

Research Article

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Framing the Reading Experience of an Apocryphal Text: The Case of the 1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John's Titles

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Abstract: It has long been recognized that paratexts – those liminal features that accompany the main text in a book – perform a primary role in interpretation since they mediate the text to the readers. They function like a commentary, trying to influence and guide readers to a better comprehension of the text. At the same time, they are artifacts of reception because in the pre-modern period, paratexts are the product of scribes and reading communities. Thus, by studying paratexts, one can have access to how the text was received and how readers shape the reading practices of subsequent users. The study of paratexts in the field of biblical studies has been a booming area of research, while the study of these features in the so-called apocryphal literature is only in its dawn. This article intends to help to remedy the situation by studying the titles of the *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*. Since this text exerted a huge amount of influence in shaping the eschatological imagination of many Christians in Late Antiquity and given the scarce amount of information that we have on its reception, studying the paratexts of the manuscripts – titles, specifically – is the safest bet to recover its reception/interpretation and the reading practices of its readers. Based on the study of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John's* titles, this article concludes that (1) *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was read as an apocalypse; that is, readers thought that the text mediated hitherto unknown divine knowledge; (2) readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* believed that it was an authentic work of John the apostle and thus authoritative and true; (3) readers were guided to navigate *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as dealing primarily with classical eschatological *topoi*: the antichrist, the second coming, and the end of the world.

Keywords: paratexts, titles, Apocalypse, John the apostle, eschatology, apocryphal literature, manuscripts

1 Introduction

Paratexts are vaguely defined as features accompanying the main text in a manuscript, thereby being typographically and semantically subordinate to the main text.¹ These include, as Gerard Genette writes, “a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; marginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or autographic.”² Paratexts play a crucial role by complementing the main text so that it can

1 Genette, *Palimpsests*, 3; Genette, *Paratexts*, 1. For a critical analysis of this definition, see Andrist, “Toward a Definition of Paratexts and Paratextuality;” Porter, “What is Paratext? In Search of an Elusive Category.”

2 Genette, *Palimpsests*, 3.

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become a book, surrounding and extending it in order to, as Genette said, “present it.”³ Although their place may be liminal, as their name suggests, paratexts perform a primary role in interpretation, mediating the main text of the book to its readers by instructing them how to read and receive the named text. Hence, paratexts may be conceptualized as a commentary – whether authorial or not – aiming to guide readers toward a specific interpretation of the text. As Genette states, “Indeed, this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary... constitutes a zone... a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that – whether well or poorly understood and achieved – is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it.”⁴

Moreover, paratexts create thresholds that readers must traverse to comprehend a text thoroughly. They provide clues to guide readers in the process of negotiating meaning with the book. They afford a particular way of reading.⁵ Paratexts create spaces where readers and the book converge, negotiating meaning.⁶ However, the meaning construed is not neutral; rather, the information conveyed by the paratexts controls this process. In summary, paratexts frame the reading experience of individuals engaging the book where they are attached.⁷ Paratexts function analogically to the descriptions next to paintings in a museum, giving visitors the information needed to properly understand artwork by describing its author, its historical context, and usually its nontransparent meaning.⁸ As such, when you see artwork after reading the description next to it, you experience it through the frame – or threshold – mediated by the paratext.⁹

Although Gérard Genette, whose work has been foundational for the surge of studies on paratexts, mostly describes and studies paratexts in modern works, his insights are applicable to pre-modern texts and books.¹⁰ Greek or Latin manuscripts from antiquity rarely present the main text without the presence of features classified as paratexts by Genette.¹¹ Titles, table of contents, prefaces, marginalia, glossae, *ekthesis*, and other features in antiquity function similarly to their modern counterparts, framing the readers’ experience and guiding the text’s interpretation.¹²

³ Genette, *Paratexts*, 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ After analyzing the paratexts of Bibles from the reformation period, Hoff aptly concludes, “Hence, with regard to reading books, the properties of the medium influence the cultural and social impact they may have on their users and readers. In the case of early modern Bibles, this ‘medium’ is the very book itself, consisting of its various material features, such as its size, weight, and type of binding. Moreover, the material, visual, and textual elements of the page – typeface, layout, text, illustrations, etcetera – impact reading practices. The page, therefore, is not only a tool for the transmission of the main text, but also conveys meaning through its other features” (Hoff, “Framing Biblical Reading Practices,” 228). On the importance of paratexts on the reformation, see Patkus, “Biblical Commentary as Reformation Commodity.”

⁸ Franklin, “‘Museum of the Mind’;” Franklin et al., “The Influence of Titles on How Paintings Are Seen.”

⁹ Carbon et al., “Entitling Art.”

¹⁰ Genette recognizes that paratexts depend on technologies endemic in each historical period, cf. Genette, *Paratexts*, 2. For a critique, however, Andrist, “Toward a Definition of Paratexts and Paratextuality,” 130–50.

¹¹ Del Corso, *Il libro nel mondo antico*, 145–76.

¹² For example, the segmentation in ancient codices of many “practical texts” pointed out to readers that these books should not be approached for linear reading, but rather to be consulted for specific *loci* where the required information would be at hand, cf. Coogan, “Gospel as Recipe Book.” Take also as an example the Eusebian canon tables. This Eusebian technology invited readers to interpret gospels’ pericopes not in isolation but along with similar material found in other gospels – in other words, to read the gospel vertically and horizontally, cf. Coogan, “Mapping the Fourfold Gospel;” Crawford, *The Eusebian Canon Tables*; Coogan, *Eusebius the Evangelist*. Yet, by selecting the gospels with which readers would have compared a particular pericope, Eusebius inscribed a theological judgment of canonicity into material form so that his instrument would influence readers to see one gospel expressed in only four versions, cf. Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 436–52. Eusebius’ canon tables also encourage readers to interpret several pericopes together whose relations was not immediately apparent, affording explanations of these passages, which would have been impossible to get without the Eusebian system, cf. Coogan, *Eusebius the Evangelist*, 94–122. In short, Eusebius’ canon tables effectively guided readers throughout history to approach the gospels canonically and to read them intertextually. These insights are equally applicable to the Euthalian apparatus, cf. Blomkvist, *Euthalian Traditions*; Allen, “Early Textual Scholarship on Acts;” Allen, “Are There Ancient Editions of Paul’s Letters?”

One of the most interesting paratexts in ancient textual technologies is the book title (inscriptions and subscriptions).¹³ Titles could simply function to distinguish works bounded in a codex. However, they also convey information about the author of the work, its genre, contents, place of composition, and other details.¹⁴ Therefore, titles impact the reading experience of a given text by informing readers about its author, thereby enabling them to grant or withhold authority to the text based on the identity of the author.¹⁵ Titles equip readers to make textual connections between the author's literary corpus and to project a historical setting for the composition of the book.¹⁶ Furthermore, readers can anticipate the book contents through its title as it mentions the genre or subject matter.¹⁷ In other words, if a book title informs readers that the genre of the work is poetry, they would not read the book as if were a medical handbook. Thus, when readers approach a text, they do not do it out of thin air in a neutral environment; rather, readers come to texts with frames in their mind – mediated through titles – within which they will negotiate meaning with the text.¹⁸ Thus, readers engage with texts as they are guided by their titles to do.

Moreover, titles and paratexts serve as artifacts of reception of the previous readers.¹⁹ In antiquity, paratexts are allographic and stem from the engagement of scribal reading communities who appended them to the manuscripts, reflecting communal insights on the author, genre, or subject matter of the work.²⁰ Titles display how tradition influenced communal perceptions. For instance, the titular tradition of Revelation betrays influence of the commentaries by Oecumenius and Andrew.²¹ Thus, titles not only create tradition, but they are themselves the product of tradition. This is of utmost importance since titles offer windows on how scribes and readers perceived the books they were engaging with.²² Titles are, therefore, both artifacts of reception and features to control the interpretation of a text.²³ This is not an either/or situation, but they are two sides of the same coin. When we study titles, we are studying how ancient readers understood a text and how they wanted others to navigate it.

¹³ On the problem of defining "title," see Castelli, *La nascita del titolo*, 22–42; Holtz, "Titre et incipit," Tombeur, "Le vocabulaire des titres." On titles in antiquity, see Zetzel, "The Subscriptions in the Manuscripts of Livy and Fronto and the Meaning of Emendatio;" Ballester, "La Titulación de las Obras en la Literatura Romana;" Schröder, *Titel und Text*; Caroli, *Il titolo iniziale nel rotolo librario greco-egizio*; Schironi, *To Mega Biblion*; Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries*, 111–2.

¹⁴ Buzi, "Titles in the Coptic Manuscript Tradition;" Buzi, *Titoli e Autori nella Letteratura Copta*; Buzi, "New Testament Titles in the Coptic Manuscript Tradition;" Allen, "Titles in the New Testament Papyri."

¹⁵ See, for instance, how titles of the book of Revelation shape the reading practices of its users, cf. Allen, "Paratexts and the Reception History of the Apocalypse;" Allen, *Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation*, 44–73.

¹⁶ Allen, *Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation*, 54–55.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 57–9.

¹⁸ Once again, although Hoff studies the phenomenon of paratexts in reformation bibles, his statements about the function of titles in interpretation still hold true, cf. "Functioning as the 'threshold' of the book, the title page provides information that guides the reader when he or she indeed enters the book. This process of entering is, in the case of the complete Bibles, directed by a large amount of visual and textual information. Before even encountering the actual text, the reader is invited to engage with figures of the Old and New Testament, with an idea of the proper way to read, and with the background and benefits of the marginal commentaries. The meaning of the biblical text, as it is expressed in the material features of paratext and illustrations on the title page, becomes part of the 'horizon of expectations' with which readers enter the text, and provides them with tools for both understanding the content of the text they will face and preparing a suitable reading approach to it" (Hoff, "Framing Biblical Reading Practices," 236).

¹⁹ Genette, *Paratexts*, 54.

²⁰ "As features that are the product of anonymous scribes and readers, not of authors, the New Testament's titles reflect readerly engagement with these works, communal perceptions of their content, relationship to other works and the personae affiliated with their production... What, then, can we say about the titular traditions of the New Testament in the papyri, as reflected in Table 1, and their value for textual scholarship? The first thing to note is that these titles show that readers were tolerant towards paratextual variation and that scribes did retain some level of freedom to develop paratextual traditions." (Allen, "Titles in the New Testament Papyri," 57, 68; Allen, *Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation*, 61.). See also, Ballester, "La Titulación de las Obras en la Literatura Romana," 144; Alexandre, "Du grec au latin;" Bogaert, "Eptaticus."

²¹ Allen, "Paratexts and the Reception History of the Apocalypse."

²² Fowler, taking as an example the titles of the *Protevangelium of James*, argues "The functionality of all Prot. Jas's titles is determined by the scribes and readers who imparted their own interpretations and expectations of the text – often building on those of their predecessors – into the manuscript witnesses that have survived" (Fowler, "The Protevangelium of James in Papyrus Bodmer V," 1.). See also Lied, "Epistles from Jerusalem."

²³ Jansen, "Introduction."

Although the study of paratextual features, especially titles, is a booming area of research in biblical studies, the study of these features in apocryphal literature is only in its dawn.²⁴ This research gap offers a unique opportunity for the field of apocryphal studies.²⁵ Common assumptions about the reading practices and authority of apocryphal texts in antiquity stem from negative value judgments by orthodox writers. However, most of these value judgments do not correspond to the reading experience of the actual users of the manuscripts that transmitted these texts. Thus, studying titles in apocryphal works can unveil how ancient readers – scribes – engaged with these texts, broadening the evidence historians use to describe the history of transmission and perceptions of apocryphal writings.²⁶ This enables modern readers to apprehend and appreciate this corpus of literature in a better way. Moreover, studying titles can contribute to understanding titling practices in apocryphal literature *vis-à-vis* canonical literature. Accordingly, studying titles in apocryphal literature sheds light on titling practices in ancient literature in general. What Garrick Allen wrote about titles in New Testament papyri applies equally to apocryphal literature. In short, this “offers a platform for considering broader trends in the labelling of ancient works in the broader Roman world.”²⁷

This article, then, examines the titular tradition of a late antique apocryphon commonly known as *The Apocalypse of John the Theologian* or *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*.²⁸ This apocryphon features the apostle John, standing alone on Mount Tabor, questioning a heavenly intermediary, presumably Jesus, about the end of times. The conversation spins around the antichrist, the resurrection, the second coming, and the judgment of sinners and righteous. The examination of the Greek titular tradition aims to answer the following questions: How did the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* guide the readers of this work to understand this apocalypse? How did the titles shape the reading experience of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*? In which ways did the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* control how readers engaged with this text? Which particular way of reading did the paratexts of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* afford? And, since paratexts are also witness the reception of the text by its readers, the aforementioned question could also be expressed as what we can learn about the reception of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* from the information conveyed by its titles? In other words, what we are trying to reconstruct is how a person might have read *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* based on how the title(s) would have directed such reader to do it. As Hoff has eloquently written “the potential of paratextual elements to direct and navigate the reader is crucial when trying to grasp how a book might have been read.”²⁹ This rings true when the paratextual elements are titles.

²⁴ See, for instance, Champagne, “An Analysis of Superscription and Subscription Traditions in New Testament Manuscripts;” Allen and Rodenbiker, “Titles of the New Testament (TiNT) A New Approach to Manuscripts and the History of Interpretation;” Thorp and Wasserman, “The Tradition and Development of the Subscriptions to 1 Timothy;” Thorup Elmélund and Wasserman, “Second Timothy.”

²⁵ For some studies of paratextual studies in apocryphal literature, see Lied, *Invisible Manuscripts*; Lied, “Epistles from Jerusalem;” Fowler, “The Protevangelium of James in Papyrus Bodmer V;” Falkenberg, “Apocryphal Gospel Titles in Coptic.”

²⁶ Other elements contribute to the evidence used to describe how ancient readers understood a text, namely, external witnesses as quotations or allusions to the text. As far as we can know, there are only a few allusions to *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* in Late Antiquity/Early Byzantium, and they could be classified rather than allusions as appeals to a common source (e.g., the resurrection material shared by *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* and *3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*). Further, the manuscript tradition itself constitutes evidence of reception. Thus, the different versions of *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* preserved in its manuscripts also witness to the interpretation and reception of this text in Late Antiquity. However, this article focuses exclusively on only one aspect of the paratextual elements from the Greek tradition of *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*, namely, its titles. Further studies should be carried out to understand how other elements from the Greek paratextual traditions and the manuscript tradition itself enlighten the reception of this apocalypse during its transmission.

²⁷ Allen, “Titles in the New Testament Papyri,” 158.

²⁸ For an overview of this text, see Brannan, “1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John;” Kaestli and Picard, “Première apocalypse;” Kaestli, “La Figure de l’Antichrist.” The designation of our text as *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* obeys to the fact that there are several apocalypses attributed to John in antiquity, including canonical Revelation. Thus, *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* is an artificial designation for a text known in its manuscripts as the *Apocalypse of John the Theologian*. However, this artificial designation is useful because it helps us differentiate this apocalypse from its canonical counterpart and from other apocryphal iterations of the apocalypses attributed to John, cf. Kaestli and Picard, “Première apocalypse,” 987–90. Moreover, scholars differ on the date for the composition of *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*. The dates range from the fourth century to the eight-nine. Since the dating of the text does not impact the discussions in my paper directly, I will not take a position on this issue. For an overview of the possible dates for *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*’s composition, see Brannan, “1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John,” 383–4.

²⁹ Hoff, “Framing Biblical Reading Practices,” 229.

The importance of recovering the reading practices of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*'s users lie in its wide circulation in Late Antiquity, not only in Greek but also in translations to Arabic, Armenian, and Slavonic.³⁰ Thus, we can safely presume that this text exerted a great degree of influence in the shaping of the eschatological expectations of eastern Christians. Furthermore, *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* is not mentioned frequently in contemporary sources, neither canon lists nor catalogues by church fathers mentioning heresies and the bibliographic sources whence they emerge. This means that we remain in ignorance as to what kind of reception this apocryphon had in Late Antiquity. Therefore, understanding the reception of this text through its titles enhances our comprehension of its transmission history and how readers interacted with it, reflecting communal perceptions of its value and authority.

As such, this article posits that the main three ways in which the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* influenced its readers were (1) by leading them to believe that they were reading a text belonging to the genre of apocalypse, creating boundaries within which they will have to negotiate meaning according to the expectations embodied in this genre; (2) by construing the author of this apocryphon as John, the son of Zebedee, thereby legitimizing the contents of this work as apostolic, authoritative, and true; (3) by guiding readers to expect from this text new knowledge about eschatological topics such as the antichrist, the resurrection, the second coming, among others; and (4) by directing readers to connect *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* to canonical Revelation and other apocalypses attributed to John known to them. These areas constitute the main parts of this paper, after which some concluding remarks will follow.

2 Genre³¹

The first way in which titles shaped the reading experience of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was by telling the users of the manuscripts to which genre the work belongs, creating boundaries readers must navigate to find meaning in the text. Many Greek manuscripts associated *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* with the apocalypse genre. Seventeen out of 26 collated Greek manuscripts of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* place the word ἀποκάλυψις at the beginning of the title, inviting subsequent readers to engage with this work as such.³²

A close study of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*'s contents reveals a deliberate choice by late antique readers to designate the work as an apocalypse, underscoring the divine origin of the contents of the work over strict adherence to its formal literary features, given that this text does not fit the genre of apocalypse properly but rather mixes the *erotapokriseis* genre with apocalypse genre.³³ *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* does not completely resemble Eusebius' *Questions and Answers on the Gospels* neither Theodoret's *Questions and Answers on the Octateuch* but neither looks alike the *Apocalypse of Peter* or the *Apocalypse of Paul* with their otherworldly journeys; this apocryphon rather sits at the intersection of these two genres.³⁴

In *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, John asks several questions to Jesus about eschatological topics and Christ answers them not by taking him to an otherworldly journey but through dialogue, instructing John as clearly as

³⁰ Brannan, "1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John," 379–82.

³¹ This discussion does not pretend to project modern genre definition and theories to late antique documents. While late antique genres were more open and porous than today, numerous texts shared a number of characteristics that set them apart from other texts. Thus, a late antique reader could differentiate between poetry and history, a medical treatise, and a letter, among other distinctions. Therefore, it is correct that in antiquity the word "genre" may not have been used as today, but that does not mean they did not have expectations attached to the type of book they were reading.

³² For a detailed description of the titles collated, see Table 1.

³³ Tóth, "New Wine in Old Wineskin," 81–3. *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* could also be seen as a post-resurrection dialogue. However, I think that post-resurrection dialogues are iterations of the apocalyptic genre, thus making the apocalypse as a genre a better heuristic category to classify *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* than the post-resurrection dialogues, cf. *Epistula Apostolorum*, Tóth, "New Wine in Old Wineskin," 77–81; Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue*; Watson, *An Apostolic Gospel The 'Epistula Apostolorum' in Literary Context*, 1–5.

³⁴ On erotapokriseis as a genre, see Volgers and Zamagni, *Erotapokriseis*; Papadoyannakis, "Instruction by Question and Answer." On the intersection of the apocalypse genre with erotapokriseis in *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, see Valeriani, "Le 'erotapokriseis' e il genere letterario delle Apocalissi."

possible on the eschatological scenario of the end.³⁵ Here, *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* resembles Eusebius' *Questions* in the sense that a question is posed to someone who can answer it. Yet in Eusebius' *Questions*, and most of the books belonging to the *erotapokriseis* genre, the identity of who ask the question remains veiled, whereas in *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, the human interlocutor is clearly identified.³⁶ Furthermore, in Eusebius' *Questions*, the answer given to the questions do not claim to have a divine origin, while in *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, the content of the answers given to John belongs – in the world of the text – exclusively to God. Hence, the idea that *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* is an apocalypse. In addition, Eusebius' *Questions* lacks a narrative setting for the exchange between questions and answer, while the beginning of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* sets up the scenario for the exchange between Jesus and John.³⁷ *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* truly represents a blend of genres, evincing the porousness of genres in antiquity – the text is not just an apocalypse employing *erotapokriseis* as a literary pattern, the text participates in both genres.³⁸ Nonetheless, the way late antique readers received and framed the reading experience of composite-genre texts like this depended on which aspects they decided to emphasize.³⁹ Therefore, while one manuscript foregrounds the medium through which the revelation takes place by designating the work as an ἐρώτησις,⁴⁰ most readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* decided to highlight the apocalyptic aspect of the text, neglecting the formal aspect of the *erotapokriseis* genre in which the dialogue between the heavenly revealer and John is embedded.

To understand the implications of reading *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as an apocalypse, it is crucial to acknowledge the role of genre expectations in communication.⁴¹ Each genre brings distinct conventions, shaping readers' expectations because "there can be no understanding without at least an implicit notion of genre."⁴² Given that some late antique readers were inviting others to engage with *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as an apocalypse – by using the word ἀποκάλυψις in the titles of the manuscripts – what should these readers expect to find in this apocryphon? What is one supposed to find in an apocalypse in antiquity?⁴³

Although etc, the following definition comprises what the genre of the apocalypse entailed for most late antique people, that is "a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, super-natural world."⁴⁴ This definition fits perfectly with *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as Adela Yarbro Collins has argued.⁴⁵

³⁵ These topics include the antichrist, the resurrection, the purification of the earth, the second coming, etc, cf. Kaestli, "La Figure de l'Antichrist," 280–1.

³⁶ Perrone, "Le Questiones evangelica di Eusebio di Cesarea;" Perrone, "Sulla Preistoria Delle 'quaestiones' Nella Letteratura Patristica."

³⁷ *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 1–4.

³⁸ On the difference between *erotapokriseis* as a literary genre and a literary pattern, see Zamagni, "New Perspectives on Eusebius' Question and Answers on the Gospels," 241. Probably *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* adopts *erotapokriseis* as a genre to blend with the apocalypse because of its usefulness for pedagogical instruction due to its diaphanous character in contrast with the confusing character of the apocalyptic visions, cf. Valeriani, "Le 'erotapokriseis' e il genere letterario delle Apocalissi."

³⁹ Linton, "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse."

⁴⁰ Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II.90, fols. 249r–255r.

⁴¹ Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 8; Collins, "The Early Christian Apocalypses," 61–122.

⁴² Ibid.; Linton, "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse."

⁴³ DiTommaso, "The Armenian Vision of Daniel and the Historical Apocalyptic of Late Antiquity;" DiTommaso, "Late Antique Apocalypticism;" DiTommaso, "Il genere 'Apocalisse' e L'Apocalittico" nella tarda antichità."

⁴⁴ Collins, "Introduction," 9. Although this definition is modern and etc, Collins argue that the definition "it is not intended to construct a metaphysical entity... in any sense independent of the actual texts" (Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 8). Collins' definition attempts to make sense of shared characteristics present in a cluster of texts that could be called "apocalypses." Thus, Collins' definition blurs a bit the distinction between etc and emic. For a more restrictive definition of the apocalypse genre, see Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre," 86–91. For a critique of Collins' position, see Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John." For a response to the critics of this definition, see Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered."

⁴⁵ Collins, "Introduction," 64, 76. We have seen that *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* has at the beginning a narrative framework where John is alone at Mount Tabor and begins a dialogue with the heavenly mediator about cosmic eschatological topoi such as the antichrist, the second coming, the resurrection, among others. The information conveyed by the heavenly mediator seems to be hitherto unknown, so this is correctly understood as a disclosing of new information. Thus, *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* met the criteria needed to be considered an apocalypse albeit adopting an *erotapokriseis* form.

Table 1: Titles of 1 Apocr. Apoc. John

1 Apocr. Apoc. John ^a	
Titles ^b	Manuscript
Αποκαλυψις ιωαννου του θεολογου ^c	Cambridge, Trinity College, O.8.33, fols. 98r–102r (16th cent.) ^d [12022] ^e
Αποκαλιψις του Ιωαννου του θεολογου και περι της ελεσεως του αντιχριστου	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, suppl. gr. 136, fols. 28v–40v (16th cent.) ^f [52906]
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου ιωαννου του θεολογου	Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 1098, fols. 15r–17v (1506–1507) ^g [3394]
Απόκαλυψις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	Jerusalem, Patriarchikē bibliothēkē, Panagiotou Taphou 66, fols. 378v–385r (15th cent.) ^h [35303]
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	Mount Athos, Monē Dionusiou, 206 (Lampros 3740), no fol. numbers provided (17th cent.) ⁱ
Η Αποκαλυψις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	[D] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 1034, fols. 120r–134v (15th cent.) ^j [50627]
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου ιωαννου του θεολογου	[C] Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II.42, fols. 285r–291r (13th century)
Αποκαληψις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι της δευτερας παρουσιας και της συντελειας	Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 346, fols. 36r–41v (15th cent.) ^k [2642]
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου και πανεφημου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου ευλογου	[B] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 947, fols. 26v–32v (1574 CE) ^l [50536]
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	[F] Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. gr. 364, fols. 110r–116v (15th cent.) ^m [66096]
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι του αντιχριστου	[G] Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, hist.gr. 119, fols. 108r–115v (15th century)
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι του αντιχριστου και περι της δευτερας παρουσιας του κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου	London, Highgate School, II. 29, fols. 112v–120v (15th cent.) ⁿ
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου παρθενου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	Mount Athos, Monē Dionusiou, 298 (Lampros 3832), fols. 136v–145r (17th cent.) ^o
Αποκαλυψις του κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου προς τον αγιον Ιωαννην τον θεολογον	Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 1007, fols. 238r–243v (15th–16th cent.) ^p [3303]
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου ιωαννου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου επιστηθιου ηγαπημενου παρθενου του θεολογου περι της συντελειας και περι του αντιχριστου	[A] Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. XI. 20, fols. 303r–313r (16th cent.)
Ερωτησις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι της παρουσιας του κυριου ημων ιησου χριστου και περι της συντελειας	[E] Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II.90, fols. 249r–255r (16th century) ^q
Του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου παρθενου επιστηθιου ιωαννου του θεολογου λογος εις την δευτεραν παρουσιαν του κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου και περι αντιχριστου	Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 355, fols. 30r–37v (15th cent.) ^r [2651]
Η α[π]οκαλιψην του αγιου ενδοξου και πανεφημου αποστολου επιστηθιου φηλου του ιγαπημενου και παρθενου Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι της συντελειας του αιωνος	Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 356, fols. 300v–306r (1633–1634) ^s [2652]
Ομιλία του κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου και Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι της κακοπραγιας του μιарου δρακοντος και περι της δευτερας παρουσιας ^t	Sofia, C'rkovnoistoriceskija i archiven Institut, 887, fols. 130r–157v (16th cent.) ^u [62054]
Λογος περι της ελεσεως του κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου	Meteora, Mone Metamorphoseos, 382, fols. 58v–65v (15th cent.) ^v [41792]
Ιωαννης του θεολογου περι της δευτερας παρουσιας του Ιησου	Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, L113 sup., fols. 167r–170r (15th cent.) ^w [42972]
Αποκαλυψις και διηγησις Ιωαννου του θεολογου και περι της δευτερας παρουσιας	Mount Athos, Mone Batopediou, 422, fols. 83–88 (13th cent.) ^x [18566]

^aThis table by no means encompasses all the titles from the Greek manuscript tradition of 1 Apocr. Apoc. John since it was impossible to had access to every witness of the work. This table is rather selective and presents a selection of the titles of 1 Apocr. Apoc. John from those manuscripts to which the researcher had access (22 out of 33). Nonetheless, there are some manuscripts where the title is missing. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Coislin 121, fols. 6,17,5 does not have a title page. Furthermore, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, graec. Quart. 22 (320), fols. 80v–88v is presumed lost during the WWII, cf. Allison, *The Testament of Abraham*, 6. The beginning

of Jerusalem, Patriarchikē bibliothēkē, Panagiotou Taphou 97, fols. 121v-131v is illegible. Finally, the catalogue where Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II. 172 fols. 477r-483r does not list a title but only the beginning of the work, cf. Mioni, *Bibliothecae Diui Marci Venetiarum Codices Graeci Manuscripti. Volume 1: Codices in Clases A Prima usque ad Quintam Inclusi. Classis II, Codd. 121-198 - Classes III, IV, V, 1:101*. That would tally up the number of manuscripts presented here to 26 out of 33 possible, giving a comprehensive sense of the title of this work in the Greek tradition. For a complete list of Greek manuscripts of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, see Brannan, “1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John: A New Translation and Introduction,” 379–82. It is important to note that the author of this paper did not have access to the content of the manuscripts listed above in some occasions. On such occasions, the author only had access to the title of *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* through the catalogues of the libraries where the manuscripts are housed.

^bThe information regarding the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* comes from Cardozo Mindiola, “If You Can Change Your Name, You Can Write”, 539.

^cI have omitted the accents in the Greek text of the titles because I have transcribed most of them from the manuscripts themselves. Since the accentuation system is not uniform in these manuscripts – even non legible sometimes – I do not think it appropriate to place those accents artificially. Thus, I follow academic convention in this case and leave the text unaccentuated as the *Editio Critica Maior* does with the titles of NT texts, cf. Allen, *Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation*, xix. Furthermore, iotacisms have not been corrected.

^dJames, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College*, Cambridge, 3:430.

^eThe number in brackets for all manuscripts corresponds with the dyktion number from the Pinakes database.

^fEhrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, 3:771–2.

^gHalkin, *Catalogue des manuscrits hagiographiques de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Athènes*, 106.

^hEhrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, 3:345.

ⁱLampros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts*, 1:362.

^jOmont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs*, 1:207.

^kHalkin, *Catalogue des manuscrits hagiographiques de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Athènes*, 43.

^lOmont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs*, 1:181.

^mEhrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, 3:803.

ⁿVorst and Delehay, *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum germaniae, Belgii, Angliae*, 389.

^oLampros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts*, 1:406–7.

^pBerendts, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der Zacharias- und Johannes-Apokryphen*, 3.

^qMioni, *Bibliothecae Diui Marci Venetiarum Codices Graeci Manuscripti. Volume 1: Codices in Clases A Prima usque ad Quintam Inclusi. Classis I-Classis II, Codd. 1-120*, 1:270.

^rHalkin, *Catalogue des manuscrits hagiographiques de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Athènes*, 45.

^sIbid., 46.

^tWhile this manuscript appears in the lists where witnesses for *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* are numbered, I believe, based on a cursory reading of the incipit and its initial lines, that this manuscript preserves a Johannine pseudepigraphon different from *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*. If this manuscript does preserve *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, it contains a heavily redacted version of the pseudepigraphon which deviates greatly from other manuscripts.

^uGetov, *A Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts at the Ecclesiastical Historical and Archival Institute of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria. Volume 1: Backovo Monastery*, 1:260.

^vEhrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, 3:768.

^wMartini and Bassi, *Catalogus Codicum Graecorum Bibliothecae Ambrosianae*, 2:601.

^xEustratiadēs and Vatopedinos, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts in the Library of the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mt. Athos*, 82.

Framing *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as an apocalypse directed readers to perceive the text as a divine revelation of previously undisclosed knowledge.⁴⁶ Questions posed by John about the antichrist, the resurrection, the judgment, the second coming, the destruction of the wicked, and the reward of the righteous received answers construed as divine revelation – highlighting that this knowledge is only accessible through the apocryphon because God decided to communicate undisclosed secrets to John.⁴⁷ By framing *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as an

⁴⁶ For reading a book as an apocalypse in this sense, see Barr, “Beyond Genre;” Reddish, “The Genre of the Book of Revelation,” 21–6; Fowler, “The Protevangelium of James in Papyrus Bodmer V,” 8.

⁴⁷ Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 1007, fols. 238r–243v emphasizes the divine nature of the revelation by making Christ the direct source of the content of the book. A similar phenomenon is at play in manuscripts 203 and 506 where the title of the canonical Revelation reads Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ ἀποκαλύψις δοθησα τῷ θεολόγῳ ἰωάννῃ. John is, in both cases, minimized as a mere intermediary and Christ occupies the main role as revealer.

apocalypse, late antique readers directed others to see the text as an authoritative divine revelation of the future, providing them with assurance and guidance to make it to the end of times.⁴⁸

Despite the prevalent reading of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as an apocalypse, a subset of readers approached the text with alternative perspectives. Two manuscripts of this apocryphon framed the reading experience of their users by mediating this work as a λόγος, a term with diverse meanings in Greek.⁴⁹ In antiquity, λόγος referred to books of many kinds of genre, denoting the general idea of a treatise.⁵⁰ Thus, when a reader engaged with *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as a treatise, the text shed its divine aura, becoming one among many human compositions. Moreover, λόγος could also refer to a homily or sermon, thereby suggesting a liturgical setting for the consumption of this text in Late Antiquity. This is clarified by a manuscript that framed the reading experience of this apocalypse explicitly as a homily, also suggesting a liturgical setting for this work.⁵¹ Reading *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as a treatise or a homily diminished its perceived divine origin and authority, allowing for a critical interpretation, as one possibility of the end-time born out of human imagination and wit, not as the definitive end-time scenario that reading this text as an apocalypse would require. In summary, the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* played a pivotal role in shaping the reading experience of many in Late Antiquity, steering readers toward distinct expectations and interpretations of its genre.

3 Author

Another significant influence of the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* on its readers pertains to the construction of the author of this apocryphon. The Greek manuscript tradition consistently ascribes the authorship of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* to John the theologian.⁵² This attribution is rooted in the deliberate effort of the author to emulate John, the canonical author of Revelation, who was also recognized in the titular tradition as the Theologian.⁵³ John the theologian was, by the time *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was written, a generic designation for John, the son of Zebedee, who was an apostle and eyewitness of Jesus Christ.⁵⁴

The recension β of a narrative expansion of the life of John which relate the imprisonment, the trial of the apostle before Domitian, and his subsequent exile to Patmos, called *The Acts of John in Rome*, has a penchant for assigning the title “Theologian” to John, the main character of the narrative.⁵⁵ Moreover, this recension explicitly identifies John the theologian with John the Galilean, the disciple of Jesus.⁵⁶ A similar phenomenon occurs in *The Acts of Timothy*, where John the Theologian is recognized as the beloved disciple who rested upon the breast of Jesus.⁵⁷ Although John 13,23-25 never clarify the identity of the disciple who reclined upon the breast of Jesus, the early Church associated John the son of Zebedee with the beloved disciple.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 8.

⁴⁹ Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 355, fols. 30r–37v and Meteora, Mone Metamorphoseos, 382, fols. 58v–65v. For details, see Table 1.

⁵⁰ See the primary evidence in Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary*, 1250.

⁵¹ Sofia, C’rkovnoistoriceskija i archiven Institut, 887, fols. 130r–157v (see Table 1). Although this manuscript is listed as a witness of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* due to a cursory reading of his incipit, I do not believe the text in question is *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* but rather a different apocryphon. If this manuscript does preserve *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, it does so in a heavily redacted form.

⁵² See Table 1.

⁵³ John, in both texts, fell to the ground after contemplating Jesus (Rev 1,17; *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 1.2), John considers himself a servant of God (Rev 1,1–2; *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 1.3), John sees, in both texts, the heaven opened (Rev 4,1; *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 2.3), and John sees a book with seven seals in both texts (Rev 5,1–11; *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 3.2).

⁵⁴ For a thorough study of the life of John, the son of Zebedee, in history, see Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee*.

⁵⁵ *Acts of John in Rome* β, 5–10, 11. Edition of the available Greek manuscripts, cf. Kaestli and Junod, *Acta Iohannis*, 835–86. English translation in Spittler, “The Acts of John in Rome.”

⁵⁶ *Acts of John in Rome* β, 5.

⁵⁷ *Acts of Timothy* 6. “Theologian” becomes one of the favorite titles assigned to John in *The Acts of Timothy* akin to how *The Acts of John in Rome* β also prefers this honorific over others, cf. *Acts of Timothy* 7–8, 11.

⁵⁸ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.31. It is beyond the scope of this paper to interrogate early Christian sources on their identification of John the son of Zebedee with the beloved disciple. For modern critiques of the early Christian consensus, see Hengel, *The Johannine Question*; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*; Furlong, *The John Also Called Mark*; Furlong, *The Identity of John the Evangelist*; Behr, *John the Theologian and His Paschal Gospel*, 44–76.

Accordingly, *The Acts of John in Rome* and *The Acts of Timothy* evince the early Christian tendency of equating John the Theologian with John the apostle of the Lord, a norm that solidified very early in early Christian memory.⁵⁹

Although the title theologian could be given to various Christian authors, it seems that only John the son of Zebedee, among the original companions of Christ, was deemed worthy of this designation.⁶⁰ The logic underlying John's designation as a theologian seems to run the following course: (1) as the beloved disciple, John must be the fourth evangelist,⁶¹ (2) the fourth gospel presents the most direct and explicit presentation of Jesus as God,⁶² (3) given that theologians discourse about gods and since the fourth gospel is the clearest discourse about the divinity of Jesus,⁶³ and (4) consequently, John must be a theologian.⁶⁴ Procopius of Caesarea, describing a church dedicated to John, rightly argued "this apostle has been named 'the Theologian' because the nature of God was described by him in a manner beyond the unaided power of man."⁶⁵ In a nutshell, John the Theologian, in antiquity, referred specifically to John the son of Zebedee, transformed by the early church into an evangelist.

As seen earlier, late antique readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* were directed to read this text as the work of John the Theologian, i.e., John the son of Zebedee. Nonetheless, some scribes went above and beyond, explicitly stating that John the Theologian, the author of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, was one of the 12 apostles and the author of the fourth gospel. Eight of 22 manuscripts include ἀπόστολος as a qualifier of John, while 7 of 22 manuscripts pair ἀπόστολος with εὐαγγελιστής.⁶⁶

The designation of John as ἀπόστολος aimed at distinguish him from other Johns in early Christianity, such as John the Baptist or John the Elder, particularly because some early Christian writers attributed

59 "Ἰωάννην ὁμοίως τὸν θεολόγον καὶ φιλούμενον μαθητὴν" (Gregory of Nyssa, *Theod.* [PG 46:748]); "Μετὰ πάντας τοὺς προφῆτας καὶ μετ' αὐτὴν τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶπεν ὁ ἅγιος ἀπόστολος καὶ εὐαγγελιστὴς καὶ θεολόγος Ἰωάννης, ὅτι »Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακε πώποτε" (Pseudo-Athanasius, *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* [PG 28:613]); "τέλος τῶν ἀπάντων κατ' αὐτὸν τὸν θεολόγον Ἰωάννην εἰπόντα: <ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος>, καὶ <ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο>" (*Scholia in Apocalypsin* 7); "Φησὶ γὰρ ὁ θεολόγος Ἰωάννης: Καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος" (John Chrysostom, *Sancta trinitate* [PG 48:1087]); "Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ θεολόγος περὶ τῆς αὐτῆς οἰκονομίας διηγούμενος, φῶς αὐτὴν ἐκάλεισε λέγων: Καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν" (Idem, *Comm. Psal.* [PG 55:646]); "Ἰωάννης δὲ ὁ θεολόγος ἐν τῇ καθολικῇ αὐτοῦ Ἐπιστολῇ λέγει" (Idem, *De pseudopropheta* [PG 59:554]); "Καὶ πάλιν Ἰωάννης ὁ θεολόγος λέγει: Ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστί, καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατεῖ, καὶ οὐκ οἶδε ποῦ ὑπάγει, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία ἐτύφλωσε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ" (Idem, *De caritate* [PG 62:772]); "Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ θεολόγος Ἰωάννης ἐν μὲν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ εἶπεν: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος..." (Didymus, *Trin.* 15.4); "μετὰ τοῦτον συνωδᾷ Ἰωάννης ὁ θεολόγος καὶ ἡγαπημένος τοῦ Χριστοῦ βοᾷ "φανερὰ ἐστί τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου" (Pseudo-Hippolytus, *Consum. Mundi* 10); "ἡ δὲ δευτέρα αὐτοῦ, ἐν ᾗ μέλλει ἔρχεσθαι ἐν δόξῃ, Ἐνώχ καὶ Ἥλιαν καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν θεολόγον ἀναδείξει" (Idem, 21); "ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἔπαθεν ὡς ἀληθινὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῇ τοῦ πάσχα ἑορτῇ, καθὼς διδάσκει ὁ θεολόγος καὶ εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης ἐν τῷ κατ' αὐτὸν εὐαγγελίῳ," (*Chronicon Paschale* [Dindorf, 10]); "τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα ἐδήλωσεν καὶ ὁ θεολόγος καὶ εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον ἐν Κανᾷ τῆς Γαλιλαίας θαῦμα" (Idem [Dindorf 398]); "Ἄλλα μεγάλη κα<ι> ἀπόρρητα παραδέδωκε καὶ σαφῶς ἐξεδίδασκεν εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ Ἀποκάλυψιν καὶ ὁ θεολόγος Ἰωάννης καὶ ἔδειξεν ὡς Ἥλιος ἐλεύσεται" (Melodus Romanus, *Hymns* 50.5); "Φησὶ γοῦν Ἰωάννης ὁ θεολόγος καὶ ἐπιστήθιος, «ὅτι ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα" (John Damascenus, *Orationes de imaginibus tres* 1.19).

60 Not many people in antiquity got to be called "Theologian." For instance, Philo calls Moses "ὁ θεολόγος" (*Praem.* 53). Gregory of Nazianzus was remembered as a theologian as well, cf. *Epigrammata*, 8.1.

61 On John as an evangelist, see below.

62 "But indeed he reserves for the one who leaned on Jesus' breast the greater and more perfect expressions concerning Jesus, for none of those manifested his divinity as fully as John when he presented him..." (Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 1.22 [FC 80:37–38]).

63 On the meaning of θεολογέω and θεολόγος, cf. Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 790; Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary*, 932.

64 "οὐκοῦν δέδεικται διὰ τούτων προϋπάρχων τῆς Ἰωάννου γενέσεως ὁ θεολογούμενος καὶ ἐμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ γεγονώς, συνέστη τε οὐ μόνον λόγος ἀλλὰ καὶ θεὸς καὶ φῶς καὶ μονογενὴς πρὸ τῆς ἐνσάρκου παρουσίας ὑπάρχων τε καὶ ὠνομασμένος" (Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 1.20, ed. Klostermann and Hansen, *Eusebius Werke, Band 4*, 83.); "but when he found that the gospels recounted the genealogy of the matters relating to the economy of the incarnation, then he theologized about the things that were not mentioned, of which he had obtained an impression from the divine breast" (*Acts of Timothy* 10, trans. Concannon, "The Acts of Timothy," 403.).

65 Procopius, *Buildings* 5.1.6, trans. Dewing and Downey, *Procopius*, 7:317.

66 See Table 1.

canonical writings to the latter John.⁶⁷ However, only John the son of Zebedee received the honorific ἀπόστολος because he was the only John to be a part of the 12 closest companions to Jesus.⁶⁸ That explains why Eusebius of Caesarea deployed ἀπόστολος to differentiate between John the son of Zebedee and John the Elder, clarifying that John the apostle referred specifically to the son of Zebedee.⁶⁹ Thus, appending ἀπόστολος to John the Theologian guided readers to conclude that *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was the work of no other John but the close companion of Jesus.

Further, manuscripts also identify John the theologian and apostle as an εὐαγγελιστής. There were three primary ways in which John could have been an evangelist in early Christianity. First, he penned the gospel himself in Ephesus after his exile to Patmos in order to supplement the synoptic gospels with those miracles and speeches of Jesus that were not registered in them.⁷⁰ Second, John not only issued his gospel but also published the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke after having edited the first drafts of these documents. In this case, evangelist amounts to redactor, editor, corrector, organizer, and writer.⁷¹ Third, John is only the medium through which God reveals the content of the fourth gospel, which is actually written by Prochorus.⁷² Although the manuscripts of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* do not exactly state in which capacity John was considered an evangelist, they would agree with Foucault's description of an author as the source or originator of a discourse.⁷³ That is, the common thread among different strands of tradition described above is that John was perceived as the source behind the document known as the fourth gospel. As early Christians attributed the authorship of the fourth gospel to John the son of Zebedee, the author of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was likewise regarded as the same individual.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Papias, *Frag.* 3.3. In this fragment preserved by Eusebius, Papias acknowledges the existence of two Johns: John the disciple of the Lord who is in close connection with Matthew, Phillip, Andrew, Peter, etc.; and John the elder who is associated with Aristion, cf. Kok, *Tax Collector to Gospel Writer*, 31–40. Eusebius, who clearly disdained the book of Revelation (cf. *Hist. eccl.* 3.25), suggested that John the Elder was its author, cf. *Hist. eccl.* 3.39. He also conceives the possibility that 2-3 John were also written by a John different from the apostle, cf. *Hist. eccl.* 3.24. Therefore, assigning a book to a person named John was not enough. Measures should be in place to clearly point to which John a book was being ascribed to.

⁶⁸ Matt. 10, 2.

⁶⁹ "His [Papias] mentioning the name of John twice is worth noting here. The first of these he reckons along with Peter and James and Matthew and the other Apostles, meaning clearly the Evangelist, but the other John, after expanding his statement, he places outside the number of the Apostles, placing Aristion before him, and he distinctly calls him a presbyter" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39 [FC 19:203]). See as well, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18; 3.20; 3.23.

⁷⁰ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Hypothesis* (preserved by Eusebius), *Hist. eccl.* 6.14; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.24; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Comm. Jo.* Greek Fragment 1. See as well, Mutschler, "Was weiß Irenäus vom Johannesevangelium?"; Mutschler, "John and His Gospel in the Mirror of Irenaeus of Lyons"; Gamba, "La disposizione 'Matteo, Luca, Marco, Giovanni' nella tradizione antica"; Farkasfalvy, "The Presbyters' Witness on the Order of the Gospels as Reported by Clement of Alexandria"; Carlson, "Clement of Alexandria on the 'Order' of the Gospels"; Ramelli, "John the Evangelist's Work," 31–40.

⁷¹ *Acts of Timothy* 8-10; Bremmer, "Timothy, John and Ephesus in the Acts of Timothy," 224–30; Ramelli, "John the Evangelist's Work," 40–6. A similar tradition reported by the Muratorian Fragment posits that John wrote down what was revealed to him and his co-disciples through oral revelation after three days of fasting, cf. *Muratorian Fragment* 9–16; Rothschild, *The Muratorian Fragment*, 38. In this case, John does not edit and publish the synoptic gospels as reported by the *Acts of Timothy*, but is responsible for handing down the oral tradition of the disciples, making him once more the funnel through which the apostolic tradition flows, cf. Ramelli, "John the Evangelist's Work," 46–50.

⁷² *Acts of John by Prochorus* 225–32; *Memorial of John* (longer version) 14–24. This version of the origins of the gospel of John quickly became influential for some Christian scribes who, before the text of the gospel of John, included an icon of John standing as intermediary between God and Prochorus, while Prochorus is sat down writing the gospel. This pictorial element in many Greek manuscripts of John witness to the broad reception that the story contained in the *Acts of John by Prochorus* had and how for many Christians this story was the normative version of the composition of John's gospel. For some manuscripts that depict this icon, see GA 106, GA 757, GA 758, GA 1142, GA 1686, GA 2370, and GA 2604.

⁷³ Foucault, "What Is an Author?" Foucault proposed in this famous essay that authors are not really those who penned a text, thereby deconstructing the romantic notion of authors, but those who were the founders of a type of discourse. Thus, John could be seen as an author in the Foucauldian sense of the term given that whether he dictated the fourth gospel to Prochorus, wrote it himself, or was just a funnel for the apostolic tradition, all these possibilities place John as the founder of the discourse associated with the fourth gospel.

⁷⁴ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Hypothesis* (preserved by Eusebius), *Hist. eccl.* 6.14; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.24.

By now it should be clear that late antique users of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* consciously identified the author as John the son of Zebedee, inviting others to engage with the text as an authentic apostolic work. Yet, some scribes went further by incorporating descriptors in the titles that were inextricably associated with John the son of Zebedee. Some manuscripts refer to John the Theologian a παρθένος.⁷⁵ In early Christian memory, John the son of Zebedee remained chaste.⁷⁶ Although παρθένος could be a generic descriptor given to anyone in antiquity, it becomes a distinctive trait of John the son of Zebedee.⁷⁷ This designation, when combined with other Johannine descriptors like theologian, apostle, and evangelist, reinforces the understanding that the author of this apocryphon is indeed John, the son of Zebedee.

Finally, some scribes also employed the word ἐπιστήθιος to characterize the author of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as John the son of Zebedee.⁷⁸ ἐπιστήθιος means “over the chest” and derives from John 13,25 (ἐκεῖνος οὕτως ἐπὶ τῷ στήθῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) where the beloved disciple reclines on the chest of Jesus. In the Christian tradition, ἐπιστήθιος becomes a shorthand for the beloved disciple, identified as John the son of Zebedee.⁷⁹ The infrequent use of this word in Greek literature suggests that it was coined in a Christian environment, with John as its primary referent.⁸⁰ Thus, in addition to the other descriptors, ἐπιστήθιος unequivocally gestures toward the identification of the author of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* with John, the son of Zebedee.

So far, we have established that scribes directed readers to think of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as being written by John the apostle, the son of Zebedee. But what did it mean for late antique readers to engage with this apocryphon as the true work of John the apostle?

First, if *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was intended to be read as a genuine work of John the apostle, then it would logically have the same authoritative status as other works penned by John, such as his gospel or his catholic letter. Regardless of what modern readers think about the authorship of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* – *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* is clearly pseudepigraphic – late antique readers believed it was written by John the apostle. This perception was not confined to the scribes copying the text, but they intentionally propagated it to influence others. Thus, the experience of a reader encountering *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* would have mirrored that of a reader engaging with *1 John*, particularly in how the scribes of both texts construed the authors through their titles (Table 2).⁸¹ Late antique readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* did not interpret the name John as a literary device meant to enhance the tradition associated with him or to assert the authority of the text.⁸² Instead, they believed that John had authored the work before them. Notably, the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* did not offer any indication to readers that they were reading a spurious and

⁷⁵ See Table 1.

⁷⁶ Tertullian, *Mon.* 17. See also the early *Acts of John*. For a complete description and commentary on the sources, see Junod, “La virginité de l’apôtre Jean.”

⁷⁷ See how “virgin/chaste” becomes an explicit descriptor of John the Theologian in *The (syriac) History of John the Son of Zebedee*, 2, cf. Lollar, *The History of John the Son of Zebedee*, 80. See as well, “First among these was John, the most revered ‘chosen instrument’ the purest tabernacle of virginity” (Blemmydes, *Encomium on John the Evangelist* 11; ed. and trans. Munitz, “Blemmydes’ Encomium on St John the Evangelist (BHG 931),” 306–7.). On this text, see, Tony Burke, “Encomium on John the Evangelist by Blemmydes.” e-Clavis: Christian Apocrypha. Accessed 8 Nov 2023. <https://www.nasscal.com/e-clavis-christian-apocrypha/encomium-on-john-the-evangelist-by-blemydes/>. Further, see Symeon Metaphrastes, *Hypomnema on John* (PG 116:685); Tony Burke, “Hypomnema on John, by Symeon Metaphrastes.” e-Clavis: Christian Apocrypha. Accessed 8 Nov 2023. <https://www.nasscal.com/e-clavis-christian-apocrypha/hypomnema-on-john-by-symeon-metaphrastes/>.

⁷⁸ See Table 1.

⁷⁹ Lampe, *A Patristic Greek*, 534.

⁸⁰ Pseudo-Clement, *Virg.* 1.6; Pseudo-John Chrysostom, *In infirmos* ln. 16; John Damascenus, *Orationes de imaginibus tres* 1.19; George Kedrenos, *Compendium historicum* ed. Bekker, *Georgius Cedrenus Ioannis Scylitzae opera*, 1:434. A TLG search confirms that ἐπιστήθιος is almost absent in non-Christian sources. Besides, note how classical Greek lexicons do not have an entry for this word, cf. Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 660; Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary*, 792; Diggle et al., *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon. Volume 1:A-I*, 1:576.

⁸¹ The titles of both works would have informed readers of *1 John* and *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* that the author of those texts was the same John the theologian, apostle, evangelist, and virgin. Thus, readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* would have experienced this text in the same manner as a reader of *1 John*, perceiving it as authored by John and therefore holding authority.

⁸² The authors of these fakes did thought of employing the names of the apostles as means to extending the traditions associated with them, cf. Najman, *Seconding Sinai*; Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination*; Rodenbiker, “The Second Peter.” However, this does not mean that ancient readers received these texts in this way.

Table 2: Comparison between author's construction in 1 John and 1 Apocr. Apoc. John

1 John		1 Apocr. Apoc. John	
Title	Manuscripts ^a	Title	Manuscripts ^b
Ιωαννου [του] αποστολου	429, 049, 1611, 0142, 436, 1067,	του αγιου [και πανεφημου] αποστολου	947, 364, 119, II.29, 298
Του [αγιου] αποστολου	2541, 1297, 1881, 020, 104,	και ευαγγεληστου Ιωαννου του	
ιωαννου	254, 1501	θεολογου	
Του [αγιου] ιωαννου			
αποστολου			
Ιωαννου του ευαγγελιστου	025v	του αγιου ιωαννου αποστολου και	XI.20, 355
και αποστολου		ευαγγελιστου επιστηθειου	
Του αγιου αποστολου	218, 1359, 1524	[ηγαπημενου] παρθενου του θεολογου	
ιωαννου του θεολογου			
Του αγιου αποστολου	93, 642, 665, 1718, 808	του αγιου ενδοξου και πανεφημου	356
ιωαννου του θεολογου και		αποστολου επιστηθιου φηλου του	
ευαγγελιστου		ιγαπημενου και παρθενου Ιωαννου	
Του αγιου και	1852	του θεολογου	
πανευφημου αποστολου			
ιωαννου του θεολογου			
Ιωαννου [του]	1243, 2544, 1292, 88, 915	του αγιου [και πανεφημου] αποστολου	947, 364, 119, II.29, 298
ευαγγελιστου		και ευαγγεληστου Ιωαννου του	
		θεολογου	
Ιωαννου του ευαγγελιστου	025v, 254, 1501	του αγιου ιωαννου αποστολου και	XI.20, 355
και αποστολου		ευαγγελιστου επιστηθειου	
Του αγιου αποστολου	93, 642, 665, 1718, 808	[ηγαπημενου] παρθενου του θεολογου	
ιωαννου του θεολογου και			
ευαγγελιστου			
[του αγιου] Ιωαννου [του]	1875, 94, 330, 43, 400, 1270,	[αγιου] Ιωαννου του θεολογου	O.8.33, 136, 1098, Panagiou
θεολογου	1595, 1127, 1844, 1359, 1524,		66, 206, 1034, II.42, 346,
	93, 642, 665, 1718, 808, 1852		II.90, 887, L113, 422
Παρθενου ιωαννου	2492	του αγιου αποστολου και	298
		ευαγγελιστου παρθενου Ιωαννου του	
		θεολογου	
		του αγιου ιωαννου αποστολου και	XI.20, 355
		ευαγγελιστου επιστηθειου	
		[ηγαπημενου] παρθενου του θεολογου	
		του αγιου ενδοξου και πανεφημου	356
		αποστολου επιστηθιου φηλου του	
		ιγαπημενου και παρθενου Ιωαννου	
		του θεολογου	

^aComplete details on the manuscripts listed here can be found in Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung/The Institute for New Testament Textual Research et al., *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior. Vol. 4*; Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung/The Institute for New Testament Textual Research et al., *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior. Vol. 4*, 5–32.

^bComplete details on the manuscripts listed here can be found in Table 1.

nonauthoritative text. Consequently, readers of 1 Apocr. Apoc. John did not experience this text as a fake or apocryphal.⁸³ In other words, late antique readers of 1 Apocr. Apoc. John were directed to read this text genuine and authoritative, even if not “canonical” in the sense of a belonging to a closed collection of authoritative writings.⁸⁴

⁸³ It is possible to understand a book as “apocryphal” not in the sense of not belonging to the canon but rather as “fake” and thus non-authoritative, cf. Nicklas, “Christian Apocrypha,” 225. On the issue of the definition of “apocrypha,” see Norelli, *Marie des apocryphes*, 18–26.

⁸⁴ I agree with Tobias Nicklas’ suggestion that many apocryphal writings were meant to be authoritative even if they did not pretend to be included in the canon, cf. Nicklas, “Christian Apocrypha,” 223. 1 Apocr. Apoc. John seems to belong to this kind of apocryphal writings.

In contrast to the perspective of late antique readers, modern renditions of the text under study in this article refer to it as *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*. The term “first” serves to distinguish it from others Johannine apocalypses, and its designation as apocryphal implies its purported falseness and lack of authority, especially in contrast to the now canonical Apocalypse of John.⁸⁵ Authority, in this context, is tied to whether John the apostle genuinely authored the apocryphal text. Whereas, in modern discussions, we categorize and divide texts as “orthodox” and “heterodox,” “authoritative” and “nonauthoritative,” these distinctions are theoretical, made from a position of power, and may not encapsulate how late antique readers approached these texts, neither reflect how “canonical” the lives of the “apocryphal” texts might have been during their transmission.⁸⁶

That is not to say that late antique thinkers did not distinguish between canonical and apocryphal texts, and between authoritative and non-authoritative texts. In fact, early Christian figures like Eusebius, Athanasius, or Augustine made efforts to identify which writings should be placed within canonical boundaries and which ones should be left outside.⁸⁷ Further, others acknowledged the extra-canonical status of many writings and read them as such anyway.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, that a text might not be found in Athanasius’ festal letter does not mean that it could not be considered Scripture and authoritative for other writers and *vice versa*.⁸⁹ As Shoemaker rightly wrote “the anti-apocryphal rhetoric of certain church fathers did not always correspond with the real status of apocrypha in Christian churches.”⁹⁰ For instance, Athanasius excluded 2 Baruch as Scripture/authoritative, while Syriac writers consider it as such. Furthermore, Athanasius considered Revelation as canonical, but it was not universally accepted.⁹¹ Therefore, the designation of a text as “apocryphal/non-authoritative” does not necessarily correspond with the perceptions of readers.⁹²

As we stated briefly in the introduction, one of our best guides to understand the late antique reception of an “apocryphal” book by its readers is to examine the paratexts of the manuscripts, particularly the titles.⁹³ This method allows us to discern what readers actually thought about these texts.⁹⁴ This method also enables a more nuance understanding of “apocryphal” texts because it looks at them through the eyes of the actual users and not only through canon lists enforcing an artificial division when it comes to the materiality of texts’ transmission.⁹⁵ As Lied has argued,

This focus on paratexts, such as titles and introductory addresses, has provided new insight into the cultural conceptions of the communities that produced and engaged with the manuscripts. Titles and introductory addresses are intriguing precisely because they serve as windows into the literary imagination of the communities that preserved copies of a text, showing how the manuscript producers identified, represented, and communicated that text to their readers.⁹⁶

Consider the so-called *Protevangelium of James* as an example. Grouped under the subtitle “Gospel-related material” and considered “apocryphal (i.e., as non-canonical, false, and fictional)” in many modern translations of Christian apocrypha, this text exemplifies how the value statements made by modern readers do not

⁸⁵ Kaestli and Picard, “Première apocalypse,” 983.

⁸⁶ On the difficulties of designating something as “apocryphal,” see Mimouni, “Le concept d’apocryphité dans le christianisme ancien et médiéval;” Marksches, “Haupteinleitung;” Reed, “Afterlives.”

⁸⁷ On Athanasius, Brakke, “Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt;” Brakke, “A New Fragment of Athanasius’ Thirtieth-Ninth Festal Letter;” Brakke, “Scriptural Practices in Early Christianity.”

⁸⁸ See for instance Priscillian of Avila, cf. Jacobs, “The Disorder of Books.”

⁸⁹ Shoemaker, “Early Christian Apocryphal Literature.”

⁹⁰ Ibid., 526.

⁹¹ On 2 Baruch, see Lied, *Invisible Manuscripts*. On the canonical and non-canonical status of Revelation, see Kruger, “The Reception of the Book of Revelation in the Early Church;” Boxall, “Reception History and the Interpretation of Revelation;” Hill, “The Interpretation of the Book of Revelation in Early Christianity.”

⁹² Aasgaard, “The Protevangelium of James.”

⁹³ Tuckett, “What’s in a Name? How ‘apocryphal’ are the ‘apocryphal gospels?’”

⁹⁴ See for instance, Haines-Eitzen, “The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles on Papyrus;” Hurtado, “Who Read Early Christian Apocrypha?;” Allen, *Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation*, 156–92; Lied, “Epistles from Jerusalem.”

⁹⁵ Chapa, “Textual Transmission of ‘Canonical’ and ‘Apocryphal’ Writings within the Development of the New Testament Canon: Limits and Possibilities.”

⁹⁶ Lied, “Epistles from Jerusalem,” 1.

correlate with the reading experience of its late antique users.⁹⁷ The titles of almost 150 Greek manuscripts that preserve this text reveal that late antique and medieval readers did not consider *Protevangelium of James* a gospel but rather a history (ιστορία), a treatise or discourse (λόγος), or a historical account (λόγος ιστορικός).⁹⁸ These designations point out that scribes of this work led late antique readers to think of the *Protevangelium of James* not as a fictional/fake account of the nativity of Mary but as a true account of her conception and birth.⁹⁹ Moreover, most manuscripts consider James as the author of the *Protevangelium*.¹⁰⁰ Then, many scribes directed their readers to believe that this text was written by James, thereby the *Protevangelium* would have enjoyed the same authority that canonical texts like the *Epistles of James* had, given that the paratexts of both works presented the same James as their author (Table 3).¹⁰¹ That is, in virtue of apostolic origin, both texts would have been considered authoritative.

Therefore, readers of *Protevangelium* did not consider the text to be fake, false, fictional, or even pseudonymous. Instead, they viewed the *Protoevangelium of James* as a true historical account of the nativity of Mary written by James the brother of Jesus, thereby an authoritative text.¹⁰² The authoritative character of the *Protoevangelium* for its late antique readers explains why the text was so influential, popular, and central for imagining and depicting the early life of the virgin Mary.¹⁰³ Calling the *Protoevangelium* an apocryphal text – in the sense of having no historical value nor authority – bespeaks more about modern anxieties caused by canon-fueled power structures than about the actual reading experiences of the users of this text.

Similarly, *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* follows a similar pattern. Although modern readers and some late antique readers labeled it “apocryphal,”¹⁰⁴ the scribes intentionally framed readers, through titles, to believe it was an authoritative work by John the son of Zebedee. Thus, paratexts challenge the separation between canonical and non-canonical texts since traditional classifications of these texts do not reflect the experience of many antique readers. Titles correct this short-sighted approach. In the case of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, the apocryphal colonized the terrain of the canonical. That is, titles, through similar constructions of authorship, directed readers to approach both *1 John* and *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as authoritative works by John the apostle.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, while we can theorize today about texts being “authoritative,” “apocryphal,” “orthodox,” etc., the actual experiences of readers sometimes blurred or obliterated such distinctions, as exemplified by *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*.

⁹⁷ For an excellent study that demonstrates the usefulness of looking at the paratexts to discover the actual reading experiences of their uses – encoded in the manuscripts – as a corrective against many of the modern assumptions and categorizations made by modern scholars regarding “apocryphal” texts, see Fowler, “The Protevangelium of James in Papyrus Bodmer V.”

⁹⁸ Zervos, *The Protevangelium of James*, 95–9. On the labeling of this text as “*Protevangelium*,” see Fowler, “The Protevangelium of James in Papyrus Bodmer V,” 2–3. and the bibliography therein.

⁹⁹ On history as the report of truthful events, cf. “History, on the other hand, abhors the intrusion of any least scruple of falsehood; it is like the windpipe, which the doctors tell us will not tolerate a morsel of stray food” (Lucian, *Quomodo Historia* 7). I do not mean to present a naïve vision where “history” in antiquity is equivalent to history in modern times, neither I wish to project in ancient historiography the same objectives and method of modern positivism. Although I recognize that ancient historians had creative license when it came to discourses or how to present certain events, I think they were interested in facts when writing history even if their presentation of them was colored by presuppositions, cf. Pitcher, *Writing Ancient History*. On the importance of reading the *Protevangelium of James* as history, see Allen, “The ‘Protevangelium of James’ as an ‘Historia’.”

¹⁰⁰ See, for instance, 109, 001, 628, 408, 81, 626, 218, 501, 513, 801, 802, cf. Zervos, *The Protevangelium of James*, 95–9.

¹⁰¹ The titles of both the *Epistle of James* and the *Protevangelium of James* exhibit a resemblance in the way they portray James as their author. The paratexts of both texts depict James as an apostle, as the brother of God/the Lord, and someone connected with Jerusalem, cf. Table 3. Thus, just as a late antique reader would have approached the epistle of James, attributing authorship to the historical character James and thereby granting authority to the epistle, that same reader would extend authority to the *Protevangelium of James* because it is presented as if it were authored by the same historical figure, shaping the reader’s perception and endorsement of its authoritative status.

¹⁰² Oyen, “The Protevangelium Jacobi;” Verheyden, “The Early Church and ‘the Other Gospels.’”

¹⁰³ For the influence of the *Protevangelium* on Christian art, see Cartlidge and Elliot, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*, 21–46.

¹⁰⁴ See the *scholion* to Dionysius Thrax’ grammar where it reads “And there is another called the Apocalypse of the Theologian. We are not speaking of the one in the island of Patmos – God forbid, for that one is supremely true – but of a pseudonymous and spurious one” (Hilgard, *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammaticam*, 565–81, trans. Court, *The Book of Revelation*, 30).

¹⁰⁵ See Table 2.

Table 3: Comparison between author's construction in James' Epistle and Protevangelium of James

Epistle of James		Protevangelium of James	
Title	Manuscripts ^a	Title	Manuscripts ^b
[του αγιου] Ιακωβου [του] αποστολου [Του αγιου] αποστολου ιακωβου Ιακωβου αδελφοθεου Ιακωβου αποστολου του αδελφοθεου	025, 88, 319, 915, 1735, 1852, 326, 0142, 436, 1067, 2541, 049, 2544, 442, 1390, 1367, 020, 254, 1524, 69, 459, 1842, 93, 665 1739, 945 (sic), 104c, 1875 1501	Ιακωβου [αγιου] του αποστολου Του [αγιου] αποστολου ιακωβου Ιακωβου [αγιου] του αποστολου [και] του αδελφοθεου Του αγιου αποστολου ιακωβου του αδελφοθεου [του αγιου] Ιακωβου [του] αδελφοθεου [του αγιου] Ιακωβου του αδελφου του κυριου Ιακωβου ιεροσολυμων Ιακωβου αρχιεπισκοπου ιεροσολυμων Ιακωβου του αδελφοθεου και αρχιεπισκοπου ιεροσολυμων Του αγιου αποστολου ιακωβου αρχιεπισκοπου ιεροσολυμων του αδελφοθεου Ιακωβου επισκοπου ιεροσολυμων Ιακωβου του αποστολου και αδελφοθεου επισκοπου ιεροσολυμων Του αγιου και πανευφημου αποστολου ιακωβου επισκοπου ιεροσολυμων Του μεγαλου αποστολου πανευφημου και ευδοξου και πρωτου Αρχιερεως ιακωβου του αδελφοθεου Πατριαρχου ιεροσολυμων Ιακωβου του αδελφοθεου	614, 517, 207, 101, 509, 604, 805, 510, 205, 307, 304, 403, 505, 401, 703, 707, 803, 105, 112, 211, 511, 709, 507, 902, 608 101, 805, 212, 631, 304, 702, 506, 615, 619, 621, 512, 601, 004, 511, 709, 301, 608 306, 108, 612, 002, 402, 606, 208, 616, 617, 705, 901, 609, 111, 104 217, 602, 118, 303, 411, 115, 201, 204, 412, 94, 105, 112, 902 623, 209 302, 212 702 304 805, 114, 631, 006, 902 703, 707, 803 403, 505 401 506

^aComplete details on the manuscripts listed here can be found in Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung/The Institute for New Testament Textual Research et al., *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior. Vol. 4*; Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung/The Institute for New Testament Textual Research et al., *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior. Vol. 4*, 5–32.

^bComplete details on the manuscripts listed here can be found in Zervos, *The Protevangelium of James*, 30–41.

Second, an interesting phenomenon arises when comparing the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* with those of the canonical Revelation in their Greek manuscripts. This comparison reveals a striking resemblance between both titular traditions. Both works share the following titles “Ιωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου ἀποκάλυψις,” “ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου,” “ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ πανεφήμου ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου,” “ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ ἁγίου ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου,” and “ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ ἁγίου ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ παρθένου Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου,” along with shared significant terminology and structure in others (Table 4). This phenomenon suggests that some late antique readers of these texts had the same reading experience irrespective of whether they were reading *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* or the canonical Revelation.

Table 4: Comparison between the titles of 1 Apocr. Apoc. John and canonical Revelation

1 Apocr. Apoc. John		Canonical Revelation of John ^a	
Titles	Manuscript	Titles	Manuscript
Αποκαλυψις ιωαννου του θεολογου	Cambridge, Trinity College, O.8.33, fols. 98r–102r (16th cent.) [12022]	Ιωαννου του θεολογου αποκαλυψις	93 ^{inscr} 314
Αποκαλιψις του Ιωαννου του θεολογου και περι της ελεσεως του αντιχριστου	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, suppl. gr. 136, fols. 28v–40v (16th cent.) [52906]		
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου ιωαννου του θεολογου	Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 1098, fols. 15r–17v (1506–1507) [3394]	Αποκαλυψις του αγιου ιωαννου του θεολογου	18 35 42 ^{sub} 93 ^{sub} 149 218 256 296 325 ^{sub} 367 368 386 ^{inscr} 456 468 ^{inscr} 517 ^{sub} 664 757 ^{tel sub}
Απόκαλυψις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	Jerusalem, Patriarchikē bibliothēkē, Panagiu Taphou 66, fols. 378v–385r (15th cent.) [35303]		808 1094 1424 ^{sub} 1678 1732 ^{tel} sub 1876 1893 1903 1948 2016 2020 2025 2038 ^{arx} 2076 2080 2138 2196 2200 2258 2323 2351
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	Mount Athos, Monē Dionusiou, 206 (Lampros 3740), no fol. numbers provided (17th cent.)		
Η Αποκαλυψις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	[D] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 1034, fols. 120r–134v (15th cent.) [50627]		
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου ιωαννου του θεολογου	[C] Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II.42, fols. 285r–291r (13th century)		
Αποκαληψις του αγιου Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι της δευτερας παρουσιας και της συντελειας	Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 346, fols. 36r–41v (15th cent.) [2642]		
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου και πανεψημου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου ευλογου	[B]Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 947, fols. 26v–32v (1574 CE) [50536]	Αποκαλυψις του αγιου και πανεψημου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	1849 ^{inscr} 2845 2846
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	[F]Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. gr. 364, fols. 110r–116v (15th cent.) [66096]	Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και	432 1064 1328 1384 1685 1732 ^{inscr} 1733 1740 1768 1771
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι του αντιχριστου	[G]Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, hist.gr. 119, fols. 108r–115v (15th century)	ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	1865 2051 2066 2723 2759
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου Ιωαννου του θεολογου περι του αντιχριστου και περι της δευτερας παρουσιας του κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου	London, Highgate School, II. 29, fols. 112v–120v (15th cent.)		
Αποκαλυψις του αγιου αποστολου και ευαγγελιστου παρθενου Ιωαννου του θεολογου	Mount Athos, Monē Dionusiou, 298 (Lampros 3832), fols. 136v–145r (17th cent.)	Αποκαλυψις του αγιου και ευαγγελιστου αποστολου Ιωαννου παρθενου του θεολογου	2638

^aAll the information concerning the titles from the manuscripts transmitting CR comes from Allen, “Paratexts and the Reception History of the Apocalypse,” 627–32. For codicological information about the manuscripts of the canonical Revelation, see Lembke et al., *VI Die Apokalypse*, 151–72; Müller, *Der griechische Text der Johannesapokalypse und seine Überlieferung*, 115–276.

In this context, individuals encountering *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* with the title “ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου” or those approaching canonical Revelation with the same title would both believe they were reading the “Revelation of Saint John the Theologian,” given that the scribes of both works mediated different texts through the same title.¹⁰⁶ Since titles create thresholds through which people negotiate the pre-conditions necessary to engage with a text, readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* and canonical Revelation were led to meet under the same threshold and negotiate the same pre-requisites to read two different works. Consequently, these groups of readers, guided by the scribes who presented both works as the Apocalypse of John, had analogous reading experiences despite engaging two different texts. This evidence problematizes the notion that late antique readers consistently differentiated between “apocryphal” and “canonical” texts in a clear-cut manner.

Moreover, some clarifications are necessary. First, those readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* unfamiliar with canonical Revelation would have read *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as if it were canonical given the widespread knowledge that John the apostle had written an apocalypse.¹⁰⁷ The titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, framing the work as a Johannine apocalypse, likely led readers to consider it the true/canonical and only Apocalypse of John, especially if they lacked familiarity with canonical Revelation.¹⁰⁸ In this context, *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* would have replaced canonical Revelation.¹⁰⁹ However, readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* who were acquainted with canonical Revelation, encountering two texts with identical titles, might have viewed *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as a complement or expansion of canonical Revelation.¹¹⁰

Third, the insistence of late antique scribes insisted on attributing authorship of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* to John the son of Zebedee implies that the “apocryphon” should be read as part of the Johannine corpus, alongside the Gospel of John, 1-3 John, and the Apocalypse of John – all believed to be written by the same author.¹¹¹ Reading a work within a corpus, as opposed to reading it on its own, suggests an expectation that it will complement the other components of the literary group, providing clues into ambiguous declarations or

¹⁰⁶ See the *scholion* to Dionysius Thrax quoted above.

¹⁰⁷ I am grateful to Chance Bonar who pointed out this to me. Furthermore, *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* and canonical Revelation share several thematic threads. The similitudes range from the “Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης” in CR 1:9 and *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 1:1, the use of “[παρὰ]γινομαι” in CR 1:9 and *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 1:1, the fact that John falls after contemplating Jesus’ glory in both accounts (“ἔπεσα πρὸς” [CR 1:17]; “ἔπεσα ἐπὶ” [*1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 1:2]), John’s designation of himself as a slave (“τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ” [CR 1:1]; “τῷ δούλῳ σου” [*1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 1:5]), the vision of the heaven as opened (“ἰδοὺ θύρα ἡνεωγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ” [CR 4:1]; “εἶδον ἀνεωγῶτα τὸν οὐρανόν” [*1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 2:3]), to the mention of the book with seven seals inaccessible to human beings (“Καὶ εἶδον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιάν τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου βιβλίον γεγραμμένον κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγίσιν ἑπτὰ” [CR 5:1]; “εἶδον βιβλίον κείμενον. τὸ δὲ μῆκος αὐτοῦ νοῦς ἀνθρώπων οὐ δύναται καταλαβεῖν, ἔχοντα σφραγίδας ἑπτὰ” [*1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 3:1-2])). These similitudes increase the possibilities that a reader unaware of canonical Revelation’s contents could consider *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* as if it were canonical Revelation.

¹⁰⁸ I think the *scholion* quoted above also demonstrate that certain people were reading *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as if it were canonical Revelation and thus some sort of distinction had to be made.

¹⁰⁹ Some authors have suggested that this was indeed the purpose for which *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was written, cf. Kaestli, “La Figure de l’Antichrist.”

¹¹⁰ This also coincides with the purpose some authors have devised to explain the creation of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, cf. Weinel, “Die spätere christliche Apokalyptik,” 149; Court, *The Book of Revelation*, 23.

¹¹¹ Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church*, 449–64; Goswell, “The Johannine Corpus and the Unity of the New Testament Canon,” Gonzaga, “A acolhida e o lugar do Corpus Joanino no cânon do Novo Testamento.” The Johannine corpus was not the same everywhere. Initially, 2-3 John were not seen as canonical although after the fourth century few doubted their canonicity. However, Revelation was on and off part of the corpus, depending on the community that read the text. At least in the Greek-speaking side of the early Church, we could speak of Revelation as belonging to the Johannine corpus in the second to fourth centuries and later in the sixth century, at least by some communities that engaged with the text and considered canonical such as the reading communities to which the commentaries by Oecumenius and Andrew of Caesarea were directed. Nonetheless, the canonicity of Revelation was still discussed by the tenth century when Arethas of Caesarea wrote his commentary. This means that *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* could have been placed by some readers in a Johannine corpus which did not have Revelation as an integral part. On the reception of Revelation, see Chilton, *Visions of the Apocalypse*; Kretschmar, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*; Maier, *Die Johannesoffenbarung und die Kirche*; Hill, *Regnum Caelorum*; Hill, “The Interpretation of the Book of Revelation in Early Christianity,” Boxall, “Reception History and the Interpretation of Revelation,” Schmidt, *The Book of Revelation and Its Eastern Commentators*; Cardozo Mindiola, “Tras las pisadas de la mujer y el dragón,” 32–50; Cardozo Mindiola, ‘Fabricating the Fall of Satan’. Moreover, readers could also have placed *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as part of a corpus containing other apocryphal apocalypses attributed to John such as the *2 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* and the *3 Apocryphal Apocalypses of John*.

filling gaps left in other places of the corpus. If *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was considered a genuine work of John the son of Zebedee, then readers were encouraged to interpret it as an expansion, as a complement, as a clarification, or a means of filling gaps in other Johannine writings since the works of the same author should share a structural unity on several issues.¹¹² However, a close comparison between *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* and the Johannine corpus reveals limited affinity, except for the book of Revelation. Therefore, by telling readers to engage with *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as a part of the Johannine corpus, particularly in relation to the book of Revelation, the scribes influenced them to read both texts interrelatedly, treating *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as an interpretative guide to Revelation, elucidating the meaning of its confusing symbols.¹¹³

4 Subject Matter

The last way in which titles helped readers in navigating the contents of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* was by delineating the scope of its subject matter. Regarding the subject matter of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, the Greek manuscripts vary in conceptualizing the main topic of this apocalypse. Some scribes chose to emphasize the antichrist as the main subject of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*.¹¹⁴ However, the antichrist is not the primary concern of this apocalypse, as a more considerable portion of the text is dedicated to the themes of resurrection, the second coming, and the judgment than to the antichrist. Thus, the fact that some scribes decided to foreground the antichrist as the subject matter of the apocalypse may signify an intention to prompt readers to focus on the unique contribution that *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* made to the antichrist discourse prevalent in Christian sources of Late Antiquity.¹¹⁵

Moreover, other scribes perceived that the antichrist was not the exclusive focus of the apocalypse, choosing to include the second coming alongside the antichrist as thematic descriptors of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*.¹¹⁶ This dual description could reflect an attempt by these scribes to organize the contents of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* into two axes. Admittedly, the first half, encompassing chapters 3-5 and 9-12, could be organized around the antichrist, delineating the conditions preceding his appearance and ensuing consequences, namely, the death and resurrection of all mankind. The second half, comprising chapters 13-16 and 20-28, may be organized around the second coming, elucidating the necessary conditions for the Lord's Parousia and the subsequent judgment and rewards.

However, some scribes opted to group all the topics present in *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* under the heading of the second coming, suggesting that, for them, the antichrist, the resurrection, and the cleansing of the earth are mere preludes to the Lord's return.¹¹⁷ For this group of scribes, the events of the end-times centered on the second coming to the extent that it could encompass the entire eschaton through synecdoche.

Furthermore, some scribes explicitly conveyed the idea that the second coming could encompass all eschatological events by framing the subject matter of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as dealing with both the second coming and the end of the world.¹¹⁸ Conversely, others preferred to encapsulate the subject matter of *1 Apocr.*

¹¹² Barker proposes that the *Acts of John* could be seen as part of the Johannine corpus since it would complement it by (1) filling the gap left by the fact that there were no texts belonging to the genre of Acts in the corpus (2) providing the backstory of John's missionary journeys which would help explain the contents of his writings, cf. Barker, "The Acts of John within the Johannine Corpus." See further, Frey, "Erwägungen zum Verhältnis der Johannesapokalypse zu den übrigen Schriften des Corpus Johanneum;" Frey, "Das Corpus Johanneum und die Apokalypse des Johannes."

¹¹³ This relationship, however, would have not been as straightforward as one might think. For a comparison between canonical Revelation and *1 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*, see Valeriani, "Simbolismo ed escatologia nell'Apocalisse apocrica di Giovanni."

¹¹⁴ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, suppl. gr. 136, fols. 28v–40v and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, hist.gr. 119, fols. 108r–115v.

¹¹⁵ Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*; McGinn, *Antichrist*; Badilita, *Métamorphoses de L'Antichrist*, 502–3; Kaestli, "La Figure de l'Antichrist;" Valeriani, "L'artifice di iniquità."

¹¹⁶ London, Highgate School, II. 29, fols. 112v–120v and Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 355, fols. 30r–37v.

¹¹⁷ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, L113 sup., fols. 167r–170r and Mount Athos, Mone Batopediou, 422, fols. 83–88.

¹¹⁸ Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 346, fols. 36r–41v and Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II.90, fols. 249r–255r.

Apoc. John under the term συντελεια, presenting all the aforementioned topics as stages leading to the final consummation.¹¹⁹

Regardless of the version of the subject matter of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* encountered by readers, all the scribes of this apocalypse influenced them to perceive it as eschatological. Whether the reader construed *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as concerning the antichrist, the second coming, or the end of the world, these topics represented classical eschatological *topoi*. As such, all readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* comprehended the contents of the book as relating to the end of the world. In doing so, the scribes managed readers' expectations about *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, delimiting the content of the new revelation implied by the apocalyptic genre to classical *topoi* of cosmic eschatology in Late Antiquity. Consequently, the scribes of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* created reading experiences similar akin to those of readers of texts such as Pseudo-Hippolytus' *de consummatione mundi* or Pseudo-Ephrem's *Sermo in aduentum domini, et de consummatione saeculi, et in aduentum antichristi*.¹²⁰ A key difference lies in that readers of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* attributed apostolic authority and truthfulness to the depiction of the end in this apocalypse. Nevertheless, aside from this distinction, the scribes of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* guided readers to locate the eschatological discourse of this text in the same register of many other eschatological treatises that dealt with the same topics, maybe even guiding them to read *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* alongside them.

5 Conclusion

Upon careful examination of the evidence and analysis presented earlier, it can be concluded that paratexts, particularly titles, exerted significant influence over *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*'s readers in Late Antiquity. The titles served as guiding markers, directing readers to interpret this text as an apocalypse – a disclosing of unknown information belonging exclusively to God, pertaining to cosmic eschatology. Despite the possibility of scribes conceptualizing the text as *erotapokriseis*, highlighting the formal literary feature of the dialogue between Jesus and John, they decided to emphasize the apocalyptic nature of the document. This choice influenced readers to approach the text as possessing a divine origin.

Furthermore, the titles of this apocalypse construed John as its author, ensuring that readers engaged with the text as an authentic and authoritative work grounded on apostolic authority. This framing discouraged readers from perceiving *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as an apocryphon – deemed spurious and non-authoritative – prompting them to regard it as a true work of John the apostle. There exists even the possibility that some readers might have read *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as if it were the canonical Revelation of John.

Finally, the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* shaped the reading experience by delimiting the subject matter of the treatise as eschatological. Thus, as readers approached this text, the titles mediated a revelation about classical eschatological *topoi* such as the antichrist, the second coming, the resurrection, among others. Examining the titles of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* as paratexts evinces their profound impact on text interpretation.

¹¹⁹ Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 356, fols. 300v–306r. One exception seems to be Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. XI. 20, fols. 303r–313r, which along with the end of the world highlight the antichrist as also the subject matter of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*.

¹²⁰ See, for instance, Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 394, fols. 293v–381v, which has as the *inscriptio* of Pseudo-Hippolytus' *Consummatione mundi* Λογος του εν αγιοις πατρος ημων και ιερομαρτυρος ιππολυτου παπα ρωμης και περι της συντελειας του κοσμου και περι του αντιχριστου και εις την β παρουσιαν του κυριου ημων ιησου χριστου. Several other manuscripts contain a similar title (e.g. Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 457, fols. 51v–75v). As for Pseudo-Ephrem, Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 286, fols. 175v–186v preserve the following title for his sermon on the antichrist Λογος περι του αντιχριστου και περι της συντελειας του κοσμου. Athens, Ethnikē Bibliothēkē, gr. 457, fols. 42r–50v similarly entitle Pseudo-Ephrem's sermon as Λογος εις την παρουσιαν του κυριου και περι συντελειας και εις την παρουσιαν του αντιχριστου. These tendencies evince that for late antique readers *de consummatione mundi* and the *Sermo in aduentum domini, et de consummatione saeculi, et in aduentum antichristi* dealt with eschatological *topoi* exactly as *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* did. These similarities point out that the reading experiences of both texts were similar and interlocked. On the eschatological depictions of these texts, see Grypeou, "Ephraem Graecus, 'Sermo In Adventum Domini' A Contribution to the Study of the Transmission of Apocalyptic Motifs in Greek, Latin and Syriac Traditions in Late Antiquity," Badilita, *Métamorphoses de L'Antichrist*, 371–7.

They convey information that impact how others read the text, creating spaces where authors and readers converge to negotiate meaning. Moreover, a study of these titles proves instrumental in recovering the reading experience of *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*. Thus, this investigation proves the usefulness of scrutinizing the paratexts of the so-called apocryphal literature, as the reading experience preserved in manuscripts often differs from the one construed by its opponents. This article aspires to motivate further exploration of paratexts in apocryphal literature, thereby enriching our understanding of this distinctive imaginative literary corpus.

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