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*Simcha Jacobovici , Barrie Wilson*

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In a startling follow-up to the *New York Times* bestseller *The Jesus Family Tomb*, a historical detective story that unravels a newly translated document filled with startling revelations and fascinating detail about the life and times of Jesus.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Gnostic writings and now *The Lost Gospel*, a newly decoded manuscript that uncovers groundbreaking revelations about the life and times of Jesus of Nazareth - a startling follow-up to the *New York Times* bestseller *The Jesus Family Tomb*.

Waiting to be rediscovered in the British Library is an ancient manuscript of the early Church, copied by an anonymous monk. The manuscript is at least 1,450 years old, possibly dating to the first century i.e., Jesus' lifetime. And now, *The Lost Gospel* provides the first ever translation from Syriac into English of this unique document that tells the inside story of Jesus' social, family and political life.

*The Lost Gospel* takes the reader on an unparalleled historical adventure through a paradigm shifting manuscript. What the authors eventually discover is as astounding as it is surprising: the confirmation of Jesus' marriage to Mary Magdalene; the names of their two children; the towering presence of Mary Magdalene; a previously unknown plot on Jesus' life, 13 years prior to the crucifixion; an assassination attempt against Mary Magdalene and their children; Jesus' connection to political figures at the highest level of the Roman Empire; and a religious movement that antedates that of Paul—the Church of Mary Magdalene. Part historical detective story, part modern adventure *The Lost Gospel* reveals secrets that have been hiding in plain sight for millennia.

## **The Lost Gospel: Decoding the Ancient Text that Reveals Jesus' Marriage to Mary the Magdalene Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Lost Gospel: Decoding the Ancient Text that Reveals Jesus' Marriage to Mary the Magdalene for online ebook**

### **Owlseyes says**

'Lost gospel' claims Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had children  
in: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/relig...>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/m...>

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### **Sarah - All The Book Blog Names Are Taken says**

I tried but I can't get through it. The leaps being taken are truly absurd. Review to come shortly.

+++++

My book blog ---> <http://allthebookblognamesaretaken.bl...>

### **Did Not Finish**

Honestly, the subtitle alone is absurd. If you have read my reviews before, you know how I feel about ridiculously long subtitles. If the subtitle needs to be that long, you are doing something wrong. In this case, there is much, much wrong. I contemplated not even bother with a short review, since I quit this one very early on, but I just could not remain quiet and had to say SOMETHING.

I will start with the positives, because despite what it looks like, I do try to find something good in every book I review. It is tough sometimes, and I REEEEEALLY have to look, but there is always some little nugget of positive that I can show. In this case, it is that the writing itself is actually quite good. I don't mean the content, I will get to that in a moment, but the actual writing. It flows well, and the style is engaging. Any other book or subject and I might be able to make it through the entire thing.

Now, onto the not so good. Pretty much, everything else. I wanted to give this one a try, as I am always interested in these ideas of 'lost gospels'. There is so much we do not know about the early days of Christianity and Jesus, as well as his family and followers. Imagine if manuscripts were discovered that could truly be authenticated and just came right out and said, "Here's the story." Wouldn't that be amazing? Instead, we have things like this, 'hidden gospels' that we have to use a great stretch of the imagination and connect all these dots that don't totally seem to fit, in order to make something kind of make sense if you look at it sideways.

I am not opposed to the idea of Jesus being married, and it does make sense. It is not a new idea by any means, and certainly would not have changed His work or Message. I can also understand the whitewashing of that aspect of His life from the Gospel, if that were to turn out to be the case, as the Apostles were only

concerned with the work that Jesus performed and His role as Savior. His possible wife and children did not fit into that mold and thus would not have been something they considered important for future generations to know.

I was ready to give up on page 36 when Gnosticism reared its ugly head - particularly as the author seemed to find a fault in Christianity as we know it today and seemed to scoff at it, while giving favor to Gnosticism. Being objective did not seem to be on the menu. Additionally when the author straight out said Gnosticism was more grounded in history than the Gospel, I knew I may not be able to continue on much longer.

While I found the author's factual history to be interesting, and even enjoyed that aspect of the book early on, I could not abide the constant ending of each chapter with a silly 'cliffhanger'. It was incredibly juvenile and kind of annoying, truth be told. I barely even got into the actual content, the core thesis of the book, in that this obscure manuscript was really the hidden story of Jesus and Mary, and had to quit around page 50. It was simply too absurd to continue.

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### **Heep says**

I enjoy this genre and was really looking forward to reading this book as soon as I saw it in my local library. I read the first thirty pages and could not finish it. I get that there were a number of messianic movements at the time of Christ in lands that now comprise Israel. I understand that the Christ movement was not unified and there were several expressions of early Christianity. Ultimately, Pauline theology prevailed largely due to Constantine and the political forces then at work. Many early texts, particularly those not aligning with Pauline orthodoxy, were either destroyed over the centuries that followed, or weren't maintained and copied - which was much the same thing as destruction before the printing press and mass publication. From time to time old texts do emerge - Nag Hammadi and the Dead Sea Scrolls are examples. Sometimes these materials were previously unknown or represent new or much more comprehensive versions of old texts. These discoveries get scholars pretty sure excited. This book is about one such text. The problem is that without more context the work is largely conjecture heaped upon many layers of prior conjecture. At best, the author has crafted an argument for one interpretation but it is not particularly compelling on its face. I just couldn't continue with this book.

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### **Jeff McLaughlin says**

The authors present numerous intriguing conjectures and back them up with textual and archaeological evidence. However, as a scholarly treatise, the book falls short. References are poorly or vaguely sourced and connections among disparate findings are not made explicit. A piling up of interesting connections does not a grand theory make. There are too many leaps of logic and fact to qualify this as a definitive study of this topic but the book does have a place in the ongoing discussion of Christian origins and the relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

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### **Pamela says**

The list of mysterious origins on which I periodically research includes Will Shakespeare's plays, my children's and my own family ancestors, Marilyn Monroe's death and Jesus life as a human man with family

and friends. Having lived and spent much time in Modern Israel I have a deep curiosity for the Roman occupied era of Herod the Great's influence, the First Century and THE LOST GOSPEL provides compelling evidence of its occupants. With a new translation and evaluation of a 1500 year old document archived at the British Library the authors use logic and existing archaeological findings to create hypotheses about Jesus' political life. They speculate an easily acceptable scenario of Jesus' parentage (one which I have heard from Galilean residents), his need to marry a Gentile (likely Mary of Magdala, a pagan priestess) and how his revolutionary politics got him in trouble with one faction of the priests and Roman leaders controlling Judea.

Jacobovici and Wilson's earlier books, the Jesus Discovery and Jesus Family Tomb established earlier discovered evidence and locations of Jesus's descendants in Jerusalem. The Lost Gospel ties many of these facts into an entertaining, thought provoking conclusion. Don't compare it to DaVinci Code's Dan Brown, who I found to be a less than mediocre stylist. The narrative in THE LOST GOSPEL is easy enough to understand, absorb and accept, and I found myself constantly using the internet to look up other quotes, sources and posted illustrations of ossuaries, mosaic symbols from early churches around Lake Tiberius. The notes and bibliography for scholars are extensive. However, the book can be enjoyed by anyone with a lifetime's imaginings about Jesus' original followers and worshipers and what evidence the Roman Church and Paul destroyed in the first three centuries after Jesus' death.

I recommend this title for a reading group interested in learning more about archaeology, Roman politics in the Middle East lands, about the times and truths of early gnostic Christianity.

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### **J. says**

What garbage, poorly written, poorly conceived. Had I realized that the writers were part of the history channel here in the US I would not have picked it up in the local library. Glad I didn't pay for this one.

I have no problem with the idea of Jesus being married, in fact, not being a member of a religion where other people have to interpret for me what I am reading, it makes little difference. These authors take what is obviously a piece of romantic historical fiction from the first or, more likely, late second century and turn it into a gospel. It has gnostic unlying themes, but most literature absorbs the cultural conventions of the times they pass through.

Interesting is the reason that Manasseh and Ephraim were the product of Joseph and an Egyptian woman in the Yahwist version of Judah's historical myths. Knowing what we know now, we find that the kingdom of David and Solomon were not the great kingdoms the those who wrote the Deuteronomistic History declared, but rather, a chiefdom, the weaker brother of the Northern tribes (or social groups and villages.) Both Manasseh and Ephraim are a part of that Northern alliance. This would be the reason that the Egyptian wife was invented, to point at these powerful clans as being not "completely" of the people. That is why she appears and disappears in the Bible so rapidly, she is insignificant beyond that task. The fact that this union is turned into a romantic story is insignificant, but to try and turn it into a gospel that might further the story of the historical Jesus is just lame.

In the end, the authors prove nothing, but show their abilities to investigate intelligently is lacking and the book becomes the big loser of my summer reading.

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## Speesh says

Right, straight off, let's keep this objective. The '*shocking*' part. No, not really. Not if you've had your eyes, ears and mind open for most of your adult life. Shocking maybe, if you're a mid-west American '*Christian*' I'll admit, but then, they don't really count as thinking people, now do they? Not recently - not since November 2016 anyway.

I think most rational people, would be fairly up-to-date with the possibility, at least, that Jesus was married and married to Mary Magdalene, whether it says so in the Bible or not. And that's the funny thing, because, as this book points out, there is evidence in the actual Bible, the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Bible, to show that Jesus was married and married to Mary Magdalene. However, because that evidence isn't in the form of "*And lo! Jesus said I do, and Mary said I do and the priest said I now declare you (Son of) man and wife,*" it does give all the 'call this number and pledge money now Christians,' wiggle room. The Catholic church would just stay silent on this sort of thing, theirs' isn't this, original Christianity anyway, so they could remain unaffected.

This book is about evidence from the early Christian church, the church started - or continued, depends on how you look at it - by Jesus and his disciples, brothers and people who knew him, heard him and believed in his words. This book is about interpreting the text of a 1,450-year old manuscript, which was found, forgotten in the British Library. It's written in Syriac, a later form of Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, and includes a text about about '*the Story of Joseph and Aseneth.*'

The book deals with an absolutely exhaustive, fascinating, dissection and discussion about the Joseph and Aseneth text. It looks at the text, from every imaginable angle. It puts the theories to the test, mentions the arguments for, and discusses away the arguments against. It is a detective story in part, a theological discourse in another part. Personally, while the above description doesn't exactly make it sound the most accessible and/or tempting of books, I found it spell-bindingly fascinating. Simcha has a good style of writing, which sets things out very clearly and then turns and twirls the argument around, allowing any possible doubt to also come in and have its day. Even the really theological point of a needle stuff is made easily readable. What I perhaps found most interesting, was the history of the early Christian church. The Christianity, as I said, that was the first Christianity, before Paul got hold of it (remember, he never saw, met, or knew Jesus at all) and twisted it out of all recognition - even to Jesus himself I suspect - and thoroughly stamped out the 'competing' but original Christian ideas and teachings.

I did have reservations at certain points, but then at some time or other in the book, all those reservations were satisfied. If you want a really objective look at early Christianity and the real message of the historical Jesus, then you really need to read one of the Simcha Jacobovici books.

All my reviews: Speesh Reads  
Facebook: Speesh Reads

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## MeriBeth says

You have to give Mr. Jacobovici and Mr. Wilson credit for an engaging writing style; however, that's the only thing to their credit with this book. When they aren't brushing off any complaint about their ideas as people essentially being brainwashed by what they referred to as "Pauline Christianity", the authors are

making some very strange leaps of logic in order to prove their idea that a British Library manuscript is actually a detailed account of Jesus's marriage to Mary Magdalene and their subsequent married life, including a conspiracy by Roman authorities to kill the entire family. I feel the need to do the heavy sigh of 'not everyone was out to get Jesus in antiquity' right about here. Much of their scholarship, and in this case I'm using the term loosely, seems to depend on similarities in word meanings, myths, and later stories in order to get their starting point. Then they move on to an argument which boils down to 'if all that is correct, then so is our idea that Jesus was married' paired with 'so, here's the bad guys based on the assumption that what we started with was correct'. When Mr. Jacobovici and Mr. Wilson aren't propping their argument up on suppositions, they're using the Talpiot Tomb contents as proof of their theory. Since much of the finds from that tomb are still both controversial and unproven by historical methods, it seems illogical to use those findings as support for the theories expounded in this book. Finally, in a postscript to the book, the authors decide to claim that since a tiny papyrus fragment, proven by a full scientific review to be an authentic manuscript from approximately the first or second century when many of the earliest writings about Jesus were written, has Jesus saying 'his wife' to someone then they are of course correct in their theory all along regarding the British Library manuscript the book was about; however, there is one problem with this argument - the fragment in question is 1.5 inches by 3 inches and consists of a handful of disconnected lines, no context at all for the text. So, if you're into the Dan Brown/Mary Magdalene phenomenon of a marriage and family for Jesus, this book will be a great read. Those wanting unbiased scholarship into ancient manuscripts which may or may not support that idea had better give this book a pass.

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### **Caitlin says**

I have long been a fan of "The Naked Archeologist," Simcha Jacobovici for his imaginative look at history. He is not swayed by centuries of an accepted theory of history or religion. He uses his immense analytical skills to explore what are uncomfortable ideas for millions of people. I can see how some might believe his life goal is to undermine Christianity but I do not think that is his intent. I think his intent is to undermine myths that rule our way of thinking and of relating to other people and cultures. Along with his co-writer Barrie Wilson, Jacobovici wants to prove the human side of Christ was just that: human; and being human means experiencing the whole of personhood, marriage, sex, children, death, etc. Christians tend to believe in the paradoxical Christ as both divine and human but they don't want to grant him the reality of being human, he was not even conceived or birthed naturally!

"The Lost Gospel: Decoding the Ancient Text that Reveals Jesus' Marriage to Mary the Magdalene" is the newest book along this path. Jacobovici and Wilson expostulate on an ancient Greek text (possibly as old as the canonical Gospels, certainly as old as other Gnostic writings) called "Joseph and Aseneth." On the surface this story purports to be about the Biblical Joseph and how he met his wife Aseneth, how they proceeded to have children, and then have a murder plot thwarted. But as the authors convincingly write, other than names, the story is entirely different in themes, rituals and language than would be found in Jewish texts. Likening Joseph to the "Son of God" would be blasphemous for a Jewish person. It simply would not be done. There is a ritual where Aseneth is purified and then eats of the honey comb which is heavy in Eucharistic symbolism, again a Christian reference.

What the authors conclude is that this story is a coded story for the real story of the marriage of Jesus and his foremost disciple Mary the Magdalene (Mary of the Tower) and the plot to murder them. This is where the book gets fun. The authors take the reader on a journey through the text, through Gnostic texts, ancient historians such as Josephus, archeological sites and more to provide evidence for their theory. Dan Brown in "The Da Vinci Code" popularized the idea of the Jesus family and also of coded history. It is accepted as fact that many mystical and early Christian and Judaic texts were written in code, after all, anything that was different than the proposed way was heretical and could put the lives of the writers and readers in danger.

Many people (though I assume not the majority) do not have a problem with a married Jesus, though I think it is daunting to think that there could be descendants of Jesus walking the earth today. What makes the detective work of Jacobovici and Wilson different than these controversial assumptions is the clarification they make that Joseph is Jesus and that Aseneth is Mary the Magdalene. Furthermore, Mary is the original Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus gaining that status later in a deliberate attempt to wipe out Mary the Magdalene's influence. They go further still, Mary the Magdalene is a stand-in for the goddess Artemis. There is a quite long and mind-blowing lay out of the evidence for this. I won't explain the evidence for any of their arguments because you should read it for yourself.

One of the driving factors of skepticism in any kind of ancient world and text scholarship is that we will ultimately never know, really, what is truth, myth, lies, etc. While I was keeping a vein of doubt open as I read this, I did find myself getting sucked into the mystery of this text and what it meant when written and the relevance it has today. I agree that the text does seem to portray a marriage between Jesus and someone, and that the Magdalene seems the best fit. Whether people replaced the pagan goddess with a new Christian version is probably unknowable, but it makes sense. As the authors point out, there were many kinds of Christianity before Pauline Christianity succeeded in stamping out the contenders.

One of the more disturbing parts of their research is the discussion on the Gnostic "bridal-chamber" rituals. If this is correct than Jesus and Mary the Magdalene would have created salvation by their sexual union and that the Last Supper would have sexual overtones and that Jesus may have been with many people. This may or may not be true but it fundamentally changes the nature of the ethical and loving Jesus and makes him sound like any sexual predator from our modern day cults. I do not believe that the authors were calling Jesus a pervert but it came dangerously close to it. I certainly believe that sex was used in many religious rituals, but it was the undertones about what that would mean if Jesus was leading people toward sex with him.

This story could have been a way of preserving the knowledge of Jesus' marriage and his divinity may have been symbolic, rather than literally believed. In this version Magdalene was also made divine and shared in the mission of Christ: together they would reunite the schism between God and humanity, by reuniting Man and woman. If the authors' interpretation is correct then this text would truly have harbored dangerous knowledge.

The research they did is prodigious but I think the conclusions they draw come from their creative capacity to think outside of the box (something that Jacobovici thanks his family for in the "Acknowledgements" section). They make leaps of faith in their connections as much as traditional believers do because the past is obscure. But I think they go in the right direction, even if all of their talking points aren't correct.

They provide an English translation of "Joseph and Aseneth" by their colleague Dr. Tony Burke. They take pains to explain that they asked him for a translation and did not tell him of their theory so his translation is pure and not biased toward their interpretation. They provide an extensive "Further Reading" section and the entire book is heavily annotated. The endnotes are fascinating but really slow down the reading process. While at times they veer into sheer speculation, this book is intelligently and passionately written, while keeping in mind that most readers are not Biblical or ancient text scholars. They clearly make their case and attempt to be as transparent in their documentation and research as is possible.

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## **Melinda says**

This was very thoroughly researched. It had a lot of fascinating historical detail. However, it wasn't compelling enough to persuade me either that Christ was married or that Christ was not married. What I got out of it was that a) the political and social situation in Palestine in the meridian of times was a lot more

complex and interlocking than anything I had previously read about it (including Ben Hur); b) there are a lot of societal references and literary devices that I previously didn't know, that a knowledgeable person could catch in the Gospels and in later writings; c) nobody has absolute proof that Christ was married but a lot of people afterwards believed that he was and some of the interactions preserved in ancient writings can be taken to mean that he was married. The authors of this study felt that there were rifts in ancient Christianity, and that the versions that won out to become Roman Catholicism and Orthodox varieties, had intentionally ignored or papered over some aspects of Christ's lifetime and teaching, because of sex. Face it, people are attracted to human bodies. If they could be persuaded that it was okay and even encouraged to have a strong physical relationship with your spouse (which is what I believe Christ would teach), then some twist that into physical relationships with everybody everywhere at any time, totally unrestrained. No wonder the Church Fathers would object: no society that has encouraged sex without restraints has ever survived very long.

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## **Walt says**

Jacobovici is a polarizing figure. He has great talent and skill. But whether his uses his talents for scholarship or for personal gain remains to be seen. The reviews for this book are just as polarizing as the lead author. I think there is a little of both worlds present. Jacobovici has found a fascinating document that adds to the literature of early Christianity. However, I think he is extracting way more significance than the text justifies.

The text in question is the Story of Joseph and Aseneth. Joseph is the Old Testament figure who is sold by his brothers into slavery and rises in the employment of the pharaoh to redeem himself. As an after-thought, the pharaoh marries him to an Egyptian priestess. Nevertheless, this Jewish icon manages to do great things. Aseneth is barely mentioned in the Bible. Joseph and Aseneth focuses on their marriage and evading the machinations of pharaoh's son. The story incorporates some obvious Christian symbolism.

Conventional wisdom says that the story, with its focus on their marriage, is a means to justify how Joseph avoided Jewish law to marry an Egyptian priestess. Some scholars argue that the Christian symbolism was added to the text by subsequent scribes. Jacobovici examines the story and says that Joseph and Aseneth really refer to Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene. He can make a good case for this interpretation. However, he does go much further to say that pharaoh refers to the Roman emperor Tiberius and pharaoh's son is Tiberius' adopted son, Germanicus. The result is a strange story indeed.

Jacobovici makes great strides in explaining Jewish culture and the socio-political world of the Galilee in the 1st Century AD. For that analysis alone, the book is worth reading. He makes a very strong case that Jesus was not some shepherd or carpenter wandering around Galilee; but rather a political activist who eventually lost in the world of politics. That alone is a strong and controversial argument. Furthermore, Jacobovici brings into analysis with his co-author the subsequent events and leaders of Jesus' ministry to show a pattern of political intrigue.

He also introduces his audience to the Christian sect of the Valentinian Gnostics, who focus on Jesus' life rather than the Pauline version of Jesus' death. Jacobovici makes a very strong case that the Story of Joseph and Aseneth is one of their texts. He shows how Pauline Christians persecuted other Christian sects, forcing their ideology underground. The result are texts like this one that loosely hide their ceremonies. Jacobovici does not tell us much about the Valentinians. Maybe he does not know much himself. However, the implication is that they believed Jesus was married and they focus attention on marriage.

Had he stopped at this point, he would have a thoughtful book. However, it would not be as polarizing (or

profitable). Hence he adds in Tiberius, Germanicus, and Sejanus. It is an interesting argument; but with little or no evidence. The later chapters of the book read like Gavin Menzies in that he throws so much "evidence" at the reader that some if it will stick, when they add up to very little. Even in the middle of the book, when he is discussing the Valentinians, he goes on to theological rambling that is akin to a trip down crazy lane. Much of it appears to be speculative.

Overall, it is an interesting read. It is not proof that Jesus was married with children. It is not proof that Germanicus tried to kill Jesus to sleep with Mary Magdalene. It is not proof that Jesus died while backing the wrong side in a political dispute. Take it as a minor story for a minor Christian cult. At most it offers a different view of Christianity in the formative years. At least it is just another gnostic text attractive mostly to those who argue against organized religion.

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### **Kristi Duarte says**

The author wants to make a case that the story about Aseneth and Joseph is about Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Despite a couple of logical assumptions, most of his conclusions don't add up.

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### **?? ? says**

A great read for the methodical seeker of truth.

While I don't necessarily agree with all the conclusions reached by Wilson and Jacobovici, I love the central theme: that Jesus was married and had children, and that this (not celibacy) was part of His doctrine.

Myself coming from the perspective that:

- \* Jesus is in fact the Son of God (challenged in LG)
- \* He established the "Kingdom of God" during His life, death, and resurrection
- \* Following the death of the 12 disciples there was a Great Apostasy (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- \* The institution of marriage is ordained of God
- \* The means by which mortal life is created is divinely appointed

It seems very likely that:

- \* Jesus would have taught and instituted heavenly marriage (supported by LG)
- \* As the Christian movement was divided and fell into apostasy, among the first doctrines to be lost/twisted would have been marriage, procreation and chastity (somewhat supported by LG)

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### **Jonna Higgins-Freese says**

Having studied theology and the historical Jesus, the idea that Jesus was likely married is not new, nor is the idea that religions borrow from each other. I also knew that early members of the Jesus movement did not understand Jesus primarily in terms of the crucifixion (it was too stark and raw), though until now I'd read that they understood it in terms of God's love as mother's milk. So I wasn't as appalled as the authors appeared to think I would be that the early Jesus movement may have been a syncretistic blend of the worship of Astartis and Jesus-as-Astartis-consort. I have no idea what the status of this idea is in scholarly

circles, but it struck me as not inconceivable, and it does explain the early roots of Gnosticism (especially Valentinian gnosticism) to some extent. (Interestingly, the authors note that Valentinus almost became bishop of Rome in the 130s . . . interesting to think of what might have been.)

The authors point out quite convincingly that the wide "diversity" of Christians today (western, Orthodox, Coptic, Chaldean) are actually all the inheritors of Pauline Christianity, which was not originally the "only" or even the dominant way to be Christian. In fact, there were at least two ways to be Christian that we're aware of -- the Jesus movement, which was led from Jerusalem by James the brother of Jesus, the Christ movement, led by Paul mostly among the God-fearers, or the non-Torah-observant but interested-in-monothemism pagans. The authors posit a third "Church of the Gentiles" that believed in a historical, Jewish Jesus, but understood as a divine being/Son of God with a divine consort (i.e., Mary the Magdalene). They provide some archaeological evidence of "synagogues" that may in fact include "Christian" (or "Church of the Gentiles") imagery, including one mosaic that shows Jesus and bride together.

They point out that mystery religions were prevalent during the time of Jesus (and, having just read *Heirs to the Forgotten Kingdom*, I would suggest that to some extent they remain so today in the form of the Druze, etc.) In these religions, the most sacred truths were understood to be secrets closely held by the initiated that were kept from others, perhaps because they were considered too incendiary or too complicated for others to understand. It's not clear to me that this would have been necessary in the context of the time of Jesus -- certainly sacred sex would have seemed perfectly normal, rather than subversive, to the many followers of the Artemis cults.

They present fascinating evidence linking "Jesus and Asenath" to Artemis, including bee imagery that depicts "the first ever Communion ceremony between Asenath (a.k.a. Mary the Magdalene) and the angel (a.k.a. Jesus). But take note, in this ceremony it is not his body they are eating -- it is hers" (114). Other imagery taken from Artemis and appropriated later to Jesus includes the fish -- one of Artemis's common signs - and in early imagery there are often two fish rather than one. According to Margaret Starbird, the discovery of the Megiddo church mosaic, "confirms that early Christians honored the zodiac symbol for Pisces [as two fish rather than one] long before they chose to identify themselves with the cross . . . I have long asserted that Mary Magdalene represented that 'other fish'" (141). In regard to the Tel Istaba mosaic, the authors write, "this is the only mosaic that is clearly in a Christian context and in a house of worship that depicts Jesus with a female partner" (145) The authors point out that resurrection imagery was taken from Helios Mithras, around which there was a cult based on "the slaying of the primordial bull and the redemption of the world through his blood . . . [they] had a communion-like meal where the initiates ate bread and drank from a cup of water mixed with wine" (192). The bull died and was resurrected as bees. The resurrected Jesus, in this sense, was Mary Magdalene. "In the 2nd century there was a movement in Phrygia, modern Turkey, known as montanism. A man named Montanus and two women named Priscilla and Maximilla led it. One of these 'Christian prophets' had a 'famous vision of Christ in female form.' In fact, from the 4th century onward, a tradition developed in Christian art that involved 'representing Jesus as quite feminine with long hair, wide hips and even breasts' Basically, Jesus came to be depicted as Mary the Magdalene." (193).

Can I just say how useless traditional bibliographic style is, especially when it doesn't include a list of works cited? p. 411 lists as one critical citation "Hill, op. cit." -- but this is on page 40 of the footnotes, and I have yet to be able to figure out what "Hill" refers to, having spent at least 15 minutes looking.

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## **J.B. Richards says**

“The Lost Gospel” is entertaining, but quite absurd if you’re looking at getting the FACTS on Jesus and Mary Magdalene’s relationship to each other and their supposed identity as the couple Joseph and Ashenath of the Old Testament - Yes, I said Joseph and Ashkeneth of the Old Testament, for that is what Simcha Jacobovici and Barry Wilson would have you believe.

The danger of Jacobovici and Wilson’s work is this . . . When a complete work of fiction is misrepresented and sensationalized as fact - as this book has been - society has a tendency to look only at the surface and believe in the imaginings of the author (or in this case, authors). I, too, am a historian specializing in this particular area, but at least I have the decency to appropriately label my own work as fiction.

JB Richards, Author

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