3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John
A translation and introduction

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3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John (3 Apocr. Apoc. John; =BHG 922k) is a revelatory dialogue between John the Theologian and Abraham that focuses primarily on the fate of the soul in the afterlife. In the available manuscripts, the text is simply titled “Apocalypse of holy John the Theologian”; it is designated the third apocryphal apocalypse to distinguish it from other noncanonical Johannine apocalypses, including the Questions of James to John, which some have called 3 Apocalypse of John.1 The variations in titles given to the Johannine apocalypses have also led to the identification of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John as 4 Apocalypse of John. While this apocalypse stands out from the others for having Abraham as John’s divine interlocutor rather than Jesus, the structure of the dialogue and citation of Scripture make 3 Apocr. Apoc. John at home among other Johannine apocalypses. The text is frequently confused with another dialogue text, the Questions of John to Abraham (Quest. John Ab.), extant only in Church Slavonic. It is included here as an appendix.

Contents
3 Apocr. Apoc. John opens with an incipit that lays out the main characters of the text, John the Theologian and Abraham, as well as the primary content of their dialogue: where souls go after death. The narrative proceeds with a post-Easter Jesus speaking to his disciples and Abraham, describing how souls are divided into two groups: the righteous and the sinners, bound for heaven and Hades, respectively. At this point, Jesus gives Abraham authority over those passing from this life (chap. 1). Peter interjects in the scene to ask Jesus about the end of the world and the resurrection, to which Jesus responds with some signs of the end of times derived from the Synoptic apocalypse (chap. 2). Then Jesus ascends to heaven, the body of Mary is taken to paradise (2:5)—an allusion to Dormition traditions—and John begins his questioning of Abraham. John’s questions vary broadly: Will the Jews find mercy in the afterlife (3:1–2)? What will happen to the impious on Judgment Day (3:3–5)? Will the righteous be separated from family and friends (4:1–2)? Do deceased children go to heaven (4:5–6)? What is the relationship between the soul and the body (4:7–8)? What do people eat or look like in the afterlife (9:1–5; 10:1–2; 13:1–4)? Will there be marriage (7:1–2)? Will a baptized sinner receive mercy (11:1–4, 8–10)? Some questions also deal with the conduct of priests and other church officials, with a particular interest in their interrelationships and who will speak for whom on Judgment Day (chaps. 5–6; 12:1–4). Throughout the dialogue, Abraham responds with a formulaic “did you not listen to

1. See the entry on Quest. James by Kathleen Gibbons and Tony Burke elsewhere in this volume.
what the prophet was saying?” and follows this rhetorical question with quotations from the Hebrew Bible, such as the Psalms and Isaiah. 3 Apocr. Apoc. John never strays from the question-and-answer structure and ends abruptly with Abraham’s response to John’s final question.

The related text, Quest. John Ab., provides no setting for the dialogue and features a response from Abraham to a single question from John: “What are the righteous fed in paradise?” (1:1). The answer (1:2–5) draws upon material from 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 9:2–5, particularly from the Church Slavonic version. Abraham then expounds upon memorials for the dead, discussed in brief in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 8:4–6. Abraham describes the Eastern Orthodox practice of holding memorial services on the third, ninth, twentieth, and fortieth days after death, each of these related to Jesus’ post-resurrection activities (2:1–7). At the end of these services, the soul is judged, and if found worthy, it is taken to paradise to “Abraham’s and Isaac’s and Jacob’s lap to eternal life” (3:1–6); if not, the soul is handed over to demons for eternal torment (3:7–11).

Manuscripts and Editions

3 Apocr. Apoc. John is preserved in two Greek manuscripts: Athens, Ethniké Bibliothékētēs Hellados, gr. 1007, fols. 171r–176r (17th cent.: =A) and Mount Athos, Moné Kontloumouisou, 176 (Lambros 3249), fols. 179v–183r (1438/1439 CE; =L). The Athens manuscript also contains several other apocryphal texts: 1 Apocr. Apoc. John (CANT 331), the Martyrdom of Zechariah (CANT 181.1/4), the Epistle of the Presbyters and Deacons of Achaia (CANT 226), and the Passion of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (Ps.-Marcellus) (CANT 193.3), along with works by Chrysostom, Cyril, Daniel of Scetis, and other hagiographical texts. The Mount Athos manuscript contains various hagiographical works along with Proclus of Constantinople’s fifth-century Dialysis de oratione dominica and Ps.-Eusebius of Alexandria’s fifteenth sermon. While the text is fairly well preserved in both manuscripts, a folio seems to be missing from A between fols. 173 and 174, covering 8:4–10:4. The Greek text of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John has not been published previously; the only acknowledgment of its existence, outside of catalog and clavis descriptions, is a brief mention by Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Jean-Claude Picard in the introduction to their translation of 1 Apocr. Apoc. John from 2005.

The sources for 3 Apocr. Apoc. John in Church Slavonic are more plentiful and the scholarship more robust. Information on these sources, however, is difficult to assess. Some of the scholars who have worked on the materials have relied only on catalog listings for their information, leading to confusion between the various Johannine apocalyptica, particularly 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and Quest. John Ab. Both texts first appeared in editions by N. S. Tichonravov in 1863 based on manuscripts of the sixteenth century housed at the Russian State Library in Moscow. Quest. John Ab. is based on cod. 166 (535), fols. 115r–118v (=Otero 27), with readings from cod. 323 (826), fols. 89.

2. Miltenova (Apocalypsis Johannis, 686–87) includes details about the two manuscripts based on descriptions provided to her by Evelina Mineva, who prefers a date of composition for A in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Miltenova also states that the beginning of the text of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John in A “is repeated twice by later hand (sic), and a part of it is illegible” (p. 687). The text is indeed written in several different hands, but there is no repetition at the beginning and very little of the text is illegible (a few words in the bottom left corner of fols. 174 and 175).

Three separate editions are given for 3 Apocr. Apoc. John based on cod. 157 (521), fols. 69r–75v (16th cent.; =Otero 26); cod. 96, fols. 91r–95v (16th cent.; =Otero 31); and cod. 183 (566), fols. 273v–275v (16th cent.; =Otero 28/61). Tichonravov published a third Quest. John Ab. manuscript—Moscow, State Historical Museum, N. S. Tichonravov 6, fols. 140–142 (17th cent.; =Otero 36)—in 1894. The range of sources is considerably expanded in V. Močul'skij's 1893 study of erōtapokriseis (question and answer) literature. He lists seventeen manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, with the text of one (Zagreb, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, II.a.43, fols. 176v–186v [16th cent.; =Otero 56]) given in an appendix, and six of Quest. John Ab. The overview of all Slavonic Johannine apocalypticism provided by Aurelio de Santos Otero, which shows no awareness of Močul'skij's work, is often unclear or incorrect about its identification of the texts, but he does include at least six manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and at least seven of Quest. John Ab. not known to Močul'skij. A review of de Santos Otero's study by Francis J. Thomson includes some adjustments, but even Thomson's list has errors. Further five manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John are mentioned in Tomislav Jovanović's 2005 apocrypha collection on the Serbian translation; three of these supply variants to Jovanović's translation of Močul'skij's edition. Julian Petkov's 2012 study of Church Slavonic apocalypses correlates Močul'skij's list with de Santos Otero's and adds a number of new sources to yield a total of twenty manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and fifteen of Quest. John Ab. These lists, too, have their problems: they neglect the additions made in the second volume of de Santos Otero and the new sources given in Jovanović, and may have misidentified two 3 Apocr. Apoc. John manuscripts as Quest. John Ab. Finally, a

9. See de Santos Otero, HUAA 1, 1:197–209, 2:253–54. Those identified as BHG 922k are nos. 1, 5, 10, 15, 16, 22, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 48, 49, 51, 56, and 60 (27 is actually Quest. John Ab.; but 10, 24, and 60 remain uncertain); those as Quest. John Ab. are 33, 36, 40, 41, 46, and 57 (Milenova confirms 46 and 57 are really 3 Apocr. Apoc. John; 40 and 41 remain uncertain). A number of other manuscripts are not clearly identified: 3, 9, 11–14, 18, 19, 28 (duplicated as 61), 38, 42–44, 59, and 62 (but Močul'skij lists 28/61 as 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, 11 as Quest. John Ab., and 62 as 3 Apocr. Apoc. John).
10. Thomson, Review of Aurelio de Santos Otero, HUAA 1, Slavonic and East European Review 58, no. 2 (1980): 256–68 at 267. Of the still unconfirmed manuscripts listed in n. 8, Thomson identifies Otero 9 as 1 Apocr. Apoc. John; 10, 12, 14, 24, 40, and 43 as 3 Apocr. Apoc. John; and 13, 38, and 44 as Quest. John Ab. (he was not yet aware of 59–62, which are listed in HUAA 2, and does not mention 3, 18, 19, and 41). Otero 57 (confirmed as 3 Apocr. Apoc. John by Miltenova) he calls "a Croatian translation of an unidentified Western work; very mutilated," and reveals that it was published by Rudolf Strohal (Stare hrvatske apokrifne priče i legende [Bjelovar: Tisaki i naklada lav. Weiss-a, 1917], 90–97), but the only Abraham text in the volume appears on pp. 57–60 and it is neither Quest. John Ab. nor 3 Apocr. Apoc. John. Of the sources for 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, Thomson says, "Most of these codices contain later redactions with various omissions, interpolations, etc. The original translation is in nos. 5 and 26 at least."
12. Petkov, Altslavische Eschatologie, 178–79. Petkov admits that his identification of the texts, like those of de Santos Otero, are based only on the information provided in catalogs and previously published works. He does not include the manuscripts that de Santos Otero could not identify (nos. 9, 14, 18, 19, 43, 59, 60) and retains de Santos Otero's identification of no. 46 (Petkov A1) and 57 (Petkov A8)
new study of the 3 Apocr. Apoc. John tradition in South Slavic by Anissava Miltenova lists nineteen manuscripts, thirteen of which are correlated with de Santos Otero (1, 5, 46, 48, 49, 51, 56, and 57) and three are known to Jovanović, though she appears not to be aware of his work, nor of Petkov's; seven of Miltenova's sources are entirely new. Miltenova includes in her study an edition of and translation of Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, slav. 433 (Panagjiršté Miscellany), fols. 117r–123v (16th cent.; =Otero 48), no explanation is given for the selection of this particular manuscript, though it does have a high degree of correspondence with the Greek text. The apocalypse has also circulated in a Bulgarian vernacular translation. Two manuscripts—Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, slav. 1070, fols. 54r–62v (1789) and slav. 1338, fols. 9r–15v (beginning of the 19th cent.)—are used in Tadeusz Szymański's 1995 edition and Olga Mladenova adds to these another seven for her study that traces the origins of this tradition to the seventeenth century.

**Literary and Theological Considerations**

Given the use of Abraham as a mediating figure in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, the text fits well into the definition of apocalypse established by John Collins as "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 supernatural world." Much like 1 Apocr. Apoc. John and such apocalyptic texts as Revelation, Shepherd of Hermes, the (Second) Revelation of James, and Nature of the Rulers, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John fits into Collins's Type Ib: "Apocalypses with Cosmic and/or Political Eschatology (which have neither historical review nor otherworldly journey)."

Abraham's circumstances are somewhat vague in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John—it is unclear whether he is among those "brought out" from Hades alongside Adam and others (1:1), or if Abraham is corresponding with Jesus and John from a supernatural realm. The Slavonic version makes clear what the Greek does not, namely, that John is raised to Abraham's side in order to begin his series of questions (Slav II 3:1). Throughout the text,
Abraham functions as an otherworldly representative who reveals certain truths about the afterlife to John after Jesus' ascension, with a particular focus on the fate of souls in heaven and Hades and how one's actions on earth impact that fate. This may be related to the ancient Jewish and Christian tradition of the "bosom of Abraham," a concept that first appears in the Second Temple Jewish and early Christian periods—for example, in 4 Maccabees 13:17, Luke 16:19–31, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah 9:4; 11:4–6, and Genesis Rabbah 48.7–8. According to the tradition, after death the righteous are separated from the unrighteous and then cross over to an area of Hades where Abraham dwells. In 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, Abraham is given the task of separating the righteous, who go to heaven, from the sinners, who go to Hades (1:3). When John asks "Where does the soul go?" Abraham says that the righteous "rest in my bosom" (8:1–3).

As Anca Bratu-Minott notes, the motif of the "bosom of Abraham" thrives in the medieval period, especially in the twelfth century, as Christians developed a full-fledged theory of Purgatory and the purification of souls. This depiction of Abraham also may be indebted to the patriarch's function in early Jewish texts (such as the Apocalypse of Abraham) as one who knows the secrets of God, salvation, and judgment. Abraham's answers to John's questions in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, however, focus on scriptural interpretation as a key to understanding the nature of souls and the afterlife. Rather than providing John with visionary experiences as an explanatory tool, Abraham consistently responds with scriptural citations and proper exegetical practices. For 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, one's ability to interpret Scripture determines one's ability to understand the fate of souls. One may look to the Exposition on the Content of Virgil according to Moral Philosophy (Expositio continentiae Virgilianae secundum philosophos moralis) by Fulgentius (late 5th–early 6th cent.) as a Hellenic comparandum of dialogue with a deceased figure regarding a tradition associated with them. In the Exposition, Virgil is summoned from the dead to elucidate the truth of the Aeneid for the author's benefit, particularly regarding allegorical readings of the text. But in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, Abraham is summoned not to explain a text with which he is associated, but to fulfill his role as an intermediary between the living and the dead, between heaven and hell for souls passing on to the afterlife.

Jesus appears only briefly in the text, in his typical post-resurrection location, teaching the apostles on the Mount of Olives before the ascension. However, the name Jesus is not used (indeed, it appears nowhere in the text); instead he is called God and

19. One might also consider Ignatius, Phild. 9.1, in which Christ is the "door" through which Abraham and many others enter heaven. This bears some similarity to Abraham's sudden appearance in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John.
20. For more on the role of Abraham in early Christian thought, see Cooper, "'In the Bosom of Abraham'; and van der Lof, "Abraham's Bosom." On the primary literature, see particularly Apoc. Zeph. 11:6 where Abraham intercedes with God on behalf of those being tormented in the afterlife. On more recent sources, note Thomas Aquinas, ST III.69.4 regarding the relationship between Abraham's bosom and limbo.
21. Bratu-Minott, "From the Bosom of Abraham"; and O'Kane, "'Bosom of Abraham.'"
22. See Williams, "Abraham in the Christian Tradition."
Lord. The teaching focuses entirely on signs of the end (2:2–3), given in response to a question posed by Peter, the only apostle who appears in the text other than John. The content is drawn from the “little apocalypse” from the Synoptics (Mark 13:5–37 par.), where it is occasioned by a question from multiple apostles (explicitly named in Mark as Peter, James, John, and Andrew). Notably absent is any forecasting of future kings, including the legendary figure of the Last Emperor, and discussion of the Son of Man, as is seen in other late antique apocalypses particularly after the Arabic conquest (e.g., the Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius). 24 However, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John does contain, however briefly, the figure of the Antichrist (13:5), which is well represented in Byzantine apocalyptic literature and certainly connected to a “John” in the New Testament (1 John 2:18; 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). 25

3 Apocr. Apoc. John shows particular interest in dates and events marked in the liturgical calendar of the Eastern church. The resurrection is situated “6530 years from the time of Adam, on March 27” (1:1). Later, Abraham states that Mary’s conception occurred on March 25, which led to Jesus’ birth on December 25 (9:8). Such dates for the conception—that is, the Annunciation—and Jesus’ birth were common in late antiquity, especially in Western Christian circles. 26 An early mention of Jesus being born on December 25 appears in the fourth-century Roman Philocalian Calendar. 27 Slightly earlier, Tertullian recounts that Jesus was crucified on March 25, based on a tradition of placing Mary’s conception and Jesus’ crucifixion on the same calendrical date. 28 The ascension of Jesus is said, in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, to take place “at the seventh hour of the fifth day” (2:4); in the Eastern church, the ascension is celebrated on the sixth Thursday after Easter. The introduction also makes mention of two other events in the liturgical calendar: the Harrowing of Hell and the Dormition/Assumption of Mary. Hints of the Harrowing of Hell, or the Descensus ad inferos, narrative, in which Jesus descends and liberates some of those withering away in Sheol/Hades, can be found in such texts as the Odes of Solomon 42, the Acts of Pilate/Gospel of Nicodemus, the Questions of Bartholomew 1:9–27, the Acts of Thomas 10, and the Teaching of Silvanus 103,28–104,14. 29 In 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, Jesus is introduced as the figure who


28. See Tertullian, Adv. Jud. 8.17; Ps.-Hippolytus, Comm. Dan. 4.23; Ps.-John Chrysostom, On Solstices and Equinoxes (De solstitia et aequinoctia conceptionis et nativitatis domini nostri iesus christi et iohannis baptistae); Augustine, Trin. 4.3; Serm. 202; Dionysius Exiguus, Argumenta Paschalia 15.

29. For more on this tradition, see James H. Charlesworth, “Exploring the Origins of the descensus
resurrects Adam, Eve, David, Solomon, and various prophets on Easter Sunday. Near the end of the apocalypse, the figure of Adam appears once more when John asks about how the soul encounters its own sins in Hades. Abraham responds not only regarding the inevitability of seeing one's own sins, but that souls coming to Hades are questioned by Adam regarding current affairs on earth (12:7). In the Dormition traditions, Jesus' mother is transported to paradise some years after Jesus' death, after some of the apostles have also perished. Here, however, the "immaculate Lady, the Theotokos" (2:5) and "ever-virgin" (9:8) mother of Jesus journeys to paradise before Jesus' ascension (3:1).

Throughout 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, John and Abraham's discussion of souls takes many twists and turns. Early on in their dialogue, John asks when souls come to earth and inhabit bodies (4:7)—an image familiar to many late ancient Christians from Origen's discussion of souls in which souls "cool" (psychesthai) and gain varieties of bodily forms (Princ. 2.8–9). Abraham's response, however, takes a different direction. He quotes Ps 102:15–16 (LXX) and asserts that the "soul never comes into the body" (4:8). Abraham may be conflating the spirit/wind (pneuma) of the psalm with the soul (psyche), since the spirit/wind passes by the flower-like human. For Abraham, the soul is the same; it does not participate in the body, but seemingly passes through it. Perhaps this assertion regarding the soul reveals some underlying reaction to Origenist claims regarding the soul. It may also relate to conversations regarding the soul by Irenaeus and Tertullian, both of whom discuss the soul in relation to the "bosom of Abraham" narrative of Luke 16, questioning the physical characteristics of the soul and its location in the afterlife. Irenaeus (Haer. 2.34.1–2) argues that after death, the soul does not pass from body to body; rather, it retains the form of the body that it currently inhabits. As proof, Irenaeus uses the Lazarus narrative to show that Abraham was able to recognize Lazarus in the afterlife because his soul retained Lazarus's appearance. Tertullian (De anima 8–9, 55) argues that the soul has physical characteristics, pointing to the "bosom" of Abraham and the "finger" of Lazarus in Luke 16. Such discussion on the form of the body in the afterlife continues among Byzantine writers who debated whether the dead will be able to recognize each other, a question posed also in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 42:1–2, and is related to questions about the age of souls (10:1–2 and 13:1–4). Opinions vary among Byzantine writers on "kindred recognition" (koinos anagnorismos), with Michael Glykas (Kephalaiia 11) perhaps approaching closest to what is found in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John. He argues that the pre-fallen "angelic" state to which we return is genderless; so recognition comes from a form of spiritual insight. 3 Apocr. Apoc. John discusses other aspects of the afterlife, such as what types of food the just and the sinners eat in paradise (92:1–4), and how souls inquire about current affairs from those who have newly arrived (12:7).

Another aspect of Byzantine views on the afterlife represented in the apocalypse is the practice of memorials for the dead. Prayers for the departed, or Panikhida (see ad inferos; in Earliest Christianity within the Boundaries of Judaism: Essays in Honor of Bruce Chilton (ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck, Craig Evans, and Jacob Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 2016), 372–95; and Paul-Hubert Poirier, "Gnostic Sources and the Prehistory of the Descensus ad inferos," Apocrypha 21 (2010): 73–81.

For a survey of views on the form of the soul in the afterlife beginning with Irenaeus and running through to Michael Glykas, see Constas, "To Sleep, Perchance to Dream," 95–99; on Origen in particular, see Louth, "Eastern Orthodox Eschatology," 244–45.

On memory in the afterlife, see Constas, "To Sleep, Perchance to Dream," 99–102.

9:4–7), are performed by the deceased’s family principally on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after death—_the same schema given in_ 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 8:4–6, though with the addition of a twentieth day, and expanded upon in Quest. John Ab. Opinions differ on the origins and meaning of this schema, with some considering the _Book of the Dead, Poimandres, Visio Pauli_, or the _Apocalypse of Paul_ as literary antecedents. Some Byzantine writers associated the memorials with certain days in the life of Christ, as in Quest. John Ab. Others, Nicholas Constas writes, “believed that the soul, like a bird seeking its nest, remained on earth for three days, hovering about the place of its death, sorrowful at the prospect of leaving the world and the body. Still others understood these services to mark the gradual dissolution of the body, in what was essentially a reversal of the body’s original formation in the womb.” The _Panikhida_ services involve also lit candles and the serving of _kollyva_ (Slavonic: _kutia_), a meal of boiled wheat, spices, and honey; these practices are not mentioned in the Greek manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, but they do appear in the Church Slavonic text (Slav I at 9:3–5; Slav II 6:3–4). Another aspect of thought on the afterlife, mentioned only in Quest. John Ab. (1:3), is the tollhouses that the soul must visit on its path to salvation or damnation; the tollhouses are inhabited by demons and in each, the soul is accused of a particular sin, angels come to its defense, and prayers of the living decide the fate of the soul. The _Panikhida_ serves a similar function, so that the prayers for the dead have an intercessory force (see, again, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 8:4–6; Quest. John Ab. 3:1–6). The righteous are able to bypass the tollhouses completely and go directly to the bosom of Abraham.

John and Abraham spend a significant amount of time discussing church officials. John first asks about the order of the priests (5:1–4) and Abraham responds in difficult Greek regarding the blasphemies of the prototypical priests (Melchizedek, Zechariah, and Simeon, chosen presumably because of their importance in Christian tradition) and their ability to curse. Abraham clarifies that God appointed shepherds and teachers over the church that must follow a certain standard set by God (5:7–8). John and Abraham go on to discuss the fate of laity who dishonor priests (6:1–2), as well as the importance of monks’ relationships and physical proximity to their hegumens (6:3–6). Near the end of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, John asks about who will speak on behalf of whom on Judgment Day—will priests speak for the people? Will hegumens speak for monks? Abraham clarifies the order of responsibility on this day: the bishop speaks on behalf of priests, the priest for the people, and the hegumen for the monks (12:1–3). Perhaps this concern over who stands for whom in the afterlife is reflected

33. Constas, "‘To Sleep, Perchance to Dream,’” 103–4 (see esp. n. 41 for discussion in Byzantine literature). See also Marinis, “‘He Who Is at the Point of Death,’” esp. 67–70; and Louth, “Eastern Orthodox Eschatology,” 239–40.
34. See Stephanov, “Between Heaven and Hell,” 84. The tollhouse schema is also evident in Irenaeus, _Haer._ 1.21.5; Epiphanius, _Pan._ 26.13.2; Athanasius, _Vit. Ant._ 65; John Chrysostom, _Paenit._ 1; and Orphic gold tablets.
36. Constas, “‘To Sleep, Perchance to Dream,’” 107–9; and Louth, “Eastern Orthodox Eschatology,” 234–40. On this motif, see also 1 Apocr. Jas. 33:2–36.1. Stephanov ("Between Heaven and Hell," 83–94) suggests that this tradition grows out of the works of Origen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, and Ephrem. He also provides an exemplar in the tenth-century _Life of St. Basil the Younger_ written by Gregory the monk (PG 109:654–65), in which Basil’s soul ascends through twenty tollhouses for forty days and is tested at tollhouses assigned to particular sins.
in late ancient monastic thought; for example, Shenoute's Canons speak of the father/mother superior (hllœ; hllò) and house leaders (prmnê; trmnêî) acting as representatives of the cenobitic community before God in judgment and being responsible for the monks' salvation. The interest in priests and monastic orders seems peculiar for a conversation said to have taken place in the first century between an apostle and a patriarch, but, as noted below, such matters are routine for Johannine apocalyptic and topical for whoever wrote the text, likely a monk, and those who copied and read it within monastic scriptoria throughout the medieval period.

**Relationship to Johannine Apocalyptic**

As with other Johannine apocalyptic included in this volume, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John belongs to the genre of *erōtapokriseis*, or "question-and-answer," literature—more specifically, the subgenre Péter Tóth calls "Byzantine revelation dialogues with eschatological scope." This group includes also 1 Apocr. Apoc. John and Quest. Jas. Several parallels can be seen between 1 Apocr. Apoc. John and another, nonapocryphal *erōtapokriseis* text: the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria. In Tóth's view, 1 Apocr. Apoc. John has "apocryphised" the *Quaestiones*. Similar relationships exist for the noneschatological 2 Apocr. Apoc. John and some connections are apparent also in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John. Consider, for example, the question posed about whether the souls of the dead remember those who still live (PG 28:616D; cf. 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 4:1–7).

Of all the Johannine apocalyptic, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John has the most affinities with 1 Apocr. Apoc. John, which appears to be the progenitor of the entire corpus. The two texts have a shared understanding that Psalms are prophetic and can be quoted as such, as well as shared conceptions of the resurrected body. Both 1 Apocr. Apoc. John and 3 Apocr. Apoc. John portray John "the Theologian" as asking the interlocutor—whether the voice of the Savior or Abraham—how will people appear in the moment of resurrection. In both cases, the interlocutor responds by saying that humanity will be resurrected as thirty-year-olds, thus putting them at their peak maturity (1 Apocr. Apoc. John 11:1–2; 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 13:1–2). Additionally, 1 Apocr. Apoc. John goes into more detail than 3 Apocr. Apoc. John regarding what it means that all will be raised "in one appearance" (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 13:2; cf. 1 Apocr. Apoc. John 11:2), explaining that they will not have diverse ages, genders, skin colors, or bodily features. Both texts also share language of race (genos) in reference to Christians resurrected and questioned together (1 Apocr. Apoc. John 23:2; 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 10:11), a term frequently used to describe Christians,

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38. On *erōtapokriseis* literature, see the scholarship cited in the entry on the *Dialogue of the Revealer and John* by Philip Tite elsewhere in this volume (p. 360).


40. Tóth, "New Wine," 84.


42. Court, *Book of Revelation*, 25. This prophetic use of the Psalms complicates Dimitri E. Conomo's claim (*The Late Byzantine and Slavonic Communion Cycle: Liturgy and Music* [Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985], 3–4) that such use was relegated only to "primitive Christianity" and stands in contrast to the Byzantine and Slavonic liturgical use of Psalms.

among other people, in antiquity and beyond.44 In 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, races are gathered like sheep in the resurrection and Christians are recognized as distinct from Jews or unbelievers (3:4; 10:11; 13:4–5).

As for the other Johannine apocalypses, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John shares with Quest. Jas, an interest in the fate of soul—particularly the separation of the righteous and the wicked, with the first destined for paradise and the second for Hades (see 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 8:1–2; Quest. Jas. 1:2; 2:1), whether the repentant can achieve salvation (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 11; Quest. Jas. 3–5; note also both texts’ application of the Parable of the Lost Sheep in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 6; Quest. Jas. 3), and with storing up riches (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 10:3–4, 7–9; Quest. Jas. 6). Both 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and 2 Apocr. Apoc. John are concerned about the honor due to priests (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 6:1–2; 2 Apocr. Apoc. John 5:8); otherwise the two texts overlap only in a shared reference to Christ’s descent to Hades and resurrection from the dead (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 11; 2 Apocr. Apoc. John 3:9). Finally, in the Coptic Mysteries of John, Jesus dialogues with John on the Mount of Olives after his resurrection (1:1) and then provides him with a cherubim-guided tour of heaven. All of these parallels entail motifs and theological concepts that cut across Christian literature of multiple periods; none are indicative of dependence of one text upon another.

Language, Date, and Provenance

Both extant Greek manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John rely on the LXX and Greek New Testament and indicate that the apocalypse originated in a Greek textual milieu. Greek ecclesiastical terminology—such as, “Theotokos” (2:5), “hegumen” (6:3–5; 12:1–2; 13:4), the “Great Fifth” (8:8), and Apokreo (11:9)—add evidence to this argument. Regarding the date of the autograph of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, it is difficult to narrow the possibilities to anything more than a window of multiple centuries. As noted in this volume by Draughon, Sellick, and Spittler regarding 2 Apocr. Apoc. John, the Johannine apocryphica are fluid texts that do not lend themselves to an easy pinpointing of an “original” text, especially given the plasticity of the erotapokriseis structure. 3 Apocr. Apoc. John is no exception.45 The Mount Athos manuscript (L) is dated to 1438/1439 CE, but two of the Church Slavonic manuscripts are dated a century earlier,46 giving us a terminus ante quem of the fourteenth century for the production of the text. While the text is not mentioned explicitly in commentaries or scholia of late antiquity or the early medieval period, the ninth-century scholia of the Grammar of Dionysius Thrax and its mention of an “Apocalypse of the Theologian”47 could conceivably just as well be a reference to 3 Apocr. Apoc. John as 1 Apocr. Apoc. John. The writer of the scholia simply states that there is “another so-called apocalypse of the Theologian” without any defining features, other than that it is supposedly “pseudonymous and spurious.” Earlier scholars like John Court have not had access to an edition of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and have previously been able to assume that the scholia refers exclusively to 1 Apocr. Apoc. John.

45. See above pp. 403–4.
46. These are nos. 5 and 46 in de Santos Otero, HUAA, 1:200 and 207.
47. Mentioned by Rick Brannan in his introduction to 1 Apocr. Apoc. John; see above p. 378.
Regarding a *terminus post quem*, we might look to the text's use of the dates for the annunciation, birth of Jesus, crucifixion, and *Descensus*, as well as its brief mention of the Dormition of Mary and its discussion of monks and abbots, which might point us to the fifth century at the earliest, but likely even later. Following the work of Alice Whealey, who suggests that production of apocalyptic texts increased throughout the seventh to ninth centuries, this may be a potential time period within which to place 3 Apocr. *Apoc. John* alongside other apocalyptic texts—however, we need not be restricted to this suggestion. Julian Petkov believes that 3 Apocr. *Apoc. John* was written in the twelfth century, under the impression that the apocalypse was composed solely in Slavonic and that it used *Quest. John Ab.* as a source. However, the presence of a Greek textual tradition and the unclear direction(s) of textual borrowing make such a date suspect. Simply put, this text could originate from any point in the late antique period and should be examined in the context(s) of Byzantine Christianity and early Islam.

**Translation**

In the interest of "new philological" approaches to manuscripts in early Christian studies, and given the significant differences between the sources, translations of both I and A, made by Tony Burke and Chance Bonar, are provided separately in a synopsis. While the two manuscripts are legible and largely free of damage, they both present orthographical challenges; emendations, where necessary, are indicated in the notes. The text has been divided into chapters and verses; at times the verses are further divided into smaller units (e.g., 4:2a, 4b) to aid in presenting both manuscripts in parallel without favoring the structure of one over the other. Also included in the notes are variant readings and references to Miltenova's translation of the Church Slavonic manuscript from Sofia (=Slav I); this Slavonic text follows the Greek very closely and is helpful in understanding difficult portions of the Greek text. Another Church Slavonic text (=Slav II) is included as an appendix, translated by Slavomír Čeplo from Tichonravov's edition of Moscow 157 (521); this version has numerous omissions and transpositions and is offered here as an illustration of the diversity observable in the Church Slavonic tradition. Finally, we have included also Slavomír Čeplo's translation of Tichonravov's first edition of *Quest. John Ab.*—the first in any modern language.

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3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John

Bibliography

EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS


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Kaeestl, Jean-Daniel, and Jean-Claude Picard. “Première Apocalypse Apocryphe de Jean.” Pages 983–90 in EAC 2. (See the introduction, pp. 987–90.)


Mladenova, Olga M. “An Early Modern Bulgarian Vernacular Version of St. John the Theologian’s Questions to Abraham.” (Forthcoming.)


Questions of John the Theologian to Abraham

1 Jesus went up to the Mount of Olives with his disciples and said to them, “I am leaving you for heaven and I will take Adam with me and will be (there) with him.”

2 And he said to Abraham, “Abraham, to you I will give souls separating them in two; the first to be led to heaven, but sinners will go to Hades.”

Peter asks for signs of the end of the age

2 Then Peter said to him, “Lord, tell us when will be the end and your return to earth and the resurrection of the dead from ancient times.”

3 Jesus said to them, “The end and my return to earth will be when there is on earth villainy in people; hate, immorality, and jealousy in that generation; earthquakes and many catastrophes, and famines and wars. 3 Brother will hate brother and deliver (one another) to death, and ruler will rise against ruler. Nations will cry out with desperate suffering and (there will be) great groaning.”

On souls recognizing one another in the afterlife

3 And John the Theologian was raised to heaven to Abraham’s side and he asked Abraham, “Father Abraham, do people know each other in the World Beyond?”

4 “They know each other very well, just as you know pleasures (when) kissing your children.”

5 Question: “Do souls know each other when they are there?”

6 “They do, just as we know each other here.”

7 Question: “And when children die here, are they remembered there?”

8 “Child, as it is born and grows on earth and matures, so a soul grows and matures there.”

9 Question: “Does the soul come to the body?”

10 “Child, did you not hear David saying, ‘As for man, his days like grass, like a flower of the field, so it will bloom, beneath a breath passed through it, and it will be gone, and it will no longer recognize its place.’ The soul never comes to the body.”

11 Question: “Are married couples united in the World Beyond?”

a This question and answer has a couplet in 5:3–4.
9

Child, understand from Adam that God joined them in a single body. So when they are in judgment, then they will also take their children in the eternal life."

On the fate of sinners

4 1Question: “And when a sinful soul comes, what will happen to it there?”

2“Child, angels will keep a sinful soul with them for four days, perhaps someone will remember it. 3If no one remembers it, again they will keep it with them for forty more days, perhaps it will feed someone or quench their thirst or clothe them, or a priest remembers it in their prayers. 4If it is not given Memory Eternal a from anywhere and forty days pass, they tell it, ‘Go, you poor soul, into the outer darkness.’”

5Question: “How long must it be in the darkness?”

6“Child, since Great Thursday until Pentecost.”

7Question: “Where do the souls of the righteous go?”

8“Child, did you not hear David saying, ‘His soul will abide in prosperity, and his offspring shall inherit the land.’ Child sitting on the lap of Abraham, a righteous soul goes to heaven to (be at) God’s side.”

9Question: “And the souls of sinners?”

10“Child, did you not hear David saying, ‘Let sinners be turned away to Hades, all the nations that keep forgetting God.’”

On marriage, gluttony, theft, and adultery

5 1Question: “Can a woman cause a man to sin?”

2“Child, (she can) cause a man (to commit) a great sin, as Eve caused Adam to be expelled, God judged them since they are husband and wife and married.”

3Question: “Will husband and wife unite in the World Beyond?”

4“Child, understand from Adam that you are one flesh with your wife. Child, this is how it is with the first one, but the second one and third one and infidelities are (truly) adultery and depravity.”

5Question: “And if people are baptized, but then live like animals, in that they eat and drink, but do not baptize their own body?”

6“Child, Isaiah the prophet says, ‘Let the ungodly one be taken away so that he may not see the glory of the Lord and die doing so,’ and let those doing these things be destroyed.”

7Question: “Thieves and (false) accusers, how will they fare there?”

8“Child, David says, ‘May sinners fail from the earth, and the lawless, so that they be no more.’”

On the food for the righteous

6 1Question: “What do righteous souls eat?”

2“They persist on angel bread and heavenly food, while sinners eat as they would in the world.”

a. The Memory Eternal is the concluding hymn of the Orthodox memorial service.
3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John

Acts Rec. B 34–35:
Ps 68:26 LXX
Ps 108:1 LXX
Ps 6:13 LXX
Ps 72:19, 91:8 LXX
Heb 12:6 [Prov 3:12]
Ps 146:2 LXX
Apoc. Sedr. 16:1

3"And (what of those who) light a candle and make kutia?"
4"Child, great memory and great prayer and great deeds (on behalf of dead souls) (will be given) to these souls. 5As God remembered Adam, led him out of the darkness and rejoiced in him, so these souls will rejoice in these candles and this kutia, happy and joyful."

On wealth, baptism, and age
7 1Question: “And (what of) those who go to oracles and are rich from them?”

2"Child, David says, ‘Let their steadings become desolated and they will know no pleasure, those who perpetrate evil.’ 3And he says, ‘May his memory be destroyed from earth;’ God’s curse be upon his house and may he himself perish without an answer."

4Question: “What is the purpose of riches given to a person on earth, do they profit the soul or not?”

5"Child, riches are wasted away, if they do not turn hearts. No apostle, no martyr had riches; no prophet, no bishop leaves (this world) without giving (them) away to the poor, and then regains the riches in heaven. Child, on earth, riches are (only good for) vanity and for driving poor souls to ruin."

6Question: “And if a person becomes poor?”

7"Child, did you not hear David saying, ‘May you not totally forget your needy.’ The suffering impoverished ones will not always perish, (they will receive) a great reward for which he suffered. Paul the apostle says, ‘For the Lord disciplines those whom he loves.’"

8Question: “And if a person is born and baptized as a Christian and happens to die as a pagan, will he be resurrected with (other) Christians?”

9"Child, David says, ‘The Lord will gather those who have been scattered.’ The ones gathered will be beautified by our God and they will be resurrected with (other) Christians.”

10Question: “And (what of) children who die here (when they are) small, while others (die) older?”

11There are 365 days in a year and those days contain hours and minutes. If a child is born in those days, the woman (will be) well and the child will die in old age. But if (it is born) at some other time, it will be worse for her; so if it is born at the exact hour, it will die in middle age; but if it is born between hours, it will die young."

On forgiveness and confession
8 1Question: “If a person confesses their sins to a priest and the priest orders them to fast for their sins, will their sins be forgiven?”

2"David says, ‘Happy are those whose lawless behavior was forgiven, and whose sins were covered over.’"

3Question: “Does the priest take on the sins of his confessor?”

4"Child, David says, ‘With the devout you will be devout and with the select and with the crooked you will pervert.’ 5If a son steals with (his) father, will he not be shackled with (his) father and brought to the court? Will they not both

a. See above p. 446 n. a.
pay for these crimes? 4Child, the confessor and the priest (will bear) the same sins; both (will bear) a common sin, but with this, he will answer for him and take his sins on himself.”

7Question: “If a confessor sins again, is he forgiven for them?”

8"Child, they are forgiven, if he does penance. Child, God has made forty days of Lent, so if a person sins, they can be purified every year during the same days when God himself, though he has no sin, fasts, and all people’s sins are forgiven.”

9Question: “Should bishops and priests who have sinned do penance?”

10"Child, David says, ‘The dead will not praise you, O Lord,’ but we the living praise the Lord. Child, he should confess his sins and (his sins) will be forgiven and will accept a crown so that he will be clean before God.”

On clergy making a defense for the righteous

9 1Question: “Does a bishop have to answer for (his) people and (their) sins at the Last Judgment or not?”

2"Child, the bishop answers for the priests; priests answer for the people and hegumens for the monks. And they stand up and say, ‘I and the children you gave me.”

3Question: “And those who deem themselves superior to hegumens and priest and bishops, how (will they fare when) they will be there before God?”

4"Child, did you not hear the Gospel talking about a Pharisee and a tax collector whom God had mercy on; should the tax collector be not reconciled (with God), and the Pharisee exalted, while Judas perishes? 5It is therefore proper for a priest to be meek, to be conciliatory, to be quiet, and to be loving towards everyone.”

6Question: “Can you show me, Father, what is a priest’s task?”

7"Child, a priest has a great task. His curse will not cease, so if he curses someone in anger, they will die of this. 8Child, did you not hear what the Lord said to Peter, ‘Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven’? 9Child, if a priest gives absolution to a person and forgives their sins, if he denies him, so I will deny him. 10Child, it is for this task that a priest was appointed to be a shepherd of people, so that if they do good, he will lead them with joy to God and receive his reward from God. 11But if they are evil and mindless, they will go to judgment all by themselves.”

12Question: “And if they do not honor the priest’s task and defy him?”

13"Child, do you not hear what the Jews did to God? As he says to them, ‘It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

On the appearance of the dead

10 1Question: “Can you also show me, father, if the dead are to be resurrected and how will the bodies be reborn when they have rotted, and whether these will exist and rise?”

2"Child, do you not hear David saying, ‘You will send forth your spirit and they will be created and you will renew the face of the earth.’ 3A trumpet will sound at midnight and bodies in graves will be renewed in the same manner
that a spiderweb emerges. "The second trumpet will sound before the rooster crows and bodies come to life, untouched by decay, and the souls of the penitent will enter the bodies. Then the third trumpet sounds just before the dawn and the dead will rise before Christ. They will flow forth to the earth, getting to know each other with joy."

6Question: "What will joy in the resurrection be like?"

7"Child, (it will be like) honey, flowing sweetly. All people will be kings, and dukes and archbishops and bishops and hegumens and priests and deacons and monks and monks and the entire world, each standing according to their rank. This is when Jews (will be sent) to the left side with God's anger."

8Question: "What will they say?"

10"Child, this is what they will say, 'Lord, why are you condemning us, when we are your chosen people?' And Jesus replies, 'Did you not say "His blood be on us and on our children"?" 11That is when they go to be condemned and the memory of them perished resoundingly.

12"Resurrection will take place on the holy Sunday of Easter. This is when we will be with the Lord and all the saints and the holy Trinity, giving praise to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever. Amen."