



HAL
open science

The Protean Evangelium Nicodemi

Rémi Gounelle

► **To cite this version:**

Rémi Gounelle. The Protean Evangelium Nicodemi. The Oldest Manuscript of the Acts of Pilate. A Collaborative Commentary on the Vienna Palimpsest (Proceedings of the International Summer Schools on Christian Apocryphal Literature, 2), pp.21-31, 2019. hal-02865744

HAL Id: hal-02865744

<https://hal.science/hal-02865744>

Submitted on 26 Jan 2021

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

The Protean *Evangelium Nicodemi**

Les numéros correspondant à la pagination de la version imprimée sont placés entre crochets dans le texte et composés en gras.

<21> Greek textual tradition

The *Evangelium Nicodemi* (*EN*) of the Latin Middle Ages was an altered and expanded translation of the Greek *Acta Pilati* (*AP*). In its narrative contour, and especially in the presence of an account of Christ's Descent into Hell, the Latin *EN* resembles the Greek text-type edited by Tischendorf as recension B of *AP*.¹ However, Rémi Gounelle, who investigated and edited that recension, has established that, rather than being the source of the Latin *EN*, it represents an expanded and revised back-translation from the dominant Latin form, carried out in the ninth or tenth century.² This medieval, Byzantine translation, which Gounelle re-branded as Greek version M to avoid any confusion with the Latin B form of *EN*, survives in three distinct textual forms: the original back-translated composition (designated as M1), the amplified version composed after the middle of the twelfth century (M2), and the expurgated version, extensively rewritten towards the end of the Middle Ages (M3). Version M was thus a product of a long evolutionary process, in which the text crossed linguistic boundaries twice and was reshaped at many intermediate stages.

The Greek text that stands behind the Latin and all Eastern translations of *AP* has been partially preserved in the manuscripts of what Tischendorf edited as *APA*.³ The textual tradition that emerges from those manuscripts is complex: it comprises two major textual families, a group of nonconforming manuscripts, and partial witnesses of the *Narratio Iosephi rescripta* and *Ecclesiastical history* attributed to Germanus of Constantinople. Nine manuscripts (F, K, X; G, H, Y, L; C, Z) form the dominant textual family φ , five others constitute family χ (O, Q, W; A, M), and the remaining five resist classification (E, I, J, B, N).⁴ Internally, family χ is less consistent than φ . None of the witnesses preserves the primitive form of *AP*, but all of them contain reflexes of earlier stages in the apocryphon's history. Although φ runs generally closer to what must have been the primitive form than χ , which rewrites and abridges the text, or the unclassifiable manuscripts, which meander between the two families and often cut their own path, all of them occasionally carry readings whose antiquity is confirmed by the presence of corresponding readings in the early translations into Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, and Georgian.

Latin textual traditions

Vienna palimpsest

The earliest Latin text of *EN*, preserved in the Vienna palimpsest, begins with the Preface of Eneas, the alleged discoverer and Greek translator of the Hebrew proceedings against Jesus, followed by a portion of the Prologue dating his trial (and Passion) and naming Nicodemus as the author of the document.⁵ The main body of the text comprises fragments of most chapters of the Greek *AP*, with only three chapters entirely missing, ch. 8 (the Jews insist that Jesus is not their king), 9 (Pilate's sentence), and 11 (the death of Jesus). The original Latin translation must have been co-extensive with the extant *AP* A and corresponded roughly to what Tischendorf edited as the <22> Latin *Gesta Pilati*.⁶ The surviving text indicates that Vp once contained, like its Greek source, ch. 16 and that it ended with the people's prayer. However, there is no indication that it ever contained the *Descensus Christi ad inferos* (*DI*), a thematic section that definitely attracted much attention in the later Middle Ages and was, in part, responsible for

* Rémi Gounelle (avec Anne-Catherine Baudoin, Justin Haynes et Zbigniew Izydorczyk), « The Protean *Evangelium Nicodemi* », dans Anne-Catherine Baudoin, Zbigniew Izydorczyk (éd.), *The Oldest Manuscript of the Acts of Pilate: A Collaborative Commentary on the Vienna Palimpsest* (Proceedings of International Summer Schools on Christian Apocryphal Literature - P-ISCAL - volume 2), Strasbourg, p. 21-31.

<21> ¹ Constantin von Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha adhibitis plurimis codicibus Graecis et Latinis maximam partem nunc primum consultis atque ineditorum copia insignibus*, 2nd ed. (Lipsiae: J. C. Hinrichs, 1876), p. 287-332.

² Rémi Gounelle, *Les recensions byzantines de l'Évangile de Nicodème*, CC SA, Instrumenta 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).

³ Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, p. 210-86. *AP* A is now being re-edited by the Acta Pilati Research Team under the auspices of the Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne for the *Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum* (Brepols); on the methodology of the that edition, see Rémi Gounelle, "L'édition de la recension grecque ancienne des *Actes de Pilate*. Perspectives méthodologiques," *Apocrypha* 21 (2010), p. 31-47.

⁴ See Christiane Furrer, "La recension grecque ancienne des Actes de Pilate," *Apocrypha* 21 (2010), p. 11-30.

⁵ The text of Vp has been diplomatically edited by Guy Philippart, "Les fragments palimpsestes de l'Évangile de Nicodème dans le *Vindobonensis 563* (Ve s.)," *Analecta Bollandiana* 107 (1989), p. 171-88.

<22> ⁶ Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, p. 333-88.

ENs popularity.

The emergence of LatA

Some time between the fifth and the ninth centuries, during the period from which no manuscripts have survived and secondary attestations are very limited, *EN* underwent a profound make-over. First, the original conclusion of *AP* (ch. 16.3-4) was altered to make space for a transition to an account of Christ's catabasis, or the *Descensus Christi ad inferos* (*DI*). The transition is smooth, the added material and the narrative method having been fully integrated with the preceding sections.⁷ Even thematically the *Descensus* is tied to the accounts of the trial, crucifixion, and Ascension through the repeated references to the divinity and royalty of Christ.⁸

Many motifs and details of *DI* find parallels in the Greek sermons of ps.-Eusebius of Alexandria and ps.-Epiphanius.⁹ However, since *DI* incorporates passages culled from Latin sources, such as a portion of the pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo 160* (the devils' confusion and questions to Jesus in ch. 22)¹⁰ and the Latin translation of the *Vita Adae et Evae* (Seth's account of his journey to Paradise in ch. 19.1),¹¹ it was most likely composed in Latin. It may have been designed specifically as a continuation of *EN*, possibly in the sixth century, when similar materials were fairly popular and circulated widely.¹²

In the Latin West, *EN* continued to change and expand through accretion. The Preface of Eneas disappeared, and new material was added after *DI*, possibly by a different redactor, to enhance its appearance as an official imperial document from Pilate's archives. In fact, the concluding sentence states that Pilate himself wrote down everything that was done by the Jews concerning Jesus ("et ipse Pilatus scripsit omnia quae gesta and dicta sunt de Iesu a Iudaeis," ch. 27.5) and deposited the writing in the public archives ("in codicibus publicis pretorii sui").¹³ The characteristic Latin title, *Gesta Salvatoris Domini Nostri Iesu Christi inuenta Theodosio magno imperatore in Hierusalem in pretorio Pontii Pilati in codicibus publicis*, which may have been fashioned by the same redactor, also promotes the idea of *EN* being a document from Pilate's archives rediscovered by emperor Theodosius.¹⁴ The problem is, of course, that, despite this title, *EN* cannot be the document that Pilate "scripsit": the main body of the narrative does not project Pilate's point of view at all, and the ascription of authorship to Pilate contradicts the Prologue, which states that it was Nicodemus who recorded at least some of the events in writing ("acta a principibus sacerdotum et reliquis Iudaeis, mandavit ipse Nicodemus litteris ebraicis").¹⁵ Nonetheless, to reinforce the connection with Pilate, the redactor attached also, with a straightforward transition ("Et post haec ipse Pilatus scripsit..."),¹⁶ Pilate's supposed letter to emperor Claudius, this time projecting Pilate's own voice.¹⁷ All <23> three – the conclusion, the title, and the letter – may have been added by a redactor who was more keenly interested in foregrounding the connection between *EN* and Pilate's records than in maintaining narrative cohesion.

It is this expanded and refashioned form of *EN*, traditionally designated as Latin A (LatA), that emerges from eleven out of twelve ninth-century manuscripts, the oldest after Vp. Their texts are still relatively uniform, sharing not only the same narrative elements but also a number of orthographic and

⁷ Rémi Gounelle and Zbigniew Izydorczyk, *L'Évangile de Nicodème ou les Actes faits sous Ponce Pilate (recension latine A), suivi de La lettre de Pilate à l'empereur Claude*, Apocryphes: Collection de poche de l'AELAC 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), p. 73-76.

⁸ Cf. Rémi Gounelle, "La divinité du Christ est-elle une question centrale dans le procès de Jésus rapporté par les *Acta Pilati*?" *Apocrypha* 8 (1997), p. 121-36.

⁹ Pseudo-Eusebius of Alexandria, "In Diabolum et Orcum," in PG 86, 383-404; "Oratio de adventu et annuntiatione Joannis (Baptistae) apud Inferos," in PG 86, 509-26; and "In sancta et magna parasceve, et in sanctam passionem Domini," in PG 62, 721-24. Pseudo-Epiphanius, "Sancti Patris nostri Epiphanius episcopi Cypri oratio in divini corporis sepulturam Domini et Servatoris nostri Jesu Christi, et in Iosephum qui fuit ab Arimathæa, et in Domini in infernum descensum, post salutarem passionem admirabiliter factum," in PG 43, 439A-64D.

¹⁰ Edited by Dolores Ozimic, *Der pseudo-augustinische Sermo CLX. Hieronymus als ein vermutlicher Verfasser, seine dogmengeschichtliche Einordnung und seine Bedeutung für das österliche Canticum triumphale "Cum rex gloriae,"* Dissertationen der Universität Graz, no. 47 (Graz, 1979), p. 19-36; the bulk of this sermon is also edited in Eusebius Gallicanus, *Collectio homiliarum, de qua critice disseruit Ioh. Leroy*, ed. Fr. Glorie, CC SL 101 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), vol. 1, p. 141-43, 145-50; CC SL 101A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), vol. 2, p. 881-86.

¹¹ Gary A. Anderson and Michael E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, Society of Biblical Literature, Early Judaism and Its Literature 17, 2nd rev. ed. (Atlanta, 1999), p. 34. Cf. M. Nagel, *La Vie grecque d'Adam et d'Ève. Apocalypse de Moïse*, Thèse présentée devant l'Université de Strasbourg II, (Lille, 1974), vol. 1, p. 165; Jean-Pierre Pettoelli, Jean-Daniel Kaestli, Albert Frey, and Bernard Outtier, eds, *Vita latina Adae et Evae*, CC SA 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 376-83, 487-97, 530-32, 562-64, 588-90, 618-21, 689-97, 736-37.

¹² Gounelle and Izydorczyk, *L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 113-17.

¹³ H. C. Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus: Gesta Salvatoris*, Toronto Medieval Latin Texts 2 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), p. 49.

¹⁴ Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 13.

¹⁵ Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 13.

¹⁶ Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 49.

¹⁷ On Pilate's letter, see below, p. 19.

lexical peculiarities; however, even those early copies show the process of divergent evolution already well under way. Their common ancestor probably lay not much further in the past, perhaps in the late seventh- or eighth-century. It inherited – in addition to the title, *DI*, the ascription of authorship to Pilate, and Pilate’s letter – also some characteristics of the palimpsest, such as, for instance, the omission of Pilate’s question about his suitability to judge a king in ch. 1.1. It then compounded them with its own idiosyncrasies, such as new omissions, unsettled morphology, confused lexis, and non-standard orthography. Many ninth-century scribes reproduced those characteristics, while others, especially in the late ninth and tenth centuries, made an effort to replace them with classical forms. For example, the ancestor of LatA must have omitted the word “hoc” in ch. 1.1, where the Jewish leaders pile up charges against Jesus (“Non solum sed et sabbatum uiolat...”); the word is present in Vp but the omission shows up in several ninth-century manuscripts (*Census* 112, 119, 133, 158, 207, 215).¹⁸ It was restored by the scribe of *Census* 334 and by later scribes either through conjecture or through borrowing from alternative exemplars. In ch. 15.5, in which Annas and Caiaphas request Joseph of Arimathea to tell them about his miraculous deliverance, the same textual ancestor substituted “contestati” for “contristati” (Gk ἐλπιήθημεν), and the ninth-century scribes followed suit, writing “Quia contestati fuimus eo quod sepelisti corpus ihesu” (*Census* 75, 119, 133, 158, 215, 288, 334). Again, later medieval scribes corrected the error. Consequently, late medieval copies of *EN* are often stylistically smoother and easier to read, more “grammatically correct,” than the early ones.

RRandBT

Although they have preserved many idiosyncrasies of their common source, the earliest LatA manuscripts must have descended through at least two intermediaries, one of which introduced additional changes. For instance, in the account of the delivered saints’ encounter with the Good Thief (ch. 16), the Thief explains what he saw during the crucifixion, saying, “& uidi creaturarum quae facta sunt per crucem ihesu crucifixi” (*Census* 119, 133, 158, 334). The meaning and grammar here are incomplete, and the ninth- and tenth-century scribes variously tried to make sense of it: “et uidi omnia quae facta sunt...” (*Census* 23, 75), “et uidi omnem creaturam quae facta est...” (*Census* 25). However, one ninth-century manuscript, *Census* 288, preserves what may have been the original reading, “signa creaturarum quae facta sunt.” For the most part, *Census* 288 is a corrupt, at times garbled copy, whose scribe was apparently incapable of independently correcting a faulty expression; the phrase in question is, therefore, likely to have descended from an ancestor that had preserved the original reading, lost in the immediate source of the other manuscripts.

In fact, *Census* 288 and its descendent, *Census* 215, appear to have followed a different textual path than the remaining ninth-century manuscripts. What sets them apart is not only the correct reading quoted above but a whole range of unique modifications. In the Prologue, they date the Passion to the consulate “Bassi Tarquilionis” (BT family), which may be a corruption of (or a replacement for) “Ruffi Rubelionis” (RR family), the usual reading in the other Latin, Greek, and Eastern versions.¹⁹ Other modifications include omissions, additions, and grammatical changes. The most extensive omission in *Census* 288 and in the majority of later BT manuscripts extends from ch. 1.6 to 3.1. The story moves abruptly from the miracle of the standards to a discussion between Pilate and the Jewish leaders: “[ch. 1.6] et iussit preses ingredi Ihesum secundo. Et fecit cursor eundem scismate sicut et prius. [ch. 3.2] Dicunt pilato iudei: Nobis non licet occidere neminem...” (*Census* 288). This sudden shift breaks the narrative continuity as the episode of the bowing standards is never concluded, and the reason for the Jews’ statement is unclear. Most likely, the omission was caused not by deliberate abridgement but by an accidental loss of a folio in the common source.

Thus already in the ninth century, LatA was not monolithic but exhibited two similar yet discrete textual forms: the predominant RR and the more peculiar BT text-type. Moreover, most likely because of its popularity and frequent copying, family RR was also mutating in the late ninth and tenth centuries. None of the extant early RR manuscripts is a direct offspring of any other; however, a number of them left their own individual legacies in the later Middle Ages.

<24> The emergence of LatB

A number of BT manuscripts were thus affected by a lacuna extending from ch. 1.6 to 3.1, covering Pilate’s wife’s dream and the testimony of the twelve righteous Jews. However, the tenth-century *Census* 268 fills in the lacuna with text that exhibits some readings that are strikingly different from the ones typically found in Latin A. The text includes, for example, Pilate’s remarks about his wife Procula’s sympathy for the

<24> ¹⁸ All manuscripts mentioned in this essay will be identified by their number in Zbigniew Izydorczyk, *Manuscripts of the “Evangelium Nicodemi”: A Census*, *Subsidia Mediaevalia* 21 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1993).

¹⁹ See Zbigniew Izydorczyk, “The Unfamiliar *Evangelium Nicodemi*,” *Manuscripta* 33 (1989), p. 169–91.

Jews (ch. 2.1), absent from all other Latin A manuscripts but attested in Greek and Oriental versions. Somewhat later, Pilate asks Annas and Caiaphas, “Nihil respondetis ad hæc quæ isti testificantur?” and in their response, they claim, “Cum omni multitudine clamamus quia de fornicatione natus est...” (ch. 2.5). Neither Pilate’s question nor the quoted portion of the answer is attested in LatA, but both are present in Greek.²⁰ Where did those ancient readings come from then?

One possibility is that the scribe of *Census* 268 used a second exemplar to supply the missing passages. In fact, the supplied passages correspond closely to the text of a distinct version of *EN*, first identified by Dobschütz as Latin B (LatB), whose earliest complete manuscripts date only from the eleventh century (*Census* 198, 247).²¹ The text preserved in *Census* 268 offers, apparently, the first glimpse of that characteristic version. Another possibility is that both *Census* 268 and LatB are indebted to the same ancient but no longer extant ancestor. That *Census* 268 represents the source of LatB is less likely because the latter contains a number of archaic features in agreement with Vp and the Greek texts, which are absent from *Census* 268.

LatB is a complex tradition, with evidence of extensive and repeated revisions. However, since it does share portions of the text with LatA, especially in the early chapters, they must have descended, ultimately, from a common archetype, or must have otherwise come in contact with each other before the period of the earliest extant manuscripts. The differences between them grew starker probably through successive revisions and/or textual mishaps. For example, in a few places, the surviving context indicates that LatA has lost a portion of the text that is still preserved in LatB. In the account of three rabbis from Galilee (ch. 14.2), LatA omits a fragment of the dialogue and has the rabbis reply twice in succession (“Respondentes dixerunt: Uuiit dominus.... Respondentes tres uiri dixerunt: Si uerba...”) ²² even though they have nothing to respond to the second time; the challenge that provoked their second response – a question about the reason for their coming to Jerusalem, which was, most likely, present in the ancestor of LatA – is preserved in LatB.

Exactly when or how the original split between LatA and LatB occurred is not known. Divergent texts must have already existed in the late fifth century, for even Vp shows signs of rewriting. The split may have been prompted by a revision of a Vp-like version, perhaps even before it acquired the *DI*, against a Greek text that was different from the one that had been used by the original translator. The evidence, although at present not overwhelming, is suggestive. For example, in ch. 1.6, when Pilate orders that the Jews choose their own strong men to hold the standards, he addresses “seniores plebis” in LatA; in LatB he speaks to “sacerdotibus populi.” These are two different renditions, one secular and one religious, of the Greek πρεσβύτερος, which may have resulted from two independent translations. In the same chapter, the Jewish strong men are set “ante conspectum praesidis” (ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ ἡγεμόνος) in LatA, as in the majority of Greek witnesses, but “ante tribunal presidis” in LatB, with the word “tribunal” corresponding to ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ ἡγεμόνος of Greek manuscripts J, B, and C.

LatB1 and LatB2

LatB is not a homogenous tradition: it falls into two major subfamilies, LatB1, attested in four complete manuscripts, and LatB2, attested in at least twelve. The two subfamilies differ in a number of ways, including traces of different Greek antecedents. For instance, in the episode mentioned above, in which the three rabbis from Galilee are being interrogated (ch. 14.2), B1 and B2 differ substantially, the interrogators making a shorter inquiry in the former and a longer one in the latter.²³ Both have counterparts in Greek, B1 in version χ (manuscripts N, A, M, and <25> O), and B2 in version φ. Similar differences, going back to different Greek models can be found in other parts of LatB as well.²⁴ Unfortunately, none of the existing Greek manuscripts matches either B1 or B2 in their entirety, and

<25> ²⁰ In fact, Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 18, reconstructed the response on the basis of the Greek.

²¹ Ernst von Dobschütz, “Nicodemus, Gospel of,” in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1919), vol. 3, p. 545. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, p. 417-32, published only *DI* B; a complete text from *Census* 44 was edited in two unpublished dissertations, one by K. A. Smith Collett, “The Gospel of Nicodemus in Anglo-Saxon England,” Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania 1981, and the other, with extensive corrections, by Rémi Gounelle, “Recherches sur le manuscrit CCCC 288 des *Acta Pilati*,” Mémoire présenté pour l’obtention de la maîtrise ès lettres classiques, Université de Paris X-Nanterre 1989. For a list of manuscripts, see Izydorczyk, “The Unfamiliar *Evangelium Nicodemi*,” 181, and idem, “The *Evangelium Nicodemi* in the Latin Middle Ages,” in *The Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts in Western Europe*, ed. Zbigniew Izydorczyk (Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997), p. 51, note 32.

²² Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 30.

²³ LatB1: “Ad hoc uenistis adnuntiare nobis hæc. aut uenistis adorare deum. aut quid hunc multiloquium fecistis coram omni populo?” (*Census* 284); LatB2: “ad hoc uenistis nuntiare nobis an uenistis orationem deo dare? Dixerunt autem eis. Venimus orationem dare deo. Dicunt seniores et principes sacerdotum. et leuite ad eos. Et si rationem uenisti reddere deo. deliramento isto quid murmurastis ante omnem populum?” (*Census* 44).

²⁴ For instance, in ch. 15.5, when the leaders of the Jews arrive at Nicodemus’s place to speak to Joseph, Nicodemus leads them, according to LatB1, “in orto suo” attested in Greek version φ (A, C, F, G; εἰς τὸν κήπον αὐτοῦ), and according to LatB2, “in domum suam” found in version χ (B, E, I, M, N, O; εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ).

sometimes certain features of the Latin text can be paralleled only from the Eastern versions.

In general, Latin B2 shows more traces of revision and editorial activity. Firstly, it seems to be aware of B1 variants but “corrects” them with new readings. For example, in Latin B1, the mountain from which Jesus ascended is called “Malech” (or some similar name), whereas B2 gives three names: “in monte oliueti qui uocatur mambre. alii uocant eum amalech” (*Census* 44; “Mambre” is also the reading of Vp). The doublet, or rather triplet, of LatB2 has no counterparts in Greek or Eastern versions, and is most likely editorial. Secondly, LatB1 gives a more complete version of the apocryphon than LatB2. All LatB manuscripts have lost the Prologue present in Latin A but preserve a portion of the Preface of Ananias. In B2, however, that Preface is introduced with a lead sentence that suggests a revision in a monastic environment: “Audustis fratres karissimi que acta sunt sub pontio pilato presidi temporibus tiberii cesaris” (*Census* 44). In consequence of the same (?) revision, some B2 manuscripts have several extensive and deliberate omissions, most notably in the trial section (ch. 2.3 - 4.5), where a long stretch of text is laconically elided with “Quid multa? omnia iam nota sunt uobis a sancto euuangelio” (*Census* 44).²⁵

Finally, LatB2 concludes with a rewritten and re-configured version of the *Descensus Christi ad inferos* (*DIB*). In *DIB*, Leucius and Carinus write essentially the same story as in A, but their narrative is rearranged (e.g., it begins with the arguing among the devils rather than with the prophecies of the patriarchs as in *DI A*) and some episodes are eliminated (e.g., the meeting with Enoch and Elijah in paradise). There are also numerous lexical and stylistic differences between the two forms of the *DI*.

DI B is usually found as part of LatB2. LatB1, in contrast, appears hesitant about it. One of its manuscripts has no *DI* at all (*Census* 284); another (*Census* 198) attaches, rather awkwardly, a Latin sermon on the Descent, based on the homilies of pseudo-Eusebius of Alexandria and entitled by its editor *Sermo de confusione diaboli*.²⁶ Yet another manuscript (*Census* 336) combines LatB1 with a version of *DIA*.²⁷ This ambivalence about *DI* may suggest that the proto-LatB1, like the original translation, did not include an account of the catabasis. Perhaps aware that other copies of the apocryphon did have it, later scribes strained to supply it from whatever source happened to be at hand.

Which form of the *DI* was original, A or B? It is usually assumed that *DI A* is primary – and it may, indeed, be a valid assumption. *DI B* appears to take pains to make certain doctrinal points about the Descent quite explicit, points of which *DI A* appears to be less self-aware. For example, while *DI A* might give an impression that Christ effected universal salvation from hell by releasing also the wicked,²⁸ *DI B* asserts the prevalent view that Christ “partem deiecit in tartarum, partem secum reduxit ad superos” (*Census* 44). And after they finished writing, Leucius and Carinus are transfigured in *DI A*, implying an exaltation of their bodies, whereas in *DI B* they return to their graves to await the future general resurrection.²⁹ Such doctrinal correctness might suggest a later revision, one based on a careful reconsideration of the implications of the original text. Moreover, in *DI B*, not only Adam but also Eve pleads with Christ, but Eve is rarely mentioned in the sixth-century texts on the Descent, such as those of pseudo-Caesarius of Arles, which constitute a natural context for the *DI*.

LatC

Despite numerous minor differences, most of the early manuscripts transmit essentially the same text-type, LatA. However, one ninth-century manuscript, *Census* 12, preserves a vastly different text that lies at the head of Latin tradition C (LatC), so different that in places it almost defies collation with LatA. Written in Catalonia in the second half of that century, *Census* 12 definitely is not the original redactor’s copy: it shows many corruptions, at least some of which suggest that the scribe of one of its ancestors was unfamiliar with the Visigothic script of its exemplar.³⁰ The majority of manuscripts of LatC are associated with the Iberian Peninsula, and some details, such as <26> as the name of the Good Thief, Limas, find parallels in Spanish sources. It is possible, therefore, that this redaction originated there.³¹

Textually, LatC must have been derived from LatA. In *Census* 12, it is entitled *Gesta Grecorum de passione domini contra Iudaeos*, and opens with an abbreviated and somewhat confused Prologue indicating that the

²⁵ The text resumes with an introduction to Nicodemus’ speech, “Post multas intercationes inter pilatum et iudeos surgens nichodemus...” (*Census* 44). Some subgroups of LatB2 do not exhibit all the lacunae, which they usually fill in with the text corresponding to LatB1.

²⁶ Edward Kennard Rand, “Sermo de confusione diaboli,” *Modern Philology* 2 (1904), p. 261-78.

²⁷ The *DI* in *Census* 336 is very similar to the one in *Census* 268 (BT).

²⁸ Cf. ch. 22.1, “et omnes de nostris uinculis auferre conaris”; ch. 23.1, “et totius mundi noxios, impios et iniustos perdidisti”; Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 42, 44.

²⁹ Cf. ch. 27.3, LatA: “subito transfigurati sunt candidati nimis,” Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 48; LatB: “reversi sunt ad sepultura sua” (*Census* 44).

³⁰ See Justin Haynes, “New Perspectives on the Evangelium Nicodemi Latin C. A Consideration of the Manuscripts on the Way to a Modern Critical Edition,” *Apocrypha* 21 (2010), p. 103-12, who also lists all the manuscripts.

<26> ³¹ Izydorczyk, “The *Evangelium Nicodemi*,” p. 51-53. See also Cullen J. Chandler, “A New View of a Catalanian ‘Gesta contra Iudaeos’: Ripoll 106 and the Jews of the Spanish March,” in *Discovery and Distinction in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of John J. Contreni*, ed. Cullen J. Chandler and Steven A. Stofferahn (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 2013), p.187-204.

work was found in Pilate's archives and that it was written by Nicodemus. The first twelve chapters recount the same episodes as LatA but adding occasional details, such as the name of the cursor, "Promanus." Beginning with ch. 13, however, LatC abridges many episodes and excises others altogether. Its *DI* is considerably restructured and its conclusion does not style Pilate as the author of the entire document. In LatC, Pilate does not himself write down—as in LatA—everything he has heard, but deposits ("reposit") the accounts written down by Laucius and Carinus in his public archives.

What Pilate does write down, at least in *Census* 12, is a report on his interrogation of the Jewish leaders in their synagogue concerning Jesus Christ. That interrogation is a major original addition to *EN* by the redactor of LatC (Tischendorf's ch. 28).³² In this extra episode, Pilate orders the high priests to consult their holy books; they comply and discover that Christ was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. They admit their error before Pilate but urge him to keep Christ's divine nature secret. The episode typically ends with a chronology from Adam to Christ, which demonstrates that Christ indeed came at the precise point in time defined in the scriptures and mentioned by archangel Michael to Seth (ch. 19.1). It is at the conclusion of this episode that, according to *Census* 12, Pilate actually writes down everything he has heard from the priests of the Jews in the synagogue. Later manuscripts of LatC, however, avoid ascribing to Pilate even the authorship of this final episode. The only text that they ascribe to Pilate himself is his letter to Claudius, which continues the apocryphon also in tradition C.

Hybridization

In the later Middle Ages, the three major textual traditions, LatA, LatB, and LatC, splintered into countless smaller textual subfamilies as different scribes adapted them for their own needs and impressed on them their own sense of Latinity. Some went even further: they adopted a more text-critical approach, apparently trying to re-configure the text to the best of their skills and knowledge. They consulted two or more exemplars—and many monastic libraries had multiple copies³³—to correct one text against another, to add a layer of interlinear glosses, even to cut and paste from different traditions or from different stages in the evolution of the same tradition. Such conflated texts gave rise to several hybrid forms of *EN*.

Troyes redaction

Although LatC survives in a limited number of manuscripts, it did nonetheless leave an important legacy: a version combining LatC with LatA. This mixed version, known as the Troyes redaction (after the location of its earliest, twelfth-century manuscript, *Census* 362), is extant in some fifteen manuscripts, at least four written or owned in France, two with links to Britain, and six executed in central or eastern Europe.³⁴

Some of the innovations of the Troyes redaction seem unique; such is, for instance, its characteristic prologue, which asserts that the Latin translation was made at the behest of emperor Theodosius. For the most part, however, it revises the narrative of Latin A, incorporating into it numerous factual details from Latin C. Those details include, for example, the name of the cursor and an allusion to the golden images of emperors crowning the standards. However, the Troyes redaction aligns itself several times with LatA against LatC in the early chapters (for example, in 1.5; 2.1; 3.1), and most of the *DI* is also A, with only one major amplification: a description of Christ's arrival in hell in the company of angels. Although none of the frequent excisions, abridgements, compressions, and rearrangements typical of *DI*C appears in the Troyes text, the latter does include Tischendorf's ch. 28, which relates the discussions between Pilate and the Jewish priests in the Temple. This chapter is absent from LatA and from all versions derived from it.

Although its manuscripts are not very numerous, this hybrid version left an extensive legacy: in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it was translated into several vernaculars, some of which continued to be printed well into the eighteenth century.³⁵

<27> 2.9. Bohemian redaction

Another hybrid form of *EN*, the so-called Bohemian redaction, circulated fairly widely in central Europe and survives in ten fifteenth-century Latin manuscripts, mostly from Upper Austria, Bohemia,

³² Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, p. 409-12.

³³ See above, p. 19-20.

³⁴ For manuscripts of the Troyes redaction and a semi-diplomatic edition of *Census* 362, see Zbigniew Izydorzycyk and Dario Bullitta, "The Troyes Redaction of the *Evangelium Nicodemi* and Its Vernacular Legacy," in *Gnose et manichéisme. Entre les oasis d'Égypte et la Route de la Soie. Hommage à Jean-Daniel Dubois*, ed. A. Van den Kerchove and L. G. Soares Santoprete, Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études – sciences religieuses 176 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), p. 557-603.

³⁵ Izydorzycyk and Bullitta, "The Troyes Redaction," p. 562-72, and below p. 46, 49-50.

Moravia, and Poland.³⁶ It resulted from a fusion of Latin traditions A and B. In the early chapters, it tends to adopt the text of LatA but with occasional details drawn from LatB. By the account of Joseph of Arimathea (ch. 15), however, the redactor has mostly switched to an exemplar of LatB and relies on it throughout the narrative of the three rabbis from Galilee and the introduction of Carinus and Leucius (ch. 16-17). He reverts to the exemplar of LatA in *DI*, but, as before, supplements it with occasional passages from LatB. He concludes the text with Pilate's letter to Claudius and a short epilogue identifying Nicodemus as the author and emperor Theodosius as the discoverer of the work.

It is clear that the redactor of this hybrid version worked from two exemplars placed side by side. He read them both and then chose one or the other as the basis for his copy. The nature of his two source texts can be determined more precisely. His copy of LatB most likely belonged to the group of LatB2 manuscripts marked by a lacuna extending from ch. 2.3 to 4.5, and therefore omitting part of the discussions between Pilate and the Jews; the manuscripts of that group summarize the missing text with a single sentence, "post multas altercationes inter pilatum et iudeos..." (*Census* 44). The scribe responsible for the Bohemian redaction retained this summarizing phrase (in the form "Post multas igitur altercationes quas habuit pylatus cum iudeis...", *Census* 87), but he supplied the text missing in his LatB2 source from the other exemplar.

The character of this LatA source is more difficult to determine. A clue, however, is offered by a short epilogue at the end of the Bohemian redaction, identifying the author and the discoverer of the apocryphon. The same epilogue occurs also in eight manuscripts from France and Great Britain, dating from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. In four of them, it follows a full text of *EN*, and in the other four it co-occurs with portions of the so-called Andrius Compilation.³⁷ The redactor's LatA exemplar may have, therefore, originated in Western Europe. This would not be surprising, since there was much intellectual traffic between Britain and central Europe in the second half of the fourteenth century, when the two regions were linked by strong religious and political ties.³⁸

Like the Troyes redaction, the Bohemian text left an important vernacular legacy. It was translated not only into Slavic languages, such as Byelorussian and Czech, but also into German. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the German translation was printed throughout the German-speaking regions, translated into Polish, and even crossed the Atlantic to North America.³⁹

Echoes of a distant past

Several manuscripts from central Europe have preserved *EN* with various archaic features. For example, a copy of the Bohemian redaction made by St. Iohannes Cantius (d. 1473, canonized 1767; *Census* 129) adds—after Pilate's letter, and, therefore, out of place—a translation of the conclusion of the Greek *AP* (ch. 16.3.2 and 16.4). This conclusion was part of the Latin translation in *Vp*, but its full text disappeared when the Latin *EN* acquired *DI*.

Praha group

Placed after Pilate's letter as in Cantius' copy, the original conclusion resurfaces also in a group of manuscripts—the Praha group—that includes *Census* 213, 299, 322 and 419a.⁴⁰ Although these manuscripts follow, for the most part, a typical text of LatA, with only minor changes and omissions, they transmit some passages rarely found in other LatA copies. They include, for example, Pilate's question about his judging a king, his statements about Procula's pro-Jewish sentiments, and his remark about the priests gnashing their teeth against Nicodemus, all characteristic of LatB. Moreover, at least two of the manuscripts, *Census* 299 and 419a, preserve a complete text of the Preface, highly abridged in LatB and attested in only eight other LatA manuscripts (*Census* 36, 59, 81, 83, 252, 287, 379, 384). The Preface of *Census* 299 and 419a is fairly close to *Vp*, and may be distantly related to it; in contrast, the wording in the other manuscripts is either foreshortened or altered in comparison with *Vp*. The Praha group appears, therefore, to have retained, or acquired, some interesting and heretofore unexplored vestiges of the early Latin apocryphon.

<28> Kraków redaction

<27> ³⁶ For a discussion of this version and a list of its manuscripts, see Zbigniew Izydorczyk, "The Bohemian Redaction of the *Evangelium Nicodemi*," *Studia Ceranea* 4 (2014), p. 49-64.

³⁷ The manuscripts are listed in Izydorczyk, "The Bohemian Redaction," p. 51, note 13. On the Andrius Compilation, see E. C. Quinn, *The Penitence of Adam: A Study of the Andrius MS*, Romance Monographs 36 (1980).

³⁸ Cf. Alfred Thomas, *A Blessed Shore: England and Bohemia from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Cornell University Press, 2007).

³⁹ See Zbigniew Izydorczyk and Charlotte Fillmore-Handlon, "The Modern Life of an Ancient Text: The *Gospel of Nicodemus* in Manitoba," *Apocrypha* 21 (2010), p. 113-20.

⁴⁰ On Cantius' copy and the Praha group, see Zbigniew Izydorczyk and Wiesław Wydra, *A Gospel of Nicodemus Preserved in Poland*, CC SA, Instrumenta 2 (Turnhout: Brepols), p. 19. *Census* 419a omits the *Descensus* and the original conclusion.

Related to the Praha group through the presence of the original conclusion of *AP*, yet in many other respects distinct from it, is a unique text preserved in two manuscripts from Kraków, *Census* 127 and 129a.⁴¹ This form of *EN*, beginning with a foreshortened Prologue, is heavily abridged: some chapters are cut out completely, and it has no *DI* or Pilate's letter. The Kraków redaction is remarkable because it is the only version of the Latin *EN* to end with ch. 16.3-16.4 exactly the same way as *Vp* and the early Greek and Eastern *AP*.

Moreover, the Kraków version uses a number of what appear to be calques from Greek, such as *scema* (σχῆμα) in ch. 1.5 or *iudeisat* (ιουδαίζει) in ch. 2.1, not attested in the mainstream versions LatA, LatB, or LatC. It is impossible to know if those two terms were present in *Vp* because the relevant passages have not survived; however, given the literal nature of the original translation, they probably would not be out of place in it.⁴² On occasion, however, the Kraków version shares wording with *Vp* and even preserves reflexes of readings (e.g., ch. 4.3, "propter blasphemiam"; cf. "de blasphemia" in *Vp*) lost in the rest of the Latin tradition. Thus, it is more likely that it has descended from the ancient Latin translation than that it was translated anew from Greek or Old Church Slavonic. In particular, its lexical agreements with *Vp*, even in rare words (e.g., 15.6, "pausauit"; cf. ἀνέπαυσε), are too numerous to be explained by accidental convergence. Most likely, the Kraków version goes back to an early *Vp*-like text that antedates the three standard versions.

Textual scope

Scribal inattention, re-translation, hybridization, and the revival of ancient forms were not the only factors that affected the ever-changing shape of *EN*. Sometimes the apocryphon was deliberately rewritten with a specific purpose in mind. Such rewriting could involve drastic abridgement, as in the homiletic adaptation preserved in the Carolingian homiliary from Saint-Père de Chartres (*Census* 102 and Angers, Bibliothèque municipale MS 236).⁴³ Embedded in the context of reflections on the need for Redemption, *EN* merges with the preceding material smoothly, with Matthean quotations gradually transforming into the Nicodemean account of the trial before Pilate. Then the rest of *EN* follows, albeit with lots of material omitted. Another homiletic treatment, dating from the thirteenth century and of Irish provenance (*Census* 162, 168),⁴⁴ begins only with the story of Joseph of Arimathea and often compresses parts of the text. A fifteenth-century example is provided by the collection of *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis* by Franciscus Woitsdorf (*Census* 132, 411, 414, 124a).⁴⁵ It includes a highly abbreviated version, also beginning with the story of Joseph and with large portions of *DI* summarized or abridged. In both cases, the apocryphon is also given a distinctively homiletic ending.⁴⁶

Other redactor-scribes amplified either the core of *EN* or its peripheries. The core text could be expanded by incorporating additional details or even entire episodes. For example, in a twelfth-century manuscript of Italian origin (*Census* 220), a fairly accurate copy of LatA, the scribe greatly amplified ch. 6, in which those healed by Jesus appear before Pilate and bear witness to the miracles. He added witnesses testifying to the miracle at Cana in Galilee and to three miracles in Capharnaum.⁴⁷ Another example is offered by a pair of manuscripts, one from the fourteenth century (*Census* 279) and the other from the fifteenth (*Census* 273), both interpolating accounts of the Jewish council, of Satan entering Judas, of the Last Supper, and of Jesus' arrest, before returning to the trial as typically presented in *EN*. Similarly, the twelfth-century *Census* 89 explains who Pilate was, reports Judas' betrayal, and relates how Peter denied knowing Jesus.

<29> The scope of the *EN* fluctuated also through the expansion of its peripheral boundaries. In fact, the *EN* as it was typically known in the Middle Ages came into being only after the Latin translation of *AP* was expanded through the addition of *DI*.

Epistola Pilati

<28> ⁴¹ *Census* 129a has been brought to light by Marcello Piantini, "Un importante contributo allo studio degli apocrifi. Il Vangelo di Nicodemo in Polonia: tradizione latina e traduzione polacca," *Studi Slavistici* 8 (2011), p. 195-201. For a discussion of the Kraków version and a semi-diplomatic edition of *Census* 127, see Izydorczyk and Wydra, *A Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 20-25, 44-97.

⁴² The only known manuscript to include both these terms, in addition to *Census* 127 and 129a, is *Census* 391.

⁴³ Another manuscript of the same homiliary is *Census* 52, but it contains an unabridged copy of the *Evangelium*. The Angers manuscript was not included in the *Census* but will be assigned siglum 5a; see Raymond Étaix, "L'homélie carolingienne d'Angers," *Revue Bénédictine* 104 (1994), p. 148-90.

⁴⁴ Edited from *Census* 162 by David J. G. Lewis, ed., "A Short Latin Gospel of Nicodemus Written in Ireland," *Peritia* 5 (1986), p. 262-75.

⁴⁵ On 124a, see Ignacy Polkowski, *Katalog rękopisów kapitulnych katedry wawelskiej*, pt 1: *Kodexa rękopiśmienne 1-228*.

⁴⁶ On these homiletic adaptations of *EN*, see Zbigniew Izydorczyk, "Preaching Nicodemus's Gospel," in *Medieval Sermons and Society: Cloister, City, University*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, Beverly M. Kienzle, Debra L. Stoudt et al. (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1998), p. 9-24.

⁴⁷ This amplification found its way into early modern printings of *EN*; see Izydorczyk, "The Unfamiliar *Evangelium Nicodemi*," and idem "The Earliest Printed Versions of the *Evangelium Nicodemi* and Their Manuscript Sources," *Apocrypha* 21 (2010), p. 129-30.

Probably as common and as old as *DI* is the *Epistola Pilati ad Claudium* (*EP*), found in a vast majority of *EN* manuscripts.⁴⁸ Its presence in all three major traditions, LatA, LatB, and LatC, suggests that it was attracted to *EN* at an early date, during the period from which no manuscripts survive. *EP* is written in Pilate's own voice and addressed to Claudius (in some late manuscripts to Tiberius). It briefly reports—from a perspective sympathetic to Jesus—the events that took place in Jerusalem, invokes the prophecies about the Messiah, blames the Jews for the Crucifixion, and reveals that Pilate believed in Christ's divine origin and Resurrection. *EP* appears fully integrated and anchored in *EN* with a single transitional sentence. Occasionally, *EP* is marked with a marginal rubric or title (e.g., in *Census* 17, 28, or 38), but more typically it is not visually set off from the main body of the apocryphon. In fact, colophons marking the end of *EN* are usually placed after *EP*, reinforcing the impression that, in the eyes of the scribes, the latter fully belonged to the apocryphon. However, at least one detail in the body of the letter appears to clash with the corresponding passage in *EN*. The letter states that the guards who reported the Resurrection “cum accepissent pecunias, tacere ueritatem non potuerunt quod factum est sed de sepulchro resurrexisse testificati sunt”; *EN* 13.4, however, clearly suggests that they said what they had been instructed to say by the Jews (“dixerunt ut a Iudaeis moniti sunt, et diffamatus est omnibus sermo illorum”).⁴⁹

Its credibility supported by Tertullian's and Eusebius's allusions to Pilate's reports to Rome, *EP* circulated also as part of other compilations. It was incorporated, for instance, into the Latin and Greek versions of the *Passio sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, ch. 19–21 (the so-called Marcellus text), possibly antedating the sixth century;⁵⁰ into the *Cura sanitatis Tiberii* before the eighth (see below); into many chronicles in the later Middle Ages;⁵¹ and into epistolary collections of the Renaissance.

Cura sanitatis Tiberii

Another text often absorbed into *EN* was the so-called *Cura sanitatis Tiberii* (*CST*),⁵² a rapid, not always cohesive compilation, narrating the mission of Volusianus to Jerusalem, dispatched by emperor Tiberius to find the healer Jesus, who might cure him from his affliction. Volusianus learns about Jesus' death, incarcerates Pilate, and returns to Rome with Veronica and her image of Christ. The emperor venerates the image, is healed, and dies less than a year later. The focus then abruptly changes to Peter and Paul, Simon Magus, and Nero. The emperor learns about Jesus and summons Pilate from exile; to refute Simon's mendacious claims, the apostles tell Nero to read Pilate's letter; Nero reads it, and Peter confirms its truthfulness. The text ends with the deaths of Pilate and Nero. *CST* thus offers a completely different perspective on Pilate than the one emerging from *EP*: it shows Pilate as a villain rather than as Jesus' sympathizer. It also styles Tiberius as an imperial convert to Christianity and a defender of Christ.

Since *CST* borrows details from *EN* (the characters of Veronica, Joseph of Arimathea, the righteous Jews) and incorporates the entire *EP*, it is no doubt later than both of them. It probably originated between the fifth and the late eighth centuries, that is, between the date of the Latin translation of *AP*, and the date of its own earliest manuscripts.⁵³ It was originally composed as an independent piece, and, to some extent, retained its independence <30> throughout the Middle Ages.⁵⁴ However, already in the ninth and tenth centuries, it began to appear contiguous to *EN*. From the eleventh century onwards, it often lost its title and became fused with the preceding text, usually *EP*. A connecting sentence (“Hanc [i.e., epistolam] Pilatus Claudio direxit...”) suppressed its own independent identity and subordinated it to the larger apocryphon.⁵⁵ The fusion was completed by colophons placed after *CST* but announcing the conclusion of *EN* (e.g., *Census* 26, 57, 169). Such expanded *EN*, incorporating *EP* and *CST*, was used as a

<29> ⁴⁸ On *EP*, see Jean-Daniel Dubois and Rémi Gounelle, “Lettre de Pilate à l'Empereur Claude,” in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 2, ed. Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2005), p. 357-63; and Izdorczyk, “The *Evangelium Nicodemi*,” p. 55-57.

⁴⁹ Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 29 et 50.

⁵⁰ Richard Adalbert Lipsius and Maximilien Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, pt 1 (1891; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1959), p. 134-39, 196-97; cf. Matthew C. Baldwin, *Whose Acts of Peter?* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), p. 108-10.

⁵¹ E.g., Matthew of Paris, *Matthæi Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica majora*, vol. 1: *The Creation to A.D. 1066*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, *Rer. Brit. M. A. Script.* 57 (London: Longman, 1872), p. 95-96; cf. Johann Carl Thilo, ed., *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, vol. 1 (Lipsiae: Sumptibus Frid. Christ. Guilielmi Vogel, 1832), p. 796-97.

⁵² Studied and edited by Ernst von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 18, N.F. 3 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899), p. 209-14, 157*-203*. More recently, *CST* has been discussed by Rémi Gounelle, “Les origines littéraires de la légende de Véronique et de la Sainte Face: La *Cura sanitatis Tiberii* et la *Vindicta Salvatoris*,” in *Sacre impronte e oggetti «non fatti da mano d'uomo» nelle religioni*, ed. A. Monaci Castagno (Turin: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2011), p. 232-37, and Zbigniew Izdorczyk, “The *Cura sanitatis Tiberii* a Century after Ernst von Dobschütz,” in *The European Fortune of the Roman Veronica in the Middle Ages*, ed. Amanda Murphy, Herbert L. Kessler et al., *Convivium. Supplementum* 2017 (Brno: Université de Lausanne and the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Masaryk University, 2017), p. 33-49. Cf. also Izdorczyk, “The *Evangelium Nicodemi*,” p. 57-59.

⁵³ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS lat. 2034 (late 8th c.), and Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare Felianiana MS 490 (late 8th or early 9th c.).

<30> ⁵⁴ Edited by Dobschütz as version A.

⁵⁵ Edited by Dobschütz as version B.

model for the *editio princeps* issued in 1473 by an Augsburg printer, Günther Zainer. Although he divided the text into three sections, he clearly viewed it as a single work.⁵⁶

Somnium Neronis

Perhaps even more closely associated with *EN* was another piece compiled from heterogeneous sources, the so-called *Somnium Neronis* (*SN*).⁵⁷ It is found attached to the apocryphon from the tenth century onwards (e.g., *Census* 179, 268). Like *CST*, it relates an exchange between Nero and Peter, in which Peter attests to the truth of Pilate's report on Jesus. After the "gesta salvatoris" have been recited, Nero's palace collapses, and Nero sees the bleeding Christ, who alludes to Pilate's letter and instructs Nero to have Vespasian avenge his death. The rest of *SN* recounts the destruction of Jerusalem, and includes a discursive anti-Jewish treatise, buttressed with numerous quotations from the Old Latin translation of the Bible, demonstrating that the downfall of Jerusalem had been foretold by the prophets and that Christ, the "lapis angularis," marks an end of the old observances of the synagogue.

While the first section of *SN* invokes *EN* ("gesta salvatoris") and is closely tied to *EP* ("Cumque haec [i.e., epistolae Pilati] Claudius suscepisset..."), the long scriptural treatise is only tangentially relevant to the preceding narrative. This must have also been the impression of at least some scribes who retained only Nero's vision (e.g., *Census* 40, 139) and/or the destruction of Jerusalem (e.g., *Census* 60, 155); of those who started copying the rest of the treatise, only a few reached the end, most stopping at various points in the dissertation (e.g., *Census* 52, 73, 173). In contrast to *EP* and *CST*, *SN* does not seem to have had an independent existence apart from *EN*⁵⁸ but is always subsumed by the apocryphon, which might suggest that it was conceived specifically as its continuation. The colophons and closing statements, whenever they appear after *SN*, invariably refer to the broader narrative of *EN* (e.g., *Census* 1, 179, 268, 294)

Minor appendices

Besides *DI*, the three appendices mentioned above—*EP*, *CST*, and *SN*—represent the earliest and most widely attested expansions of *EN*. Later scribes continued to graft additional texts onto *EN* and to stretch its boundaries, but the circulation of those newer amplifications was more limited. Typically, they are of quasi-historical character. *De Veronilla*, for example, is textually related to *CST* and tells the story of Veronica's image of Christ; it is found together with *EN* in four manuscripts. In its oldest manuscript dating to the twelfth century, *Census* 351,⁵⁹ it stands adjacent to *EN* but is announced with its own title; in the other three (*Census* 18, 95, 307), it continues without a break the preceding narrative⁶⁰ and ends with colophons explicitly announcing the conclusion of *EN*.

In several thirteenth- to fifteenth-century manuscripts, *EN* ends with an epilogue, which also serves as a transition to a series of other pieces loosely associated with the apocryphon, dealing with the Roman emperors and the destruction of Jerusalem.⁶¹ In *Census* 53, this hugely expanded compilation includes, in addition to *EN*, an account of the healing of Tiberius, notes on other emperors, the destruction of Jerusalem, a legend of the cross, and a story of Judas.⁶² The last three sections have titles of their own so they were not fully absorbed into the apocryphon, but the compilation was transmitted as an entity (with some omissions and rearrangements) for close to two centuries.

<31> *Vindicta Salvatoris*

Other texts, too, kept close company with *EN* but without becoming part of it. Perhaps the most important of those is the *Vindicta Slavatoris* (*VS*), attested in manuscripts of *EN* since the ninth century (*Census* 334).⁶³ *VS* combines two narratives of miraculous healings. First, it relates how Titus, a ruler in Aquitaine, is cured after he has learnt about Jesus from Nathan, a Jewish emissary to Rome; and how, in

⁵⁶ Reprinted but with modern mise-en-page by Achim Masser and Max Silber, eds, *Das Evangelium Nicodemi in spätmittelalterlicher deutscher Prosa. Texte*, Germanische Bibliothek, 4th Series, Texte und Kommentar (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1987), p. 448–67.

⁵⁷ Edited by Ernst von Dobschütz, "A Collection of Old Latin Bible Quotations: *Somnium Neronis*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 16 (1915), p. 1–27. Cf. also Izydorczyk, "The *Evangelium Nicodemi*," p. 61–62.

⁵⁸ In three manuscripts, Cambridge, St. John's College, MS K.23 (MRJ 229) (early 12th c.); Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 320 (12th c.); and London, British Library, MS. Royal 10 A. VIII (13th c.), the *Somnium* occurs in conjunction with *EP* only.

⁵⁹ Edited by Hans Ferd. Massmann, *Der keiser und der kunige buoch oder die sogenannte Kaiserchronik, Gedicht des zwölften Jahrhunderts*, pt. 3 (Quedlinburg: G. Basse, 1854), p. 579–80, 605–6; cf. also Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, p. 278*; Izydorczyk, "The *Evangelium Nicodemi*," p. 62–63; and Gounelle, "Les origines littéraires," p. 236.

⁶⁰ In at least two of them, *Census* 95 and 307, it is directly attached to a piece on the death of the two Herods, which is in turn fused with *EN*.

⁶¹ See Izydorczyk, "The *Evangelium Nicodemi*," p. 64–67.

⁶² The last two pieces have been printed by E. M. Thompson, "Apocryphal Legends," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 37 (1881), p. 241–43.

<31> ⁶³ Edited by Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, p. 471–86. For a recent discussion, see Gounelle, "Les origines littéraires," p. 237–51.

gratitude, Titus besieges and destroys Jerusalem, where Jesus was crucified. The second narrative, drawn from *CST*, retells the mission of Volusianus, the condemnation of Pilate, and the healing of Tiberius. *VS* co-occurs with *EN* in over twenty manuscripts but never develops the same attachment to it as, for example, *CST*: not infrequently, it is contiguous with the apocryphon of the Passion (e.g. *Census* 4, 14, 44, 51, etc.), but it tends to retain its independence, visually marked by a title, a large initial, or white space. However, the fact that the two were often copied together suggests that *VS* was perceived as a companion piece to *EN*, a kind of sequel or appendix to it.

Prefaces

The textual boundaries of *EN* could be stretched not only by its various continuations or appendices but also by prefaces. We have already alluded to the sporadic resurgence of the Preface of Ananias in a small group of LatA manuscripts.⁶⁴ In a different group, the main body of the apocryphon is introduced with excerpts from ps.-Augustine and Gregory of Tours, which were probably viewed as patristic recommendations for *EN*.⁶⁵

The two passages are found at the head of *EN*, typically before the title, in several British codices of the twelfth century and later (e.g., *Census* 44, 46, 50, 72, etc.). The first, extracted from Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, ch. 1.21, is concerned with Joseph of Arimathea and mentions the “gesta Pilati ad imperatorem missa.”⁶⁶ The second, taken from the sermons of Eusebius “Gallicanus” “De Pascha I” and “De Pascha IA,”⁶⁷ which formed part of the pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo 160*, describes the terror of the denizens of hell at Christ’s Descent and resembles *EN* ch. 22. Although not fully merged with the apocryphon, the two extracts function as introductions to *Gesta Pilati* and *DI*, respectively, while at the same time guaranteeing the apocryphon’s veracity and doctrinal correctness.

Conclusion

Published editions may give an impression that the medieval *EN* was a fixed, stable, clearly delimited work. However, its 450 or so extant manuscripts suggest otherwise: from the moment it entered Latin Christendom, it seems to have been in a constant state of flux. Its style, form, and scope fluctuated as much as its title. The original Passion-Resurrection narrative as preserved in Vp was polished, corrected against Greek copies, revised, abridged, and amplified many times over the centuries, its non-canonical character and status as a translation inviting such editorial interventions. It was easily transformed into homilies and chronicles, cut and pasted into hagiographic and encyclopedic compilations. So much so that the opinion of what exactly constituted or counted as the *Evangelium Nicodemi* varied somewhat from place to place and from century to century. Was Tischendorf’s ch. 28 really part of it? Was the *Cura sanitatis Tiberii*? Was the *Somnium Neronis*? Different scribes would, no doubt, have answered differently. The apocryphon had no single authorial or authoritative text or form, but was being shaped simultaneously in many different places and to many different effects.

⁶⁴ See above, p. 27.

⁶⁵ Printed from *Census* 228 by David C. Fowler, “The Middle English Gospel of Nicodemus in Winchester MS. 33,” *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s., 19 (1988), p. 79-81. Cf. Izydorczyk, “The *Evangelium Nicodemi*,” p. 67-68.

⁶⁶ Cf. above, p. 17.

⁶⁷ Eusebius “Gallicanus,” *Collectio homiliarum*, vol. 1, p. 141-50; cf. vol. 2, p. 881-86.