THE PRESENCE OF HADES IN THE *CODEX OF VISIONS* (P.BODM. XXXI, XXXII, XXXV)

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The Codex of Visions from the Bodmer papyri collects a variety of texts, some well known, some completely new. For instance, the codex contains portions of the well-known early Christian text, the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Yet it also contains previously unknown fourth-fifth century Christian poems. These poems, while concerned with Biblical and theological matters, are composed in classical meters, in imitation of epic poetry (and often their imitation is less than felicitous). Thanks to the initial work of André Hurst and Jean Rudhardt, we have an excellent edition to work from[1]. While they have done the truly difficult work of establishing the text, many questions still remain. To name just a few : why were these classicizing poems placed in the same codex as the prose *Shepherd* ? Are the poems the work of one poet or many ? Where did these poems come from, and what was their original and subsequent audience ? Most of the questions are still awaiting an answer. Much of the scholarship has focused on the classicizing element of these poems ; I want to turn to the other part of these poems and examine how they engage in Biblical exegesis.

The title given to the codex by its modern editors suggests a certain connection, a thematic unity to the contents of the codex. P.Bodm. XXIX (*The Vision of Dorotheus*) and P.Bodm. XXXVIII (the visions from the *Shepherd of Hermas*) deal with heavenly visions[2]. But alongside visions of heaven, the codex also exhibits a concern with the underworld, in this codex called by various classical names, including Tartarus, Erebos and Hades[3]. In this paper, I want to accomplish two things. First, I want to ask why a number of these poems dwell on the underworld. Specifically, I want to look at how Jesus' descent to the infernal realm gets used in the poems from the codex. And Hades points us toward other connections. Since P.Bodm. XXXV (*Abel's speech after being slain by Cain*), though dealing with a narrative from the book of *Genesis*, is also a paraphrase of *Ps.* 101 (LXX), we are in fact dealing with the exegesis of two different biblical books[4]. In paraphrasing *Ps.* 101, P.Bodm. XXXV turns the Psalm into a christological text as the narrator looks ahead to the coming of Christ. Moreover, the poem may also have in mind Jesus' Descent to Hades. Therefore the second goal of the paper is to demonstrate how P.Bodm. XXXV is taking part in a Christian exegesis of *Ps.* 101. By the eighth century, Byzantine readers undoubtedly read *Ps.* 101 as a text that anticipates the Descent to Hades. P.Bodm. XXXV appears to contribute to the formation of this tradition.

Hurst and Rudhardt take note of this interest in the infernal realms in their introduction to P.Bodm. XXXII, *Hymn to the Lord Jesus*[5]. This short acrostic poem is a hymn and is perhaps the most theological poem in the codex. It praises the Lord Jesus, the image of God, who freed many souls from Erebos. The mention of Jesus' Descent to Hades comes in the following lines (20–24)[6] :

῾Υψόθι ναιετάων πέλεν ἄφθιτος [αἰ]ωνίοιο,
Φήνατο δ᾽ ἐν δικαίοις ἅγιον φάο̣[c, ἐκ φά]ε̣ος φῶc.

1 Hurst / Rudhardt (1999). See also the recent work of Livrea (2004) on P.Bodm. XXXII, and Livrea (2006–2008) on P.Bodm. XXXI.
2 Hurst / Reverdin / Rudhardt (1984) ; Carlini (1991).
3 For a discussion of these names, see Rey (2002) 183–186.
4 *Ps.* 102 according to the Masoretic Text. On the manner in which the poem paraphrases *Psalm* 101, see Hurst / Rudhardt (1999) 151–164.
5 Hurst / Rudhardt (1999) 110.
6 Improved text of Livrea (2004) 39–43 ; translations are my own.

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Χρηστὸς ἄναξ, μέγ' ἄγαλμα θεὸς π[έλεν ἰcόθεος φώc·]
Ψυχὰc δ' ἐξ Ἐρέβευc πολέαc προέη[κε φό]ωcδε·
Ὡίcθη φάοc αἰνὸν Ἄ<ι>δηι νεκύ[ε]ccι φ[ανῆναι.]

Dwelling in heaven, he was immortal from eternity, and he was revealed among the righteous as a holy light, light from light, the Lord Christ, the great image, who was God, an equally divine light : he delivered many souls from Erebos to the light ; he purposed to be revealed as an awesome light to the dead in Hades.

In line 24, the diplomatic transcription simply has ΑΔΗ. Since *iota* subscripts are not written in the codex, one can easily render this as the dative Ἄιδηι, the reading given both by Hurst and Rudhardt as well as Livrea. One would expect the initial syllable of ἄιδηι to be long but here it used as a short syllable. This is on par with other metrical oddities in the codex. Hurst and Rudhardt in their *apparatus criticus* suggest another possibility, namely that it could be rendered ἄδην « to one's fill » or « completely ». A compelling reason for reading ΑΔΗ as Ἄιδηι rather than ἄδην comes in the previous line (23) : with the mention of Christ delivering souls from Erebos, the place of primeval darkness, it comes as no surprise to find Hades in the following line. The context suggests that Hades is indeed the better reading, and there is little doubt that this poem has in mind the Descent to Hades.

Moments of silence in the Biblical narrative often lead to attempts to fill in the gaps. This can be seen in Jewish *midrash* as well as much Jewish and Christian *apocrypha*. It is also a favorite device of early Christian poets. Many poems from the *Codex of Visions* engage in this practice, as we see in the poem on Abraham (P.Bodm. XXX) and the two poems on Cain and Abel (P.Bodm. XXXIII and XXXV). Only a few passages in the New Testament give a hint of what happened during the three days that Jesus was in the tomb. The *Gospel of Matthew* tantalizingly mentions that the bodies of the saints were raised and appeared to many (Mt 27, 52–53). In the *Acts of the Apostles* Peter's first sermon argues that Christ was not abandoned to Hades (Acts 2, 29–32) and he cites as testimony a passage from the *Psalms* (Ps. 15, 10). Less certain is the mention in I *Peter* 3, 18–21 and 4, 6 of Jesus preaching to the spirits in prison and to the dead[7]. From these brief hints there develops, beginning in the second century, a fleshed-out narrative of Jesus' Descent[8]. Discussions of Jesus' Descent are widespread and can be found in a range of texts. It appears in various writings of second and third century Greek authors[9]. Ephrem the Syrian's *Carmina Nisibena* contain a number of dramatic accounts of Jesus' Descent[10]. Among the texts discovered at Nag Hammadi is the *Teaching of Silvanus*, the only non-gnostic text in this collection. This text also mentions the descent of Jesus, though not to Hades but to Amente, the Egyptian underworld[11].

By the fourth and fifth centuries, the question is not so much did Jesus descend to Hades, but rather what was the significance of his Descent ? For instance, Augustine states unequivocally in an epistle that Jesus descended to Hades, and he uses I *Peter* 3, 18–21 as a testimony. The remainder of Augustine's epistle, however, is an attempt to make sense of what the descent means[12]. One text in particular develops the narrative extensively and fills out the story. This is the account contained in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, a text with a

7 Modern scholarship is divided over what is meant by these spirits in prison ; see the discussion in Perrot (1980).
8 For a history of the doctrine of the Descent to Hades, see Gounelle (2000) and Alfeyev (2009).
9 See for instance Ignatius of Antioch *Magn.* 9 and Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6, 6.
10 See for example *Nis.* 41 and 53 in Brock / Kiraz (2006).
11 See Pearson (2007) 513 and 516.
12 Aug. *Ep.* 164, 2–3.

complicated textual history[13]. It is evident that P.Bodm. XXXII contributes to a tradition that by the fifth century, if not well before then, is firmly established. The poem does not say much about Jesus' Descent ; rather it assumes that the story is so well known that there is no need to discuss it. The poem highlights Jesus' divinity (especially in lines 20–23) and describes Christ as a light. This is no mere light, however : with Livrea's reconstruction of line 21, this light imagery has a strong theological association, as it employs the same language as the Creed formulated by the First Œcumenical Council at Nicaea[14]. This light of Jesus' divinity shines in Hades, in much the same manner that the *Gospel of Nicodemus* describes the brilliant light appearing in Hades[15].

In another poem from the codex, the *Address to the Righteous* (P.Bodm. XXXI), Hades appears at least twice (26 and 83)[16]. This poem dwells on the rewards for the righteous. As expected, a poem on the rewards for the righteous also addresses what happens to the unrighteous, as we see in the following lines (23–26) :

ὅφρα μὴ οἶος ἅπασιν ἀπεχθόμενος θεῷι ἁγνῶι
ἐνναίων Ἔρεβος Τάρταρον ἀμφινέμηι
οὕνεκα νηπυτίηισιν ἄδην κατέναεσεν [
αὐτὸς γὰρ τ᾽ Ἀίδης ἔπλετ᾽ ἐν ἀνθρώποις

(...) lest he alone, hated by all and by the Holy God dwell in Tartarus, abiding in Erebos, on account of their immense foolishness he established (...) for Hades himself was among men.

A break in the text makes it difficult to pick up the stream of thought (it is unclear who is the subject of line 23), but in line 24 both Tartarus and Erebos are mentioned. In the next two lines, the emphasis remains on the underworld (25–26). In line 26, the reading Ἀίδης is very clear. The papyrus here helps us by including the *iota* written with the diaeresis (αϊδης in the diplomatic transcription). The *iota* is only written in line 26 with diaeresis, so that the *alpha* and *iota* scan as two syllables. This is similar to how Hades appears in Homer, where it most often appears with the *alpha* and *iota* as short vowels pronounced separately. In the previous line (25), Hurst and Rudhardt choose to read ΑΔΗΝ as the adverb ἄδην. But they suggest in the critical apparatus, as well as in the notes, that the noun Ἄιδην would also work. We should note that ΑΔΗΝ here occurs at the same metrical position as in P.Bodm. XXXII, 24. If Hades fits the context and the meter there, could we not also read Hades here ? If we read ΑΔΗΝ as Ἄιδην, then we could render the passage as follows :

οὕνεκα νηπυτίηισιν Ἄιδην κατέναεσεν [
αὐτὸς γὰρ τ᾽ Ἀίδης ἔπλετ᾽ ἐν ἀνθρώποις

(...) on account of this he settled Hades for the foolish ; for Hades himself was among men.

With Tartarus and Erebos in the preceding line and Hades following this line, it seems more than justified to favor the reading Hades here. At least two poems have Hades itself ; if we include other terms for the underworld, such as Tartarus, then we could also include P.Bodm. XXXIII, *Cain's Speech after Slaying Abel*. This poem is constructed as the rheto-

[13] See Gounelle / Izydorczyk (1997) 11–15 ; Elliot (1993) 164–169. The oldest Greek recension (Greek A) only contains the *Acts of Pilate* and not the *Descent to Hades*, although a much later medieval recension (Greek B) does contain it. Accounts of the Descent are generally translated from one of the Latin recensions (Latin A).

[14] Livrea (2004) 42.

[15] *Gospel of Nicodemus,* chap. 18 ; Gounelle / Izydorczyk (1997) 183.

[16] In addition to the edition of Hurst / Rudhardt, see also Livrea (2006–2008) 27–44.

rical exercise *ethopoiia*, common to the Greek schoolroom, though in this poem the speaker is a biblical rather than mythological persona. P.Bodm. XXXIII asks what Cain might have said after slaying his brother Abel. In the final line, he longs for Tartarus to accept him, since no region of the earth will take him : Τάρταρα λοιπὸν ἵκ[ες]θε κακορραφίη[c] ἀκόρητοι « Tartarus, who never has his fill of evil-doers, come for me ! »

It should be clear by now that the underworld, whether it goes by the name of Hades or Tartarus, is a recurring theme in these poems. Now let me make the case for reading Hades in P.Bodm. XXXV, *Abel's speech after being slain by Cain*. This poem, like P.Bodm. XXXIII, Cain's speech, applies the rhetorical exercise of *ethopoiia* to the Bible. As Jean-Luc Fournet has observed, these poems are our earliest witnesses to biblical *ethopoiia*[17]. P.Bodm. XXXV, *Abel's Speech*, has the added feature of being a paraphrase of *Ps.* 101. The slain Abel utters a lament, and, surprisingly, he rewrites a *Psalm* but in the language of Homer. The poem is unexpected in many ways : one would not expect an *ethopoiia* to engage in paraphrase ; and for Abel to have the words of the *Psalms* on his lips, though in the style of Homer, demonstrates a real melding of styles and traditions. At the same time, there already existed a tradition of assigning particular *Psalms* to specific historical persons, such as David (*Ps.* 50 / 51 being the most notable example)[18]. In the biblical account in *Genesis* 4, Abel has no chance to speak, although he is remembered in later traditions as a righteous sufferer.

Numerous literary accounts of the story of Cain and Abel from both Jewish and Christian authors attempt to fill in the gaps in the typically sparse narrative of *Genesis*[19]. A major concern was the whereabouts of Abel's soul. This was a subject for much discussion in both Jewish and early Christian literature. According to some Jewish sources, his soul could find no rest ; meanwhile, in some Jewish apocryphal texts, as well as in some Greek and Syriac Christian texts, Abel went to paradise[20]. To adopt the imaginative framework of the poet for a moment, let us imagine where Abel is when he gives this lament. Either he is on the earth, in the underworld, or in heaven. According to *Genesis*, he simply did not have time to say anything here. He does not seem to be in heaven, since his speech is such a plea for help. He cries out and blames himself for this grief : οὕνεκ' ἐμεῖο, φέριστε ἄναξ, ἐχολ[ώς]αο λίην | καὶ μ' ἔρρηξας ὄπιcθε βαλὼν ὀδύν[ηιcι]ν ο[. . . .] . τεc « on account of me, mighty Lord, thou hast been exceedingly wroth, and hast shattered me, casting me to sorrows » (25–26). Furthermore, he describes himself as invisible and mute : καὶ ῥ' ἄιστος ἄπυστος ἔην ἑτάρο[ιcιν ἅπαcιν « yea, to my friends I am invisible and mute » (22). Such exclamations suggest a soul in Hades, not in heaven. Although a later development, Byzantine iconographic depictions of Jesus' *Descent to Hades* display Abel as one of the righteous in Hades[21].

Why *Ps.* 101 ? Did he just happen upon this text ? Or is there a reason for using it ? One thing that may have suggested using it is the subscription that attempts to situate the *Psalm*. Often these headings, which are found in the Septuagint, assign the *Psalm* to a person such as David, or to an occasion. This *Psalm*, however, has a more universal application : it is called « A prayer. Pertaining to the poor one. When he is weary and pours out his

17 Fournet (1992) 264–265.

18 I wish to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for bringing this to my attention.

19 Glenthøj (1997) collects a wide range of material pertinent to this topic.

20 On Abel's soul not finding rest, see Ginzberg (1937) I 110. Ginzberg draws upon *Genesis Rabba* 22, 9. For accounts of Abel's soul in the Jewish Apocrypha, see I *Enoch* 22, 6–7 and the *Testament of Abraham* 13, 1–3 ; both of these may be found in Sparks (1984). I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for these references. See Glenthøj (1997) 160 for the Greek and Syriac references.

21 Abel only appears in these depictions around the eleventh century. See Kartsonis (1986) 209–210, who suggests that the representation of Abel may be influenced by the homily *In die resurrectionis Christi* attributed to Epiphanius, PG 43, 465ff.

petition before the Lord »[22]. Thus this text is a good fit, even if Abel has already departed this world. Abel looks forward to the coming of Christ, as evidenced in the following passage (47–51) :

ὅτ[ι μὲν] ἐξεκάλυψεν ἀπ' οὐρανοῖο φόωcδε
c[ωτῆρ' ὅ]ν προέηκεν ἐν ἀνθρώποιcιν ἔcecθαι
[οὔνε]κεν αὐτὸc ἄναξ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἀμφ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν
[ἠΐεν] ὥcτε φράcαιτο ἰδὼν cτοναχήν τε πενιχρῶν,
κα[ὶ] μ̣ογέοντ[α]c ἅπαντας ἄδην cαοῖ ἠδ' ἐλεαίροι

(...) because from heaven he revealed to the light the Savior whom he sent to be among men. For this reason the Lord himself from heaven to earth came down so that he might observe the groaning of the paupers, and that he might completely save and grant mercy to all the distressed.

These lines are an expansion of *Ps.* 101, 19–20[23]. The Psalmist speaks of the Lord peering out from his holy place (ἐξέκυψεν) and looking upon the earth from heaven (κύριοc ἐξ οὐρανοῦ). P.Bodm. XXXV expands upon this : in this version : the Lord not only looks down but unveils to the light the savior who comes to be among men. Line 48 presents an undeniably Christian rewriting and expansion of the *Psalm* : c[ωτῆρ' ὅ]ν προέηκεν ἐν ἀνθρώποιcιν ἔcecθαι « the Savior whom he sent to be among men ». Here the savior is sent to dwell among men. This line of the poem (48) in fact appears again in another poem from the codex (P.Bodm. XXXIV 6), another christological poem from the *Codex of Visions*. This incarnational reading of the *Psalm* accords well with the Alexandrian approach to the *Psalms*. These interpreters tended to see the presence of Christ in the *Psalms*, whereas the Antiochean approach focused more on a literal and historical reading[24]. Athanasius of Alexandria, for example, reads the verse in this way when he claims that this passage refers to the appearance of Christ at the incarnation[25]. The next two lines of the poem (50–51) translate verse 21 of the *Psalm*.

The poet is likely to be drawing upon Gregory of Nazianzus as well as *Ps.* 101. In *Carmina Dogmatica* 35, Gregory writes : γίγνετο δὲ θνητὸc Θεὸc ἄφθιτοc, εἰc ὅ κε πάντας | Ταρταρέων μογέοντας ὑφ' αἵματι λύcατο δεcμῶν « The immortal God became mortal to deliver all the distressed from hellish bonds by the power of his blood »[26]. Here, as in many other places in the codex, Gregory of Nazianzus appears to be a model for the author's poetic experiments. The poet also notices in *Ps.* 101 the mention of those in bonds and the children of those put to death. Are they in fact in the underworld ? We again encounter ΑΔΗΝ in line 51, just as in P.Bodm. XXXI ; indeed it occurs in the same metrical position. Hurst and Rudhardt interpret ΑΔΗΝ in line 51 as the adverb ἄδην « fully ». Could we read Ἄιδην here, instead of the adverb ἄδην « fully », as in P.Bodm. XXXI and XXXII ? All the reasons given for reading Hades in those other passages apply here as well. Then we could read these lines as follows : [ἠΐεν] ὥcτε φράcαιτο ἰδὼν cτοναχήν τε πενιχρῶν, | κα[ὶ] μ̣ογέ-οντ[α]c ἅπαντας Ἄιδην cαοῖ ἠδ' ἐλεαίροι « so that he might observe the groaning of the paupers, and that he might save all

[22] Προcευχὴ τῷ πτωχῷ, ὅταν ἀκηδιάcῃ καὶ ἐναντίον κυρίου ἐκχέῃ τὴν δέηcιν αὐτοῦ. Translations from Pietersma (2007).

[23] ὅτι ἐξέκυψεν ἐξ ὕψουc ἁγίου αὐτοῦ, κύριοc ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἐπέβλεψεν | τοῦ ἀκοῦcαι τὸν cτεναγμὸν τῶν πεπεδημένων, τοῦ λῦcαι τοὺc υἱοὺc τῶν τεθανατωμένων « because he peered down from his holy height, the Lord from heaven looked at the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoners, to set free the sons of those put to death ».

[24] Gillingham (2008) 28–31.

[25] Ath. *Exp. in Psalmos*, PG 27, 429.

[26] Greg. Naz., PG 37, 517A.

the distressed and grant mercy upon Hades ». This is less than satisfactory, since it sounds unusual to talk about having mercy upon Hades. Another solution would be to understand Hades in a locative sense. Then these lines would read « so that he might observe the groaning of the paupers, and that he might save and grant mercy upon all the distressed in Hades ».

One might expect the poet to use the locative dative ἐν ᾅδῃ, since the accusative is usually used with verbs of motion and the preposition εἰc. Again, usage suggests that there is no reason why the accusative would not work, especially in this period when the accusative was gradually taking the place of the dative. If we look to the New Testament, both usages are found with respect to Hades. Luke has ἐν ᾅδῃ[27]. The book of *Acts*, following *Ps.* 15, has εἰc ᾅδην[28]. We should notice as well that the author of *Acts* is quoting from *Ps.* 15, so in the *Psalms* themselves we have the accusative used in a locative sense – and we have further evidence of the *Psalms* discussing Hades. The lack of the preposition is less than ideal, but the other instances when Hades is used in the codex also demonstrate this absence of the preposition.

We are left with one final question : does this reading make sense ? If we take the word to be an adverb, then the line means something like this : « that he might completely save and grant mercy to all the distressed ». But does it work to have an adverb with the verb « to save » ? In most cases, the adverb is used in the context of actions that have degrees: to have one's fill of war, food or drink; to have one's fill of sorrow, tears, etc. It can also mean « thoroughly ». But can one be saved « fully » or « thoroughly » ? Either one is saved or one is not. You would not say of a drowning man that he was saved partially, since that would mean that he was not saved but was lost. Nor would you say that a drowning man was saved completely ; either one is saved or one perishes. So there is no good reason to favor the reading of the word as the adverb, since this does not make sense to save fully those in distress. But it does make sense to imagine Abel in Hades and understand his prayer as prophetic anticipation of the future coming of Christ to the distressed and the bound in Hades. Therefore Abel in Hades looks forward to his salvation, to the day when his savior will come with a great light to those distressed souls like his, inhabiting the dark realms of Tartarus.

As already mentioned, one tradition of commentators on the *Psalms* already read *Ps.* 101, 20 as anticipating Jesus' incarnation in the flesh. We can also trace the lineaments of an emerging tradition that also perceived in *Ps.* 101 evidence of Jesus' *Descent to Hades*. In a fragment from Hippolytus (ca. AD 170–236) we have perhaps the earliest use of *Ps.* 101 in reference to the Descent : διέβη ἐν ᾅδῃ, τὰc ψυχὰc τῶν πεπεδημένων λῦcαι τοῦ δεcμοῦ βουλόμενοc « He descended to Hades, wishing to free the souls of the fettered from bondage »[29]. With the interweaving of phrases from the *Psalm* (in particular τῶν πεπεδημένων and λῦcαι), Hippolytus melds together an account of the Descent with words from *Ps.* 101. Thus we have at least one instance prior to P.Bodm. XXXV. By the eighth century, it became commonplace to see in *Ps.* 101, 21 an indication of Jesus' *Descent into Hades*. This is seen most clearly in John of Damascus's *Expositio Fidei*. This work, from the first half of the eighth century, was the primary compendium of Orthodox doctrine from the Byzantine world, a work that summarized previous works and crystallized the foundational teachings of the Orthodox Church for centuries to come. He explains Jesus' *Descent to Hades* by using *Ps.* 101. The chapter entitled *Concerning the Descent to Hades* (Περὶ τῆc ἐν τῷ ᾅδῃ καθόδου) states :

[27] *Lk.* 16, 23 : ἀπέθανεν δὲ καὶ ὁ πλούcιοc καὶ ἐτάφη. καὶ ἐν τῷ ᾅδῃ ἐπάραc τοὺc ὀφθαλμοὺc αὐτοῦ, ὑπάρχων ἐν βαcάνοιc,ὁρᾷ Ἀβραὰμ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν καὶ Λάζαρον ἐν τοῖc κόλποιc αὐτοῦ.

[28] *Acts* 2, 27–28 : ὅτι οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψειc τὴν ψυχήν μου εἰc ᾅδην, οὐδὲ δώcειc τὸν ὅcιόν cου ἰδεῖν διαφθοράν. ἐγνώριcάc μοι ὁδοὺc ζωῆc.

[29] Richard (1966) 82–94.

κάτειcιν εἰc ᾅδην ψυχὴ τεθεωμένη (…) καὶ οὕτω τοὺc ἀπ᾽ αἰῶνοc λύcαc πεπεδημένουc αὖθιc ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνεφοίτηcεν ὁδοποιήcαc ἡμῖν τὴν ἀνάcταcιν.

The soul [of Christ] when it was deified descended into Hades (...) and thus after He had freed those who had been bound for ages, straightway He rose again from the dead, showing us the way of resurrection[30].

When John of Damascus talks about freeing « those who had been bound » (καὶ οὕτω τοὺc ἀπ᾽ αἰῶνοc λύcαc πεπεδημένουc), he alludes to *Ps.* 101 : τοῦ ἀκοῦcαι τὸν cτεναγμὸν τῶν πεπεδημένων, τοῦ λῦcαι τοὺc υἱοὺc τῶν τεθανατωμένων. The *Psalm* is interwoven within his thought (and has thus escaped the attention of the editors of John of Damascus). John is very determined to show that he is saying nothing new, and only transmitting what the fathers taught ; the passage from Hippolytus provides evidence that such a reading was not isolated. Moreover, we can now add P.Bodm. XXXV as an additional witness to this emerging tradition.

From what we know about the liturgical traditions in Constantinople (and we know quite a lot thanks to the 10th century typicon of the Great Church that survives), *Ps.* 101, 20–21 was used before the reading of the Gospel at Easter[31]. Thus within the liturgical experience, a connection was made between this *Psalm* and a central celebration of the Church, a celebration whose hymnody is saturated with references to the *Descent to Hades*. One final example shows how thoroughly the *Descent to Hades* was tied to *Ps.* 101 : a Byzantine commentary by Neophytos Enkleistos (AD 1134–1214) even adds τοῦ ἀκοῦcαι τὸν cτεναγμὸν ἐν τῷ ᾅδῃ τῶν πεπεδημένων « to hear the groans of those in fetters in Hades »[32].

At some point Greek Christian exegesis began seeing *Ps.* 101 in connection with the *Descent to Hades*. We can now place P.Bodm. XXXV within this tradition. By the eighth century, it is already commonplace enough for John of Damascus to make use of it. Thus P. Bodm. XXXV should be placed within a wider exegetical tradition. We should not discount the possibility that the poet who composed Abel's Speech was instrumental in connecting *Ps.* 101 to Jesus' *Descent to Hades*.

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