

one who was frequently kissed by Christ. The other disciples took umbrage at this and merited a rebuke from the Lord in the form of a parable (*Gos. Phil.* 63–64). In the 4th-century Acts of Philip, a woman named Mariamne appears as the sister of Philip. Her role is similar to that of Mary Magdalene in the gnostic tradition. She consoles Philip, is at the risen Christ's side when he divides the world into missionary sectors, and then accompanies Philip on his mission.

As a heroine in gnostic literature, Mary Magdalene appears as the first witness of the risen Jesus, as one particularly loved and praised by him, and as the recipient of secret revelations (many of the texts have the literary form of a dialogue with Jesus). This gnostic portrayal of Mary was apparently known to some of the Fathers, notably Hippolytus (*haer.* 5.7.1), Origen (*Cels.* 5.62.11), and Epiphanius (*Haer.* 1.2.26.41).

The developments of the portrait of Mary Magdalene depicted in gnostic literature are rooted in the tradition, attested in the canonical gospels, that the risen Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene and other women from Galilee. Many proponents of a revisionist version of early Christian history suggest that the role of Mary Magdalene was diminished in canonical literature because of the patriarchalism of early Church structures (Schüssler Fiorenza 1983: 50–51; 321–23; 332–33). The prominence accorded to Mary Magdalene in gnostic literature pre-dates and develops the earlier memory (Meyer 1985; Pagels 1979). The competition between Mary and Peter reflects the tension between heterodox Christianity and apostolic orthodoxy.

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3. Mary of Bethany. Mary appears as the sister of Martha of Bethany in the gospels of Luke (Luke 10:38–42) and John (John 11:1–12:11). Luke does not identify her as having a brother named Lazarus nor as coming from Bethany, a town near Jerusalem (John 11:1, 18). The extant gospel accounts are colored by the language and theologies of the respective evangelists; nonetheless, given the remarkably similar character portrayal of Mary in both

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accounts, there is little reason to doubt that a single historical person lies behind both the Lukan and the Johannine narratives.

a. **Luke.** According to the Lukan account, "Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching" (Luke 10:39). Her demeanor, that is, her posture—indicated by a technical expression "to sit at the feet of" meaning "to be a disciple of"—and her listening clearly indicates that Luke considers her to be a disciple of Jesus. In the eyes of her sister, Mary is neglectful of the household responsibilities. Martha's criticism of Mary merits a mild rebuke from Jesus, who extols Mary's discipleship (Luke 10:42). In Luke's gospel Mary serves as a role model for female disciples.

b. **John.** In the Johannine narrative, although Mary is characteristically introduced as the one "who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair" and Lazarus is identified specifically as her brother (John 11:2; cf. v 32), Mary's role in the dialogue with Jesus prior to the resurrection of Lazarus is less significant than that of Martha (John 11:1–40). Mary quickly ran to Jesus (v 29) and fell at his feet (v 32), but she says only, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (v 32), a gentle reproach to Jesus, who had delayed his arrival (v 6). Mary's principal narrative role seems to have been to introduce the Jews, apparent sympathizers with her grief (vv 31, 33) who will later capitalize on the Lazarus incident in their plot against Jesus (John 11:45–53).

The Johannine technique of dramatization typically focuses upon one feature of the persons introduced into his narrative. In Mary's case, it is her anointing of Jesus, summarized in 11:2 and described at length in 12:1–12. Her gesture is characterized by its utter radicalness: (1) in the Jewish world it was scandalous for a woman to let down her hair in the presence of a man who was not her husband; (2) the anointing of feet was the task of slaves; and (3) the cost of the perfume (not mere oil) was extravagant (costing approximately 300 days' pay for the ordinary laborer).

Despite Judas' rejoinder, Mary's act was praised by Jesus and interpreted by him as a symbolic gesture. Since the anointing of feet was a typical funeral rite, Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet was a dramatic foreshadowing of his future burial. The evangelist does not, however, suggest that Mary had been aware of the symbolic nature of the dramatic expression of her devotion to Jesus.

The role accorded to Mary of Bethany in the gospels of John and Luke serves as a reminder of the role of female disciples in the communities of the respective evangelists. Jesus' praise of Mary makes her the only woman to be twice praised in the gospels for her devotion to Jesus (Luke 10:42; John 12:7). The mention of Jesus' love for her (John 11:5) singles her out as one of only two women (Martha is the other) cited in the canonical gospels as having been loved by Jesus.

c. **Tradition.** Scholars continue to study the relationship between the Johannine narrative of Jesus' anointing by Mary of Bethany and the Synoptic stories of the anointing of Jesus' head by an unnamed woman (Matt 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9) and of the sinful woman forgiven by Jesus (Luke 7:36–50). The latter story was often later used as a link in the confusion between Mary Magdalene and Mary of Beth-

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any, to which some Church Fathers (e.g., Augustine; Gregory the Great) and some gnostic texts (e.g., the *Secret Gospel of Mark*) attest. The majority of critical commentators refuse, however, to identify Mary of Bethany with Mary Magdalene. They consider the Johannine account (John 11:1–12:8) to be a radical reworking of ancient traditions by the author of the Fourth Gospel.

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4. The mother of James and Josés. This Mary was one of the women who followed Jesus during his Galilean ministry and who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion (Mark 15:40–41). Mark identifies her as the mother of James (the Little) and Josés (15:41), while Matthew calls her "the other Mary" (Matt 27:61), after first calling her the mother of James and Josés (Matt 27:56). Luke simply calls her the mother of James (24:10). It is difficult to know whether or not Mary the mother of James and Josés is to be identified with "Mary (the wife?) of Clopas" (see #5 below) mentioned as being at the cross in John 19:25, or even as the sister of Jesus' mother Mary. The former suggestion is probably overly harmonistic, since we are told at Mark 15:41 that there were many other female followers of Jesus present and watching his crucifixion. The latter suggestion is doubtful since it would require that two daughters in the same family be called Mary, though such a practice was not unprecedented in early Judaism.

Mary was a traveling companion of Jesus'; in fact, the comment that she "served him" probably means she provided financial support for Jesus' itinerant ministry. Mary accompanied Jesus on his last trip to Jerusalem (Mark 15:41), witnessed the burial of Jesus (Mark 15:47), and was involved with other women planning to wrap Jesus' body with spices on Easter morning (Mark 16:1). Thus, she was one of the first witnesses of the empty tomb and the angelic message about the resurrection (Mark 16:2–7 = Matt 28:8; Luke 24:9–11). Matt 28:9–10 may also suggest that she saw the risen Lord.

5. A follower or possibly a relative of Jesus mentioned by name only in John 19:25 where she is said to be "of Clopas." The Greek is elliptic and one can insert "the sister," or "the mother," or most likely "the wife" before "of Clopas." She may be the same Mary that the Synoptics identify as the mother of James and Josés, but we cannot

be sure. It is possible, but not probable, that Clopas is to be identified with the Cleopas mentioned at Luke 24:18, since Cleopas is not a rendering of a Semitic name but a diminutive of Cleopatros, a Greek name. Thus, all we know about this Mary is that she was probably married to a man named Clopas, and she seems to have been a follower or relative of Jesus, since she is grouped with others who clearly fall into one or the other of these categories.

6. The mother of John (Mark), depicted only in Acts 12:12–16. This is probably the John who traveled with Paul and Barnabas doing missionary work in Cyprus (Acts 13:5), and who wrote the gospel bearing the name Mark. That Mary is a widow is indicated by the reference to the house belonging to her, rather than to her husband. That she is well-to-do is substantiated by the references to the people meeting at her home, and by her home having a courtyard with a gate and gatekeeping servant.

Mary's home is portrayed as a regular place for gathering and praying suggesting this Jerusalem home as one of the earliest house churches in all Christendom. Particularly in Jerusalem, having a house church took faith and courage in view of the precarious status of Christianity in its early years. Not only does Acts 12:1–7 tell of the arrest of Christian leaders such as Peter and the execution of James by Herod Agrippa I, but both Acts and the Pauline corpus indicate that at least some fellow Jews and some Jewish authorities did not accept Christianity merely as another Jewish sect (Acts 6:8; 8:3; 9:1–2; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13–14; 1 Thess 2:14–15). It is possible that the meeting discussed in Acts 12:12–16 was attended only by women since Peter's words suggest that James and the brethren are not present to hear his parting remarks.

In Acts 12, Luke stresses the importance of Mary and her contribution to early Christianity through her hospitality and her influence on her family. She is portrayed as a notable early Christian.

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7. A Roman Christian who received greetings from Paul in Rom 16:6. Paul had been informed that she had "worked hard" in Rome (for a discussion of this phrase, see TRYPHAENA AND TRYPHOSA). There are two possibilities for identifying Mary (see the material in *StadtChr* 66–67, 146–47, 152–53, 296). (1) "Maria" represents the Semitic *miryām*, in which case she was a Jewish Christian. But only nineteen Roman inscriptions show Jewish women bearing the Semitic name. (2) Five times more Roman inscriptions (ca. 108) suggest that "Maria" was the Latin name of the gens *Maria* (cf. "Marius"); women were often called by the name of their gens without cognomen. Two groups carried the name of the gens *Maria*: the noble

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