. Since in the ancient era there was no line- or paragraph-enumeration, the only way to indicate which lines were commented upon was to repeat those lines, either in full or by the incipit. The fragmentary status of P.Oxy. 1.5 does not allow us to evaluate the modalities of intervention as a whole, nor can it reveal whether there were other forms of insertion like those attested to in the preserved lines. An important element that we found in the text is the presence of the stock formula *to gar*, by which the

12 As D. Batovici has suggested in a private conversation, since what in P.Oxy. 1.5 precedes the quotation is now lost, it is unclear whether this was signaled as a quotation from the *Shepherd*, or as a quotation from an unnamed text. Whether this was incorporated in such a manner that it would have looked like an undifferentiated part of the new text, is also not explicit. However, what clearly emerges from our fragment is a typical exegetical (cognitive) attitude: the adversative *to gar* in l. 9 immediately after the text from the *Shepherd* does indicate that a content of a different nature follows, whereas the sentence that starts with it reads as an explanation of, or expansion upon, the description from the eleventh *Mandate*. Thanks are due to Dan Batovici for his re-reading of paragraph 3.1 of this chapter.

explanation after the quoted text is introduced. This introductory formula leads to the interpretive digression concerning the *pneuma tēs theotētos* mentioned in the previous line; this aims at highlighting that Hermas's words hint at something not directly said. F. Schironi has recently observed that modern scholars often have distinguished between "internal" allegory (when the text is conceived as an allegory by its own author) and "external" allegory (when the text is interpreted allegorically by a commentator independently from the real intention of its author. See Schironi 2012, 438–439). Most of the ancient commentators did not make such a distinction: many ancient commentators "firmly believed that their authors had 'hidden' some deeper meaning into the text and that their duty was to reveal those meanings to the ignorant reader" (Schironi 2012, 435). The modality of intervention attested in P.Oxy. 1.5 seems to be in line with the one applied on ancient "technical" or "scientific" texts, where the commentator considers himself as a later "colleague" of the original, allowing himself relatively more freedom with rereading and commenting upon the text (Schironi 2012, 438–439). The agent who is behind P.Oxy. 1.5 seems to claim a kind of specialization in his interpretive intervention on the eleventh *Mandate* of the *Shepherd*, bearing witness to the particular time when the role of the contact with the other-world had presumably assumed a technical *allure*, in line with the particular institutionalization processes of the Christian churches between the 3rd and the 4th century CE.

The *Shepherd* of Hermas occupies a unique place in the literature of the first Christians (see Bagnall 2009, 41–49). Although the *Shepherd* ultimately was not enclosed in the Christian canon, at least his inclusion in the *Codex Sinaiticus*, as well as its mention in the Muratorian Canon, shows that it was considered in some circles as worthy of inclusion within the authoritative scriptures. Carlini, on the basis of a papyrological analysis, has stressed the less fixed nature of the text of the *Shepherd* in its transmission, if compared to other proto-Christian texts; in this regard, it is significant that 4 of the 23 surviving witnesses are rolls (see Carlini 1987; 2002; see also the assessment by Choat and Yuen-Collingridge 2010). In Carlini's analysis, there was a high level of variability or of polymorphism in the first circulated texts of the *Shepherd*, considering also the separate diffusion in Egypt of the first four visions on the one hand, and of the rest of the book, starting with vision 5, on the other hand.[13]

13 Recently, Batovici 2016 has tried to reassess the validity of the argument according to which in the Egyptian transmission of the *Shepherd*, the first four visions have circulated separately from the rest of the book, also showing that four fragments (P.Oxy. 15.1783 and 15.1828, P.Amh. 2.190, P.Berol. inv. 6789), sometimes thought to be of two manuscripts, do not belong together. On the topics connected with Batovici's discussion, I share the view expressed by Bagnall 2009, 48: "There is obviously no reason, moreover, why separate editions of the two

This is entirely consistent with the transmission and the diffusion of the visionary accounts in Late Antiquity: texts for which, very often, neither the fundamental structure of the book nor the details of its textualization were stably unified. Visionary accounts become thus more and more protean texts, and although this depends in many cases on the private dissemination of these texts, this does not necessarily mean that their transmission was always unauthorized (this is Carlini's hypothesis: see discussion in Bagnall 2009, 45). Authorization and private circulation are not in contradictory terms, if we keep in mind the malleability implied in practices of textualization, as well as the processes of reproduction/re-functionalization of textual media and the related forms of their "usability" (Rüpke 2014, 161). P.Oxy 1.5, a testimony so far rather overlooked in the scholarly debate, emerges as a crucial text for the subject under examination.

3.2 4 Ezra in the Codex Sangermanensis: from the visionary text to the "theological" treatise

According to the majority of the manuscripts of the Latin version of *4 Ezra*,[14] the transition from the thirty-fifth to the thirty-sixth verse of the seventh chapter must strike even a superficial reader as singularly abrupt; the "lack" of an entire section of *4 Ezra* is confirmed by the text transmitted by the "Oriental" versions, as well as by other Latin manuscripts, where we find a long digression on the course of the

halves of the *Shepherd* cannot have continued to circulate after the omnibus edition became available, just as the establishment of the canon of the New Testament did not produce the disappearance of codices with a single book in favour of complete Bibles."

14 The major Latin manuscripts of *4 Ezra* are the following: the *Codex Sangermanensis*, 822 CE; the *Codex Ambianensis*, 9th cent. CE; the *Codex Complutensis*, 9th–10th cent. CE (Visigothic hand); the *Codex Mazarinaeus*, 11th cent. CE. According to the majority of scholars, the *Sangermanensis* seems to be the ancestor of the vast majority of the extant manuscripts: see Metzger 1983, 518; however, on this aspect, Bergren 1996, 114 has correctly underlined: "Since every manuscript lacking the 'missing fragment' must have descended, directly or indirectly, from S[angermanensis], none of these manuscripts is of independent value in the textual criticism of 4 Ezra." Many manuscripts (Bergren lists eight manuscripts) contain the missing section, and four fragmentary ones are early enough to escape suspicion. The types of text of *4 Ezra* in these and other Latin manuscripts fall into two main families: the French group (represented by *Sangermanensis* and *Ambianensis*) and the Spanish group (represented by *Complutensis* and *Mazarinaeus*); in general, the French family is considered as the more accurate. For a convenient list of Latin manuscripts of *4 Ezra*, see Gry 1938, xi-xiii.

final judgment (7.36–105).[15] The *Codex Sangermanensis*, a manuscript dated to 822 CE, formerly in the Library of the Benedictine Abbey of S. Germain-des-Prés at Paris and now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, number 11505 Fonds Latin, seems to be the oldest known copy of the Latin version of *4 Ezra* where 7.36–105 is expunged.[16] This long passage in Latin came to our knowledge thanks to R.L. Bensly's discovery (in 1875) of the *excerptum* in a 9th century manuscript, which was then in the possession of the communal library of Amiens.[17] Since the expunged passage contains an emphatic denial of the value of prayers for the dead (in 7.105), it is probable that the excision was made for dogmatic reasons.

Before the Reformation, the authority of *4 Ezra* had not been particularly disputed in the Roman Empire as well as in the processes of formation of the new national ("barbaric") states.[18] In the *Vulgata* manuscripts, *4 Ezra*, usually placed between *Nehemiah* and *Tobit*, appears among inspired writings of more or less uncontested authority. As we shall see, the opinions of the "Church Fathers" are divided on this issue yet many of them seem to accept the text and quote it as an authoritative source. Clement of Alexandria cites *4 Ezra* 5.35 verbatim with the formula "The Prophet Ezra says" (*Stromata* 3.16), and Ambrose often uses and quotes the apocalypse (see e.g. *De spiritu sancto* 2.6; *De excessu Satyri* 1.2), as in *De bono mortis*, especially when he concludes: "And who indeed is first, Esdras or Plato? For Paul followed the words of Esdras, not those of Plato. Esdras revealed, according to the revelation bestowed on him, that the just would be with Christ and with the saints" (11.51; English translation in McHugh 1972, 107; for the Latin text, see *Patrologia Latina* 14:591). A less enthusiastic consideration is that expressed by Jerome, who considers *4 Ezra* as an

15 The passage is extant in Ethiopic, Arabic, and Syriac translations: see Bensly 1875, 2–3; Metzger 1983, 518–519; Bergren 1996, 107–113.

16 There is decisive evidence that the Latin version once contained the passage in Ambrose's treatise *De bono mortis*, a text where the missing portion is often quoted and commented. It is not by chance that the Benedictine editors of Ambrose's works were perplexed at references which they could not verify, and suggested that a solution might be found in the examination of new manuscripts (see Bensly 1875, 4). References to the section of *4 Ezra* under examination in the *De bono mortis* are the following: *4 Ezra* 7.32–35 / *De bono mortis* 10.45; 7.36 / 12.53; 7.80–87 / 10.47; 7.91–101 / 11.48; 14.9 / 11.50. For other Christian quotations of *4 Ezra*, see Bergren 1996, 114 (and the bibliography quoted there).

17 See Bensly 1875. However, see Bergren 1996, 114: "It should be noted, however, that in 1826, almost fifty years before Bensly's publication, J. Palmer discovered the complete version of [*4 Ezra*] in the Complutum manuscript [*sc.* the already mentioned *Complutense*] in the University Library in Alcalá de Heñares, Spain. The discovery was kept private until 1877."

18 On the reception of *4 Ezra* in late antiquity, see Hogan 2013; on the reception of the text from the 15th to the 18th century, see Hamilton 1999.

apocryphal book, for which he has no devotion. In his dispute with the Priscillianist Vigilantius, Jerome declares that he did not read the text: "As for you, when wide awake you are asleep, and asleep when you write, and you bring before me an apocryphal book which, under the name of Edras, is read by you and those of your father, and in this book it is written that after the death no one dares pray for others. I have never read the book *(sic!)*: for what need is there to take up what the Church does not receive?" (*Contra Vigilantium* 6; English translation in Schaff and Wace 1893, 419; for the Latin text, see *Patrologia Latina* 23:360). It seems that Jerome's refusal is presumably one of the causes for the expunction attested in the *Codex Sangermanensis*: the denial of the intercession for the dead, together with both the use and the transmission of the apocalypse by Priscillianist circles, have received Jerome's attention and his stigmatization of the "apocryphal" text.

Notwithstanding Jerome's condemnation of the book as "apocryphal", the entire *4 Ezra* is found in Vulgate and, consequently, in many medieval manuscripts (on Ambrose's role in the process of inclusion of *4 Ezra* in the Latin version of the Bible, see Hogan 2013). This presence, and the debates documented by the Church Fathers, inevitably meant a shift in the interpretation of the apocalypse, from a visionary account of a direct experience of contact with the other-world to a theological meditation. The latter is thought to be based on an actual relationship with the supernatural; it is focused on the disparity between God's promises to Israel and the people's current predicament, and on the injustice of Israel's punishment, granted that sin is an inevitable and universal human condition. In this context, the authority of the book appears as a very important element for its transmission. Nevertheless, the doubts expressed by Jerome, especially on the impossibility of the prayer for the dead, cannot be regarded as a negligible problem in monks' religious activity. Why such an ambiguity? Why was an authoritative text, transmitted as a canonical one, omitting an entire section for which exegesis (or symbolic activity) was, if I may say so, absolutely useless? With this omission, we can see two important aspects of the RT model of interpretation, that of the evocation (when an information is reviewed and tested against the information in one's long-term memory), as well as that of the "failure" of relevant background information (see Sperber 1978, 119–123). For the case of the *Sangermanensis*, at least after a certain point of the manuscript's existence, the monk/scribe is unable to create his own pathways in memory, and this is why he can do nothing other than put in place the "extreme" operation of the "cut".

The problem of the intercessory prayer does not belong to the theological disquisition only, at least under the Carolingian reign (which is when the *Codex Sangermanensis* was in use). A. Diem has argued that the transfer of this

intercessory power "from the holy man to a monastic institution" marks the beginning of a new monastic concept (Diem 2007, 557). Through this process, as M. Dunn has shown, the function of intercession became the pre-eminent feature of early medieval monasticism, which emerges as a type of monasticism ("intercessory monasticism") distinctive to the West (Dunn 2000, 98 and 106). The transformation "received its final shape in the Carolingian monastic reforms" (Diem 2007, 522), when councils held during the reign of Charlemagne consistently declaring the duty of monastic communities to perform masses and psalms for the kingdom and the church. The fact that early medieval monasteries functioned in this fashion has encouraged scholarly attention along two particular areas of interest: gift giving and liturgical ritual (see Choy 2016, 4–5). In this context, J. Bossy's sociological description of the mass has underlined (in Maussian terms) that the exchange of gifts for prayer were "total occasions", with worldly and spiritual motivations, and social and legal factors, all simultaneously at work (Bossy 1983).

The monastic provenance of the *Codex Sangermanensis*, as well as its Carolingian date, are elements beyond all doubt. In 1865, as Bensly writes in his monograph (see Bensly 1875, 5–6), J. Gildemeister, who personally discovered the *Codex Sangermanensis*, wrote in a private letter that the "offending" page of *4 Ezra* had been cut out very early in the volume's history, perhaps within a very few decades of its writing in 822. What we can say is that the text of *4 Ezra* was copied in its entirety (as the *Codex Ambianensis* clearly shows), and only after this was an entire page deleted. It is possible to hypothesize that a monk had considered it legitimate to copy the text of the apocalypse in its entirety; then another one made him aware of the question involved in the *4 Ezra* narration, and subsequently an entire page of the manuscript was cut out.[19] The *Codex Sangermanensis* was clearly considered as a sort of self-representative instrument, and it was reputed as inconvenient to cancel only the last lines in a page.

In summary, the theological and political relevance of the issue of intercession was implicitly debated in a continuum between adherence to the correct transcription of an authoritative visionary text (as it is testified by both the *Codex Ambianensis* and the *Sangermanensis* before the deletion of *4 Ezra* 7. 36–105) and its theological meaning, viewed as an all-encompassing element

19 On this last aspect, a very important observation is found in Bensly's monograph (Bensly 1875, 5). Gildemeister personally saw the Codex, discovering that *dormibunt* was the last word of one leaf and *primus* (with a small *p*) the beginning word on the next leaf – thus revealing the two words by which the lacuna is enclosed. This leads to the conclusion that this page was entirely sacrificed because of the last lines of the section.

for a specific context. The pairing information/long term memory, in this case, was impossible to encode; moreover, it was very difficult to make up for the prohibition, explicitly claimed in the text, by the means of an interpretive "gesture".[20]

4 Living visionary texts between exegesis, interpretation, and visionary *habitus*: towards a conclusion

I would like to conclude this paper by discussing the idea that the transmission of visionary texts could represent the legacy of a *longue durée* visionary *habitus*. The concept grows out of Pierre Bourdieu's attempt to answer the question: "how is human action regulated?" – or more precisely, "how does human action follow regular statistical patterns without being the product of obedience to some external structure, such as income or cultural norms, or to some subjective, conscious intention, such as rational calculation?" (Swartz 1997, 95; see also Bourdieu 1990, 53). According to Bourdieu, *habitus* consists of deeply internalized dispositions, schemas and forms of know-how and competence, both of mental and corporeal nature, some of which are acquired by the individual through early childhood socialization. In ancient religions, visionary experiences are considered as actual and often ritualized possibilities to perceive the "divine". Plutarch reminds us that if people "see a light blazing in the house at night, they consider it supernatural *(theion)* and marvel at it *(thaumazousi)*" (*Moralia* 762 d). In Plutarch's opinion, this is a clear symptom of an irrational attitude. However, the philosopher also registers a widespread internalized disposition and a common form of know-how. In ancient Jewish groups, the Biblical texts have contributed to creating a specific religious and/or ritual role, i.e. the figure of the prophet, a man who tells people everything that YHWH commands him to say (cf. *Deut*. 18.18). In so doing, "Biblical" narrations have also distinguished the "true" from the "false" prophecy. Such an attempt emerges as a discursive practice

20 See Bergren 1996, 113: "The transmission history of 4 Ezra in the Latin tradition is, however, an extremely complex one that goes far beyond the scope of the details given above. Moreover, the process of transmission in Latin can be assumed to have taken place entirely within a 'Christian' context. Thus, the Latin transmission history of 4 Ezra furnishes a remarkable model of the different types of influence to which an 'originally Jewish' pseudepigraphon could be subjected in the process of transmission in a 'Christian' context."

aiming at "structuring structures", or at absorbing non-authorized, or supposedly illegitimate, modalities of relationship with the divine.

On the basis of such elements, at a first glance the concept of *habitus* seems to fit a sociological view of the visionary *habitus* in antiquity as well as in Late Antiquity. Like a real *habitus*, visionary experiences generate perceptions, expectations and practices that correspond to the structuring properties of socialization. Nevertheless, many other questions remain unresolved. Bernard Lahire has remarked that the notion of "disposition", which is central to Bourdieu's theory of the *habitus* and which is widely employed in sociological research, is founded upon the idea that processes occurring at the level of social groups are general and homogenous in nature, an assumption which is never empirically tested (see Lahire 2003).

For a long time, scholars have considered apocalyptic texts as a monolithic platform for anti-Jewish considerations on the bifurcating ways between Judaism and early Christianity. The creation of an "apocalyptic monolith", as a real Second Temple unitary "group" among others, has functioned as an inferior instrument of "apologetic" separation between Judaism and early Christianity (see *status quaestionis* by Koch 1970). Many scholars have deeply endeavored to deconstruct such a pseudo-historical view; they have emphasized the difficulty, on the basis of ancient apocalyptic texts, to extend a literary notion of "apocalyptic/apocalypticism" to the sense of a social uniformity or a linear diffusion of a specific ancient or late-antique group, also keeping in mind the widespread attestation of visionary patterns and experiences. In the current state of art, a *genre* definition of apocalyptic/apocalypticism seems to be tenable in its literary dimension, in spite of criticisms questioning the indiscriminate use of the problematic concept of "literary *genre*", especially if rigidly applied to ancient cultures (see Newsom 2005).

On the basis of Jewish (and proto-Christian) "apocalyptic" texts, it emerges that visionary patterns and experiences were commonly used and conceived by different textual groups and individuals, also raising polemics and cultural dynamics of acceptation and/or refusal by other Jewish (and non-Jewish) religious agents. Thus, if we want to conserve the Bourdieusian concept of *habitus* in its analytical function, we should envision, as Lahire has methodologically remarked, that various religious agents have developed a broad array of context-dependent combinations between visionary dispositions, on one side, and other structuring principles acquired during the socialization process, on the other. In this domain, the intensity with which visionary dispositions affect behavior also depends upon the specific context in which cultural-religious agents interact with one another.

As a further avenue to develop this field, I encourage in-depth analysis of "apocalyptic" Jewish and proto-Christian texts within the larger context of ancient and late-antique visionary practices and discourses, assessing both similarities and differences not in relation to a singular imagined whole, but rather in comparison with actual activities and cultural-religious agencies. For example, the cases discussed in this essay considered the technical role of scribes and of scrolling monks, as well as the medieval marketing agents of intercessions within Carolingian monasteries. In this regard, textual practices documented in transmitted manuscripts, as well as their dissemination in various religious circles confirm the idea that the visionary *habitus*, as a pre-existing and traditionally grounded (at least for some individuals and groups in Late Antiquity) "structuring structure", was re-adapted and manipulated according to many group- and individual-specific aims.

The forms of textualization documented in the manuscripts analyzed in this essay can hopefully cast light upon these processes of selection from and re-adaptation of the tradition. Ancient and late-antique visionary texts travel and circulate, being disseminated and diffused. They are uncompromisingly bound to movement along a diachronic transmission over time: the transmitter and the receptor do not always share a common religio-cultural setting. Simultaneously, they move along a synchronic transmission in which the transmitter is distanced from the "original" setting and attempts to make sense of the text through symbolic (cognitive) mechanisms like exegesis, interpretation, translation, adaptation, or other forms of "re-appropriation". The examples provided and analyzed in this paper offer a key to understanding these processes of transmission and reshaping of traditions across time, space and religious contexts.

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