

Arguably his most extraordinary work, a 1333 triptych housed in the Uffizi in Florence, offers as its central image the *Annunciation* referenced in Luke 1:26–38. Among its more interesting aspects are the gold-leaf, spaceless background, together with the ogives of the frame, medieval elements that contrast with the chiaroscuro of the Renaissance-style figures and perspectival floor line; the extraordinary emotional terror that occupies the Virgin's face as she positively recoils from the news; and the raised gold letters of annunciation that extend from the angel's mouth toward the Virgin's ear.

A late work not universally ascribed to Simone is a crucifix in the Church of the Misericordia in San Casciano Val di Pesa that some have suggested is a 1321 work originally painted for the Chapel of the Nine in Siena – but that work was apparently a fresco subsequently destroyed in a fire.

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Martinů, Bohuslav

Bohuslav Martinů (1890–1959) was a Czech composer and violinist. Since 1923, he lived outside of his native country, mainly in France and in the USA, and from 1957 to his death in Switzerland. He is considered the main Czech composer of the 20th century after Janáček (Smaczny, “Martinů”). He was influenced by modernism, but in his own personal way; “while he was responsive to new ideas he was never part of any identifiable school.” His music could be quite dissonant, but it was “founded on a fundamentally tonal harmonic framework” (Smaczny, “Martinů”).

Martinů composed some few works setting biblical and liturgical texts. Among these are the *Polní mše* (Field Mass) for baritone, male chorus and instruments (1939) setting Czech translations of liturgical texts and biblical psalms and his *Hymnus k sv. Jakubu* (Hymn to St. James; 1954) for soloists, chorus and instruments (Smaczny, “Martinů”). However, his most important biblical reception occurred in his operatic works. Two of his sixteen operas are biblical, but in very different ways. His *Hry o Marii* (The Plays of Mary, 1935) combines four parts, each based on a mystery play. Part one is a prologue based on the 12th-century *Sponsus* (see “Bridegroom VIII. Music”), staging the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (Matt 25:1–13). Part two sets a Marian, non-biblical narrative. Part three is again biblical, based on Moravian folk poetry, *Narození Páně* (The Nativity of Our Lord). Finally, Part four, *Sestra Paskalina* (Sister Pasqualina) renders a non-biblical Marian miracle.

Martinů worked on his last opera, The Greek Passion (*Řecké pašije*), to his own libretto based on

Nikos Kazantzakis's novel *Christ Recrucified* (in Jonathan Griffin's English translation) during the last years of his life, from 1954 (Smaczny, “Greek Passion”). The opera exists in two versions, the first (1957) had to be reconstructed and was premiered in 1999 at the Bregenz Festspiele (Bregenz Festival); the revised version was finished by Martinů in 1959 before his death and performed for the first time in 1961 in Zurich (Bruhn: 23). The story concerns a planned modern performance of a Passion play in a Greek village in Anatolia in the early part of the 20th century. Those chosen to act the biblical roles gradually assume similar roles in their own lives, and the plot becomes a re-enactment of the story of Christ's Passion, in which Manolios, who has been chosen to play Christ, becomes a Christ-like person and, in the end, is similarly sacrificed (Bruhn: 24–32; Smaczny, “Greek Passion”; see also “Kazantzakis, Nikos”). Siglind Bruhn has discussed and analyzed how the opera translates the narrative of the novel, not only through the action of the opera, but also by symbolic musical means (Bruhn: 3, 22–24, 33–49).

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Nils Holger Petersen

Martyr, Martyrdom

- I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. New Testament
- III. Judaism
- IV. Christianity
- V. Islam
- VI. Literature
- VII. Visual Arts
- VIII. Film

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

A word describing a willing or voluntary death for one's belief does not exist in the HB/OT. Even the closest LXX equivalent (μάρτυς) suggests a common witness (*‘ēd*) and not a martyr. The concept or action of voluntary death is well attested in the HB/OT in instances of suicide (cf. Judg 9:54; 16:30; 1 Sam 31:4–5; 1 Chr 10:4–6; 2 Sam 17:23; 1 Kgs 16:18). However, suicide does not fully meet the standards of martyrdom, despite the similarities (cf. Brettler: 4–5). Thus, while Jephthah's daughter (Judg 11:30–40) accepts her death willingly, she does so for “the sake of her father and Israel's security” (Olson: 2:833). Apart from Jephthah's daughter, there are two arguable instances of martyrdom in the HB/OT.

The first is the “suffering servant” of Second Isa (Isa 42:1–4; 49:1–7; 50:4–11; 52:13–53:12). The poetry in this text clearly speaks of an “individual” who is willing to be “oppressed and afflicted” and die “like a lamb to the slaughter” (Isa 53:7) all for the sake of others. Yet, what is unclear is whether the “suffering servant” is an individual person or the collective Israel in exile (cf. Tabor: 4:575). The second example is in the book of Daniel, in which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego accept death over idol worship (Dan 3:16–18). Their stubborn loyalty towards God over a looming death is clearly highlighted. These texts, which mention voluntary deaths with a religiously-based impetus, come from a later, post-exilic period, and may suggest that “martyrdom” in the HB/OT resulted from later influence.

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II. New Testament

The theme of suffering and persecution pervades the NT. Paul warns his churches that they will have to endure persecution for the sake of the gospel, recounting his own experiences of imprisonment, beatings, lashing, and stoning (2 Cor 11:23–25; Phil 1:7; Phlm 1; Rom 8:35; 1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 4:4–5; 4:8–9; 11:23–29; 12:10). Paul claims he shares in Christ’s sufferings, and in turn calls Christians to imitate him (1 Thess 1:6; 1 Cor 11:1; 2 Cor 1:6; Gal 4:12; cf 2 Thess 3:7, 9). Moreover, since suffering was a mark of faithfulness (Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29–30; 1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 6:4–10), believers could receive it with joy (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 6:10; 8:2; 13:9; Phil 2:17; 4:4–6; cf. Col 1:11, 24), a response found throughout the NT (Matt 5:11–12//Luke 6:22–23; Jas 1:2; 1 Pet 1:6; 4:13).

Ultimately this persecution, whether from Jew or Gentile, could also lead to martyrdom (e.g., Mark 13:9–13). Jesus calls his disciples to “take up their cross” and follow him to death (Mark 8:34). While Luke’s addition of the word “daily” clearly renders the saying metaphorical (Luke 9:23), the call to lose one’s life is firmly embedded in Jesus tradition (Q 14:27; John 12:25; *Gos.Thom.* 55). Moreover, the threat of punishment for attempting to save one’s life moves the saying towards a more literal interpretation (Mark 8:35–38). Nonetheless, there are few unambiguous references to martyrs in the NT. While the author of Hebrews calls on his readers to suffer like Jesus (Heb 13:12–13), and lists martyrs among the heroes of the faith (11:36–38), he knows of no community martyrs (12:4). It is only in Acts and Rev where examples of Christian martyrdom are found in the NT. In Acts, Stephen is stoned to death by a Jewish mob (Acts 7:54–8:1), while James

is executed by Herod (Acts 12:2). Luke models Stephen’s martyrdom on the death of Jesus, including a charge of speaking against the Temple (6:14), committing his spirit to Jesus (7:59), and dying with a prayer of forgiveness (7:60).

The *imitatio Christi* theme is also found in Rev, where Jesus is the paradigm of a faithful witness (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, Rev 1:5; 3:14). While Antipas is the only named martyr in Rev (2:13), the narrative assumes many more will follow: Christians are called to be faithful to death (2:10); martyrs are found under the heavenly altar (6:9); saints conquer the dragon by their deaths (12:10–11); the Beast slays faithful Christians (14:13); the harlot is drunk with the blood of the saints (17:6); and those who had been beheaded for their witness reign with Jesus for a thousand years (20:4).

The NT portrays, and perhaps also reflects, situations of persecution and danger for the followers of Jesus. They are enjoined to embrace suffering and death as a means of imitating Christ. However, while many would indeed follow this path to death, we find in the NT the potentiality for martyrdom more than its actuality.

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Paul Middleton

III. Judaism

■ Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism ■ Rabbinic Judaism ■ Medieval Judaism ■ Modern Judaism

A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism

Whether Jewish martyrdom existed in the Second Temple period or not is a matter of definition. Several scholars argue that martyrdom is a particular form of noble death that originated in the Greek tradition (pointing to Socrates or Antigone as forerunners). Others consider the presence of the Greek title μάρτυς (“witness” etc.) decisive, which implies that the idea of martyrdom can only have originated within Christianity, because the first occurrence of μάρτυς (Lat. *martyr*) with the meaning “martyr” is found in Christian documents. Arguments in favor of the occurrence of the theme of martyrdom in Second Temple literature include the fact that scholars deal with it (esp. in connection with Daniel 3 and 6, and 2 and 4 Maccabees) and that a middle-of-the-road definition of a martyr as a person who prefers a violent death to compliance with an oppressive demand from hostile foreign authorities is matched by several stories about ideal Jewish figures from this period (e.g., 2 Macc 6:18–7:42; though a few scholars argue that these stories are not Jewish). A broader definition makes other passages about a noble death of Jews including suicides in a hostile set-

ting relevant as well. Martyrs are not always seen as ideal figures and sometimes they are contrasted with other heroes, pointing to a different attitude (cf. 1 Macc 1:60–63; 2:29–41 and Josephus' speech against suicide at Jotapata, *War* 3.362–82).

1. Relevant Passages. The proposed definition can be elaborated by a common pattern of narrative elements that together highlight the voluntary and non-violent character of Jewish martyrdom: (1) The Greek or Roman authorities issue a decree; (2) this decree causes a loyalty conflict for the Jews, who must choose between obeying the commandment of the foreign government or remaining faithful to Jewish practices; (3) in the setting of a trial and/or tortures, the martyrs decide to remain faithful to their Jewish practices and identity; (4) the execution of the martyr is described. This pattern can function as a paradigm to establish in which ways relevant passages correspond to this view of martyrdom or not. The stories about the Maccabean martyrs (see "Hannah and her Seven Sons") in 2 Macc 6:18–31 and 7 as well as 4 Macc 4–18 fully match the paradigm (the same is true for several passages about rabbinic martyrs; see below "B. Rabbinic Judaism"). The court tales in Daniel 3 and 6 are different (cf. point 4) because the attempted execution of the heroes is followed by their miraculous deliverance.

2. Religion, Law, and Politics. Religion is an important motive for the martyrs, contrary to Greco-Roman noble death traditions. The martyrs bear witness to their faith and highlight their faithfulness to the God of Israel. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to venerate the divine statue erected by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:3–7, 10–5). Daniel maintains his routine of praying three times a day to his God (Dan 6:11, 12, 14). In both cases the death penalty is the punishment for disobedience to the king (3:6, 11, 15, 17, 19–25; 6:8, 13, 17–18). The religion of Daniel and his companions is the key marker of their identity – it requires a fundamental choice when the king's policy and their religious practice are in conflict with each other. The dialogue between Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's companions in Dan 3:14–18 before the execution expresses these conflicting loyalties. The royal decree in Dan 6 is a test case for the recognition of the king's absolute authority (6:8, 13). Daniel becomes trapped as a worshipper of the God of Israel, but the outcome of the story confirms his double loyalty, towards the king and towards his God: he is saved, being innocent before God, and he claims that he was innocent before the king as well (6:23). The Maccabean martyrs are forced to participate in a ritual meal of Antiochus IV and eat some pork (2 Macc 6:7, 18, 21; 7:1, 42; cf. 4 Macc 4:26–5:4; pork is forbidden according to Jewish law, Lev 11:7; Deut 14:8). The martyrs' faith in God is closely connected with their faithfulness to God's law (see already Dan 6:6), which functions as the ancestral laws of the

Jews (2 Macc 6:21, 23, 28; 7:2, 9, 11, 23, 30, 37; 4 Macc *passim*).

Daniel 3 and 6 as well as 2 and 4 Maccabees highlight the ethnic political setting of the martyrdoms. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are accused as Judeans (Dan 3:12; cf. 6:14), a specific people that worships its own God. The Maccabean books create a fundamental opposition between Jews and non-Jews by highlighting that the martyrs remained faithful to Jewish practices in their conflict with Antiochus IV. The martyrs exemplify the Jewish way of life and their glorious deeds and statements point to the special character of the Jewish people. They are exemplary figures for fellow-Jews (2 Macc 6:28, 31; 4 Macc 6:19) and function for them and for outsiders as ideal representatives of the Jewish nation. In 2 Maccabees the martyrs and Judas Maccabeus fight for the same cause. The martyrdoms are a decisive step towards the restoration of an independent Jewish state. Fourth Maccabees is not interested in Jewish political institutions, but the martyrs defeat the king and reestablish thereby the Jewish way of life.

3. Power Struggle. The loyalty conflict in the martyrdom narratives goes hand in hand with a power struggle, at two levels, on earth and in heaven. The martyrdoms suggest that the martyrs are victorious in spite of their death by remaining faithful to God and the law. God, therefore, vindicates the martyrs but also acts against the foreign king and his gods. After the deliverance of Daniel and his companions, King Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede acknowledge that their power is subordinate to the God of the Judeans (Dan 3:28–29; 6:26–28). They highlight that this God is a savior God (3:29; 6:28). In the Maccabean books the outcome of the double power struggle is mixed. Most passages imply that Antiochus was punished for his arrogant attitude towards God and the oppression of the Jews (2 Macc 5:17; 7:17, 19, 34, 37; 9:1–18; 4 Macc 9:24; 12:18; 18:5). Fourth Maccabees 17:23–4 indicates King Antiochus held up the martyrs as models for his own soldiers, resulting in victories over all his opponents.

Fourth Maccabees elaborates the power struggle between king and martyrs in its praise for the martyrs with specific vocabulary and athletic metaphors. Antiochus is depicted as a tyrant, and his defeat by the martyrs results in the re-establishment of the Jewish way of life and the restoration of the Jewish polity (4 Macc 1:11; 17:9–10, 20–22). The martyrs' perseverance is connected with their victory (*νίκη*) over Antiochus and his representatives (4 Macc 1:11; 6:10; 7:4; 8:2; 9:6, 30; 16:14; 17:15). The athletic metaphor in 4 Macc 17:11–17 elaborates a prestigious competition between the martyrs and Antiochus with vocabulary associated with the arena. It points to the martyrs' victory and to immortality as their reward (17:12, 15; cf. 7:3; 9:8, 22–

23). The passage visualizes the conflict between the king and the Jewish people, suggesting that the entire human race is a spectator of this combat (17:13–14; cf. 15:20).

4. Beneficial Death and Intercession. The Prayer of Azariah (Dan 3:39–40 in the Septuagint version) and 2 Maccabees 7 and 14:37–46 (Razis' suicide) hint at a beneficial effect of the death of the heroes. Fourth Maccabees elaborates this effect by connecting it with several cultic traditions deriving from the Hebrew Bible. In 2 Maccabees the result of the martyrdoms for others becomes apparent from the narrative context (2 Macc 4:7–10:9; 14:1–15:36) in which faithfulness to the covenant with God is a *leitmotif*. Wicked Jewish leaders like the high priests Jason and Menelaus disturb this relationship, invoking God's wrath and a temporary punishment of the people. The martyrs share in this sinfulness and suffer in solidarity with the people (2 Macc 7:18, 32). The martyrs' self-sacrifice functions as a turn for the better, which is anticipated in their intercessory prayer (2 Macc 7:37–38; also LXX Dan 3:39–40; 4 Macc 6:28–29; 9:24; 12:17). The reversal in the people's situation after the martyrdoms in 2 Macc 8 (cf. ch. 15), implies that the covenant relationship is restored. God's reconciliation with his people is hinted at in 2 Macc 7:33. The beneficial effect of the martyrs' death leading to God's renewed mercy for the people is indicated with atonement phrases in the context of intercession (LXX Dan 3:39–40; 2 Macc 7:37–38; 4 Macc 6:28; 9:24; 12:17; 17:22).

5. Afterlife. The faithfulness to God of Daniel and his companions is rewarded by a miraculous deliverance from the furnace and the lions' den, emphasizing that God is a saving God (Dan 3:15, 17, 25–29; 6:17, 21–23, 28). The Maccabean martyrs are posthumously vindicated. Second Maccabees points to their resurrection (7:9, 14) and re-creation (7:9, 11, 23, 26–29, 36) but offers no specific information about the time, location, and form of this renewal of life. A plausible reading is that it concerns an immediate renewal of life by God in heaven. Fourth Maccabees combines several concepts of the resurrection of the martyrs, including afterlife near God together with Israel's suffering righteous and the patriarchs, astral immortality, as well as a bodily resurrection, according to the prophecy of Ezekiel 37 (4 Macc 5:37; 7:18–19; 9:7–9; 10:15; 13:17; 14:5; 16:13, 25; 17:12, 18–19; 18:6–19, 23).

6. Exemplifying Jewish Philosophy. The martyrdoms incorporate traditions about famous Greek philosophers. Daniel 3 may build on Greek traditions about a trial because of ungodliness (*ἀσεβεία*), i.e., the contempt of state deities or the introduction of new gods, as in the case of Socrates. The figure of the ninety-year old Eleazar (2 Macc 6:18–31) may be partly inspired by Socrates (Rajak 1997). The detail that Eleazar spits out the pork (2 Macc 6:19)

recalls the philosophers Zeno of Elea and Anaxarchus of Abdera, who bit off their own tongues and spat them into the face of the tyrant either out of contempt or as a proof of their determination. The mother of the seven sons argues like a philosopher (2 Macc 7:20–23, 27–29) and watches her sons die in a way that matches the Greek virtue of *ἀνδρεία*, “manliness” (4 Macc 15:30). Fourth Maccabees explicitly connects the martyrs with philosophy: they demonstrate that the book's proposition about the autonomy of devout reason (1:1) is right, and their statements present a Jewish philosophy of its own (5:22, 35; 7:9, 21; 8:1), according to ancient standards, of course. They highlight the famous four cardinal virtues (prudence, courage, self-control, and justice, 1:18), but they are reinterpreted in a Jewish framework by exchanging prudence (*φρόνησις*) for *εὐσεβεία*, “piety,” “proper religion” (5:23–24). This virtue together with faithfulness to the law forms the heart of the Jewish philosophy (1:4, 6; 2:6, 23; 13:24; 15:10). The martyrs demonstrate that life in accordance with this divine philosophy results in the realization of important virtues and values advocated by Greek and Roman philosophers, such as freedom, justice, and wisdom, which also leads to the perfect match between statements and deeds and a harmonious and peaceful existence for the Jewish people.

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B. Rabbinic Judaism

Rabbinic stories about exemplary figures who give up their lives in the face of religious persecution belong to the wider discourse of martyrdom that flourished across the ancient Mediterranean world from the Hellenistic period on. While the idea of martyrdom is largely absent from the HB/OT, important building blocks of this concept appear within several late biblical works and especially in Jewish literature in Greek from the late Second Temple period (on these sources, see below). But despite these roots, rabbinic martyrology largely developed within the particular political and cultural conditions of the Roman Empire and shares numerous rhetorical features and theological or philosophical concepts with narratives of noble death produced in that context, especially by Christian writers (see, e.g., Boustán: 51–198; Shepkaru: 66–106; Gray; Boyarin; Lieberman). In addition, recent scholarship has emphasized that, despite the original Palestinian provenance of many of the martyrological traditions contained in the Babylonian Talmud, these materials were further shaped within the cultural context of Sasanian Iran (see esp. Rubenstein). Among the most prominent elements that rabbinic martyr stories share with the wider discourses of martyrdom and noble death in antiquity are: the intercessory power of the dying or the dead; the application of sacrificial language to the act of dying for God; the public enunciation of communal identity during trial or at the time of execution; and dreams or heavenly visions before or during the martyr's execution. In addition, the institutions of the Roman arena and law tribunal and, more generally, the Roman culture of spectacle likewise contributed to the form and content of rabbinic martyrology.

At the same time, rabbinic martyr stories are linguistically and formally distinctive. Unlike Christian martyrology, rabbinic martyr stories do not appear to constitute a genre of their own. Moreover, like other types of rabbinic story, martyr stories in rabbinic compilations serve the larger aims of the redactional context in which they appear, whether legal, normative, historical, or hagiographical. In addition, rabbinic sources from late antiquity do not apply a single unifying term (or set of terms) to the act of dying for God that is equivalent to the standardized Christian terminology of martyrdom as “witness” in a range of languages (deriving initially from the Greek stem *μάρτυρ*). While idioms like “sanctification of the [divine] name” (*qiddush hashem*; see, e.g., *Sifra*, *Emor* 9.4) and “those executed by the government” (*harugei malkhut*; see, e.g., *bPes* 50a; *bBB* 10b) do appear in classical rabbinic sources, these phrases only emerged as stable technical terms for martyrs and martyrdom in the medieval period (Cohen: 18–22; Boustán: 55–60).

The rabbis of late antiquity were acquainted with a number of narrative traditions regarding

non-rabbinic figures who experienced persecution, suffering, and, in some cases, execution at the hands of an oppressive ruler or his representatives. These stories are drawn from within the HB/OT as well as from outside the Jewish canon. Most prominent among these canonical stories that contributed to the development of the rabbinic discourse of martyrdom are the so-called binding of Isaac or *Aqedah* (Gen 22:1–19) and the court tales concerning the persecution of Daniel and his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Dan 3 and 6). Of course, neither Isaac nor Daniel and his companions are martyrs in the full sense of the term: Isaac is not subjected to political or religious persecution and indeed survives his ordeal, while the figures from the book of Daniel are ultimately rescued from execution through divine intervention. Nevertheless, their willingness to offer their lives out of devotion to their god rendered them suitable models for later Jewish and Christian martyrs (van Henten). Numerous rabbinic traditions – perhaps formulated in dialogue with the Christian use of Isaac as a type for Christ – refer to the blood of Isaac that was spilt on the altar during the sacrifice (e.g., *MekhY*, *Pisha* 7 and 11; *Tan*, *Wa-yera* 23) or to his ashes (e.g., *bBer* 62b; *bZev* 62a) and attribute to them intercessory power, while several (e.g., *PRE* 31) even claim that he died on the altar but was later revived (*Himmelfarb*). Similarly, Daniel and his companions are invoked in rabbinic literature as exempla for the Jew's obligation to lay down one's life rather than transgress God's commandments (see, e.g., *Sifra*, *Emor* 9.5).

Rabbinic authors also drew on martyr-like traditions from outside the HB/OT, such as the colorful tradition about the execution of the prophet Isaiah by the wicked Israelite king Manasseh. This account first appears in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 1–6 (also known in modern scholarship as the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*), which was likely composed in 1st- or 2nd-century Syria or Palestine. While the sources and original socioreligious context of this composition are difficult to determine, the tradition regarding Isaiah's execution circulated far and wide and was incorporated into both the Palestinian and Babylonian talmuds (cf. *ySan* 10:2 [28c] and *bYev* 49b–50a; see Kalmin: 29–52). Most importantly, several rabbinic compilations contain versions of the martyrdoms of the mother and her seven sons that resemble the accounts in 2 Macc 7 and 4 Macc 8:1–17:1. The more elaborate of the rabbinic retellings (*EkhR* 1:16, §50; *bGit* 57b; *PesRab* 43) bear a striking resemblance to versions in 2 and 4 Maccabees, although the precise relationship among these sources is difficult to determine (Doran). Rabbinic literature updates the narrative by recasting the Maccabean martyrs as victims of the Roman persecutions under Hadrian, rather than of Seleucid oppression under Antiochus IV. Hebrew and Aramaic versions of the

story continued to circulate in various forms throughout the medieval period, exerting a profound impact on Jewish attitudes toward martyrdom (Baumgarten/Kushelevsky).

But the majority of martyr stories in classical rabbinic sources center on rabbinic figures. These stories typically take the form of relatively brief episodes narrating the circumstances surrounding the execution of one or two rabbinic figures (for a useful collection of rabbinic martyrologies, see van Henten/Avemarie: 132–73). Emblematic of this pattern are the numerous iterations across the rabbinic corpus of the executions of R. Aqiva (see, e.g., *MekhY*, *Shirata* 2; *yBer* 9.7 [14b]; *bBer* 61b) and of Ḥanina ben Teradion (*SifDev* 307; *BAZ* 17b–18a). In some cases, rabbinic martyrs are paired, as in the narrative about the twin executions of R. Ishmael and Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel (see, e.g., *MekhY*, *Neziqin* 18; *ARN* A 38 and B 41). Rabbinic martyrs are usually executed as punishment for their abiding commitment to teaching Torah or to fulfilling a Jewish ritual obligation. Rabbinic sources often also attribute the suffering and death of the rabbinic martyr to a minor ritual or ethical failing – with the very triviality of this sin serving as an indication of the martyr’s true righteousness (Boustán: 55–77).

The atomized stories regarding rabbinic martyrs that were incorporated within various talmudic and midrashic compilations were gathered together beginning in the 5th century into a narrative cycle that recounts the sequential deaths of ten rabbinic sages. This anthological form of rabbinic martyrology is most commonly known as *The Story of the Ten Martyrs* (critical edition and German translation: Reeg; English translation: Stern). It should be stressed, however, that numerous versions of this general narrative regarding ten rabbinic martyrs were composed in both prose and poetry from the 5th century on and served a variety of functions, including as penitential hymns recited on the Day of Atonement and as dirges for the fast of the Ninth of Av (Boustán: 51–98; see the sources collected in Velner). Although produced in Byzantine Palestine, *The Story of the Ten Martyrs* is set in the 2nd century CE during the period of Roman repression that followed the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. The martyrology assimilates otherwise disparate martyrological material within a single, coherent narrative and theological framework. The narrative presents the deaths of the ten sages as vicarious atonement for the collective national guilt generated by the sale of Joseph by his ten brothers (Gen 37:27–28). This organizational structure combines rabbinic literary tradition with themes and forms from genres that emerged or were newly revived in the Byzantine period for Jewish use, such as apocalyptic literature, liturgical poetry, and prose narrative. This innovative form of rabbinic martyrology reflects a Byzantine Jewish culture that shared much in common

with its Christian milieu, while also presenting the Christian Roman state in a profoundly negative light (Boustán; Shepkaru: 107–17). Rabbinic martyrologies, whether circulating within classical rabbinic compilations or within anthological collections, helped to condition Jewish attitudes toward persecution and martyrdom in the medieval period and beyond.

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Ra’anan Boustán

C. Medieval Judaism

1. Patterns of Jewish Martyrdom in Ashkenaz and Sepharad. Throughout the Middle Ages, Jews suffered persecutions in most European countries. Their reaction to these persecutions depended on the region in which they occurred. In Ashkenazic lands, the ancient ideology of *qiddush ha-shem* (sanctification of God’s name) was dominant – persecuted Jews forced to choose between conversion/apostasy and being slaughtered deliberately chose martyrdom and death (see 2 Macc 7; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.225–23; *bGit* 57b). In Sepharad, on the other hand, conversion and apostasy were more often described as the common reaction.

The earliest literary source for Jewish martyrdom in the Middle Ages is the depiction of the suicide of the sages in Otranto, Italy, in an anonymous letter to Ḥasdai ibn Shaprut from the middle of the 10th century (Mann: 23–25).

During the spring of 1096 the Jewish communities along the shores of the Rhine were attacked by

the Crusaders. Many victims chose death over conversion and were slain. Others preferred to take their own lives and those of their kin rather than let themselves be killed by their oppressors. The Ashkenazic martyrs were praised as a holy generation, and their acts and heroic deeds were described in various genres of literature. Three Hebrew chronicles were composed – by Solomon b. Simeon, Eleazar b. Nathan, and the Mainz Anonymous – which portray the reaction of the Jewish communities, i.e., the collective suicide and murder of families and children in order to avoid being killed or forcibly baptized by Christian attackers (Haverkamp; Habermann; Eidelberg; Chazan). The names of the victims were listed in memorial books (*Memorbücher*) and read out during the synagogue service. A comprehensive corpus of *piyyutim* (religious poems) depicting the events was composed, many of them entering the liturgy for Tish'ah be-Av, the day commemorating the destruction of the Jerusalem temples and other catastrophes in Jewish history (Fraenkel; Habermann). The descriptions of the martyrological acts in prose and poetry drew on biblical models and terminology (see below).

In the generations following the events of 1096, martyrdom as *qiddush ha-shem* developed into a characteristic feature of Jewish literature composed in Ashkenaz. It became an essential element of Ashkenazic self-consciousness and the collective identity of the communities despite or because of the fact that some owed their survival to those who chose conversion. Nevertheless, the model of *qiddush ha-shem* was adopted during the persecutions that followed the blood libel, e.g., the Rintfleisch persecutions in 1298 as well as those surrounding the Black Death in the middle of the 14th century. The poetic language of martyrdom was even applied to the burning of the Talmud in Paris (1242) by Meir b. Baruch of Rothenburg (d. 1293), whose prominent elegy “Ask, O You Who Are Burned in Fire” is shaped by the language of the biblical book of Lamentations (*Einbinder*).

Scholars have struggled with the question which sources inspired the extraordinary acts of martyrdom described in the Crusade chronicles and the *piyyutim*, in particular the suicide and killing of women and children. Looking for models, scholars have debated the role of biblical and rabbinic examples, the importance of *Sefer Josippon* and the interplay of motifs in the framework of Jewish-Christian polemic (Grossman 1999; Cohen 2004; Dönitz; Marcus). The acts of suicide and filicide were even seen as influencing the Christian claim that Jews murdered Christian children for ritual purposes, made in the context of the blood libel accusations (Yuval).

Finally, there is the question of why in Ashkenaz these models gained such a large literary reception while in Sepharad and other countries (e.g., North Africa) stories of the martyrs were much less

cherished (Ben-Sasson). In Sepharad, martyrdom was less common, while conversion was frequently the last way out of dire situations or chosen as an alternative (see Maimonides, MT, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-Torah* 5:1–2; Halbertal; Soloveitchik). Beginning with the 13th century, the attitude toward conversion and martyrdom seemed to change in favor of the latter. Cases of active martyrdom became known following the persecution in 1391 and the expulsion in 1492 and were depicted in descriptions of these events. Scholars debate whether the Ashkenazic model had spread to Sepharad or whether the Spanish scholars developed their own attitude toward martyrdom (Ben-Shalom; Gross).

2. Biblical Models for Jewish Martyrdom. The depictions of the martyrs in prose and poetry draw on paradigmatic biblical models:

1. the binding of Isaac (*‘Aqedah*; Gen 22). The chronicles as well as the *piyyutim* refer to the *Aqedah*, yet emphasize the idea that Abraham indeed “slaughtered” Isaac (Ephraim of Bonn, quoted in Spiegel: 148; Nirenberg: 288; see “*Aqedah* I.I.C Medieval Judaism”; “*Isaac* I.I.C Medieval Judaism”);
2. the example of the three youths in the furnace (Dan 3);
3. the story of the mother and her seven sons (2 Macc 7) connected with 1 Sam 2:5 and Ps 113:9 [“joyous mother of children”] (Cohen 1953; Cohen 2004; Dönitz); see “*Hannah* and her Seven Sons I. Judaism and Christianity 1. Reception in Judaism”);
4. the example of King Saul who killed himself (1 Sam 31:4) and the interpretation of Gen 9:5;
5. the use of sacrificial terminology derived from biblical terms like e.g., burnt offering (*qorban ‘olah*) (Dönitz; Shepkaru);
6. the opposition towards Christianity and Esau, the arch-enemy, as expressed in Rashi’s commentary on the Psalms (Cohen 1967; Grossman 1999; see “*II. Jacob and Esau, Story of C. Medieval Judaism*”).

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Saskia Dönitz

D. Modern Judaism

Before the Holocaust, the concept of sanctified death (*qiddush Ha-Shem*) was usually applied to those Jews who chose to die rather than violate their religious beliefs. During and after the Holocaust, it came to be applied to anyone who was killed because he or she was identified as a Jew (Benzion Firer, Yehoshua Grinvald, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, and Natan Rabinovits, citing *YalqShim* Ps 701, responsa of Hayyim ben Isaac Or Zaru'a no. 4, and Moses Sofer, responsa on *Yoreh de'ah*, no. 333). Emil Fackenheim observed that "in making Jewish existence a crime, Hitler murdered Jewish martyrdom itself." (Fackenheim: 247)

Orthodox Jewish thinkers and scholars, many of them survivors of the Holocaust, probed the dimensions of Jewish martyrdom. Avraham Grodzensky (1883–1944), himself a victim of the Holocaust, argued that since suffering and love are rooted in a single divine source, those who were murdered

loved God through painful deaths, emulating R. Aqiva. Yitzhak Ayzik Sher (1875–1952), who escaped to Palestine, wrote that Jews who had died had absolute trust that God brought the evil just as he brought the good, as exemplified by the ancient martyr R. Ishmael ben Elisha, who ceased to cry out just as the Roman torturer reached the space on his arm for *tefillin*. Chaim Elazary (d. 1984), in the United States, suggested during the war that the greater the suffering, the greater the opportunity for love of God. Jacob Lessin, who escaped to the United States during the war, held that the soul left a body degraded by sins of the soul, which physical suffering now purified. Drawing upon kabbalistic and Lurianic terminology, Eliyahu Meir Bloch (1894–1954) and Ya'akov Mosheh Ḥarlap (1882–1951) wrote that God shattered the body as the soulful spark left its material shell to coalesce with God's illumined presence. Mordechai Shulman (1902–1982) wrote that the spirituality and love for God were of such intensity as to absorb the agony; Simhah Elberg (1915–1995) believed that mothers who entered the gas chambers did not suffer the pains of *Gehinnom*, for they resided now in a heavenly atmosphere.

Others spoke of annulling and transcending the self – whether through an absolute trust which enabled a leap into divine goodness (Abraham Isaac Bloch; 1891–1941); or through a *Shema* declaration which surrendered the autonomous self in higher love for God (Elazary); or by drawing from Abraham's primitive faith such as to shatter the heart until nothing was felt except God (Aharon Roth; 1894–1947). For others, the deaths enacted the burnt offering in the temple or the binding and sacrifice of Isaac. As such, the deaths atoned for Israel's sins and enabled God to fulfill his promise of Jewish sovereignty (Reuven Katz; 1880–1963); or washed away the sins of the entire world (Yehoshua Mosheh Aharonson; 1910–1994).

For some, martyrdom also had a messianic dimension. For Benzion Firer (1914–1988) the catastrophe was the "colossal outflow of blood" at the birth of redemption. Ḥarlap held that as the body diminished, the soul broke the boundaries of finitude and history to share in the light of the Messiah.

Some Jewish thinkers and artists who were not Orthodox rabbis employed themes associated with Christianity. The slaughtered Jews were the Suffering Servant (Isa 53), who absorbed the world's suffering (not its sins) lest it destroy all of humankind. They were crucified, as Marc Chagall (1887–1985) implied in his sketches, *Way to Calvary* (1941), and his other depictions of the crucifixion. Abba Hillel Silver (1893–1963) spoke of the Warsaw Ghetto and the concentration camps as scenes of the crucifixion of Israel; Ignaz Maybaum (1897–1976) wrote that after God failed to remove sin through scriptural

commandment, or through Jesus' crucifixion, Jewish martyrdom had now atoned vicariously for the sins of humanity. The Yiddish writer Sholem Asch (1880–1957) compared the cry of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto to that of the Jews martyred by the Inquisition, which was that of Jesus at Golgotha amid Roman assault: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1 [MT 22:2], Matt 27:46; Asch: 23).

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Gershon Greenberg

IV. Christianity

■ Patristics and Orthodox Churches ■ Medieval Times and Reformation Era ■ Modern Europe and America ■ New Christian Churches and Movements ■ World Christianity

A. Patristics and Orthodox Churches

Biblical influence on the concept of martyrdom in Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity was profound but indirect. One of the archetypes in both

traditions was the story of Eleazar the priest and the seven Maccabees brothers and their mother as told in 2 Macc and 4 Macc. These heroes of the faith resisted the attempts by Antiochus IV Epiphanes to force them to violate Jewish Law, and the priest and brothers paid for their determination with their lives. The mother is also lauded for enduring the torture of her sons for the sake of preserving the faith, and she also dies soon afterward. In his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, Origen of Alexandria includes Eleazar and the Maccabees among his biblical examples. When they reach "the gates of death," Origen's readers should recite the parting words of Eleazar: "It is clear to the Lord in his holy knowledge that, though I might have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but in my soul I am glad to suffer these things because I fear him" (2 Macc 6:30 [NRSV]; cited in Origen *Mart.* 22). The Maccabees and their mother receive extended treatment (Origen *Mart.* 23–27), and Origen clarifies that he selected this story "from scripture" in order to demonstrate the power of faith over the pain of torture. Cyprian of Carthage likewise includes the Maccabees among his list of scriptural examples of martyrs. He interprets the significance of the death of Eleazar, each brother, and then the mother one by one, citing passages from 2 Macc and declaring that they were "glorious and unconquered in the spirit of their confession" (Cyprian *Mort.* 11).

Not surprisingly, the stories of Jesus and the apostles were reinterpreted as exemplary martyrdom narratives in early Christian sources. Candida Moss has demonstrated that many elements of the Gospel passion accounts reappear in martyrdom narratives. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is replete with these elements, presenting the aged bishop of Smyrna as another Christ. For example, the captain of the soldiers who come to arrest Polycarp is named Herod, and those who hand over the bishop are compared to Judas (cf. Mark 14:10–11; Matt 26:14–16; Luke 22:3–6; John 13:27). Polycarp is arrested while he is praying and submits his will to the will of God (cf. Mark 14:32–36; Matt 26:36–45; Luke 22:39–46). He is bound to a stake, mirroring Jesus' binding to the cross (cf. Mark 15:24; Matt 27:35; Luke 23:33; John 19:18; Acts 2:23). Moss also shows that famous events from the life of Jesus appear in other martyrdom accounts. For example, the 4th-century *Martyrdom of Dasius* recounts the story of a Roman soldier who refuses to participate in a festival for Saturn. Instead, he overturns the idols in a temple and is summarily arrested and executed – a parallel to Jesus' cleansing of the Temple and the subsequent plot to destroy him (Mark 11:11–19; Luke 19:45–48). Another motif in martyrdom texts is the conversion of a soldier at the execution, mimicking the declaration by the centurion at the Crucifixion of Jesus (Mark 15:39; Matt 27:54; Luke

23:47). One of the best examples is the *Martyrdom of Potamiaena and Basilides* as preserved in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.5). The Alexandrian Christian Potamiaena is sentenced to death, and on the way to her execution she is protected from the abuse of the mob by the soldier Basilides, who is not a Christian. The martyr promises to pray for Basilides and visits him posthumously in a dream to assure him that she has secured his salvation. Basilides himself ends up also dying as a Christian martyr. To these examples we can add *inter alia* the conversion of the soldiers Longinus and Cescus at the time of the martyrdom of Paul (*Mart. Paul* 4–7). The Crucifixion motif was also very common in martyr stories, including most famously in the *Mart. Pet.*. Peter has an encounter with Jesus on the road outside Rome, and Jesus clarifies that Peter is to die in the same way as his Savior; Jesus even states that he is being “crucified again” through Peter (*Mart. Pet.* 6–11). Augustine and others understood Peter’s arrest and martyrdom not just as an echo of Jesus’ experiences, but also as the fulfillment of Jesus’ prediction of Peter’s fate in John 21:18–19 (*Serm.* 297.2). The Gospel stories about Jesus, therefore, provided a paradigm through which later events were experienced, interpreted, and remembered.

The apostle Paul was also received and venerated as a model martyr, and thus his writings were reinterpreted in this light. Some time during the reign of either Trajan (98–117 CE) or Hadrian (117–138 CE), Ignatius of Antioch was arrested and sent to Rome for execution. Along the way the bishop wrote a series of letters to various places, and a prominent theme was his expectation, even anticipation, of his own death. In his letter to the Romans, Ignatius writes, “Permit me nothing more than to be poured out as an offering (σπονδισθήναι) to God, while the altar is still prepared.” His use of the verb σπένδω recalls two Pauline passages in which the apostle gestures toward his future death. In Phil 2:17, a letter written from prison, Paul states, “But if I am being poured out as a drink offering (σπένδομαι) upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, then I am glad and rejoice together with all of you.” Paul uses the same verb in 2 Tim 4:6, a letter whose authenticity is questioned by contemporary scholars but not by authors in the early church: “I am already being poured out as a drink offering (σπένδομαι), and the time of my departure has come.” On the route to face his own death, Ignatius employs explicitly Pauline imagery to describe his impending fate. He is being poured out (σπένδω) as a libation to God and as a kind of “new Paul”; thus, his teachings on other topics (e.g., ecclesiastical authority) should be heeded as having near apostolic authority. Augustine also referred frequently to 2 Tim 4:6–8 in sermons preached on the joint feast day of Peter and Paul, June 29. In no fewer than seven sermons, the bishop meditates on

Paul’s prediction of his own imminent demise (*Serm.* 297, 298, 299, 299A–C, *Sermo sancti Augustini habitus ad populum in die natalico apostolorum sanctorum Petri et Pauli*). Augustine highlights the apostle’s disregard for this life in light of the glory awaiting him after death and therefore links 2 Tim with other Pauline passages such as Rom 8:18, 35–37 and Phil 1:29–30.

The examples of the apostles also served polemical functions in ecclesiastical disputes. In the context of the Donatist Controversy, Caeilianist (self-designated “Catholic”) polemicists cited scripture to prove their legitimacy against their Donatist rivals. Augustine was chief among them. He alluded to Ps 116:15 to argue that the martyrdoms of Peter, Paul, Cyprian, and others were “precious in the sight of the Lord.” The devil, however, had twisted martyrdom and created a class of false martyrs, represented by the Donatists, to lead people astray through a “poisonous fraud” (*De oboedientia* 16). Citing 2 Tim 4:8 against the Donatists in another context, Augustine asserts that the “crown of righteousness” is reserved only for the truly faithful. Heretics such as the Donatists may claim to honor the apostolic martyrs, but their liturgical celebrations are in vain (*Sermo sancti Augustini habitus ad populum in die natalico apostolorum sanctorum Petri et Pauli* 9).

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David L. Eastman

B. Medieval Times and Reformation Era

Martyrdom lies in the eyes of the beholder. One person's heretic or enemy of established religion is another's martyr. Medieval definitions of martyrdom stressed heroic death for the Christian faith. At the outset of introduction of Christianity to northern and eastern Europe reactions from the traditional religions to the intrusion of the Christian faith occasioned the death of early missionaries, such as Boniface and fifty-two other Christians by pagans in Frisia, 754 CE, or Adalbert of Prague in Prussia, 997 CE. In other cases, the political struggles associated with the introduction of Christianity resulted in the deaths of adherents of the faith.

The Christian settlement that came to dominate Europe in the Middle Ages made martyrdom unnecessary for almost all European Christians although from the 16th century on several figures executed as heretics in the previous century became celebrated as martyrs, including Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague as well as Hieronymus Savonarola.

Martin Luther changed the definition of martyrdom. He did not focus on the heroic courage of the one who sacrificed life itself for the faith but instead viewed it as God's gift of being able to give dramatic witness to the gospel, a gift to both martyr and church. His view of suffering-the-cross as a mark of the church developed out of his experience of the persecution of the followers [in *On the Councils and the Church*, 1539], which accorded with Christ's prophecy in Matt 5:11. His "theology of the cross" recognized the church's suffering persecution as part of God's "wisdom and power" (1 Cor 1 and 2). Subsequent reports on Protestant martyrs followed Luther in seeing in their witness through death the pattern Jesus had prophesied for his church (Matt 10:16–20, 23:33–36).

Luther's fellow Augustinians in Antwerp avidly propagated his message, falling under the persecution of the Habsburg government of the Netherlands. Two Antwerp friars, Johann van Esch and Heinrich Voes, were executed for their faith in Brussels July 1, 1523; Luther celebrated them as martyrs in the first of the "hymns" he composed. Territorial governments gave most adherents of Luther protection or a place to which to flee, but within the German empire some also were burned at the stake for preaching Luther's doctrine. Many more Protestants fell victim to the French government's repression of the Huguenot followers of John Calvin. The French religious wars of 1562–98 occasioned many deaths on both sides, and the revocation of the toleration Edict of Nantes in 1685 issued in another period of persecution, with the execution of more than 100

Reformed pastors and the exile of thousands. In the Netherlands some 1300 followers of Calvin, as well as the English Bible translator William Tyndale, earned execution for their faith by the Habsburg government before 1566; many more executions for Protestant heresies followed in the war between the Dutch and the Spanish government in the next century.

Anabaptists often earned martyrdom not only for their rejection of infant baptism but also for their belief that Christians should not participate in secular governing; the charge was sedition in those cases, the result, execution, the same. Later in the 16th century English Roman Catholic leaders were executed also for conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth, but because they were only supporting papal policy, they earned the status of martyr. In the early 1530s Thomas More had led in efforts to eliminate Anabaptists through execution but fell victim to the executioner in 1535 because he remained faithful to the pope and not to King Henry VIII when Henry defied the papacy.

Luther recognized the need for some substitute for the medieval *Lives of the Fathers*; martyr stories seemed an ideal substitute. His student Ludwig Rabus, dismissed from his Strasbourg pulpit in 1549 by enforcement of the Augsburg Interim, turned to collecting published stories of martyrs, from Scripture, the ancient church, and contemporary accounts. His first volume, 1552, began with Abel (Gen 4); his eight volume work, 1554–58, included a few, like Luther, who had testified to the faith boldly without being executed. In 1554 John Foxe published his first effort at collecting the stories of martyrs, chiefly English. His *Acts and Monuments* has nursed English piety for a half millennium. Geneva publisher Jean Crespin also issued his first edition of his *History of the Martyrs* in 1554. He and successors expanded the work as more Huguenots and other Protestants fell victim to French persecution. Adriaan Corneliszoon van Haemstede performed a similar service to Dutch Reformed martyrs; his *History of the Martyrs Who Shed their Blood as Witnesses of Evangelical Truth* appeared in 1559. His fellow Dutchman Hendricks van Schoonrewoerd edited an influential collection of Anabaptist martyrs' histories in 1562, *The Sacrifice of the Lord*. The first Anabaptist martyrology, *The Bloody Mirror* (1560) matured into *The Martyrs' Mirror* (1685), and like Foxe this volume cultivated the piety of Anabaptists for generations. Roman Catholic critiques of Protestant claims to the status of martyr included works by Nicholas Harpsfield in English. The Jesuit Johann Bolland followed up the work of Caesar Baronius in his *Martyrologium Romanum* (1583) with an ongoing program for cataloging Roman Catholic martyrs.

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Robert Kolb

C. Modern Europe and America

A revival of interest in the Christian commemoration of martyrs arose in the context of totalitarian dictatorships in the 20th century. The 20th century has even been called “the century of martyrs” (Ringshausen). This is true for the Protestant and Orthodox churches in particular. The Roman Catholic Church has a prolonged history of venerating martyrs, who are regarded as prototypes of saints and venerated accordingly. Pope Benedict XIV (1740–1758) established the three basic criteria of the Roman Catholic Church for the process of beatification or canonization that continue to be applied today: 1. a violent death (*martyrium materialiter*); 2. the persecutors’ motive of hatred of faith or hatred of the church (*martyrium formaliter ex parte tyranni*); 3. the victim’s conscious acceptance of God’s will even at the risk of their life (*martyrium formaliter ex parte victimae*).

The Second Vatican Council reduced the number of festivals of saints, but Pope John Paul II (1978–2005) canonized more saints than had ever occurred during the entire previous history of the Church. John Paul II also emphasized the commemoration of the neo-martyrs of the 20th century. He invoked “a common inheritance of Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants” (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 1994, No. 37). At a commemoration service for martyrs held at the Colosseum in Rome on May 7, 2000, John Paul II honored Protestant minister Paul Schneider, who was murdered at Buchenwald concentration camp in 1939, and also encouraged local churches to compile catalogues of martyrs in the 20th century. The German martyrology currently includes more than 1,000 biographical sketches, which include the controversial “purity ordeals” (i.e., preferring to be killed rather than to lose one’s virginity [Möll]).

Shortly after 1945, a renewed interest in the commemoration of martyrs arose in the German Protestant church. However, it never grew beyond basic memorialization efforts, such as memorials at Brandenburg Cathedral in 1953 and Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in 1961. A book listing 499 martyrs from German-speaking areas in Europe was published in 2006 (Schulze/Kurschat). This volume uses the term ‘martyr’ to incorporate not only those who were killed because of their religious beliefs or their work within the church, but also those who were killed because their Christian faith inspired them to acts of resistance, or those who died as a result of imprisonment or torture.

Hebrews 13:7, combined with 11:35 and 12:1, is of particular importance to the commemoration of martyrs in Protestantism. Other biblical references are, among others, Matthew 5:10 and Mark 8:34. The fate of Stephen, who is considered an arch martyr (Acts 6:8–8:2; cf. 22:20) is also to be included, as well as various passages in the Revelation of John (e.g., 2:13; 11:3–13). A clearly-defined understanding of martyrdom (for example with a regulated canonization process) is unknown in Protestantism. However, the church historian Wolf-Dieter Hauschild observed that the biblical-ancient church and the Protestant-Reformation view seem to be broadly in agreement. He described four essential aspects which both positions hold in common: 1. the close relationship of the slain Christians to the crucified Christ, in whose wake they live and die (although there is a categorial difference in soteriological terms); 2. martyrs are not only evangelizers but also simple church members; 3. in addition to the witnesses of the word there are also witnesses of the act in accordance with the divine justice and God’s commandments; 4. martyrs may be honored, but not worshiped like Christ.

The Russian-Orthodox church was only able to commemorate the many victims of brutal persecutions which followed the October Revolution of 1917 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As of now, around 1,100 20th-century neo-martyrs have been canonized, roughly three times as many as in the church’s history leading up to the 20th century. Some cases are controversial, such as persons who initially collaborated but later fell victim to the regime; or the canonization of the family of the last Tsar of Russia Nicholas II in 2000, which was explicitly not intended as a political rehabilitation.

In 1998, the Anglican church unveiled ten statues of Christian martyrs of the 20th century. The statues are located above the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey and represent, by way of example, martyrs from all continents and from different denominations, men and women. Among them are Martin Luther King, Jr. from the USA and Oscar Romero from El Salvador. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was introduced as a federal holiday in the USA in 1986 in order to stress the civil-religious significance of the Baptist minister and civil rights activist.

Recently, Western churches in particular have considered the ecumenical aspect of the commemoration of martyrs. Issues that are still debated include the misconduct of Christians, victims of interdenominational conflicts including the branding of individuals as heretics, and the treatment of martyrs of non-Christian denominations or faith groups. It is not always possible to determine the motivations of martyrs and their persecutors. Furthermore, it can be difficult to evaluate a situation in which a victim incurred guilt or committed suicide, for in-

stance in order to protect others. Protestant voices have always drawn attention to the risks associated with the veneration of humans. The case of Paul Schneider illustrates how complex the issue can be. Schneider has long been venerated by ecumenical Christians; however, in 2007 Folkert Rickers expressed doubts regarding Schneider's martyrdom due to his allegedly narrow worldview, and because he pushed himself toward martyrdom, thus disregarding Heb 7:27.

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Thomas Martin Schneider

D. New Christian Churches and Movements

Whether there can be modern-day martyrs depends on how tightly the concept is defined. Some very loose definitions allow those who have experienced severe suffering for the Christian faith to count as martyrs. Thus the stigmatic Padre Pio (1887–1968) has on occasion been said to be a martyr on account of the pain experienced from his wounds. Occasionally the term has been applied to victims of mass deaths in new religious movements, for example the collective deaths in Jim Jones' Peoples Temple in 1978, David Koresh's Branch Davidians of Waco in 1993, the Order of the Solar Temple in Switzerland and Canada in 1994 and 1995, and Heaven's Gate in 1997. However, only the Branch Davidians died at the hands of an "enemy" (often regarded as a defining characteristic of martyrdom); in the other organizations the deaths were either suicides or inflicted by their own members. Unlike traditional martyrs, the victims are not venerated, although

their names are inscribed on a memorial at the compound.

While traditionally the term has been applied exclusively to those who die for the Christian faith, the term has been used outside the mainstream Christian tradition. The Bahá'í faith speaks of the Martyrdom of the Báb (Siyid 'Alí Muhammad Shírází, 1819–1850), the forerunner of their prophet Baha'u'llah. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regards founder-leaders Joseph and Hyrum Smith as martyrs, to be counted among "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God" (Rev 6:9; *Doctrine and Covenants* 135:1). Since John uses the phrase "word of God" rather than "the gospel," it is inferred that HB/OT characters can count as martyrs, and hence Abel is cited as the first martyr (Gen 4:2; *Doctrine and Covenants* 138:40). Other Mormon martyrs include Abinadi, who was burnt to death for teaching King Noah's wicked priests the laws of Moses and Christ (Mosiah 17:20), and those inhabitants of the city of Ammonihah, who were burnt at the stake for supporting Alma the Younger and Amulek, his convert.

After twenty-one Copts were beheaded by Islamic State militants on February 21, 2015, Pope Tawadros II, the Primate of the Coptic Church, declared that they should be venerated as martyrs, and they have become known as the "21 Martyrs of Libya," and several other Christians who have died at the hands of terrorists have also been so described. The ultra-conservative organisation the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), however, denies the appropriateness of such description, arguing that they were heretics, since they did not belong to the true Catholic Church. The Coptic Church, however, views such martyrdoms as a fulfillment of Jesus' warning that his followers would be persecuted and killed (John 16:1–3).

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E. World Christianity

In Asia, the Middle East and in Eastern Europe (during Communism era), Christian communities were often or still are minorities in a context of persecution and in some cases martyrdom. In some Latin American countries, many Christians suffered under dictatorships, during guerrilla wars and under societal unrest and injustice. Non-Western Christian voices speak often about martyrdom from a background of experience in their respective contexts. Out of these contexts Christians develop specific approaches to martyrdom. Some of these ap-

proaches are rooted in a Bible-based historic view of martyrdom that has been widely forgotten in Western Christianity. Others try to develop new hermeneutics and new definitions of martyrdom.

South Korean theologian Young Kee Lee's thinking builds on the suffering of the comparatively young Korean church. He tries to find out how far the principle of multiplication mentioned in John 12:24 applies to the suffering church today. Lee perceives suffering and martyrdom as part of the spiritual battle between the "seed of the serpent" and the "seed of the woman" (cf. Gen 3:15 and Rev 12:9). Based on the effects of the suffering and dying of Christ (cf. Isa 53), Lee interprets the death of Christian martyrs as a part of this cosmic spiritual battle. At times, martyrdom looks like a defeat (cf. Heb 11:35b–40), but finally it will be part of Christ's victory.

Similarly, Coptic bishop Anba Youannis reflects on Tertullian's famous saying that the blood of the martyrs is the seed for the church. He claims that the witness of blood offered by the martyrs is more important for the spreading of the Christian message than preaching or education. As a representative of the troubled Christian minority among the Muslim majority of Egypt, Youannis sees martyrdom not only as a possible outcome of Christian witness, but as an instrument of mission. Highlighting the missionary consequences of martyrdom, Youannis refers to Luke 10:3 and to St. Augustine's commentary on this verse: "When the many wolves devoured the few sheep, the wolves have turned into sheep" (Youannis 2008: 259).

Romanian Baptist pastor Josef Ton had to escape his country under the rule of communist dictator Ceausescu. In his theology of suffering and martyrdom he sees suffering as part of God's plans for salvation. His special focus, however, is on the effects that suffering has on the Christian. Suffering transforms the follower of Jesus into the likeness of Christ. The character is developed and the glory of God revealed.

Ton points to the heavenly rewards that await those disciples who have suffered most for Christ (Matt 5:11–12). The resurrection that the apostle Paul longs for (Phil 3:11, in Greek ἐξανάστασις instead of the regular ἀνάστασις, cf. also the "better resurrection" in Heb 11:35) according to Ton is a special resurrection for the martyrs (Ton: 214–15) that grants them special rewards.

A remarkably different approach to martyrdom is found in the Latin American "theology of liberation." In the context of poverty and oppression, proponents of this theology call Christians to radically take sides with the poor and to interpret Scripture with a "bias" for the oppressed. The historical context is made a benchmark for hermeneutics. The duty of the church is not primarily to call people to an eternal life. Instead, mission is liberation.

Among liberation theologians, the Jesuit Jon Sobrino stands out in his thinking and writing about martyrdom. According to him, the martyr is not necessarily the one who dies *for* Jesus, but who dies *like* Jesus (Sauer: 115). According to this interpretation, Jesus died because he proclaimed the kingdom of God for the poor and by doing so came into opposition to the oppressors.

Sobrino pleads for broadening the definition of martyrdom to include not only those who die for their faith in Christ but also those who die while fighting for justice in society. The death as martyr is the climax of a life that was marked by love for the oppressed (Sauer: 128).

Recently some compendia (cf. Taylor) aptly unite voices from Western and Now-Western contexts in order to give a comprehensive approach to Christian martyrdom. They emphasize that suffering, persecution and martyrdom often are connected with Christian missions.

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Wolfgang Häde

V. Islam

Islam grants a rank of honor to believers who lose or sacrifice their lives in the cause of their belief. It also grants a cognate honor to those who struggle to live a godly life and endure patiently the daily tests and difficulties of life by bestowing the same rank upon those who fast, observe prayer, read the Qur'an, and even paying their taxes on time (Lawson). But, the charisma of martyrdom as dying for God, despite attempts during the early centuries to discourage actively seeking death for religious purposes (*talab al-shahāda*) and equating it with the unambiguously condemned suicide, carried on down the centuries. (In this regard, it is of some interest that the first four Rightly-guided caliphs, of whom all but one was murdered, are never referred to as martyrs.) The religious lustre of martyrdom is obvious from the earliest authoritative source, the Qur'an (S 85:4–8), and even more emphatically stated in the Hadith (see below), the second authoritative scripture in Islam. This is upheld in the auxiliary religious sciences of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), sacred biographies of the prophet (*ṣīra*) and his earliest companions (*ʿilm al-rijāl*) and the accounts of the

early battles (*maghāzī*). It is also attested in the jurisprudence of the religious scholars, the *fuqahā*. The word for martyr in these sources is the frequent Qur'anic *shahīd* which means in that book "witness" construed in the legal sense of "eye-witness." Most other Islamic languages (e.g., Persian, Turkish, Urdu) have retained this terminology and have added synonyms from their respective linguistic-cultural sphere. The earliest major Western study of the subject posited a close connection between Christian and Islamic martyrdom on the philological fact that martyr also means witness (Wensinck). Whatever the development that led to the choice of "witness" to designate a believer who has made the ultimate gesture in the path of religion, it is clear that the idea of martyrdom in Islam was thoroughly at home in the early religion even though the one unambiguous use of the term *shahīd* as martyr in the Qur'an is in the plural *shuhadā'* at S 4:69.

However, it should be immediately emphasized that in the Qur'an, the religious value of patient suffering in the face of tests (S 12:18 and 83) is exemplified repeatedly in the lives of numerous prophets and messengers referred to incessantly. As such, their suffering for the truth is to be a model for their community, both individually and collectively. All of God's messengers have been rejected and persecuted (cf. Jer 35:15; Matt 5:12). (The Qur'anic teaching that God never tests his servants beyond their ability to endure is also key here [S 2:286; cf. 49:3; cf. also 1 Cor 10:13].) The Qur'anic teaching that God never tests his servants beyond their ability to endure is also key here (S 2:286; cf. 49:3; cf. also 1 Cor 10:13). It therefore only makes sense that their followers will endure a similar fate. Note that even though the clear majority of Islamic teachings on the topic deny the Crucifixion (and death) of Jesus (based on the quite ambiguous S 4:157) they all nonetheless agree that he suffered severely in his divine mission. Numerous verses in the Qur'an, such as S 2:154, teach that those who suffer or die "in the path of God" (*fī sabīl Allāh*) do not really die but enjoy a special place in paradise post-mortem (Lawson).

In the Hadith, martyrdom is even more unambiguously esteemed and the word *shahīd* frequently used to refer to a martyr.

"The Messenger of God said, The Prophet is in the Garden and the martyr (*shahīd*) is in the Garden and the newborn child is in the Garden and the new-born girl is in the Garden" (from *Musnad*, quoted in Smith/Haddad: 173).

"Paradise [or the gates of paradise] lies under the shadow of the swords"; "God is a guarantee to him who is zealous in His way (*li-man jāhada fī sabīlihi*) ... that He shall make him enter paradise." On the topic of the ordeals of the tomb, from which martyrs are exempted, the Prophet was asked why those who have given their lives in battle will not

have to endure the interrogation of the two angels Munkar and Nakir, and his response is reported as: "They have been put to the test sufficiently by the flashing of swords over their heads." (see Wensinck)

Martyrdom in Islam, like martyrdom in Christianity, may acquire numerous forms. And it is certainly not the only method of gaining entrance to paradise (Günther/Lawson). By the 8th century, theorists were deeming such acts as actual dying for the faith as only one of many and not necessarily the most meritorious. The classical scholars identified numerous meritorious deeds and examples of long-suffering that merited the rank of martyr, such as those who die in an epidemic:

Every one who gives himself wholly to God (*ta-jarrada illāhi*) in the war against his own desires [*nafs*], is a martyr when he meets death going forward without turning back. So the holy warrior is he who makes war against his own desires, as it has been explained by the apostle of God: The "greater war" is the war against one's own desires." And, as the companions said: "We have returned from the lesser war unto the greater one" meaning thereby the war against their own desires (Lawson).

In Islam, as in Christianity, martyrdom means testifying. A martyr is someone who "witnesses" or "testifies" to their faith. In Sufism martyrdom came to be construed in a variety of ways involving devotion to an ethical and spiritual life in which the baser appetites were mortified. Until recently, it was Shi'ism, in which the figure of the supreme martyr, Husayn ibn 'Alī is a central object of contemplation, that most emphasized the ideal of martyrdom. In a beleaguered and frequently despised community from its very beginnings, such an emphasis is not surprising. However, political and religious developments in recent years have given new life to the idea of martyrdom in Islam. In the bibliography below are included several works published in the last ten years that testify to this development.

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Todd Lawson

VI. Literature

In literature, martyrs are used to convey a variety of hardships and types of suffering. Martyrdom is also used in a secular sense in modern literature as it is experienced worldwide and is not solely related to Christian beliefs.

Traditional and religious meanings of martyrs and martyrdom are used in literature to convey ideas of holiness and self-sacrifice. James Joyce offers a direct allusion to Stephen as the first martyr in *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* as he is the patron saint of the protagonist, Stephen Dedalus (1916: 185). Joyce alludes to martyrdom again in *Ulysses* (1922) in Bloom's internal monologue as he sees a flyer about an American evangelist. Bloom sees martyrdom as something that is expected by God when he associates the concept of martyrdom with the flyer's question "Are you saved?" (151). Martyrdom is also equated with sainthood in literature, as is in Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856: 49). In Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831), martyrdom is described as a means to the ends of being perfect. The idea of being perfected is articulated in the gospels (e.g., Matt 5:48). Hugo's allusion refers to the philosopher's stone which must be perfected (21).

While martyrdom in contemporary literature typically draws on a more modern and secular meaning of the word, *The Green Mile* (1996) by Stephen King and *Silence* (1966) by Shusako Endo both retain religiosity in their allusions to martyrdom. In *The Green Mile*, King's protagonist, John Coffey, is a Christ-figure who is executed by the death penalty after being wrongfully accused of murder. Coffey, whose journey in being ridiculed is similar to that of Christ, is martyred by the juridical system as well as his accusers. In *Silence*, Endo recounts the hardship of the Japanese as Portuguese missionaries made efforts to evangelize, in turn recounting stories of Christians, Japanese and foreign, that were martyred for their faith, by the Japanese who retained indigenous beliefs. In Endo's allusions to martyrdom, there is also an element as political and societal martyrdom as the missionary efforts also greatly alter the political structure in Japan.

This political and social definition of martyrdom is used by David Diop, a French West-African poet, in his poem *Le temps du martyre* (1934, *The time of the martyrdom*) where he describes how Africans suffered under white European colonialism. He alludes to martyrdom in the title in order to catalogue the race relations that existed in 20th century French West Africa. This type of oppression is also found in class structure, with the disparity between the high and low classes. Victor Hugo alludes to martyrdom, with class difference as an overarching theme, in *Les Misérables*, as Jean Valjean places a crucifix down on the table in his last moments before death, saying "Voilà le grand martyr," after having

said "Ce n'est rien de mourir; c'est affreux de ne pas vivre" (1862: 301, "Here the great martyr/It is nothing to die; it's awful to not live"). In another of his works, *Napoléon le Petit*, Hugo describes the corruption of uniformed men in war as it is explained to them that their victims are not only victims, but martyrs of the war as well (1852: 12).

Shakespeare alludes to the idea of martyrdom in two of his works within the context of family and romance. In *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), after Juliet drinks the coma-inducing potion in an effort to avoid the marriage to Paris, Capulet describes her as having been martyred as he perceives Juliet as dead. This allusion to martyrdom insinuates that Juliet's apparent death was brought on by the conflict between the pressure to marry Paris and her convictions that she should be with Romeo (4.5.56). Shakespeare also uses martyrdom in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1602) as the character Antiochus, King of Antioch, describes famous princes, like Prince Pericles, as martyrs "slain in cupid's wars" because Hesperides, the beautiful daughter of Antiochus, stands before him (1.1.80). While these allusions to martyrdom are mostly secular, other allusions to martyrdom exaggerate the secular meaning, sometimes resulting in a comedic effect.

Louisa May Alcott draws on a modern, exaggerated definition of martyrdom, including any kind or degree of suffering, in *Eight Cousins* where she describes Aunt Jane as "sailing out of the room with the air of a martyr" after tense conversation with family members (1875: 43). Molière also evokes this comedic, exaggerated definition of martyrdom in three of his plays, *Les Fâcheux* (1661), *Tartuffe* (1664), and *L'École des Maris* (1661). In *Les Fâcheux*, Eraste describes his state after seeing Orphise with another man and not knowing what to think as "un si cruel martyre" to La Montagne (26, "Such a cruel martyrdom"). In *Tartuffe*, Mariane explains to Dorine that she loves Valère and is dreading her fate of marrying Tartuffe. She says "Vois-tu, si l'on m'expose à ce cruel martyre, je te le dis, Dorine, il faudra que j'expire" (77, "You see, if it exposes me to this cruel martyrdom, I tell you, Dorine, I certainly shall die"). Molière exaggerates by using martyrdom to describe Mariane's situation, however it is ironic that in this allusion, martyrdom is equated with death as martyrdom immediately entails death in its traditional definition. Lastly, in *L'École des Maris*, Léonor says to Lisette, "O l'étrange martyre! Que tous ces jeunes fous me paroissent fâcheux! Je me suis dérobée au bal pour l'amour d'eux" (69, "Oh strange martyrdom! What bores all those young fools appear to me! I have stolen away from the ball, on account of them"). Léonor is describing her situation of suitors waiting to meet her, after she has already left the ball to avoid them, as martyrdom. She later says "Et moi, je n'ai rien vu de plus insupportable, et je préférerois le plus simple entretien à

1095 les contes bleus de ces diseurs de rien”, explaining that she has never endured anything worse (69, “And I never endured anything more intolerable. I should prefer the simplest conversation to all the babblings of these say-nothings”). Honoré de Balzac also alludes to a very secular connotation of martyrdom yet he goes to the root definition of dying and suffering for a cause and for beliefs while Molière’s allusions were more comical and superficially related to martyrdom as a concept and biblical theme. In *Béatrix* (1839), Balzac explores a parallel between art and religion. “Écoutez-le: l’artiste est un missionnaire, l’art est une religion qui a ses prêtres et doit avoir ses martyres” (130, “Listen: the artist is a missionary, art is a religion, which has its priests and ought to have its martyrs”).

Lastly, martyrdom in literature can be an expression of a desire to stay true to oneself and do the right thing, even if it means death and self-sacrifice. In Flaubert’s *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, which draws from the medieval tradition of hagiography and allegory, Anthony recounts a thirst for martyrdom bringing him back to Alexandria, saying “la soif du martyr m’entraîna dans Alexandrie” (1874: 6, “The thirst of martyrdom led me back to Alexandria”). While this allusion retains religious connections to martyrdom as a biblical theme, it provides an interesting context as the language suggests Anthony was seeking suffering so that he could be glorified later on as a martyr. In Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958), the character Okonkwo’s suicide can be seen as an expression of Okonkwo’s desire to retain any parts of himself that remained and endured the suffering that the European colonial presence brought upon him (207). This allusion to martyrdom is ironic in that the death of the character is in opposition to Christian missionaries yet resembles Christian martyrs dying for what they believe in and sacrificing themselves. Finally, popular fiction also uses martyrdom to express themes concerning suffering yet holding onto dignity. *The Hunger Games* (2008), by Suzanne Collins holds death as a common theme. In saying that he does not want to give into the Capitol’s desires, Peeta essentially says that he would rather die and be a martyr rather than become an apostate (142). In Collin’s sequel, *Catching Fire* (2009), she alludes to martyrdom directly as Katniss, thinking that death is imminent, says “They can turn me into some kind of martyr for the cause and paint my face on banners, and it will do more to rally people than anything I could do if I was living” (244). These notions of martyrdom are connected to the traditional meanings of martyrdom drawn from the Bible. If she needs to die, Katniss aims to be a martyr so that she can give a testimony and remain a witness to the injustice that she has endured.

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Mary Claire Gibson

VII. Visual Arts

Biblical instances as well as biblical symbols of martyrdom – defined as suffering persecution, torment and death for witnessing and adhering to what one believes to be the truth – are frequent and find their way into art in various forms.

Both biblical and post-biblical martyrs in art often carry, besides their instruments of torture and death, a palm branch, both as a traditional sign of victory and, more specifically, as a symbol of the victory of the spirit over the flesh. In biblical terms the palm branch refers to the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem and to Psalm 92:13: “The just shall flourish as the palm,” interpreted as death itself seen as victory, the victory of Christianity and the promise of entering the paradise of God. When carried in procession or by groups, the palm branches alone, without any narrative or other symbols expressing martyrdom added, may suffice to identify the depicted as martyrs. In other cases however, they cannot, since palm branches are common to Christian iconography, especially in funerary contexts. The arrow and palm branch held by Sebastian in an early 16th century painting by Andrea de Sarto emphasizes Sebastian’s death as having been violent yet even more victorious.

Another biblical symbol of victory and reward is the crown of laurel, palm, or precious metal. Depicted in association with martyrs, the crown may on the one hand refer to the crown of thorns and on the other hand to e.g. 2 Timothy 4:6–8: “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” or to Revelation 2:10: “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”. The left and right lateral walls of the 6th century Sant’Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna are adorned with mosaics depicting female and male saints proceeding towards the east apse, each carrying a crown of precious metal,

decorated with plant motives. The forty martyrs of Sebaste, a subject particularly popular in Orthodox art, are often shown still freezing to death while their forty crowns of martyrdom already descend from heaven.

Although martyrdom is a post-biblical construct, the previously given definition of the concept can be applied to several biblical figures. The accounts of martyrdom in First and Second Maccabees meet the definition very well. The martyrdom of Hannah and her seven sons in 2 Maccabees 7 (see “Hannah and her Seven Sons”), is often depicted in a Christian context and for instance used to reflect the sufferings of Christ.

The holy innocents, according to Matthew massacred at the order of Herod, and thereby indirectly having saved the infant Jesus, are by some, although unofficially, identified as the first martyrs of Christianity. If the event took place, which is unlikely, the little children’s martyrdom cannot have been an act of free will for any cause. Be this as it may, the story has given rise to a vast amount of imagery. Some art works show the emotional moment of the innocents being welcomed in heaven, but the majority depicts the massacre in all its gruesomeness. It seems evident that this biblical event gave artists a great opportunity to show their artistic skills to their public. Many paintings of this massacre from the Italian Renaissance and the Dutch Golden Age show squirming bodies of mothers lamenting dramatically, soldiers brutally chopping off the children’s limbs, while dead little bodies are piling up everywhere. The *Massacre of the Innocents* at the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem (1591) and a painting with the same subject (1590) at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, both by Cornelis van Haarlem show the soldiers of Herod entirely naked, demonstrating how skilled the painter was at rendering the human body.

Chronologically, the next biblical accounts of martyrdom are those of the apostles Peter and John and of Stephen, deacon of the early church of Jerusalem. While according to Acts 4:3–22 and 5:17–42 Peter and John were arrested, questioned by the Sanhedrin, flogged and released – the later martyrdom of Peter is not recorded in Acts –, Stephen was accused of blasphemy and stoned after his long and enraging speech before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7). Officially venerated as the protomartyr, images of Stephen are numerous. Being the first deacon of the church, he is sometimes depicted tonsured, dressed in a deacon’s attire, while holding a model of a church. Furthermore he is often holding a palm branch or stones in his hand, the stones referring to his violent death. Sometimes the stones are placed on his head and shoulders. Of the martyrdom of the twelve apostles that of James, son of Zebedee, is the only one recorded in the Bible. According to Acts 12:2 James was arrested by Herod and beheaded.

In his capacity as a martyr he is depicted carrying a sword.

Perhaps one of the most expressive contemporary artistic representations of the theme is Bill Viola’s video altar piece *Martyrs* (Earth, Air, Fire, Water) which was opened in May 2014 at Saint Paul’s Cathedral in London. The soundless presentation shows four figures on four individual screens, each being martyred by one of the four elements. The figures remain motionless while they are gradually overwhelmed, the first being buried by soil, the second violently attacked by a growing storm while hanging by the wrists, the third surrounded by engulfing flames, while the fourth is strung up by the ankles suffering the surging water. At the height of their violent assault through death each of them passes into the light.

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Esther Mulders

VIII. Film

The study of martyrdom, like film studies, requires attention to the multiple ways their respective subjects can be defined. While film certainly functions to show some thing on the screen, it also functions to orient its audience to a particular way of seeing. Similarly, martyrdom can be defined as an act of willing self-sacrifice and as an interpretive framework; it is the subject matter of a story and a way of telling that story. To look for martyrdom in film then is not just about finding the martyrs in films but about seeing how the conventions of martyrdom and film work together to create meaningful visual encounters with suffering and death.

The historical epic film draws on key elements of early martyrdom accounts – spectacle, violence, and voyeurism – which are crucial to the film’s affective force. Notable examples include the classic films *The Sign of the Cross* (dir. Cecil B. DeMille, 1932, US), *Fabiola* (dir. Alessandro Blasetti, 1949, IT/FR), and *Quo Vadis* (dir. Mervyn LeRoy, 1951, US). They employ larger-than-life set and costume design, as well as hundreds of extras in crowds and battles, to make visible the grandeur of the ancient world. At the same time, their martyr-heroes critique the excesses of this world. The films’ audiences come to identify with the audience that fills the arena, simultaneously entertained by the violent spectacle and converted to the underdog’s side, cheering on the martyrs as they suffer nobly to win back control from those in power.

The 2000 film *Gladiator* (dir. Ridley Scott, US/UK) uses the framework of Christian martyrdom to tell a story set in pre-Christian Rome, particularly

through the role reversals, gendering of virtue, and salvation through death that make the protagonist Maximus heroic. The plot follows first the humiliation of Maximus, who is reduced from celebrated general to despised slave by the jealous and autocratic emperor Commodus, and then its reversal as Maximus' feats of endurance reveal the power of the gladiator-slave and the weakness of the emperor. Commodus himself, though using these words to mock a captured Maximus, communicates the power of this convention: "The general who became a slave. The slave who became a gladiator. The gladiator who defied an emperor. A striking story." This scene further makes visible the martyrological link between suffering and power by showing Maximus chained with arms outstretched like a crucified man. In the background, crossed beams complete the allusion to Christ as proto-martyr, who turns humiliation into redemption.

The film's central conflict between Maximus and Commodus takes shape around two opposing versions of masculinity, echoing the classic gendering of virtue found in early martyrdom accounts. Commodus desires to exercise absolute power in an authoritarian Rome, while Maximus longs to settle down with his family in a free Roman republic. The gladiatorial arena becomes the site for performing their masculinity. By controlling the spectacle through superior discipline, strength, and resolve, Maximus proves his motivation more virtuous and pure. In the end, Maximus achieves victory through an act of mercy as he spares the life of Commodus, and he achieves salvation through his embrace of noble death as he joins his family in the afterlife.

The silent film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (dir. Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1928, FR) highlights the visually evocative nature of martyrdom and the centrality of relics and iconography to its memorialization. Through close-ups and extreme close-ups, Joan's face often fills the frame, becoming both object and lens, echoing the two-fold nature of martyrdom as something having existed in time and place and as a lens for seeing the world. The film's dominant aesthetic is restraint. The actors wear no makeup or wigs, creating a sense of unmediated access to Joan's inner life; her body communicates her faith. The steady close-ups of Joan are interrupted by cuts to the group of male judges and clerics at her trial and later to the frenzied crowd gathered to watch her execution. These shots contrast Joan's passionate faith to the cruelty of the Church that condemns her and to the chaos of the world that rejects her. Through her dress and commitment to military mission, Joan follows earlier female martyrs whose bending of gender norms signals their otherworldliness. In addition, the film offers a number of parallels to Christ's passion, from the obvious reference, including the film's title and the straw crown and sign used to mock Joan during her death, to the

more subtle display of her will when she helps her executioner bind her to the stake by handing him a fallen rope.

Where in some films the close-up offers a sense of intimacy with the martyr's suffering, the sustained use of long shots in other films can offer a sense of cosmic narrative governing the interpretation of that suffering. Striking examples of this use of martyrdom to create narrative closure are treatments of World War II in Soviet cinema and the Iran-Iraq War in Iranian cinema. Notable examples include the Soviet film *Zoya* (dir. Lev Arnshtam, 1944) and the Iranian film *The Scout* (dir. Ebrahim Hatamikia, 1990). These films address the war dead through the image of noble sacrifice, transforming the traumatic memory of mass mobilizations and casualties into the commemoration of foundational events that embody national spirit.

Martyrdom in film sometimes serves to disrupt traditional battle lines and create space for moral reflection that requires abandoning the clarity of a larger governing narrative. This is notable in films about Christian conquest and colonialism. *The Mission* (dir. Roland Joffe, 1986, UK/FR) and *Silence* (dir. Martin Scorsese, 2016, MX/TW/UK/US/JP/IT) treat martyrdom as an ideal that looms large in the psyche of its characters, whose suffering tests the ideal that true faith is expressed through willingness to die and is lost in compromised survival. The colonial landscapes of 18th century South American and 17th century Japan respectively become new ground for exploring the nature of faith and questioning the stability of the martyrdom category. Can faith live in secret or only in public theater? Can one achieve the imitation of Christ through accommodation and collaboration with the "other?"

The 2010 film *Of Gods and Men* (dir. Xavier Beauvois, FR) reframes the Algerian Civil War through the story of the 1996 murder of seven Trappist monks, focusing on the bonds formed between the Christian monks and their Muslim neighbors and showing the suffering of both groups at the hands of government and rebel forces alike. The camerawork is patient and contemplative; time feels slowed as the camera lingers on simple moments of cooperation and friendship. The monks choose to stay in Algeria rather than abandon their neighbors even as the inevitable violence of war closes in on them. The film depicts the monks as martyrs for choosing to be moved by human connection rather than coercion. Here the civil war is not primarily a battle between government and rebels but a battle between the larger agendas that fuel war and the local encounters that create a loving community, with the camera firmly on the side of the local, privileging that often overlooked perspective.

Martyrdom also significantly shapes American biopic films. In *Malcolm X* (dir. Spike Lee, 1992, US/JP) and *Milk* (dir. Gus Van Sant, 2008, US), docu-

mentary footage (the 1991 Rodney King beating and anti-gay riots from 1970s respectively) works to present Malcolm X and Harvey Milk as martyrs for human rights who are not only exceptional in their heroism but also representative of entire communities victimized by systemic violence. By infusing personal tragedy with collective meaning, these films act as martyrological texts. Foreshadowing in both films gives their martyrs a prophetic awareness that highlights their willingness to die for their cause. *Malcolm X* most famously delivers prophecy through the iconic dolly shot of Malcolm X, face stoic and framed by dead branches, walking to the site of his assassination to Sam Cooke's melancholic "A Change is Gonna Come." Even the films' release dates (*Malcolm X* in the aftermath of the L.A. riots and *Milk* during the battle over the Proposition 8 same-sex marriage ban) tell us something about the cultural legacy of martyrdom as these films become political acts in their mobilization of past image to shape their present audience.

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Rosanne Morici

See also → Death, Dying; → Hannah and her Seven Sons; → Jesus; → John the Baptist; → Macabees

Martyrdom of Isaiah

→ Isaiah, Martyrdom and Ascension of

Marx, Karl

The German philosopher, economist, socio-historian, and revolutionary Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1883), known simply as Karl Marx, had relatively little to say directly about the Bible. He left that task in their collaborative work to Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), who had been a believer and had studied the Bible intensely in his youth. Most of Marx's observations appear as allusions, which had entered the cultural frame as modes of expression. But there is one exception: an essay by a youthful Marx on the Gospel of John. We will begin with this essay, before offering a thematic overview of Marx's allusions.

1. John 15: The Union of Believers with Christ. The essay was written as part of the Trier gymnasium's final examinations in 1835, seeking to test Christian doctrine and biblical exegesis. The text was John 15:1–14, which includes the allegory of

the vine and its branches (John 15:1–11) and part of the commandment of love (John 15:12–17). In connecting the two (excluding some verses), the love commandment becomes upon examination a commentary on the vine allegory.

Marx's answer reveals two tensions, of content and form. As for content, by the essay's end Marx contradicts himself. He begins by arguing that however much we may strive towards God, we can never reach God on our own. For this we need Christ, who meets and helps us on the last steps. Later, Marx offers a more dialectical argument, suggesting that the only way to achieve a fully human virtue is to fix our eyes solely on God; our singular love for God through Christ will make us fully human. Human virtue on its own offers only a "dark distorted image," the "offspring of a harsh theory of duty," filled with "repulsive aspects" and "coarseness" (MECW 1:638–39; MEW 40:601). The only source of truly human virtue is God, giving human beings the ability to face misfortune with calm assurance and suffering with consolation. This tension, moving between a role for good works and their sole source in God, may be described as one between a more Pelagian emphasis and an Augustinian one.

The second tension is formal, appearing in the examination question: "The union of believers with Christ according to John 15:1–14, showing its basis and essence, its absolute necessity, and its effects." This is clearly a catechetical question that is in tension with the metaphorical and poetic language of the text. Although Marx attempts to answer in catechetical terms, he continually finds himself seduced by the different formal temptations of John's text. To give one example: "Thus, penetrated with the conviction that this union is absolutely essential, we are desirous of finding out in what this lofty gift consists, this ray of light which descends from higher worlds to animate our hearts, and bears us purified aloft to heaven" (MECW 1:637; MEW 40:599).

The contradictions in question arise not from Hegelian philosophy (as with the later Marx), but from the theological tradition – in terms of grace and works and between poetic texts and doctrinal positions. To conclude with the examiner's assessment: "It is profound in thought, brilliantly and forcefully written, deserving of praise, although the topic – the essence of union – is not elucidated, its cause is dealt with only one-sidedly, its necessity is not proved adequately" (MECW 1:758, n. 198).

2. Biblical Allusions. Given that biblical allusions pepper all of Marx's texts, one cannot provide a full list here. Instead, distinct types are identified with an example in each case.

In his early journalistic writings, Marx worked hard to outwit the Prussian censors, although in the end he too succumbed, giving up editing the *Rheinische Zeitung* and leaving Prussia. For example, in