

# *Is Lucian's „On the Death of Peregrinus” a Satire on Marcion?*

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Translated from the German:  
„Ist Lucians Schrift „Über das Lebensende des Peregrinus“ eine Marcion-Satire?“  
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In his „Kritik der zynischen Vernunft” PETER SLOTERDIJK recently drew our attention to a figure of 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE that seemed to have been forgotten for a long period of time: Peregrinus Proteus, the cynic philosopher and Christian itinerant preacher<sup>1</sup>. SLOTERDIJK places the Cynic in his gallery of representatives of cynical reason in world history together with Lucian – who in his satire „On the Death of Peregrinus” provides us with the essential biographical data about Peregrinus –. The passage, however, can be read just as well as an interesting contribution to the history of ideas of the 2nd century CE.

With the exception of the current reference to the Cynic philosopher in the work of SLOTERDIJK, we are confronted with a long period of silence about Peregrinus Proteus. It's a long way back to those times when even great scholars – in both the fields of theology and classical philology – were interested in Lucian's Peregrinus. Today we haven't anything comparable to the works of F.C. BAUR<sup>2</sup>, ZAHN<sup>3</sup> and A. HARNACK<sup>4</sup>. The only extant monograph of some size on Peregrinus (used by SLOTERDIJK), »Lucian und die Kyniker« by JACOB BERNAYS<sup>5</sup>, was published in 1879, which means that it is more than a hundred years old already. From among younger scholars as far as I know only H.D. BETZ<sup>6</sup> and the American C.P. SNOW dealt with the Peregrinus figure. In his essay on „Lucian and the NT” BETZ deals with him in a few passages. JONES<sup>7</sup> goes into detail about „Peregrinus of Parion” in his book „Culture and Society in Lucian”, published in 1986. Though both of these scholars contribute quite a few interesting details about the conditions of Peregrinus's time and life

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<sup>1</sup> SLOTERDIJK, *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*, 1983, Bd. I, 319-330, (*Lukian der Spötter oder: Die Kritik wechselt das Lager*).

<sup>2</sup> F.C. BAUR, *Drei Abhandlungen*, 1876.

<sup>3</sup> ZAHN, *Ignatius von Antiochien*, 1873.

<sup>4</sup> HARNACK, Art.: *Lucian von Samosata*, in: <sup>2</sup>RE VIII, 774ff.

<sup>5</sup> But cp. C.F.M. DEELEMAN, *Lucianus' geschrift 'De Morte Peregrini'* and E. JOHNSON chap. X, *Antiqua Mater. A Study of Christian Origins*, 1887.

<sup>6</sup> H.D. BETZ, *Lukian von Samosata und das NT*, TU 76, 1961.

<sup>7</sup> *Culture and Society in Lucian*, 117-132, London 1968.

there still is a need for fundamentally new points of view that could shed light on the old mystery around this figure. BETZ obviously sees the importance of Lucian's Peregrinus only in his being the type of a Christian itinerant preacher of the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. The old issues that inspired the acumen and imagination of scholars from BAUR to HARNACK, the question whether Peregrinus was historical at all or just a figure of fiction by Lucian, nowadays seem to be forgotten, obsolete, of no interest. This applies just as well to VÖLTER's bold hypothesis with its identification of Peregrinus and the well known martyr-bishop Ignatius of Antioch of early Christian history<sup>8</sup>.

It's by no means my goal in this essay to bring up these issues of old and have a renewed discussion on the historicity of Lucian's Peregrinus. This much at least seems to be certain: there isn't actually sufficient evidence to doubt –as did BAUR, BAUER or ZAHN– his historic existence and we have no reason to see in him nothing but a product of literature, a monstrous product of Lucian's imagination aroused by the (irrational) practice of Christian martyrdom of the time and by his reading a few Christian writings (e.g. by Ignatius) that finally condensed into the fictional character of Peregrinus.

What I would like to show though, is, that it's still worth investigating another question, one that was put on the agenda for the first time by VÖLTER, i.e. the question of the *identity* of Lucian's Peregrinus.

What induces me to take the issue up again is an observation made when looking more closely at the name of this strange itinerant preacher: *Peregrinus Proteus*. That this is not meant to be a real name of some person but a symbolic (nick-) name is explicitly noticed by almost all investigators, at least as regards the second part. So e.g. BERNAYS where he says about Proteus, „Probably his [Peregrinus's] opponents –because of his conversions first to Christianity and then to Cynicism– compared him with the always transforming Homeric Proteus, in the same way the fawning sponger, always reconciling himself to everything, was named Proteus (so Hedylos by Athenäus 8, 345a). The friends of Peregrinus, or he himself, may then –in the way it happened to Cyon– have adopted or interpreted positively that nasty name<sup>9</sup>.

But what about the first of the two names: Peregrinus?

JONES holds the opinion, „His name suggests a Roman citizen, and even Lucian concedes the wealth of his family,” and points to the Roman colonial status of Peregrinus's hometown Parion as further evidence. However, on the one hand, contra JONES, the term „peregrinus” was actually used to describe the non-Roman citizen<sup>10</sup>, but on the other, it was never used as an epithet for the name of a person in antiquity meaning „a freeman, yet not a Roman citizen”.

Most of the other scholars don't investigate the meaning of the first name and restrict themselves to hinting at the symbolic meaning of the second name. DÖRRIE in his article in „Der kleine Pauly” is the only one to draw attention to both, „Both [author's italics] names of P. are meaningful: Peregrinus, the one who is nowhere at home...” etc.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> D. VÖLTER, *Ignatius - Peregrinus*, in: ThT 21, 1887, 272.

<sup>9</sup> BERNAYS, a.a.O., 90.

<sup>10</sup> »... bedeutet als Substantiv den Freien, der nicht röm. Bürger ist«, D. MEDICUS, Art. *Peregrinus*, in: *Der Kleine Pauly*.

<sup>11</sup> Bd. IV, Sp. 625.

Indeed we have to agree with DÖRRIE, in as far as he says that „Peregrinus”, just like „Proteus”, is nothing but an epithet or nickname! Against his interpretation, however, we have two objections: first, the original meaning of the word is not „the one who is nowhere at home”, but –if it is not the non-Roman free citizen thus to be described– simply the „stranger”; second, the context of Lucian's writing clearly shows that Peregrinus, even after beginning to call himself Proteus, kept on being the same homeless itinerant preacher he had been before. In my opinion the name Peregrinus is not to be connected to the typical way of life of Peregrinus the itinerant preacher, but to that period of his life when he was a Christian. It's Lucian himself who draws our attention to the fact. In c. 12<sup>12</sup> he gives a detailed report about the Christian period in the life of his hero, especially about his captivity which obviously made Christians consider him to be like another Socrates. In this context Lucian remarks that the man then, i.e. at the time when he still lived among Christians, was called Peregrinus („the brave Peregrinus – for that's the name he then was still known by”). In my opinion this is a clue that the name Peregrinus was used only in connection with the Christian period of his life and had to do with it in some way. That's the reason why that designation had to fade away the moment Peregrinus had again broken with Christianity or the Christian community had expelled him from among their ranks.

The connection shows even more clearly when we no longer focus on the orthodox Christianity of the era but on the heretical branches of Christianity, which, as W. BAUER in his „Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum” has shown in a most impressive way, were in no way inferior to the former in respect of numbers of followers or of ecumenical presence. It's odd that of all people HARNACK, the great specialist on Marcion, who gave his well-known book about the famous heretic of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century the subtitle „The Gospel of the *Stranger* [my emphasis] God”, in his article ‘Peregrin’ in RE<sup>3</sup> managed to overlook completely the fact that here a 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian bore a name which he himself had found out to be *the* central theological term with Marcion. The God Marcion preached is none other than the Stranger God, or simply the *Stranger*, described in the Latin language either as *extraneus* or *alienus* or quite often, and this especially in the Latin translations of the works of Ephraem Syrus, as *peregrinus* ( syr. *nwkry'* = strange) <sup>13</sup>. I shall not enumerate the theological specifics of Marcion's doctrine about the Stranger God and the many passages quoted by HARNACK. Instead I shall quote those sentences in HARNACK's book where the author quite rightly describes the doctrine of the Stranger as quintessence and specific element of Marcionite theology and Christology and where he, at the same time, gives the valuable hint that in the Marcionite Church the term „Stranger” could be used not only for the „Good God” himself but for his followers as well.

»Durch die Jahrhunderte hindurch, solange die Marcionitische Kirche bestanden hat und in allen Sprachen, welche die Marcioniten sprachen, blieb 'der Fremde' bzw. 'der gute Fremde' der eigentliche Name für ihren Gott. Umgekehrt hießen vom Standpunkt Gottes auch die Menschen 'die Fremden'. Daß sie dennoch zusammengekommen waren und die Fremden zu Kindern Gottes geworden sind, das war das kündlich große Geheimnis dieser Religion... In ihrer 'Fremdheit', die zwischen der Gottheit, die es allein in Wahrheit ist, und der Welt besteht (also auch zwischen der Religion und allem menschlichen Sein und Tun), kombiniert mit der Gutheit, liegt die Eigenart der Religions- und Weltanschauung M.s. Ich weiß keine Belege dafür, daß vor ihm in der gesamten Religionsgeschichte irgend jemand etwas Ähnliches

<sup>12</sup> Oxford Classical Texts von M.D. MACLEOD: *Luciani Opera, Tomus III, 1980.*

<sup>13</sup> *Contra haereses, Hymn.30-40.*

gelehrt hat.«

[For centuries, as long as the Marcionite Church existed, and in all languages spoken by Marcionites, 'the Stranger', or 'the Good Stranger', remained the true name of their God. On the other hand, from their God's point of view human beings remained 'strangers' as well. That they nevertheless had come together and that these strangers had become God's children, was the great mystery preached by this religion. ... This 'strangeness' of the relationship between the one and only God and the world (and consequently between religion and all human being and acting), combined with the 'Goodness', is the core of Marcion's religion and world view. I don't know of any evidence that, in the entire history of religion prior to him, anyone had taught anything similar.]<sup>14</sup>

Though in the meantime HARNACK's interpretation is no longer universally accepted and, as against the assertion that the concept of 'strangeness' was exclusively and specifically Marcion's, quite a few Gnostic parallels could easily be given<sup>15</sup>, one cannot overlook the fact that in all of 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christianity –there weren't any fixed boundaries between orthodox and heretic then– no other theologian but Marcion gave the term such a central position in his doctrine. So this notion in itself obviously might have been considered by contemporaries as quite sufficient to describe the special character of Marcion's doctrine.

Should one now - and this is the question to which all of the foregoing has been intended to lead - consider this to be a strange coincidence? Approximately at the same time when Marcion was preaching his doctrine of Peregrinus, the Stranger God, throughout the Mediterranean area, and when in the Syrian region this doctrine had obviously already spread widely, a Christian itinerant preacher who was roaming about at exactly that time in exactly that same part of the ecumene bore the name of Peregrinus? I can't believe anybody will seriously think so. Actually, the conclusion is very clear and hardly anyone will dispute it: Lucian's Peregrinus Proteus is a *Marcionite* Christian, who not only fostered his Marcionite faith in the existence of the „Good“ i.e. the „Stranger God“ (set apart from the evil Demiurge) in his heart, but also testified to it by his name<sup>16</sup>.

Admittedly Lucian does not tell us explicitly in his work, not even in the quoted passage c.12, whether Peregrinus took up the name *himself* or whether he was given the epithet by *others*, if the latter most probably because of his Marcionite preaching of the Stranger God he conveyed to the Christian communities as a itinerant preacher. Both alternatives are possible. HARNACK rightly states that Marcionite Christians could use the term *Peregrinus* to describe themselves. If this was obviously true for the common Marcionite Christian, how much more so for a person who –as is the case with Peregrinus Proteus himself– was one of the Marcionite preachers of the Stranger God? Even

<sup>14</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 119 u. 120.

<sup>15</sup> Vgl. BULTMANN, *Mand. Quellen und Johannesevangelium*, in: *Mandäismus*, 284f: »Typisch ist in den mandäischen Quellen die Bezeichnung des Gesandten als des 'Fremden'. - J. WOLTMANN, *Der geschichtliche Hintergrund der Lehre Markions vom 'fremden Gott'*, in: *Wegzeichen' zum 60. Geburtstag von H.M. Biedermann OSA*, 1971.

<sup>16</sup> »Warum verspricht er, Vater 'der Fremden' zu sein?« Orig, *c. Cels.*, VI.53, nach HARNACK, a.a.O., 326\*; comp. ThomAct 2,15: »Ich danke dir, Herr, der du durch den fremden Mann verkündigt und in uns gefunden wurdest«, HENNECKE/SCHNEEMELCHER, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Bd. II, 314: »Blicke auf uns (und sieh), daß wir um deinetwillen unsre Häuser und unser väterliches Gut verlassen haben und um deinetwillen gern und freiwillig Fremdlinge geworden sind« HENNECKE/SCHNEEMELCHER, a.a.O., 333.

the later Gnostic Mani, taking it up from Marcion, described himself as the „the first of the strangers, the stranger of supreme glory, the son of the sovereign ruler”<sup>17</sup>. But of course, the Cynic-Christian itinerant preacher from Parion may have been given that name because of his specific preaching of the Stranger God since this was what particularly characterized the person and his doctrine.

Basically I could leave it at that. The examination so far would then in a modest but interesting way highlight the person Peregrinus Proteus and perhaps the situation of Christianity in the first half of 2<sup>nd</sup> century, especially of course, that of the Marcionite branch. It would be another demonstration of the fact – widely accepted at least since W.BAUER's book was published, though not yet sufficiently thought through as to its consequences– that the Christian ecumene of the era shows a shimmering multicoloured picture of diverging lines of thought and trends and Catholic Christianity was just one of the many branches whereas Marcionism exerted an immense influence and at least by outsiders could be identified with Christianity as such.

But there is something that makes me not leave it to that, but instead makes me go a step further and both express and justify another admittedly bold speculation which I can't help making –as probably nobody can who went with me thus far – and which necessarily must impose itself on the mind. Comparing the biographies of Peregrinus, as passed on to us by Lucian, and of Marcion, the founder of the Christian branch Peregrinus obviously adhered to, we find parallels and common features so striking that in my opinion they can hardly be accidental.

As both the names Proteus and Peregrinus have been recognized as symbolic epithets it's quite natural to ask the question what then actually was the *real* name of Peregrinus Proteus. There would be, however, not much hope of ever getting the answer. If Lucian hadn't given us some pieces of explicit information which prevent us from underestimating the importance of the early Christian itinerant preacher from Parion, Peregrinus Proteus would disappear in the anonymous mass of itinerant preachers of the era, be they Christian, Cynic or whatever kind. Was Peregrinus Proteus really just another –as BETZ thinks– of those numerous 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian itinerant preachers, another of those faceless anonymous figures contemporary Christian literature doesn't tell us anything about?

Taking in account the information given about him by Lucian, we should hardly expect this to be the case. Indeed, Lucian can't overemphasise the importance Peregrinus obviously had in the Christian communities of his time. Lucian tells us for example that not a long time after Peregrinus had become acquainted with the „wonderful wisdom of the Christians”, which he obviously had learned about in Syria/Palestine from their „priests and scribes”<sup>18</sup>, those that had taught him were soon as children themselves when compared with him: „in a trice he made them all look like children”<sup>19</sup>, and not only this but also: „he was prophet, cult-leader, head of the synagogue, and everything, all by himself”<sup>20</sup>. And there is still more to emphasize the importance of the man: Pere-

<sup>17</sup> Bei F.W.K. MÜLLER in: *Abh. d. Berl. Akad.* 1904, 29, 108; vgl. REITZENSTEIN, *Iranisches Erlösungsmysterium* 10.8; ThW V,33 A. 225 sowie Bultmann, a.a.O., 284f.

<sup>18</sup> c.11.

<sup>19</sup> a.a.O.

<sup>20</sup> a.a.O.

grinus „interpreted and explained some of their books and even composed many, and they revered him as a god, made use of him as a lawgiver, and set him up as their protector.<sup>21</sup>”

In summary: Lucian's Peregrinus obviously was one of the leading Christian figures in the syriac-palestinian region, active both as head (probably bishop) of his communities and as author of Christian literary texts; by Christians not only considered to be a kind of second Socrates (as Lucian in c.12 tells us<sup>22</sup>) but even „worshipped as a God”<sup>23</sup>. Now, if we don't want to start from the rather improbable assumption that such a figure could remain completely anonymous in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century ecumene without leaving any trace whatsoever in Christianity, to which he adhered for some time, we won't find many known representatives of Marcionitism in 2<sup>nd</sup> century that could be related to the figure portrayed by Lucian. Actually, there is just one: *Marcion himself*.

And indeed, nobody will have overlooked the fact, that simply everything reported by Lucian in c. 11 about Peregrinus's position in the (Syrian-Marcionite) Christian communities of his time applies just as well, or even exclusively, to Marcion.

- a) Peregrinus is said to have been promoted to the rank of a „prophet, cult-leader, head of the synagogue” shortly after his first contact with Christians (in Syria), and finally „everything, all by himself”. Moreover the Christians had made use of him as their „law-giver and protector”. To this passage PLOIJ says, „Lucian had no clear idea of the organisation of a Christian community” and, „Lucian lacked precise knowledge of the inner organisation of the Christian community”<sup>24</sup>. This is certainly true. The titles „cult-leader” and „head of the synagogue” are not found in the NT and they are *termini technici*<sup>25</sup> only in pagan cults. Only the „prophet” is a figure known from Christian literature<sup>26</sup>. But there is no doubt that the functions here mentioned by Lucian may in fact be identified as the Christian episcopate. We know that Marcion, too, can be said to have been in a sense „everything” to his followers. That he was a bishop obviously follows from the words of Megethius: „Marcion was my bishop”<sup>27</sup>; Optatus of Milevis acknowledged his episcopal authority<sup>28</sup>. Clues to his extraordinary authority are the self-designation of his followers as „Marcionites”, the „establishing of a Marcionite Era”<sup>29</sup> and finally their „belief that in heaven Paul was sitting to the right side of Christ and Marcion to the left” (Orig., Hom. XXV in Luc., T.V p 181\*). Despite HARNACK's objection I think Marcion also might have claimed the titles of an apostle and a prophet. Could Tertullian have written, „*Exhibe auctoritatem; si propheta es, praenuntia aliquid, si apos-*

21 a.a.O.

22 Peregrinus „hiess bei ihnen ein neuer Sokrates”

23 c. 11: „hielten ihn für einen Gott”

24 PLOIJ, a.a.O., 67

25 BETZ, a.a.O. 8

26 1 Kor 12,28.29; 14,29.32; Eph 3,5; 4,11; Apg 13,11; 15,23; Bei Cyrill Cat 6 für Petrus und Paulus; s. Ant.Mat. 244, A.1

27 Bei Adaman. I.8; vgl. HARNACK, a.a.O., 162, A.2.

28 *De schism. Donat.* IV,5

29 HARNACK, a.a.O. 162 (*Tert. Adv. Marc* I,19)

*tolus, praedica publice*”<sup>30</sup>, if Marcion had not declared himself to be specifically thus entitled? And is it really nothing but „pure polemics”<sup>31</sup> when Ephraem says, „With the Marcionites it is not: Thus speaks the Lord, but: Thus speaks Marcion”?<sup>32</sup> Furthermore I don't see any convincing reason to regard Maruta's remark, „Instead of Peter they declare for themselves Marcion to be Head of the Apostles”, as „an exaggeration”.

- b) Peregrinus is said to have been an *author of theological literature*, „he interpreted and explained some of their books and even composed many”. Commentaries on and explanation of Christian literature, of Paul's epistles (the Apostolicon) and Luke's (allegedly shortened) gospel were, apart from –according to the Church Fathers– their expurgation of Jewish-law additions, part of the main task he had taken up as a theologian. His principal theological work, the *Antitheses*, not only contains the basic ideas of Marcionite dogmatics, so as to make it from this point of view a complete treaty in itself, but in addition „argumentations”, a commentary on the correct meaning of Bible passages<sup>33</sup>. As founder of a Church and head of the Marcionite branch of Christianity Marcion most probably wrote quite a lot more, and not just a lost letter and a Psalm, lost as well, but original works under his own name, and other ones maybe as pseudepigraphicals using an Apostle's name (see the Marcionite letters of Paul, *Pauli nomine fictae ad haeresem Marcionis*, mentioned in the Canon Muratori).
- c) Another detail about Peregrinus recounted by Lucian is, that by his followers he was considered to be (a) *God*. Justin in his Apology I, 26 also says that some founders of sects in early Christianity pretended to be Gods (or divinely inspired prophets)<sup>34</sup>, and he explicitly gives the names of three of them: from past time Simon Magus and Menander, as his contemporary *Marcion*! After Christ had left, according to Justin, evil spirits had created „some men, who pretended to be Gods”, Simon, Menander and „Marcion from Pontus, who has been teaching up to the present days”.

Now in HARNACK's opinion „putting Marcion in one bag together with those founders of sects who declared themselves gods” is „totally incorrect and extremely spiteful.”<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, an unbiased investigator will find no reason for considering Justin's statement to be incorrect, unless his idea of Marcion is not made up from the evidence in the sources, but from his own imagination. And that is a reproach HARNACK cannot totally be acquitted of since his book on Marcion to some extent shows the characteristics of unproven personal convictions.

That –according to Lucian– Peregrinus declared himself to be a God is, though not an impossible phenomenon in Early Christianity, nevertheless a very remarkable one. Therefore the group of Christians known to us that might be involved needs must be

<sup>30</sup> *De carne Christi*, c. 2.

<sup>31</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 162

<sup>32</sup> *Ephraem, Contra haereses*, Hymn. 56.

<sup>33</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O. 78; s. Tert IV, 9

<sup>34</sup> BEYSCHLAG, K.: *Simon Magus und die christliche Gnosis*, Tübingen 1974, 110, A 27.

<sup>35</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 7\*

extremely small in numbers. As Justin shows, among the heads of sects in 2<sup>nd</sup> century there is but one worth considering: Marcion.

But, apart from those already mentioned, there are still more, equally striking, parallels between Peregrinus and the great 2<sup>nd</sup> century heretic. Especially, a surprising correspondence (not without importance as evidence for the hypothesis put forward in this paper) in the chronological course of the events can be noticed.

The only two events in the life of Peregrinus that can be dated with certainty are the announcement at the Olympics of the year 161 of his decision to burn himself (c. 20), and that burning itself at the Olympiad in 165<sup>36</sup>. Apart from that, Lucian tells us (c. 19) about the presence of Peregrinus at the Olympic Games on two more occasions: first, when he libelled Herodes Atticus for building the aqueduct and, second, when he gave a speech praising him in public. Yet this is evidence only for Peregrinus's presence at the Olympiad of 157 but not at that of 153 as well, since the announcement of his decision to burn himself and the speech in praise of Herodes Atticus might have occurred on the same occasion<sup>37</sup>.

Starting from the fixed dates and using what other hints Lucian gives us, we can reconstruct more or less the following chronological order of events: Peregrinus being rather old at his death (*De fugit.* 1; and see the other evidence given by FRITZ), we have to assume that he was born in  $\pm 100$ . The period when he was a Christian, his stay in Syria/Palestine, and his imprisonment there could then belong to a very early part of his life (ca from the year 125 on). In FRITZ' opinion there are „some errors” in Lucian's chronology, as

1. he thinks it „quite improbable that Peregrinus, still being a member of the Christian Community, would have given his possessions to the pagan administration of the town”, and he further claims, that
2. „what Lucian reports about Peregrinus's appearance in cynic attire,...” shows „that he was not a member of the Christian Community at that time”.

Yet, those two objections are not convincing, as Peregrinus possibly could possibly have remained a Cynic even after becoming a Christian in the same way as Hippolytus reports exactly this about Marcion! (see below) – and after all, he gave a part (maybe 200,000 sesterces) of his considerable fortune (15 talents = 4,000,000 sesterces)<sup>38</sup> to the Christian Community.

We have no absolute certainty about the moment when the final break with Christianity occurred. We can't even say for certain whether –as Lucian states– there was such a fundamental break. Maybe there only was –as was the case with Marcion– a disagreement with Catholic Christianity, the representatives of which Peregrinus met in Rome.

Peregrinus's stay in Rome after his journey to Alexandria and the visit to the Cynic philosopher Agathobulos is generally accepted to have taken place during the reign of

<sup>36</sup> s. K.V. FRITZ, Art. *Peregrinus Proteus*, in der RE (PAULY-WISSOWA).

<sup>37</sup> s. dazu FRITZ, a.a.O. 657.

<sup>38</sup> s. JONES a.a.O., 123.



Antoninus Pius (138-161), since this emperor (Lucian emphasizes) was famous for his leniency. The expulsion might then have occurred – with the reservation already mentioned – before the year 153. About the year 160 Aulus Gellius will have paid the Cynic itinerant preacher a visit in Athens; the journey from Troas to Greece, when Lucian was one of his fellow-passengers on board, probably happened in the last year of the life of Peregrinus, who in the meantime preferred to call himself by the name of Proteus.

We know for certain that Marcion, called „haereticus Antoninianus” by Tertullian, stayed in Rome during the reign of Antoninus Pius and was expelled from the Roman community in the year 144. For the Marcionite Church this remained a highly memorable date (HARNACK: „comparable with the Protestant Reformation Day”).

Already before his stay in Rome, Marcion must have launched lively missionary activities: in his Apology (I, 20 and I, 58) written shortly after the year 150, Justin says that the Marcionite heresy had already spread over wide parts of the ecumene („over all of mankind”), and Clement (Strom VII. 17, 106f.), too, has Marcion already start his activities during the reign of Hadrian (117-138). Obviously Marcion developed his activities generally in the eastern part of the Empire, in Asia Minor, and especially in Syria, where in the town of Edessa there is evidence of Marcionite Christianity as early as about the year 140. From all this follows that Marcion was already in the prime of his life when he arrived in Rome and that he was born approximately at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> or the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. HARNACK supposes, „85 or a bit later may be the year of his birth”. This remains a conjecture which is in my opinion relatively early; I think too early if one dates his death to about the year 160 –as does HARNACK based on Tertullian's „Invaluit sub Aniceto”, whereas the bishop's period is according to HARNACK quite accurately dated to 154/155 – 165/166. Trying to give a parallel overview of the already mentioned dates in the lives of Peregrinus and Marcion completed by some more biographical details we still have to discuss, we get this picture:

Date	Peregrinus	Marcion
± 100 <sup>39</sup>	Born in Parion	Born in Pontus (Sinope?); (HARNACK ± 85; LIPSIUS: ± 105-110 Paphlagonia?)
117-138 Hadrian	in Armenia: caught in the act of adultery (c. 9) Alleged patricide (c. 10) Both Christian and Cynic; Imprisonment; Founding of Communities in Syria, Asia Minor, Palestine Bishop	Seduction of a virgin Rupture with his father Both Christian and Cynic in Syria/Palestine: Stay in Asia, Syria. According to Esnik <sup>40</sup> : from 129

<sup>39</sup> JONES, 120: »He was probably born about 100« und begründet dies A. 15 folgendermaßen: »Philostr. VS 71.19-20« implies that he was a contemporary of Herodes Atticus, who was born ca. 101;...»

<sup>40</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 23\*.

	Worshipped as God Theological-literary activities	Bishop Worshipped as God Theological-literary activities Commentaries; Antitheses
138-161 Antoninus Pius	To Agathabulos in Alexandria Donation: 15 talents (= 4.000.000 sesterces) to home community in Parion Ascetic	Donation: 200.000 sesterces to the Roman Community  Ascetic; Tert.: »Castrator car- nis«
144 ±160	Rupture with the Christian Community Aulus Gellius meets Peregrinus in Athens	Rupture with the Roman Christian Community
154/155-165/166 Anicetus 165	Burns himself	Death: Invaluit sub Aniceto (HARNACK ± 160; LIPSIUS (165-170)

Additionally included in the chronological overview is Peregrinus's adultery in Armenia which corresponds to the anecdote of Marcion's seducing a virgin (equally when he was very young). It is a matter of controversy, though, whether this anecdote is historical. Not only HARNACK – who surely among all scholars has the greatest difficulty in reconciling this piece of information with his image of Marcion, since he rather tends to have his hero walk a few inches above ground level –, but other scholars as well, consider it to be an example of the polemical style of the Church Fathers when fighting heretics. Already before HARNACK, the Dutchman MEYBOOM (in his 1888 monograph on Marcion) had pointed to a passage in Hegesippus (Eusebius Hist. Eccl. IV, 22)<sup>41</sup>, which states the heretics had seduced the Church, a chaste virgin. On account of this he proposed a figurative interpretation for that alleged seduction by Marcion. In this context, however, the question whether the anecdote be historical or not has no importance. Suffice it to notice that the same rumour was spread about both Peregrinus and Marcion.

Likewise the assertions that Peregrinus had murdered his father and that Marcion had been excommunicated by his father, need not be real events of history to serve as evidence for the considerable amount of similarity at least of the rumours about both of these men –in so far as rumours can be identical."

One of the most conspicuous and remarkable parallels between Peregrinus and Marcion is the tradition about both of them, that they had not only been Christians, but simultaneously Cynics as well! Peregrinus –as already mentioned previously– is reported to have appeared at an assembly in his hometown Parion in the typical get-up of a Cynic: wearing his hair long, dressed in a dirty mantle, a wallet slung at his side, and the characteristic staff in his hand (c. 14-15). This assembly –where Peregrinus relinquished to the state all the property which had been left him by his father– allegedly took place immediately after his stay with the Christians in Syria and before his second journey as

<sup>41</sup> MEYBOOM, a.a.O., 38: »Indien dan Marcion, in de schatting der catholieken aartsketter bij uitnemendheid, zich aan de heilige kerk vergreep, wat deed hij anders dan echtbreuk plegen?«

an itinerant preacher, during which he again lived with Christians –and obviously off them as well.

In the same way Hippolytus pictures the Christian Marcion as a typical Cynic, even as the founder of a „School full of nonsense and a canine (i.e. cynic) way of life”, the members of which, –all of them „dogs”– „bark at us” about the Demiurge<sup>42</sup>. With Hippolytus's designation of Marcion as a „dog” is a closely related to the use of „wolf” by Eusebius<sup>43</sup>, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Justin<sup>44</sup> (though the latter not in the specific sense): Marcion, the „Pontic wolf”. HARNACK<sup>45</sup> himself already drew the attention to a most interesting ancient parallel: to Lucian's Peregrinus Proteus! Lucian, in the *Bacis-Oracle* he invented, calls Peregrinus Proteus „Wolf”! (c. 30)

*Nay, when the time shall come that a Cynic with names that are many  
Leaps into roaring flame, soul stirred by a passion for glory,  
Then it is meet that the others, the jackals that follow his footsteps,  
Mimic the latter end of the wolf that has taken departure.*

This parallel, supplied by HARNACK; should be given much weight, especially because the designation „Wolf” as an epithet for a person is –with the exception of Marcion and Peregrinus Proteus– found hardly anywhere in ancient literature.

Also closely related to Cynicism is Peregrinus's turning to asceticism, which probably occurred in Alexandria during his third big journey when he took a course with the Cynic Agathobulus (c. 17f.). Lucian reports that Peregrinus then „shaved one half of his head” and excelled in other exploits of asceticism. The same is said of Marcion and the Marcionites: „The Marcionites were ascetics”, MEYBOOM laconically says, and HARNACK, alluding to their ban on marriage and sexual intercourse, states, „No Christian Community has ever prescribed a more unworldly and austere way of life than did the Marcionites”. Tertullian scornfully calls Marcion the „sanctissimus magister” and a „castrator carnis”. Surely Marcion's asceticism was connected to and motivated by his doctrine about the evil Demiurge –but what do we know about the actual reasons for Peregrinus's asceticism? On the other hand, we'll have to assume that Marcionite asceticism was not without a Cynic background and Cynic influence. After all, Marcion continued his Cynic-style life after becoming a Christian, a fact Hippolytus repeatedly draws attention to<sup>46</sup>. Just so MEYBOOM, writing about Marcion's ascetic theories, repeatedly feels compelled to point to Cynicism and its representatives. One of those he mentions is Peregrinus Proteus!

But to the ecclesiastic author Hippolytus still another name occurs when he evaluates Marcionite doctrines and ethics: that of Empedocles. He tries to prove that Marcion's system doesn't contain anything original but that, on the contrary, it is nothing but a bad

<sup>42</sup> Hippolyt, *Ref. VII* 29.30.

<sup>43</sup> *Hist Eccl. V, 13*: »Diese folgen dem pontischen Wolfe«.

<sup>44</sup> *Apol. I, 58*.

<sup>45</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 321, A.3.

<sup>46</sup> *Ref. VII, 29.30*.

copy of the philosophy of the man from Agrigentum. Though Hippolytus's proof can't be said to be fully satisfying and it clearly shows a tendency to attempt to discredit Marcionism by the reproach of plagiarism, it need not necessarily be pure invention. After all, we have to admit that there are in fact quite a few points of contact with some fundamental ideas of Empedocles. Not least Peregrinus's spectacular death in the flames which reminds us of Empedocles' leap into the crater of Mount Etna, shows that Diogenes of Sinope was not the only one to model himself on Empedocles.

Finally, after all that has been said, we need not emphasize the fact that, as a result of their profession, the lives of both *peregrini* obviously were lives of unsettled roaming. Of Marcion specifically, Ephraem *Hymn 1, 18* says „Against Marcion, who denied the Creator, Creation rose up; restless he strayed on her”. The Latin translation has the verb *peregrinari*! Yet Ephraem could have read his statement –even without a detailed knowledge of the life of Marcion– in the context of the other name of the heretic he knew: i.e. of Peregrinus! Furthermore, the passage calls to mind the Marcionite text *Contra Adversarium legis et prophetarum* from which he quotes (II, 35) „In mundo peregrinamur”<sup>47</sup>.

Another rather odd correspondence in the biographies of both Peregrinus and Marcion is the tradition that both obviously possessed a considerable fortune which allowed them to grant generous donations. Peregrinus is said to have given his hometown Parion the sum of 15 talents (= 4.000.000 sesterces), half of his father's estate, the other half already being squandered. Marcion, too, on arriving in Rome proved himself to be very generous with an inaugural gift of 200.000 sesterces to the Christian Community there, no doubt hoping by this means to buy the Roman Christians' favour for himself and his doctrines. As is well known, he did not in the end succeed in this, and the money is said to have been returned to him after he had been excommunicated. HARNACK thinks the money given by Marcion to the Roman Community came from his revenues as a shipowner, for, according to HARNACK, Marcion was a „Shipowner, and in fact a rich one”<sup>48</sup>, who is even said to have made the journey to Rome „in his own ship”. Yet these are all quite uncertain assumptions. The designation of Marcion as *nauclerus*, found e.g. in Tertullian – whereas Rhodon (in Eusebius) mentions „Marcion the sailor”– could be meant figuratively and refer to his being a bishop (see above), as MEYBOOM<sup>49</sup> has already correctly noticed.. HARNACK's evidence for Marcion's having been a rich shipowner is the 200.000 sesterces donation, but as is shown by the example of Peregrinus, there were other ways as well to come into such a considerable fortune. Finally the piece of information about the excommunication of both *peregrini*, is another relevant parallel, though the reasons are different. According to Lucian, Peregrinus had been seen eating some forbidden food, whereas Marcion was excommunicated in the year 144 because of his doctrine about the irreconcilability of the Law with the Gospel. Yet, Lucian is not quite certain about what he tells us, as is shown by his using the relative formula „as I believe”. Lucian's knowledge of the reasons for the expulsion of Peregrinus from the Christian community seems to have been rather limited. And as to the question of when the Christians and Peregrinus broke up we can't safely rely on Lucian's statement that it did not happen before Peregrinus had taken residence

<sup>47</sup> Vgl. HARNACK, a.a.O., 390\*f, A.4.

<sup>48</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 17\*.

<sup>49</sup> MEYBOOM, a.a.O., 34f

in Rome. Obviously, as FRITZ among others supposes –though for reasons I don't accept (see above)–, Lucian is trying here „to find a motive for the attempt to withdraw the donation, a motive which easily presented itself in the financial aftermath of the rupture with the Christians.”

Comparing the details of the biographies of both these men, one will hardly find any differences of real importance –apart from the places where they were born. This we'll have to explain. Whereas we learn from Lucian and other witnesses that the seaport of *Parion* on the Hellespont was Peregrinus's hometown, we know that Marcion came from Pontus and was born in *Sinope*.

Do we really know this? –

Obviously the tradition according to which Marcion was born in the town of Sinope is a relatively late one: Epiphanius and Philastrius are the first ones to explicitly mention Sinope as Marcion's hometown, though the addition might hint at an already widespread tradition<sup>50</sup>. Nevertheless MEYBOOM in his monograph on Marcion (still worth reading) has already asked the question whether „the town of Sinope as the residence of Mithridates and the cradle of Marcionism had not spontaneously been taken as a symbol for the entire region”. Be this as it may, it is a remarkable fact that the most ancient tradition fails to specifically name Sinope and that e.g. Tertullian, too, only knows of 'Marcion Ponticus'. For this reason alone, one would be inclined to agree with Meyboom, but there is another, in my opinion conclusive argument. Sinope is the birthplace of Diogenes, the founder of Cynicism. Marcion, as Hippolytus emphasizes, was a member of the Cynic School, a spiritual descendant of Diogenes from Sinope. Wasn't it then in later times a natural thing to do, to simply turn the man from Pontus into a man from Sinope?

But even this quite probable assumption can't once and for all settle the question of whether the man from Parion and the man from Sinope are one and the same. However, at this stage a remark made by Lucian should draw full attention. We get the conclusive piece of evidence in c. 9 where Lucian mentions the adultery episode, which –what is remarkable– is said to occur not in or near Parion, but in far away Armenia. Which Armenia is meant by Lucian is not clear from the text, „whether the word designates the kingdom to the east of the Upper Euphrates or the region called Lesser Armenia west of the river,”<sup>51</sup> – in any case, at this stage the change of place, not explained at all by Lucian, is quite a surprise. If one doesn't assume that Peregrinus Proteus travelled across all of Asia Minor, thereby covering a distance of thousands of kilometres –and doing so for an obviously quite obscure love affair–, there is but one conclusion: Lucian was quite poorly informed about the first two decades of the life of Peregrinus, who had obviously spent a considerable part of his youth not only in Parion but also in either Armenia or Armenia Minor, the latter having been for a long time part of the Province of Pontus, and having been integrated into Cappadocia only since the time of Vespasian.. Maybe that's why he later could be named Ponticus. In my opinion this is quite a likely assumption - the more so, as there is a quite remarkable number of other parallels which give evidence for Peregrinus and Marcion being the same character. In

<sup>50</sup> MEYBOOM a.a.O., 34

<sup>51</sup> JONES, a.a.O., 121.

my opinion this is quite a likely assumption - the more so, as there is a quite remarkable number of other parallels which give evidence for Peregrinus and Marcion being the same character.

In our comparison of Marcion and Peregrinus, information about the latter has so far been taken from Lucian's repeatedly cited *De morte Peregrini*. But this satire is not the only historical source about the cynic itinerant philosopher. In his work *De fugitivis* Lucian again mentions Peregrinus and his spectacular death in the flames, though no essentially new information about the person on top of what has already been said in *De morte Peregrini* is given. *De fugitivis* may have been written as a reaction to the quarrel „about the character and motives of Peregrinus, which broke out even before he leaped into the flames and continued for months afterwards”<sup>52</sup>, possibly even as a direct answer to the vehement attacks on Lucian by Peregrinus's pupils and followers<sup>53</sup>, following the publication of the first work against Peregrinus. The death of Peregrinus in the flames is again briefly reported, and then 3 more characters are brought onto the scene. Like Peregrinus they are Cynic (- Christian) itinerant preachers who are obviously in some way not further explained in contact with him. Apart from two more runaway slaves (= *fugitivi*), the main character is an unnamed person –there is but a hint to a name that expresses the acquisitive greed of its bearer: „But thinking of their excessive acquisitiveness, you won't go amiss if you put out a call for the Ktesons, Ktesippuses, Ktesiklese, Euktemoneses or Polykteteses”.

Which name it is, that is ironically indicated here by Lucian, we don't know. In any case we have to reject the possibility that Lucian might be alluding to the well-known philosopher Epictetus. First we have to solve the problem of whether –as many exegetes suppose– the name we are looking for is to be derived from the word *κταρμαι* at all. Perhaps in that name Lucian simply saw excessive acquisitiveness expressed. That's where in my opinion the solution should instead be sought, since otherwise Lucian's reference to *κταρμαι* would have presented a rather easy puzzle for his readers. Assuming that a) Peregrinus is no other than Marcion and b) the 3 characters mentioned by Lucian at the end of *De fugitivis* are pupils or followers of Marcion, I think we not only can find a satisfactory solution to the puzzle of the name but at the same time an excellent confirmation of our overall hypothesis. Could the character here described be the Syrian Gnostic Cerdo? In any case, the name of this man, associated with Marcion, would fit better than any other, as it expresses what Lucian obviously wants to express: Cerdo, a name often used as a *nomen proprium* for slaves –and it's a slave we are talking about (*De fugitivis* c. 27-28)– is derived from the Greek word *kerdos*, which means *profit, benefit!*... Unfortunately we don't know much about the life of Cerdo. The Fathers of the Church most often call him Marcion's teacher and closely associate him

<sup>52</sup> JONES, a.a.O., 53.

<sup>53</sup> s. H. CONRAD, 405ff, A.1.: »Lukian hatte durch sein Lebensende Peregrins in ein großes Wespennest gestochen und den ganzen zahlreichen Orden der Kyniker gegen sich aufgebracht. Vermutlich hatten sie ihn ihre Rache durch mündliche, vielleicht auch schriftliche Ausleerungen ihrer Galle und auf jede andere Art, die man Leuten ihres Schlages zutrauen kann, sehr gröblich empfinden lassen. Aber sie hatten es mit einem Manne zu tun, den man nicht ungestraft beleidigen konnte, und der das Talent besaß, das feinere Publikum immer auf seine Seite zu bekommen, indem er sogar seine Privathändel auf eine Art abzutun wußte, wodurch sie für seine Leser unterhaltend und anziehend wurden.«

with the Simonians<sup>54</sup>. Like Valentinus he is said to have come to Rome at the time of bishop Hyginus of Syria. What influence Cerdo had on Marcion there and in how far he can be said to have been Marcion's *teacher* has been controversial since HARNACK<sup>55</sup>. But this point is without importance for the problem we are tackling here. It is sufficient here to realize that in *De fugitivis* Lucian describes an itinerant preacher, associated with Peregrinus, who is an amazingly exact image of the man we know from the Fathers of the Church as one of Marcion's closest intimates: the Christian „popular science Gnostic” Cerdo.

So far our search for the historical character of Peregrinus Proteus has been carried out exclusively by means of the evidence given by Lucian. Yet there are some more ancient witnesses that partly complete, partly correct Lucian's, presumably somewhat one-sided, report. They cannot, of course, be left out of consideration.

The first one is Aulus Gellius, an ancient author born about the year 130. In his *Noctes Atticae* he twice mentions Peregrinus, whom he went to see during his stay in Athens about the year 160. His words reveal a much higher opinion of the Cynic philosopher than Lucian's text does. In VII 3, Gellius tells how the philosopher severely admonished a Roman youth, who had kept yawning during one of his lectures. Then Gellius reports how he himself went to meet the philosopher, who at the time lived in a farmer's cottage outside the town<sup>56</sup>:

Philosophum, nomine Peregrinum, cui postea cognomentum Proteus factum est, virum gravem atque constantem vidimus, cum Athenis essemus, deversantem in quodam tugurio extra urbem, cumque ad eum frequenter veniremus, multa hercle dicere eum utiliter et honeste audivimus, in quibus id fuit, quod praecipuum auditum meminimus. Virum quidem sapientem non peccatum esse dicebat, etiamsi peccasse eum dii atque homines ignoraturi forent. Non enim poenae aut infamiae metu non esse peccandum censebat, sed iusti honestique studio et officio. Si qui tamen non essent tali vel ingenio vel disciplina praediti, uti se vi sua ac sua sponte facile a peccando tenerent, eos omnis tunc peccare proclivius existimabat, cum latere posse id peccatum putarent, impunitatemque ex ea latebra sperarent. »At si sciant«, inquit »homines, nihil omnium rerum diutius posse celari, repressius pudentiusque peccabitur.« Propterea versus istos Sophocli, prudentissimi poetarum, in ore esse habendos dicebat.

Aulus Gellius obviously went to see the philosopher, whom he describes as a *virum gravem et constantem*, several times (*ad eum frequenter veniremus*) and doing so, had the opportunity of listening in to quite a lot of useful and beautiful sayings. He especially remembered the remarks about the *sapiens* who even when unnoticed by either humans or Gods would never do wrong, since he would do good not for fear of being punished but exclusively for love of what is right and beautiful. Yet, since not all of mankind were up to these high standards, one should nevertheless remind them of the fact that all evil deeds would come to light some day.

Admittedly, the passage quoted by Gellius belongs to the well known Stoic-Cynic commonplaces. Nevertheless we should notice the fact that it obviously expresses a

<sup>54</sup> Irenäus, *Adv. Haer. I, XXVII, 1*: „Kerdon, der durch die Simonianer beeinflusst war.”

<sup>55</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 38\*f.

<sup>56</sup> Quem in modum et quam severe increpauerit, audientibus nobis, Peregrinus philosophus adolescentem Romanum ex equestri familia, stantem segnem apud se et assidue oscitantem.

very central idea of Peregrinus's doctrine which coincides with Marcion's theology, who also – as HARNACK put it – „did not feel any urge to especially render account for morality to believers”, since he didn't know a justly punishing God but only a merciful good one. To the question which he was surely asked again and again by his moralizing (Jewish – Catholic) opponents, and which Tertullian could least of all stop himself from asking „why he did not sin, if his God had not to be feared as he would not punish”, his answer was that well known „Absit, absit”, which HARNACK loved to cite frequently<sup>57</sup>. But what else could be the meaning of this „absit”<sup>58</sup> but the phrase of Peregrinus, quoted by Gellius, „*Non enim poenae aut infamiae metu non esse peccandum censebat, sed iusti honestique studio et officio*”?

Apart from the report by Gellius, there is more evidence about Peregrinus, though less important in *Tatian* (2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE), *Athenagoras* (2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2<sup>nd</sup> cent.), *Flavius Philostratus* (early 3<sup>rd</sup> cent.), *Eusebius* and *Ammonius Marcellinus* (± 330-440).

In c. 6 of his „Embassy for the Christians” Athenagoras, the Christian apologist from Athens, tells us that the town of Parion, of which they were citizens, honoured both Alexander, the well known wonder doctor, and Proteus by erecting columns with their statues after their deaths. But he doesn't tell us anything more about Proteus, though he may or may not have known more about him than just the fact of his death in the flames.

Tatian (Address to the Greeks, c. 25) quotes another saying of the Cynic itinerant preacher, whom he probably got to know in Rome. He criticizes the philosophers, who leave uncovered one of their shoulders, let their hair grow long, cultivate their beards, have long nails and say that they want nothing, yet, „they need a carrier for their wallet, and a weaver for their mantle, and a wood-cutter for their staff, and the rich, and a cook also for their gluttony.” The interpretation of this passage depends on the interpretation of the kata. ton Prwtea. Is it to be translated with HARNACK as „like Proteus” and does it consequently mean that „the Cynics, even the most extravagant ones like Proteus, need a carrier for their wallet, and a weaver for their mantle, and a wood-cutter for their staff”? Or is BERNAYS right, who concluded „that what follows is a quote from a text or a speech by Peregrinus”, inferring that „Peregrinus himself, according to Tatian, acknowledged in a rational way the real conditions of human existence, and warned against exaggeration of the Cynic way of life.”

Unfortunately HARNACK's interpretation is qualified by a mere „probably”<sup>59</sup>. In the context BERNAYS' interpretation doubtless fits equally well or even better. Tatian aims to expose the allegedly modest lifestyle of the philosophers by saying that even the seemingly most modest among them, i. e. the Cynics, still need a tanner, a weaver and so on. There is no need for this general rule, which is valid for all of the Cynics, to be exemplified by a special case, namely that of the Cynic Proteus. And if, as HARNACK assumes, Tatian mentioned Proteus specifically because among the Cynics Proteus was the „most extravagant”, he would surely have made it clear in as many words (e.g. by adding the word *even*). On the other hand, the contents of the passage, if we view them with BERNAYS as a quotation of a saying by Proteus, match well the down-to-earth

<sup>57</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 231

<sup>58</sup> cp. Röm 3,4.

<sup>59</sup> HARNACK, a.a.O., 661.



and rational fundamental philosophy that has already become apparent in the saying mentioned by Gellius. That's why, in my opinion, BERNAYS' interpretation is without doubt the better one. If this assumption is correct, it's quite amazing to notice the naturalness the Christian Tatian shows in (positively) quoting the Cynic Proteus and accepting him as an ally in his struggle against the hypocritical presumptuousness of the philosophers.

Things are a bit different in Tertullian's *Ad martyras* c. 4. 5. Tertullian here mentions some pagan men and women who *famae et gloriae causa* took their own lives, among them the philosophers Heraclitus and Empedocles and finally Peregrinus, *qui non olim se rogo immisit*. The hypothesis which is here put forward, namely that Marcion and Peregrinus are identical, need not be given up because Tertullian mentions Peregrinus's self inflicted death in the flames without any commentary. He may not have known that Marcion, his greatest rival, was in some circles only known by the name of Peregrinus. But of course, I admit freely that this is not really very probable, even taking into account the fact that Tertullian –writing more than half a century after Marcion's death– was anything but a thorough investigative biographer and that his interest in the person of his adversary went just as far as it was useful for his polemics<sup>60</sup>. If the passage about the suicide of the Cynic philosopher in *Ad martyras* was indeed written by Tertullian, it certainly would constitute the only really serious objection against the hypothesis put forward here.

Now it is far from certain that *Ad martyras* was written by Tertullian. There are some very weighty arguments which can be brought to bear against the presumption that Tertullian was the author, which have not received anything like the attention that they should have done:

- 1) In a central point of *theological doctrine*, *Ad martyras* holds a view quite different from Tertullian's genuine texts. The difference is so serious that Tertullian's authorship must be doubted, even if this were the only reason to do so. In I. 6 the author refers to the Christian opinion, that martyrs by their very quality as martyrs acquired the right to forgive sins. Yet he does not just casually mention this opinion, at his time an obviously widespread one, but he invites the imprisoned Christians to make peace with one another in order eventually, as martyrs, to perform the remission of sins themselves:

Quam pacem quidam in ecclesia non habentes a martyribus in carcere exorare consueverunt. Et ideo eam etiam propterea in vobis habere et fovere et custodire debetis, ut, si forte, et aliis praestare possitis.

Now, the opinion which is here supported flagrantly contradicts the one held by Tertullian in a passage of his indubitably genuine work *De pudicitia* (from his montanistic period). Tertullian here comes out against the opinion, emphatically propagated in *Ad martyras*, which holds it possible to concede the right of remission of sins to martyrs, and negates it in quite a polemical way, asking, „Who gives him”, i.e. the martyr, „the

<sup>60</sup> HARNACKS: »Augenscheinlich hat Tert. von dem Leben M.s so gut wie nichts gewußt«, a.a.O., S 22\*. Tertullians Nachlässigkeit in bezug auf die biographischen Daten wird besonders durch *De praescr. haer* 30 erhellt, wo er Marcion unter Eleutherus (174/189) nach Rom kommen läßt!

right to forgive what only God can forgive, who condemned without any excuse those sins, that not even the apostles considered to be forgivable? The martyr may be satisfied with being himself purified of his own offences! It is a sign of ingratitude and arrogance to distribute among others what he acquired himself at a high price<sup>61</sup>.

These differing opinions about the remission of sins by martyrs make it obvious that *Ad martyras* is hardly compatible with the „genuine Tertullian's” theology and hence can't be his work. Moreover, the „genuine” Tertullian's level of theological argument is higher than that typified by the popular idea of remission of sins by martyrs or confessors. However, this lower level characterizes the real author of *Ad martyras* (s. below).

- 2) The small work, pretending to be a *consolatio* or *exhortatio* for imprisoned Christians awaiting their imminent martyrdom, is not only on a considerably lower *theological* level than that shown in Tertullian's genuine works, but by its *literary-stilistic* aspect it also misses the mark by far, thus providing another argument for its spuriousness.'

The difference of style is particularly striking when one compares the *exempla* already mentioned by BARNES<sup>62</sup>. It's a list of pagan „martyrs” enumerated by the author in chapter 4. The examples of pagans fearlessly scorning death are given to persuade the Christian martyrs that they need fear death even less than these, as they do not act out of worldly ambition but strive for the reward that will be granted in heaven after a successfully endured martyrdom (4. 9). Since Tertullian in his *Apologeticum* (and in a further modified form in *Ad nationes* and in *De virginibus velandis*) lists the same *exempla* (shortened only by a few of the names), an accurate comparison of the different versions can be made, which enables us to notice their different stylistic levels. The following comparison, in synoptic mode, of a passage taken from *Ad martyras* with the corresponding one from the *Apologeticum*, affords an example:

## Apologeticum c.50

4. sed haec desperatio atque perditio penes vos in causa gloriae et famae vexillum virtutis extolunt.

5. Mucius dexteram suam libens in ara reliquit: o sublimitas animi !

## Ad martyras c.4

3. acerba licet ista, a multis tamen aequo animo excepta, immo et ultro appetita, famae et gloriae causa; nec a viris tantum, sed etiam a feminis, ut vos quoque, benedictae, sexui vestro respondeatis.

4. Longum est, si enumerem singulos, qui se gladio confecerint, animo suo ducti. De feminis ad manum est Lucretia, quae vim stupri passa cultrum sibi adegit in conspectu propinquorum, ut gloriam castitati suae pareret.

Mucius dexteram suam in ara cremavit, ut hoc factum eius fama haberet.

<sup>61</sup> *De pudicitia*, c.22.

<sup>62</sup> T.D. BARNES: *Tertullian. A historical and Literary Study*, Oxford 1971.

Empedocles totum sese Aetnaeis incendiis donavit: o vigor mentis!

aliqua Carthagini conditrix rogo se secundum matrimonium dedit: o praeconium castitatis!

6. Regulus, ne unus pro multis hostibus viveret, toto corpore cruces patitur: o virum fortem et in captivitate victorem!

Anaxarchus cum in exitum ptisanæ pilo contunderetur: »tunde, tunde«, aiebat, »Anaxarchi follem; Anaxarchum enim non tundis!« o philosophi magnanimitatem, qui de tali exitu suo etiam iocabatur!

7. omitto eos, qui cum gladio proprio vel alio genere mortis mitiore de laude pepigerunt. ecce enim et tormentorum certamina coronantur a vobis.

8. Attica meretrix carnifice iam fatigato postremo linguam suam comesam in faciem tyranni saevientis expellit, ut exspueret et vocem, ne coniuratos confiteri posset, si etiam victa voluisset. 9. Zeno Eleates consultus a Dionysio, quidnam philosophia praestaret, cum respondisset: »contemptum mortis«, impassibilis flagellis tyranni obiectus sententiam suam ad mortem usque signabat.

(10) O gloriam licitam, quia humanum,...

5. Nec minus fecerunt philosophi: Heraclitus, qui se bubulo stercore oblitum excussit; item Empedocles, qui in ignes Aetnaei montis desilivit; et Peregrinus, qui non olim se rogo immisit, cum feminae quoque contempserint ignes: Dido, ne post virum dilectissimum nubere cogere- retur; item Asdrubalis uxor, quae iam ardente Carthagine, ne maritum suum supplicem Scipionis videret, cum filiis suis in incendium patriae devolvit.

6. Regulus, dux Romanorum, captus a Carthaginensibus, cum se unum pro multis captivis Carthaginensibus compensari noluisset, maluit hostibus reddi et in arcae genus stipatus undique extrinsecus clavis transfixus, tot cruces sensit.

Bestias femina libens appetiit, et utique aspides, serpentes tauro vel urso horridiores, quas Cleopatra immisit sibi, ne in manus inimici perveniret.

7. »Sed mortis metus non tantus est, quantus est tormentorum.«

Itaque cessit carnifici meretrix Atheniensis? Quae conscia coniurationis cum propterea torqueretur a tyranno, et non prodidit coniuratos et novissime linguam suam comestam in faciem tyranni exspuit, ut nihil agere in se sciret tormenta, etsi ultra perseverarent. certe Laconum flagella sub oculis etiam hortantium propinquorum acerbata tantum honorem tolerantiae domui conferunt, quantum sanguinis fuderint.

8. Nam quod hodie apud Lacedaemonas sollemnitatis maxima est, diastigōsis, id est, flagellatio, non latet. In quo sacro, ante aram nobiles quique adolescentes, flagellis affliguntur, astantibus parentibus et propinquis, et uti perseverent adhortantibus. Ornamentum enim et gloria deputatur maiore quidem titulo, si anima potius cesserit plagis, quam corpus.

9. Igitur si tantum terrenae gloriae licet de corporis et animae vigore, ut gladium, ignem, crucem, bestias, tormenta contemnat sub praemio laudis humanae, possum dicere, modicae sunt istae passiones ad consecutionem gloriae caelestis et divinae mercedis. Si tanti vitreum, quanti verum margaritum?

## V. 1...Omitto nunc gloriae causam.

The stylistic-literary difference between those two variants immediately catches the eye. The *Apologeticum* lists the *exempla* in an effective rhetorical way: first the heroic act of the „pagan martyr” is described in a short forceful phrase, the name of the martyr most often being given at the beginning of the sentence (e.g. *Mucius dexteram suam libens in ara reliquit*); then follows the admiring appreciation of that heroic act in the form of a brief *exclamation* (o sublimitas animi!). The syntactic-parallel construction of the sentences is rhetorically exceedingly skilful and effective. Quite different is the list of pagan martyrs in *Ad martyras*. Though the order in which the martyrs are listed is the same as in the *Apologeticum*, except for the inclusion of some more examples (Heraclitus, Peregrinus and the two *women* Lucretia and Asdrubalis uxor), one can hardly fail to see the difference of literary style. Instead of the short concise sentences of the *Apologeticum*, we notice in *Ad martyras* a lack of form and a long-winded style which almost calls to mind a pupil's work; the individual *exempla* are listed without any recognizable effort to give form to the arrangement. It's a far cry from the list of *exempla* in *Ad martyras* to the elegant and brilliant style of the corresponding passage in the *Apologeticum*. That's why BARNES can rightly say:

»Its structure is wooden: the genres, though combined, are not interwoven. The *exempla* are somewhat laboured, with inappropriate touches: Mucius only lost a hand and Heraclitus' suicide in a dungheap is not edifying.«

To the extent that before now the different level of style has been noticed as problematic, most scholars – assuming without further reflecting upon it Tertullian's authorship of *Ad martyras* to be a self-evident truth – thought it was an *early* work, the obvious poor style of which had been improved by Tertullian in the later *Apologeticum*. Consequently a passage in BARNES reads,

»The *Ad martyras* is one of Tertullian's earliest extant works... The *Apologeticum* was soon to remedy these defects and to employ the matter of the *Ad martyras* more effectively in a different context.«

Against this opinion the following objections must be raised: First, the explanation seems not to take into account the immediate impression on the reader of both of the quoted passages. The list of *exempla* in the *Apologeticum* shows an original unified literary outline. One can hardly imagine Tertullian writing the rhetorically elegant passage of the *Apologeticum* and then referring to the clumsy and stylistically ponderous list of *exempla* in *Ad martyras*. And if so, would they have inspired him to something better than a similar ponderous and clumsy style? Yet, that is what we have to believe, if we accept BARNES' assumption, since the order of *exempla* is identical in both works and some of the wordings are so similar that literary dependence between those texts seems probable. But was this necessarily dependence in the direction BARNES imagined it? Couldn't it possibly have been the other way round, in that the author of *Ad martyras* –perhaps a pupil or an admirer of Tertullian's– used the work of his admired master when writing his own list of *exempla*?

But the idea that the defects of style in *Ad martyras* might be excused by calling it an „early work” becomes even more problematic if at the same time one holds that the *Apologeticum*, a work far superior in style, was written only a few months later than *Ad*

*martyras*. BARNES, after thoroughly studying the problems of chronology, dates *Ad martyras* »no earlier than March 197«<sup>63</sup>, and the *Apologeticum*, on the other hand, about *half a year* later in »autumn 197«!<sup>64</sup> Finally, to explain the poor style of *Ad martyras* the early date proposed by BARNES is hardly useful for still another reason: in *Ad nations*, a work dated early by BARNES as well –even earlier than *Ad martyras*– nobody has ever found any trace of such a poor style. We have to pay attention especially to the passage Nat. I. 28, 2ff, since in respect of wording and style it is already very close to the *Apologeticum*."

Nat. I. 18,1ff.

reliquum obstinationis in illo capitulo collocatis, quod neque gladios neque cruces neque bestias vestras, non ignem, non tormenta ob duritatem ac contemptum mortis animo recusemus. atenim haec omnia apud priores maioresque vestros non contemni modo, sed etiam magna laude pensari a virtute didicerunt. crucis vero novitatem numerosa, abstrusae, Regulus vester libenter dedicavit;

regina Aegypti bestiis suis usa est; ignes post Carthaginensem feminam Asdrubale marito in extremis patriae constrictiorem docuerat invadere ipsa Dido.

sed et tormenta mulier Attica fatigavit tyranno negans, postremo, ne cederet corpus et sexus, linguam suam pastam expuit, totum eradicatae confessionis ministerium.

sed vestris ista ad gloriam, nostris ad duritiam

Ad martyras c.4

6. Regulus, dux Romanorum, captus a Carthaginensibus, cum se unum pro multis captivis Carthaginensibus compensari noluisset, maluit hostibus reddi et in arcae genus stipatus undique extrinsecus clavis transfixus, tot cruces sensit.

Bestias femina libens appetiit, et utique aspidem, serpentes tauro vel urso horridiores, quas Cleopatra immisit sibi, ne in manus inimici perveniret.

[cum feminae quoque contempserint ignes: Dido, ne post virum dilectissimum nubere cogeretur; item Asdrubalis uxor, quae iam ardente Carthagine, ne maritum suum supplicem Scipionis videret, cum filiis suis in incendium patriae devolvit.]

7. »Sed mortis metus non tantus est, quantus est tormentorum.«

Itaque cessit carnifici meretrix Atheniensis? Quae conscia coniurationis cum propterea torqueretur a tyranno, et non prodidit coniuratos et novissime linguam suam comestam in faciem tyranni expuit, ut nihil agere in se sciret tormenta, etsi ultra perseverarent.

8. Nam quod hodie apud Lacedaemonas solenitas maxima est, diamastigôsis, id est, flagellatio, non latet. In quo sacro, ante aram nobiles quique adolescentes, flagellis affliguntur, astantibus parentibus et propinquis, et uti perseverarent adhortantibus. Ornamentum enim et gloria deputatur maiore quidem titulo, si anima potius cesserit plagis, quam corpus.

9. Igitur si tantum terrenae gloriae licet de cor-

<sup>63</sup> BARNES, a.a.O., 33.

<sup>64</sup> BARNES, a.a.O., 5.

deputatis.

poris et animae vigore, ut gladium, ignem, crucem, bestias, tormenta contemnat sub praemio laudis humanae, possum dicere, modicae sunt istae passiones ad consecutionem gloriae caelestis et divinae mercedis. Si tanti vitreum, quanti verum margaritum?

V. 1...Omitto nunc gloriae causam.

BARNES justifies the early dating of *Ad martyras* – apart from the poor style – by means of Mart. 6, 2:

Ad hoc quidem vel praesentia nobis tempora documenta sint: quantaes qualesque personae inopinatos natalibus et dignitatibus et corporibus et aetatibus suis exitus referunt hominis causa, aut ab ipso, si contra eum fecerint, aut ab adversariis eius, si prosteterint.

According to BARNES this passage refers to an occurrence in the year 197, when Septimus Severus overcame his co-governor Clodius Albius near Lyons and started a bloodthirsty campaign of vengeance against the latter's supporters – especially in the Roman senate – in which allegedly more than 50 senators lost their lives.

»L. Septimus Severus, governor of Pannonia Superior, was proclaimed emperor at Carnuntum on 9 April 193. He at once marched on Rome, where Didius Julianus was deserted by his troops and killed early in June. Recognized as emperor by the Senate, Severus proceeded to defeat two more serious rivals for supreme power, first Pescennius Niger, former governor of Syria (in 193/4), then D. Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain (in 196/7), in the meantime conducting a campaign against Parthians.«<sup>65</sup>

In BARNES' opinion the »general allusion to the civil wars in the *Ad martyras* [is] clear enough.« Yet here again doubt is permitted. The political allusion – general enough as it is – might just as well refer to a later time. KELLNER/ESSER has the years 202-205 in mind, with the fall of Plautian and the execution of the generals Laetus and Crispus. Even more probable than both those political events just mentioned is another one, more spectacular by far: Caracalla's seizure of power. On 19<sup>th</sup> February 212, after just one year of co-governing with him, he had his older brother Geta killed in the arms of their mother. Geta's name was then chiselled out of all inscriptions on memorial stones; a campaign of vengeance against all of Caracalla's political opponents followed, in which allegedly 20.000 (!) people were killed. One can easily imagine this – action of vengeance by Caracalla, outrageous even by the standard of the customs in politics of the period, to have made an indelible impression on his contemporaries and as such to explain the allusion in *Ad martyras*.

To finish with another argument against the early dating of *Ad martyras*, let's compare it with the *Passio S. Perpetuae et Felicitatis*<sup>66</sup>. It has often been noticed that the

<sup>65</sup> BARNES, a.a.O., 32.

<sup>66</sup> *Literatur zur Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis:*  
Ausgaben: T.H. BINDLEY: *Tertulliani De Praescriptione haereticorum, Ad martyras, Ad Scapulam*, Oxford, 1893.

Übersetzungen: Englisch: C.DODGSON: *Library of the Fathers* 10. Oxford, 1842, 150-157. - S. THELWALL: ANL 11,1-7, ANF 3,693-696. - Deutsch: H. KELLNER: *BKV*<sup>3</sup> 7, 1912. - Holländisch: H.U.

latter, which depicts the death as a martyr of Vibia Perpetua in the year 202/203, is closely related to the former. In respect of both style and theological doctrine there are quite a lot of parallels, so many as to induce some scholars to declare Tertullian to be the author or the editor of the *Passio*<sup>67</sup>. Since not all of those similarities in style and contents (which were investigated particularly by the Czech scholar Z. VYSOKY) can be enumerated here, only the essential ones may be mentioned: both works deal with martyrs and catechumens (*benedicti*); in both the *Spirit* plays an outstanding role; both present the same concept of martyrdom, which is seen primarily as a place of probation where one is put to the test in a fight against Satan.

Based on the strong theological and stylistic parallels, we have to assume that there is a direct relation of contents and consequently of the time they were written as well. So Tertullian might be thought to be the author of both. Tertullian, however, cannot possibly have written the *Passio Perpetuae*. The main argument against his having done so is that the genuine Tertullian in *De anima* c. 55 mixes up the vision of Saturus and that of Perpetua, which he hardly would have done if he had written the *Passio* himself.

Therefore it may rather be the work of someone from Tertullian's circle, differing from the genuine works by its more popular and simple style, but, like the works of Tertullian's later period, showing a close connexion with Montanism.

Now, Tertullian is considered the editor of the *Passio* because he is the author of *Ad martyras*. If the *Passio*, however, is not a work of Tertullian's, the argument falls apart. Would it not then be reasonable to reverse the argument and declare both the *Passio* and *Ad martyras* to be written by the same author, one pseudo-Tertullian? In my opinion this is the conclusion which follows from the entire examination so far and which is the most probable one. *Ad martyras* and *Passio* were indeed written by the same author – only this author was not Tertullian but rather one of his pupils or followers of a later period, probably someone associated with Montanism. In this view, *Ad martyras*, most probably written not long after the year 212, is a kind of counterpart and supplement to the *Passio*, which perhaps by this time was already being read in church and very popular with believers. So the readers or hearers of *Ad martyras* would find themselves back again in the world of the *Passio*, particularly –apart from all other similarities– because of the striking emphasis on women in the *exempla* and the addressing term *benedicti*."

### Conclusion:

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MEYBOOM: Aan de martelaren, OCL, dl.43, Leiden 1930. - CHR. MOHRMANN: MC 1,3. Utrecht-Brüssel, 1941, 183-195. - *Spanisch*: J.PELLICER DE OSSAU: Barcelona, 1639.

*Monographien*: F.J. DÖLGER: Der Kampf mit dem Ägypter in der Perpetua-Vision. Das Martyrium als Kampf mit dem Teufel: AC 3, 1932, 177-188. - H.V.CAMPENHAUSEN: Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche. Göttingen, 1936, 17-28. - G.D. Schlegel: The martyras of Tertullian and the Circumstances of its Composition: Downside Review 63, 1945, 125-128. - Z. VYSOKY: The sources of the treatise Ad martyras by Tertullian; DERS.: Listy Filologicke 72, 1948, 156-166. - E.E. MALONE: The Monk and the Martyr, SCA 12, Washington, 1950, 30-34.

<sup>67</sup> M. SCHANZ, *Geschichte der römischen Litteratur bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian, Dritter Teil: Die Zeit von Hadrian 117 bis auf Constantin 324*, 1905<sup>2</sup>, 479, der auf ZAHN hinweist, der sich in seinen Promotionsthesen 1868 für Tertullian als Redaktor aussprach; BARNES, 265, weist hin auf C.J.M.J. VAN BEEK, *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis I* (1936), 92\*, QUASTEN, *Patrology I* (1950), 181f.

I come back to the starting-point or rather to the starting-points of this investigation: to Peregrinus Proteus and Marcion. In my opinion the arguments put forward for the thesis that they were actually not two different characters but *one and the same person*, don't seem to be too daring. Admittedly, indubitable conclusive proof has not yet been given. But, where in the field of investigation of Early Christianity is there indubitable proof? So I propose to take this thesis as a working hypothesis to be tested as such for some time. Those who are not interested may feel free to forget it. However, as long as no answer has been given to the problems I've tried to present, the question at least will remain: Is Marcion Peregrinus? – Is Peregrinus Marcion?