

Prooftexting from Other People’s Scriptures? “Prophets and Patriarchs” in Acts of Philip 5–7*

Julia Snyder

Westcott House, Cambridge; jas249@cam.ac.uk

■ Abstract

What role has the “Old Testament” played in the self-understanding of Christians over the centuries, and what can we learn from the fact that Israel’s scriptures are often cited in early Christian texts? Using the Acts of Philip as a case study, this article argues that we should not assume all early Christian writers thought of these as “my own scriptures.” When we encounter citations from Israel’s scriptures in Christian texts, a variety of interpretive options should be considered, including the possibility that some writers saw Israel’s scriptures as “other people’s scriptures, not ours,” or would have consigned them a limited role in the Christian life, treating them as relevant for apologetics and evangelism—or for talking *about* apologetics and evangelism—but not for ongoing Christian discipleship. The article offers a new interpretation of Acts Phil. 5–7 and also examines Qur’anic citations in the *Dialogue of Timothy I and the Caliph*.

■ Keywords

citation practices, reception of scripture, supersessionism, interreligious relations, Acts of Philip, *Dialogue of Timothy I and the Caliph*

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■ Introduction

In Acts Phil. 5–7, a narrative about the apostle Philip that may trace to the fourth or fifth century CE, a prominent “Jewish” leader named Aristarchos challenges Philip to a public debate about Jesus. As the debate begins, Aristarchos asks Philip, “Do you accept the prophetic voices?” (Acts Phil. 6.13).¹ Philip replies, “Because of your ἀπιστία [faithlessness or unbelief] prophets are needed.” Aristarchos then cites a number of things that “have been written,” such as “One god created everything,” and Philip responds with his own catalog of citations, such as “Out of Egypt I called my son,” concluding, “The whole chorus of the prophets and all the patriarchs proclaimed about the coming of Christ.” Aristarchos and Philip then have a contest of miracles, and the (non-Jewish) crowd decides that Philip represents the living god.

To modern readers, the fact that Philip cites from “the prophets and the patriarchs” might not seem particularly striking. Isn’t he just citing his own sacred texts? Although that is one possible interpretation of the scene, his initial remark—“Because of your ἀπιστία prophets are needed”—invites us to consider whether the story could also be understood in other ways. This article will discuss several options, including the possibility that Acts Phil. 5–7 depicts Philip as citing “other people’s scriptures” rather than his own (i.e., “the Jews’ scriptures, not ours”) when he references “the prophets and the patriarchs.” To develop the latter point, we will also explore Qur’anic citations in an eighth-century dialogue between Patriarch Timothy I and the third Abbasid caliph, al-Mahdī.

As we will see, these texts raise a number of questions that are significant for the study of early Christian texts and history more broadly, as well as for cognate areas of research. What can be inferred from the mere fact that someone cites a particular text? What stances have Christians over the centuries taken toward Israel’s scriptures? For some Christians, have texts had less functional authority than persons? Were “sacred texts” really “the lifeblood of virtually every aspect of [early] Christian communities,”² as is often presumed? Since citation of earlier sources has been a common feature of Christian writing since ancient times, these questions are salient for interpretation of a wide range of literature, and answers to them also influence the overall pictures scholars draw of the status and role of particular texts—or texts in general—in early Christian communities.

Among other things, this article will argue that when we encounter citations from Israel’s scriptures in early Christian texts, we should not assume that they are necessarily being viewed by the writers as “my own scriptures” in a current, active sense. While not all scholars operate with this assumption, it nevertheless continues

¹ This is the reading of manuscript *Xenophontos* 32. More information about the two extant manuscripts is provided below.

² Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens, introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) 1–3, at 1.

to shape many studies of early Christian literature, which often treat figures like Marcion as the exception to the rule in that regard. There can be a tendency to assume that Christians who did not make a point of distancing themselves from Israel's scriptures—or who did not share Marcion's reported cosmological ideas—probably embraced these texts as “their own.” Indeed, I myself assumed that about Acts Phil. 5–7 when I first began analyzing the narrative, and no other scholars to date have suggested otherwise. In response to this common scholarly tendency, the current study will highlight the need to assess the significance of citations from Israel's scriptures (or from other works) in each ancient text individually, and with a variety of possibilities in mind, rather than assuming they represent “my own scriptures” by default.

This article will also suggest that even in Christian communities that considered Israel's scriptures “their own,” those texts may sometimes have been consigned a limited role. Some Christians may have seen them as primarily relevant for apologetics and evangelism, for example, rather than for ongoing Christian discipleship. In some Christian communities, this could even have reflected a broader tendency to allocate greater functional authority to persons—such as the bishop, the apostles, or the still-living Christ—than to written texts, including “sacred” ones.

Overall, this article thus has two complementary goals: to offer a new interpretation of a specific scene in Acts Phil. 5–7—which has received only a limited amount of scholarly attention to date—and to indicate ways that similar questions might fruitfully be asked of other early Christian texts and communities.

■ The Significance of Citations: A Range of Possibilities

Before turning to Acts Phil. 5–7, it will help to step back and consider a general methodological question: What can be inferred from the mere fact that someone cites a particular text? In this section, I will argue that it does not immediately tell us the stance of a speaker or writer toward the source text as a whole. Instead, many different scenarios are possible, a range of which need to be considered when interpreting a particular text, such as Acts Phil. 5–7. To illustrate this plurality, I will describe just a few of the many possible stances a speaker or writer could take toward a citation or its source. This will not be an exhaustive account, nor am I trying to construct a typology or suggesting that the labels used below—which are my own—represent the only way stances toward cited texts could be described or classified. My aim is primarily heuristic: I want to defamiliarize the phenomenon of Christians' citing Israel's scriptures, so that texts like Acts Phil. 5–7 can be read with fresh eyes.

The possibilities described in this section are loosely organized around two questions, selected for the sake of illustration from among the many different questions one could ask about a person's stance toward a text they cite. First, for that individual, does the source text represent something along the lines of “my

scripture” (or “our scripture”)—or not? Second, in what variety of contexts would the individual find it natural to reference this source text? Would they tend to talk about it only in relation to certain interlocutors or when discussing particular topics?

A. “My Scripture”: Various Possible Stances

In some cases, a speaker or writer who quotes a text might consider the source text to be something along the lines of “my scripture” (or “our scripture”). It is important to recognize, however, that one can relate to texts that represent “my scripture” (or “our scripture”) in a wide range of different ways, and that the mere fact that someone cites a particular text does not immediately indicate which of these may be in play. Does the speaker or writer think about the source text all the time or only occasionally? Would they treat it as giving ongoing guidance for daily life in a wide variety of areas, or would they only find it natural to reference this particular source text in a limited range of contexts, such as when discussing advanced theological questions with educated companions? Does the source text represent “first priority scripture” for them, or a text they would only go to when the topic they want to address is not covered in other, more preferred “scriptures”? For this person, does viewing the text as “my scripture” entail endorsing the entirety of its contents? Questions like these can be very difficult to answer, especially when we are thinking about people in the ancient world. Thus, even in cases where one knows that a speaker or writer views the source text from which a citation is taken as “my scripture” (or “our scripture”) in some sense, determining their precise stance toward that text is by no means straightforward—and as a result, that stance is rarely inferable from the mere fact that they have cited it.

B. “Other People’s Scripture”: Various Possible Stances

Moreover, a speaker or writer does not have to consider the source text “my scripture” at all in order to cite a particular passage. In a debate, for example—or when writing an academic article—a person might cite something not because they are particularly attached to it, but for other reasons, e.g., because they think it will help persuade their audience, or will make them seem knowledgeable. They might affirm *only* the particular statement they cite from the source text, and only insofar as it accords with the claim they are making, while rejecting other ideas in the source text outright. They may not even have read the entire source text. Perhaps they do not even know where the citation comes from. In other words, citation is not necessarily an endorsement of the entire source text, or an indication that the person citing the text views it as “my scripture.”

I will offer two illustrations of this phenomenon. First, consider a scene in the Acts of the Apostles, where the apostle Paul is in Athens talking to some gentiles about “the god who made the world and everything in it” (Acts 17:24).³ In many

³ Translations of Acts are mine.

manuscripts, including fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus, he announces: “He is not far from each one of us. For ‘in him we live and move and have our being.’ As even some of your own poets (τινες τῶν καθ’ ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν) have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ Being God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the Divine is like gold or silver or stone” (Acts 17:27–29). Did the storyteller (“Luke”) consider the “poets” of Acts 17 “my scriptures”? And would he have affirmed everything they said? Probably not, nor was he probably trying to attribute those stances to Paul. Clement of Alexandria attributes the words “for we too are his offspring” to Aratus, *Phaenomena* 5, a proem to Zeus from the third century BCE (see *Strom.* 1.19), and more recent interpreters have suggested that Aratus was thinking of Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus* 1.⁴ While “Luke” may not have known where the words came from, it seems unlikely that he would have considered such works “my scripture” or any equivalent,⁵ or that he wanted to characterize Paul as having that attitude. In the version of the story cited above, Paul even calls them “some of *your* own poets” (τινες τῶν καθ’ ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν), which seems to distance him from the works.⁶ Indeed, one purpose of the citations was probably to characterize Paul as a good communicator who could tailor arguments to his gentile audience. His speech critiques idolatry, and the comment about “poets” characterizes that critique as following on from ideas with which his audience was already familiar.

Our second illustration comes from a dialogue between Patriarch Timothy I of the (Nestorian) Church of the East—a Christian leader—and the third Abbasid caliph, al-Mahdī—a Muslim and the political ruler over the area where Timothy and his constituents lived.⁷ An oral dialogue between these figures seems to have taken place in Baghdad around 782 CE, of which Timothy later wrote up an account in Syriac.⁸ This written *Dialogue* may share an element of fictionality with Acts Phil.

⁴ See, e.g., C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 37–38. Regarding the first reference, Rowe summarizes: “Scholars have attempted to derive this phrase ultimately from Plato or from the remaining fragments of Epimenides or Posidonius, but—given the flexibility of the precise meaning of the formula—the wiser course is to attribute the lack of an exact parallel to Luke’s careful realization of the power of general allusion” (ibid., 37).

⁵ The sources in question were probably not considered “scripture” by anyone.

⁶ Where Codex Sinaiticus, etc., read “some of your own poets,” a few manuscripts, including P⁷⁴ B 049. 326. 614, read “some of our poets” (τινες τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ποιητῶν).

⁷ Timothy served for forty-three years (780–823 CE) as patriarch. A short biography is provided by Samir Khalil Samir and Wafik Nasry, *The Patriarch and the Caliph: An Eighth-Century Dialogue between Timothy I and al-Mahdī* (Eastern Christian Texts; Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2018) xxix–xxxiv. Longer works include: Vittorio Berti, *Vita e studi di Timoteo I (d. 823), patriarca cristiano di Baghdad. Ricerche sull’epistolario e sulle fonti contigue* (Studia Iranica 41; Paris: Association pour l’avancement des études iraniennes, 2009); Hans Putman, *L’Église et l’Islam sous Timothée I (780–823). Étude sur l’Église nestorienne au temps des premiers ‘Abbāsides avec nouvelle édition et traduction du dialogue entre Timothée et al-Mahdī* (Recherches publiées sous la direction de l’Institut de Lettres Orientales de Beyrouth, Nouv. sér. B: Orient chrétien 3; Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1975).

⁸ While the oral dialogue will have been in Arabic, the first written account was in Syriac. Heimgartner dates the event to 782 or 783 CE (Martin Heimgartner, *Timotheos I., Ostsyrischer*

5–7, since one can hardly assume that it is an exact transcription of a historical event. In other ways, the *Dialogue* differs from Acts Phil. 5–7. Most notably, the Christian protagonist’s interlocutor is a Muslim rather than a Jew. The latter difference makes the *Dialogue* a particularly useful tool for defamiliarizing Christian citation practices, at least for those of us for whom Christian-Jewish literary debates and Christian citation of Israel’s scriptures are already familiar enough to seem routine, but who have spent less time reading debates where Christians cite another set of scriptures: the Qur’an. The *Dialogue* helps elucidate some interpretive possibilities that we should consider when reading texts like Acts Phil. 5–7.⁹

This account is particularly interesting for our exploration of Acts Phil. 5–7 because Timothy cites the Qur’an to support claims about Jesus.¹⁰ At one point, for example, the caliph asks whether God can die, and Timothy comments:

It is written in the Surat `Isa, “Peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be sent again alive” [Q 19:33]. This passage shows that He died and rose up. Further, God said to `Isa (Jesus) “I will make Thee die and take Thee up again to me” [Q 3:55]. (*Dial.* 9.18–20)¹¹

Timothy uses another Qur’anic passage to argue that Christ is “not a servant but a Lord”: “I heard also that it is written in the Qur’an that Christ is the Word

Patriarch. Disputation mit dem Kalifen Al-Mahdī [CSCO 632; Leuven: Peeters, 2011] xxxi–xxxiii). Others have dated it to 781 CE. Note that there are differences between extant versions of the *Dialogue*. On the textual history, see Mayte Penelas, “A New Arabic Version of the ‘Dialogue between Patriarch Timothy I and Caliph al-Mahdī,’” in *Cultures in Contact: Transfer of Knowledge in the Mediterranean Context* (ed. Sofia Torallas Tovar and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala; Series Syro-Arabica 1; Cordoba and Beirut: CNERU and CEDRAC, 2013) 207–36; and Samir and Nasry, *The Patriarch and the Caliph*, xxxvi–xlix.

⁹ Since the *Dialogue* is from a different historical and cultural context than Acts Phil. 5–7, it cannot help us adjudicate between different interpretations of the latter narrative, but it can help ensure that we have not ignored relevant possibilities. Methodologically, I am thus engaging in a sort of limited, heuristic comparison. For some insightful remarks on the benefits of this sort of methodological move for scholarship on early Christianity, see John S. Kloppenborg, “Disciplined Exaggeration: The Heuristics of Comparison in the Study of Religion,” *NovT* 59 (2017) 390–414; and Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (CSHJ; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

¹⁰ On Timothy’s use of biblical and Qur’anic prooftexts in the *Dialogue*, see David Bertaina, “The Development of Testimony Collections in Early Christian Apologetics with Islam,” in *The Bible in Arab Christianity* (ed. David Thomas; CMR 6; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 151–73. Timothy addresses Christian-Muslim issues in several letters. For discussion, see, e.g., Sidney H. Griffith, “The Syriac Letters of Patriarch Timothy I and the Birth of Christian *Kalām* in the Mu’tazilite Milieu of Baghdad and Baṣrah in Early Islamic Times,” in *Syriac Polemics: Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink* (ed. Wout Jac. van Beekum, Alexander Cornelis Klugkist, and Jan Willem Drijvers; OLA 170; Leuven: Peeters and Department of Oriental Studies, 2007) 103–32; Martin Heimgartner, “The Letters of the East Syrian Patriarch Timothy I,” in *Exegetical Crossroads: Understanding Scripture in Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Pre-Modern Orient* (ed. Georges Tamer et al.; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—Tension, Transmission, Transformation 8; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018) 47–59.

¹¹ English translations of the *Dialogue* are from Alphonse Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies: Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshūni*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, 1928). Numbering follows the edition of Heimgartner, *Disputation*.

and the Spirit of God [Q 4:171; cf. 3:45], and not a servant. If Christ is the Word and the Spirit of God, as the Qur'an testifies, He is not a servant but a Lord" (*Dial.* 19.20). Elsewhere, Timothy cites texts from the Qur'an and Genesis in parallel:

Were it not for the fact that His Word and His Spirit were eternally from His own nature God would not have spoken of Himself in the Torah, as, "*Our* image and *Our* likeness" [Gen 1:26]; and "Behold the man is become as one of *us*" [Gen 3:22]; and "Let us go down and there confound their language" [Gen 11:7]; and the Qur'an would not have said, "And we sent to her *our* Spirit" [Q 19:17]; and "We breathed into her from *our* Spirit" [Q 21:91]. (*Dial.* 17.25)

As these examples illustrate, Timothy cites the Qur'an to bolster claims about Jesus. This does not mean that it represents "my scripture" for Timothy, however, or for the (presumably) Christian audience for whom he wrote up the account.¹² Rather, he is quoting "other people's scriptures" to support his own christological claims. Indeed, he distances himself from the Qur'an at a number of points. Addressing the caliph, Timothy refers to the Qur'an as "your book" (e.g., *Dial.* 16.44), and says that it has not been confirmed by signs and miracles:

All the words of God found in the Torah and in the Prophets, and those of them found in the Gospel and in the writings of the Apostles, have been confirmed by signs and miracles; as to the words of your Book they have not been corroborated by a single sign or miracle. It is imperative that signs and miracles should be annulled by other signs and miracles. When God wished to abrogate the Mosaic law, He confirmed by the signs and miracles wrought by the Christ and the Apostles that the words of the Gospel were from God, and by this He abrogated the words of the Torah and the first miracles. Similarly, as He abrogated the first signs and miracles by second ones, He ought to have abrogated the second signs and miracles by third ones. If God had wished to abrogate the Gospel and introduce another Book in its place He would have done this. (*Dial.* 8.16–21)

Timothy does not seem to consider the Qur'an "my scripture," or to accord it the same status as "the Gospel." It is "your book" (i.e., the caliph's book), not "mine."¹³

In addition to illustrating how a person can quote something—and even use it to make a christological argument—without considering the source text "my scripture," the *Dialogue* also raises questions about how citation practices relate to the social context in which a statement is made. While the *Dialogue* was presumably

¹² Also concluding that such texts were for a primarily Christian audience is Mark Swanson, "Beyond Proof-texting (2): The Use of the Bible in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity* (ed. Thomas), 91–112.

¹³ Pace Bertaina, who remarks, "This Christian reading of the Qur'an as scripture signals a dramatic shift in the identity of admissible sources for argumentation" (Bertaina, "Development," 162). In my view, Timothy does not seem to be reading the Qur'an as "(my) scripture," nor was it an innovation for a Christian in the eighth century to cite other types of sources in argumentation (cf. Acts 17).

written for a Christian audience, the Qur'anic citations are presented within the narrative as directed toward a Muslim interlocutor. In fact, it seems likely that for Timothy the Qur'an represented not simply "other people's scriptures" but, more specifically, "other people's scriptures that we only cite when talking to or about Muslims," and that he would have looked askance at Christians searching for wisdom in the Qur'an for their own edification, with no Muslims in view.

There are also other ways an individual could relate to "other people's scriptures," however. In some circumstances, a person or community might think of a text as "other people's scripture" and also see it as a valuable repository for wisdom and knowledge for its own sake. They might look to that text as a source of information for addressing their own questions about the world.

C. Other Possibilities

As already remarked, I am not trying to construct a typology of categories here, or to suggest that these are the only way that stances toward texts could be assessed or described. Rather, I simply want to alert us to the fact that people can have a wide variety of stances toward texts they cite, which means that there are a variety of interpretive options to consider for specific texts, including Acts Phil. 5–7.

Before turning to the latter text, let me sketch out one additional stance someone could have toward a text, which both illustrates the complexity of the issues, and is potentially relevant when considering how Christian storytellers might have viewed Israel's scriptures. For convenience, I will call this type of stance "scripture 1.0." Someone could consider the Torah or prophets "scripture" or "authoritative" in a certain sense, but see them as more or less redundant or obsolete for those who have already accepted the message about Christ. This perspective might argue that once you reach your destination, you no longer need a map. A Christian community shaped by such a stance might employ Israel's scriptures for outward-facing purposes such as evangelism and apologetics—and/or include readings in worship services—but not allocate them a significant role in ongoing Christian discipleship, or in conversations among Christians except insofar as those conversations relate to people outside the fold.

Could this perhaps be Timothy's stance toward the Torah and the prophets in the *Dialogue*? In the last passage quoted above, Timothy says that the Torah and prophets were initially confirmed by signs and miracles but were later "abrogated" and replaced by "the Gospel." (Although there is more emphasis on the "abrogation" of the Torah, the passage as a whole suggests that Timothy is thinking about the prophets along similar lines.) Elsewhere Timothy adds, "If I had found in the Gospel a prophecy concerning the coming of Muhammad, I would have left the Gospel for the Qur'an, as I have left the Torah and the Prophets for the Gospel" (*Dial.* 8.13).¹⁴

¹⁴ As Heimgartner notes, this passage should not be taken as an indication that Timothy was originally Jewish (Heimgartner, *Disputation*, 38 n. 136).

Timothy thus affirms that the Torah and the prophets were from God, but talks as if only “the Gospel” has the status of “current scripture” for him.

I will leave further evaluation of Timothy’s stance toward the Torah and prophets for future research, after one final observation: the *Dialogue* reminds us that some people’s stances toward Israel’s scriptures may not be easily categorizable as *either* “my scriptures” *or* “other people’s scriptures.” There is no indication that Timothy is thinking of the Torah and the prophets as “other people’s scriptures”—and I doubt he is—but he may not consider them “my scriptures” in a current, active sense, either. Rather, the overall tenor of his remarks suggests that only “the Gospel” enjoys the status of “my book” for Timothy.

■ Acts Philip 5–7: Introduction

We will now look more closely at Acts Phil. 5–7. Before turning to textual analysis, I will briefly summarize the plot for readers who are unfamiliar with the narrative and will then comment briefly on extant manuscripts and date.¹⁵

A. Plot Summary

Acts Phil. 5–7 depicts the conversion of a city called “Nikatera” to Philip’s god. Philip arrives in the city, and a leading citizen named Ireos quickly accepts his teaching about Jesus and invites Philip to his house, where the apostle continues his ministry activities (Acts Phil. 5). This causes a stir among “Jews” and other residents of the city—including city leaders—and a mob forms, escorting Philip to the city hall and calling out for “the magician” to be whipped (Acts Phil. 6.1–8).¹⁶

A prominent “Jew” named Aristarchos then challenges Philip to a public debate about Jesus (Acts Phil. 6.9). Before the debate begins, Aristarchos pulls Philip’s beard, and the apostle miraculously maims his antagonist (Acts Phil. 6.10–11). Aristarchos and other “Jews” urge Philip to be compassionate, and Philip instructs Ireos to heal him (Acts Phil. 6.12). Aristarchos then repeats his request for a debate, and the crowds promise that if Philip wins, they will “put our faith in the Messiah you proclaim” (Acts Phil. 6.12).

The verbal debate—which forms the focus of this article—is concisely narrated (Acts Phil. 6.13–15). (For ease of reference, a Greek text and English translation of the passage are provided in an appendix at the end of the article, where I have also given numbers to the “citations” in the debate.)

¹⁵ The critical edition is François Bovon, Bertrand Bouvier, and Frédéric Amsler, *Acta Philippi: Textus* (CChrSA 11; Turnhout: Brepols, 1999). French versions are included in the latter volume and in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens, I* (ed. François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain; Paris: Gallimard, 1997). An English version is François Bovon and Christopher R. Matthews, *The Acts of Philip: A New Translation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012).

¹⁶ On the term “magician” and other references to Philip in Acts Phil. 5–7, see Julia A. Snyder, *Language and Identity in Ancient Narratives: The Relationship between Speech Patterns and Social Context in the Acts of the Apostles, Acts of John, and Acts of Philip* (WUNT 2/370; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014) 168–73.

After a short duel of citations, the (non-Jewish) crowds and city authorities start saying that Philip seems to be right. The combat between Aristarchos and Philip is not over yet, however. A dead person is carried by on a stretcher, and at the urging of Philip and the crowd, Aristarchos tries to raise him—in vain (Acts Phil. 6.16–18).¹⁷ Philip then steps in and is successful (Acts Phil. 19–20), leading the crowd to proclaim, “There is one god, that of Philip, Christ Jesus who raises the dead” (Acts Phil.^A 6.20). The non-Jewish populace has now been completely won over (Acts Phil. 6.21–22).

In a final scene, a place of Christian worship is constructed and Philip continues teaching, then departs (Acts Phil. 7).

B. Manuscripts and Date

Two Greek manuscripts of Acts Phil. 5–7 are extant, each of which presents it as part of a longer series of stories about Philip. Fourteenth-century *Xenophontos* 32 (cited here as Acts Phil.^A) includes stories about Philip divided into fifteen “acts,” plus a martyrdom account, while eleventh-century *Vaticanus graecus* 824 (Acts Phil.^V) contains the first nine of these “acts” and a martyrdom.¹⁸

This article focuses exclusively on Acts Phil. 5–7, which seems to have had an independent origin. Acts Phil. 5–7 and Acts Phil. 8–15 + Martyrdom, each of which forms a cohesive plot unit, are clearly separate cycles of stories that were brought together secondarily.¹⁹ Acts Phil. 1 and Acts Phil. 2 are also clearly distinct stories. And while one scholar has suggested that Acts Phil. 3–4 may belong with Acts Phil. 5–7,²⁰ I consider it more likely that Acts Phil. 5–7 had a different origin than even that material, given the lack of any necessarily interconnected features of plot, and certain linguistic and social dynamics.²¹

Regarding date, because Acts Phil. 5–7 seems to draw on the Acts of Peter (see below), the story was probably not circulating in its current form earlier than the third century CE. There is no reason to think it originated that early, however, and

¹⁷ For analysis of the resurrection miracle, see Julia A. Snyder, “Sieg durch Wunder (Totenerweckung in Nikatera). ActPhil 6,16–20,” in *Kompendium der frühchristlichen Wundererzählungen. Band 2: Die Wunder der Apostel* (ed. Ruben Zimmermann et al.; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2017) 935–52.

¹⁸ For a description of the manuscripts, see Bovon, Bouvier, and Amsler, *Acta Philippi*, xiii–xxx; and François Bovon, “Les Actes de Philippe,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.25.6 (ed. Wolfgang Haase; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988) 4431–527, at 4468–75.

¹⁹ Acts Phil. 8–15 + Martyrdom begins with the assigning of missionary tasks to various apostles and ends with Philip’s demise, and thus appears to be a self-contained literary unit.

²⁰ Frédéric Amsler, *Acta Philippi: Commentarius* (CChrSA 12; Turnhout: Brepols, 1999) 130–32, 212–14; idem, “Les Actes de Philippe. Aperçu d’une compétition religieuse en Phrygie,” in *Le mystère apocryphe. Introduction à une littérature méconnue* (ed. Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Daniel Marguerat; 2nd ed.; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007) 125–45, at 158.

²¹ See Snyder, *Language*, 144–45. Also suggesting that Acts Phil. 3 and 4 have separate origins from Acts Phil. 5–7 are Bovon, “Les Actes,” 4483, and Christopher R. Matthews, *Philip, Apostle and Evangelist: Configurations of a Tradition* (NovTSup 105; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 170.

most commentators tentatively date the tale to the late fourth or first half of the fifth century.²² Regardless, extant manuscripts probably reflect some later revision.

The Xenophontos and Vaticanus versions of Acts Phil. 6.13–15 are quite similar. I will generally cite Xenophontos, noting variants when relevant for my overall argument.

■ “Prophets and Patriarchs” in Acts Phil. 5–7: Interpretive Possibilities

Turning now to the question at hand: How should Philip’s citation of “prophets and patriarchs” in Acts Phil. 5–7 be interpreted? What stance(s) might storytellers themselves have taken toward the source texts, and what attitudes did they want to attribute to Philip? I will argue that while one cannot rule out the possibility that the storytellers would have allocated the “prophets and patriarchs” some inward-facing role in ongoing Christian discipleship, reading Philip as citing “other people’s scriptures” or “scripture 1.0”—and doing so because of the outward-facing context—might account better for several features of the narrative.

A. “Need” for Prophets because of ἀπιστία

First, discussing “the prophets” is presented in the story as Aristarchos’s idea, not that of Philip.²³ At the beginning of the debate, Aristarchos asks, “Do you accept the prophetic voices?”²⁴ and Philip replies, “Because of your ἀπιστία prophets are needed.” Within the narrative, Philip thus cites “prophets and patriarchs” after his interlocutor suggests debating on that basis.²⁵

In his reply, Philip also associates the prophets with both “need” (χρεία) and ἀπιστία (faithlessness or unbelief). Moreover, it is specifically “your” ἀπιστία with a plural ὑμῶν. In the context of Acts Phil. 5–7, this could imply “Jewish” ἀπιστία, since Aristarchos is explicitly presented as representing a group of “Jews” who collectively oppose Philip.²⁶

²² See Bovon, “Les Actes,” 4501–3; Amsler, *Commentarius*, 437–39; Amsler, “Actes de Philippe,” 159; Matthews, *Philip*, 163–64.

²³ In Acts Phil.^Λ, the general idea for the debate is attributed to a group of “Jews,” but Aristarchos mentions the prophets (see Acts Phil.^Λ 6.9).

²⁴ Acts Phil.^ν: “Do you accept the prophetic writings or not?” (λαμβάνεις τὰς προφητικὰς γραφὰς ἢ οὐ;).

²⁵ In Acts Phil.^ν 6.12, Aristarchos has also already told Philip he wants “to discuss about Jesus based on the scriptures” (συζητῆσαι ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ). Cf. Acts Phil.^Λ: “to discuss about the Messiah” (συζητῆσαι περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ).

²⁶ In a story with different social dynamics—e.g., where one character marked as “Jewish” was addressing other characters marked as “Jewish”—the same phrasing could easily have other overtones, of course. The term ἀπιστία is used elsewhere in Acts Phil. 5–7 for another character, Nerkella, who has not (yet) accepted Philip and his message (Acts Phil.^Λ 5.10, 20, 23; Acts Phil.^ν 5.10, 23). Nerkella is not actively characterized as “Jewish,” although neither is she clearly depicted as a worshiper of other gods (see Debra J. Bucher, “Converts, Resisters, and Evangelists: Jews in Acts of Philip V–VII,” in *A Most Reliable Witness: Essays in Honor of Ross Shepard Kraemer* [ed.

In this initial exchange between Philip and Aristarchos, there is thus no positive indication that the “prophets” necessarily represent “my scriptures” for Philip, and they are also associated with two negative concepts, “need” and ἀπιστία. The latter terms suggest further that the “prophets” may be seen as having only a limited function, at least for Christians. Precisely what those limits might be is something we will continue to think about as the article progresses. The first thing to observe is that the only context in which Israel’s scriptures are explicitly mentioned in Acts Phil. 5–7—or even clearly alluded to—is this debate between Philip and a “Jewish” character in front of an audience made up of worshipers of other gods, which is framed as an apologetic and evangelistic context.²⁷ The narrative never portrays “prophets and patriarchs” as being part of Philip’s teaching to his own disciples. While “Gospel” texts are also strikingly absent from Philip’s teaching to his disciples—a point to which we will return below—Philip’s association of the prophets with “need” and ἀπιστία, combined with the limited social contexts in which they are referenced in the narrative, nevertheless highlights the possibility that these texts could be understood as being useful primarily in outward-facing contexts, either for talking to people who are not Christians (i.e., for evangelism and apologetics) or for talking *about* talking to people who are not Christians, as happens in literary debate scenes like the one in Acts Phil. 5–7.

In other words, while none of the features of the narrative we have looked at so far rule out the possibility that the prophets represent “my scriptures” in some more active sense for the storytellers of Acts Phil. 5–7, those features may be better explained by understanding the prophets to represent either “scripture 1.0”—still “scripture,” but functionally irrelevant for people who have already accepted the message—or “other people’s scriptures, for outward-facing contexts,” like the Qur’an in Timothy’s dialogue with the caliph (i.e., “the Jews’ scriptures, not ours”). At the very least, nothing in Acts Phil. 5–7 speaks against the latter possibilities, either of which would account well for the negative overtones of Philip’s initial remark.

B. Lack of Familiarity with the Prophets as Entire Texts

There is also reason to think that the storytellers may not have been familiar with “the prophets” as entire texts, and that they may not even have been overly concerned with ensuring that all the “citations” in the debate actually derived from Israel’s scriptures. Again, while this would not preclude the possibility that the storytellers considered Israel’s scriptures their “own,” or that they would have

Susan Ashbrook Harvey et al.; BJS 358; Providence: Brown University, 2015] 9–16, at 13–14). In Acts Phil.^v, Aristarchos also uses the term of himself (Acts Phil.^v 6.12).

²⁷ As far as I can see, no other passage in Acts Phil. 5–7 indicates knowledge of particular LXX texts. Some passages have similar motifs (e.g., calling down fire on enemies), but the similarities need not reflect direct knowledge of LXX texts.

allocated those texts an active role in ongoing Christian discipleship, it would nevertheless fit well with a scenario in which neither of those was the case.

Several of Aristarchos's remarks cannot be conclusively located anywhere in the Septuagint, despite being presented as "what is written."²⁸ Thus, e.g.,

"Who will recount your great deeds, o God?" (τίς ἐξηγήσεται τὰς ἀρετὰς σου, ὁ θεός;) [C1]

"No one can ever know your glory." (οὐδεὶς ποτε δύναται γινῶναι τὴν δόξαν σου.) [C2]

"The Lord is judge of the living and the dead." (κύριος κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν.) [C4]

If these words were "written" somewhere, it was probably not in an (accurate) version of "the prophets." In Old Greek (LXX) versions of Israel's scriptures, the closest analogue to the first "citation" [C1] seems to be Isa 43:21, which is typically printed in modern editions as λαόν μου ὃν περιεποισάμην τὰς ἀρετὰς μου διηγῆσθαι but has a form of ἐξηγεῖσθαι in place of διηγῆσθαι in some witnesses.²⁹ The parallel is hardly exact, however. In the *TLG*, the closest verbal parallel I have discovered is not a biblical citation but a comment about John Chrysostom: τίς τὰς ἀρετὰς σου ἐξηγήσεται ὡς ὀφείλει.³⁰ Parallels to the second "citation" [C2] are even more elusive, and the third "citation" [C4] likewise has no LXX equivalent—although it has numerous close parallels in Christian texts (e.g., Acts 10:42; Rom 14:9; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Pet 4:5; 2 Clem 1:1; MartPoly 2:1).

What explains these enigmatic "citations"? Frédéric Amsler has suggested that the storytellers intentionally had Aristarchos offer nonexistent or non-prophetic "citations" because they wanted to portray him as ignorant or confused.³¹ This is not the most convincing explanation, however, since the story's audience would have needed extensive familiarity with the entire contents of Israel's scriptures

²⁸ Acts Phil.^v includes two references to "scriptures" (see nn. 24, 25 above), suggesting that at least some storyteller(s) had written works in view.

²⁹ Thus, e.g., Theodoret, *Commentary on Isaiah* 13.21 (5th cent.) (οὐκ ἐξηγεῖσθε). A sentiment similar to the Acts of Philip "citation" is expressed in question form in Ps 106:2 (LXX 105:2), but the Greek wording is entirely different: τίς λαλήσει τὰς δυναστείας τοῦ κυρίου.

³⁰ Gregory of Alexandria, *Life of John Chrysostom* 74. Cf. Philo, *Mos.* 2.239: ὁ δ' οὐρανὸς ὄλος εἰς φωνὴν ἀναλυθεὶς δυνήσεται ἰ τῶν σῶν ἀρετῶν διηγῆσασθαι μέρος;

³¹ See Amsler, *Commentarius*, 253–60. "It is not very surprising that Aristarchos' quotations are inexact or truncated. This is one of the literary devices available to an author who wants to discredit the adversary of his hero" (*ibid.*, 256; my translation). Amsler also suggests a connection to Acts Phil.^a 6.12, where Aristarchos sees Jesus: "The appearing of Jesus to Aristarchos disturbs him to such an extent that it hinders him from formulating a coherent refutation of the Christian faith" (*ibid.*, 258). In this reading, the debate illustrates the irresistible power of Jesus (*ibid.*, 259). I think Amsler overestimates the knowledge and talents of the storyteller(s), however; e.g., Amsler wonders whether Aristarchos is portrayed as trying and failing to cite Isa 53:8 (τὴν γενεάν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται) in the first citation [C1] (*ibid.*, 253), but that interpretation is too subtle. If the "citation" does reflect a combination of Isa 53:8 with, e.g., Isa 43:21, the Acts of Philip storyteller was probably unaware of that fact.

(or modern Bible software) to realize that these “citations” were not found in that corpus. (It is much easier to confirm that a citation *is* found in a body of textual material than to ascertain that it is *not*.)

All in all, it seems much more likely that the storyteller(s) thought that the “citations” sounded like prophetic material and were either muddled up themselves—and mistakenly believed that these were actually quotes from Israel’s scriptures—or knew that some of the material did not derive from that corpus but did not consider that fact relevant for their literary purposes, as long as their *audience* did not realize—or did not care—about the dubious provenance of some “citations.” Or perhaps both of these factors were in play to varying degrees.

One can easily see how mistakes could have arisen regarding the original sources of some of the “citations.” For example, the storyteller(s) could have been drawing citations from an anthology of quotations or another secondary source that included both citations from “the prophets” and other material—other citations, commentary, and the like. The storyteller(s) could have mistaken some of that other material for “prophetic” citations, without checking the original sources or knowing the “prophets” well enough to realize their error.³² For some “citations,” they could also have been working from (faulty) memory.

Robert Kraft’s analysis of some actual “citations” of “prophets” that appear in the debate would lend support to such a scenario. Kraft observes that the word order in one of Philip’s “citations” [C10] differs from many Greek manuscripts of Isa 53:7 but resembles a version cited in Barn 5.2 and Melito, *Paschal Homily* 64. He suggests that each of these writers probably took the quote from a secondary source rather than from a text of Isaiah.³³ With regard to another citation [C19], Kraft points out that while all Old Greek manuscripts of Isa 45:1 read τῷ χριστῷ μου Κύρω, “to Cyrus, my anointed,” the Acts Phil. citation reads τῷ Χριστῷ μου κυρίῳ, as do many other Christian texts, beginning with Barn 12:11 (cf. *Psa* 110:1).³⁴ Again, he concludes that each of these texts more likely took it from a secondary source (or oral tradition) than from a manuscript of Isaiah.

The versions of Isa 42:1 [C9], Zech 9:9 [C17], and Hos 11:1 [C18] that appear in Acts Phil. 5–7 likewise suggest that the citations in the debate may generally

³² Anthologies of quotations and extracts were common in antiquity. For an overview, see Henry Chadwick, “Florilegium,” *RAC* 7 (1969) cols. 1131–59.

³³ Robert A. Kraft, “Barnabas’ Isaiah Text and Melito’s Paschal Homily,” *JBL* 80 (1961) 371–73, at 372–73.

³⁴ Robert A. Kraft, “Barnabas’ Isaiah Text and the ‘Testimony Book’ Hypothesis,” *JBL* 79 (1960) 336–50, at 341–42. The “citation” is corrupt, but largely reflects Isa 45:1, apparently with influence from Isa 42:4. Acts Phil.^A: τὰδε λέγει κύριος τῷ χριστῷ μου κυρίῳ οὐκ ἐκράτησα τῆς δεξιᾶς ἐπακοῦσαι ἔμπροσθεν [*Vat. gr.* 824: ἐπὶ σε] ἔθνη ἔλπιουσιν. Modern editions of Isa 45:1 typically read οὕτως λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῷ χριστῷ μου Κύρω οὐ ἐκράτησα τῆς δεξιᾶς ἐπακοῦσαι ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ ἔθνη. Since some manuscripts (e.g., the uncorrected original of the 4th-cent. Codex Sinaiticus) read οὐκ ἐκράτησα instead of οὐ ἐκράτησα (as in the Acts of Philip manuscripts), that variant could already have been part of the version received in the Acts of Philip. The word ἔλπιουσιν seems to come from Isa 42:4: (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι) αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἔλπιουσιν.

have been taken from a combination of secondary sources and memory. In each of these cases, the wording is more similar to the version found in the Gospel of Matthew (see Mt 12:18; 21:5; and 2:15) than to known versions of the LXX. It therefore seems likely that the storyteller(s) of Acts Phil. 5–7 either reproduced these citations from memory—a memory shaped more by Matthew’s Gospel than by readings from the “prophets” themselves—or that they drew the citations from an anthology or other secondary source that itself attested Matthean versions of the extracts. In either case, there is no reason to think that the Acts of Philip storytellers were aware of any discrepancy between the words they wrote and those in LXX manuscripts—to which they may not have had access, anyway.

How does all of this inform our assessment of the storytellers’ stance toward Israel’s scriptures? One can, of course, be relatively unfamiliar with a text, work from secondary sources or memory, and fail to check whether one’s “citations” actually come from the text in question, and still consider it “my scripture,” especially in a context where access to books is limited. The storyteller(s) of Acts of Philip could theoretically have been thinking, “I wish I could consult LXX manuscripts to verify these citations—these are my scriptures and important to me, after all—but alas, there are no copies of those books in town!” All things considered, however, it seems more likely that the curious “citations”—especially those of dubious provenance attributed to Aristarchos—reflect a certain unconcern on the storytellers’ part with “knowing the texts” and “getting the details right.” A storyteller could have been perusing an anthology of quotations and thinking, “Is this one from the prophets, too? I don’t know, but I need a few more citations to pad out this dialogue I’m writing, so I’ll just include it.” Or a storyteller might even have invented some prophetic-sounding “citations” himself, thinking either, “My audience won’t realize this isn’t from the prophets,” or “My audience won’t care.”³⁵ And all in all, this is in keeping with the possible interpretations of the story I have suggested, in which Israel’s scriptures represent either “other people’s scriptures” for the storytellers or an outmoded “scripture 1.0.”

C. *Why Are the “Citations” Included?*

I have been arguing that the “citations” in Acts Phil. 5–7 do not necessarily indicate that the storytellers thought of the “prophets” as “my scriptures” in an unqualified manner—nor indeed would such a stance have been required for the literary functions that the “citations” may have been designed to serve. These include making the protagonist look good by having him display mastery of a certain type of knowledge.³⁶ In Acts Phil. 5–7, Philip is not only good at performing miracles, but he is more successful in a debate about “Jewish scriptures” than a “Jewish”

³⁵ Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for the prompt to include this possibility.

³⁶ See Heidi Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Early Roman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

leader!³⁷ Storytellers may also have wanted to show off their mastery of the well-established literary “debate” form.³⁸ As will be illustrated by the Acts of Peter below, the storytellers of Acts Phil. 5–7 did not invent the idea of having characters engage in a debate about Jesus in which Israel’s scriptures are cited, and at least part of their motivation for including the “citations” was therefore probably to adhere to literary conventions. There are thus various reasons the “citations” could have been included in the narrative that do not presuppose a “my own scriptures” stance on the storytellers’ part.³⁹

D. Acts Phil. 5–7, the Acts of Peter, and the “Jews”

A brief comparison with the Acts of Peter provides additional reason not to assume that the Acts of Philip storytellers necessarily considered Israel’s scriptures “my scriptures” in a current, active sense.⁴⁰ The debate scene in Acts Phil. 5–7 owes a lot to the Acts of Peter, which seems to have been a direct inspiration. Although we do not know what version of the Acts of Peter may have influenced Acts Phil. 5–7, parallels with the extant Vercelli manuscript include the following:

- 1) An apostle debates a “Jewish” antagonist, in front of a crowd that includes worshippers of other gods, who ask to hear the respective arguments (Acts Phil. 6.12; Acts Pet. 23).
- 2) The antagonist accuses the apostle of saying that a person who was born and crucified is a god (Acts Pet. 23; Acts Phil. 6.13).
- 3) Citations from the “prophets” are made (Acts Phil. 6.13–15; Acts Pet. 24; NB: not the same citations).

³⁷ Admittedly, Aristarchos is not necessarily portrayed as a talented debater and could even be understood as contributing to the debate’s quick end. After Philip finishes his citations, Aristarchos says, “I know that Isaiah spoke about a messiah,” and offers an additional prophetic citation. The narrator then comments, “The Jews were fighting with Aristarchos because he was saying, ‘You have called to mind the things written about the Messiah,’” and the city leaders remark, “Even the Jew who debated with him has revealed the hidden glory in the prophets concerning Christ.” This part of the scene raises a number of interpretive questions. Why does Aristarchos offer a citation about the Messiah from Isaiah, and how does it fit into the flow of the debate? Is Aristarchos conceding defeat and admitting that Philip has won? Or is he just a bad debater, and does Philip win over the audience partly thanks to this final citation out of Aristarchos’s mouth? I lean toward the first of these two interpretations.

³⁸ See, e.g., Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* or the *Clementine Recognitions and Homilies*.

³⁹ It seems less likely that the “citations” reflect evangelistic or apologetic intent on the part of the storytellers, since Acts Phil. 5–7 was probably designed for a “Christian” audience, like Acts 17 and the written version of Timothy’s dialogue. On the audience of the Acts of the Apostles, see Snyder, *Language*, 85–88.

⁴⁰ On intertextuality between the Acts of Peter and Acts Phil. 5–7, see Amsler, *Commentarius*, 224–25, 263–68; Andrea Lorenzo Molinari, “*I Never Knew the Man*”: *The Coptic Act of Peter (Papyrus Berolinensis 8502.4), Its Independence from the Apocryphal Acts of Peter, Genre and Origins* (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi Section “Études” 5; Québec and Leuven: Les Presses de l’Université Laval and Peeters, 2000) 95–102; Matthews, *Philip*, 183–86; Snyder, “Sieg durch Wunder,” 945–47.

- 4) A dead man from a high-status family is carried in, whose parents offer to give up slaves and money if their son is raised (Acts Phil. 6.16–17; Acts Pet. 28).
- 5) The hesitant antagonist is unable to raise the dead, whereas the apostle is successful (Acts Phil. 6.18–20; Acts Pet. 28).
- 6) The apostle extracts a promise not to harm his opponents as a condition for performing the miracle (Acts Phil. 6.19; Acts Pet. 28).⁴¹

A notable difference is that in the Acts of Peter it is *the apostle Peter's* idea to talk about “the prophets,” and his antagonist does not cite any texts at all, whereas in Acts Phil. 5–7 *Aristarchos* suggests debating on that basis and Philip immediately brings up ἀπιστία and “need.” If Acts Phil. 5–7 was inspired by a story similar to the Vercelli Acts, the idea of citing prophets has thus been taken away from the apostle—whether consciously or not on the part of the Acts of Philip storyteller(s)—and given to the literary antagonist.

The latter changes are important to keep in mind when assessing the stance of the Acts of Philip storytellers toward Israel's scriptures. It could be that the storytellers of the Acts of Peter felt fine with an apostle who cites “prophets” as “my own, current scriptures,” but the Acts of Philip storytellers felt less comfortable with that, and altered some elements of the story—consciously or otherwise—to distance their apostle from those texts.

As well as accounting for the differences between the narratives mentioned above, this would fit the generally more anti-Jewish vibe of Acts Phil. 5–7 and the starker distinction made between “Jewishness” and “Christianness” in the narrative. In the Acts of Peter, both Simon and Peter are referred to as “Jews,” although this is not a significant aspect of the characterization of either.⁴² In Acts Phil. 5–7, in contrast, being a “Jew” is the most prominent feature of Aristarchos,⁴³ and Aristarchos now also represents a whole group of “Jews” opposing the apostle (see Acts Phil. 6.11; 6.15; cf. 7.3). Philip, meanwhile, is not referred to as a “Jew” in Acts Phil. 5–7 at all, and “Jews” in the story treat him as an outsider, addressing him as “stranger” (ξένε) and speaking of “our people” in a way that suggests Philip does not qualify: “Heal the first of our people” (θεράπευσον τὸν πρῶτον τοῦ ἔθνους ἡμῶν) (Acts Phil. 6.11). Philip himself addresses Aristarchos as “Jew” (ὁ Ἰουδαῖε) (Acts Phil. 6.18), and in Acts Phil.^A “Jewish” and “Christian” are used as

⁴¹ Intertextuality with the Acts of Peter may also explain the fact that the dead person in Acts Phil. 5–7 is characterized as both “rich” (πλούσιος σφόδρα) and a “child” (παῖς) (Acts Phil. 6.16, 20): one person raised from the dead in the Acts of Peter is described as a senator and very rich, and also as a *puer* (Acts Pet. 28–29). See Snyder, “Sieg durch Wunder,” 946–47.

⁴² A Roman crowd is reported as saying, “Tomorrow at dawn two Jews (*duo Iudaei*) will debate about how (the) god should be addressed” (Acts Pet. 22), and another character speaks of “a Jew named Simon” (*Iudaeum . . . , nomine Simonem*) (Acts Pet. 6).

⁴³ Philip addresses Aristarchos as “Jew” (ὁ Ἰουδαῖε) (Acts Phil. 6.18), and Aristarchos is also called “the Jew” (ὁ Ἰουδαῖος) by the narrator (Acts Phil. 6.13), city leaders (Acts Phil. 6.15), and the populace (Acts Phil. 6.18). He describes himself as “great among the Jews” (μέγας . . . ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις) (Acts Phil. 6.9).

contrasting terms: the crowds refer to Aristarchos as “the Jew” (Acts Phil.^A 6.18) and to Philip as “the Christian” (τῷ χριστιανῷ) (Acts Phil.^A 6.16). All in all, the story seems to reflect an attitude where “Jewishness” and “Christianness” are not seen as overlapping in any meaningful way.⁴⁴ In this sort of narrative, a greater hesitancy to treat the prophets as “my scriptures” in an unqualified manner may not be so surprising after all.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Debates about the characterization of Ireos may also be worth mentioning. Interpreters often talk about Ireos as a “Jewish” character, but apart from the first moment he is introduced, Ireos is not actually characterized as a “Jew,” and even the initial introduction is open to interpretation. The narrator announces that Philip faces opposition from Nikaterans in general and from “Jews,” then depicts “one of their leaders named Ireos” (τίς [V: εἷς] ἐξ αὐτῶν ἄρχων ὀνόματι Ἡρεως) urging his interlocutors not to treat Philip with injustice and violence (Acts Phil. 5.6). It would be possible to read “one of their leaders” as including the non-“Jewish” crowd mentioned in the immediately preceding context. It is also interesting that when Ireos first speaks—attempting to dissuade his interlocutors from harming Philip—he calls them “friends and fellow citizens” (ὁ ἄνδρες φίλοι καὶ συμπολιταί) (Acts Phil. 5.6), a form of address that hardly marks Ireos as a “Jew” addressing fellow “Jews.” (See Snyder, *Language*, 166–67.) Moreover, there is nothing recognizably “Jewish” about Ireos after his conversion. He does use the term “synagogue”—offering to make his house “a synagogue of Christians” (συναγωγὴν χριστιανῶν) in Acts Phil.^V 5.8 and suggesting the building of “a synagogue in the name of the Messiah” (συναγωγὴν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ) in Acts Phil.^A 7.2 (cf. 7.4)—but this Greek term was also used by non-Jewish groups in the ancient world and therefore does not necessarily mark Ireos as “Jewish” (even if Jews in Acts Phil.^A 6.13 describe their own gathering with the same term). Reaching a similar conclusion, Bovon disagrees with Zahn’s assertion that the term συναγωγή indicates Ireos’s Jewish origin, at least in Acts Phil.^A 7 (see Bovon, “Les Actes,” 4490–91 and n. 194; Theodor Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur*, VI, I: *Apostel und Apostelschüler in der Provinz Asien* [Leipzig: Deichert, 1900] 20 n. 2; Amsler, *Commentarius*, 228, 231, 517). Peterson suggests that the term was used for house gatherings by the ascetic community he posits behind the Acts of Philip, pointing to a 4th-cent. Marcionite inscription from Deir Ali (Lebaba) (Erik Peterson, “Die Häretiker der Philippus-Akten,” *ZNW* 31 [1932] 97–111, at 102–3). Harland also cites examples of non-Jewish associations that used the term (Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians* [London: T&T Clark, 2009] 40).

⁴⁵ On “Jewish” characters and “Jewishness” in Acts Phil. 5–7, see further Bucher, “Converts”; Snyder, *Language*, 165–67, 218; Julia A. Snyder, “Simon, Agrippa, and Other Antagonists in the Vercelli Acts of Peter,” in *Gegenspieler: Zur Auseinandersetzung mit dem Gegner in frühjüdischer und urchristlicher Literatur* (ed. Ulrich Mell and Michael Tilly; WUNT 428; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019) 311–31. The increased thematization of Aristarchos’s “Jewishness” in comparison to the Acts of Peter could reflect a context of production in which producers wanted to distinguish “being Christian” from “being Jewish,” like John Chrysostom in Antioch, who complained in the 4th cent. about Christians who participated in Jewish festivals and visited synagogues. See Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 4; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* (SBL SBS 13; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978). Aristarchos’s “Jewish” profile could also reflect plot considerations. Storytellers could hardly cast Simon Magus as an antagonist of Philip, and therefore needed to change the character’s identity. The literary tradition of “Jews” opposing “Christian” leaders, which was well established by the time Acts Phil. 5–7 was produced, provided a good alternative.

■ Functional Authority in Acts Phil. 5–7: Texts, Apostle, Christ, Bishop?

This exploration of Acts Phil. 5–7 also raises a further question. What enjoys the most functional authority in the narrative, if not Israel's scriptures? Close examination of the story suggests that functional authority is not necessarily invested in other *texts*, even those of the Gospels. Philip is never presented as quoting or reading from a text elsewhere in the story, nor is there any explicit reference to "Gospel" texts (in contrast to Acts Pet. 20). Acts Phil. 5–7 includes a scene where Philip is transfigured (Acts Phil. 5.22–23) and other language that resembles material in our New Testament, such as beatitudes (Acts Phil.^A 5.25), but nothing is presented as a direct quotation, and the possible allusions often reflect common motifs. At least within the story, therefore, Israel's scriptures are not explicitly presented as taking a back seat to other *texts*.

In fact, functional authority is more clearly attached to the *apostle*. Philip is the central figure in the story, and he wins allegiance as much for himself as for Christ over the course of the narrative. He has "disciples" (e.g., Acts Phil.^A 5.13, 14, 26, 27; 6.6; 7.7),⁴⁶ and there are references to "putting faith in Philip," with the verb πιστεύω:

"Perhaps Ireos has put his faith in Philip." (τάχα ὁ Ἰρεος πιστεύει εἰς τὸν Φίλιππον.) (Acts Phil.^A 5.6)⁴⁷

The leaders of the city and the whole crowd . . . cried out, ". . . If there is some god in him, and he can really raise him [the dead person], we, too, will trust in him (πιστεύσωμεν εἰς αὐτόν)." (Acts Phil.^A 6.16)⁴⁸

Other remarks similarly treat Philip as a central reference point for converting characters, whose new commitment is framed as being to "Philip's god." They proclaim, "There is one god, that of Philip" (Acts Phil. 6.20),⁴⁹ and "There is no other living god except that of Philip, who does marvels through him" (Acts Phil.^A 6.20).⁵⁰ In the Xenophon version, Philip is also described as speaking of the city's conversion as "my victory" (Acts Phil.^A 6.22),⁵¹ and some freed slaves tell him, "We, too, will practice piety through you" (Acts Phil.^A 6.21).⁵² The prominence of Philip in this conception is striking. Throughout the story, he is likewise portrayed as an authoritative teacher (see Acts Phil. 7) and in the Xenophon version gives his

⁴⁶ Acts Phil.^V 5.13, 14; 6.6; 7.7.

⁴⁷ Missing in the Vatican version.

⁴⁸ The Vatican version has a similar statement.

⁴⁹ εἷς θεὸς ὁ Φιλίππου.

⁵⁰ οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς ἕτερος ζῶν, εἰ μὴ ὁ Φιλίππου ὁ ποιῶν τὰ μεγαλεῖα δι' αὐτοῦ. For a discussion of references to Philip's god in Acts Phil. 5–7, see Snyder, *Language*, 173–83.

⁵¹ τὸ νικῆσαί με. On the theme of "conquering" in Acts Phil. 5–7, see Snyder, "Sieg durch Wunder," 941.

⁵² καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀσκήσομεν διὰ σοῦ θεοσέβειαν.

disciples “commandments” (ἐντολάς) (Acts Phil.^A 7.5). In sum, Philip is presented in the story as an authority figure with a sizable sphere of influence.⁵³

Christ as a living being also enjoys ongoing authority and power, especially in the Xenophontos version, where “Christ is with us” is a repeated theme (e.g., Acts Phil.^A 5.2–4; 6.5, 11, 20; 7.6, 8),⁵⁴ where Christ appears to Philip and gives him instructions, and where Philip says that Christ is “fighting” for him (Acts Phil.^A 5.4; 6.5).⁵⁵ In the Vaticanus version, meanwhile, Philip appoints a bishop and tells people, “Serve him in submission” (Acts Phil.^V 7.5).⁵⁶

Thus, with some variation between the Xenophontos and Vaticanus versions, the apostle, Christ, and/or the bishop seem to enjoy more functional authority than texts do in Acts Phil. 5–7, which suggests another possible twist in how to understand the “citations” in the debate between Philip and Aristarchos. I have already suggested that they could represent either “other people’s scriptures” or “scripture 1.0”—but in contrast to what? “Other people’s scriptures” in contrast to “our scriptures”? “Scripture 1.0” in contrast to “scripture 2.0”? Or might the salient contrast be between “scripture” (of any kind) and other (nontextual) sources of authority, such as authoritative persons? What role did “sacred texts” actually play for the individuals who were involved in telling this story about Philip, or for the Christian communities of which they were part? Although Acts Phil. 5–7 does not provide enough data to draw firm conclusions in that regard, the observations made here suggest that we should not be too quick to assume that “scriptures”—even the Gospels—were necessarily a central or dominant touchstone in the lives of the storytellers and their communities.⁵⁷

■ Concluding Reflections

As this case study from Acts Phil. 5–7 illustrates, we should consider a variety of interpretive options when we encounter citations from Israel’s scriptures in early Christian texts. In this article, I have argued that just as one cannot infer from Timothy’s Qur’anic citations that the Qur’an represents “my scriptures” for him, the mere fact that Israel’s scriptures are cited in Acts Phil. 5–7—or used as evidence of christological claims—does not indicate that they necessarily represented “my

⁵³ Philip’s transfiguration also portrays him as special, and he even seems to be at least partially responsible for the transformation and subsequent return to his normal appearance (Acts Phil. 5.22–23).

⁵⁴ A number of these statements do not appear in Acts Phil.^V. The theme is not entirely absent, however. See, e.g., Acts Phil.^V 6.11, 20; 7.6.

⁵⁵ These appearances of Christ are missing in Acts Phil.^V.

⁵⁶ δουλεύσατε αὐτῷ ἐν ὑποταγῇ.

⁵⁷ One could also ask what role other texts—e.g., Acts Phil. 5–7 itself—played in the lives of storytellers and their communities. What functional authority did these so-called apocryphal texts enjoy in such communities, and how did it compare to the authority attached to “persons” such as apostles or the bishop? Did the storyteller(s) of Acts Phil. 5–7 want or expect their own work to be treated as “authoritative,” and if so, how? With regard to Acts Phil. 5–7, there is unfortunately little internal or external evidence to go on to answer those questions.

scriptures” for the Acts of Philip storytellers, or that they wanted to attribute that stance to Philip. As we have seen, it is just as plausible that the storyteller(s) of Acts Phil. 5–7 considered those texts “the Jews’ scriptures, not ours” and “for use in outward-facing contexts,” and that they wanted to portray the apostle Philip as sharing that perspective. Or perhaps they thought of Israel’s scriptures as in some sense their “own” but would have consigned them a limited role in the Christian life, treating them as relevant for apologetics and evangelism—or for talking *about* apologetics and evangelism—but not for ongoing Christian discipleship.

This article has focused on Acts Phil. 5–7 in part to offer a new reading of that particular story, but it would also be worth reassessing other early Christian texts along these same lines, as well as considering the implications for the pictures we paint of early Christianity more broadly. For studies whose primary focus is on narrative analysis and characterization, all of these possible interpretations of citations that appear in dialogue are important to keep in mind—as well as variations on them—lest we misconstrue how various characters are being portrayed. Likewise, the sort of exploration undertaken in this article can be valuable for studies interested in what it has meant to different individuals to be “Christian” over the centuries. What role have “sacred texts” actually played in the lived experiences or self-understanding of Christians in various contexts? Were they “the lifeblood of virtually every aspect of [early] Christian communities,”⁵⁸ or did authoritative *persons* exert a more significant influence over the lives of many Christians than authoritative *texts*? Similarly, how do citation practices reflect different early Christians’ understanding of the relationship between “Christianity” and “Judaism”? And what are the implications for subsidiary issues such as the history of “canon”?⁵⁹

There is also still room for continued reflection on how Christians over the centuries related to *particular* texts, including Israel’s scriptures. As a final note, I myself am envisioning a fair amount of variety in the latter regard, even among authors who engaged in similar sorts of communicative acts, such as citing from the prophets to support claims about Jesus. Some texts with this sort of discourse (e.g., the Gospel of Matthew) may well cite Israel’s scriptures as “my scriptures” in an unqualified manner, while for other authors they represented something more

⁵⁸ Blowers and Martens, introduction, 1.

⁵⁹ This study has corollary implications for questions about “canon,” including with regard to the New Testament (see Julia Snyder, “The Canon of the New Testament,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the New Testament* [ed. Patrick Gray; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021] 333–47). For instance, because it is methodologically problematic to try to ascertain how a particular work was viewed in early Christian communities simply by tabulating citations of and allusions to it in (other) early Christian writings, this is not a reliable means of determining when and where a work was seen as “canonical” (as had sometimes been done in earlier studies of “canon”). See Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., “The Bible Canon and the Christian Doctrine of Inspiration,” *Int* 29 (1975) 352–71, at 360–61. I also second other scholars’ critique of an older tendency to posit that New Testament writings gradually attained the status of LXX writings among Christians, since it is not clear that LXX writings themselves enjoyed a robust status in all communities. See John Barton, *Holy Writings, Sacred Text: The Canon in Early Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997).

akin to “other people’s scriptures” or “scripture 1.0.” This variety will have resulted from the fact that “citing the prophets while discussing Jesus” was a practice that began in the earliest days of the Christian movement and was inherited by later generations, with a range of different meanings assigned to it in the process. In the earliest stages, many people probably saw the prophets as something like “my current, active scriptures,” and it will have been natural for them to relate claims about Jesus to those texts and traditions. Later Christians then inherited the idea that “citing Israel’s scriptures when talking about Jesus” is what “we” do as Christians and kept up the practice, adapting and reinterpreting it along the way, and sometimes performing it with quite different senses of what they were doing and why.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ It could even have been primarily a *literary* practice for some authors, inspired by *preexisting literary works* rather than by everyday conversations or debates. Cf. the relationship between Acts Phil. 5–7 and the Acts of Peter. As I have noted elsewhere, the readiness of the storytellers of Acts Phil. 5–7 to include motifs that they had not encountered in daily life is illustrated by a reference to burning slaves with the body of a dead master (Acts Phil. 6.16). Cremation was no longer a widespread practice at the time the story probably originated, nor is there evidence that slaves were regularly—or ever—cremated with their masters in Greek or Roman contexts. See Snyder, “Sieg durch Wunder,” 942–44.

Appendix: Acts Phil. 6.13–15 (Xen. 32)

τότε ὁ Ἀρίσταρχος λέγει τῷ Φιλίππῳ· λαμβάνεις τὰς προφητικὰς φωνάς; ⁶¹	Then Aristarchos said to Philip, “Do you accept the prophetic voices?”
λέγει ὁ Φιλίππος· διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν ὑμῶν χρεῖα προφητῶν.	Philip replied, “Because of your <i>apistia</i> prophets are needed.”
καὶ φησιν ὁ Ἰουδαῖος· ἀγνοεῖς, Φίλιππε, ὅτι γέγραπται·	The Jew said, “Philip, don’t you know that it is written,
τίς ἐξηγήσεται τὰς ἀρετάς σου, ὁ θεός; [C1]	‘Who will recount your great deeds, ο God?’ [C1]
καὶ οὐδεὶς ποτε δύναται γνῶναι τὴν δόξαν σου [C2]	And, ‘No one can ever know your glory.’ [C2]
καὶ ὅτι ἡ δόξα σου ἐπλήρωσε τὴν γῆν; [C3]	And that ‘your glory filled the earth.’ [C3; cf. <i>Psa</i> 71:19; <i>Isa</i> 6:3; 1 <i>Clem</i> 34:6; <i>Num</i> 14:21]
καὶ ὅτι κύριος κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν; [C4]	And that ‘the Lord is judge of the living and the dead.’ [C4; cf. <i>Acts</i> 10:42; <i>Rom</i> 14:9; 2 <i>Tim</i> 4:1; 1 <i>Pet</i> 4:5; 2 <i>Clem</i> 1:1; <i>MartPoly</i> 2:1]
καὶ ὅτι ὁ θεός, φησὶν, πῦρ καταναλίσκον καὶ φλογεῖ ἐχθρούς αὐτοῦ; [C5]	And that ‘God is a devouring fire and consumes his enemies.’ [C5; cf. <i>Dt</i> 4:24; <i>Ps</i> 96:3]
καὶ ὅτι εἷς θεός ἐποίησεν τὰ σύμπαντα; [C6]	And that ‘one god created everything.’ [C6]
πῶς οὖν σὺ λέγεις, Φίλιππε, ὅτι ἡ Μαρία ἀφθάρτως ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἔστιν θεός; καὶ πῶς ἐσταύρωται, καὶ πῶς ἀγωνίζῃ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ;	So how can you say, Philip, that Mary gave birth to Jesus in an incorruptible manner and that he is god? And how (can you say that) he was crucified? And how can you fight for him?
ἀλλὰ πάντως διελέγξεις με, ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν δύναμις θεοῦ καὶ θεοῦ σοφία, ὃς συμπαρήν τῷ θεῷ ὅτε τὸν κόσμον ἐποίηι. [C7]	But you will surely dispute with me (and say) that he is the power of God and wisdom of God, who was with God when he was making the world. [C7; cf. 1 <i>Cor</i> 1:24]
τοῦτο γὰρ οὐκ ἀρνοῦμαι ὡς εἶπεν ἡ πρώτη γραφή· ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν. [C8]	I don’t deny that, because the first scripture says, ‘Let us make human beings in our image and likeness.’ [C8; <i>Gen</i> 1:26]
εἰ γὰρ ταῦτα σιωπήσομαι, ἐλέγξεις με.	If I don’t mention that, you will censure me.”

⁶¹ *Vat. gr.* 824: λαμβάνεις τὰς προφητικὰς γραφὰς ἢ οὐ, “Do you accept the prophetic writings or not?”

ὁ δὲ Φίλιππος μειδιάσας ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει εἶπεν εἰς ὅλον τὸν ὄχλον· ἀκούσατέ μου, καὶ γίνεσθε κριταὶ τῆς ἀληθείας.

ὁ γὰρ προφήτης Ἡσαΐας περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγει· ἰδοὺ ὁ παῖς μου, ὃν ἠρετισάμην, εἰς ὃν ἠδόκησα· θήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν. [C9]

καὶ περὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ εἶρηκεν ὅτι ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη καὶ ὡς ἀμνὸς ἄφωνος ἐναντίον τοῦ κείραντος αὐτόν. ἀλλὰ τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται; [C10]

καὶ πάλιν· τὸν νῶτόν μου ἔδωκα εἰς μάστιγας, τὰς δὲ σιαγόνας μου εἰς ῥαπίσματα, τὸ δὲ πρόσωπόν μου οὐκ ἀπέστρεψα ἀπὸ αἰσχύνῃς ἐμπτυσμάτων. [C11]

καὶ ἄλλως· ἐξεπέτασα τὰς χεῖράς μου πρὸς λαὸν ἀπειθοῦντα καὶ ἀντιλέγοντα, [C12]

καὶ ἐφανῆς ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπιζητοῦσιν, καὶ εὐρέθην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπερωτῶσιν. [C13]

ὁ δὲ Δαυὶδ περὶ αὐτοῦ φησιν· υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε· αἴτησαι παρ’ ἐμοῦ, καὶ δώσω σοι ἔθνη τὴν κληρονομίαν σου. [C14]

καὶ περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἰούδα λέγει· κύριε, τί ἐπληθύνθησαν οἱ θλίβοντές με; πολλοὶ ἐπανεστησαν ἐπ’ ἐμέ, πολλοὶ λέγουσι τῇ ψυχῇ μου· οὐκ ἔστι σωτηρία αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ θεῷ αὐτοῦ. [C15]

καὶ προσέθηκεν τὰ ἐξῆς τοῦ ψαλμοῦ. ὁρᾷς ὅλας τὰς προφητείας περὶ αὐτοῦ βοῶσας.

καὶ πάλιν ὁ Δαυίδ· προωρώμην τὸν κύριόν μου ἐνώπιόν μου διὰ παντός, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. [C16]

Smiling joyfully, Philip said to the whole crowd, “Listen to me and be judges of the truth.

The prophet Isaiah says about Christ: ‘Behold my servant whom I love, with whom I am well pleased. I will set my spirit upon him.’ [C9; Isa 42:1; cf. Mt 12:18]

And about his cross, he has said, ‘Like a sheep he was led to slaughter and like a lamb is silent before its shearer. But his generation, who can recount?’ [C10; Isa 53:7–8; cf. Acts 8:32–33; 1 Clem 16:7; Barn 5:2]

And again, ‘I gave my back for blows and my cheeks for slaps and I did not turn my face from the shame of spitting.’ [C11; Isa 50.6; cf. Barn 5:14]

And elsewhere, ‘I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.’ [C12; Isa 65:2; cf. Rom 10:21; Barn 12:4]

And, ‘I was manifest to those who did not seek me and was found by those who did not ask.’ [C13; Isa 65:1; cf. Rom 10:20]

And David says about him, ‘You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will give you nations as your inheritance.’ [C14; Ps 2:7–8; cf. Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5; 1 Clem 36:4]

And about his resurrection and about Judas, he says, ‘Lord, how my oppressors have increased. Many oppose me. Many say to me: There is no salvation in his god.’ [C15; Ps 3:2–3]

He added the rest of the psalm. You see all the prophecies crying out about him.

And again David: ‘I keep the Lord always before me, etc.’ [C16; Ps 15:8; cf. Acts 2:25]

ὁ δὲ Δαυιδ ἐτελεύτησεν, καὶ τὸ μνήμα αὐτοῦ οἶδαμεν· ταῦτα δὲ πάντα εἴρηται περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν αὐτοῦ ἀναστάσεως.

λάβε καὶ ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα προφητῶν· εἶπατε τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ πῶλον νέον. [C17]

καὶ ἕτερος· ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου. [C18]

καὶ ὁ πᾶς χορὸς τῶν προφητῶν καὶ πάντες οἱ πατριάρχαι περὶ τῆς ἐλεύσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκήρυξαν.

καὶ ὁ Ἀριστάρχος πάλιν εἶπεν, φησὶν· Φίλιππε, οὗτος Ἰησοῦς καὶ Χριστὸς λέγεται. οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἡσαΐας χριστὸν εἶρηκεν·

τάδε λέγει κύριος τῷ χριστῷ μου κυρίῳ οὐκ ἐκράτησα τῆς δεξιᾶς ἐπακουῦσαι ἔμπροσθεν ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν. [C19; Isa 45:1; 42:4]

οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐμάχοντο τῷ Ἀριστάρχῳ ὅτι φησὶν σὺ μᾶλλον ὑπέμνησας τὰ περὶ Χριστοῦ γεγραμμένα.

καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἔλεγεν· τί πρὸς ταῦτα ἀντιφιλονεικοῦμεν τῷ Φιλίπῳ;

καὶ οἱ τῆς πόλεως ἄρχοντες ἔλεγον· πάντως οἱ θεοὶ ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἤγαγον τὸν Φίλιππον, ἵνα μάθωμεν κωφοὶ καὶ τυφλοὶ καὶ μάταιοί εἰσιν· πρὸς δὲ τὴν ὄντως ἀλήθειαν αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς ὠδήγησεν. ποίαν οὖν ἀφορμὴν εὐρωμεν κατ' αὐτοῦ; ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ Ἰουδαῖος ὁ συνζητήσας αὐτῷ μᾶλλον ἐφάνερῶσεν τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην δόξαν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. διὸ δοκιμάσαντες τοὺς ἀμφοτέρων λόγους καὶ ἰδότες ὅτι δι' ἀπάντων ἀσφαλῶς ἐφανερώθη ὁ Χριστὸς, παρακαλέσωμεν τὸν Φίλιππον, ἵνα ἐν τῇ πόλει ἡμῶν τὸν πάντα χρόνον οἰκήσῃ εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν.

ὁ δὲ Ἴρεος ἦν ἐν ἀγαλλίασει καρδίας ἐπὶ τοῖς ῥήμασι τοῦ Φιλίππου· ὁ δὲ Φίλιππος οὐ διελίμπανεν δοξάζων τὸν θεόν.

David died and was buried, and we know his tomb [cf. Acts 2:29]. But all these things were said about Christ and his resurrection from the dead.

And take this from the twelve prophets: 'Say to daughter Zion, Behold your king is coming to you riding on a new foal.' [C17; Zech 9:9; Isa 62:11; Mt 21:5]

And another one: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.' [C18; Hos 11:1; Mt 2:15]

The whole chorus of the prophets and all the patriarchs proclaimed about the coming of Christ.'

Aristarchos spoke again, saying, "Philip, this one is called Jesus and Christ. I know that Isaiah spoke about a messiah:

'Thus says the Lord to my anointed lord, did I not grasp the right hand to subdue before the nations will hope.'"⁶² [C19; Isa 45.1; Isa 42.4; cf. Barn 12:11]

The Jews were fighting with Aristarchos because he was saying, "You have called to mind the things written about the Messiah."

And the whole crowd was saying, "Why are we still contending with Philip about this?"

And the leaders of the city were saying, "Surely your gods have led Philip into the city, so that we could learn that they are deaf and blind and worthless. He has guided us to the real truth. So what sort of charge would we find against him? Even the Jew who debated with him has revealed the hidden glory in the prophets concerning Christ. Since we have assessed the arguments of both and have recognized that Christ is reliably revealed in everything, let's urge Philip to stay in our city forever for our salvation."

Ireos was joyful in his heart about Philip's words, and Philip did not leave off glorifying God.

⁶² The text appears to be corrupt. See n. 34.