CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TEXTUAL HISTORY OF THE
MEDIEVAL LATIN REDACTIONS OF THE VISIO PAULI

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Tasmania, November, 2004.
DECLARATION

This Thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the Thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the Thesis.

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ABSTRACT

No major review of the textual history and development of the main group of medieval Latin abbreviated versions, or redactions, of the *Visio Pauli* has been published since Theodore Silverstein's fundamental studies in 1935 and 1959. However, twenty-eight further witnesses of this group have come to notice since then, but have not been studied in detail.

This thesis examines each of the new texts in the context of the redaction to which they belong or are related, and their implications for the filiation established by Silverstein. In the case of Redaction IV this has required the classification of all the witnesses of that redaction for the first time, and in the case of the composite redactions drawn from several individual redactions, this has enabled a more precise identification of their components. In the case of Redaction IX one of the new texts supplies the section presently missing from the published edition.

A separate volume of Appendices contains transcriptions from the mss. of the texts examined in the thesis, together with other reference material.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the major debt of this thesis to the late Professor Theodore Silverstein who generously made available, some years before its publication, a list of manuscripts containing unstudied versions of the *Visio Pauli* which he had compiled. This was the genesis of the present study and permitted work to begin early on the preparation of material for the project which Professor Silverstein followed with kindly interest and support over the years.

My thanks are due too to my supervisors: to Professor R. M Thomson for his scholarly and practical advice and help, to Professor M. J. Bennett for his assistance, and to both for their patience and forbearance.

I am grateful to the University of New England for its support of the research for this thesis by way of grants of leave and access to its resources and staff.

I wish to thank also Dr Diana Modesto of Sydney University for practical and efficient assistance and support in many and various ways over the years, always readily and generously offered and gratefully appreciated.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

PART I

Chapter I Redaction I

Chapter 2 Redaction BR and the Göttingen Visio Pauli

Chapter 3 Redaction III

PART II REDACTION IV

Chapter 4 Redaction IV and its Witnesses

Chapter 5 The Classification of Redaction IV Texts (1)

Chapter 6 The Classification of Redaction IV Texts (2)

Chapter 7 Family Interrelationship and a Base Text for Redaction IV

PART III THE COMPOSITE REDACTIONS

Chapter 8 The III/IV Redactions V and X, and Two Further III/IV Texts

Chapter 9 Redaction VII

Chapter 10 Redaction VIII and Two Other Combined Texts

Chapter 11 Redaction IX

Conclusion

Bibliography
INTRODUCTION

For its longevity and the vast geographical and linguistic breadth of its diffusion, the *Visio Pauli* or Apocalypse of Paul was an extraordinary text. It was one of the early Christian apocrypha and belongs to the more ancient tradition of Apocalypses and Otherworld journeys.¹ Abundant evidence remains - and continues to emerge - that it was known, cited and copied for well over 1,000 years from its composition in the mid 3rd century, having spread into an area ranging from Egypt, where it was written, to Scandinavia and Russia in the north and from Ireland to Armenia in the west and east, either in the original Greek or translated, in full or abbreviated versions, into Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, the Slavic languages including Old Russian, Armenian² and nearly all the vernacular languages of the regions of its diffusion over time.³

The earlier versions of the Apocalypse purported to be the Apostle's own words (although the account later changed to a third person narrative) which described first the complaints made by creation - the sun, the moon & stars, the earth and all the waters- against the iniquity of man and God's patient rejection of their plea to unleash their apocalyptic power in retribution; this was followed by an account of how the angels reported daily on the deeds of men. An angel then took Paul on a journey to the Otherworld during which he witnessed the going-out from the body of good and wicked souls at death and how they were met and escorted by holy and evil angels to judgement before the throne of God. He then visited the realms assigned to the righteous and unrighteous after death and, in supplication with the angels and the suffering souls, he obtained from Christ some respite for these souls from their pain; his journey concluded with a second visit to Paradise. A preface describing the miraculous discovery of this work in Tarsus was added at the beginning of the 5th century and over its long history the text was both abbreviated and

¹ See e.g. Yabro Collins 1979, pp. 61-69 & 85-86, and Collins 1979, pp. 6-9 & 12-15; cf. also Attridge 1979, pp. 159-168.
² For the texts in the foregoing languages see Silverstein & Hilhorst 1997, pp. 47-58 and Piovanelli 1993, pp. 26-37
³ These include English, French, German, Italian, Provençal, Danish, Welsh etc.; see e.g. Silverstein 1935, p. 16 and notes on pp. 99-101. For a chronological survey of the spread of the Latin abbreviated forms and the vernacular versions see Dinzelbacher 1991, pp. 167-171.