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# Two cities and one self: Transformations of Jerusalem and reflexive individuality in the Shepherd of Hermas

JÖRG RÜPKE

This chapter will argue that reflection on the self does not stop with the use of concepts like “self” or “soul”. Instead, institutionalized self-reflection needs further concepts, images, and imagined situations that are propagated through texts. Starting from the second century Roman text called “The Shepherd of Hermas”, I identify the imagery of two rivaling cities as just such an attempt to develop a reflexive individuality.<sup>1</sup> The attractiveness and efficiency of this concept will be traced to the rivalry of Rome and Jerusalem that led to the destruction of the latter city and will be followed by modifications of earlier apocalyptic imagery by Hermas. Thus, the search for individualization detects processes of group formation as well as developments of religious individuality deeply embedded in the contingencies of Mediterranean history of the late first and early second century AD.

## 1 The Shepherd of Hermas

If the process of canonization had finally ratified the decision of the Codex Sinaiticus to include the “Shepherd of Hermas”, this text would have been the by far longest book of the New Testament. Despite its length, the text was much more popular than, for instance, the gospel of Mark, which had found hardly any readers in antiquity.<sup>2</sup> The length of the text was the result of a probably lengthy process of growth. The sequence of the text betrays different phases of additions, traces which have even given rise to the idea of multiple authors. If the latter thesis has lost in favour with interpreters of the “Shepherd”, it is the unity

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<sup>1</sup> For the concept of different individualities see RÜPKE 2013a (forthcoming). – Apart from the participants of the conference I am grateful to audiences at Aarhus and Toronto and to REINHARD G. KRATZ, Göttingen, MARKUS VINZENT, London, and ELISABETH BEGEMANN, Erfurt, for critical remarks.

<sup>2</sup> STÖKL 2010.

of the imagery, the fundamental identity in the outlook of these parts, and the lack of any indications of different publications which suggest a single author.<sup>3</sup> The visionary dialogues of the first person narrator addressed as “Herma” with various revelatory figures explicitly point to activities of oral and written communication.<sup>4</sup> This process has to be imagined for an unknown period during the second quarter of the second century,<sup>5</sup> a period before any substantial formation of the collection of texts later known as New Testament.

The text itself offers visionary, apocalyptic literature like 4 Ezra or John, that tries to come to grips with the realities of Roman power, but unlike the other apocalyptic texts (apart from John) its plot is clearly autobiographical and intensively localized.<sup>6</sup> Hermas is struggling with the problem of every diviner, that is, how to establish the plausibility and authenticity of the contents of his message. This problem looms particularly large in textual prophecy, given its lack of institutional and instrumental plausibility and the possibly de-personalized mode of reception in the form of reading. Whereas John – a somewhat earlier contemporary, if we date him to the early second century rather than to the reign of Domitian – is drawing on both prophetic traditions and on astrology<sup>7</sup> in order to underline his authority,<sup>8</sup> Hermas on the other hand very carefully develops the notion of *apocalypsis* in the terms of contemporary concepts about the possibilities of visionary divination.<sup>9</sup>

How is an extraordinary contact with the divine possible? Hermas’ answer is not a general theory of the soul, but an attempt at clearly locating himself in the middle of contemporary society and his religious group.<sup>10</sup> His autobiographical sketch, which opens the book, argues that it was his everyday style of life that qualified him in particular for special contact with the divine. This was not a necessary way for the argument to proceed. A roughly contemporary apocalyptic text, 4 Ezra, which might have been produced in the city of Rome, too (it claims to be written in “Babylon”),<sup>11</sup> demonstrates the acceptance of the genre of *apocalypsis* in the pseudepigraphic mode. In that case, a sharply individualized figure from history is invoked as the subject of the visionary experience.

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<sup>3</sup> E.g. HILHORST 1988, 682–701, here 685; EHRMANN 2003, 166. For the unity HENNE 1992 and RÜPKE 1999 for the unity of the imagery.

<sup>4</sup> LEUTZSCH 1989, 17; see also OSIEK 1999, 10. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. EHRMANN 2003, 169: 110–140 CE.

<sup>6</sup> See OSIEK 1999, 24; RÜPKE 2013b (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> SATAKE 2008, 126; MALINA 2002.

<sup>8</sup> TAEGER 2006, 162 f.; see also WILCKENS 1998, 260.

<sup>9</sup> Analyzed in detail in RÜPKE 2005. Visionary authority as an additional moment is of course important in many other earlier texts, see e.g. CHESTER 2007 for the role of visions in the creation of first century Christology (for instance 179–86 on Paul).

<sup>10</sup> For the use of the term “group” see RÜPKE 2007.

<sup>11</sup> STONE 1990, 10 speculates about a production in Judaea, if the Babylon reference is not meant historically. He postulates an Hebrew original (*ibid.*, 1).

## 2 Textual visions and practices of religious self-fashioning

Visionary individuality, if I might coin such a term, is not restricted to the mode of production of visionary texts. Hermas' text(s) aim(s) at the practice of fashioning the self. This is primarily to be effected through reading the text.<sup>12</sup> The public character of such a reading is not at odds with my claim of "individuality" in such practices. Communal reading in different groups aims at the institutionalisation of situations that lead the audience to reflect on its own inner and moral state. The extreme problem of sins of the mind, which opens the earliest layer of the text,<sup>13</sup> is a case in point: You need to be provoked from outside to detect such an inner problem.

The earliest part of the book points to different institutional settings, beginning with the reading of the text within the circle of *presbyteroi* and *episcopoi*.<sup>14</sup> But Hermas did not stop there. Evidently, this first reading of his visions – popularizing a text that is existent in written form already in heaven – aims at garnering larger audiences for Hermas. Perhaps such an audience offered the place for the explicit vituperation of a Maximus.<sup>15</sup> The text is to be reoralized by a certain Grapte for widows and orphans and should be diffused in written, epistolary form by a certain Clemens.<sup>16</sup> This is a command by the female revelatory figure with a clear indication of institutionalisation as repetitive publication (*vis* 2.4 [8]):

(2) "The elderly woman came and asked if I had already given the book to the presbyters. I said that I had not. 'You have done well', she said, 'for I have some words to add. Then, when I complete all the words, they will be made known through you to all those who are chosen. (3) And so, you will write two little books, sending one to Clement and the other to Grapte. Clement will send his to the foreign cities, for that is his commission. But Grapte will admonish the widows and orphans. And you will read yours in this city, with the presbyters who lead the church."<sup>17</sup>

Admonitions of the revelatory figures to distribute their message are implied in later passages of the book, too. The very growth of the text with its repetitions and variations points to the reiteration of such form of publications, at least partly controlled by the author (if the hypothesis of his unity is accepted), as I have argued above. It is this form of recitation that is criticized by the Muratorian fragment, restricting the recommendation of the text to individual reading.<sup>18</sup> The aim of such receptions, however, remains the same. Such practices of fashioning

<sup>12</sup> Cf. INWOOD 2009 for the Senecan authorial self.

<sup>13</sup> *PH vis* 1.1 [1]: 8; cf. *vis* 1.2 [2]: 1.

<sup>14</sup> *PH vis* 2.4 [8]: 3. Cf. MAIER 1991, 63 for an attempt at defining the relations of these nearly synonymous terms.

<sup>15</sup> *PH vis* 2.3 [7]: 4 with LEUTZSCH 1989, 70 f.; see RÜPKE 2005.

<sup>16</sup> *PH vis* 2.4 [8]: 3.

<sup>17</sup> Trsl. by BART D. EHRMANN, Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>18</sup> *Canon Muratori* l. 77–80.

a specific religious self will change the individual position in the *ekklesia* as a consequence of self-reflection and behavioural changes, *metanoia*. Such practices of the *souci de soi* offer the possibility of a “democratisation” of visionary experience.

As the revelation to Hermas is conceptualised as a sequence of female and male revelatory figures leading to the Shepherd and an angel, the self is externalised in the course of the book as an internal space for witnessing the struggle between spirits and angels. In particular, a polar pair of angels who themselves are a part of a demonology or rather angelology that offers the semantics for pneumatic as Christological reflections and has been dealt with extensively.<sup>19</sup>

### 3 Roman imagery

Angels were a powerful tool of the Jewish tradition for cosmological as well as moral reasoning.<sup>20</sup> In the text of the Shepherd they are employed in the series of *mandata*, which form the second largest layer of the book, particularly in the second half of the text. As I have argued elsewhere, for Hermas, a specifically religious individuality was the solution to the more general problem of a lack of distinction between the members of the new *ekklësia* in his contemporary world.<sup>21</sup> Every single person has to reflect on his own status, his moral and religious stance, in order to belong to that new *ekklësia*. The angels offered a figure of thought for such reflection. In the following, the third of at least four clearly discernible parts of the book (I reckon the ninth and the concluding tenth simile as a further layer of composition), the angels are not discarded, but the revelatory figures serve only to introduce several *similia*, starting with the two cities.

It is crucial for my argument that this collection of images is more Roman in tone than any part before. This is a pervading characteristic that modifies the classification of the sequence as arbitrary.<sup>22</sup> The second simile, of an elm tree and vine, had been characterized as very Italian.<sup>23</sup> In content, the reference to the institution of patronage and the exchange of services between patron and client<sup>24</sup> strengthens this impression further. The third and fourth simile, of the trees in winter and summer, formulate the central concern of the whole series. For people embedded in the day-to-day business of a society it is hardly possible to tell the bad from the just. Only in the coming aeon will this be easy (*sim* 3 [52]: 3):

<sup>19</sup> See LONGENECKER 1970, 26–32; BUCUR 2009; again such figures are part of a long tradition of prophetic calls for repentance.

<sup>20</sup> For the Greco-Roman world see now CLINE 2011.

<sup>21</sup> RÜPKE 2013b (forthcoming).

<sup>22</sup> Thus BROX 1991, 283.

<sup>23</sup> OSIEK 1999, 162.

<sup>24</sup> RANKIN 2004, 306.

“For just as the trees that shed their leaves in the winter all look alike, with the withered indistinguishable from the living, so too in this age it is not clear who the upright are and who the sinners, but they all appear alike.”

In the following simile the Latin loan word *statio* (*sim* 5 [54]: 1) – one out of only four loan words in the text<sup>25</sup> – and its explicit explanation continue to stress local, Roman colours, as does the verbal simile of the slaves as co-heirs, a notion exclusive to Roman law.<sup>26</sup> To dress the shepherd in a yellow dress, as is done in the following, sixth simile, again is best explained as a Roman image of luxury.<sup>27</sup> Finally, the crowns of palms given as rewards in simile eight might have reminded reader of Roman military decorations.<sup>28</sup>

Against this background it is time to return to the first parable (*sim* 1 [50]), the text of which must be quoted in full.

(1) He said to me: “You [pl.] know that you, the servants of God, live in a foreign land, for your city is far away from this city. So if you are aware of your own city in which you are about to live, why do you arrange for fields, costly arrays, buildings, and silly housing arrangements? (2) The one who sets up these things in this city does not expect to return to one’s own city. (3) You stupid, doubleminded, unfortunate person, do you [sg.] not see that all these things are alien and under the control of someone else? The lord of this city will say: ‘I do not want you to live in my city, so leave this city, because you do not use my laws.’ (4) Then you who have fields and houses and many other possessions, when he throws you out, what will you do with field and house and all the rest that you have prepared for yourself? For the lord of this land rightly says to you: ‘Either use my laws or leave my land.’ (5) Then what will you do, since you have a law in your own city? Because of your fields and the rest of your possessions, will you completely deny your law and proceed according to the law of this city? Watch out lest it be futile to deny your law, for if you wish to go back, you will never be received back, because you have denied the law of your city and will be shut out of it. (6) So you, watch out: as one living in a foreign place, arrange no more for yourself than what is necessary and be ready, so that when the master of this city wants to expel you for resistance to his law, you will leave his city and go out to your own city and use your own law gladly and without harm. (7) Watch out, then, you [pl.] who serve the lord and hold him in your heart. Do the works of God, remembering the commandments and promises made by God, and trust that God will keep them if his commandments are kept. (8) So instead of fields, buy suffering souls, as each one can, and take charge of widows and orphans and do not neglect them, but spend your wealth and all possessions that you have received from God for such fields and houses. (9) This is why the Master has made you wealthy, in order to carry out these ministries for him. It is much better to buy such fields, possessions, and houses, which you [sing.] will find in your city when you arrive there. (10) This wealth is full of beauty and happiness; it brings no sadness or fear, but rather joy. So do not deal with the wealth of outsiders. It is unhelpful for you [pl.], the servants of God. (11) Deal with your own wealth, in which you can rejoice, and do not

<sup>25</sup> BROX 1991, 308.

<sup>26</sup> *Sim* 5 [55]: 8; LEUTZSCH 1989, 148.

<sup>27</sup> Thus BROX 1991, 334.

<sup>28</sup> Briefly RÜPKE 1990, 204–6.

imitate or touch what is alien, or even desire it, for it is evil to desire what is alien to you. Just do your [sing.] own work, and you will be saved.”<sup>29</sup>

Like other passages before it, this chapter engages in a central concern of the whole text. Beyond paraenetics and repentance the image of an imagined community,<sup>30</sup> to use the phrase of BENEDICT ANDERSON, is developed. It is the “church”, *ekklēsia*, a word that does not connote any buildings,<sup>31</sup> but seems to be an easy replacement of “Israel”.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to see how this idea is developed in several images. The image of the city, I shall claim, is much more than another strand of theological reflection in a text that does not seem particularly coherent in dogmatic terms. Thus the first parable or simile offers more than just some thoughts on the *topos* of ecclesiology. My thesis in what follows is that the motif of the “two cities” is a central figuration for the reflection of the self. It is the imagination of two cities and the related thought experiments of behaviour, inside, outside, and towards these cities that is offered as an instrument for reflexive individuality and caring for a self that is not a freely formable soul but part of a person fully integrated in local and contemporary society. The motif is most explicit in the very first parable,<sup>33</sup> but as I will show the image of the city is enlarged by the image of the tower as developed in similes eight and nine – the latter a book in itself<sup>34</sup> and probably a new layer, that is, a next phase of growth of the text.

#### 4 Two cities or one?

Within the series of parables and the concerns of Hermas discussed so far, it does not seem adequate to simply follow for instance NORBERT BROX in his reading of the text, which merely takes the two cities to be synonyms of heaven and earth.<sup>35</sup> Neither does it seem helpful to follow the detailed analysis by MARTIN LEUTZSCH, which stresses the difference from other apocalyptic traditions and identifies an early theology of martyrdom.<sup>36</sup> Instead, Hermas is taking up older, more collective lines of thought, ultimately leading back to the imagery

<sup>29</sup> Trsl. by OSIEK 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. THOMASSEN 2004, 252: “Hermas’s views on the Church may be taken both as a testimony to the divisiveness characterizing Roman Christianity in his time and as a reaction against it.”

<sup>31</sup> Rightly LEUTZSCH 1989, 61.

<sup>32</sup> See BROX 1991, 525 and MARTÍN 2007 for the eschatological content of the notion.

<sup>33</sup> OSIEK 1999, 157

<sup>34</sup> Thus BROX 1991, 377.

<sup>35</sup> BROX 1991, 285.

<sup>36</sup> LEUTZSCH 1989, 196–208. Such a thesis would have to be revisited in the light of VINZENT’S dating of the rise of the *topos* of Christ’s resurrection in reaction to Marcion (2011).

and personifications of the city of Jerusalem and Babylon by the time of the first destruction of Jerusalem,<sup>37</sup> but he radically individualizes them.

First, the text is to be read as a text written from within the Roman empire. A central notion is that of the laws or constitution of a city. Citizenship included the particular “civic way of life (*politeuesthai*)” of that city.<sup>38</sup> The discussion of the “patrioi nomoi” of a minority group is as old as the Hellenistic empires, present for example in the text of 2 Maccabees (2 Macc 6).<sup>39</sup> The same condition of empire suggested the motif of the two fatherlands (*patria*e) on Roman citizens stemming from Italian municipalities, as is discussed in Cicero’s “Laws”.<sup>40</sup> In that case, however, the one citizenship does not exclude the other. In the same logical vein is the argument of the Letter of Diognetus, which tries to balance the legal obligations of both.<sup>41</sup> This line of argumentation is present in Hermas, too. But is that all?

The imagery of the city is powerfully present in several apocalyptic texts composed at least a bit earlier. Given Hermas’ extensive use of the apocalyptic terminology in the earliest layer of the text,<sup>42</sup> texts from this tradition claim special attention. In 4 Ezra, probably written by the end of the first century,<sup>43</sup> Ezra sees a wonderful city.<sup>44</sup> MICHAEL STONE relates this to the tradition of “the revelation of the ideal temple city in Ezekiel 40–48”.<sup>45</sup> The city would have been used as a metaphor for the heavenly realm of god and the setting of his throne. John’s Apocalypse would strengthen this interpretation in its equation of the heavenly city’s temple with god himself.<sup>46</sup>

The passage and its context merit a closer look. In 4 Ezra 10, the revelation is the explanation of an earlier vision of a woman, as is shown by the immediately preceding passage:

The woman who appeared to you a little while ago, whom you saw mourning and began to console – (42) but you do not now see the form of a woman, but an established city has

<sup>37</sup> Here Second Isaiah (see e.g. the confrontation of the fall of the virgin Babylon and the mother Jerusalem in 47 and 49.14–50.3) is important, as is the exhortation to accommodate in the city of the exile in Jeremiah (Jer 29; cf. 32.43 f. for the renewal of accommodation in Jerusalem); the first exile offered many a blueprint for the interpretation of later experiences (I am grateful to REINHARD G. KRATZ, Göttingen, for these references). For other contemporary uses of Jerusalem as a symbol see CAPE 2011.

<sup>38</sup> LIEU 2004, 243.

<sup>39</sup> See *ibid.* and KIPPENBERG 1986.

<sup>40</sup> Cic. *leg.* 2.5. Cf. the discussion on Jews in Alexandria in Ios. *c. Apion* 2.6

<sup>41</sup> Diogn. 5–6.

<sup>42</sup> See RÜPKE 1999 in detail.

<sup>43</sup> Dated to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD by LONGENECKER 1995, 13–4, concurring with STONE 1990, 10: the latter part of Domitian’s rule.

<sup>44</sup> 10.51–6. This has already been prepared in 8.52: “Paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the world to come is prepared, delight is provided, a city is built, rest is provided” (trsl. STONE).

<sup>45</sup> STONE 2007, 405.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 12 on Rev 21.22–3.

appeared to you – (43) and as for her telling you about the misfortune of her son, this is the interpretation: (44) This woman whom you saw, whom you now behold as an established city, is Zion. (45) And as for her telling you that she was barren for thirty years, (it is) because there were three thousand years in the world before any offering was offered in it. (46) And after three thousand years Solomon built the city, and offered offerings; then it was that the barren woman bore a son. (47) And as for her telling you that she brought him up with much care, that was the (period of) residence in Jerusalem ... (51) Therefore I told you to remain in the field where no house had been built, (52) for I knew that the Most High would reveal all these things to you. (53) Therefore I told you to go into the place where there was no foundation of any building, (54) for no work of man's building could endure in a place where the city of the Most High was to be revealed (trsl. STONE).

The woman<sup>47</sup> had been mourning the fate of Jerusalem, historically destroyed one generation before (70 CE). The envisaged restoration of Zion<sup>48</sup> occupies a totally new place, thus dealing with the problem of the destruction of Jerusalem without claiming a renovation on the spot. Basically, we are dealing with the metamorphosis of one city, Jerusalem. There is no clear temporal index, consigning the project to an unforeseeable future. The centrality of the contents of this vision is stressed by its connection to a previous vision; it is the turning point of the whole text.<sup>49</sup>

John's Apocalypse gives the descent of the heavenly city comparable space (21 f.), indulging in the description of its wall and gates. The destruction of the first Jerusalem remains implicit, but is compensated for by an extensive description of the eschatological destruction of Babylon, clearly a cover for the city of Rome (17 f., in particular 18).

In 4 Ezra the vision of the city is followed by a very explicit treatment of the Roman emperors.<sup>50</sup> Another nearly contemporaneous text, tentatively dated to the early Hadrianic period, the fifth Sibylline oracle, probably composed in Egypt, also imagines the replacement of the destroyed city of Jerusalem by a heavenly city (408–27).<sup>51</sup>

But now there came up against it an inglorious and unholy king, to throw down the holy place and leave it a ruin, with a great host and men of renown in war. (411) Yet he perished [Titus] ... (418) He [god] took and utterly burnt with fire the cities of them who before had done evil, (420) and the city which God loved he made more bright than the sun, moon and stars: her he adorned, and ... he made a holy house in visible shape, pure and beautiful, of many furlongs he made it in magnitude, (425) with a great tower reaching to the very clouds, visible to all men.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> For the female personifications of Jerusalem see MAIER 2009 and HÄUSL 2011a.

<sup>48</sup> Thus STONE 1990, 334.

<sup>49</sup> HÄUSL 2011b, 38–9.

<sup>50</sup> 4 Ezra 11–2.

<sup>51</sup> See GAUGER 1998, 455.

<sup>52</sup> Trsl. H. N. BALE, *The Sibylline Oracles: books III–V*. London: MacMillan, 1918.

Just as in John's Apocalypse, the direct confrontation is made explicit and the cities of the enemy – a plural also given in Apc 16.19 – are destroyed by fire. There is no need and no reason to choose: Rome is the enemy, and the eschatological Jerusalem the future home.

KENNETH R. JONES has reviewed these and other contemporary Jewish texts in a recent monograph. His analysis supplements my findings. Taking up discourses about the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, the authors find difficulties in finding new ways to deal with the oppressing and probably lasting reality of the Roman Empire. The solution that presented itself was to call for an end to Jewish sinfulness, to merely hope for the political fall of Rome and to conceptualize Jerusalem as a heavenly city.<sup>53</sup>

How does Hermas fit into this image? It is easy to recall a thesis developed one hundred and thirty years ago in the monographic study of THEODOR ZAHN, who already identified the present city as Rome.<sup>54</sup> His arguments can be enlarged and historically contextualized. The preface of Flavius Josephus' "Jewish War" demonstrates that Jews, and particularly those being led to Rome as captives, interpreted the Flavian destruction of Jerusalem as part of a distant duel of two cities<sup>55</sup> rather than a clash of totally different people.<sup>56</sup> The contemporary rebuilding of the Roman central temple for Capitoline Jupiter might have strengthened such a perspective; in his historical narrative, Tacitus explicitly refers to the role of its divine owners, the Capitoline triad, as the leading tutelary deities of the empire (*praesides imperi*), probably referring to the actual formula of the prayer.<sup>57</sup> Against such a backdrop, the renewal and elaboration of the idea of a heavenly city gains a clear – in fact, a political – and contemporaneous meaning.

## 5 Architectural details

And yet, Hermas stands out from these texts with their typically provincial concerns.<sup>58</sup> The explicit discussion of two cities and two citizenships remains isolated in a book that is characterized by its many repetitions. Evidently, sim 1 is addressed to all those for whom the alternative is not evident. To elaborate on that, Hermas concludes his series of similes by one that starts with a willow, but in fact returns to the city and its most prominent feature, a tower, recalling the prominent and representative of *acropoleis* or *Capitolia* of Greco-Roman cities already featured in the Fifth Sybilline Oracle, but also taking up an important biblical and

<sup>53</sup> JONES 2011.

<sup>54</sup> ZAHN 1868, 121–4. Explicitly rejected by BROX 1991, 285, n. 10.

<sup>55</sup> See *Ios. bell. Iud.* pr. 3–4 with § 9.

<sup>56</sup> See BARCLAY 2007, 362–9 on Josephus' view of the Romans.

<sup>57</sup> *Tac. hist.* 4.53.3.

<sup>58</sup> See JONES 2011, 277–8 for such "local Jewish concerns".

postbiblical image.<sup>59</sup> The rewards allotted in *sim* 8 regulate admittance to a tower (*sim* 8.2 [68]: 1), which is at the same time differentiated from the wall (*sim* 8.6 [72]: 6; 8.7 [73]: 3) and at the same time its central feature, directly accessed by the gates, as the later simile nine makes clear (79 f.). For Hermas, the inhabitant of Rome and visionary of a new ecclesia, it is not the old Jerusalem, which has to be re-imagined. The image of two cities was a starting point, not an end.

In the Shepherd, the image of the tower is an old one, already introduced at length in *vis* 3, which portrayed the “ecclesia” in its function of an alternative place of living, a tower rather than a city.<sup>60</sup> The location of the vision of the building in the fields used for the production of salt adds a local and professional flavour to the imagery and its details.<sup>61</sup>

*Vis* 3.2 (10): (4) “She said to me, ‘Look, do you not see a great tower being built upon the water across from you, with bright, squared stones?’ (5) The tower was being built in a square by the six young men who had come with her. And thousands of other men were bringing stones, some of them from the depths of the sea and some from the land, and they were handing them over to the six young men, who were taking them and building. (6) Thus they placed all the stones drawn from the depths in the building; for they fit together and were straight at their joints with the other stones. And they were placed together so that their joints were invisible. The tower building seemed to have been made out of a single stone.”<sup>62</sup>

This vision is interpreted in the subsequent dialogue:

*Vis* 3.5 [13]: (1) “Hear now about the stones that go into the building. On the one hand, the squared and white stones that fit together at the joints are the apostles, bishops, teachers and deacons who live reverently towards God and perform their duties as bishops, teachers, and deacons for the chosen ones of God in a holy and respectful way; some of these have fallen asleep, but others are still living. And they have always been harmonious with one another and at peace with one another, and they have listened one to another. For this reason their joints fit together in the building of the tower.”

(2) “But who are the ones drawn from the depths of the sea and placed into the building, who fit together at their joints with the other stones already built in it?” “These are those who have suffered on account of the name of the Lord.”

(3) “But I also want to know, Lady, who the other stones are, the ones brought from the dry land.” She said, “Those that go into the building without being hewn are ones the Lord has approved, because they walk in the uprightness of the Lord and carry out his commandments ...”

(3.7 [15]: 3) “But who are the other ones, which fall near the water but cannot be rolled into it?” “These are the ones who have heard the word and wanted to be baptized in the name of the Lord. But then when they recall what the life of purity involves, they change their minds and return to pursue their evil desires.”

<sup>59</sup> See BUSI 1999, 235–9.

<sup>60</sup> Thus SCHNEIDER 1999, 372–4.

<sup>61</sup> RÜPKE 2005.

<sup>62</sup> This and the following translations are by BART D. EHRMANN, Loeb Classical Library.

Traditional imagery is given a baptismal dimension here,<sup>63</sup> apart from the text's interest in differentiating as many cases as possible. The latter is important and will be repeated in many passages of the whole text. As indicated in the beginning, actual behaviour in the many fields of daily life leads to endless nuances in the moral standing of group members.<sup>64</sup> Such observations, however, beg the central question. Why must the "Church" compete in architectural terms? And why are details so important?

For Hermas' readers, Rome is not an imaginary opponent as for other apocalyptic texts quoted. They are confronted with the real Rome, the marble city of Flavian and Trajanic-Hadrianic times.<sup>65</sup> Hermas is aware of the enormous attraction of the city and its society and social rules;<sup>66</sup> his presence at Rome (probably shared by the author of Hebrews, who had to design an alternative priesthood)<sup>67</sup> only strengthens this factor. The author happens to live on this alien soil.<sup>68</sup> Following another trend in the post-70s apocalyptic literature, Hermas turns inward. The alternative of an incommensurable, eschatological, imagined city would be a distant one, an image whose radicality is not fitting to the problems of daily life. Dominant in the text is not the apposition of the two cities, but the image of the tower.

The shift to the tower does not exclude differences. Competition is realised in details. The whiteness of the tower – that is the *ekklêsia* and the alternative city – is not only the ideal white of Hermas' professional experience, of the salt, but it is competing with the white of Rome's marble buildings. An important technical and visual detail is repeated:

(*Sim* 9.9 [86]: 7) When the shepherd saw that the tower was beautiful built, he was extremely cheerful. The tower was so built that I marvelled at the construction. For it was built as if it came from a solitary stone, without a single joint. The stone seemed to be chiselled out from the rock; for it looked like a monolith to me.

Other instances could be added. The same *ekklêsia* uses a *subsellium*, a chair of magistrates, inserting a Latin loan word into the Greek text.<sup>69</sup> She is accompanied by six young men caring for her chair like *apparitores*.<sup>70</sup> Roman technique – per-

<sup>63</sup> SCHNEIDER 1999, 313–4.

<sup>64</sup> Also stated by LIPSETT 2011, 43.

<sup>65</sup> On the latter see BOYLE, DOMINIK 2003.

<sup>66</sup> Stressed for the author of Hebrews by HARRY O. MAIER, see RÜPKE 2012; cf. NASRALLAH 2010 for cities in the East.

<sup>67</sup> RÜPKE 2012.

<sup>68</sup> See LEUTZSCH 1989, 198, and DUNNING 2009, 78–90, for Hermas' conceptualisation of his contingent existence on such a soil.

<sup>69</sup> *PH vis* 3.1 [9]: 4.

<sup>70</sup> *PH vis* 1.4.1 and 3; *vis* 3.1.6 and 3.2.5. Interpreted as angels by OSIEK 1999, 50 *ad loc.* The role of the companions speaks against the interpretation of the *subsellium* as 'sigma bank' for the presbyters (thus SCHNEIDER 1999, 441). SCHNEIDER tends to use much later evidence for the interpretation of the early 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. text of the *Pastor Hermae*, thus supposing unchanging continuity.

haps of fountains – is obviously implicitly admired, since explicitly rejected: it cannot pump the water up to heaven.<sup>71</sup>

Such references are more than local colour. In Hermas' argumentation they have an important function. In his view, many people find it is so easy to believe that they do so without clear thought<sup>72</sup> – why should they not add another god, I would like to add. But the same people are much more reluctant – or easily forget – to exchange the real for the imagined community. Hermas offers the thought experiment of the closer than eschatological tower as an exercise for fashioning one's self,<sup>73</sup> but it is embedded in the thought experiments of architectural competition, of an architectural miracle facing all the problems implied by its human building material and one yet to be built. Hermas' "cities" are not comparing their walls. Points of reference are the fields owned (referring to sustenance and wealth), and the houses, the primary focus of social self-representation. At the end of simile one (50.8–10) metaphorical relationships mitigate<sup>74</sup> the alternative: caring for widows and orphans and winning souls in this city are the fields and houses of the proper city.

## 6 Self, identity and power: Empire and individualisation

Obviously, such constructions of oneself are polemical. The imaginary city-like tower is part of such boundary constructions. The fight for the dominance of a place is an important part in every struggle for power.<sup>75</sup> It is not by chance that in 4 Ezra even the future *aion* is a space for living rather than a period.<sup>76</sup> Rome, however, was not just a city, but, as Pliny the Elder claimed in the early 70s CE, a common home for the whole world: *una cunctarum gentium in toto orbe patria*.<sup>77</sup>

The destruction of Jerusalem had been a watershed moment<sup>78</sup> in the history of what was slowly to become a religion.<sup>79</sup> Jews like Christians reacted by creating an identity that was not primarily a local one.<sup>80</sup> In fashioning such an identity, they could stress the negative, the loss of any home. Such was the strategy of the

<sup>71</sup> *PH mand* 11 [43]: 18.

<sup>72</sup> *PH mand* 12.4 [47]: 5.

<sup>73</sup> Similarly now LIPSETT 2011, 52: "salvation by an elaboration of techniques of self-scrutiny".

<sup>74</sup> Cf. LIPSETT 2011, 42, stressing "restraint" as a common demoninator. For philosophical models of such a conduct and its importance in paraenetic literature of the time see KLOPPENBORG 2010.

<sup>75</sup> PERKINS 2009.

<sup>76</sup> See HARNISCH 1969, 104.

<sup>77</sup> Plin. *NH* 3.39; see PERKINS 2009, 33 for further references from the early empire.

<sup>78</sup> STROUMSA 2009

<sup>79</sup> RÜPKE 2010.

<sup>80</sup> See NASRALLAH 2008 on the *Acta apostolorum*, interpreted as demonstrating the creation of an empire-like network of cities.

Letter to Diognetus.<sup>81</sup> The claim to a categorically different place, a town, was another one, proffered by apocalyptic literature.

But the main thrust of the Shepherd's discourse was not directed towards the Roman empire, but towards the self. Hermas' stress on the individual was not exceptional. In post-destruction Judaism "the view became more and more prominent that sins could be atoned for ... by means of prayer, fasting and proper behaviour, all in living dedication to God" notes LONGENECKER in his analysis of 4 Ezra.<sup>82</sup> In 3 Baruch the problem of the destruction of Jerusalem was also solved by a turn to individual behaviour, a turn which had been observed by god and therefore already occurred.<sup>83</sup> In the "Shepherd" the stones used are living ones. They live, even according to the letter to Diognetus, practically as everybody else does.<sup>84</sup> The transcendent tower was above all an instrument in the shaping of the self, it was a tower in the making. But it was a consequential image, and it offered institutionalisations within a discourse that might be seen as an element in a larger process. This larger process could be termed individualisation, characterized by reading practices, communal meetings of the few, and the permanent reflection on one's position in society.

Such an individualisation is not opposed to institutionalisation; after all, citizenship was a collectivising and homogenising institution. It was the oppressive and increasingly pervasive presence of the Roman Empire, enforcing appropriation of its values by its coercive power as well as by its attractiveness that provoked the stress on individuality by distancing and drawing boundaries.<sup>85</sup> It was the growing of individuality in cities, in the quantitative mode described by GEORG SIMMEL,<sup>86</sup> that provoked the institutionalisation of alternative options. This correspondence seems to be a historical truth about individualisation. The more city, the more self. Or in the short history of the motif of the two cities from 70 CE to the tower of Hermas: dual citizenship is possible.

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<sup>81</sup> PERKINS 2009, 32 on Diogn. 5.1. In chapter 6, the author of the letter to Diognetus compares the Christians to the all-pervading (Stoic) soul, in order to explain difference and local presence.

<sup>82</sup> LONGENECKER 1995, 16.

<sup>83</sup> COLLINS 2000, 258–9. This was combined with a construction of a Jewish identity via a specifically Jewish history (ibid., 274–5). See also JONES 2011, 111–42 on the exceptional position of 3 Baruch.

<sup>84</sup> In particular 5.4–5.

<sup>85</sup> For the notion of boundaries see LAMONT, MOLNÁR 2002.

<sup>86</sup> SIMMEL 1917.

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