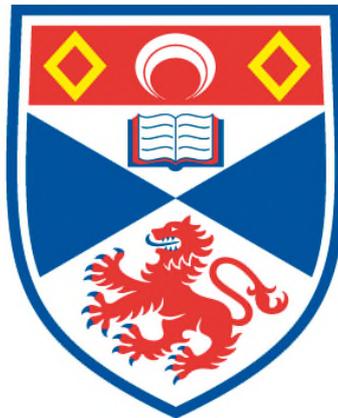


**PATRISTIC RECEPTION AND APOCALYPTIC CHARACTER:
THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS AS AUTHORITATIVE BOOK
IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY**

Dan Batovici

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews**



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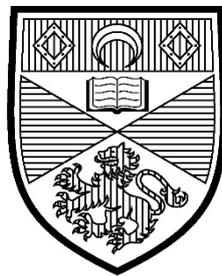
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Patristic Reception and Apocalyptic Character:
The Shepherd of Hermas as Authoritative Book
in Early Christianity

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University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment
for the degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews

5 January 2016

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PATRISTIC RECEPTION AND APOCALYPTIC CHARACTER:
THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS AS AUTHORITATIVE BOOK IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

ABSTRACT

This MPhil thesis is an enquiry into the reception history of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, aiming to a better understanding of the earliest circulation of the Shepherd as authoritative text in early Christianity. Specifically, it hypothesizes and tries to document the perhaps obvious but nevertheless understudied link between the alleged scriptural status of the *Shepherd* with some early Patristic authors and its apocalyptic character. To that end, this thesis gathers an investigation of how its apparent scriptural character during Antiquity was dealt with in the recent bibliography on the New Testament canon, an analysis of *Hermas*' earliest Patristic reception (by the means of a thorough assessment of Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria), and a reconsideration of its apocalyptic character, as the possible source of its authority.

Overall, this research is proposed as shedding light on our understanding of how and why *Hermas* was authoritative in the earliest Christian centuries, which in turn would be relevant for the larger question of the circulation of authoritative texts in early Christianity. In particular, this research opens new ways for better addressing questions pertaining to the circulation and authority of early Christian *non-NT* works in Late Antiquity.

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INTRODUCTION

This MPhil thesis is an enquiry into the reception history of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, aiming to a better understanding of the earliest circulation of the Shepherd as authoritative text in Early Christianity. Specifically, it hypothesizes and tries to document the perhaps obvious but nevertheless understudied link between the alleged scriptural status of the *Shepherd* with some early Patristic authors and its apocalyptic character. To that end, this thesis gathers an investigation of how its apparent scriptural character during Antiquity was dealt with in the recent bibliography on the New Testament canon, an analysis of *Hermas'* earliest Patristic reception, and a reassessment of its apocalyptic character as the possible source of its authority.

Having explored an instance of *Hermas'* manuscript reception for my previous graduate degree,¹ I have turned, for the current research, to the Patristic reception of the *Shepherd*, inquiring into the nature of its authority in each discrete point of this strand of its reception. This is still the starting point and the core of the thesis; however, as will be shown presently, the very process of research prompted a supplementary direction of investigation (relating to its apocalyptic character) that needed to be incorporated in the thesis in order to offer a better refined account of, and a rounder view of, *Hermas'* reception. Given the limited space of an MPhil thesis, this meant that instead of a comprehensive treatment, the Patristic investigation had to be narrowed down to the earliest significant sample. Hence the structure of the thesis goes as follows:

(I) The first chapter is mainly a survey of the presence of the *Shepherd* in the current bibliography concerned with the New Testament canon and its margins. It also brings to the discussion punctual analysis of other relevant early Christian sources, attempting for instance to reassess the relevance of the Muratorian fragment for *Hermas'* reception as authoritative work.

(II and III) Provided that the Patristic authors most important for our topic (who seem to have used the text of the *Shepherd*) are arguably Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria, the second and third chapters are an in-depth examinations of all possible references to the *Shepherd* in the works of these two authors, in order to see what they reveal about the authority the two ascribed to it. The results of this analysis raise two distinct matters: the possible scriptural status of *Hermas* in these authors, and its relationship to the apocalyptic character of this work. The former points thus to an effect, or perhaps shape, of *Hermas'*

¹ This resulted in the following forthcoming publications: "The Appearance of Hermas' Text in Codex Sinaiticus," in *Codex Sinaiticus: New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript*, edited by S. McKendrick, D. Parker, A. Myshrall & C. O'Hogan (London: British Library, 2015), 149-159, and "Textual Revisions of the Shepherd in Codex Sinaiticus," *ZAC/JAC* 18/3 (2014).

authority—the apparent scriptural status ascribed to *Hermas* in Early Christianity—and relates to, and is informed by, the first chapter.

(IV) The latter, however, required further investigation into *Hermas*' apocalyptic character in order to better grasp how it relates to its authority, especially since its very inclusion in the apocalyptic genre is sometimes contested. The fourth chapter, therefore, explores the apparent link between the fact that the *Shepherd* is an early Christian apocalyptic text and its subsequent authoritative reception; if the scriptural status is to be regarded as an *effect* of *Hermas*' authority, this chapter is an in depth analysis of a probable *cause* of *Hermas*' authority in the Early Church.

In this twofold approach to the question of the reception of the *Shepherd*, the ongoing scholarly discussion is advanced on various points. With regard to the murky matter of *Hermas*' earliest reception, the following offers an integrated view of *Hermas*' presence and standing in the two Patristic authors. As regards the reason for *Hermas*' early reception, the following proposes a better articulated picture as to how its apocalyptic character might have influenced and fuelled its authority in the early Church. In the process, two adjacent matters are furthered: *Shepherd*'s bearing on the 'canon debate,' and, more importantly, the debate over *Hermas*' apocalyptic character, especially with regard to its moral, non-apocalyptic material.

Overall, this research is important for our understanding of how and why *Hermas* was authoritative in the earliest Christian centuries, an issue relevant for the larger question of the circulation of authoritative texts in early Christianity. In particular, this research opens new ways for better addressing the question pertaining to the circulation and authority of early Christian non-NT works in Late Antiquity.

The Book and Its Wider Reception

For a bit of context, the *Shepherd of Hermas*² is a rather peculiar Christian work, likely written in Rome sometimes between c. 70 and c. 150.³ Describing a number of visions Hermas experiences and long – also revealed – interpretations of them, the text of the *Shepherd* is “imbued with symbolism and allegorization,”⁴ yet “with a clear-cut focus on the present and serving catechetical and pastoral purposes.”⁵ Indeed, “one of

² In the following, 'Hermas' and the 'Shepherd' designate the respective characters of the book, and in the case of the former, either the character or the author, while '*Hermas*', the '*Shepherd*' and the '*Shepherd of Hermas*' (but Herm.) designate the book.

³ For a discussion of the traditional arguments for *Hermas*' dating see Andrew Gregory, “Disturbing Trajectories: *1 Clement*, the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the Development of Early Roman Christianity,” in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*, edited by Peter Oakes (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 142-166, esp. 151-153.

⁴ Joseph Verheyden, “The Shepherd of Hermas,” *ExpT* 117 (2006): 397-401; the quote is from p. 397.

⁵ Verheyden, “Hermas,” 398.

the persistent puzzles of the *Shepherd*, whose theological views appear so strange to modern scholarship, is that it fared so well in the early Church.”⁶

To be sure, the corpus of data forming *Hermas*’ reception history is by and large fourfold: apart from a) *Hermas*’ peculiar standing in the works of subsequent Patristic authors with all its particularities, we have b) a wealth of early manuscripts preserving its text, and c) a number of ancient translations we have of the *Shepherd*; moreover, the *Shepherd* is mentioned in various manners on a number of d) canonical lists.

Indeed, introductions to *Hermas* hardly ever omit to mention it might have been considered scriptural by Patristic authors⁷ such as Irenaeus of Lyon,⁸ Clement of Alexandria⁹ and Didymus the Blind;¹⁰ at any rate, it seems to have been regarded as a revealed text by Origen.¹¹ There are also reports from Eusebius, Jerome and Rufinus according to which *Hermas* was read in churches throughout the fourth century.¹² Other antique sources present themselves as less enthusiastic about the *Shepherd*: testimonies such as those of the *Muratorian fragment*¹³ and Athanasius’ *Festal Letter* 39¹⁴ are explicitly denying it any sort of scriptural status;

⁶ Bogdan Gabriel Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 95; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), ix.

⁷ An extended survey of testimonies up to the sixth century on *Hermas* can be found in N. Brox, *Der Hirt des Hermas* (Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1991), 55-71; P. Henne, *L’unité du Pasteur d’Hermas* (Cahiers Revue Biblique 31; Paris 1992), 15-44. See also M. Whittaker, *Der Hirt des Hermas* (Die Apostolischen Väter 1; Berlin 1967²), xix-xx; C. Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 4-7; R.M. Grant, “Apostolic Fathers First Thousand Years,” *Church History* 31 (1962): 421-429, and H. Chadwick, “The New Edition of *Hermas*,” *JTS* 8 (1957): 274-280.

⁸ See discussion in Brox, *Der Hirt*, 57-61; C.E. Hill, “The Writing which Says ...: The Shepherd of Hermas in the Writings of Irenaeus,” *Studia Patristica* 65/13 (2013): 127-138; M.C. Steenberg, “Irenaeus on Scripture, *Graphe*, and the Status of *Hermas*,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 53/1 (2009): 29-66; B. Hemmerdinger, “Observations critiques sur Irénée, IV (Sources Chrétiennes 100) ou les mésaventures d’un philologue,” *JTS* 17/2 (1966): 308-326, esp. n. 3 at 308; P. Henne, “Canonicité du ‘Pasteur’ d’Hermas,” *Revue Thomiste* 90 (1990): 81-100, esp. 82-87. See also Y.-M. Blanchard, *Aux sources du le canon, le témoignage d’Irénée* (Paris : Cerf, 1993), 129, n. 7.

⁹ J.A. Brooks, “Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon,” *Second Century* 9/1 (1992): 41-55.

¹⁰ B.D. Ehrman, “The New Testament Canon of Didymus the Blind,” *VC* 37/1 (1983): 1-21.

¹¹ Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 5: “Origen used it freely with scriptural arguments in his earlier years, becoming cooler toward it as time went on.”

¹² References in G.M. Hahneman, “The Muratorian Fragment and the Origins of the New Testament Canon,” in *The Canon Debate*, edited by L.M. McDonald and J.A. Sanders (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 405-415, at 411.

¹³ The text is presented in G.M. Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 6-7. See also C.E. Hill, “The Debate over the Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 57/2 (1995): 437-452.

¹⁴ A. Camplani, *Atanasio di Alessandria. Lettere festali; Anonimo. Indice delle lettere festali* (Letture Cristiane del Primo Millennio 34; Milan: Paoline, 2003), 498-518. See also G. Aragione, “La *Lettre festale* 39 d’Athanasie. Présentation et traduction de la version copte et de l’extrait grec,” in *Le canon du Nouveau Testament. Regards nouveaux sur l’histoire de sa formation*, edited by G. Aragione, E. Junod and E. Norelli (La Monde de la Bible 54; Geneva: Labour et Fides, 2005), 198-219, and D. Brakke, “A New Fragment of Athanasius’ Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*: Heresy, Apocrypha, and the Canon,” *HTR* 103/1 (2010): 47-66.

yet in that they also deem this writing useful, they offer further evidence for the authority *Hermas* has enjoyed for some centuries.¹⁵

On the manuscript side, *Hermas* is better represented among the papyri than most of the New Testament texts taken apart.¹⁶ Beyond that, as is well known, *Hermas* is the last book – after the *Epistle of Barnabas* – of what has survived of the 4th century full Greek Bible manuscript known as Codex Sinaiticus. In addition, there are a number of versions which have survived in a variety of languages, hinting further at the popularity of this text: *Hermas* was translated into Latin (two different translations, one probably from the 2nd century), Ethiopic, Coptic (we have fragments of both Akhmimic and Sahidic versions), Middle Persian¹⁷ and Georgian. As a direct result of the antique testimonies on *Hermas*, its name is among the first to emerge in scholarly discussion concerning the fluid margins of the biblical canon in the first four centuries.¹⁸

1 *Problem, Question and Method*

Problem

Granted, the early data concerning the reception of the *Shepherd of Hermas* is altogether remarkable; yet it remains far from clear what to make of it in terms of what it means, and of its causes. As such, the nature of *Hermas*' authority remains unclear, and the significance of its authority in various points of its reception is still very much disputed.

¹⁵ Beyond Patristic testimonies, *Hermas*' history of reception also includes a number of variants, as it was translated into Latin (twice, first probably from the 2nd century), Ethiopic, Coptic (we have fragments of both Akhmimic and Sahidic versions), Middle Persian and Georgian. Furthermore, "among the papyri, *Hermas* is preserved on a scale usually reserved for the New Testament and LXX. [...] *Hermas* is considerably better attested than any other non-scriptural Christian text:" M. Choat and R. Yuen-Collingridge, "The Egyptian *Hermas*: The *Shepherd* in Egypt before Constantine," in *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach*, edited by T.J. Kraus and T. Nicklas (TENT 5; Leiden/Boston, 2010), 191-212, at 196. Last but not least, in Codex Sinaiticus, the mid-4th century Greek Bible manuscript, the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas* are bound together with the Septuagint and with the texts that eventually became the New Testament.

¹⁶ Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, "The Egyptian *Hermas*," 196.

¹⁷ Michael Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers: Greek Text and English Translation*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 448-489.

¹⁸ E.g. B.M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament. Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 63-67; Hahneman, *Muratorian Fragment*, 34-72; A.G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament: Origin, Collection, Text and Canon* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 104-105; J. Barton, *Holy Writings, Sacred Text: The Canon in Early Christianity* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 18-21, 26-9, 66, etc.; B.D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures. Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) 251-279; B.D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities. The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 231-245.

Research question(s)

To be sure, the general question addresses the very nature of authority enjoyed by the *Shepherd* in early Christianity.

For the first chapter, this translates into a survey of the presence of *Hermas* in the recent bibliography on the New Testament canon, given that for early Christian works the question of authority is linked one way or another to matters pertaining to the formation of this particular canon. The specific question pertains to establishing which categories provided in current scholarship are suitable for the evidence of *Hermas*' reception in early Christianity.

For the second and third chapter, this involves the more specific question as to what we can safely say about the authority of the *Shepherd of Hermas* in the two points of its Patristic reception – the works of Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria.

For the fourth chapter, the question to be answered pertains to the apocalyptic nature of *Hermas*, and specifically to the relation between the 'less-apocalyptic' material and denser apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd*. This admittedly complementary direction of inquiry is nevertheless directly relevant for the main topic, given that, as will be shown, Clement, who seems to see this work as inspired, does so by also quoting from the 'less-apocalyptic' material.

Method

It would be best to establish at the outset what will be here considered to be reception of *Hermas* in the case of the two selected Patristic authors. To that end, some terminological considerations are in order; for that, we can use an already existent model: a *reference* will denote a general "apparent use of one text in another;" a *quotation* a "significant degree of verbal identity with the source cited," and an *allusion* will stand for an instance that contains 'less verbal identity.'¹⁹ There is no need to determine more closely the differences between *quotation* and *allusion*, as any of them "if established, may each be sufficient to indicate the use" of the earlier text "directly or indirectly" in the later text.²⁰

Further terms need to be defined:

Rhetorical reference: the author simply formulates his thoughts employing a quotation from an earlier text. As such, it forms a rhetorical device: the insertion confers an additional value to the text. If the quoted

¹⁹ A. Gregory and C. Tuckett (eds.), *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers; Oxford: OUP, 2005), 64-55. See also, more recently, Lorne R. Zelyck, "Method for identifying the reception of the Fourth Gospel" in his *John among the Other Gospels* (WUNT 2/347; Tübingen 2013), 13-21.

²⁰ Gregory and Tuckett, *Reception*, 65.

text is in high regard, the second text builds upon the authority of the source.²¹ In general, Irenaeus' text is full of this type of parallels and scriptural words and expressions.

Argumentative references are any quotations and allusions which, within an argument, verify and claim its validity. Whether they are the starting point or, at the other end, a confirmation, their function is the same: they validate the argument. Arguably, both these types of argumentative references form an exegesis of the quoted text and therefore can overlap. In both cases, the text used by means of quotation or allusion is held as authoritative text, whose authority validates the assertion/argument. The presence of either a *rhetorical* or an *argumentative reference* shows that the quoted text is held as authoritative by the later author; yet what that authority stands for still remains to be determined by other means.

For all purposes, the question of *whether* the Patristic author uses *Hermas* must precede that of *how* it is used and regarded, otherwise the results would be prone to collapse, as they can be shown to have been built upon insecure evidence.

Yet how can a quotation or an allusion be ascertained? There is an extended bibliography in a vicinal area, which is most useful for assessing such a question with respect to *Hermas*, especially regarding authors who wrote in a short span of time after *Hermas* was written: the textual reception of the New Testament in the second century.²² To be sure, scholars seeking traces of New Testament early influence in the larger frame of the second century writings follow, more or less, two paradigms, one maximalist, and the other minimalist. É. Massaux and H. Köster illustrate them respectively.²³

Köster has proposed a criterion by which the dependence of one text on another can be assessed.²⁴ Within this admittedly minimalist approach, Köster's places the solution of the problem in redactional criticism:²⁵ his criterion states that a reading can only be considered a certain use of a text in another, if it contains an identifiable redactional peculiarity of the first text. The main implication is that if strong verbal agreement is found between the two texts, but is not a sure case of a redactional element of the latter, this cannot point to dependence but, at most, to a common source. Compared to Massaux, who seems to firstly assume the

²¹ If the quoted text is in low regard, the effect is ironical etc.

²² These considerations draw upon D. Batovici, "The Second Century Reception of John: A Survey of Methodologies," *CBR* 10/3 (2012): 396-409.

²³ Works that have previously considered the maximalist and minimalist scholar trends illustrated respectively by Massaux and Köster when regarding the New Testament textual reception in the second century include: Andrew Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus. Looking for Luke in the Second Century* (WUNT 2/169; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 5-15; A. Gregory and C. Tuckett, "Reflections on Method: What constitutes the Use of the Writings that later formed the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers?," in Gregory and Tuckett, *Reception*, 71-76; Arthur J. Bellinzoni, "The Gospel of Luke in the Apostolic Fathers: An Overview," in Gregory and Tuckett, *Reception*, 46-48 and 51-52.

²⁴ Helmut Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, (TU 65; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957).

²⁵ Helmut Koester, "Written Gospels or Oral Tradition," *JBL* 113 (1994), 297.

knowledge and use of the New Testament book and then to proceed measuring its extent, Köster “sets out to determine whether the use of the gospels may be established at all.”²⁶

More recently A. Gregory and C. Tuckett reassessed the methodology concerning the problematic of reception and submit to Köster’s criterion,²⁷ in an effort to avoid what might lead to a “tendency to parallelomania.”²⁸ For this thesis, a minimalist approach is obviously the better fit, given that one needs to avoid the risk of building on the shaky grounds of a more inclusive approach.

It might be best thus to keep the discussion consistent with each one of the presented methodologies: should enough Hermas material in a given later author be found to ascertain the presence of identifiable redactional material from Hermas, we might argue for *dependence* on and *use* of Hermas. Should only material be found that rather falls under the more permissive sides of an approach akin to that of Massaux we should be very wary about claiming *dependence* (or *knowledge*, for that matter).

Yet the question of how each of the two approaches would be applicable in the case of *Hermas* begs further considerations. Koester’s criterion is, to our understanding, imagined as a solution which responds to specific synoptic issues: should one find a fragment resembling Mark, it is still to be shown why it would not be borrowed from one of the parallel fragments in the other two synoptic gospels. Redactional criticism is proposed as a solution to address that question. In Hermas’ case, there is no text which might act for the *Shepherd* as either Mark or Q do for Luke and Matthew in the Two-Source Theory; nor as Matthew (and Luke) acts for Mark in the Griesbach Theory. Considering this, the *minimalist* criterion might just prove to be a *negative* one as far as the reception of *Hermas* in the second century is concerned.

Furthermore, the question as to what constitutes redactional elements in *Hermas* remains however open. A possible example of how this issue may be addressed can be found in a parallel discussion on Mark of David B. Peabody, whose approach aims to identify recurrent and habitual phraseology as redactional features of the author of Mark.²⁹

²⁶ Gregory and Tuckett, *Reception*, 71.

²⁷ Gregory and Tuckett, *Reception*.

²⁸ Gregory and Tuckett, *Reception*, 76.

²⁹ David Barrett Peabody, *Mark as Composer*, (New Gospel Studies 1; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987).

I. THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS IN RECENT SCHOLARSHIP ON THE CANON

After a few preliminary terminological remarks, I will first survey historical scholarship focused on the *Shepherd*, on the Patristic authors who mention *Hermas*, and on the manuscripts with its text, scholarship that tackles the issue of *Hermas*' possible "canonicity." The last part will deal with scholarship at the other end of the spectrum, namely the more synthetic and comparative approaches in scholarship dealing specifically with the New Testament canon (even if starting from the *Shepherd*). Due to inherent space limitations, this chapter inevitably has an element of selection to it, both in terms of what scholarly takes on the matter are included here and with regard to which of the witnesses to the reception of *Hermas* are brought into discussion. It is hoped, however, that it will offer a rather relevant backdrop for the general topic of the thesis.

1. Preliminary Remarks

For a plus of precision, I should like to place the following within the ongoing discussion on the terminology regarding the biblical canon.³⁰ As a means to account for the authoritative use of texts in early Christianity, A. Sundberg notoriously proposes the distinction between *scripture* "as writings regarded as in some sense authoritative," and *canon* "as a closed collection of scripture to which nothing can be added, nothing subtracted."³¹ Several Biblical scholars—but also scholars in the field of History of Religions—have tried to refine this typology. Within a volume of devised for the latter domain, G. T. Sheppard—and since followed in Biblical Studies by L. M. McDonald³²—proposes perhaps a more neutral terminology for largely the same realities; he holds *canon 1* "to refer to a rule, standard, ideal, norm, or authoritative office or literature" displaying "internal signs of elevated status," and *canon 2* "to signify a temporary or perpetual fixation,

³⁰ For a very helpful survey on the theories surrounding the New Testament canon see Harry Y. Gamble, "The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis," in *The Canon Debate*, edited by L. M. McDonald & J. A. Sanders (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 267-294. For a more recent overview on the issues involved in the matter, see J. Verheyden, "The New Testament Canon," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From the Beginnings to 600*, edited by J. Carleton Paget and J. Schapper (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), 389-411. A recent survey on terminology is available in Tomas Bokedal, "Dimensions of the Concept of canon as applied to the Biblical Writings," in his *The Formation and Significance of the Christian Biblical Canon: A Study in Text, Ritual and Interpretation* (London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 64-70.

³¹ Albert C. Sundberg Jr., "Toward a Revised History of the New Testament Canon," *Studia Evangelica* 4 (1968): 452-561, at 452-454.

³² E.g. Lee Martin McDonald, "The Integrity of the Biblical Canon in Light of Its Historical Development," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 6 (1996): 95-132, esp. 101-103, or, more recently, his *Formation of the Bible: The Story of the Church's Canon* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2012), 32.

standardization, enumeration, listing, chronology, register, or catalog of exemplary or normative persons, places or things.”³³ K. W. Folkert too keeps with the *canon 1* and *2* typology, but re-sets it on a more functional level, emphasizing instead the dual way in which scripture works in a community: “Canon I’s place in a tradition is largely due to its ‘being carried’ by some other form of religious activity,” and its significance “cannot be grasped fully without reference to its carrier and to the relationship between the two. ... Canon II most commonly serves as a vector of religious authority.”³⁴ Of the two, the latter only is “normative, true, and binding.”³⁵

For his part, in a series of his late articles, F. Bovon proposes a threefold categorization as a means to explaining the status of texts which seem to escape a too sharp distinction between “those that were canonical and those that were rejected as apocryphal:”³⁶ canonical, rejected and books useful for the soul. To be sure, this is paralleled in ancient testimonies,³⁷ and Bovon develops it somewhat without interaction with previous terminological efforts in the field, as those listed above. In fact, his proposal is not fundamentally new: if his first category of books would certainly overlap with *canon 2*, the same would be true at least to some extent of his category of works ‘useful for the soul’ as paralleled in Sundberg’s *scripture* and *canon 1* of the other authors, or perhaps whatever remains when subtracting the books in the *canon 2*. All in all, the reminder that not all books outside *canon 2* are books to be rejected is certainly welcome; as it were, books of *canon 1* along with those of *canon 2*.³⁸

³³ Gerald T. Sheppard, “Canon,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion 3: Second Edition*, edited by Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2005 [1987]) 1405-1411, at 1407, where he also adds that “the essential nature and status of a normative tradition or a ‘scripture’ within a religion inevitably emerges through its own unique, dialectal interplay between these polarities.”

³⁴ Kendall W. Folkert, “The ‘Canons’ of Scripture” in *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective*, edited by M. Levering (Albany N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1989), 170-179, at 173.

³⁵ Folkert, “Canons,” 176. In modern terms, “the liturgical churches’ Bible is clearly best understood, if one is seeking its full function in the community, as a Canon I phenomenon,” as it is “vectored by the ritual processes of eucharist and sacred calendar;” on the other hand, “the non-liturgical churches’ Bible is of a Canon II variety. ... [T]he Protestant churches, by and large, are those whose Bible is Canon II,” at 178.

³⁶ François Bovon, “Beyond the Book of Acts: Stephen, the First Christian Martyr, in Traditions Outside the New Testament Canon of Scripture,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32/2 (2005): 93-107, at 93. Moreover: “Contrary to a commonly held assumption, Christian churches from late antiquity to the Renaissance acknowledged not two groups of texts but three – those that were canonical, those that were rejected (apocryphal), and those that were useful for private piety, edification of the community, and a historical understanding of Christian origins,” at 101. In the 2012 article, however, all four AFs are mentioned as examples for this category: F. Bovon, “Beyond the Canonical and the Apocryphal Books, the Presence of a Third Category: The Books Useful for the Soul,” *HTR* 105/2 (2012): 125-137, at 127.

³⁷ Cf. J. Carleton Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas. Outlook and Background* (WUNT 2/64; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 248, who notes that a “threefold division is clearly attested by Eusebius in the East and by Rufinus in the West,” the former distinguishing between *ὁμολογούμενα*, *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, and *νόθοι* (*H.E.* 3.25: 1f), and the latter between *canonici*, *ecclesiastici* and *apocryphy* (*On the Creed*, 36).

³⁸ Still other authors discuss the margins of the New Testament canon in connection with various conflicts and power-plays in early Christianity, e.g. B.D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 229-246; David Brakke, “Scriptural Practices in Early Christianity: Towards a New History of the New Testament Canon,” in *Invention, Rewriting, Usurpation: Discursive Fights over Religious Traditions in Antiquity*

In the following, the terminology of “scripture” and “canon” will be preferred, given that the latter conveys clearly the closed, binding, character that differentiates it from the former, which in turn offers a space in which authoritative texts can emerge as such. Having said that, whenever an author mentioned in this survey does not seem to employ this distinction in any of its forms it will be assumed that they mean “canon” (or canon 2) irrespective of whether they use “canon” or “scripture” (or their cognates).

2. *Literature on Hermas and Its Reception*

A. *Patristics*

Most of the literature on the reception of *Herimas* among early Christian authors acknowledges the high esteem the *Shepherd* enjoyed but is very temperate in tone and quite wary about canonical judgments, especially when speculating on the matter. For example, in the case of Clement of Alexandria, C.P. Cosaert notes:

“While it is impossible to say definitely what additional books Clement would include in his NT canon, frequency of citation and authoritative references indicate it would probably include 1 Clement, Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Didache.”³⁹

Assessing the matter at hand with regard to the same antique author, J.A. Brooks cautiously uses “scripture” instead of “canon” about such texts (and the way he uses the latter suggests that he does distinguish one way or another between the two) and concludes, after having noted that “a passage [from Hermas] is commented upon as though it were scripture:”

“Therefore it is possible—even probable—that Clement recognized as scripture four or five early Christian writings which ultimately failed to find a place in the canon.”⁴⁰

The reason for this cautiousness is rather obviously the rather unnerving fact that the Patristic texts that seem to quote *Herimas* as authoritative are, as will be shown in the next chapter, far from explicit as to the nature of this authority.

edited by J. Ulrich, A.-C. Jacobsen and D. Brakke (Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 11; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), 263-280.

³⁹ Carl P. Cosaert, *The Text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria* (TNGF 9; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), n. 5, 22.

⁴⁰ Brooks, “The Canon of Clement,” 47.

Nonetheless, there are authors who interpreted this data in a more decided manner. A. Jülicher noted in 1904 in an optimistic manner that “The ‘Shepherd’ of Hermas was treated by practically all the Greek theologians of the third century who had the occasion to use it as a canonical document.”⁴¹

For his part, B.D. Ehrman comments on the function of a *Hermas* quotation in Didymus the Blind’s commentary on Job, where the validity of a principle formulated in Job seems to be established through the *Hermas* quotation, and contends that

“From this solitary passage it should be clear that Didymus considers the Shepherd canonical. Not only does he use it to validate his interpretation of Scripture (a “canonical verification”), but also, in so doing, he presents it as a canonical equal to 2 Corinthians by placing of an element of his interpretation, the other as a Scriptural amplification of a different element.”⁴²

It would seem that in the line of his argument it would be more or less necessary that he equates “scriptural” and “canonical” (with the sense of “canonical” as described in the preliminary remarks). Although Ehrman’s analysis clearly goes a long way to emphasize the importance of *Hermas* for Didymus the Blind, perhaps other ways to interpret the evidence remain possible. Since Didymus does not seem to be bothered by a “canonical” question in the modern sense, I do not see why it would be less possible that Didymus was working with largely authoritative, scriptural, Christian texts to validate the canonical text he is commenting upon.

B. *The Papyri*

The *Hermas* papyri tend to emerge in most recent discussions involving its possible canonicity, given that there are more papyri with its text than most of the texts of our New Testament taken separately.⁴³

Malcolm Choat and Rachel Yuen-Collingridge have recently published a paper on the reception of Hermas in Egypt before Constantine.⁴⁴ The authors find at the outset that the question of whether or not Hermas was canonical is “the wrong question,” since it “cannot withstand methodological scrutiny, as the concept of canonicity is debatable and elastic.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ A. Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1904), 521, quoted in G.M. Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 63.

⁴² Ehrman, “The Canon of Didymus,” 11-12.

⁴³ Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, “The Egyptian Hermas,” 196.

⁴⁴ Based also on Patristic testimonia who seem to attest that Hermas has been used for catechetical purposes, the two authors argue that ‘its dramatic attestation in early Christian world, and the proliferation of manuscripts of it in pre-Constantinian Egypt’ is explained by that Hermas is a catechetical text which includes a catechesis: “as Hermas has the mysteries of the world explained to him, so were they explained to the catechumens,” in Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, “The Egyptian Hermas,” 203. This is a very interesting proposal: Hermas was copied so much before the time of Constantine because it is an enhanced catechetical text. I would note that it points more to a *how* rather than *why*, with regard to answering the initial question: “why were the works of Hermas so popular?”, at 191.

⁴⁵ Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, “The Egyptian Hermas,” 191.

However, they do address the canonical question in their paper on two occasions. They also seem to take a firm stance on the matter. In fact, the text continues thus: “Actually, there should have never been any argument over whether or not the works of Hermas were canonical.” To back that up, a brief review of ancient witnesses who do not hold Hermas in the highest esteem follows. Then Irenaeus, Clement and Didymus are mentioned as authors where “Hermas is used *as if* he had authority of scripture.”⁴⁶ The canonical matter is picked-up again later on, in passing, where the opinion of the authors is again clear: “Whether or not Hermas was considered canonical – and the evidence strongly suggests he was not – it was thought worthwhile to include the work in collection of Christian material.”⁴⁷

This stance might be deemed bold. It would also be a poorly argued one, since it does not take into account the methodological problems the authors otherwise mention in the first quotation. Leaving the methodological problem aside in a similar manner, from the data presented in their paper one could easily argue that at least for some Christians *Hermas* was most likely “canonical,” by simply moving the emphasis on the Patristic authors who are said to have used it “*as if* he had the authority of scripture.”

In a contribution on the textual stability on the New Testament, Martin Heide uses as comparison the textual transmission of the *Shepherd*.⁴⁸ Of interest here is the fact that he offers some considerations on *Hermas*’ canonicity as implications stemming from the comparison. When mentioning the ancient witnesses to the reception history of the *Shepherd*, the emphasis is similarly placed on those who “reject” this text:

“Despite its great popularity, though, certain church fathers as Tertullian rejected it and, according to the words of the *Canon Muratori*, it should most certainly be read in private; therefore, public readings to the people at church were forbidden, as the *Shepherd of Hermas* was neither reckoned among the prophets nor among the apostles. Eusebius has already relegated the *Shepherd of Hermas* to the noncanonical writings [...]”⁴⁹

The discussion on canonicity, however, revolves around two pegs: the codex format and the differences in textual stability. Heide proposes an algorithm for computing the grade of stability of the New Testament (as a whole) which he then applies to *Hermas* and finds that the latter is less stable (with a stability between 83.1 and 87.9%) than the former (between 92.6 and 96.2%).

⁴⁶ Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, “The Egyptian Hermas,” 191-192. Emphasis original.

⁴⁷ Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, “The Egyptian Hermas,” 197.

⁴⁸ Martin K. Heide, “Assesing the Stability of the Transmitted Texts of the New Testament and the *Shepherd of Hermas*,” in *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart D. Ehrman & Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*, edited by R. B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 125-208. First published as “Labilität un Festigkeit des überlieferten Textes des Neuen Testaments un des *Pastor Hermae*, demonstriert an wichtigen Textzeugen,” *Sacra Scripta* 7 (2009): 65-97.

⁴⁹ Heide, “Stability,” 144.

Heide takes this to mean that “despite its high popularity at the time, it was not copied as precisely as the New Testament Writings” probably because “greater emphasis was placed on its role in private usage.” Heide then picks up on the canonicity issue:

“An obvious consequence was that the text of the *Shepherd of Hermas* received less attention than the writings of the New Testament. Although the *Shepherd of Hermas* in the Code Sinaiticus was linked to some degree to canonical writings (which surely increases its esteem), it cannot, thus, be concluded that the *Shepherd of Hermas* had scriptural authority.”⁵⁰

There are several problems with this statement. For starters, with regard to *Hermas*' presence in Codex Sinaiticus, it seems that the opposite is more likely: it was associated with “the New Testament” *because* it enjoyed a high esteem. In fact we know nothing of the impact of the presence of *Hermas* in Sinaiticus (save the intrigue-factor in modern scholarship), and data we have about *Hermas* authority tends to predate Sinaiticus.⁵¹

But other problems, mainly methodological, arise with regard to Heide's main argument. In fact, the conclusions Heide draws from the quantitative results of his paper for *Hermas*' “canonicity” are very difficult to accept. In this comparison, Heide treats the New Testament as a unitary and closed unit. One wonders what such a comparison would look like if one were to compare a New Testament text with known textual problems (like John or Acts) and the rest of the New Testament as a whole. Given that there will inevitably be a difference in stability, should we also pass judgment on John with respect to its canonicity?

Heide concludes as follows:

“A further point worth mentioning is that the earliest manuscripts of the *Shepherd of Hermas* from the second century (P. Michigan 130; P.Oxy 4706) were written on scrolls and not bound in the codex form as is the case with the earliest known New Testament manuscripts. Theological discourses and excerpts were also written on scrolls; the Codex style, however, was the prevalent technique of writing among canonically relevant manuscripts.”⁵²

In all likelihood, this is added to strengthen the case for *Hermas*' noncanonicity. If my assumption is correct, then I would just note that it is one thing to notice that none of our early New Testament papyri are non-epistolograph scrolls, and quite another to make this mere observation a rule with which to pass judgments on

⁵⁰ Heide, “Stability,” 147.

⁵¹ Chadwick “The New Edition,” 279 suggests precisely that *Hermas*' fame was already faded in both the West and the East, and, as he would have it, that “[i]n the circumstances its preservation in Sinaiticus is astonishing and illustrates the force of conservatism.”

⁵² Heide, “Stability,” 147-148.

the canonicity of texts found among Early Christian papyri.⁵³ Any argument for the codex format as a canonical marker has also to take into account the fact that *Hermas* (and other Christian non-NT texts), too, appears bounded in codex form among the papyri, while there still are New Testament books which did not survive in the papyri at all.

C. Codex Sinaiticus

Arguably the manuscript which has generated most discussions with regard to *Hermas*' canonicity in modern scholarship is of course Codex Sinaiticus, where the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd* are the last two texts following the Old Testament (LXX) and the books that are today in our New Testament.

The presence of *Hermas* in Codex Sinaiticus has proved to be a particularly thorny topic, as modern scholarship usually offers for it two quite different interpretations.

Some authors contend that Codex Sinaiticus assigns *Hermas* – together with the *Epistle of Barnabas* – a “canonical standing.”⁵⁴ The most recent in this line would be C. M. Tuckett, who, in a note to his 2013 presidential address of the SNTS states: “Some of these were evidently regarded as canonical by some by being included within biblical/NT codices ... as are Barnabas and Hermas in Sinaiticus.”⁵⁵

Several authors, however, take the opposite view, regarding these two texts as an *appendix* to the New Testament. So, for instance, Hahneman notes: “In the Codex Sinaiticus, the Shepherd again appears to be in secondary class. Following the books of the New Testament and Barnabas, a space of over one and a half columns is left vacant, after which the Shepherd was added. Such a gap may suggest a secondary class for the Shepherd.”⁵⁶ Similarly, N. Brox considers the presence in Sinaiticus as relevant for the importance and

⁵³ Heide is referring to Larry H. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2006), 57, who, however, does not formulate such a rule, refraining to the observation. See also J. K. Elliott, “Manuscripts, the Codex and the Canon,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 63 (1996): 105-123, who too makes the connection between the codex form and canonical texts, yet he does not propose any such rule. While Elliott thinks *Hermas* and *Barnabas* canonical for the authorities behind Codex Sinaiticus, he does so not based on the codex form alone.

⁵⁴ B.D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 2 (Loeb Classical Library 25; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 169, and B.D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 245. In a similar vein, Elliott, speaking of *Hermas* and *Barnabas* at the end of Sinaiticus and of 1 and 2 *Clement* at the end of Codex Alexandrinus, notes: “We must assume that the authorities behind Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus considered these works canonical and wished to promote them as such,” Elliott, *Canon* (1996), 111.

⁵⁵ Christopher M. Tuckett, “What is ‘New Testament Study’? The New Testament and Early Christianity,” *NTS* 60/2 (2014): 157-184, n. 51 at 172.

⁵⁶ Hahneman, *Development*, 67. The reason for *Hermas*' starting after a blank space of one and a half columns is however less spectacular: far from signalling a different status, this blank space is due to the fact that *Hermas* starts on a new quire and is written by a different scribe, working probably in parallel with the scribe writing *Barnabas*. For a detailed analysis of the treatment of the text of *Hermas* in Codex Sinaiticus, see Batovici, “Appearance.”

authority of *Hermas*, yet he does not think that this evidence is enough to consider it to be a part of the New Testament.⁵⁷

I would just note that, upon examination, there is no formal distinction between the two Apostolic Fathers and the rest of the codex, no marker to justify the “appendix” designation.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the scribe of *Hermas* worked in the same manner on its text as on the other biblical books he wrote in Codex Sinaiticus.⁵⁹ A cautious position is highly advisable, because the only evidence we have on this is the manuscript itself, and it virtually points in both directions. *Hermas* may well be a biblical text, if Codex Sinaiticus is to be considered a biblical codex. Similarly, *Hermas* and *Barnabas* may well be appendices, since they are indeed at the end, and, for instance, the *Epistle of Barnabas* is not grouped with the rest of the now canonical epistles.⁶⁰

Finally, an illustrative example of how the presence in Codex Sinaiticus is assessed in relation to the presence among the papyri: D. Stökl argues that

“when he [F. Stuhlhofer] denies the possibility to draw conclusions with regard to their quasi-canoncity from the presence of non-canonical writings in biblical manuscripts, such as *The Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas* in the Codex Sinaiticus, the strong attestation to at least *Hermas* among the papyri seems to counter his opinion.”⁶¹

He might be right in *Hermas*’ case, but probably feels less secure about *Barnabas* on this matter, as the latter is left aside.

D. The Muratorian Fragment

Together with other later sources such as Eusebius and Athanasius’ *Festal Letter*, the Muratorian Fragment is to be counted among the witnesses who seem to convey that the *Shepherd* does not belong to the first tier of Christian texts. On the one hand they clearly refuse *Hermas* a standing with the writings that we today name canonical, and on the other hand nonetheless bear testimony to the authority this text has enjoyed.

⁵⁷ Brox, *Der Hirt*, 71. A similar stance is taken by J. Carleton-Paget – specifically about *Barnabas*’ presence in Sinaiticus, Carleton Paget, *Barnabas*, 252-253.

⁵⁸ See, for a presentation of the evidence, D. Batovici, “The Less-Expected Books in the Great Uncial Biblical Manuscripts: Codicological and Palaeographical Considerations,” in Chiara Ruzzier and Xavier Hernand (eds.), *Comment le Livre s’est fait livre* (Bibliologia; Brepols, 2015), 37-47 (forthcoming).

⁵⁹ A point made in Batovici, “Less expected.”

⁶⁰ Batovici, “Appearance.”

⁶¹ D. Stökl Ben Ezra, “Canonization – a Non-Linear Process? Observing the Process of Canonization through the Christian (and Jewish) Papyri from Egypt,” *ZAC/JAC* 12 (2008): 229-250, at 213, discussing F. Stuhlhofer, *Der Gebrauch der Bibel von Jesus bis Euseb: Eine statistische Untersuchung zur Kanongeschichte* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1988), 54.

For instance, Athanasius is explicit that *Hermas* is among the books that were not canonized but were to be read by catechumens.⁶² As a result, Eric Junod proposes the category of “books to be read” as opposed to canonical books,⁶³ where the latter are the sole source of salvation and the former serving a propaedeutical function for the catechumens.⁶⁴

For its part, the Muratorian fragment, also known as the Muratorian Canon, has this to say about the Shepherd, in a notoriously precarious Latin:

73 Pastorem vero

74 nuperrim e(t) temporibus nostris In urbe

75 roma herma conscripsit sedente cathe

76 tra urbis romae aeclesiae Pio eps fratre(r)

77 eius et ideo legi eum quide Oportet se pu

78 plicare uero In eclesia populo Neque Inter

79 profe(*)tas completum numero Neque Inter

80 apostolos In fine temporum potest.⁶⁵

B. Metzger’s translation goes as follows:

“(73) But Hermas wrote the *Shepherd* (74) very recently, in our times, in the city of Rome, (75) while bishop Pius, his brother, was occupying the [episcopal] chair (76) of the church of the city of Rome. (77) And therefore it ought indeed to be read; but (78) it cannot be read publicly to the people in the church either among (79) the prophets, whose number is complete, (80) or among the apostles, for it is after [their] time.”⁶⁶

⁶² Eric Junod, “D’Eusèbe de Césarée à Athanase D’Alexandrie,” in *Le canon du Nouveau Testament. Regards nouveaux sur l’histoire de sa formation*, edited by G. Aragione, E. Junod and E. Norelli (La Monde de la Bible 54; Geneva: Labour et Fides, 2005), 169-195, at 192.

⁶³ See discussion in Junod, “Eusèbe Athanase.”

⁶⁴ Junod, “Eusèbe Athanase,” 194.

⁶⁵ Hahneman, *Development*, 7. Hahneman himself argues with Sundberg against the traditional dating in the second century for a dating in the fourth. Despite their efforts, the traditional view seems to be today the majority view. See the discussions in Charles E. Hill, “The Debate Over the Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 57/2 (1995): 437-452, and especially the rebuttal of Hahneman and Sundberg’s arguments in J. Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori: A Matter of Dispute,” in *The Biblical Canons*, edited by J.-M. Auwers, and H.J. de Jonge (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 163; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 487-556.

⁶⁶ Metzger, *Canon*, 307.

When describing the fragment, Metzger uses the word “rejected” about *Hermas*, even though it does not appear in Latin. As a result, he uses an expression such as “totally rejected” for other books mentioned in the fragment that are rejected but that do not get any good commendation similar to that which *Hermas* receives.⁶⁷

Hahneman notes, in a similar manner: “clearly the Fragment assigns the *Shepherd of Hermas* to a secondary class of books that is neither completely rejected nor completely approved of; private reading is encouraged, but public reading in church is not allowed.”⁶⁸ J. Barton seems to read into this that the Fragment recommends a catechetical use of *Hermas*, and he places it in the category of “books whose use is deplored or which are explicitly said to be usable only for special purposes, such as the instruction of catechumens (this is the Muratorian Fragment’s view of the Shepherd).”⁶⁹ While this is altogether possible, it is also not explicit in the Fragment.

Yet it is not uncommon to describe the testimony of Muratorian Fragment as follows: *Hermas* is “mentioned as a book that can be read by the church but is rejected as canonical,”⁷⁰ with *ought* (*oportet*) *to be read* sliding into *can be read* and with an emphasis on *rejected*—which has no correspondent in the Latin text. This quote continues: “The grounds for this rejection are due to the fact that it was written “very recently, in our times.”⁷¹ This is rather inexact: in the text of the Fragment, “very recently, in our times” is in the part stating that *Hermas* should be read, and not in the part denying reading it in public with the prophets and the apostles. This inaccuracy is also quite common.⁷²

In this respect it is worth noting that, in order to bypass the difficulty that the command “to read”—*legi eum oportet*—follows the affirmation that *Hermas* is a recent work, M.-J. Lagrange proposed that the command is not referring to *Hermas* but to the Wisdom of Solomon which is mentioned before *Hermas* in the Fragment.⁷³

In M. Heide’s view, the fragment is saying that the *Shepherd* “should most certainly be read in private; therefore, public readings to the people at church were forbidden, as the *Shepherd of Hermas* was neither

⁶⁷ Metzger, *Canon*, 199.

⁶⁸ Hahneman, *Origins* (2002), 411.

⁶⁹ Barton, *Holy Writings*, 20.

⁷⁰ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Michael J. Kruger, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture’s Fascination with Diversity has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012), 170.

⁷¹ Köstenberger and Kruger, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy*, 170.

⁷² E.g. Geoffrey Wainwright, “The New Testament as Canon,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975): 551-571, at 555: “The reason for rejecting *The Shepherd* is that it ‘was written quite lately in our times in the city of Rome by Hermas while his brother Pius, the bishop, was sitting in the chair of the church of the city of Rome,’ who seems to be ignoring what follow immediately in the Fragment, namely: “and therefore it ought indeed to be read.” Similarly, Barton, *Holy Writings*, at 39 and 66.

⁷³ M.-J. Lagrange, *Histoire ancienne du Canon du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Gabalda, 1933), 75, quoted in Henne, “Canonicité,” 85.

reckoned among the prophets nor among the apostles.”⁷⁴ This can be construed as stepping away from the text, since what the fragment seems to say is that, on the one hand, the *Shepherd* “ought (*oportet*) to be read,” and then, on the other hand, that it was not to be read publicly *among* the prophets or the apostles. The Latin text does not seem to exclude at least the possibility that *Hermas* could be read in public *separately* from the prophets and the apostles. This point is worth making since, as seen, the current interpretation is that the Muratorian Fragment forbids *any* public reading of the *Shepherd*. This has been already argued for by Riemer Roukema:

“Contrairement à l’interprétation habituelle, selon laquelle le *Pasteur* ne devait pas être lu du tout dans l’église, nous proposons que, d’après ce texte, le *Pasteur* d’Hermas pourrait alors être lu dans l’église, si on avait précisé qu’il n’était pas considéré comme l’un des prophètes de l’Ancien Testament ou comme l’un des apôtres.”⁷⁵

Ehrman seems to take this into account as well when he notes, with regard to the Fragment: “it maintains that the *Shepherd of Hermas* should be read, but not in church *as Scripture*.”⁷⁶

The Fragment has also been taken to mirror contexts in which the *Shepherd* could have been included in the Old Testament: “Its possible inclusion in the Old Testament is opposed in the Muratorian Fragment, but on the grounds that the Old Testament is closed (not, for example, on the grounds the *Shepherd* is a Christian book).”⁷⁷ From a different angle, C. H. Turner argues that in Codex Sinaiticus *Hermas* is misplaced at the end of the codex, and should have been immediately after the Prophets, closing the Old Testament. He bases this on the fact that *Hermas* and the Prophets are written in Sinaiticus by the same hand, and on the supplementary fact that the Muratorian Fragment hints and reacts to precisely this situation.⁷⁸

3. Literature focused on the canon

J. C. Wilson identifies three “strikes against the canonicity of the Shepherd of Hermas,” of which the first is “the lack of apostolic attribution,” pointed out, among others, by the Muratorian Fragment. The second is “its overall theological ineptitude” as “its adoptionistic Christology in Sim. V appears to contradict its pre-existent

⁷⁴ Heide, “Stability,” 144.

⁷⁵ Riemer Roukema, “La tradition apostolique et le canon du Nouveau Testament,” in *The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought*, edited by A. Hilhorst (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 70; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), 86-103, at 97, referencing to a suggestion from Harnack.

⁷⁶ Ehrman, *Lost Christianities*, 241. Emphasis added.

⁷⁷ Barton, *Holy Writings*, 76.

⁷⁸ C.H. Turner, “Is Hermas also among the Prophets?” *Journal of Theological Studies* 14 (1913): 404-407, esp. 405-406. This was soon and convincingly refuted on palaeographical grounds in G. Mercati, “The Place of the Pastor in Codex Sinaiticus,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 15 (1914), 452.

Son of God Christology in Sim. IX:11.⁷⁹ While C. Osiek also states “it is strange that this immensely popular document of the early church was never condemned for christological heresy,”⁸⁰ B. G. Bucur argues convincingly that this is hardly a surprise since the general frame for *Hermas*’ Christology is not at all peculiar in the first centuries.⁸¹

Wilson’s third strike is perhaps less expected, and has to do with *Hermas*’ length:

“It seems altogether probable to me that the third and the fourth century fathers, when they looked at the emerging New Testament as a whole, would strongly wonder whether a book of as questionable theological value as the Shepherd of Hermas would deserve the amount of space in a New Testament manuscript that its sheer length would require.”⁸²

This is a multiple-stage approach to the canonical problem, postulating an inclusive stage, a transitional stage and an exclusive stage.⁸³ In his view, Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria would illustrate the first stage, Irenaeus and Origen the second, and Tertullian, Eusebius and the Muratorian Fragment the third,⁸⁴ taking the latter then as originating in the fourth century.

Hermas also appears among H. Y. Gamble’s examples illustrating the criteria used by the church in the formation of the canon.⁸⁵ Gamble recognizes the difficulty in assessing “their effects on the history of the canon,” as well as that “there is disagreement today about the meaning or importance of the so-called criteria of canonicity.”⁸⁶ His proposed criteria are apostolicity, catholicity, orthodoxy, traditional usage, and inspiration; *Hermas* displays the latter two.

“Unlike apostolicity, catholicity, and orthodoxy, which pertain to the internal character of a writing, the principle of traditional usage capitalizes on the standing practices of the church. [...] While this practice did not in itself presume or imply that such writings were canonical, it was a tacit recognition of their usefulness, conferred on them a certain authority, and ultimately paved the way for the canonization of some of them.”⁸⁷

Gamble acknowledges that this criterion is not without problems:

⁷⁹ J. Christian Wilson, *Five Problems in the Interpretation of the Shepherd of Hermas: Authorship, Genre, Canonicity, Apocalyptic, and the Absence of the Name ‘Jesus Christ’* (Mellen Biblical Press Series 34; Lewinston/Queenston/ Lampeter: Mellen, 1995), 54.

⁸⁰ C. Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 179-180.

⁸¹ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 113-138.

⁸² Wilson, *Five Problems*, 55. See also 70-71.

⁸³ Wilson, *Five Problems*, 55.

⁸⁴ Wilson, *Five Problems*, 57-67.

⁸⁵ Harry Y. Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 67-72.

⁸⁶ Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 67, with references in n. 29.

⁸⁷ Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 70.

“This criterion was not, however, definitive: many documents which met the it quite adequately were not admitted into the canon (e.g., *The Shepherd*, *1 Clement*, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) while others writings lacking longstanding and broad currency nevertheless did gain canonical recognition, although tardily (e.g. James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John).”⁸⁸

Hermas is then the obvious test case showing the lack of viability of such a criterion in canonical reasoning. The “inspiration” criterion is even less fit for that purpose, as Gamble notes: “inspiration could not be used to differentiate orthodox writings into canonical and noncanonical categories.”⁸⁹ By and large, such an approach tends not to engage with the particularities of a witness as *Hermas* by simply noting it is an exception to the case put forward.

Other authors, however, do engage more directly with the situation presented by texts that seem to have been scriptural in the early Christian centuries. One such approach simply explains the early presence of the *Shepherd* in places with relevance for the biblical canon in the following terms: together with other similar authoritative—and to us non-canonical—texts, the *Shepherd* “may be called ‘canonical’ in something like the sense that we may call the Mishnah and the Talmud canonical in Judaism. [...] They form a penumbra around the basic texts, which fades off indefinitely,”⁹⁰ which would make for the “scripture” as described in the introductory remarks of the chapter. In a similar manner, D. Stökl proposes that “[a]mong the paracanonical writings, we should differentiate between Apocrypha and Deuterocanonica. The latter [who include *Hermas*] ‘behave’ more like canonical writings ... The New Testament Deuterocanonica, unlike the Old Testament Deuterocanonica, did in the long run not succeed in being integrated into the Canon or conquer a place among the liturgical readings in ecclesiastic worship.”⁹¹

L. M. McDonald takes into account and explains in a different manner the remarkable early reception of texts that—like the *Shepherd*—seem to have enjoyed “canonical status” in the second and third centuries before losing it in the following centuries: “the problem of decanonization, if that is an appropriate way to describe this phenomenon, cannot be ignored.”⁹² To avoid the problems generated by the use of a concept such as “decanonization”, McDonald proposes that

⁸⁸ Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 71. See also the recent discussion of ‘canonical’ criteria and their problems in J. Verheyden, “The New Testament Canon.”

⁸⁹ Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 72.

⁹⁰ Barton, *Holy Writings*, 26-27.

⁹¹ Stökl Ben Ezra, “Canonization,” 214.

⁹² L.M. McDonald, *Forgotten Scriptures: The Selection and Rejection of Early Religious Writings* (Louisville, KE: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 24.

“if we more appropriately speak of the biblical canon as a fixed entity to which nothing more can be added, then canonization occurred in the fourth century at the earliest. Even in the fourth and fifth centuries we are talking about biblical canons (plural).”⁹³

Consequently, his preference is to “distinguish the temporary scriptural status by *canon 1* and the later fixed or closed collections as *canon 2*,” acknowledging nonetheless “the limitations of all such language.”⁹⁴

M. J. Kruger recently produced a critique of McDonald’s idea of a fixed canon of the fourth century, and argues for a functional and continuous understanding of the canon.⁹⁵ To use Kruger’s own words on Sundberg’s similar distinction between *scripture* and *canon*⁹⁶ (echoing the one between *canon 1* and *canon 2*), “the concept of canon cannot be reduced to a single point of time. It is best conceived as a continuum—less like a dot and more like a line.”⁹⁷

Since one of the aims of the categories proposed by Sundberg and McDonald is to find a place for texts that seem to have been authoritative without making it eventually into to canon, Kruger motivates his position in the following terms: “Just because some other books were occasionally used as Scripture does not negate this approach, nor does it mean we are obliged to call these books canon.”⁹⁸

This in turn means that Kruger’s answer to the difficulties produced by texts such as *Hermas* (*canon 1* with McDonald, *scripture* with Sundberg) is simply to consider that it was never canonical (and, for that matter, not even scriptural). As such, from *Hermas*’ early reception, the witness of the Muratorian Fragment and Eusebius are emphasized.⁹⁹ At the same time, Irenaeus’ designation of the *Shepherd* as γραφή is taken to mean “writing” rather than “Scripture,” and the presence in Codex Sinaiticus as mirroring “a common practice to place either disputed books or books found generally useful (though not canonical) at the back of such lists.”¹⁰⁰

Finally, in a recent publication, Nielsen tries to argue that the authority of *Hermas* during the first centuries is a test case that favours the theories according to which the New Testament canon has been formed in the fourth century, and proves against the second century dating of the canon; he does so by the

⁹³ McDonald, *Forgotten Scriptures*, 24.

⁹⁴ McDonald, *Forgotten Scriptures*, 25. Emphasis added.

⁹⁵ M. J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012), 57-58.

⁹⁶ A. C. Sundberg, “Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List,” *Harvard Theological Review* 66/1 (1973): 1-41, at 35: “the differentiation between “scripture” (as writings regarded as in some sense authoritative) and canon (as a closed collection of scripture to which nothing can be added, nothing subtracted).”

⁹⁷ Kruger, *Canon Revisited*, 37.

⁹⁸ Kruger, *Canon Revisited*, 57.

⁹⁹ Kruger, *Canon Revisited*, the Fragment is discussed at 111, 182, 230, 239, 275; Eusebius at 267, 276.

¹⁰⁰ Kruger, *Canon Revisited*, 275.

means of a bird's eye survey to *Hermas'* reception (there is no sign, for instance, of addressing the Patristic reception beyond, for instance, the considerations from Osiek's commentary).¹⁰¹ What stands out, however, in Nielsen's contribution is his observation that *Hermas* might have been more authoritative on the whole than some New Testament books.

4. Concluding remarks

In the literature focusing on the *Shepherd*, the discussion of canonicity around this second century text seems to oscillate between a maximal and a minimal approach. Authors who take on a maximal approach place the emphasis on the earliest testimonies on the *Shepherd*—Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria, and also the presence in Codex Sinaiticus—and take them to indicate that *Hermas* had enjoyed canonical standing in the first four centuries, even if only locally, or temporarily. The witnesses of Origen and Didymus the Blind are also adduced to prove the same point.

Authors more inclined towards the minimal approach with regard to the canonicity of *Hermas* place the emphasis on the contrary on the testimonies of the Muratorian Fragment, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Athanasius of Alexandria in order to point out that the *Shepherd* belonged in fact to the second tier of authoritative texts. In such contexts, the earlier testimonies of Irenaeus and Clement are played down—and so are those of later Patristic authors—while in Codex Sinaiticus *Hermas* is considered a mere appendix to the New Testament.

These two quite opposing stances are then echoed in the literature focusing on the development of the Biblical canon, where those who accept the high reading of Irenaeus tend to propose a special category for such texts, be it “canon 1,” (as opposed to “canon 2”), “Scriptural” (as opposed to “Canonical”). Correspondingly, those who work with a high canonical understanding assume a minimalist reading of the testimonies about *Hermas*.

Several recurring inaccuracies in the interpretation of these testimonies seem to hinder at times an adequate understanding of their relevance for the canonical question focused on *Hermas*; therefore, a more careful reassessment of the early reception history of this text is commendable, not least because the *Shepherd* provides an interesting and privileged vantage point for probing the on-going theories regarding the dynamics of the Biblical canon in early Christianity. This survey already suggests is that there is evidence where *Hermas* might have been taken as *scripture* (or *canon 1*, or book useful for the soul), and also that it might be difficult to securely establish that it would have been *canonical* (or *canon 2*). The following chapters

¹⁰¹ D. Nielsen, “The Place of the *Shepherd of Hermas* in the Canon Debate,” in “*Non-canonical Religious Texts in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*,” edited by L. M. McDonald and J. H. Charlesworth (Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies Series 14; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 162-176.

aim to further the discussion by thoroughly documenting two of the earliest points of *Hermas*' reception, arguably most relevant for this topic. It can be anticipated here that that will point to its apocalyptic character as a possible source for the probably scriptural status in *Hermas*' authoritative reception.

II HERMAS' AUTHORITY IN IRENAEUS' WORKS

1. Introductory Remarks

This chapter focuses on a particularly controversial point in the reception history of the *Shepherd* as authoritative text, regarding its presence in the writings of Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130-202), who seems to be the earliest author to quote from *Hermas*. The impetus for this reassessment is that in Irenaeus' case most of the scholarly discussion so far seems restricted to only one element: the ἡ γραφή designation of the Herm. Mand. 1.1 quotation in 4.20.2, and its possible bearing on canonical reasoning. Indeed, many authors tend to play down the significance of such a designation: even if ἡ γραφή can designate with Irenaeus a text from the canon (New or Old Testament), they maintain, it is unlikely that Irenaeus held *Hermas* as canonical;¹⁰² the latest contribution holding this view is that of C. E. Hill.¹⁰³ Such authors usually point to the fact that in *Adv. haer.* 3.6.4, 3.17.4, and 5.Pr, Irenaeus uses γραφή about his own writings as in 3.6.4,¹⁰⁴ and that in 1.20.1 even about the texts of the heretics he's refuting,¹⁰⁵ arguing hence that γραφή means simply *writing*.¹⁰⁶ Others, however, hold quite the opposite view, arguing on the one hand that the first group of scholars tend to force the evidence to fit their modern understanding of the canon on it, and emphasizing on the other hand that in Eusebius' view (*HE* 5.8.7), the quotation of *Adv. haer.* 4.20.2 means precisely that Irenaeus considered *Hermas* canonical.¹⁰⁷

However, as will be seen presently, the data suggests that in fact three issues need to be addressed: the reliability of the available data (Irenaeus seems to quote over again only one paragraph from *Hermas*, Mand. 1.1a, never mentioning the name of the text, thus inviting the question as to whether the former knew the latter as a whole at all), the meaning of ἡ γραφή in 4.20.2, and—potentially the most relevant, because if

¹⁰² Again, inasmuch as a modern author does not seem to use anything akin to the scripture/canon distinction, it will be assumed that canon is what they mean (as described in the introductory remarks of the first chapter above), irrespective of whether they use 'scripture' or 'canon.'

¹⁰³ Hill, "The Writing." For similar positions see J. Behr, in St Irenaeus of Lyons, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, translation and introduction by John Behr (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), n. 15 at 103; Blanchard, *Témoignage*; J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London: Epworth Press, 1948), 50-51; A. Rousseau et al. (eds.), *Irénée De Lyon, Contre les hérésies, Livre IV, tome I* (Sources Chrétiennes 100/1; Paris: Cerf, 1965, 2006), 248-250.

¹⁰⁴ J. Behr, *Apostolic Preaching*, n. 15 at 103.

¹⁰⁵ Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 51.

¹⁰⁶ R.M. Grant, "The New Testament Canon," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. 1*, edited by P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 284-307, at 295.

¹⁰⁷ Steenberg, "Status of *Hermas*;" also Hemmerdinger, "Mésaventures," n. 3, 308, and Henne, "Canonicité," 82-87, where he also offers a brief history of the interpretation on the matter. Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 5, simply mentions the γραφή designation without much discussion.

ascertained it indicates on its own that the *Shepherd* is scriptural—the presence of the *Hermas* quotation in Irenaeus' canon of truth.

While it does engage with the scholarship questioning the significance of the ἡ γραφή designation in 4.20.2 and contributes new data to the debate, the following is not meant in any way to clarify Irenaeus' concept of Scripture;¹⁰⁸ instead, it is meant to address and inform the ongoing scholarly discussion on the circulation of authoritative texts in early Christianity.¹⁰⁹ Summing up, the following aims to answer the question as to whether *Hermas* is, to Irenaeus, scriptural, or, canonical, or indeed something else, and this will be achieved mainly by inquiring into the nature of the authority assigned to *Hermas* by Irenaeus, as reflected in his works.

2. Irenaeus' References of *Hermas*: Reliability and Function

In selecting a safe basis for the investigation of Irenaeus' relevance in *Hermas*' reception history, the first question pertains thus to textual reception: what *Hermas* quotations or references can be ascertained in Irenaeus' works? Such caution is rather necessary given that, as will be shown, Irenaeus never names the *Shepherd* in an explicit manner, *Hermas* never being mentioned as such.

The *Shepherd* has three main parts: five *Visions* (*Vis.*), twelve *Mandates* (*Mand.*), and ten *Parables* (*Sim.*), yet in all instances where a quotation or allusion to *Hermas* is signalled in Irenaeus' works (it turns up in *Adv.*

¹⁰⁸ A bibliography on Irenaeus' concept of Scripture would include Steenberg, "Status of *Hermas*," 53-59; Blanchard, *Témoignage*; A. Camerlynck, *St Irénée et le canon du Nouveau Testament* (Louvain: Ista, 1896); Lawson, *Biblical Theology*; T.C. Skeat, "Irenaeus and the four-folded canon," *NT* 34/2 (1992): 197-198; A.Y. Reed, "ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ: Orality, Textuality, and the Christian Truth in Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*," *VC* 56 (2002): 11-46; E.F. Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyon* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001) 162-190; B. Sebouë, "La prevue par des Ecritures chez s. Irénée; à propos d'un texte difficile du Livre III de l'*Adversus Haereses*," *NRT* 103 (1981): 872-887; D.L. Balás, "The Use and Interpretation of Paul in Irenaeus' Five Books *Aversus Haereses*," *Second Century* 9 (1992): 27-39.

¹⁰⁹ Most discussion on the authority of Christian non-NT texts seems to be devoted to apocryphal literature and their possible vicinity to the New Testament canon, e.g. recently A. Gagne and J.-F. Racine, eds., *En marge du canon: Etudes sur les écrits apocryphes juifs et chrétiens* (L'Écriture de la Bible 2; Paris: Cerf, 2012). In turn, this led other scholars to point out that there may be other early Christian books than the apocrypha with a better claim to having been at some point candidates for canonical inclusion, the usual example being the *Shepherd*, see L.L. Johns in his response to L.M. McDonald's paper in *Jewish and Christian Scriptures: The Function of 'Canonical' and 'Non-Canonical' Religious Texts*, edited by J.H. Charlesworth and L.M. McDonald (Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts 7; London/New York: Continuum, 2010), 42-44. For his part, in a series of his late articles, F. Bovon argues for a threefold categorization as a means to explaining the status of texts which seem to escape a too simplistic distinction between "those that were canonical and those that were rejected as apocryphal." F. Bovon, "Beyond the Book of Acts: Stephen, the First Christian Martyr, in Traditions Outside the New Testament Canon of Scripture," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32.2 (2005) 93-107, here 93. See also F. Bovon, "Beyond the Canonical and the Apocryphal Books, the Presence of a Third Category: The Books Useful for the Soul," *Harvard Theological Review* 105/2 (2012): 125-137. Bovon speaks of the authority of a wider variety of Christian texts, not limited to those designated today as apocryphal literature. In this context, the present chapter is a contribution on the matter discussing the case of an early Christian non-apocryphal text and the nature of its authority in a peculiar point of its reception.

haer. 1.15.5, 1.22.1, 2.30.9, 2.10.2, 4.20.2, and *Epideixis* 4.1), the reference is to *Mandate* 1.1 [26].¹¹⁰ *Hermas' Mand.* 1.1 is a theological introduction to a moral oriented section,¹¹¹ and precisely this part appears in Irenaeus.¹¹² The quoted text represents actually half of the two-phrased first Mandate:

[26] 1. First of all believe that God is one, who created and arranged all things, and made everything from not being into being, and who contains all things but is himself alone uncontained.¹¹³

Parts of this phrase have parallels in other texts, usually signalled in commentaries, which means that one needs to show some editorial activity of *Hermas* present in Irenaeus' quotation in order to prove the reference is to *Hermas* and not to its sources or parallels.¹¹⁴ The parallels – Jas 2:19,¹¹⁵ Eph 3:9,¹¹⁶ several Jewish-Christian texts,¹¹⁷ and a probable Hellenistic philosophical idea¹¹⁸ – however, are far from being clearly established sources of *Hermas*; I would then propose that the very mix of these elements – taken or not from the parallel texts mentioned in the notes – can be considered *Hermas'* editorial activity. This means that if we come across

¹¹⁰ The traditional division of the *Shepherd* in *Vis.*, *Mand.*, *Sim.* will be kept here, yet the continuous numbering is added between brackets.

¹¹¹ The *Mandates'* main focus is on moral teachings. One by one are discussed faith, simplicity, fear of God, self-restraint, etc. However, “the *Mandates* open with a very brief but significant introduction that affirms the centrality of monotheistic faith as the foundation of all faithful living,” Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 103.

¹¹² Brox, *Der Hirt*, 191, notes this is the only *Mandate* which does not start with a form of personal addressing.

¹¹³ In the latest *Hermas* edition, M.W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers; Greek Text and English Translation* (3rd edition; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 505: Πρῶτον πάντων πιστεύουσιν ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας καὶ καταρτίσας καὶ ποιήσας ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα, καὶ πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὢν. All translations are mine, unless otherwise specified.

¹¹⁴ See on this the methodological consideration at the beginning of the thesis.

¹¹⁵ *Hermas'* πιστεύουσιν ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός could be paralleled by πιστεύεις ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός of Jas 2.19. While possible, this is hardly provable a case of dependence – as was suggested as one by E. Massaux, *Influence de l'Évangile de Saint Matthieu sur la littérature chrétienne avant Saint Irénée* (Leuven: UCL, 1950 [réimpression anastatique 1986]), at 310 – given the rather general statement it makes on monotheistic belief.

¹¹⁶ *Hermas'* θεός ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας is paralleled perhaps by Eph 3:9 τῷ θεῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι. J. Verheyden mentions that Gebhard and Harnack concur with Zahn in that *Hermas* probably knew Ephesians; “*The Shepherd of Hermas* and the Writings that later formed the New Testament,” in *Reception The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, edited by A. Gregory and C. Tuckett (The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers; Oxford: OUP, 2005), 293-329, at 297. Verheyden does not further discuss this parallel which is rather loose parallel, prone to appear in both Jewish and Christian texts.

¹¹⁷ With regard to *Hermas'* θεός ποιήσας ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα Snyder notes that *God's creation out of nothing* is an expression “normally used in Jewish-Christian circles to indicate new life” and points to parallels in 2 *Baruch* 48.8; Philo's *De specialibus legibus* 4.187; Rom 4.17; 2 *Clement* 1.8; see G.F. Snyder, *The Shepherd of Hermas* (The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary 6; Camden, NJ: T. Nelson, 1968), at 63. Osiek concurs that this is “a familiar Hellenistic Jewish creedal formula,” and also offers as possible parallels for the creation out of nothing 2 Macc 7.28, Wis 1.14, Philo's *De specialibus legibus* 2.225, *Vit. Mos.* 2.267; Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 103. Such creedal formula might be the source, instead of *Hermas*. However, the closest parallel is 2 Macc 7.28 where it reads οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεός, which is far enough to be considered but simply a parallel text.

¹¹⁸ *Hermas'* statement that God “contains all things but is himself alone uncontained”, πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὢν, is regarded by Osiek as “the earliest Christian use of an idea drawn from Hellenistic philosophy that was soon to appear frequently among Christians,” that is, the incomprehensibility of God; Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 103.

a possible *Hermas* quotation or allusion in which we read more than one of the above presented parts, chances are it is a *Hermas* reference rather than one to one of the parallels.¹¹⁹

So far as the possible references to *Hermas* in Irenaeus' works go, there are two in the first book of *Adv. haer.*, two in the second book, one in the fourth and one in *Epideixis* 4.1 – adding up to a total of six. In the absence of any clear statement about *Hermas* on Irenaeus' part, the better question would be: What is the function of the *Hermas* references in the new context?¹²⁰

i) 1.15.5 Ἡ πάλιν τίς ἀνέξεται σου εἰς σχήματα καὶ ἀριθμούς (...) συγκλείοντος τὸν τῶν πάντων Κτίστην καὶ Δημιουργὸν καὶ Ποιητὴν Λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ (...) καὶ τὸν μὲν πάντων Κύριον, τὸν ἑσπερωκότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, εἰς ὠπὴ κατάγοντος ἀριθμὸν, (...) καὶ αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν τὰ πάντα χωροῦντα Πατέρα, ἀχώρητον δὲ ὑπάρχοντα, εἰς Τετράδα καὶ Ὀγδοάδα καὶ Δεκάδα καὶ Δωδεκάδα ὑπομερίζοντος (...)¹²¹

Here the possible allusion from Ps 32 stands in contrast with the idea or concept of Mark the magician which immediately follows in the text. The possible allusion from *Herm. Mand.* 1.1 has the very same function; in this context they function similarly, in that they are contrasting with the “Gnostic” opinions that follow them. Hence, either deliberate allusions or reference to ideas in circulation, the underlined sentences are on the authoritative side of things.¹²² If intended allusions, they are both references to the respective source's contents, although they are used in an argumentative, polemic context. Finally, neither the Psalm nor *Hermas* is mentioned here by name, as a designated text; as such, if at all, the references are to their content and not to the text as a whole.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Of course, the possibility remains open that *Hermas* might have used some source that already combined these elements, but since we don't have any other text combining these elements, such speculation remains precisely that.

¹²⁰ Matters pertaining to establishing the nature of a probable reference will be dealt with in footnotes.

¹²¹ The phrase Κύριον, τὸν ἑσπερωκότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς may well be a paraphrase of the first part of Ps 32:6, reading (τῷ λόγῳ) τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἑσπερώθησαν (LXX). Similarly, τὰ πάντα χωροῦντα Πατέρα, ἀχώρητον δὲ ὑπάρχοντα may be a freer paraphrase of the couple present in *Herm. Mand.* 1: καὶ πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὢν. The two instances could be allusions to the respective texts, given that they both convey respectively the initial meanings from the sources and the key words. Yet, on their own, none of the two can be ascertained as deliberate allusions to those texts. So far as the fragment similar to *Hermas* is concerned, given that this is “an idea drawn from Hellenistic philosophy” – Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 103, with a list of later authors where this idea appears at 104 – it still remains to be established by other means whether it comes from *Hermas* or not; considering that in *Adv. haer.* 4.20.2 there is a verbatim quotation from *Mand.* 1.1 which includes this part, I would suggest the balance tips in favour of *Hermas*.

¹²² While it may be a circular argument to say that Irenaeus' possible free quotation from Ps 32 offers a model for Irenaeus' possible free quotation from *Hermas*, this much can be said: even if none of the two are sure allusions, they are consistent with one another in that they have the same function, and they may well be further consistent with one another as free citations from the two texts: Ps 32 and *Herm. Mand.* 1.1.

¹²³ A “reference to content” would point to an allusion or quotation in which the source text is not explicitly mentioned. In order to have a “reference to the text as a whole” we will need to have some sort of an explicit marker showing that Irenaeus is not only referencing some loose narrative or idea, but is also explicit about it being a part of a text, mentioned or not.

ii) 1.22.1 Cum teneamus autem nos regulam ueritatis, id est quia sit unus Deus omnipotens qui omnia condidit per Verbum suum et aptauit et fecit ex eo quod non erat ad hoc ut sint omnia, quemadmodum Scriptura dicit: Verbo enim Domini caeli firmati sunt, et Spiritu oris uirtus eorum, et iterum: Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil [...] facile eos deuiasse a ueritate arguimus.¹²⁴

Functionally, the Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 text seems to define what Irenaeus names the rule of truth (*regulam ueritatis, id est*), while standing in contrast with the two following two quotations (from Ps 32.6 and John 1.3) which, in turn, are introduced with *quemadmodum Scriptura dicit*.¹²⁵ This is, largely, the equivalent of καθὼς καὶ ἡ γραφὴ λέγει. These instances, where a text is introduced by such a formula will be discussed presently at length. Further considerations of what the *Mandate* reference stands for in the rule of faith will be given in the fourth section of this chapter.

iii) 2.10.2 [...] non credentes quoniam Deus ex his quae non erant, quemadmodum uoluit, ea facta sunt ut essent omnia fecit [...]¹²⁶

Functionally, this fragment describes what the followers of Valentinus do not believe, that is in Irenaeus' view. More exactly, they are described to be at fault for not believing this, with the connotation that this is precisely what Irenaeus' implied reader should believe.

iv) 2.30.9 [...] solus hic Deus [...] adaptauit et disposuit Sapientia sua, et omnia capiens, solus autem a nemine capi potest [...]¹²⁷

The context of this reference is a description of the attributes of God.

¹²⁴ *Quia sit unus Deus ... qui omnia condidit ... et aptauit et fecit ex eo quod non erat ad hoc ut sint omnia* is an almost verbatim Latin transposition of ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας καὶ καταρτίσας καὶ ποιήσας ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα. While parts of this can be read in other places too – in Eph 3.6 there is τῷ θεῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι, and in 2 Macc 7.28 there is οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεός – the sequence and the wording strongly suggest this is a quotation from Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 (even if only the Latin text survived) with things added in: *per Verbum suum* might echo John 1.3 which will be quoted shortly as scripture; E. Pagels, “Irenaeus, the ‘Canon of Truth,’ and the *Gospel of John*: ‘Making a Difference’ through Hermeneutics and Ritual,” *VC* 56 (2002): 339-371, at 362, considers that “created all things through his logos” is an echo of Jn. 1.13 - πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο. While that is not impossible, it should be noted that the Latin text reads *condidit* which would be the equivalent of κτίσας of *Mand.* 1.1. Indeed, the Johannine verb is rendered as *facta sunt*. This reference is by no means one to *Hermas*' text as a whole.

¹²⁵ Rousseau, *SC* 100 (1), 248-249.

¹²⁶ One could see this as a freer version of what is quoted from Herm. *Man.* 1.1 in 1.22.1 (ii). This could also be an allusion to 2 Macc 7.28 (as the French editor has it, p. 89), yet *ut essent omnia* is likely to correspond to εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα which is in *Hermas* and not in 2 Macc. Applying the criteria proposed earlier, this seems indeed a loose adaptation of Herm. *Mand.* 1.1. This would then be a reference only to content and not to the text of the *Shepherd* as a whole.

¹²⁷ *Et omnia capiens, solus autem a nemine capi potest* does echo καὶ πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὢν. In the following reference – 4.20.2 which, as will be seen, is an almost verbatim quotation from Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 – the Latin rendering of πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὢν is *omnium capax, et qui a nemine capiatur*, which shows at least the use of the same vocabulary. In the light of the Latin translation of 4.20.2, the quote can be proposed as a loose quotation of Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 and not as a simple Hellenistic common idea circulating around. Should this be a loose quotation of Herm. *Mand.* 1.1, it would be a reference only to content and not to the text of the *Shepherd* as a whole.

v) 4.20.2 Καλῶς οὖν ἡ γραφή ἢ λέγουσα· « Πρῶτον πάντων πίστευσον ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας καὶ καταρτίσας καὶ ποιήσας ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα καὶ πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὢν. » Καλῶς δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς προφήταις Μαλαχίαις φησὶν· «[...]» Ἀκολούθως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος· «[...]» Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ Κύριος· «[...]»¹²⁸

It remains to be established what else (καλῶς) ἡ γραφή ἢ λέγουσα introduces, and that discussion will soon follow. It can be noted, however, that in the previous paragraph, 4.20.1, a similar introductory formula (περὶ οὗ φησιν ἡ γραφή) precedes a quote from Gen 2.7. Given the short distance between the two, whatever ἡ γραφή stands for, it is not unreasonable to consider that it applies, here, to both Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 and to Gen 2.7.

vi) *Epideixis* 4.1 Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πρῶτον πιστεῦσαι δεῖ ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν Θεός Πατήρ ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας καὶ καταρτίσας καὶ ποιήσας τὰ μὴ ὄντα εἰς τὸ εἶναι, καὶ πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὢν.¹²⁹

This seems to be another case of using the *Mand.* 1.1 quotation to describe *regula ueritatis*, mentioned earlier under ii) as the *rule of truth*.

Three issues need to be further addressed, resulting from the analysis so far. The first, pertaining to the reliability of Irenaeus as witness to Hermas, follows immediately. Two other – the ἡ γραφή ἢ λέγουσα introductory marker for Herm. *Mand.* 1.1, and Herm. *Mand.* as part of Irenaeus' *regula ueritatis* – will be treated in the ensuing two sections.

The first issue thus pertains to Irenaeus' referencing technique, in an attempt to understand the significance of the fact that Irenaeus quotes from yet does not mention *Hermas* at all (nor does he mention any other name for the text, often noted as a striking particularity),¹³⁰ and also that he only quotes Herm. *Mand.* 1.1.

Is it possible Irenaeus never knew the whole text of *Hermas*? What if he knew *Mand.* 1.1. as belonging to some other author, or as part of some other text? All these are surely possible, but there is no way to ascertain them.¹³¹

¹²⁸ This is indeed a verbatim quotation of the first verse out of two from *Mand.* 1 [26]. The presence of the introductory formula *γραφή ἢ λέγουσα* at the very least suggests that Irenaeus is referencing the text as a whole. Nonetheless *Hermas* is not mentioned at all.

¹²⁹ *Epideixis* only survived in an Armenian version. This is a reconstruction of the Greek text behind the Armenian text proposed by Rousseau, with Irenaeus' additions and modifications of Herm. *Mand.* 1.1, in A. Rousseau, *Irénée de Lyon, Démonstration de la prédication apostolique* (Sources Chrétiennes 406; Paris: Cerf, 1995), at 237. J. Behr's translation of the Armenian text reads: 4.1 "[...] And therefore it is proper, first of all, to believe that there is One God, the Father, who has created and fashioned all things, who made that which was not to be, who contains all and is alone uncontainable," Irenaeus, *Apostolic Preaching*, 42. I see no reason to doubt this is a rather close (though interpolated with Irenaeus' additions) quotation of *Mand.* 1.1.

¹³⁰ E.g. Brox, *Der Hirt*, 61: "[...] und auffällig ist auch, daß er den Namen des H nie nennt".

¹³¹ We do not have any continuous manuscript starting with *Mand.* 1. It may well be possible that *Mand.* 1.1 had been circulating as an extract in various ways (amulets, liturgical, creedal, prayers, *testimonia* etc). Indeed, Irenaeus, as an example of the use of only this particular fragment of *Hermas* is doubled by another example: P. Mich. inv. 6427 (LDAB

On the contrary, a survey of a few chapters from the first book of *Adv. haer.* reveals that it is quite common for Irenaeus to make a reference to the contents of a text without mentioning at all the text as a whole, hence without mentioning the author or the title. For instance, gospel parables are usually quoted only to content: 1.1.3 (reference to Matt 20.1-7), 1.3.2 (a reference to Luke 2.42-6, and another to either Matt 5.18 or Luke 6.13), 1.3.3 (to Matt 9.20 or Luke 8.44.45), 1.8.1 (1 Tim 4.7), 1.8.2 (Luke 8.41-2), etc. Other references to content without any mention of the source texts are the quotations of Jesus' sayings from Matt, Luke, John: e.g. in 1.3.2, 1.3.3 or 1.3.5. The same goes for the sayings of John the Baptist in 1.3.5 which come from synoptic material (Matt 3:12 / Luke 3:17).

The quotations from Paul's letters are introduced in the same manner, usually by *verba dicendi*: καθὼς ὁ ἀπόστολος φησιν (Pr. 1); when the title of the letter is mentioned, it appears in dative, as in 1.8.2 where both the contents and the text as a whole are clearly stated: [τὸν] Παύλον [...] εἰρηκέναι ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ πρὸς Κορινθίους. However, Pauline quotation can also be introduced without any reference marker: 1.4.5, 9.1, etc.

Chapter 1.8.5, for instance, contains a number of allusions and quotations from the Fourth Gospel. The quotations are all similarly introduced by *verba dicendi* and the speaker is referred to as τὸν μαθητὴν τοῦ κυρίου; they are, as such, references to content; in the context they are argumentative references. Here, at least, the gospel of John is not mentioned as a full text; all references are to content: allusions to Johannine material (1:34.49; 3:18; 1:18; 1:5) and quotations from John (τὸν μαθητὴν τοῦ κυρίου) with *verba dicendi*: (John 1:1-2; 1:3; 1:3-4; 1:4; 1:14).

Returning to *Hermas'* case, not mentioning the title of a text otherwise referenced "to content" is not dissimilar to the use of other texts, even scriptural. For 2 Sam, for instance, the biblical indices of the *Sources Chrétiennes* volumes indicate allusions and quotations in: *Adv. haer.* 1.18.4 (an allusion), 4.27.1 (three quotations), and *Epideixis* 36 (an allusion), adding up to five references, of which three to content and one to the text as a whole, given the explicit introductive marker φησί ἢ γράφη. Yet, in none of these cases is the text named. Likewise, there are similarly few quotations from Jonah, in 3.20.1 and 5.5.2, and in none of them is the name of the book mentioned. Jonah is mentioned, but only as a character. Arguing for Irenaeus' lack of knowledge of *Hermas* as a text would attract the same judgement on other texts, even scriptural. Rather, we should consider that the fact that Irenaeus does not mention *Hermas* (or 2 Sam, or the book of Jonah) is simply due to his referencing habits.

The singular case of 4.20.2, where the introductory formula καλῶς οὖν ἡ γράφη ἢ λέγουσα implies that Irenaeus is thinking of Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 as a written text or as a part of a written text will be discussed in a little while.

5694), who contains *Mand.* 1.1 embedded in a prayer. Could this mean that Irenaeus did not know *Hermas* as a (larger) text? This might be too speculative, and the data presented in the remainder of the chapter suggests otherwise.

There are further reasons to consider that from the six references to only *Mand. 1.1* need not follow that Irenaeus knew this fragment only, without awareness of the whole text. *Mand. 1.1* stands out in the *Shepherd* as a condensed theological discourse on God in a larger otherwise moral-focused text, even though there are other few places where faith in God the Creator is mentioned.¹³²

I would suggest that *Mand. 1.1* is singled out in the *Shepherd* as a condensed discourse on God's attributes in an otherwise moral text, and might have been picked out from among the other similar fragments by its emphatic position: immediately after the *Visions*, and on the top of the *Mandates*. The position and the theological emphasis do make this phrase stand out when the whole text is read. Indeed, the accent placed on "the centrality of monotheistic faith as the foundation of all faithful living" makes Herm. *Mand. 1.1* "a statement that endeared this section to later heresiologists."¹³³ It is indeed hardly surprising that Irenaeus picked this up and not one of *Hermas'* statements on penitence or abstinence. In any case, the question of how much of the 140 pages of *Hermas* Irenaeus really knew seems bound to remain unanswered.

3. *The καλῶς οὖν ἢ γραφή ἢ λέγουσα introductory formula in 4.20.2*

It was already mentioned that many scholars maintain that, even if ἢ γραφή can designate at Irenaeus a text from the canon (New or Old Testament), it is unlikely that Irenaeus held *Hermas* as canonical.¹³⁴ Such scholars point to the fact that in *Adv. haer.* 3.6.4, 3.17.4, and 5.Pr Irenaeus uses γραφή about his own writings,¹³⁵ or in 1.20.1 even about the texts of the heretics he's refuting,¹³⁶ maintaining thus that γραφή simply means *writing* in 4.20.2.¹³⁷ Those who find themselves in disagreement with this view argue that the first group of scholars tend to force the evidence to fit their understanding of the modern canon(s), pointing to the fact that in Eusebius view (*HE* 5.8.7), the quotation of *Adv. haer.* 4.20.2 means precisely that Irenaeus considered *Hermas* canonical.¹³⁸

Much of the discussion revolves thus around the introductory formula καλῶς οὖν ἢ γραφή ἢ λέγουσα. Starting from its first part, Brox surveys the list of quotations introduced by *bene ... ait/dixit/meminit*. Introduced in this manner are Paul (2.14.7, 5.10.2, 5.13.3), an anonymous author (4.4.2), Justin (4.6.2), a Johannine saying of the Lord (4.7.1), and the prophet Malachias (4.17.6 and 4.20.2), thus unlikely to point by

¹³² Listed in Snyder, *The Shepherd*, 63.

¹³³ Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 103.

¹³⁴ E.g. Behr, *Apostolic Preaching*, n. 15 at 103; Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 50-51; Rousseau, *SC* 100 (1), 248-250.

¹³⁵ Behr, *Apostolic Preaching*, n. 15 at 103.

¹³⁶ Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 51. Steenberg, "Status of Hermas," 37-51 lists all occurrences of this term in *Adv. haer.*; among them 1.20.1: ἀποκρούφων καὶ νόθων γραφῶν, speaking of the heretics who "put forth hosts of spurious writings by ignorant men," at 38.

¹³⁷ Grant, "Canon," 295.

¹³⁸ Hemmerdinger, "Mésaventures," n. 1 at 308; Henne, "Canonicité," 82-87, where he also offers a brief history of interpretation on that matter; Blanchard, *Le témoignage*, n.7 at 129; Steenberg, "Status of Hermas," 29-66.

itself to a scriptural use.¹³⁹ For his part, Steenberg lists all uses of *γραφή* and argues that *ἡ γραφή* without further qualifications denotes Scripture in Irenaeus; in turn, qualifications added to *ἡ γραφή* would denote a normal writing.¹⁴⁰ In the latest contribution to the debate, Hill argues that the attributive participle *ἡ λέγουσα* forms in fact a qualification, by means of which “Irenaeus is commending a specific writing, the one which says a certain thing,” while also acknowledging that “this observation about the construction, in itself, does not mean Irenaeus could not have considered *SH* to be Scripture.”¹⁴¹

This is also the reading of Rousseau, who notes that in all cases where *λέγει* is employed, the expression *ἡ γραφή λέγει* means “incontestablement” Scripture, and that *ἡ λέγουσα* used in the case of *Hermas* implies a nuance: while it is still possible to indicate Scripture, *ἡ γραφή ἡ λέγουσα* can also be understood as “*l’écrit qui dit*.”¹⁴² Hill then adduces that while in 4.20.2 “Irenaeus quotes *Hermas* in a chain of sources whose other three members are clearly Scriptural, it is also true that he associates each of the other members with a known category of Scriptural writings: the prophets, the apostles, the Lord.”¹⁴³ In this case, the introduction *ἡ γραφή* would simply signify that Irenaeus “had no ‘Scriptural’ category for this writing,”¹⁴⁴ and thus that *Hermas* would be “simply a ‘writing’ which said something exceptionally well.”¹⁴⁵

While this is possible, it is nonetheless speculative, and by no means ascertained, since, for instance, there is really no reason within the text to ascertain that *Hermas* is *not* of one of the ‘scriptural’ categories Hill mentions. And as far as the correct understanding of the Greek text of 4.20.2 goes, “the Scripture, which says,” is equally possible with Hill’s solution “the writing which says.” In addition, it is rather hard at this point to overlook the fact that Eusebius (who did not think *Hermas* by any means canonical) quotes this very fragment to illustrate that Irenaeus not only knows but also “receives” the *Shepherd*, in his discussion of Irenaeus’

¹³⁹ Brox, *Der Hirt*, 58-59.

¹⁴⁰ Steenberg, “Status of *Hermas*,” 51-53, 62.

¹⁴¹ Hill, “The Writing,” 131.

¹⁴² Rousseau, *SC* 100 (1), 248.

¹⁴³ Hill, “The Writing,” 131-132. This too is also argued by Rousseau, albeit in a more radical manner; Rousseau, *SC* 100 (1), 248-249: “En effet, aussitôt après la phrase du *Pasteur*, Irénée cite un texte prophétique (Malachie), puis un texte apostolique (Ép. aux Éphésiens), puis une parole du Christ lui-même. On reconnaît là, rangée par ordre de gradation ascendante, les trois autorités, qui, aux yeux d’Irénée, résument toute la révélation divine et constituent l’«Écriture» au sens global du terme. Comme la phrase d’*Hermas* se situe en dehors de ces trois autorités fondamentales, il y a tout lieu de croire qu’Irénée ne la considère pas comme appartenant à l’Écriture.” Blanchard, *Le témoignage*, 129, goes along the same lines: he finds that while it is hard to avoid the Scriptural connotation of *γραφή* in 4.20.2, Irenaeus is more interested here in the continuity of the message as based on the apostolic preaching than in the status of *Hermas* as authoritative text: “Il paraît plus sage quant à nous d’admettre que, tout en conservant habituellement aux Écritures leurs frontières canoniques, Irénée est parfois tenté d’y annexer telle phrase extra-biblique, suffisamment répandue pour paraître appartenir au trésor commun reçu des apôtres [...]” 129. While he explicitly does not agree with Rousseau’s method, he reaches basically the same conclusion: *Hermas* is not Scripture to Irenaeus, though one needs to keep in mind that they do not seem to operate with a scripture/canon sort of distinction, and that in both cases they seem to mean “canon” (as was discussed in the introduction to the first chapter) even if they use the “scripture” terminology.

¹⁴⁴ Hill, “The Writing,” 131.

¹⁴⁵ Hill, “The Writing,” 132.

Scripture in HE 5.8.¹⁴⁶ Eusebius' testimony keeps afloat the possibility that ἡ γραφή means Scripture in 4.20.2, to say the least. I would rather agree than with Osiek that the succession of Scriptural quotations in which *Hermas* appears in 4.20.2 "indicates a recognition of the text as authoritative, even if it is not clear exactly how he would value its authority."¹⁴⁷ However, a few steps can be taken towards assessing the value of *Hermas*' authority in Irenaeus adding another perspective to the discussion on the introductory formula, as there is at least one more formulaic structure to be taken into account.

Given that at least some instances of γραφή were shown to designate Irenaeus' texts or those of the heretical authors (thus implicitly non-Scriptural texts), it seems necessary to revisit all cases in which a quotation is introduced in a similar manner to that of Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 in 4.20.2, because such introductory formula (where a *verbum dicendi* or an equivalent is preceded by ἡ γραφή) is hardly a neutral statement about the quotation which follows it.

Below is a list with quotations introduced by ἡ γραφή and *verbum dicendi*. The introductory formula is followed in each case by the place of the modern reference of the quotation between round brackets.

Most of them – eighteen – are in *Aduersus haereses*:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1.22.1 | quemadmodum Scriptura dicit (Ps 32.6, et iterum John 1.3) |
| 2.2.5 | sicut Scriptura Geneseos dicit (Gen 1.3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26) |
| 3.6.1 | ἐπὶ τῆς καταστροφῆς τῶν Σοδομιτῶν ἡ γραφή φησιν (Gen 19.24) |
| 3.12.5 | φησὶν ἡ γραφή (Acts 4.22) |
| 3.20.1 | καθὼς ἡ γραφή [περὶ τούτων] φησὶν (Jonah 3.8-9) |
| 3.23.2 | περὶ οὗ ἡ γραφή φησιν [εἰρηκέναι τὸν Θεόν] (Gen 1.26) |
| 4.16.4 | καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἡ γραφή φησιν (Deut 5.22) |
| 4.20.1 | περὶ οὗ φησιν ἡ γραφή (Gen 2.7, a paragraph away) |
| 4.20.2 | καλῶς οὖν ἡ γραφή ἡ λέγουσα (Herm., Mand. 1.1) |
| 4.27.1 | φησὶ ἡ γραφή περὶ αὐτοῦ (2 Sam 10.34), and |
| 4.27.1 | φησὶν ἡ γραφή περὶ αὐτοῦ (1 Kgs 11.1-9) |

¹⁴⁶ So Brox, *Der Hirt*, 58. Hill "Writing," does not take this fact into account when discussing the meaning of the Greek text of 4.20.2, beyond that he simply mentions this in n. 4 at 128; in Hill's argument, Eusebius is only mentioned with his own view, i.e. that he rejects *Hermas* as spurious (hence that he does not "receive" it), at 133.

¹⁴⁷ Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 5.

- 4.30.2 ὡς καὶ ἡ γραφὴ φησιν (Exod 1.13-14)
- 4.31.1 καθὼς καὶ ἡ γραφὴ λέγει (Gen 19.33)
- 4.40.3 ἡ γραφὴ φησιν (Gen 3.15)
- 5.5.1 καθὼς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει (Gen 2.8)
- 5.16.1 ἡ γραφὴ φησιν [εἰρηκέναι τὸν Θεόν] (Gen 3.19)
- 5.23.1 καθὼς ἡ γραφὴ φησιν [εἰρηκέναι τὸν Θεόν] (Gen 2.16-17)
- 5.28.3 καὶ διὰ τοῦτο φησιν ἡ γραφὴ [τῆς Γενέσεως] (Gen 2.1-2)

There are also two possible such introductory formulae in *Epidexis*:

- 32 *ait scriptura* (Gen 2.5)
- 44 *deinde dicit scriptura* (Gen 19.24)

All these examples are largely similar: rather common variations of *verba dicendi* and ἡ γραφή. That is, *the writing*, always at singular in this construction, which is only natural since Irenaeus quotes from one text at a time. In only two occasions the name of the writing is mentioned, 2.2.5 and 5.28.3, and in both cases the name is lacking in the Greek manuscripts and is found only in the variants. In the rest of the examples the name is not mentioned, which suggests that Irenaeus' implied reader knows the name of *the writing*. A. Rousseau argues that in 4.20.4 the *Shepherd* is not Scripture since *Hermas*, the name, is not mentioned, as it is mentioned for other texts. As seen from the list above, on the contrary, it is rather rare (and text-critically insecure) to have the book named when this construction is used. Furthermore, as shown a little earlier, 2 Sam, who also figures in the above list as introduced by φησί ἡ γραφή, is nowhere mentioned with any name whatsoever for the text, although quoted or alluded to in *Adv. haer.* 1.18.4 (an allusion), 4.27.1 (three quotations), and *Epidexis* 36 (an allusion).

Jonah, who appears in the same list (introduced in 3.20.1 by καθὼς ἡ γραφὴ φησιν), affords a rather instructive example. Throughout all *Adv. haer.*, Jonah is only quoted or alluded to in 3.20.1 and in 5.5.2.¹⁴⁸ In the latter case, there is no quotation; instead, Irenaeus mentions Jonah' adventures at sea, alluding to Jonah 1-2. Given that there is no mention of any (prophetic) book whatsoever, and that Jonah himself is only mentioned as a character (and not as the name of a prophetic book), this is a reference to content with no mention of a text as a whole.

¹⁴⁸ There is no Jonah entry in the scriptural index of *Epidexis*, in Rousseau, SC 406.

The whole 3.20.1 paragraph is intertwined with allusions and quotations from Jonah (references to 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.8-9). Most of these are references to content. First, the prophet Jonah (the character, not the book) is mentioned as the subject of God's compassion. Later, two quotations from Jonah 1.9 and 2.2 are introduced with *verba dicendi*, as the words of indeed the character Jonah, thus making them references to content. They are not different in this regard from the references to other texts mentioned earlier. On only one occasion in this paragraph a quotation from the book of Jonah is presented as coming from a text, and this is introduced by *καθὼς ἡ γραφή φησίν*. However, there is no mention of any title of the text, as all occurrences of Jonah's name refer to the character and not to the book. Therefore, it is not at all unusual for Irenaeus to quote a text without mentioning its name, even if introduced as *γραφή*. Rousseau argues that, since in 1.22.1 *Hermas* is quoted without this introductory formula, and in the same phrase two other texts are mentioned as Scripture, Ps 32.6 and John 1.3, this could only mean that *Hermas* is not scripture as the other two.¹⁴⁹ Yet in 3.12.5 where a quote from Acts 4.22 is introduced by *φησίν ἡ γραφή*, the same phrase contains quotes from Ps 145.6 and Ps 2.1-2 without their being named *γραφή*. If we would keep to Rousseau's interpretation, the two psalms should not be considered scripture either.

Returning now to the list offered above, it is perhaps more interesting to note that most of these quotations introduced in this manner are from the Old Testament (17), mainly from Genesis (11). Three of them are from early Christian texts: 1 from Acts (3.12.5), 1 from John (1.22.1), and 1 from the *Shepherd* (4.20.2).¹⁵⁰ Surely *ἡ γραφή* could have had, in all those occasions, the literal meaning of *the writing*, hence being neutral. Given that the syntax and construction of the introductory formula is consistent, it is impossible to discern whether some of them mean *the writing* and others *the Scripture* without the risk of projecting our clear-cut categories of canon and Scripture on the ancient data. It surely could mean *Scripture*, yet without much of a sense of what that meant precisely.

I believe it is safe to notice that Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 is employed and functions just as the quoted verses from Gen, Jonah, Deut, 2 Sam, 1 Kgs, John and Acts. Also, with regard to the question of whether *ἡ γραφή* of these

¹⁴⁹ Rousseau, *SC 100* (1), 248-9. Rousseau's arguments were not received all that well. One of the collaborators on the *SC 100* volume, notes: "Rousseau (pp. 248-50) cherche longuement à montrer qu'Eusèbe se trompe [in saying that Irenaeus considered *Hermas* Scripture]. Mais comment ne pas voir qu'Eusèbe, qui est un père grec, et qui n'est séparé d'Irénée que par un siècle, est mieux placé que Rousseau pour le comprendre?" Hemmerdinger, "Mésaventures," n. 1 at 308. Even less indulgent with Rousseau's argumentation is Blanchard: "Dans une longue note («p. 629, n. 1», p. 248-250, du volume des notes accompagnant l'édition du livre IV), A. Rousseau et ses collaborateurs tentent de réduire le scandale que représenterait pour eux le fait qu'Irénée décerne au *Pasteur* le titre d'Écriture, et cherchent à justifier leur traduction par le mot passe-partout «écrit»; cela nous paraît de mauvaise méthode", Blanchard, *Le témoignage*, n. 7 at 129.

¹⁵⁰ It is perhaps worth recalling here that the *Muratorian Canon* excludes *Hermas*, from the vicinity of both the gospels and of the prophets, implying perhaps that the *Shepherd's* authority could have been related to that of the Old Testament and not only to that of the New Testament. If such would be the case, Irenaeus might be construed as an example for that situation. However, we should keep in mind that, at least here, *Hermas* is in the vicinity of other Old Testament books than the prophets.

constructions means *the scripture* or *the writings*, given the peculiarity of this introductory formula and the authoritative context in which it is used, I would hold that it is a marker of authority: *Hermas*, just as Gen, Jonah, Deut, 2 Sam, 1 Kgs, John and Acts, is *scripture* to Irenaeus. That is, Irenaeus' *scripture*, and not, by any means, our canon. Unlike later authors, Irenaeus does not offer categories to hierarchically classify the authoritative texts he is using. Given the focus of the present contribution on the reception history of the *Shepherd*, an assessment of Irenaeus' concept of Scripture would be well beyond the scope of this chapter.

Suffice here to note that Irenaeus can use *Hermas* just as he uses any of the above-mentioned texts, naming it ἡ γραφή: *Hermas* is a highly authoritative text, being ἡ γραφή just as Gen, Jonah, Deut, 2 Sam, 1 Kgs, John and Acts.

4. The Canon of Truth

Inviting further reflection, *Hermas* is referred to on two occasions in relation to the κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας, once in 1.22.1, and once in *Epideixis* 4. However, the presence of a *rule of truth* in early Christianity has generated a history of interpretation of its own. A sketched survey is offered by E. Pagels:

As is well known, A. von Harnack took this to be a version of a baptismal creed (*History of Dogma* I, 354-372) while others, like C. Blume (*Glauben und Taufbekenntnis in den alten Kirche*, 238-270) identified it with what he calls "apostolic tradition," and includes the whole of the doctrines, precepts, rites, and customs transmitted in the churches and preserved by the bishops. Most persuasive, however, is the work of van den Eynde, who shows that, for Irenaeus, it involves hermeneutics as well as creedal formulations, but cannot be as inclusive as Blume suggests; for his discussion on Irenaeus, see D. van den Eynde, *Les normes de l'enseignement chrétien dans la littérature patristique des trois premiers siècles* (Paris, 1933) 288-291.¹⁵¹

Different authors offer fairly different lists of passages relevant for this concept in Irenaeus.¹⁵² The Greek version of *regula veritatis* is κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας, and Irenaeus uses it "with reference to authoritative teachings."¹⁵³ With regard to the first word of the expression, Reed notes:

the second century use of κανὼν remains distinct from its later meaning. . . . For Irenaeus, the κανὼν functions as an extra-textual criterion for distinguishing true doctrine from spurious compositions. . . . As such, his κανὼν τῆς

¹⁵¹ Pagels, "The Canon of Truth," n. 51 at 351.

¹⁵² Compare the list in n. 4 at 205 of R. Kereszty, "The Unity of the Church in the Theology of Irenaeus," *Second Century* 4/4 (1984): 202-218, with that on p. 13 of Reed, "Orality." The difference comes from that in the former the accent is on *faith* while in the latter it comes on the *canon*.

¹⁵³ Reed, "Orality," 13, where she offers the following list of occurrences: 1.9.4, 1.22.1; 2..25.2, 2.27.1, 2.28.1, 2.28.3; 3.15.1; 4.35.4; see also 1.10.1; 3.2.2, 3.4.1, 3.5.1, 3.14.4; 4.32.1, 4.33.8.

ἀληθείας differs markedly from the κανών of later tradition, which attributes a self-legitimizing degree of sanctity to a certain group of texts.¹⁵⁴

D. van den Eynde, for his part, notes that in Irenaeus' expression κανών τῆς ἀληθείας the genitive introduces a simple apposition: the expression means *the rule which is the truth* (or *the rule given in truth* or *in faith*) rather than *the rule for the truth*, and is used as a synonym for *truth* (2.27.1), *faith* (1.22.1), *object of faith* (1.10.3), the *preaching of the Apostles* (3.2.1), and *the word of God* (4.35.4).¹⁵⁵

Eynde concurs that the term κανών simply points to inflexibility of the "vraie doctrine."¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, while the rule of faith is not different from the words of God and from the Scripture,¹⁵⁷

la règle de la vérité est également la doctrine prêchée par les apôtres, transmise par succession et enseignée dans les églises. [...] La formule « règle de la vérité » désigne d'abord, dans ce contexte, le critère qui permet de distinguer les fausses interprétation des Écritures d'avec les vraies. Ce n'est pourtant pas un principe formel d'exégèse, mais la doctrine véritable des Écritures.¹⁵⁸

Eynde offers the following list of occurrences for the κανών τῆς ἀληθείας: *Adv. haer.* 1.9.4, 1.22.1, 2.25.1, 2.27.1, 2.28.1, 3.2.1, 3.11.1, 3.12.6, 3.15.1, 4.35.4, and *Ep.* 3. In only two of these instances is the κανών τῆς ἀληθείας explained (1.22.1 and 3.11.1); in the rest of them it is only mentioned.

As seen before, in 1.22.1 Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 is introduced as an explanation of the rule of faith (*regulam ueritatis, id est quia* [...]).¹⁵⁹ In 3.11.1, it is John who formulates the explanation of the κανών τῆς ἀληθείας, and the explanation is introduced in a largely similar manner, as the Latin version shows: *discipulus Domini regulam ueritatis constituere in Ecclesia quia* [...].¹⁶⁰ Although what follows after the *quia* is not a quotation, it is nonetheless a statement which sounds much like John and which is confirmed immediately with a full quotation of Jn 1.1-5.

Pagels argues that Irenaeus uses John "to radically revise"¹⁶¹ the canon of truth which he uses against his opponents, "using precisely the terminology and concepts he finds in the *Gospel of John*,"¹⁶² that is, turning

¹⁵⁴ Reed, "Orality," 13-14.

¹⁵⁵ D. van den Eynde, *Les Normes de l'Enseignement Chrétien dans la littérature patristique des trois premiers siècles* (Paris: J. Dulcot, 1933), 283.

¹⁵⁶ Van den Eynde, *Enseignement*, 284.

¹⁵⁷ Van den Eynde, *Enseignement*, 284.

¹⁵⁸ Van den Eynde, *Enseignement*, 286.

¹⁵⁹ 1.22.1 *Cum teneamus autem nos regulam ueritatis, id est quia sit unus Deus omnipotens qui omnia condidit per Verbum suum et aptauit et fecit ex eo quod non erat ad hoc ut sint omnia, quemadmodum Scriptura dicit: Verbo enim Domini caeli firmati sunt, et Spiritu oris uirtus eorum, et iterum: Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil [...] facile eos deuiasse a ueritate arguimus.*

¹⁶⁰ Pagels, "The Canon of truth," 362: "Astonishingly, Irenaeus declares that it is the *Gospel of John* – and especially the prologue – that establishes the canon of truth," in 3.11.1.

¹⁶¹ Pagels, "The Canon of truth," 339.

¹⁶² Pagels, "The Canon of truth," 362.

“this favourite source of Valentinian Christians against them.”¹⁶³ Pagels’ assumption, based on Bauer’s influential book,¹⁶⁴ is that John was in high regard with the “heretics” and under suspicion with the “orthodox.”¹⁶⁵ Two years after her article was published, Hill argued convincingly that we should not so easily see John as better regarded by the “heterodox” than the “orthodox” in early Christianity.¹⁶⁶ This does not invalidate all Pagel’s conclusions: irrespective of the prior “gnostic” use of John, Irenaeus’ *rule of faith* is still shaped by John 1.1-5 in 3.11.1 (and, in part, in 1.22.1 too) in a polemic context.

When comparing the two explanations of the κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας in 1.22.1 and 3.11.1 the first difference is that in 3.11.1 Irenaeus mentions both John and his gospel, while in 1.22.1 he says nothing of the source of his definition. Although *Hermas* is not mentioned and nor is his text, it has been shown earlier that it is not at all unusual for Irenaeus to quote from a text without any mention of the source text. Keeping this in mind, it seems that Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 functions in a similar manner in 1.22.1,¹⁶⁷ as John 1.1-5 does in 3.11.1: they both define, in their respective fragments, the κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας. If, as Pagel has it, John 1.1-5 is used as authoritative text for polemical purposes to shape the *regula ueritatis*, then the same is true of Herm. *Mand.* 1.1, as a text belonging to the early Christian apologetic traditions.¹⁶⁸

5. Concluding remarks

To briefly summarise, in this chapter I have made an attempt to assess the significance of Irenaeus’ quotations for the early reception history of the *Shepherd*, inquiring into how authoritative Irenaeus could have considered *Hermas* to be. Since the latter is anything but explicit on the matter, the inquiry pertains to the function of *Hermas* references in his works, and the first step was to establish a safe base for analysis. Having assessed *Hermas* possible references in Irenaeus, I have argued that the fact that he never mentions this text by name is most likely due to the latter’s citation habits, with parallels in his use of other scriptural texts.

Two other issues emerged in discussing Irenaeus’ view of *Hermas*: the καλῶς οὖν ἢ γραφῆ ἢ λέγουσα formula in 4.20.2, and the presence of Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 as part of Irenaeus’ *regula ueritatis*, both with relevance to *Hermas*’ reception history as authoritative text. The latter, as seen, appears in an apologetic context in which Herm. *Mand.* 1.1 works in the same manner John’s text does.

¹⁶³ Pagels, “The Canon of truth,” 362.

¹⁶⁴ W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1934); English translation: *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

¹⁶⁵ Pagels, “The Canon of truth,” 360, references Bauer when she formulates precisely this assumption: “Irenaeus, may have realized, too, that many of his fellow believers might regard the *Gospel of John* as problematic, even suspect.”

¹⁶⁶ C.E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

¹⁶⁷ Pagels, “The Canon of truth,” quotes 1.22.1 as displaying Johannine influences (*uerbum*) but does not seem to notice the reference to Herm. *Mand.* 1.1.

¹⁶⁸ Brox, *Der Hirt*, 57; also Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 103. Hill “The Writing,” 127, also relegates the authority of *Hermas* with Irenaeus as “a faithful exposition of the apostolic faith.”

With regard to the former, I have argued that the γραφή *Hermas* reference in 4.20.2 should be taken together with the rest of references introduced as ἡ γραφή with a *verbum dicendi*. In 4.20.2, the Herm. Mand. 1.1 quotation functions just as the similarly introduced quotations from Gen, Jonah, Deut, 2 Sam, 1 Kgs, John and Acts. Furthermore, given the peculiarity of this introductory formula and the authoritative context in which it is used, it can hardly be understood as the neutral “writing.” It is rather very likely a marker of authority: *Hermas*, just as the above listed texts, is *scripture* to Irenaeus, although it is beyond the scope of this study to determine what *scripture* would be theologically for Irenaeus. It is sufficient to notice that Irenaeus can use *Hermas* just as he uses any of the above-mentioned texts, naming it ἡ γραφή: *Hermas* is then a highly authoritative text, being ἡ γραφή just as Gen, Jonah, Deut, 2 Sam, 1 Kgs, John and Acts, and part of the *regula veritatis* just as John.

As far as Bovon's categories go – canonical, rejected, and “books useful for the soul” – it remains unclear whether Irenaeus introductory formula comprising ἡ γραφή and a *verbum dicendi* is meant to describe only the first category, or with both the first and the third. So far as other current terminological proposals go, as they have been described in the introduction to the first chapter, it is clear that for Irenaeus *Hermas* is *scripture*—to be sure, *Hermas*' presence in Irenaeus' rule of faith indicates by itself that the former *is* scripture to the latter in the any variant of understanding scripture or canon 1—and it is not at all clear whether one can also claim that it is canon, although very few would argue for the existence of a New Testament canon this early.

All in all, the presence of *Hermas* in the works of Irenaeus affords an instructive example of Patristic reception of an early Christian authoritative text which is neither in our New Testament nor in our collections of apocryphal literature: when one switches from only the ‘canonical’ question to that of circulation, function and use of authoritative texts in early Christianity, one gets a more composite understanding in which a perhaps less-expected text may intermingle with our biblical texts on various levels, be that theological, polemical, scriptural.

As regards the general hypothesis—that the authority *Shepherd of Hermas* may be linked to what we understand today to be its apocalyptic character—it is not yet clear whether this connection can be made in the case of Irenaeus.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, what he quotes from the *Shepherd* belongs to the poorest apocalyptic scenario possible, as in Mand. 1.1 the revelation is reduced to a mere discussion between the seer and the apocalyptic agent, the Angel of Penitence, and, as will be seen in the third chapter, it is especially this type of material that lead every now and then to *Hermas*' ‘exclusion’ from the apocalyptic literary genre in modern

¹⁶⁹ The comparison with Irenaeus' use of other apocalyptic writings does not clarify matters. On the one hand, as seen in the list above, none of them appears in the list of writings introduced by a formula similar ἡ γραφή ἢ λέγουσα. On the other hand, Revelation is used extensively and discussed, not only quoted, and certainly referred to as a written text (e.g. *Adversus haereses* 5.30), unlike the *Shepherd*, yet it can also be used in polemical contexts.

scholarship. Having said that, that which Irenaeus quotes is nonetheless a 'truth' that an angel conveys to a seer, which at least opens the possibility that the Patristic author considers it the result of an revelation. Although the connection at this point is rather weak, it nonetheless begs in turn the question of what the nature of *Hermas'* apocalyptic is. Further research is therefore needed in order to establish anything, but at the other end of the spectrum, focusing on the peculiarities of the *Shepherd's* apocalyptic character—a task which is left for the last chapter.

But first, we turn to Clement of Alexandria's use of the *Shepherd*, for a complementary vantage point.

HERMAS IN THE WORKS OF CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA¹⁷⁰

Clement of Alexandria (150-215) is listed, without fail, in all commentaries on *Hermas* among the early authors who held the *Shepherd* in highest esteem. Yet it is not always an easy task to grasp the meaning of this esteem. This chapter aims to reassess the peculiar view Clement held about *Hermas* as an instance of this text's reception.

The traces of *Hermas* in Clement's works have long been seen as focussing on common themes, of which the most prominent is, I believe, the discussion around repentance.¹⁷¹ Recently, a more subtle parallel was documented, a shared use of an angelic imagery when referring to the Holy Spirit.¹⁷²

1. References to *Hermas* in Clement's works

Strom. I 1.1 [1]

Today, we no longer have the beginning of the *Stromateis*. The first page of the main manuscript is missing. What we have of it starts, in fact, with a *Hermas* quotation, *Strom. I 1*:

Strom. I 1.1 [1]: '[...] that you read them at hand and be able to keep them'.¹⁷³

In *Hermas*, this occurs in the 5th vision ([25] 5); it is the vision in which the *Shepherd* makes his appearance. And the first instruction to *Hermas* is precisely to write down all the commandments and parables to come, so that you may read them at hand and be able to keep them, or, to be more exact, to observe them.

The first chapter of the 1st book of the *Stromateis* presents a brief argument as to why Clement is writing the whole book. On the one hand he points to the limitations of teaching (some things should remain

¹⁷⁰ The first two parts of this chapter have been presented at the Oxford Patristic Conference 2001, and were subsequently published as "Hermas in Clement of Alexandria," in Markus Vinzent (ed.), *Studia Patristica, Vol. LXVI. Papers presented at the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2011, Volume 14: Clement of Alexandria; The Fourth-Century Debates* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 41-51.

¹⁷¹ See some references in Peter Panyiotis Karavites, *Evil, Freedom, and the Road to Perfection in Clement of Alexandria*, (Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 63; Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999), n. 102, 49.

¹⁷² Bogdan Gabriel Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 95, Leiden: Brill, 2009).

¹⁷³ Herm. Vis. 5.5 [25]: ἵνα ὑπὸ χεῖρα ἀναγινώσκῃς αὐτάς καὶ δυνήθῃς φυλάξαι αὐτάς – B.D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 2 (Loeb Classical Library 25; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 236.

Strom. I 1.1 [1]: [...] ἵνα ὑπὸ χεῖρα ἀναγινώσκῃς αὐτάς καὶ δυνήθῃς φυλάξαι αὐτάς – C. Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie, Les Stromates: Stromate I* (Sources Chrétiennes 30; Paris: Cerf, 1951), 43.

obscured), and on the other he sets in contrast the two ways of transmitting the gnosis, orally or in a written manner.

And after the *Hermas* quotation, there is a question pertaining to the latter: who should *not* leave written works behind? It could be construed that the presence of the *Hermas* quotation is used by Clement to point to the necessity rather than the vague possibility of his leaving behind written works, given that the *Hermas* fragment speaks of writing teachings down as a means for observing them, and not just for the sake of collection.

Strom. I 181.1 [29]

The next *Hermas* quote occurs in the very last chapter of the first book of the *Stromateis*. In this chapter, the 29th, Clement affirms the prevalence of the divine law over the younger teachings of the Greeks.

Strom. I 181.1 [29]: Therefore, it is in a divine manner that the power which spoke to Hermas by revelation said: 'The visions and revelations are for the double-minded, who ponder in their hearts whether these things are or are not'.¹⁷⁴

In the *Shepherd*, these are the words of the woman impersonating the church. She is telling Hermas that the visions and the interpretations he receives for those are not for him, for his qualities, but for the benefit of the double-minded.

In Clement, the double-minded who question whether things are or are not, are the Greeks, with their younger teaching. The meaning is that you need the Law and the Scriptures to grow out of mere philosophy, no matter how erudite or full of reason it may be.

Of interest here is also how this rather loose quotation from *Hermas* is introduced: the woman impersonating the church is said to be a power, δύναμις, who, in a divine manner, θείως, speaks to Hermas by revelation. It can be noted that in the preceding chapter (I 178.1), in largely the same discussion, Clement contrasts Greek dialectics with true wisdom (τὴν ἀληθῆ σοφίαν), of which the latter is a divine power (δύναμις θεία), through which a complete understanding can be reached, but not without the Saviour and his divine word.

¹⁷⁴ Herm. Vis. 3.4.3 [12]: [...] καὶ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται διὰ τοὺς διψύχους, τοὺς διαλογιζομένους ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν εἰ ἄρα ἔστιν ταῦτα ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν (LCL 25, 204).

Strom. I 181.1 [29]: Θείως τοίνυν ἡ δύναμις ἢ τῷ Ἑρμᾶ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν λαλοῦσα « τὰ ὀράματα » φησὶ « καὶ τὰ ἀποκαλύμματα διὰ τοὺς διψύχους, τοὺς διαλογιζομένους ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν εἰ ἄρα ἔστιν ταῦτα ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν » (SC 30, 176).

Strom. II 3.5 [1]

In the second book of the *Stromateis*, a quote from *Hermas* concludes the first chapter.

Strom. II 3.5 [1]: The power who shows things (ἡ δύναμις ἡ φανείσα) says to Hermas in the vision: what may be revealed to you, will be revealed.¹⁷⁵

This is a free quote from the 3rd vision of the *Shepherd*, where the woman impersonating the church urges Hermas to stop asking about the revelation, and then adds: 'If something needs to be revealed (rather than may be revealed, as Clement has it), it will be revealed to you'.

This first chapter of the second book of the *Stromateis* is an introductory one, which sets the intention of what follows and offers further critique of the philosophy of the Greeks. Before the *Hermas* quote, Clement contends that the one who seeks the truth diligently will see beyond what the Greeks offer, looking for the face beneath the mask. The *Hermas* quote then functions as a confirmation: rest assured, what may be revealed, will be revealed.

And again, in the introductory formula, Clement mentions the power, that is, the power who shows things (ἡ δύναμις ἡ φανείσα), the character who speaks to Hermas and conveys the visions he experiences.

Strom. II 43.5-44.3 [9]

The next quotation occurs in the 9th chapter of the same book, a chapter that puts together the virtues which follow one another, faith, fear, love, hospitality, repentance and hope. Yet the *Hermas* reference appears in an excursus dealing with the issue of faith prior to Christ and even to the Law. I will offer here a larger quote from Clement:

Strom. II 43.5-44.3 [9]: And the Shepherd, speaking plainly of those who had fallen asleep, knew there were certain righteous among Gentiles and Jews, not only before the coming of Christ, but also before the law, given the acceptance before God. [...] He thus says that the apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God and fallen asleep, preached by power and by faith to those that had fallen asleep before.

This is a reference to the 16th chapter of the 9th *Similitude*, which does mention neither Gentiles nor Jews, nor the death of the righteous man before the Law. It simply says *before*.

Clement's text continues with a large quotation from that chapter of *Hermas*:

¹⁷⁵ Herm. Vis. 3.13.4 [21]: [...] ἐάν τι δὲ δέη, ἀποκαλυφθήσεται σοι (LCL 25, 226).

Strom. II 3.5 [1]: Φησὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ ὁράματι τῷ Ἑρμᾶ ἡ δύναμις ἡ φανείσα· « ὃ ἐάν ἐνδέχῃται σοι ἀποκαλυφθῆναι, ἀποκαλυφθήσεται » (SC 38, 34).

Strom. II 44.2-3 [9]: Indeed he adds: and they gave them the seal of preaching. Thus they descended with them into the water and ascended again. But these descended alive, and again ascended alive. But those, who had fallen asleep, descended dead and ascended alive. Therefore, by these they were made alive, and found out the name of the Son of God. This is also why they ascended with them, and fitted into the construction of the tower, and, without being cut, were built up together; they fell asleep in righteousness and in great purity; the only thing they didn't have was this seal.¹⁷⁶

In this Clementine chapter, *Hermas* serves as a confirmation and an example for what the mentioned aside states: the virtues were available to the Gentiles also, and even before the Law. This aside, spanning over 11 verses of 3 paragraphs of the 9th chapter (II 42.4 – II 44.4), contains confirmative examples from, respectively: *Romans*, *Deuteronomy* and *Isaiah* quoted according to *Romans*, *Hermas*, and again *Romans*.

This fragment from the *Sim.* 9.16.6 [93] is also quoted in the 6th book of the *Stromateis*, chapter 6, in a similar context. Brooks notes that here, the *Hermas* 'passage is commented upon as though it were scripture'.¹⁷⁷ I'll just note that this quotation is really no different than other *Hermas* quotations.

Strom. II 55.3-6 [12]

The next *Hermas* quote occurs in the 12th chapter, again dedicated to virtues: we find here discussed faith, love, fear of God, hope, knowledge, and the intricate relations between them. This chapter is then concluded with several *Hermas* quotation, at times very approximate ones. Here is the first one:

Strom. II 55.3 [12]: As the Shepherd puts it: 'The virtue who holds together the church is Faith, the one through which the elect of God are saved. And the manly one is Self-restraint. They are followed by Simplicity, Knowledge, Innocence, Reverence, and Love. All these are the daughters of Faith.'¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ *Herm. Sim.* 9.16.5-7 [93]: [...] και αυτοι εδωκαν αυτοις τη σφραγιδα του κηρύγματος. 6. κατέβησαν και ζώντες κατέβησαν και ζώντες ανέβησαν· εκείνοι δε οι προκεκοιμημένοι νεκροι κατέβησαν, ζώντες δε ανέβησαν. 7. δια τούτων ουν εξωποιήθησαν και επέγνωσαν το όνομα του υίου του θεου· δια τούτο και συνανέβησαν μετ' αυτών, και συνηρμόσθησαν εις την οικοδομήν του πύργου, και αλατόμητοι συνωκοδομήθησαν· εν δικαιοσύνη γάρ εκοιμήθησαν και εν μεγάλη αγνεία· μόνον δε την σφραγιδα ταύτην ουκ ειχον [...] (LCL 25, 430).

Strom. II 44.2-3 [9]: Είτα επιφέρει· « και αυτοι εδωκαν αυτοις την σφραγιδα του κηρύγματος. Κατέβησαν ουν μετ' αυτών εις το ύδωρ και παλιν ανέβησαν· Αλλ' ούτοι ζώντες κατέβησαν και παλιν ζώντες ανέβησαν· εκείνοι δε οι προκεκοιμημένοι νεκροι κατέβησαν, ζώντες δε ανέβησαν. Δια τούτων ουν εξωποιήθησαν και επέγνωσαν το όνομα του υίου του θεου. Δια τούτο και συνανέβησαν μετ' αυτών, και συνηρμόσθησαν εις την οικοδομήν του πύργου, και αλατόμητοι συνωκοδομήθησαν· εν δικαιοσύνη <γάρ> εκοιμήθησαν και εν μεγάλη αγνεία, μόνον δε την σφραγιδα ταύτην ουκ εσχον » (SC 38, 69).

¹⁷⁷ J.A. Brooks, "Clement," 47.

¹⁷⁸ *Strom* II 55.3 [12]: « Η τοίνυν συνεχουσα την εκκλησίας », ως φησιν ό Ποιμήν, « αρετή ή πίστις έστί, δι' ής σώζονται οι εκλεκτοι του θεου· ή δε άνδριζομένη εγκράτεια. "Επεται δ' αυταίς απλότης, επιστήμη, άκακία, σεμνότης, αγάπη· Πάσαι δε αυται πιστεώς εισι θυγατέρες » (SC 38, 78).

This is a very loose manner of quoting on Clement's part. To be exact, in *Hermas'* text, all of them support the building of the tower, not only Faith, and they are not all daughters of Faith, as they come one from another: from Faith is born Self-restraint, from Self-restraint Simplicity, and so on, Herm. *Vis.* 3.8. [16].

Clement continues further seemingly quoting from the *Shepherd*:

Strom. II 55.4 [12]: And again he says: 'Faith leads the way, Fear builds up, and Love perfects.'¹⁷⁹

Yet, even though this is indeed introduced as a quotation, there is nothing in the *Shepherd* to resemble it. It is, most likely, an interpretation on Clement's part. The next one is very similarly an interpretation: it is again introduced as a quotation but cannot be found in the *Shepherd*. It is usually considered a reference to the 7th *Mandate*, 1-4, of which it seems to be a very free reworking on Clement's part.

Strom. II 55.4-5 [12] [...]: He says: 'Fear the Lord, then, in building up, and not the devil, in ruining.' 5. And furthermore: 'The works of God, that is <from> his commandments, are to be loved and done. But the works of the devil should be feared and not done. For the fear of God teaches and restores in love, while the fear of devil has hatred dwelling with it.'

Up next one is a free quotation reworking material from the 4th *Mandate*:

Strom. II 55.6 [12]: He (the Shepherd) also says: 'repentance is a great understanding. When repenting for what one has done, one does not do it or say it anymore, and, by torturing himself for his mistakes, benefits his soul.' [...]¹⁸⁰

The last *Hermas* reference in this chapter also concludes it. It has no introductory marker, and it is also not a quotation, but rather an interpretation of the contents of what follows in the 4th *Mandate* [31].

Strom. II 55.6 [12]: Therefore, the forgiveness of sins differs from repentance, although both show what is in our power.¹⁸¹

This last *Hermas* reference from the 12th chapter of the 2nd book of the *Stromateis* could be construed as an introduction to the next chapter, which deals precisely with a core topic from the *Shepherd*: the possibility of a second repentance. In fact, the whole conglomerate of *Hermas* references and loose quotations from *Hermas* here mark the switch from the treatment of the virtues to the more practical one pertaining to the margins of repentance.

¹⁷⁹ *Strom.* II 55.4 [12]: Καὶ πάλιν· « προηγείται μὴν πίστις, φόβος δὲ οἰκοδομεῖ, τελειοὶ δὲ ἡ ἀγάπη » (SC 38, 78).

¹⁸⁰ The parallel text is Herm. *Mand.* 4.2.2 [30].

¹⁸¹ The parallel text is Herm. *Mand.* 4.2.3 [30].

This chapter 13, usually considered to be closely inspired from the 4th *Mandate*, does not contain any explicit *Hermas* quote, although its opening statement seems to be an unmarked borrowing from the same 4th *Mandate* [31.2].

Strom. II 56.1 [13]: [...] He who has received forgiveness of sins must sin no more.

It was already noted by previous authors that, on the matter of the possibility of a second repentance, Clement concurs with *Hermas* in accepting the possibility of a second post-baptismal repentance, and also in holding that repeated repentance is useless.¹⁸²

Beyond these references, in 4.15.6 and 4.30.1 there are mentioned the martyrs who stay at the right hand of holiness, with an expression very close to that of *Hermas* on the same matter. Yet if a quotation, it is a silent quotation, without any explicit introductory formula.

Strom. IV 74.4 [9]

The following clear *Hermas* quotation occurs in the 9th chapter of the 4th book of the *Stromateis*. Here, Clement distinguishes the defending of faith from the confession of faith, and argues that only the latter is a requirement for all. Defending the faith, however, 'is not universally necessary, for that is not in our power'. The sufferings of Christ and of the Apostles are offered as models on that.

Paul is then quoted, from *Titus* 1:16, about those who confess God but whose works really are abominable. Clement adds that even those, by confessing, have done a good work, as their witness seems to cleanse their sins away. A quote from *Hermas* and one from *Luke* 22:31-2a are adduced to demonstrate his point:

Strom. IV 74.4 [9]: For example, the Shepherd says: 'You will escape the operation of the wild beast, if your heart becomes pure and blameless.' And also the Lord himself says [...].¹⁸³

The Lukan quote follows, about the Lord's intercession for those otherwise claimed by Satan. **One should** note that Clement here relies on *Hermas* to go beyond the text of Paul.

The *Sources Chrétiennes* editor notes, with respect to the *Luke* quotation, that the importance of the Gospel is here emphasized by comparison with *Hermas*' quote. This, however, does not say much about

¹⁸² See SC 38, n. 1, 80. P. Karavites, *Evil, Freedom*, n. 102, 49: "Clement's ideas on the lure of sin are nearly inspired by *Hermas* (Mand. 4.3) which contains the locus classicus on penitence in the 2nd cent. AD. Like *Hermas*, Clement admits a 'second penitence,' *Strom* II 57.1, for sins committed after baptism, but also like *Hermas* he rejects the idea that this penitence could be repeated (Mand. 4.3.6). He who repents in order to fall back to the same sin is not a real repenter (*Strom* II 59.1). More than *Hermas* Clement does not give any indication of the sacramental and ecclesiastical character of this second penitence."

¹⁸³ *Herm. Vis.* 4.2.5 [23]: [...] δυνήσεσθε ἐκφυγεῖν αὐτήν, ἐὰν ἡ καρδιά ὑμῶν γένηται καθαρὰ καὶ ἄμωμος [...]. (LCL 25, 230).

Hermas standing compared to the New Testament texts involved here, as it could have been provided simply as another example, even more diluted, for the message conveyed by the Gospel.

There is another possible reading, that Clement here is not comparing texts, ‘the *Shepherd of Hermas*’ and the ‘*Gospel according to Luke*’, but the characters in these texts: the Shepherd and the Lord. In which case it is only natural to have a Jesus’ saying as more authoritative than, virtually, a saying of anyone else. To be sure, there is a difficulty with such a proposal: in the text of *Hermas*, it is not the Shepherd who speaks, but the woman impersonating the church. Yet if one notes that in all other direct citations from *Hermas*, it is the speaking character who is introduced as saying what is quoted, the difficulty can be resolved. Furthermore, both the Shepherd and the woman-church are named as the divine power that speaks to Hermas, rendering Clement’s seeming confusion possible. All in all, both *Hermas* and *Luke*, linked by ἀλλὰ καί, are bound together in that they are used to support Clement’s interpretation beyond the text of Paul.

Strom. VI 131.2 [15]

The last explicit *Hermas* reference and quotation comes in the 15th chapter of the 6th book of the *Stromateis*. The context is Clement’s discussion about the rich obscurities of the Scripture, accessible to the gnostic. The *Hermas* reference goes as follows:

Strom. VI 131.2 [15]: Did not the power, who appeared to Hermas in vision as the typos of the Church, give him the book to copy for the elects [...] He says he wrote it letter by letter, for he could not find the syllables.

Modern readers of *Hermas* were baffled by this fragment from the 2nd *Vision* 1.3-4 [5]. Some pointed out that the book must have been written in *scriptio continua*, which caused Hermas reading difficulties.¹⁸⁴

Clement, for his part, understands this fragment allegorically: the letter by letter reading is the simple faith based on Scripture, who is accessible to all upon simple reading, while the syllabic reading is for the gnostics whose advanced faith unfolds the Scriptures. Relevant for the present discussion, however, is that the second similar example is drawn from *Isaiah*, who also received the order to write a book, in 8:1-2.

2. *Hermas as Revealed Text in Clement*

First of all, unlike in Irenaeus’ case, it is clear from Clement that he quotes and makes references to all three parts of *Hermas*: *Visions*, *Mandates* and *Parables*.

¹⁸⁴ See R. Joly, *Hermas: Le Pasteur* (Sources Chrétiennes 53; Paris, 1958, ²1968), n. 2, 89; Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 52. Stanislas Giet, *Hermas et les Pasteurs: les trois auteurs du Pasteur d’Hermas* (Paris: PUF, 1963), n. 4, 14, however, draws attention to the fact that this is a vision scenario which would rather require a symbolic interpretation.

There is not enough material of *Hermas* in Clement to make it easy to establish the status of this text. The number of citations and references is significantly smaller than that of the Gospels, and rather comparable with that of Revelation, for example, in whose case Clement also does not seem to say anything pertaining to its status.¹⁸⁵ And yet, Brooks notes: “Clement knew and used, almost certainly as scripture twenty-three out of twenty-seven books now in the New Testament,”¹⁸⁶ and also places where a *Hermas* ‘passage is commented upon as though it were scripture’.¹⁸⁷

While it is impossible to say definitely what additional books Clement would include in his NT canon, frequency of citation and authoritative references indicate it would probably include 1 Clement, Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Didache.¹⁸⁸

Letting aside the gospels, it is difficult – without projecting our own expectations on to the data – to establish whether *Hermas* is higher or lower in Clement’s esteem than the New Testament books with a smaller number of references in his works, due to the fact that Clement did not categorized texts in an explicit manner such as later authors would do.¹⁸⁹

The most distinctive feature, I believe, is the way the revealing agents – those who are mediating Hermas’ visions and the subsequent interpretations of those visions – are presented. As seen, they are (divine) powers on two occasions: ἡ δύναμις ἡ φανείσα, and ἡ δύναμις ἡ τῷ Ἑρμᾷ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν λαλοῦσα.

From what I can tell, no other individual text is introduced in such a manner in the *Stromateis*. In the 4th chapter of the 1st book, with the aid of two quotations from Paul (one from *Eph.* 3:10, and the other from *Hebr.* 1:1) Clement states that the wisdom of God (σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ) comes in many shapes, through which, for our benefit, wisdom shows its power (δύναμις): through art (διὰ τέχνες), knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), faith (πίστις), and prophecy (προφητεία) (*Strom.* I 27.1). However, few paragraphs before the first mentioning of the power speaking to Hermas, and in the same larger context, Clement speaks of the true wisdom (τὴν ἀληθῆ σοφίαν), of which the latter is a divine power (δύναμις θεία), through which a complete understanding can be reached, but not without the Saviour and his divine word.

As such, the powers belong to Clement’s technical vocabulary. With regard to a ‘decisive passage for the doctrine of the trinity in Clement (4.25),’¹⁹⁰ H.F. Hägg notes that for the Alexandrine ‘[t]he powers are ... the

¹⁸⁵ See Brooks, “The Canon of Clement,” for a presentation of such numbers.

¹⁸⁶ Brooks, “The Canon of Clement,” 44.

¹⁸⁷ Brooks, “The Canon of Clement,” 47.

¹⁸⁸ Carl P. Cosaert, *The Text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria* (TNGF 9; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), n. 5, 22.

¹⁸⁹ E.g. Eusebius – ὁμολογούμενα, ἀντιλεγόμενα, and νόθοι –, or Rufinus – canonici, ecclesiastici, and apocryphi.

¹⁹⁰ Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 151.

thoughts and actions of God.¹⁹¹ B.G. Bucur, however, finds that such an explanation ‘does not account for the complexity of this text.’¹⁹² Instead he contends, with regard to the key text in *Strom.* IV 25.156:

Following Oyen, one can say confidently that Clement is fusing the Logos-speculation with an established teaching on the “powers of spirit” that originated in Jewish Christian speculation about angelic “powers.” It is significant that in this respect that Clement immediately quotes Revelation. ... What he has in mind is surely the throne-visions of Revelation, depicting the seven spirits or angels in attendance before the throne (Rev 1:4; 8:2).¹⁹³

Based on *Excerpta* 10, 11, and 27 and *Eclogae* 56-57, he further argues that Clement’s worldview forms a celestial hierarchy (within ‘a theological tradition that goes back not only to an older generation of Jewish-Christian “elders.” ... It consisted of oral instruction going back to the apostles themselves¹⁹⁴) with the Logos ‘at its pinnacle,’ featuring, ‘in descending order, the seven *protocists*, the archangels, and the angels, ... continued by an ecclesiastical hierarchy.’¹⁹⁵

Yet what is quite relevant for the question at hand, is the proposal that for Clement ‘the prophet represents the highest level in the human hierarchy.’¹⁹⁶ Bucur too mentions Clement’s two introductory remarks involving the powers who speak to Hermas, as examples for the use of *δύναμις* within ‘a venerable history in Jewish and Jewish-Christian angelology and demonology,’ the context being that ‘[b]oth Philo and Clement know about “power” as an angelic being.’¹⁹⁷

In the light of this, it becomes clear that, put bluntly, Clement believed Hermas’ visions to be genuine. Not a literary genre, not the book of a venerable man, or gnostic or saint, but an account of a genuine revelation, where Hermas is technically a prophet.¹⁹⁸

This is not necessarily unusual: among the ancient sources, at least the Muratorian Fragment seems to hint that he might have been regarded as a prophet by some at that time. Although no individual saying of any Old Testament prophet seems to be introduced as being conveyed to him by a power, they are presented in a not too dissimilar manner: in the 21st chapter of the 1st book of the *Stromateis*, Clement speaks of “power”

¹⁹¹ H.F. Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: OUP, 2009), 232.

¹⁹² Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 30.

¹⁹³ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 30.

¹⁹⁴ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 35.

¹⁹⁵ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 36. A complex argument for and description of Clement’s “celestial hierarchy” are offered on 32-51.

¹⁹⁶ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, n. 194, 53. On the same page he explains the way this works: “Prophecy occurs when the Logos moves from the first rank of the *protocists*, and this movement is transmitted from one level of the angelic hierarchy down to the next. The lowest rank, which is one closest to the human world, transmits the ‘movement’ to the prophet.”

¹⁹⁷ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, n. 17, 78.

¹⁹⁸ Pace Brox, *Der Hirt*, 64, who contends that the form of Hermas quotations in Clement shows that the latter didn’t consider the former a prophet.

with respect to the Hebrew prophets, who are said to have been spoken to by the means of the power of God (δυνάμει τοῦ θεοῦ) and through inspiration (ἐπιπνοία). However, *Hermas* does not appear in the list closely following, in I 134.3ff [21]. Nonetheless, there seems to be enough material to consider that *Hermas* was a prophetic nature for Clement, even if he does not place him along the other Prophets.

To conclude, I would contend that, if Clement's high regard of the *Epistle of Barnabas* and *1 Clement* has to do most likely with the apostolic character he confers to these writings (see *Strom* 2.31.2 and 4.105.1), then the authority *Hermas* enjoys in Clement of Alexandria seems to lie on different grounds – its apocalyptic character, which Clement considers to be genuine. This begs the question as to how other Clement treats *Hermas* in comparison with other apocalyptic texts, which will be addressed briefly in the following.

This also points to and documents a possible main reason for *Hermas*' authority in early Christianity, and for that reason the following chapter offers a re-evaluation of the apocalyptic character of the *Shepherd*, especially since its very inclusion in the apocalyptic genre is every now and again contested.

3. Further Apocalyptic Works in Clement

At this point, it might be then useful to compare even briefly on the use of the following four apocalyptic texts: Daniel, Revelation, the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the Apocalypse of Peter. They are all rather rarely referred to, and what makes them a coherent sample beyond the mere appurtenance to a modern literary genre is that they share in “the use of the term ‘spirit’ as a designation for angelic presence,”¹⁹⁹ which also present in Clement. John Levison has documented this as ‘angelic spirit’ in Early Judaism and his treatment includes the ‘Greek Danielic literature,’ while Bogdan Bucur among others has done so for Early Christianity, in a series of publications on ‘angelomorphic pneumatology,’ specifically in Revelation, the *Shepherd* and Clement of Alexandria.²⁰⁰

This commonality should probably do as basis for a comparison pertaining to the use of the four apocalyptic texts in Clement, which in turn sample three corpora of texts, as we have them today: the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Early Christian literature outside the New Testament. To Clement these are technically prophetic texts in as much as the Logos it the one who speaks in them, the context being that in Clement's world view it is the prophet who is the first link with the celestial realm (and not the bishop, as

¹⁹⁹ Bogdan G. Bucur, “The Angelomorphic Spirit in Early Christianity: Revelation, The Shepherd of Hermas, Clement of Alexandria,” *Scrinium: Revue de patrologie, d'hagiographie critique et d'histoire ecclésiastique* 3 (2007): 3-29, at 3.

²⁰⁰ John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2002); Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*. See also Ch. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (AGJU 42; Leiden: Brill, 1988).

the Pseudo Areopagite would have it a few centuries later),²⁰¹ and what the prophet experiences is “the presence and message of the Logos by receiving the “energy” of the proximate angel.”²⁰²

Daniel tends to appear in Biblical indices to Clement volumes with expressions and allusions, and as the whole group, with a rather small number of occurrences. It is quoted as well as introduced explicitly by name: ‘And Daniel the prophet says ...’ It is mentioned both separately and in lists of Old Testament prophets. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it can appear quoted right before a quotation from another one of the reminding three, Revelation. For Daniel, as for other prophets, Clement at times seems to preserve Theodotian readings,²⁰³ which would be interesting in that Levison²⁰⁴ identifies ‘angelic spirit’ features precisely in that version.²⁰⁴

Revelation, is too quoted rather rarely, and most of the references are to one expression or another from its text; but eventually it does appear “quoted directly by name and attributed to John without further qualification.”²⁰⁵ From this Charles Hill infers, probably rightly, that Clement “quite transparently receives the Revelation of John as authentic and prophetic,” since in “citing John 1:16, he includes John the Evangelist among the prophets.”²⁰⁶

As seen, Hermas too seems to be taken technically as a prophet, even if it is not taken together with the other prophets. The fact that in one of these two occasions a quotation from Revelation immediately follows is one of the pegs on which Bucur builds his argument that Clement, *Hermas* and Revelation share in the Jewish-Christian traditions of speculations about angelic “powers.”²⁰⁷ In this contexts, it becomes apparent that, as shown, Clement believed Hermas’ visions to be genuine.

Incidentally, it seems that the only one of these four texts to be called Scripture is the Apocalypse of Peter. Clement’s pinnacle work, *Hypotyposesis*, now lost, is exegetical in nature and according to Eusebius would have contained also an exposition of the *Apocalypse of Peter*. And if we are to accept the view that the fragments preserved as *Eclogae Propheticae* should be regarded as fragments of the lost *Hypotyposesis*, then it is worth noting perhaps that it is there that the *Apocalypse of Peter* is called scripture. In Brooks’ view, “the fact that Clement included the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* in a biblical commentary may indicate that he regarded them as scripture.”²⁰⁸ A bit more cautiously, and rightfully so since the ‘scripture’

²⁰¹ Bucur, “The Angelomorphic Spirit,” 27.

²⁰² Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 45.

²⁰³ Natalio Fernandez Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2000): “It seems that Origen quotes the Theodotianic text of Daniel in his writings out of respect for Church tradition and the same applies to biblical quotations by Clement of Alexandria,” 144. His examples are Paed II, 8; III, 3; Strom I, 4, 21.

²⁰⁴ Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism*, 72-73.

²⁰⁵ Brooks, “The Canon of Clement,” 44.

²⁰⁶ Hill, *The Johannine Corpus*, 123, on Strom 1.17(87.5).

²⁰⁷ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 30.

²⁰⁸ Brooks, “The Canon of Clement,” 47.

introductory marker is in fact unclear, Buchholz simply notes that Clement quotes the Apocalypse of Peter “in the same manner in which he cites Scripture,” (p. 25) which only says that it is quoted like the other texts in this comparison are.

When zooming in, the four apocalyptic texts that sample our Old Testament, New Testament and non-NT early Christianity are listed with only few references each, the list of references that can be ascertained as such being even smaller. All in all, comparing the references to these four apocalyptic texts in the Clementine corpus shows there is next to nothing much to indicate some sort of hierarchy between them; they might as well be taken as functioning in a similar manner.

Following the analysis of the presence of *Hermas* in the two early Patristic authors, one more aspect needs further consideration: its apocalyptic character (which is central, as seen, to Clement’s use of this work), in connection with its scriptural status (explicit in Irenaeus, and implicit in Clement). This prompts to a reassessment of *Hermas*’ apocalyptic features and will be the subject matter of the following, and last, chapter.

II. HERMAS APOCALYPTICUS REVISITED

The very inclusion of the *Shepherd of Hermas* in the apocalyptic literary genre has been disputed many times over, due in part to the prominence in its text of largely moral material. Such sections still preserve the apocalyptic outlook of a conversation between an other-worldly mediator and a seer, but present less apocalyptic material than the denser apocalyptic material of the first three visions in that the focus comes on ‘moral’ matters. This chapter offers a survey of the apocalyptic features of this writing and then approaches the less apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd*, usually omitted from such enquiries. The proposal will be put forward that, even beyond its apocalyptic frame, further apocalyptic features are embedded in the moral material in *Hermas*, including a so-called “interiorized apocalyptic” *sui generis*. If this is accepted, the implication would be that the apocalyptic character of this work remains a probable cause for its scriptural status—at least with some authors of Late Antiquity—even when the connection between the two is not explicit, or indeed when what is quoted from *Hermas* comes from its otherwise less-apocalyptic material.

“There are many puzzles in this puzzling little book” writes Robert J. Hauck about the *Shepherd of Hermas*.²⁰⁹ Should that be true, the apocalyptic character is surely one of them. The *Shepherd* is divided in its manuscripts in three main parts: the five *Visions* (*Vis.*), the twelve *Mandates* (*Mand.*), and the ten *Similitudes* (*Sim.*). These three parts are quite different from one another in literary outlook and content, fact which— together with further differences within each section—has led in the past to the theories of multiple authorship for the *Shepherd*,²¹⁰ and also fuelled a long standing scholarly discussion concerning its literary genre.

The remainder of the introduction will present briefly the main scholarly views concerning the genre of the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Subsequently, the outline of the apocalyptic features of the book (1) will be followed

²⁰⁹ R.J. Hauck, “The Great Fast: Christology in the Shepherd of Hermas,” *Anglican Theological Review* 75.2 (1993): 187-198, at 187; quoted by Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 113. Unless otherwise stated, all *Hermas* English renderings here are from M.W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (3rd edition; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

²¹⁰ In the second half of the past century, it was Stanislas Giet, *Hermas et les Pasteurs: Les trois auteurs du pasteur d’Hermas* (Paris: PUF, 1963) who reopened the debate, followed by W. Coleborne, “The Shepherd of Hermas: A Case for Multiple Authorship and Some Implications,” *Studia Patristica* 10 (1970), TU 107: 65-70. Robert Joly argued for one author in “Hermas et le Pasteur,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 21 (1967): 201-218, and “Le milieu complexe du Pasteur d’Hermas,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II/27.1 (1993): 524-551. Also Philippe Henne, *L’unité du Pasteur d’Hermas: Tradition et rédaction* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1992) and „La penitence et la rédaction du Pasteur d’Hermas,” *Revue Biblique* 98 (1991): 358-397. The debate seems to have subsided, and the current scholarly consensus is that the *Shepherd* is a unitary work of one author (e.g. Brox, *Der Hirt des Hermas*, 32-33; Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, n. 7, 114-115; Grundeken, *Community Building*, 11-16), even though with several stages of redaction (e.g. Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 13-15); the present thesis too accepts this view.

by a brief survey of the particularities of Hermas' mystical experience as presented in the narrative (2), and a discussion of the presence of less distinctly apocalyptic elements in (mainly) the *Mandates* and *Similitudes* (3), questioning how the less apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd of Hermas* relates to the richer apocalyptic material in the *Visions*. This will include an excursus on the concept of *μετάνοια*, will be shown that even a "moral" concept such this one is in this book imbued with apocalyptic features. I will argue that in the *Shepherd of Hermas* repentance bears clear apocalyptic features, as cumulative evidence can be adduced that repentance is set up in this book as a dialogue of sorts between the Lord and the believer, and furthermore that the apocalyptic character underlying repentance is confirmed in that Hermas undergoes—transformed by his visions—the steps of repentance as described by the Shepherd.

Is the *Shepherd of Hermas* an apocalypse? Given that, despite many similarities, the apocalyptic outlook of the book is still quite different from other works of apocalyptic literature, the response to this question has varied considerably in past scholarship. The fact that it seems to lack eschatological material and of the teachings related to the future, common in other apocalypses, has led to a negative answer to this question.²¹¹ To offer an example, J. Christian Wilson, who concedes that the book could be named largely 'apocalyptic', finds nonetheless that the *Shepherd of Hermas* is more of a failed apocalypse, on account of its minimal apocalyptic theological content or apocalyptical eschatology.²¹²

Indeed, the *Shepherd of Hermas* does not fit easily in definitions of the apocalyptic genre. For example, it falls short of the last criterion of the celebrated definition of the apocalyptic genre proposed by John J. Collins in *Semeia* 14,²¹³ since it does not display the spatial component of the transcendent reality of the supernatural world, as none of Hermas' visions is otherworldly; the geography of all his visions is indeed mundane. Nonetheless, given the rather polythetic approach taken in applying this definition, in the same volume the *Shepherd of Hermas* is included among the undisputed apocalypses: Adela Yarbro Collins considers that this book should nonetheless be included in the genre 'apocalypse,' since it does display apocalyptic eschatology as well as "revelation mediated by otherworldly beings."²¹⁴

²¹¹ As noted by Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), 389, who disagrees arguing that eschatological teaching is not an indispensable feature of an apocalypse.

²¹² J. Christian Wilson, *Five Problems in the Interpretation of the Shepherd of Hermas: Authorship, Genre, Canonicity, Apocalyptic, and the Absence of the Name 'Jesus Christ'* (Mellen Biblical Press Series 34; Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Mellen Biblical Press, 1995), 41: "It is as if the author is trying his best to write an apocalypse but fails;" reiterated at 83: "It seems to me that Hermas is intentionally attempting to write an apocalypse and that he fails in that attempt."

²¹³ John J. Collins, "Introduction: towards the morphology of a genre," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, edited by J. J. Collins (*Semeia* 14; Atlanta: SBL, 1979), 1-59, at 9: "Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world."

²¹⁴ A. Yarbro Collins, "The early Christian apocalypses," in Collins, *Morphology*, 61- 121, at 74. This judgement was accepted for instance in E.g. Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 10-11, and various other publications. Yarbro Collins further provides

J. J. Collins' definition has met some critique for focusing on literary and theological matters and for not including socio-historical considerations about the function of apocalyptic writings,²¹⁵ and David Hellholm's amendment to the definition—namely that the apocalypse is “intended for a group in crisis with a purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority”²¹⁶—impacted the understanding of the *Shepherd of Hermas* as well: Carolyn Osiek, for instance, employs it to argue that the key to the morphological differences between the *Shepherd of Hermas* and other less debatable apocalyptic texts lies with its function, proposing that this book too addresses a crisis of some kind.²¹⁷ In any event, the idea that the *Shepherd of Hermas* is an apocalypse while marking “a change in the character of apocalyptic,”²¹⁸ seems to describe the consensus today. In fact, it seems to be a constant of the scholarship devoted to this book to describe it as an apocalypse with further qualifications.²¹⁹

Given that Collins' definition does not work entirely for the *Shepherd of Hermas*, for the purpose of this chapter ‘apocalyptic’ will be taken in the broadest sense, that of revelation as found in any narrative unit which involves an encounter of a seer with an otherworldly element, be that otherworldly mediator, voice, etc.²²⁰ This is intended to serve an attempt to better determine the nature of the apocalyptic dimension in the

several categories for early Christian apocalypses, *Hermas*' place being in the group containing “apocalypses of cosmic and/or political eschatology with neither historical review nor otherworldly journey,” at 63.

²¹⁵ E.g. Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York: OUP, 1997), 32; Wilson, *Five Problems*, 83.

²¹⁶ D. Hellholm, “The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John,” in A. Yarbro Collins (ed.), *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting* (Semeia 36; Decatur: SBL, 1986), 13-64, at 27.

²¹⁷ Carolyn Osiek, “The Genre and Function of the Shepherd of Hermas,” in Adela Yarbro Collins (ed.), *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting* (Semeia 36; Decatur: SBL, 1986), 113-121, at 113. *Hermas* would be then a case in which “the social reality prompts a response of ethical exhortation within a framework of apocalyptic myth; at the same time, apocalyptic myth gives meaning and shape to a prophetic and paraenetic interpretation of the social reality,” on the same page.

²¹⁸ C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), 389. He states that the *Shepherd* lacks a vision of the heavenly world, and sees the the change as consisting in the circumstance that “various images are not to be seen ... as a prediction of future personages and events but a picturesque way of talking about the true meaning of the present,” (389) with parallels in Revelation 11-13.

²¹⁹ Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 10, who notes that “most who attempt an answer to this question [of whether or not it is an apocalypse] end in some way by saying both yes and no,” offers a useful survey of scholars who recognize the particularity of the *Shepherd of Hermas* and incline to describe it using “qualifying adjectives:” thus Vielhauer and Strecker assert we should designate *Hermas* “a pseudo-apocalypse;” for Joly, *Hermas* is a “cooled-down apocalypse,” for Paramelle a “moralizing apocalypse,” and for Kirsopp Lake a “practical apocalypse.” All references in Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 11. More recently it was for instance described as “apocalyptic procedure in action, but with a clear-cut focus on the present and serving catechetical purposes,” in Joseph Verheyden, “The Shepherd of Hermas,” *Expository Times* 117 (2006) 397-401, at 398.

²²⁰ “Some use the term ‘apocalyptic’ very broadly to refer to any type of revelatory literature irrespective of content,” notes J. J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” in Collins, *Morphology*, 1-20, at 5. This is to say that this chapter will not be restricted to apocalyptic in the sense of the content of the vision being that of the end of the world historical sequence, the denial of the goodness and totally God-sourced nature of creation and divine judgement. As C. Rowland puts it, “Apocalyptic is as much involved in the attempt to understand things as they are now as to predict future events;” Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 2, whereas at 17, he describes Jewish and early Christian apocalypses as containing “visions, or disclosure by heavenly envoys, which unfold various aspects of God’s will and other mysteries of

Shepherd of Hermas, and how it plays out. While it is generally accepted that establishing the literary genre of a text can be relevant for its interpretation, I submit nonetheless to that “any attempt to specify the genre of a text too precisely may foreclose (or predetermine) interpretative possibilities in relation to a text prematurely.”²²¹ As will be shown, this seems to be the case with the *Shepherd of Hermas*: by avoiding a too quick exclusion from the apocalyptic genre, further interpretative possibilities emerge in relation to its apocalyptic character, particularly with regard to the parts that are usually ascribed to other literary genres. Of the various theories of genre, this approach sits well both with the prototype theory, where one thinks “of a genre in relation to a text’s rhetorical orientation so rather than referring to texts as *belonging* to genres one might think of texts as *participating* in them,” and with a more historical method, where “genre is ‘much less of a pigeon-hole than a pigeon,’ not so much a set of pre-cast categories as something [that] itself moves and changes.”²²²

In what follows I aim to offer a survey of the apocalyptic features of the *Shepherd*, in both the denser apocalyptic material of the *Visions*, and the less apocalyptic material of the rest of the book, and argue that the latter contains, in an embedded manner, further apocalyptic features beyond the general frame provided by the seer-otherworldly mediator dialog.

1. *The Apocalyptic Outline of the Book*

The various manners in which Hermas is preparing for his first five visions²²³ will be detailed in the next section. The first and the second visions start with Hermas being taken by the spirit (πνεῦμά με ἔλαβεν) to the place of revelation. In the first vision one mediator conveys the revealed information, and another mediator

the world and man’s life in it. ... Truths which are beyond man’s capacity to deduce from his circumstances are revealed directly by means of the manifestation of the divine counsels.” Similarly, N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), at 281: “When applied to literature, the word usually denotes a particular *form*, that of the reported vision and (sometimes) its interpretation.”

²²¹ Christopher Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), at 31, particularly with regard to the gospel genre.

²²² For a review of these approaches and an evaluation of their applicability see Adela Yarbro Collins, “Apocalypse now: The State of Apocalyptic Studies Near the End of the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century,” *Harvard Theological Review* 104:4 (2011), 447-57, at 456; the two quotations are respectively from 454-5 and 653, where Carol Newsom and Christopher Pelling are referenced to respectively. J.J. Collins, “What is Apocalyptic Literature?,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 1-16, at 3, too recognizes that “one objection [to the *Semeia* definition] arises from acute appreciation of the individuality of every text,” and, at 6, notes that the prototype theory “would refuse to establish a strict boundary between texts that are members of the genre and those that are not. It rather distinguishes between texts that are highly typical and those that are less typical. And this, I think, is an improvement that might have saved us some agonizing about boundary cases.”

²²³ Often only the first four visions are considered the most apocalyptic part of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which is reflected in the focus of a number of studies: D. Hellholm, *Das Visionenbuch des Hermas als Apokalypse: formgeschichtliche und texttheoretische Studien zu einer literarischen Gattung* (Coiectanea Biblica, New Testament series 13; Lund: Gleerup, 1980), and Jörg Rüpke, “Der Hirte des Hermas: Plausibilisierungs- und Legitimierungsstrategien im Übergang von Antike und Christentum,” *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 8 (2005), 276-298.

explains what happened. In the third and the fifth vision the same mediator delivers the vision and the explanation, while in the fourth the heavenly mediator appears only to deliver the explanation. The textual unit we call *Vision 2* contains in fact three visions; there is the main one with a first mediator, followed by two smaller ones: in one of them a different mediator provides an explanation, and in the other the mediator from the main second vision offers Hermas further directions.

So far as the apocalyptic content is concerned, in the first vision Hermas sees the skies opening and a woman from his past who will then make him aware of his faults. A second woman, personifying the church, will provide some explanation to a confused Hermas and will read to him from a book. In the second vision, Hermas again sees the woman personifying the church, who offers him a book to copy for the benefit of the chosen ones, which however he is not able to read at first; later on, a young man will explain to him that the woman—whom he thought to be the Sibyl—is in fact the church.

The third vision is by far the longest: the woman personifying the church shows Hermas the construction of the eschatological church in the shape of a tower. An *ekphrasis* of the construction follows, yet the vision is completed by extensive explanations as to the scope of the building, the identity of the builders and the significance of the different stones used in, or excluded from, the ongoing construction.

In the fourth vision Hermas sees the beast, which is, as he puts it, an allegory of a future threat (εις τύπον τῆς θλίψεως τῆς ἐπερχομένης). Surviving the beast, Hermas sees again the personified church who explains what he just saw and how to stay safe.

In the fifth vision Hermas meets the Shepherd,²²⁴ in fact the angel of penitence, who introduces himself as having been sent by the most reverend angel to be staying with Hermas for the rest of his days. He also explains the purpose of his coming, that is to dictate to Hermas the *Mandates* and *Similitudes* forming the rest of the book. The main mediator is accordingly in the first four visions the woman identified as the church, while in the fifth vision and all *Mandates* and *Similitudes* her place is taken by the angel of penitence.

The twelve *Mandates* then follow, and they are usually considered to be written in the genre of Jewish-Hellenistic homily.²²⁵ They contain a wide array of ethical and largely spiritual matters, developed from one another, ranging from faith and the fear of God to self-restraint and lists of vice and virtues. Yet, since all these teachings are conveyed to Hermas by an angel, that is, the angel of penitence, who asks him to write them down, the frame continues to be largely an apocalyptic one. In the same manner as he does in the *Visions*,

²²⁴ Starting with this fifth vision, Hermas is never mentioned again by name, as in the first four visions. Following most exegetes of the *Shepherd*, in the following will be assumed that the first person narrator in the book is the character of Hermas. C. Osiek, for instance, notes that although the fifth vision belongs more with the *Mandates* and *Similitudes* than with the preceding *Visions*—on both literary and manuscript grounds—“there are elements of continuity, especially the similarity of revelatory structure”, “The Genre of Hermas,” 98.

²²⁵ So Snyder, *The Shepherd*, 10-11.

Hermas keeps requesting further explanations from the heavenly mediator; he is at first scolded for this, being nonetheless indulged in the end.

Most of the *Similitudes* are quite similar in this respect: while they develop in an allegorical manner several topics— some of which manifest social concerns regarding the less fortunate, the poor and the widows—they are in fact within the same revelatory frame. The ninth *Similitude* stands apart in that it has a far more poignant apocalyptic character: it picks up and extensively builds upon the third vision, that of the eschatological tower. As such, for both the *Mandates* and the *Similitudes*, the apocalyptic frame is preserved.²²⁶

Hermas shares many of the above features with other apocalyptic texts, and the parallels have been drawn in past scholarship. Snyder, for instance, produces a list of structural elements in the *Shepherd of Hermas* “with exemplary parallels from Jewish-Christian apocalyptic literature.”²²⁷ 4 Ezra is the text which has most points of contact, with six apocalyptic features,²²⁸ while Revelation is deemed to have four points of morphological contact with the apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd*.²²⁹ Four other texts are only minimally represented: 2 Baruch is present in this list with two shared apocalyptic elements,²³⁰ while Enoch, Ezekiel and the Odes of Solomon have each one element in common with the *Shepherd*.²³¹

A. Yarbro Collins places *Hermas* in the group containing “apocalypses of cosmic and/or political eschatology with neither historical review nor otherworldly journey.”²³² Within this group, *Hermas* stands together with at least four other texts: Revelation, the apocryphal Apocalypse of St John the Theologian, the

²²⁶ Osiek, “The Genre of Hermas,” 114: “the literary devices of revelatory agent and symbolic visions are sustained throughout.”

²²⁷ Snyder, *The Shepherd*, 8-9. In his presentation, parallels with apocalyptic texts are drawn only for the five *Visions*. For the *Mandates* he offers parallels in Jewish-Christian and Jewish-Hellenistic homiletic literature, at 10-1, and for the *Similitudes* in “the parables of Enoch,” at 11-2.

²²⁸ Snyder, *The Shepherd*, 8-9: “fasting of recipient,” “prayer for revelation,” “ecstatic manifestations,” “appearance of revelator,” “unworthiness or foolishness of the recipient,” and “explanation of the revelation.” R. Joly, the French editor of the *Shepherd* for the Sources Chrétiennes series, notes that *Hermas* offers a high degree of resemblance with the apocryphal apocalypse 4 Ezra; he offers parallel passages in footnotes and contends that this is due to intentional imitation on Hermas’ part. Hermas – Joly, *Le Pasteur*, 47. For a recent treatment of 4 Ezra’s apocalyptic context see K. M. Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra: Wisdom Debate and Apocalyptic Solution* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 130; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008).

²²⁹ Snyder, *The Shepherd*, 8-9: “appearance of the revelatory” (1:12-16), “gift of book or dictation of revelation” (2:1-3:22), “charge to communicate revelation” (1:11), and – with some hesitation on Snyder’s part – “mysteriousness of revelation” (5:3).

²³⁰ Snyder, *The Shepherd*, 8-9: “fasting by recipient” and “charge to communicate revelation.”

²³¹ Snyder, *The Shepherd*, 8-9, respectively: “ecstatic manifestations” (12:3; 60:3), “gift of book or dictation of revelation” (2:9), and “mysteriousness of revelation” (23).

²³² Yarbro Collins, “Early Christian Apocalypses,” 63-5. In this classification, there are two other categories of texts devoid of otherworldly journeys: “‘Historical’ apocalypses” (Ia) such as Jacob’s Ladder, and “apocalypses with only personal eschatology” (Ic) as the one found in the second chapter of 5 Ezra (2: 45-48). *Hermas*’ category would be in Ib. Together, these three stand in contrast with apocalypses involving otherworldly journeys, divided in the same manner in three subcategories: “historical” apocalypses (IIa), apocalypses with cosmic eschatology (IIb) and apocalypses with only personal eschatology (IIc).

Apocalypse of Peter and a fragment from the first chapter of The Testament of the Lord (1:1-14).²³³ Yarbro Collins' article deals with early Christian apocalypses only; Jewish apocalypses are treated separately in the same *Semeia* 14 by John J. Collins, and the texts are grouped largely in the same manner as early Christian apocalypses.²³⁴ Expectedly, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch end up in the same category as *Hermas*, although Jewish apocalypses lacking otherworld journeys are not further subdivided. The header under which they are placed—together with Daniel 7-12—is thus “‘historical’ apocalypses with no otherworldly journey.”²³⁵

Christopher Rowland groups 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra, Revelation 17, Daniel 2 and 8, and the *Shepherd of Hermas* together on the basis that the symbolic character of their visions is indicated by the fact that an interpretation is included “which makes it quite clear that the earlier vision is just a way of expressing certain facts about the human history in picturesque language.”²³⁶ He also notes that the *Shepherd of Hermas*, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra differ from Revelation due to their extended dialogues between the seer and his other-worldly revelatory or mediator.²³⁷ Furthermore, Rowland emphasises that Daniel, on the basis of 10:12 and 9:2, should be added to the group of apocalypses in which the seer prepares himself for the vision by fasting or praying, as in 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch and the *Shepherd of Hermas*.²³⁸

This much about the apocalyptic outlook of the *Shepherd of Hermas* and its parallels in other apocalyptic works. This needs to be complemented at this point with a survey of what can be called the mystical experience of (the character) Hermas, to the extent that these are presented in the text.²³⁹ As will be shown, the account of Hermas' experience can shed fresh light on our understanding of the apocalyptic character of this book: the latter is a framework not only for Hermas' mystical experience but also for the teaching he is purporting.²⁴⁰

²³³ Yarbro Collins, “Early Christian Apocalypses,” 64, counting as well a number of differences between the members of this group: “three predict cosmic destruction, but contain no indication of cosmic transformation (the Apocalypse of Peter, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the Testament of the Lord 1:1-14)” while the other two (Revelation and the Apocalypse of St John the Theologian) “expect both cosmic destruction and cosmic renewal.”

²³⁴ John J. Collins, “The Jewish Apocalypses,” in Collins, *Morphology*, 21-59.

²³⁵ Collins, “Jewish Apocalypses,” 22. Collins notes: “4 Ezra and 2 Baruch show conspicuously less interest in the heavenly world than others, but the spatial axis still plays a significant part,” at 22-3.

²³⁶ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 57-8.

²³⁷ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 61.

²³⁸ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 228. He also adduces another text in the discussion by presenting a number of similarities between Hermas and the apocalyptic episodes of the *Passion of St. Perpetua*, for instance the threat from a beast within a vision.

²³⁹ Recent research on other early Christian texts has similarly suggested that mysticism is an aspect of apocalyptic which tends to go underappreciated in the scholarship devoted to apocalyptic literature, which tends to focus on eschatology; so Jody Barnard, *The Mysticism of Hebrews* (WUNT 2/331; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 1, but also Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 1-2. Cf. also his considerations in C. Rowland and C.R.A. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament*, edited by P.W. van der Horst and P.J. Tomson (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 12; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009), at 3, on mysticism: “Its relationship with matters apocalyptic and eschatological is not always noted, however, and it is often treated separately as a discrete phenomenon.”

²⁴⁰ In her discussion of *Hebrews*, Barnard starts from defining “apocalyptic mysticism” as “a phenomenon occurring in late Second Temple Judaism (including early Christianity), which finds literary expression in the apocalypses and

2. *Hermas' Mystical Journey*

In her use of the term 'mysticism', Jody Barnard combines the definitions offered by April DeConick ("mysticism ... identifies a tradition within early Judaism and Christianity centred on the belief that a person directly, immediately, and before death can experience the divine, either as a rapture experience or as one solicited by a particular praxis"²⁴¹) and Bernard McGinn ("the *mystical* element in Christianity is that part of its belief and practices that concerns the preparation for, the consciousness of, and reaction to what can be described as the immediate or direct presence of God"²⁴²), replacing however McGinn's phrase "the presence of God' with something like DeConick's 'experience of the divine,' since the latter phrase has the advantage of including a broader range of mystical phenomena."²⁴³ This approach is also suitable for the present study, which poses the question: What does the *mysticism* of the *Shepherd of Hermas* look like? How does he prepare for revelations, raptures and the "experience of the divine"?

When one considers Hermas' experience, one finds—as seen—that he prepares his visions by prayer (1.3-4, 5.2, 25.1), glorifying the Lord (1.3, 22.4), fasting (6.1, 9.2, 18.7, 54.1), raising thanks for having seen glorious things in previous visions (22.4, 54.1, 91.3), and asking and imploring for further revelation (9.1, 10.3, 22.3, 87.5). At one time, the vision comes while he sleeps (8.1).²⁴⁴ Yet he is also affected by what he sees or hears in a vision: he is upset at the beginning, when his sins are denounced (1.7), and then remains "terribly shaken and upset" (2.1). When the personified church comes shortly thereafter, she finds "upset and crying" (2.2), "gloomy", looking rather "depressed and unhappy" (2.3).

Further on, he listens "with care and amazement" to what the church woman reads him from her book (3.2), and finds some words "terrifying" (3.3), while other words pleased him (4.2). When copying the heavenly book, he cannot make sense of the letters (5.4), but after fifteen days of fasting and imploring, he has a moment of clarity and the writing is revealed to him (6.1).

related literature, and exhibits a preoccupation with the realities of the heavenly realm, and the human experience of this realm and its occupants;" Barnard, *The Mysticism of Hebrews*, 84. For an example of how mysticism fits in apocalyptic in the same context, see Ithamar Gruenwald, "The Mystical Elements in Apocalyptic," in his *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 90; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 68-110. With regard to this relationship, Morray-Jones notes in Rowland and Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God*, at 219: "In so far as they express uncompromising confidence in the revelation of God's hidden mysteries ... these writings are themselves 'apocalyptic'. Conversely, in so far as this supernatural revelation is an immediate experiential reality which gives present access to celestial and divine realms, thereby producing a spiritual transformation of the mundane self and its relationship to the world, it is also 'mystical'."

²⁴¹ April DeConick, "What is Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism?," in April DeConick, (ed.), *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 1-24, at 2. Emphasis added.

²⁴² Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism: Vol. I. The Foundation of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century*, (New York: Crossroad, 1992), at xvii. Emphasis added.

²⁴³ Barnard, *Mysticism*, at 28.

²⁴⁴ The first vision takes place as Hermas falls asleep while travelling; the second and the third too catch him on the road—yet without sleeping. Of the third vision we are only told it happened by night, and the fifth while Hermas was lying in bed, praying.

When he sees the “ivory couch” before getting to the construction of the tower in the third vision, Hermas has a complex reaction: “I was astonished and a fit of trembling seized me and my hair stood on end and I shuddered in panic [...]” (9.5). Then he recollects himself and confessed his sins (9.5). He gets “sad” when he is seated on the left instead of the right side of the bench, the latter being the place reserved for martyrs (9.9). At one point, the woman personifying the church says that further revelation will enable Hermas to “rejoice with the saints” (11.3). Some things he sees leave him “deeply distressed” (18.6).

Seeing the beast, he starts crying, asking for divine help (22.7), but then remembers what he has received so far and obtains courage to face it (22.8). After the beast has passed by, Hermas finds himself more “cheerful” (23.2). Then the Shepherd appears to him and his first reaction is suspicion (25.3). When he finally understands, he becomes confused, seized by fear, “and completely overwhelmed with sorrow” (25.4). Even outside the *Vision* section of the book, the third *Mandate* sends him into tears: “When I heard those things, I wept bitterly” (28.3); and in the twelfth *Mandate* Hermas finds himself in great fear of the Shepherd, becoming agitated and confused (47.1-2). He is similarly affected in the sixth *Similitude* (62.5), where further on he feels sorry for the tormented he sees (63.1). Hermas finds himself amazed by what he sees in *Similitude* 8 too (67.4). In the vision within the ninth *Similitude* Hermas joins the virgins by the tower with whom he will sleep “as a brother and not as a husband” (88.3) and feels rejuvenated and happy (88.5).

It is instructive at this point to set this against a list of elements that a seer experiences in apocalyptic literature, as gathered by Alexander Golitzin:

The apocalypses which feature an ascent or “heavenly journey” ... display common features, including: 1) preparatory ascetical praxis, involving fasting, mourning, constant prayer, often at least temporary celibacy, and prostrations; 2) the ascent to the heavenly palace or temple, and therein to the throne of God; 3) initiation into the mysteries of heaven and creation; 4) the acquisition of, or transformation into angelic status, by virtue of which 5) the visionary becomes a concelebrant of the liturgy of heaven, and 6) is accorded a vision of the divine Glory; in order 7) to return to earth bearing a unique authority and message concerning the things of God.²⁴⁵

Most of these features are not present in *Hermas*, perhaps unsurprisingly since the *Shepherd* does not contain a heavenly ascent. However, beyond the elements of 1) which are clearly present, the following could still be taken into account: Hermas is ‘initiated’ into the mysteries of the eschatological church, and he can be regarded as invested with the authority of the teachings received from the Shepherd. Moreover *Hermas* is not entirely devoid of transformational vocabulary: Bucur, for instance, rightfully notes that “these expressions [‘clothed,’ ‘renewal,’ ‘purification,’ ‘strengthening’] mark a transition from past spiritual weakness to present strength.”²⁴⁶ Golitzin’s list is therefore to be tailored down when applied to the *Shepherd*, just as

²⁴⁵ A. Golitzin, “Christian mysticism over two millennia,” *Scrinium* 3 (2007): xxi-xxxiii, at xxii.

²⁴⁶ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, at 125. Further examples and reasoning on the matter will be offered shortly.

current apocalyptic genre definitions tend to be tailored down to include it. In other words, the fact that elements such as the heavenly ascent are lacking in the *Shepherd of Hermas* has a series of consequences when applying Golitzin's list of mystical elements to this peculiar text, modifying its 'mystical' outlook; such morphological shifts need not come as a surprise in an investigation of genre.²⁴⁷

Yet I would like to draw attention to a particular aspect regarding Hermas' reactions to what he sees or hears, beyond the varied responses of amazement or fear, an overall movement which may amount to a transformation: the theme of his regrets for his past mistakes tends to fade as we move into the narrative. These regrets are important because they seem to mark the beginning for his visionary journey, and this theme will cease to appear after the angel of penitence, sent by the most holy angel, settles in with him. As a matter of fact, no new faults of his will be denounced beyond this event, apart from his being too insistent in demanding further explanations of what he has seen.²⁴⁸ Within the larger apocalyptic framework, Hermas' mystical experience includes his own transformation, and, as will be shown in the remainder of the paper, such transformation is consistent with, and goes along the lines of, the description of repentance (μετάνοια) offered by the Shepherd in 30.2. And in order to assess the relevance of this observation, it is necessary to first take a closer look to the less apocalyptic material and to how it relates to the denser apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

3. The Less Apocalyptic (and Non-Apocalyptic) Material: Metanoia and Apocalyptic

A striking particularity of this work is the presence of the less apocalyptic material from the *Mandates* and *Similitudes* (together with the paraenetic material from the *Visions*), where virtually only the setting is apocalyptic, i.e. the body of teaching is delivered by the angel of penitence to Hermas. The question would then be: how does the less-apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd* relate to the richer apocalyptic material in the *Visions*?

²⁴⁷ See for instance Adela Yarbro Collins, "Apocalypse now: The State of Apocalyptic Studies Near the End of the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 104:4 (2011), 447-457, at 452, discussing the studies on the subject by Gian Biaggio Conte and John Marincola, she notes that "Conte argued that 'genre is not a static concept, functioning as *recipe* with a fixed set of ingredients that the work must contain.' Rather it 'is dynamic and should be seen as a *strategy of literary composition*.' ... Marincola himself suggested that 'one must pay attention to the interplay between form, content, and context for each work individually, and that one must always make allowance for innovation within any generic category'."

²⁴⁸ One could probably object that such character transition, which tends to take place outside the first four visions, would have more to do with the "sequential composition" (Osiek's expression), being then simply a product of the complex and mixed character of the work. Even so, Hermas' transformation has not passed unnoticed in recent scholarship, for instance with respect to *Similitude* 9.1.2, where "the issue... is rather Hermas' spiritual development, by which he obtains the ability to perceive celestial realities," in Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, at 119. Further elements supporting the image proposed here are presented in the remainder of the chapter.

An attempt to answer this question was made by the means of a functional approach to the apocalyptic character of this book. By taking into account Hellholm's amendment to J.J. Collins' definition,²⁴⁹ Osiek argues that the morphological differences between the *Shepherd of Hermas* and other apocalyptic texts—that is the emphasis on repentance, paraenesis and concerns with the welfare of the less fortunate which form the less-apocalyptic material—are in fact due to the circumstance that the crisis its author is addressing is not an exterior threat but “the degeneration of quality of life in a milieu in which many Christians are economically comfortable, upwardly mobile, and inclined to find vigorous fidelity to the demands of religious visionaries uninteresting if not downright threatening.”²⁵⁰ A possible difficulty with this approach is that it is hard to imagine a context in which the life of the poor is not a crisis, but Hermas' concerns and emphases form a “proving ground for the way in which the function modifies form.”²⁵¹ Rowland's view of the purpose of apocalyptic in the *Shepherd of Hermas* is functional too, placing the focus on Hermas' teachings. From this perspective, the apocalyptic framework is used to support Hermas' new teaching about repentance, whereas the visions are meant to demonstrate the individual believer and the church as a whole just how apart is one from God, how one is evaluated, and what is expected of them.²⁵² This would reinforce Hermas' call to repentance in front of his community, as “the use of the apocalyptic is a means of bringing them face to face with the demand of God himself.”²⁵³ I would agree with these authors that the apocalyptic character in the *Shepherd of Hermas* is a means to put forward the teaching material.²⁵⁴ This material seems to be focused on Hermas' present and on addressing his social location, perhaps for catechetical purposes, or maybe in response to recent hardship emerged in his community, though the context remains unknown.

But the question can be pursued further: what of the non-apocalyptic, teaching material? How does such material relate—specifically the moralising and paraenetic material from the *Mandates* and *Similitudes*, which brought into question the apocalyptic genre attribution in the first place—to the apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd of Hermas*? In what follows I shall argue that in this book repentance or *μετάνοια*—a concept prominent throughout the whole book—bears apocalyptic features, as cumulative evidence can be adduced

²⁴⁹ Hellholm, “The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre,” 27: the apocalypse is “intended for a group in crisis with a purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority.”

²⁵⁰ All quotations from this paragraph are from Osiek, “The Genre,” 118-9.

²⁵¹ Osiek, “The Genre,” 119.

²⁵² Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 391-2, where he puts this in relation to Revelation 2:4ff and 3:15.

²⁵³ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 392. So far as the occurrence and importance of the less apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd of Hermas* is concerned, Helmut Koester sets it in contrast with Revelation, “only a nonpolitical apocalyptic perspective would allow a call for repentance to provide an opportunity to focus on the problems of individual morality and Christian conduct,” opening the door “for an influx of moral teachings from diaspora Judaism into the instruction of the Christian community;” H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament, volume 2: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (second edition; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 262-3.

²⁵⁴ Rüpke, “Plausibilisierungs- und Legitimierungsstrategien,” 276-298, argues precisely that Hermas' apocalyptic is used as a way to legitimise his discourse on repentance.

that repentance here is set up as a dialogue of sorts between the Lord and the believer. Apocalyptic as a framework for repentance is also further confirmed by the fact that Hermas undergoes in the narrative, transformed by his visions, the steps of repentance as described by the Shepherd.²⁵⁵

Most scholarship on repentance (μετάνοια) in the *Shepherd of Hermas* focuses on the Shepherd's rather ambiguous teaching about the possibility of repeating repentance after baptism.²⁵⁶ Since this teaching indicates an effort in the early church to deal with instances of serious sin after baptism, the question did arise as to whether we can see here the beginning of a movement toward a sacrament of penance; however,

²⁵⁵ To be sure, μετάνοια has been linked in the past to *Hermas'* apocalypticism. David Hellholm, *Das Visionenbuch*, whose research on the matter is focused on the first four visions of *Hermas* – that is, the part with most apocalyptic material in the Shepherd –, takes an approach based on text-linguistic methodology. He produces two complementary hierarchies, one pertaining to the various levels of communication in the Shepherd, and the other to the text-sequences identifiable in the text. On the top of the former, Hellholm finds the communication-level in which the addressees of the *Shepherd* receive quoted sayings of God and a quoted apocryphal prophetic book, and at the top of the latter he finds the text sequence containing the conversation between the revealer and the receiver and the copying of the heavenly book.²⁵⁵ Hellholm then contends that the location of these two tops overlap in the text of the *Shepherd*. The most embedded texts in the *Shepherd of Hermas'* apocalyptic material are two inconsecutive paragraphs from the second vision, 6.5 and 7.4; the former is the discussion about the possibility of repentance, and the other is the quote from the book of Eldad and Modat: “the Lord is near to those who turn to him.” Hellholm applies the same method to Revelation, in his “The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John,” in Yarbrow Collins, *Early Christian Apocalypticism*, 13-64, and finds that the most embedded sequence is Revelation 21:5-8, at 44. J. J. Collins notes that Hellholm's view has not yet been largely accepted mostly because his approach remains to many scholars “more mysterious than the texts it seeks to clarify,” in his *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Supplements to the Journal of the Study of Judaism 54; Leiden: Brill, 1997), at 28. A useful review of Hellholm's method can be found in D. E. Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic in Early Christianity: Collected Essays* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 199; Tübingen: Mohr, 2006), 43-7. See also O. M. Bakke, “Concord and Peace”: *A Rhetorical Analysis of the First Letter of Clement with an Emphasis on the Languages of Unity and Sedition* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II/143; Tübingen: Mohr, 2001), 210-5.

²⁵⁶ For a survey on scholarly views on this topic in *Hermas* see I. Goldhahn-Müller, *Die Grenze der Gemeinde: Studien zum Problem der Zweiten Buße im Neuen Testament unter Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung im 2. Jh. bis Tertullian*, (Göttinger theologische Arbeiten, 38; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1989), 241-2. See also Joly, *Le pasteur*, 22-30; at 25, he notes that “il nous paraît sourtout qu'Hermas est incompréhensible si l'on n'admet pas ... qu'il lutte contre le rigorisme.” Although one may note the possibility, mentioned by Grundeken, *Community Building*, 134, that “the author is a rigorist himself who stresses that a baptized believer has *no more than one* other chance,” the general view is indeed that the *Shepherd of Hermas* is opposing rigorists in his milieu. Tertullian, in *De pudicia* 10:12 and 20:2-2, rejects *Shepherd* virulently precisely for professing a second repentance, and possibly also the author of the Coptic *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC VII, 3); see, for instance, Henriette W. Havelaar, *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter: Nag-Hammadi-Codex VII,3* (Texte und Untersuchungen 144; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999), 96-7, and the extended discussion in Andrea Lorenzo Molinari, “The Apocalypse of Peter and its Dating,” in *Coptica – Gnostica – Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, edited by L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section “Études” 7; Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Leuven/Paris: Peeters, 2006), 583-605. Irrespective of whether or not the *Shepherd of Hermas* is referenced in the Coptic *Apocalypse of Peter*, the latter is another example in which a teaching on repentance is conveyed by the means of apocalyptic.

this interpretation has not gained acceptance in the *Shepherd of Hermas* scholarship,²⁵⁷ since there is nothing in the *Shepherd of Hermas* by way of a discipline of penance.²⁵⁸

Indeed, it can be argued that the one hundred and fifty occurrences of *μετάνοια* and its cognates form a picture in which the repentant is placed in a dialog of sorts with God, and not simply offered a to-do list.²⁵⁹ To begin with, penitence as it appears in the *Shepherd of Hermas* can be construed as a divine gift,²⁶⁰ a good that God is asked for, and thanked for. At the other end, believers are still to accomplish it:²⁶¹ *having* and *doing* *μετάνοια* are not the same thing in the *Shepherd of Hermas*—only the latter seems to fall within the possibilities of the believer. As such, *μετάνοια* is the Lord's to give or not:

“Then why, sir,” I said, “do they not all repent?” “To those,” he said, “whose hearts the Lord saw were about to become pure, and who were about to serve him with all their heart, he gave repentance; but to those whose deceit and wickedness he saw, who were about to repent hypocritically, he did not give repentance, lest they should somehow again profane his name,” (72.2).

Similarly, the angel of penitence himself can be regarded as gift, as he was sent by the “most holy angel” to live with Hermas for the rest of his days, in *Vision* 5 (25.2). A bit earlier, a vision is asked for in order that *μετάνοια* be granted to God's servants, in *Vision* 4 (22.3). And for a gift such as the angel of penitence, Hermas raises thanks in *Sim* 9 (91.3). When given, in *Mand* 4 (31. 4-5), *μετάνοια* is said to be established by the Lord (*ἔθηκεν ὁ κύριος μετάνοιαν*), and then shortly we learn that the Shepherd is invested with handling its authority (*ἐξουσία*) (31.5).

Conditions apply to this particular gift. In the ninth *Similitude* (103. 5-6) the Shepherd evaluates one's chances to *μετάνοια* by weighing the depth of one's fault: in Ehrman's translation, “repentance can come to those people, if they are found not to have denied the Lord from their hearts.”²⁶² In several places believers

²⁵⁷ “Although some scholars, interested in a history of dogma, have read *The Shepherd* looking for the beginnings of an institutional discipline of penance, *μετάνοια* here seems not so much a ritual or ecclesial mandate as a broad change of heart and social practice to which the protagonist, his household, and all the saints are called;” B. Diane Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion: Hermas, Thecla, Aseneth* (New York: OUP, 2011), 20, who quotes, as an example for the former approach, Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations, Vol. XV, Penance in the Early Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1956), 57-113.

²⁵⁸ Point made in Verheyden, “Hermas,” 399. Rather, as Snyder notes, “for Hermas, repentance is the dialectic between the perfection of man in the kingdom (church, tower) and God's mercy for man caught between the kingdom and the world,” Snyder, *The Shepherd*, 71.

²⁵⁹ Paul Hanson, “Apocalypticism,” in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume* (ed. Keith Crim; Nashville, Tenn.: Abigdon, 1976), 28-34, at 29, defines apocalyptic eschatology as “a religious perspective, a way of viewing divine plans in relation to mundane realities.”

²⁶⁰ Cf. Osiek, *The Shepherd*, n. 227, 29, where she points to Hans A. Frei, “Metanoia im ‘Hirten’ des Hermas,” *Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift* 64 (1974) 118-39, 189-202; 65 (1975) 120-138, 176-204, for whom “*μετάνοια* is not a technical term for penance, but for the gift of God's mercy.”

²⁶¹ See, for instance, Grundeken, *Community Building*, 138, who discusses both these aspects of *μετάνοια*: “It is true that *μετάνοια* is a God-given opportunity. ... There is, however, an element of personal responsibility as well.”

²⁶² Ehrman, *LCL* 25, 451, *τούτοις οὖν μετάνοια γίνεται*. Holmes translates “For these, then, there is repentance.”

are urged the fulfil *μετάνοια* as the gift is about to be withdrawn: in the proximity of the eschatological threshold, there is still hope (ἔτι ἐλπίς ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτοῖς) of *μετάνοια*, in *Sim* 8 (73.2), but it should be fulfilled as soon as possible (74.3). There are also places in which both parts are mentioned: the godly gift of *μετάνοια* and the requirement to be fulfilled by the believer:

And after he had finished the explanations of all the sticks, he said to me, “Go and speak to all people, in order that they may repent and live to God, for the Lord in his compassion sent me to give repentance to all [...]” (77.1)

The believer should repent, for the opportunity is offered. And when fulfilled, *μετάνοια* might secure a place in the eschatological tower (75.2).

Yet of greater consequence for the present discussion is the fact that the Shepherd describes what repentance is on the human’s part:

“I,” he said, “am in charge of repentance (*μετάνοια*), and I give understanding (*σύνησις*) to all who repent. Or you don’t think,” he said, “that this very act of repentance is itself understanding? For those who have sinned understand that they have done evil in the Lord’s presence, and the act that they committed enters their heart, and they repent and no longer do evil, but do good lavishly, and they humble their soul and torment it, because they sinned. You see, therefore, that repentance is great understanding. (30.2)

I would propose that the Shepherd’s layered definition of *μετάνοια* describes, in fact, Hermas’ mystical experience as presented above, namely the way he is transformed by his visions.²⁶³ To start with, he confesses his sins (1.3, 9.5), and glorifies God’s name for making him aware of them (5.2), and the sins trouble him greatly (2.1-3, 25.4); in doing that he is already in an exchange with the Lord, first as the woman personifying the church,²⁶⁴ then through the angel of penitence who moves in with him, sent by the most holy angel. And no new faults of his will be accused after that—apart from his being too insistent in demanding further interpretations of the visions he has seen.

Moreover, understanding (*σύνησις*) is the benefaction for the act of repentance. And at one time the Shepherd is explicit about his expectations from Hermas: “How long will you people lack understanding (*ἀσύνητοι ἐστέ*)? Your double-mindedness caused you to lack understanding; indeed, your heart is not set towards the Lord” (18.9). Hermas himself asks for further explanations because “I do not understand anything and my heart has been hardened by my previous deed. Make me understand (*συνέτισόν με*) [...]” (30.1). If

²⁶³ B. Diane Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion*, 20, too makes the point that “Hermas is not merely the messenger of *μετάνοια*, but the *exemplum*.”

²⁶⁴ Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 121: “[b]ut “church” in Herm. *Vis.* 2.4.1 is only the symbolic identity of the Son,” and also, ““church” is here a symbolic designation of the supreme spirit, i.e. the Son,” in n. 23 and 24 respectively.

μετάνοια is to be understood as conversion, as argued by Osiek,²⁶⁵ then it becomes even clearer that Hermas' transformation, as his visions unfold, is to be added to his mystical dossier.²⁶⁶

As such, μετάνοια in the *Shepherd of Hermas* bears unambiguous apocalyptic features: the otherworldly mediator (a) presents μετάνοια as an exchange between the Lord and the believer (b), and conveys its meaning and layered mechanics to the seer (c). The same elements are used when Hermas' rather discrete transformation throughout the book is described: he undergoes the layered mechanics of μετάνοια (c) and, through the mediation of the angel of μετάνοια (a), is in an exchange with the Lord (b) who sent him the angel.

To draw a parallel from recent scholarship, Alexander Golitzin, in a research focused on the use of apocalyptic motifs in Byzantine monastic literature, defines "interiorized apocalyptic" as "the transposition of the cosmic setting of apocalyptic literature ... to the inner theater of the Christian soul."²⁶⁷ In *Hermas'* case, the transposition of the apocalyptic frame (as described above) concerning μετάνοια in the narrative presenting the transformation of Hermas points to the teaching on μετάνοια includes an interiorized apocalyptic *sui generis*.²⁶⁸

4. Concluding remarks

This chapter is an attempt to reassess the apocalyptic character of the *Shepherd of Hermas*. It has added a focus on the extensive parts of the book which are usually considered to belong to other genres. The presence of other literary genres seems best explained by the function of the *Shepherd*: even if its context is lost to us,

²⁶⁵ Osiek, *The Shepherd*, 29-30, argues that μετάνοια in *Hermas* envisages not a ritual regulation, "but a fundamental personal change," and the image proposed is that of conversion instead of mere repentance; she generally translates μετάνοια with 'conversion' instead of 'repentance'. See also J. Verheyden, "Hermas," 401, for some reservations on this view.

²⁶⁶ For a possible if remote parallel, and within a different approach, see in N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 414-415, the discussion of the implications of taking "(as Rowland does) a maximal account of what we classify as 'mysticism' to include his [Paul's] conversion-experience," set in relation to 'apocalyptic' and to Jewish mysticism.

²⁶⁷ Alexander Golitzin, "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men: the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Nicetas Stethatos, and the Tradition of Interiorized Apocalyptic in Eastern Christian Ascetical and Mystical Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 125-153, at 141.

²⁶⁸ To be sure, Golitzin is looking at how a Byzantine monk, Nicetas Stethatos, is describing his own mystical experiences using elements and themes inherited from the older Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, with a particular focus on "the 'out of body' experiences of heavenly ascent and transformation." The apocalyptic of the *Shepherd* is notoriously devoid of both out of body experiences and heavenly ascents, as its emphasis is – also notoriously – on moral themes. As such, Hermas' "interiorized apocalypticism" does not involve those themes, but the themes belonging to its own apocalyptic, in this case developed around the concept of μετάνοια. If in the texts treated by Golitzin the revelation is the 'heavenly mysteries,' then in the discussed material from the *Shepherd* the object of revelation is the mysteries of μετάνοια. For a discussion of *Hermas'* ascetical features, see Bogdan Bucur, "Observations on the Ascetic Doctrine of the Shepherd of Hermas," *Studia Monastica* 48 (2006), 7-23, who also, in a different place – in *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, n. 11, at 116 –, points to another case of interiorization in the *Shepherd*: "Note that the offering of the heavenly altar is mirrored by an interior phenomenon: Mand. 5.1.2 describes the proper mission of the indwelling spirit as an act of worship, a "liturgy.""

the author clearly addresses pastoral, catechetical, and social needs of his milieu, which eventually led to a switch in literary genre.

When considering *Hermas'* apocalyptic on its own terms, we can get a better grasp of the apocalyptic character of the parts of the book that are less apocalyptic: the *Mandates* and the *Similitudes*, whose teaching and moralizing content raised doubt about even considering the *Shepherd* an apocalypse. While it is hardly unexpected that genre boundaries break down at some point, it is nonetheless significant that in the very core of the non-apocalyptic parts of the *Shepherd* the structure is still apocalyptic in nature: when looked at more closely, the teaching on μετάνοια is not merely a set of rules, but something of an ongoing exchange between God and the believers, thorough the mediation of the angel of penitence, who also reveals its meaning and mechanics. Furthermore, these apocalyptic features were shown to be duplicated in an 'interiorized apocalyptic' scenario.

This is to say that in the *Mandates* and the *Similitudes*, μετάνοια is anchored in the apocalyptic of the book not only by the fact that it is a teaching conveyed by an otherworldly mediator to a seer, but also because it is set as a space in which the believer and the Lord reciprocate, and more importantly as an central element of *Hermas'* mystical experience. The implication is that, even if one holds that in the *Shepherd of Hermas* the apocalyptic genre is adopted in order to draw on divine authority, one needs to keep in mind that this is effected, as seen, in a very embedded manner, as opposed to a simple appropriation of an alien framework.

These results are relevant for the main topic of the thesis – *Hermas'* reception history as authoritative text – not only as an extensive footnote to the observation that Clement takes the *Shepherd* as an account of a genuine revelation. The fact that apocalyptic features permeate the non-apocalyptic material as well might point to how early Christian authors regarded this work even when they quote the apocalyptically diluted material. For instance, Clement, whose technical vocabulary clearly points to the fact that he is taking *Hermas'* revelation character seriously, has been shown also to draw on the latter for his understanding of the otherwise moral concept of penitence.²⁶⁹

Of course, this is not to say in any way that Clement (or any other Patristic author, for that matter) is working with the modern understanding of 'apocalyptic'. The latter remains a modern construct, a heuristic tool to understand a genre. However, this chapter shows just how much what we regard as 'moral' material is intertwined with what we regard as 'apocalyptic' features and 'mysticism' in this book, which in turn could

²⁶⁹ E.g. Peter Panyiotis Karavites, *Evil, Freedom, and the Road to Perfection in Clement of Alexandria* (VCS 63; Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999), n. 102, 49.

explain better how an early Christian author could have taken the *Shepherd* to be an account of genuine revelation (within his own worldview, however conceived).

This at least opens the possibility that the affirmation of monotheistic belief which Irenaeus quotes from *Hermas* to be meant as a quotation from a revelation, on the count that it is indeed a truth conveyed by the Angel of Penitence to the receiving seer, Hermas. In turn, this might indicate that the *Shepherd* is scriptural (as authoritative, not as canonical) to Irenaeus. In fact, other Patristic authors mention *Hermas* as inspired work as well, further suggesting the relevance of studying its apocalyptic character for understanding its reception as authoritative early Christian work. Origen, for instance, in his commentary on Romans 10:31, mentions Hermas as *scriptor libelli illius qui Pastor appellatur, quae scriptura valde mihi utilis videtur, et ut puto divinitus inspirata*. He thus finds this writing rather useful, and considers it divinely inspired. Yet he also quotes or uses its less-apocalyptic material: in his commentary on John I 103 he references precisely the monotheistic statement quoted as well by Irenaeus.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis I propose an assessment of the earliest reception of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, enquiring into the nature and significance of its circulation as an authoritative text in Late Antiquity. In particular, I have set out to verify whether—and if so, how—its alleged early scriptural status might be linked to its apocalyptic character. As such, complementary as they are, both pegs were addressed in depth for a round view on the matter. The former implied an analysis of the reception of *Hermas* in the works of a meaningful selection of Patristic authors, the earliest witnesses: Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria; these are indeed the Patristic authors most frequently brought up when the authority of *Hermas* in the early Church is mentioned. The latter involved a re-examination of the specificity of the apocalyptic character of this work in relation to its inclusion in the modern literary genre, with an interest in the less- and even non-apocalyptic material in the *Shepherd*.

The use of the *Shepherd* in the two authors poses different problems. In the case of Irenaeus, *Hermas* seems to be quoted several times, yet in all cases the same half of a paragraph is offered, and with no mention of the source whatsoever. The way it is quoted, however, indicates that Irenaeus quotes it as from a written work (as opposed to a saying in only oral circulation), and it can be shown furthermore that it is not uncommon for him to quote from a work (even biblical) without mentioning its name. It is also emphasized that the *Hermas* quotation is involved in an expression of Irenaeus' 'rule of truth' (intertwined with a quotation from John). But perhaps the most interesting feature is the introductory marker ἡ γραφή ἡ λέγουσα. I propose that this manner of introducing a quotation is peculiar to a select group of Christian books, of which only the *Shepherd* will not be canonical later on, when canonical matters will settle in Late Antiquity. All these point to a scriptural status with Irenaeus, to say the least. Clement of Alexandria, on the other hand, quotes the *Shepherd* explicitly, on various occasions, and from all its constituent parts (*Visions, Mandates, Similitudes*). More interestingly, the vocabulary Clement uses clearly suggests that to him *Hermas* is technically a prophet—even though not among those of the Old Testament—and also the fact that he considers the *Shepherd* an account of genuine revelation.

This understanding prompted the need to explore the link between the scriptural and the revealed character of *Hermas* (one a matter reception history, the other of exegesis), especially given that other Patristic authors too seem to think *Hermas* inspired (e.g. Origen), also that what Irenaeus quotes from the *Shepherd* is a line of a heavenly mediator (the Angel of Penitence) addressed to a seer (*Hermas*). This encouraged further study of *Hermas*' brand of 'apocalyptic'.

The third chapter thus addresses and re-evaluates the specificity of *Hermas* as an apocalyptic text, especially since in modern scholarship its very place in the apocalyptic literary genre has been sometimes contested, due among other reasons to the vast presence of material (e.g. moral) that is normally ascribed to other genres. Addressing specifically the relationship between the less-apocalyptic material in the *Mandates* and the denser apocalyptic material in the *Visions*, it can be shown that the latter imbues the former, even with regard to otherwise moral concepts; specifically, a concept like *metanoia* and mysticism (as described in *Hermas*' experience in the narrative) go together in the dialogical character of this apocalypse. In turn, this finding sheds new light on the matter at hand, for it at least opens the possibility that the revealed character of the *Shepherd* may underlie his authority or scriptural standing with early Patristic authors, even when the material they use from it is not the denser apocalyptic material of the *Visions*.

The foregoing constitutes a preliminary study of the authority of the *Shepherd of Hermas* in early Christianity, which can now be expanded by the means of similar thorough analyses of each point of its reception history (and of the discrete problems their assessment reveals). Considering the materials presented in the first chapter, it would seem that the evidence from Late Antiquity tends to suggest that the *Shepherd* was regarded widely as scriptural, while there is very little, if at all, to allow us to think of it as canonical.

This research is thus proposed as a first step and a firmer basis for a future more inclusive treatment of the whole reception history of the *Shepherd*. I would suggest that such future research should take into account, apart from the apocalyptic character, at least two further matters: *Hermas*' catechetical use (as indicated by Athanasius of Alexandria and Didymus the Blind), and the question pertaining to its public and/or private reading (pointed by the surviving manuscripts, but also by the Muratorian Fragment, and several Patristic authors, such as Eusebius and Jerome). Ultimately, this sort of research is virtually useful for any ancient book that is placed in modern scholarship in the vicinity of the biblical canon. The most obvious example are the constituent parts of the apocryphal literary corpus, for which any claim to canonical status should be verified by the means of a thorough analysis of its reception history in Late Antiquity, enquiring into the nature of its authority in each discrete point of that reception.

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