

SBL 2024 – Claire Clivaz, Textual Criticism Seminar

“Our Fathers”: The Consciousness of Belonging to the Judeo-Christians?

A test case with New Testament variants

Claire Clivaz, RSCS (UCLouvain, BE)

A series of variants in the Acts of the Apostles and a variant in Hebrews 1:1 hesitate between the expressions οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν (*our fathers*), οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν (*your fathers*), or simply οἱ πατέρες (*the fathers*), drawing different relationships to the same group of ancestors. Thanks to this test case, this paper argues that New Testament textual criticism (NTTC) can bring crucial elements to the discussion about the *Dial. Try.* 47.2 and 48.4 of Justin (2nd century). A variant in *Dial. Try.* 48.4 may indicate that Justin includes the Ebionites among the Christians (Bobichon 2003).

The intersection of the Patristic investigation with the NTTC helps us to understand better what might have been at stake in the readings of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. First, the two oldest witnesses of Heb 1:1, P⁴⁶ (175-225 CE) and P¹² (264-282 CE) qualify the *fathers* as *ours*, as already underlined (Clivaz, 2011, 48; Clivaz 2019a, 283). We can now add to this file the interesting case of the Christian Palestinian Aramaic version of Heb 1:1, which also refers to *our fathers* (ܐܘܪܝܢܐ, Müller-Kessler & Sokoloff, 1998). In addition, the title of the Epistle is introduced by ܐ, a determinant in the genitive, *of the Hebrews* (Sokoloff, 2014). Other variants in Acts could testify to similar hesitations about the consciousness of belonging or having belonged to the Judeo-Christians, as Maertens has shown (2012). This awareness can be flexible, depending on the rhetorical framework: Philo sometimes rhetorically distances himself from some of his countrymen (*Praem.* 162: “their fathers”, Maertens 2012). The discussion of this NTTC test case supports Verheyden’s point of view about Trypho, who has a “far more open mind towards Christianity, so it seems, than the rabbis who are met later on in the Mishnah or the Talmud” (Verheyden, 2021, 320).

About the new Christian Palestinian Aramaic Font « CPA-DM »:

A new CPA font has been produced by Alain J. Desreumaux (CNRS, Paris) and Tim Meylan (HEVS, Sierre), in a project led Claire Clivaz in collaboration with Jérémy Formaz (Forme.ch): <https://github.com/sib-swiss/dh-cpa>

Also available with guidelines to install the font on Nakala: <https://doi.org/10.58079/veqs>

The CPA-DM font can be tested without installation on a KeyManWeb built by Silvano Aldà (SIB, CH): <https://etalk.sib.swiss/cpa>

C. Clivaz and A. J. Desreumaux, “Christian Palestinian Aramaic Encoding”, *Unicode Technical Note #52, Version 2*, December 2023 : <https://www.unicode.org/notes/tn52/>