V. Is the Liar Bar Kokhba? Considering the Date and Provenance of the Greek (Ethiopic) *Apocalypse of Peter*

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But this liar is not the Christ. And when they have rejected him, he will kill with the sword, and many will become martyrs (*ApPt* 2.10).

In the past century scholars have been divided about the date and provenance of the *Apocalypse of Peter* (*ApPt*). According to one group, chapter 2 of the Ethiopic *ApPt* reflects the events of the Judaean revolt of AD 132-135, and the liar and deceiver should be identified with Bar Kokhba. In that case, the text may have a Palestinian Jewish Christian provenance. Whereas older scholars took this revolt as the *terminus a quo*, recent scholars argue that the text was written during the revolt. The other group of scholars argues that the description of *ApPt* 2 is of a general apocalyptic nature, not of necessity referring to Bar Kokhba. In fact, references to specifically Egyptian elements, such as idols representing cats or reptiles, rather suggest an Egyptian provenance. In that case, the Jewish revolt of AD 115-117 may be the background of *ApPt* 2.

In the last decades, the Bar Kokhba hypothesis has been resuscitated in the dissertation of Buchholz', and especially in a series of publications by Bauckham. Buchholz’s discussion is to some extent

marred by an incorrect understanding of the Ethiopic text. Bauckham, on the other hand, has presented the hitherto most thorough and comprehensive statement of the Bar Kokhba hypothesis. Not reflecting on Bauckham, but on earlier statements of the hypothesis, Schafer questioned the identification. More recently, Lietaert Peerbolte dismissed the identification and date as tempting but not compelling.

Bauckham's arguments, which he first unfolded in 1985, and elaborated on in 1998, may be summarised as follows. Chapters 1 and 2 of the Ethiopic text are primarily based on Matthew 24, which speaks of false messiahs and false prophets (24.24). The ApPr, however, is only concerned with false messiahs, not with false prophets. Moreover, the transition from multiple false messiahs in ApPr 2.7 to a single false messiah in ApPr 2.8 and following suggests that the author describes an actual messianic claimant. The concern with martyrdom in ApPt 2.10-11, 13 indicates that the author wrote in a situation of persecution. The only known figure who was regarded as a messiah in the period in which the text could have been written was Bar Kokhba, and there is evidence that he punished or killed Christians. Since the author expects Enoch and Elijah to come to denounce the false messiah, he must have expected them to come before the war was ended, i.e., between AD 132-135. It is unlikely that Alexandrian Christians were very much concerned with the Bar Kokhba revolt; therefore one may assume that the text was written in Palestine. Other details fit nicely within this interpretation. The description of the messianic claimant as a liar fits with the nickname


3 See the discussion of J.V. Hills, Parables, Pretenders, and Prophecies: Translation and Interpretation in the Apocalypse of Peter 2', RB 98 (1991) 560-73.

4 Schafer, Bar Kokhba-Aufstand, 62, 'mehr als unwahrscheinlich'


6 Bauckham, The Fate, 176-94, 285-87: 'Two Fig Tree Parables'.
given to Bar Kokhba, namely Bar Koziba. The rebuke of Peter in ApPr 16.8-9 for his proposal to make three tabernacles, and the emphasis that there is one tabernacle, not made by human hand, may imply a criticism of Bar Kokhba's purported aspirations to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

The evidence for the identification of the liar with Bar Kokhba is cumulative. None of the arguments are in themselves compelling, but the elements taken together seem to be strongly indicative of the identification. The present contribution will comment on some of the suppositions and arguments related to the identification of the liar with Bar Kokhba.

Date

1. On The Use of a Frequently Corrupt Text

Most of the arguments concerning the identification of the liar with Bar Kokhba and the dating of the text during the 132-135 war are based on the text of ApPr 2 which is only preserved in the Ethiopic manuscripts. The comparison of the Ethiopic manuscripts with the Greek Bodleian and Rainer fragments shows that in general the Ethiopic corresponds to the Greek, but that the Ethiopic is less reliable in detail. Thus, the translation is said to be somewhat careless, and the text not infrequently corrupt or confused. Bauckham acknowledges that this makes it difficult to draw defident conclusion from the details of the Ethiopic text.

Nonetheless, Bauckham argues that the transition from multiple false messiahs in ApPt 2.7 to a single liar and deceiver in ApPr 2.8b ('his evil deeds"') and following indicates that the author is con-

See the descriptions of the two manuscripts, one in Paris (= P) and one in a monastery of Lake Tana (= T), in Buchholz, Your Eyes, 119-34. On the relation, see Bauckharn, The Fate, 254.

8 Bauckham, 'Two Fig Tree Parables', 270-71; The Fate, 254. See also P. Marrassini, 'Note sur le texte éthiopien', in Bovon and Geoltrain, Écrits apocryphes I, 750-52 at 751, note 8: 'confusion continue entre masculin et féminin et entre singulier et pluriel'; Buchholz, Your Eyes, 127.

9 Bauckham, 'Two Fig Tree Parables', 270.

For the translation of c. 2, see Hills, 'Parables, Pretenders', whose gram-
cerned with one specific pretendent. Perhaps one may emend the plural of \textit{ApPt} 2.7 to a singular\textsuperscript{11}, or consider the plural as deriving from \textit{Mt} 24.24, and the singular forms as portraying one specific messiah". One should also note that the Ethiopic manuscripts differ with regard to the number of several verbal forms (\textit{ApPt} 28, 10)\textsuperscript{13}, and that in general Ethiopic does not always sharply distinguish between singular and plural forms\textsuperscript{14}. The differences between the manuscripts show that both Ethiopic copyists had difficulties with determining the subjects of the verbs in \textit{ApPt} 2.8-10, and that they sometimes failed to understand the text. Yet, in spite of these incongruences, the manuscripts do agree in using third person singular forms in \textit{ApPt} 2.11-13. One cannot rule out the possibility that the switch from plural to singular was prompted by the statement 'and he/she will assure: I am the Christ'. The singular 'I am the Christ' may have prompted the use of a singular 'he' throughout the rest of the section.

2. Martyrdom and the Killing False Messiah

Whereas several elements of \textit{ApPt} 1-2 are derived from \textit{Mt} 24, the motif of a false messiah killing many with the sword has no parallel in \textit{Matthew}. \textit{Mt} 24.9 does mention martyrdom, 'but it is not a major theme and is not connected with the false Messiahs". The statement that 'many' (\textit{ApPt} 2.10, 11) will die and be martyrs may, however, be derived from \textit{Mt} 24.10 'many shall stumble' (καὶ τότε σκανδάλισθησαν οἱ χορεοί), quoting \textit{Dan} 11.41 (MT י.full; LXX καὶ

\textit{matical} remarks are on the whole sound, though his attempt to make sense of the probably corrupt text of \textit{ApPt} 2.9 is not entirely convincing. For 'his evil deeds' (or: 'the wickedness of his deeds') see Hills, 565, and the Hebrew expression רֵעֲשׁוֹת מִצְוָי (for example 4Q417 2 i 8).

\textsuperscript{11} Hills, 'Parables, Pretenders', 573; Bauckham, 'Apocalypse de Pierre', 756.

\textsuperscript{12} Lietaert Peerbolte, \textit{Antecedents of Antichrist}, 57-8.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{ApPt} 2.8 P 'he will assure'; T 'they will assure'; 2.10 P 'he will kill'; T 'they will kill him'.

\textsuperscript{14} In the two \textit{ApPt} manuscripts incongruence of number is found in 10.6 and 15.6, and differences between T and P in the Prologue 2, and 15.3.

\textsuperscript{15} Bauckham, \textit{The Fate}, 183.
This expression has been interpreted in several ways, for example in the Ethiopic translation of *Daniel* in mss O and P (ed. Lofgren) as 'many will be killed'. The motif of martyrdom is also implicit in the remainder of *Mt* 24.10, which in a minority reading includes 'giving over to death' (\(\varepsilon\nu\zeta\ \theta\acute{\alpha}ν\alpha\tau\omicron\nu\)), whilst the Ethiopic text of *Mt* 24.10 reads 'and they will be killed' instead of 'and they will hate one another'.

Still, the element that a false messiah will kill many, has no precedent. Even Lietaert Peerbolte, who questions the identification of the liar with Bar Kokhba, believes that it 'most likely reflects the historical reality out of which it originated'\(^{16}\). The problem of the identification with Bar Kokhba is that whereas Eusebius tells that he killed Christians, there is no evidence that 'many' were killed by Bar Kokhba. Bauckham therefore suggests that a 'small number of martyrs would sufficiently explain the expectation that many more martyrdoms would soon follow'\(^*\). Buchholz's incorrect understanding of *ApPr* 2.8-9 leads him to think that some Christians initially followed Bar Kokhba, but then deserted his cause\(^\text{**}\). This interpretation is rightly criticised by Lietaert Peerbolte because the sources do not characterise the Christians killed by Bar Kokhba as his former follower~'.

With regard to Justin Martyr's and Eusebius' comments, one should note that neither author views Bar Kokhba as a persecutor par excellence. Justin Martyr observes in an aside to a description of the Hebrew Prophets, that the Jews, like the Romans, 'kill and punish us whenever they have the power' (*I Apology* 31). He then gives the example of Bar Kokhba. The lack of any further attention to Bar Kokhba in Justin's *First Apology*, may be due to the nature of this work, or to the fact that Bar Kokhba did not stand apart in this respect. One should also note that Eusebius, in his most extensive description of Bar Kokhba, calls him murderous and a bandit (*Hist.*).

\(^{16}\) Lietaert Peerbolte, *Antecedents of Antichrist*, 60.

\(^{17}\) Bauckham, *The Fate*, 189.


\(^{19}\) Lietaert Peerbolte, *Antecedents of Antichrist*, 59.
eccl. 4.6), but does not mention persecution of Christians. Only where Eusebius gives a series of quotations from Justin Martyr (Hist. eccl. 4.8.3ff), he includes the side-remark on Bar Kokhba. Finally we have the short report in the Chronicle, that Bar Kokhba killed Christians who did not support his revolt. In short, persecutions by Bar Kokhba are mentioned by these authors, but they do not suggest the martyrdom of many.

3. The Liar and Deceiver

ApPt 2.10 refers to the false messiah as a 'liar', and in 2.12 he is called a 'deceiver'. Bauckham argues that 'the idea of the Antichrist as a deceiver was, of course, thoroughly traditional', and that '1 John 2.22 may well indicate that the Antichrist was sometimes known specifically as 'the liar' (δῆμος λογουρής'), and that the use of the term 'liar' might reflect a pun on the name of Bar Kosiba. Bauckham's reference to the 'Antichrist' is apparently influenced by 1 and 2 John, but the point is that both in the Johannine Epistles and in earlier Jewish texts 'lying' and 'deceiving' are terms which are commonly used for both false prophets and (eschatological) opponents. This traditional language is, for example, reflected in several biblical pesharim or commentaries from Qumran which designate specific individuals as 'the liar' (איש הובה), or 'spreader of lies who deceives many' (משיח הובה אשת התעה רבי; 1QpHab X 9; 'the liar who deceives many' (4QPs 126 איש הובה אשת התעה רבי). Note also that texts found at Qumran have Hebrew and Aramaic terms parallel to Greek προφητής: 1QH* XII 17 (= Sukenik IV 16) and 4Q339 1 נבאר [ש] פרה.

In other words: not only 'deceiver', but also 'liar' are traditional terms, both of which are used by the author of the ApPt 2. These are general designations for false prophets, and, presumably by extension, for false messiahs. As such these terms may be applied to spe-

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20 Note that Josephus too refers to 'bandits' when referring to the groups of 'impostors' related to the sign prophets such as the Egyptian (JW 2.264).
21 Bauckham, The Fate, 190. Note the contrast between 'of course, thoroughly traditional', and 'may well indicate that ... sometimes known specifically'.
specific historical figures, as in 4Q339, the so-called 'List of False Prophets'\textsuperscript{22}. The use of the name Bar Koziba ('son of the lie' = 'liar') in Rabbinic texts is likely to be a pun on his real name Ben or Bar Kosiba\textsuperscript{23}, but this does not mean that the term 'liar' in ApPt 2.10 is a pun on Bar Kosiba. Because of the traditional use of the term 'liar' one cannot know whether ApPt 2.10 should be interpreted generically or specifically.

4. Evil Deeds and Signs and Wonders

The seeing of the evil deeds of the liar in ApPt 2.8 is not commented on by Bauckham, whereas Buchholz, because of his incorrect interpretation of the end of the verse, fails to understand the clause. A distant parallel to ApPt 2.8 may be found in 4Q169 (4QpNah) 3-4 iii 2-5 which comments on Nah 3.7 'all those who see you will run away from you'. The Qumran interpretation of the verse says that at the end of time 'their evil deeds will be exposed', after which the simple people of Ephraim 'will leave those who misdirected them'. The reference is to those looking for easy interpretations (generally interpreted as the Pharisees) who 'walk in treachery and lies'. Though the pesher is not concerned with false prophets or messiahs, it describes false teachers in terms which are remarkably similar to those found in the ApPt.

The 'doing of signs and wonders to deceive' (ApPt 2.12) is derived from Mt 24.24, which in turn depends on Deut 13.2-4. Note, however, that we are dealing with the common topic of sign prophets who promised to perform signs and wonders. This is clear from Josephus' description of the sign prophets who try to deceive and to delude the people with signs and wonders (Ant. 20.167-168)\textsuperscript{24}. Some

\textsuperscript{22} See Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XIX (Oxford, 1995) 77-9.
\textsuperscript{23} R.G. Marks, The Image of Bar Kokkba in Traditional Jewish Literature (University Park, Pa., 1994) 15, argues that later generations may not have known that Koziva was not the original name.
\textsuperscript{24} Also other descriptions in Josephus' works describe these prophets as mendacious, deceiving, deluding, and promising signs. See Ant. 18.85-87; 20.97-98; 20.167-171; 20.188; JW 2.259-263; 2.283-287; 7.437-450. See for example R. Gray, Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine (New York, 1993) 112-44.
of these sign prophets, such as the Egyptian (Ant. 20.169-171; JW 2.261-263), claimed to be prophets but apparently also had messianic aspirations. The fact that this motif of the 'false prophet' (JW 6.285) or 'impostor' (γόης) who deceives and promises signs surfaces both in the New Testament and in Josephus, shows that the similar terms and phrases in the ApPt do not of necessity refer to a specific liar who deceived and did signs.

5. Ex eventu Prophecy

Bauckham and Buchholz point out that the text does not record Bar Kokhba's defeat, and that therefore the work can be dated during the 132-135 revolt. ApPt 2.12 (the coming of Enoch and Elijah who will denounce the Deceiver) refers to an event still in the future. In fact, Bauckham seems to place the transition from the author's present to the future in ApPt 2.11 between 'there will be martyrs by his hand' and the next clause 'many will die and become martyrs' (or perhaps, between the parallel clauses in ApPt 2.10). In other words, the text is treated as a kind of ex eventu prophecy, although it is very unspecific compared to such prophecies in other apocalypses. The prophecy consists of no more than three or four main movements. First, a false messiah will arise who will try to deceive. Second, he will kill those who reject him. Third, Enoch and Elijah will come to denounce him, and, perhaps, fourth, the day of judgment will appear. Ultimately, the argument of a specific ex eventu prophecy depends on 'the killing of those who reject him'. The evidence for this killing is the short report in Eusebius' Chronicle, Hadrian's Year 17 (= AD

25 Bauckham, The Fate, 184-185; Buchholz, Your Eyes, 412.

26 Compare Dan 10-12 which like the ApPt, has been dated to a very specific period. Dan 11, however, gives a series of detailed descriptions which can easily be correlated to the historical events preceding the Maccabean Revolt.

27 Buchholz, Your Eyes, 409-11, describes two more movements between the first and second, namely that 'a group of Jewish Christians supported the revolt at first and then turned against him'. Bauckham, 'Two Fig Tree Parables', 279 and The Fare, 182, distinguishes between the killing of Christians (ApPt 2.10), and Jews becoming Christians (ApPt 2.11) who too will become martyrs.
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133): 'Cochebas, duke of the Jewish sect, killed the Christians with all kinds of persecutions, (when) they refused to help him against the Roman troops', as well as Justin Martyr's statement (I Apol. 31) that Bar Kokhba commanded to punish the Christians severely if they did not deny Jesus as the Messiah and blaspheme him. We do not know of any other persecution by a messianic claimant, but Bauckham acknowledges that Lucuas, the leader of the 115-117 revolt must have been seen as a messianic figure, and that it 'is likely enough that Jewish Christians who refused to join the revolt would also have suffered'28.

In other words: it is possible to relate the first two movements of the prophecy to the Bar Kokhba revolt. Yet, the descriptions are general to such a degree that they may also refer to, for example, the 115-117 revolt.

6. Categories of Sinners

The catalogue of sins and accompanying punishments in hell (ApPt 7-12) includes some sins which are thought to shed light upon the provenance of the text. On the one hand, the sin of making idols 'which resemble cats, lions and reptiles' (ApPt 10.5) strongly points to an origin of the text in Egypt, though denunciations of animal idols are not entirely absent from texts of Palestinian provenance29. On the other hand, the unique groups of sinners in ApPt 9.2-4, namely persecutors and betrayers of my righteous ones (9.2), blasphemers and betrayers of my righteousness (9.3), and false witnesses who kill (9.430) may 'indicate a situation of persecution and martyrdom as the Sitz im Leben of the Apocalypse of Peter'31.

This catalogue of sinners seems to be a haphazardly assembled collection of diverse sins, without a clear systematisation or an area of special attention. However, one should note that the sins of ApPt

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28 Bauckham, The Fate, 186.
29 See references in Bauckham, The Fate, 186-87.
30 The text seems to be corrupt, and probably should be emended to 'these are the false witnesses'; see the Akhmim text and P. Marrassini's notes in Bovon and Geoltrain, Écrits apocryphes I, 766.
31 Bauckham, The Fate, 184.
9.2 and 9.3 stand apart for several reasons. First, the sins are quite similar to those already mentioned in ApPt 7.2 and 3. Secondly, contrary to many other cases, there is no clear correspondence between sin and punishment\textsuperscript{32}. Thirdly, the Ethiopic text has here two first person singular pronouns, in 'my righteous ones' and 'my righteousness'. In the present text these first person forms should refer to Christ, but in the catalogue of sinners there are no other first person references, nor, for that matter, any specifically Christian elements at all.

The present poor state of the text does not allow for a detailed source-critical analysis of the ApPt. Yet, the combination of the three elements mentioned above which put ApPt 9.2 and 9.3 apart, strongly suggests that these sins were inserted into an already existing catalogue. This would mean that ApPt 7-12 was by and large an already existing source which was reused and modified by the author of the ApPt.

I suggest that the author modified an existing source or tradition\textsuperscript{33}. Presently, the catalogue of sinners is part of a prophecy of the judgment of the sinners, but its original visionary language is still present in the visionary description of again and again 'place' after 'place', and perhaps in the 'behold' of ApPt 7.3.

Because of the references to cat-idols, the original catalogue, or some of the elements, may have an origin in Egypt. The assumption of an inserted or modified source in ApPt 7-12 does not help us to determine to what extent the smaller framework of this section, namely ApPt 3-6 and 13-14, were the work of the author who incorporated ApPt 7-12. For example, ApPt 13 may in part also have belonged to the author's source, which was slightly modified by adding 'my' in ApPt 13.1.

The question is whether the additions or modifications to the assumed original source (such as in ApPt 9.2 and 9.3) 'indicate a situation of persecution and martyrdom as the Sitz im Leben' of the text.

\textsuperscript{32} But Bauckham, \textit{The Fare}, 218, finds a measure-for-measure punishment in only eleven out of twenty-one cases.

\textsuperscript{33} See also Bauckham, \textit{The Fare}, 184, and especially 207-8. Bauckham only speaks of a 'tradition', and not of a 'source'.

The phrase 'blaspheme the way of righteousness' has a close parallel in 2 Peter 2.2 'blaspheme the way of truth', when discussing false prophets and teachers. The references to martyrdom may be implied in ApPt 9.2 which mentions those who persecute, and perhaps in 9.4 if one interprets the Ethiopic as 'those who put to death the martyrs with a lie'. This would imply that the author added the sinners of ApPt 9.2 and 9.3, and perhaps those of 9.4, in order to include those who persecuted Christians.

7. The Heavenly Temple

In the transfiguration scene of ApPt, based upon Mt 17, Peter asks the same question as in Mr 17.4: 'do you wish that I make three tabernacles here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah?'. Mr 17.5 continues with the voice from the cloud which announces that Jesus is the beloved son; in ApPr 16.8, however, Jesus severely rebukes Peter: Satan has veiled his understanding. Peter should not build tabernacles, since there is one tabernacle, not made by hands, 'which my Heavenly Father had made for me and for my elect'. The text carries on in ApPt 17.1 with a parallel to Mr 17.5.

Bauckham reads the severe rebuke in the light of Bar Kokhba's presumed intention to rebuild the temple. It would serve as a warning to those Jewish Christians who may have been tempted to participate in the attempts to rebuild the temple. Moreover, the following verse would explicitly identify Christ (and therefore not Bar Kokhba) as the true Messiah. It is clear that the text refers to the idea of a transcendent temple (such as in Heb 9.11 or Rev 21.3). The point is how one should read the expansion to the text of Mr 17. In Mr 17.4-8 there is no explicit answer to or rebuke of Peter's question. One may imagine that the author wanted to explain why Peter's question was inappropriate, expanding the text in the same manner as the text expands on the physical appearance of Moses and Elijah. The main reason to expect more than a mere expansion is the harshness of the rebuke. Yet, even this may be a literary reworking of Mr 16.23.

Bauckham, The Fate, 192-4.

The two points in common are the references to Satan, and to 'the things of men' respectively 'the things of this world'.

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34 Bauckham, The Fate, 192-4.
35 The two points in common are the references to Satan, and to 'the things of men' respectively 'the things of this world'.
The main motif of ApPt 15-17 is life after death. The text elaborates on the angelic appearance of Moses and Elijah, describes the paradisiacal abode of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the other righteous fathers, and promises that thus will be the future glory of those who pursue 'my righteousness'. The emphasis on the one tabernacle 'for me and for my elect' (ApPt 16.9) makes here more sense as a reference to the future abode of the elect, then as a veiled warning against Bar Kokhba's aspirations.

8. Conclusion Regarding the Bar Kokhba Identification

The interpretation of the text of the ApPt is hindered by the uncertainties of the Ethiopic translation which is in many places problematic or even corrupt. In ApPt 9.4 and 16.5, Bauckham interprets a difficult text as referring to persecution, whereas the Ethiopic can also be explained differently. The same may go for the transition from plural messiahs to a singular 'he' in ApPt 2. Comparison of the Greek Rainer and Bodleian fragments show that the Ethiopic differs in many details from the Greek. Therefore, all hypotheses based on details of the text should be considered uncertain.

The Parables of the Fig Tree in ApPt 2 describe a false messiah in rather general terms which are also used in other texts (Qumran pesharim, New Testament, Josephus) to denounce opponents or false prophets. It comes as no surprise that some of these terms were also applied to Bar Kokhba. The only element which is not common apocalyptic stock is the emphasis on martyrdom. This may be a reaction to persecutions during the Bar Kokhba revolt, but we do not have any evidence of large-scale martyrdom in that specific period, whereas Justin Martyr even states that whenever the Jews had the power they killed Christians.

In short: the identification of the liar with Bar Kokhba is possible and tempting, but the arguments are not conclusive. However, the issue is not only whether this identification is compelling or not, or

36 Bauckham, The Fate, 184 adopts the translation of Müller: 'this is the honour and glory of those who will be persecuted for my righteousness'. Here, once again, the Ethiopic is problematic, but 'those who will pursue my righteousness' seems preferable.
whether the text should be dated exactly to the years between 132 and 135, but also whether this particular identification should serve as a hermeneutical key to the understanding of the composition.

**Provenance**

9. The Location of *ApPr* 15-7

An Egyptian provenance has been suggested on the basis of *ApPr* 10.5, whereas, more generally, Hellenistic influence is evident in, for example, *ApPt* 14.1. However, *ApPt* 7-12 is likely to preserve older traditions or an edited source which was incorporated by the author into the work. On the other hand, a Palestinian Jewish Christian provenance would be implied if the composition was written during the Bar Kokhba revolt. Also Sozomen's report that the *ApPt* was still read in some churches of Palestine in the 5th century, fits well with the supposition of a Palestinian origin. Even if one questions the Bar Kokhba identification, a Palestinian provenance need not be excluded.

The framework of the *ApPr* presents three events which are located in the Gospels and *Acts* on three mountains. Both *ApPr* 1.1 and *Mr* 24.3 locate Jesus' speech on the Mount of Olives. In *ApPr* 15.1 the scene is transferred to 'the holy mountain', commonly interpreted as Mount Zion. This seems to be consistent with 2 *Peter* 1.18 which locates the transfiguration on 'the holy mountain', but not with the location of the mountain of the transfiguration in *Mr* 17. The Gospels do not specify which mountain is involved, but the pericope is located in between events in the territory of Caesarea Philippi (*Mt* 16.13) and Galilee (*Mt* 17.22). Ancient traditions therefore identify the mountain with Mount Hermon. In *ApPt* 15-17 the transfiguration and ascension are merged into one event. The Gospels indicate a Galilean setting of the post-resurrection Christophanies, *Mr* 28.16 referring to 'the mountain where Jesus had told them to go', but the *Acts* account of the ascension indicates that the ascension was also

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38 Bauckham, *The Fate*, 192-93; 300-301
located on the Mt of Olives (*Acts* 1.12). There is, however, no evidence that the author of the *ApPt* used either *Luke* or *Acts*.

One should consider the possibility that 'the holy mountain' of *ApPt* 15.1, and perhaps also of *2 Peter* 1.18, does not refer to Mt Zion, but to Mt Hermon. Or, stated more cautiously, that the account was originally based upon traditions connected with Mt Hermon, rather than with Mt Zion or the Mt of Olives. First, whether or not the name 'Hermon' means 'sacred mountain', the area around Dan and Banias were cultic centres from Bronze Age times up to the Late Roman period. Second, Nickelsburg has argued that the *Book of Watchers*, the *Testament of Levi*, and *Mt* 16, relate sacred revelation to Enoch, Levi, and Peter, in this particular territory. I *Enoch* 6-16 and Test. Levi view Mt Hermon as the gate to heaven, through which angels and some human beings go up and down.

A comparison of *ApPt* 15-17 to the New Testament accounts of the transfiguration and the ascension show that though there are some resemblances, the narrative and theological meaning has been changed. Specific connections with the Enochic literature or the *Test. Levi* are found in those elements of *ApPt* 15-17 which are not found in the Matthean account of the transfiguration or the *Acts* account of the ascension. These are the description of paradise (*ApPt* 16.2-4; see 1 *Enoch* 32), the opening of (the gates of) heaven, and the refer-

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39 Not only Mt Zion is called a 'holy mountain'. See Ezek 28.14 which calls the mountain of the gods a 'holy mountain'. On the other hand, the combination of 'holy mountain' and God's announcement of his son, suggests a relation with *Psalm* 2.6-7 which identifies the mountain as Mt Zion.


41 More in general, Nickelsburg, 'Enoch, Levi, Peter', 600 already referred to the fact that the *ApPt*, like 1 *Enoch* 17-19, records a vision of the places of eternal punishment, and that there are parallels between the *ApPt* and the *Similitudes*. 
ence to the second heaven (ApPt 17.3,6; see I Enoch 13-16; Test. Levi 2.6-12; 5.1). Note also that the description of Moses and Elijah in ApPt 15.2-7 closely resembles the description of Noah in I Enoch 106. The reference to the one heavenly temple, and the short notice that 'we saw and were rejoiced' (ApPt 16.9) makes sense if one locates the event in the same area where Enoch was brought to the heavenly temple, and Levi saw the holy temple. In other words: the reference to the heavenly temple belongs to the tradition of revelations in Upper Galilee. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility that the text also scorned Bar Kokhba's assumed attempts to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. It does show that the Bar Kokhba hypothesis should not serve as a hermeneutical key that veils other possible explanations of sections of the composition.