Whence it is clear **{T440}** that many, even of those who believe the opposite, can use Christ as a cover to perform wonders through some other art in order to deceive inexperienced people. Simon Magus was like this, and after him Menander, and others like them, about whom obviously he said, ᾽You must not be deceived by marvels nor by a lofty promise but must test the truth of what is said’. For the Lord says, ‘You will know them by their fruits’ [Mt 7:16, 20]

**Nerva and the death of John the Evangelist** [1-7 PsS, 7-64 GM 447.3-450.4]

**261.1.** Nerva reigned one year, 4 months, 9 days. He was moderate and fair. When news of victory by Trajan came from Paionia, he ascended the Capitol and, after offering incense, stood on the podium and, with the senate and the people of **{B434}** the Romans in attendance, called out loudly and said, ‘To the good fortune of Nerva I adopt Trajan.’

**261.2**. He forbade the cutting of some people’s genitalia in Rome.[[1]](#footnote-1) He died of an illness.

**261.3.** During his reign, Apollonius died in Byzantium.

**261.4.** This Nerva recalled John the Theologian from exile and released him to dwell in Ephesus. At that time he was the only one of the 12 disciples still alive; having written the Gospel according to him, he died in peace. Concerning him, the very learned Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, says, ‘Thomas was allotted Parthia, and John Asia, and after he had lived some time among them he died in Ephesus’ [*HE* 3.1.1].

and later,’During this time John the Evangelist dies in Ephesus in Asia and is buried by the faithful there[??]. And similarly Philip, one of the seven deacons, dies in Hierapolis and is buried there with his daughters. Concerning whom Polycrates, bishop of the community in Ephesus, writing to Victor, **{T441}** the bishop of Rome, says as follows: ‘For in Asia also are great lights have fallen asleep, who will be raised on the last day of the Lord’s coming, John, Christ’s bosom friend, who became both bishop[[2]](#footnote-2) and teacher in Ephesus and fell asleep there, and Philip, one of the seven deacons, dies in Hierapolis.’[[3]](#footnote-3) — it was he who baptised the eunuch and catechized Simon. Moreover, the divine Hippolytus of Rome said, when discussing the divine preaching and the death of the Apostles, ‘Preaching the word in Asia, John, the brother of James, was exiled to the island of Patmos under the emperor of the Romans Domitian, and **{B435}** from there [went] back to Ephesus when recalled by Nerva from exile, and having written the Gospel according to him, there where he had seen the apocalypse he died, being 106 years old; his remains were searched for and not found. ‘[Hipppolytus, *On the Twelve Apostles*, PG 10:952B]. And the brother of the great Gregory [of Nazianzus], Kaisarios, a privy secretary in Constantinople, replied thus when asked about this matter, saying,

John himself, towards the end in his Gospel, clarified this, saying,

And having said this, Jesus said to him — that is, to Peter — ‘Follow me.’ But Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved … following [them] and he said: ‘Lord, what about him?’ And Jesus said to him, “What’s it to you if I want him to stay until I come?’ — *Jn 21:19-22*

For when He came upon them fishing, He bade *only* Peter to follow Him. But he [Peter], wanting John too to go with them, had said, ‘Lord, what about him?’ Jesus, *deciding that he remain fishing*, said, ‘If I want him to stay *here and fish* until I come *back this way again*, what’s it to you?’ — *Ps.-Caesarius, 199.5-16[[4]](#footnote-4)*

He obviously said this so that He might best correct **{T442}** their mistaken ideas. Jesus did not say to him that he would not die. [Jn21:23]. For in many matters they were mistaken many times with respect to the questions and answers of Christ, and they would listen without understanding and with a sluggish heart, until the Holy Spirit came and taught them and led them to the whole truth in accordance with what the Lord had said.

But if someone querulously and rashly rejecting these holy voices and testimonies and importunately ‘reasoning’ were to say, ‘In order to proclaim the **{B436}** second coming of Christ, he [John] was left living in the flesh with Enoch and Elijah’, let him hear he himself [John], through revelation and speaking in the name of the Lord, says that only those two will become witnesses, Enoch and Elijah, when he says this:

‘And I will give [power] to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth’. These are the two olive trees and the two lanterns that stand before the earth. And if anyone wanted to harm them, fire comes out of their mouths and consumes their enemies. // And when they have finished their witness, the beast that rises from the abyss will make war against them, and it will win and will kill them, and their corpses will remain three and a half days unburied in the public square of the great city, where their Lord was crucified [Apoc 11:3-5 // 7-8]

In vain do some people rave, saying that he is still alive in the flesh, ‘in reality not knowing what they are saying nor what they are making assertions about’, [1Tim 1:7]

really dangerously and audaciously talking up this marvel out of their own heads and not from some holy exegetes.

**Trajan** [1-18 PsS 79.4-21; 18-19 Log 62.3; 1-4 cf GM 450.6-11, Const.Porph. *De virt.* 2.1.136.30-137.4, Suid. Τραϊάνος 902; 1-12 Log 62.1-2]

**262.1.** After Nerva, Trajan reigned 19 years, 6 months, 15 days. He was a hater of knavery and a lover of justice. For on one occasion he unsheathed a sword before all the high officials and gave it to the eparch, saying, ‘Receive this and use it on my behalf if I am ruling well, but if not, use it against me.’ He was appointed by Nerva because of his **{T443}** excellence in matters of war and the many achievements he had accomplished in Rome and everywhere on earth.

**262.2.** A friend was once denounced to him as a conspirator and his eyes **{B437}** were stabbed by his own hands and his beard shaved off; when he was brought blind before Trajan, he felt deeply sorry for his friend and, taking pity on him, sent him to be lord of a city he was then building with his own name, now Traïanoupolis; until his death he looked after him in every way.

**262.3.** He commanded that the race of Christians not be sought out but punished if happened upon.

**262.4.** During his reign Menander succeeded Simon Magus. He was a sorcerer and cheat, by birth a Samarian, who called himself Christ. Cerinthus the heresiarch and Nikolaos, one of the seven deacons, were active at that time; heresiarchs are enemies of the truth. Martyred during his reign were St Ignatius the God-bearer and Symeon, son of Cleopas.

**262.5.** Trajan died after appointing as emperor Hadrian, who was related to him by marriage.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Hadrian** [1-5 PsS cf Log; 6-12 GM; 12-18 Log; 18-20 Sync; 23-26 cf Log]

**263.1.** Hadrian Aelius reigned 24 years.[[6]](#footnote-6) He was African by birth, a man of letters, competent in both prose and verse, related to and adopted by Trajan.

**263.2**. Having hunted in Mysia, he built a city and named it Hadrianou Therai (‘Hadrian’s Hunts’) among the lodges; and similarly another city in Thrace, calling it Hadrianoupolis, and a temple in Kyzikos. During his reign, when the Jews revolted and wanted to build the temple in Jerusalem, he became very angry at them, and when war ensued he slew 580,000 thousand of them in a single day.[[7]](#footnote-7) And after demolishing the remnants of the city and the temple, he built a new Jerusalem, which he named **{B438}** Aelia; and setting up a statue of himself in the temple, he commanded Hellenes to live in the city. But a portent occurred of them [the Jews] being conquered in the collapse, of its own accord, of Solomon’s **{T444}** tomb.

**263.3.** He held a certain Simelos in high regard, a man adorned with prudence and fairness and many virtues, and he appointed him to high office; but having held the office for a short time he stood down from it, spent seven years living in the countryside and died. He had instructed that [the following] be inscribed on his tomb: ‘Here lies Simelos, alive for 60 years but living seven.’

**263.4.** This Hadrian cancelled the debts of the cities and citizens under his authority that were owed to the public treasury, burning the paperwork. He rebuilt Nicaea and Nicomedia when they collapsed in an earthquake.

**263.5.** During his reign Justin [Martyr] the Philosopher opposed to all heresies reached manhood; for as Clement [of Alexandria] the Patchworker says,[[8]](#footnote-8) during Hadrian’s reign enemies of the faith of the Christians were the sectaries Satorninus, Basileiades and Carpocrates.

**263.5.** Hadrian dies from disease, crying out: ‘O Zeus, how bad it is for one wanting to die and not succeeding’. As he was dying he appointed Antoninus [as his successor]; for when Trajan had died, he forged a letter purporting to be written by him [Trajan] to the senate, in which he [Trajan] named [Hadrian] son and successor to the empire.

**Antoninus Pius** [1-12 PsS; 12-14 GM]

**264.1.** Antoninus Pius reigned 24 years[[9]](#footnote-9), adopted son to Hadrian and the first emperor to be called pious; for he possessed **{B439}** all virtue.

**264.2**. As Clement says, during his reign the heresiarchs Valentinus and Kerdon and Marcion became known in Rome, and Tatian **{T445}** and Bardisanes and the pseudo-prophetesses of the Phrygian region Priscilla and Maximilla became known. And at the same time Galen the doctor was admired. And a certain Bardesanes, a Syrian, was such a skilled disputant and wise that his speech ‘On fate’, addressed to Antoninus, was much admired.[[10]](#footnote-10) Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, came into the presence of Marcion and heard, ‘Do you recognize us, dear Polycarp?’, and he said, ‘I recognize you, the first-born of Satan.’

**264.3**. Antoninus dies promoting as emperor Marcus Antoninos [Aurelian], his son-in-law.

**264.4**.Martyred during his reign were Polycarp, disciple of John the Evangelist, and Justin the Philosopher and Dionysius the bishop of Corinth.

**Marcus Aurelius** [1-8 PsS, Log; 8-26 PsS, GM; 26-27 PsS, Log; 27-31 PsS, Log]

**265.1**. Marcus Antoninus reigned 19 years; 10 years with Verus his adoptive brother, and 9 years on his own. When Marcus was waging war against Germans and **{T446}** Sarmatians and the army was pressed by thirst and in danger because of this, those of the legion at Melitene and named after it were Christians, and through a lengthy prayer being made to God the enemy were struck by lightning and the Romans were comforted by rain. This having very much stunned Marcus, he wrote that Christians should be honoured and that the legion be called Thunderbolt.

**265.2**. During his reign a certain Jew was travelling with **{B440}** Christians through the desert and, overcome by a very serious illness and about to be in grave danger, swearing an oath to God he begged the Christians to baptise him. There being neither water nor priest, the Christians stripped him and one of them, filling his hand with sand, poured it over his head three times saying, ‘Theodoros is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’, and immediately the fellow recovered, finding complete release from the illness. When they arrived in Alexandria and a discussion about him took place with the pope Dionysius, he was baptised again, with water. He ordained as deacon the one who had earlier baptised him with sand, being worthy. And quite rightly; for the great Gregory, listing the [kinds of] baptisms, says thus: ‘Moses baptised, but in water, and before this in the cloud and the sea. John also baptised, but no longer in the Jewish manner: not just in water but also in repentance. Jesus too baptised, but in the spirit; this is the perfection [of baptism]. I know of a fourth baptism, that through confession and blood. I know also of a fifth, that of tears.’[[11]](#footnote-11)

Since it was none of these, it [baptism by sand] was rightly not accepted.

**265.3**. During his reign Oppian **{T447}** composed the *Halieutika.*

**265.4**. This Marcus was very wise and virtuous and, having saved Rome from many wars, was very much loved by the citizens. He died poisoned by his son Commodus. After his death the senate, holding on to the memory **{B441}** of his virtue, honoured him with a golden statue.

**Commodus** [1-11 PsS 79v.37-80.8, cf SLog 66]

**266.1**. Commodus, son of Marcus, reigned 12 years, 9 months. He had blond hair, it looked golden. He was a keen hunter and extremely adulterous,[[12]](#footnote-12) they say that he killed 12 lions in a single day. But he became gouty and stooped. Rome suffered many bad things in his days: for there was a plague and two thousand died in a single day.

**266.2**. The chronicler Africanus says that Clement the Patchworker became known in Alexandria during his reign; Origen was a pupil of Clement. But flourishing at the same time was the heresiarch Montanus, who said that he was a paraclete.

**266.3**. This Commodus removed the head of the colossus in Rhodes and attached it to his own statue. One of his servants, Narcissus, drowned him in the bath.

**Pertinax** [PsS, Log]

**267.1**. Pertinax reigned 87 days.[[13]](#footnote-13) He brought neither his wife nor his children into the palace but left them to live with their grandfather.

**267.2**. During his reign, as Eusebius says, lived Symmachus, one of the translators of the Hebrew Scriptures, an Ebionite in his heretical views, but **{T448}** also the philosopher Porphyry, who wrote against the Christians, and the chronicler Africanos. During his reign Leonides was martyred, the father of the errant Origen.

**267.3**. This Pertinax was slain by the soldiers. **{B442}**

**Didius Julianus** [PsS, Log]

268 Didius Julianus reigned 66 days.[[14]](#footnote-14) He was called Didius because of taking the empire by gifts. He was mean in manner and immoral in his actions and a lover of money; because of his shameful and inhumane life, he was condemned to death by the Senate and executed.

**[Septimius] Severus** [PsS, GM, Log]

**269.1.** Severus reigned 17 years, 8 months[[15]](#footnote-15) — he is called Severus the heretic.

**269.2.** Having won the war in Britain, he build a wall around the island from sea to sea, one thousand stades.

**269.3.** Capturing Byzantium, he demolished its walls. Byzantium had seven towers starting from the Thracian gates and reaching the northern sea. If one approached one of the towers, there was no sign of it in the others, but if someone shouted or rocked a stone in the first tower, the tower would resound and, when it quietened down, would transmit the sound to the second tower, and the second to the third, and so on.

**269.4.** He also built the Baths of Zeuxippus for the Byzantines, gave the hippodrome its first structure, and constructed the *kynegion* and theatre for them.

**269.5.** During **{T449}** his reign Paul of Samosata renewed the heresy of Artemis.

**269.6.** Severus dies from an illness while engaged in war, leaving three sons.

**Origen** [GM]

**270.1.** During his reign Origen flourished, who in Alexandria studied the word of God with the greatest zeal; he was the source of great benefit not only to the faithful but also to not a few heretics. Receiving from him the sound doctrines **{B443}** of the faith, they became zealous for the truth. Notably among these was Ambrose, a man of distinction and of letters, who eagerly sought to make his acquaintance and then parted from the heresy of Valentinus and Marcion after he had acquired enough experience of his divinely inspired teaching. And many non-Christian philosophers who studied with him also reaped the greatest benefit in their own subjects; indeed, he was regarded by them as a great teacher of geometry and arithmetic and the other undergraduate studies. Wherefore not a few of the Hellene philosophers provided testimonies of him, referring in their own writings to him as their teacher. For he was extremely clever from his childhood and with a very enquiring mind. Learning as a youth that the meaning of the divine Scripture was more profound than he thought, his father admonished him to seek no longer beyond his years (while counting himself blessed to have such a blessed child). From a young man he exercised such purity and mastery of his body that **{T450}**

1. Cass. Dio. 68.2.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Literally, ‘wore the plate’ with an inscription on the mitre of a bishop. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Eusebius *HE* 3.31.3 and 5.24.2 has Polycrates naming Philip first and saying he was one of the Apostles. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. R. Riedinger: *Pseudo-Kaisarios, Die Erotapokriseis* (Berlin 1989). Interrogatio 179, PG 38:1152; the PG text has some variations from the Ked quote. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hadrian married Trajan’s grand-niece. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 117-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Bar Kokhba revolt, 132-136 CE. Cassius Dio 69.14 says that 580,000 Jews were killed in the war. The revolt followed Hadrian’s rebuilding of Jerusalem and construction of a temple on the Temple Mount. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7.17.106. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 138-161. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Cf. Eusebius *HE* 4.30. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Greg Naz *Or.* 39 (PG 36:353.38-356.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Xylander suggested μαχιμώτατος ‘a great fighting man’; the word μοιχικώτατος ‘very adulterous’ appears in some SLog manuscripts. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The first three months of 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 28 March - 1 June 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 193-211. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)