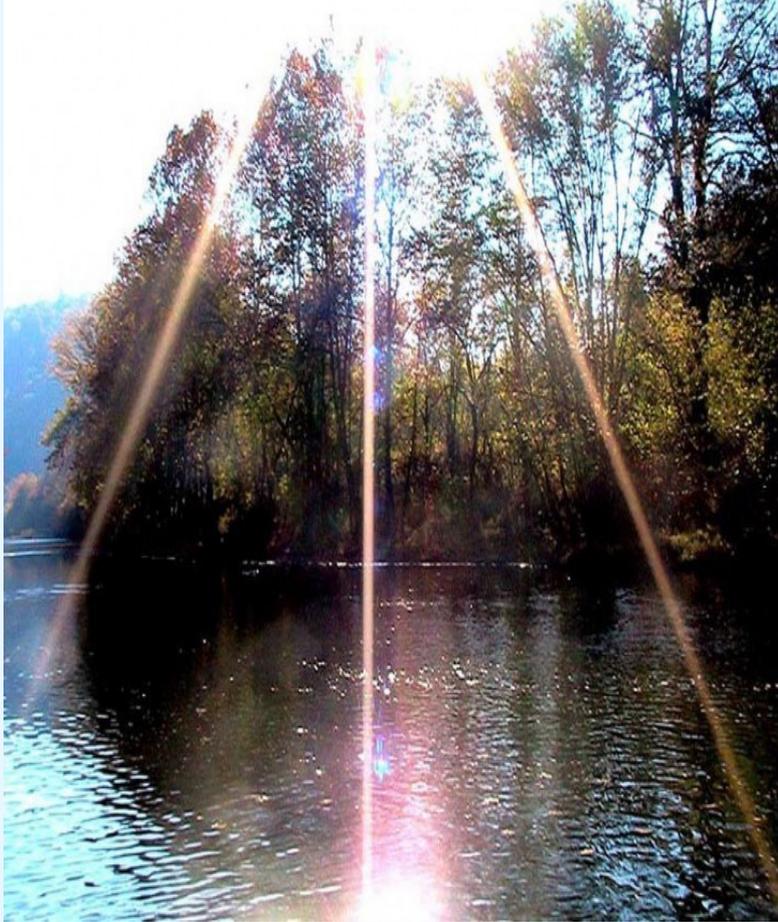


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The Magda Connection



- Were Jesus and Mary Magdalene married?
- Did they have children?
- What did the early Jesus movement look like?
- What were the politics that shaped the crucifixion and early Jesus movement and was there a plot against Jesus, Mary and the children?
- Mary Magdalene as the foundation of the early gnostic movement

Recent documentary evidence related to today's topic

- 7th Century C.E. Coptic papyrus
- Gnostic gospels
- Essene Blue Rose Society documents
- The Gospel of the Holy Twelve
- Manuscript 17,202 from the British Library



7th Century Coptic Text Discovery

The "Gospel of Jesus' Wife"



← 8cm = $3\frac{5}{32}$ in →

The Gospel of Jesus's Wife

1. not [to] me. My mother gave me li[fe]
2. The disciples said to Jesus
3. deny. Mary is n[ot] worthy of it
4. Jesus said to them, My wife
5. she is able to be my disciple
6. Let wicked people swell up
7. As for me, I am with her in order to
8. an image

Gnostic Gospels

- Discourses as opposed to the historical stories of the canonical gospels
- More mystical and zen-like than the canonical gospels
- Contain the inner teachings of Jesus
- Personal divine gnosis



Gospel of Philip

“Three women always walked with the master: Mary his mother, Mary his sister, and Mary Magdalene who is called his companion. For Mary is the name of his sister, his mother, and his companion.”

The companion of the savior is Mary Magdalene. The savior loved her more than all the disciples, and he kissed her often on the mouth. The other disciples said to him “Why do you love her more than all of us?”

The savior answered and said unto them “Why do I not love you like her? If a blind person and one who can see are both in the darkness, they are the same. When the light comes, one who can see will see the light, and the blind person will stay on the darkness.”

Gospel of Philip

Jesus on marriage:

“The mystery of marriage is great. Without it the world would not exist. The existence of the world depends on people, and the existence of people depends on marriage. Then think of the power of pure intercourse, though its image is defiled.”

Gospel of Thomas

Simon Peter said to them “Mary should leave us, for females are not worthy of life.”

Jesus said “Look, I shall guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter heaven’s kingdom.”

Gospel of the Savior

- The Dialogue of the Savior, also written in the second century A.D., is a dialogue between the Savior (never called Jesus or Christ) and some of his disciples, including Mary. The disciples ask questions about esoteric religious things, and Jesus gives equally esoteric answers. Mary is one of the most frequent interrogators of the Savior, asking nearly three quarters of the questions. At one point she makes an observation. The text explains, “This word she spoke as a woman who knew the All”. In other words, Mary has special knowledge of spiritual reality.
- She is seen, once again, as central among the disciples of the Savior, and as a person with special insight.

Pistis Sophia

The Pistis Sophia is a Gnostic gospel written sometime during the third century A.D. It is a revelation of Christ in which Mary plays a prominent role, asking the majority of the questions about all measure of esoteric matters.

Mary is praised in The Pistis Sophia as one “whose heart is more directed to the Kingdom of Heaven than all [her] brothers”. Jesus says that she is “blessed beyond all women upon the earth, because [she shall be] the pleroma of all Pleromas and the completion of all completions”. In other words, Mary will have the fullness of knowledge and therefore spiritual life within her. So impressed is Jesus with Mary’s spiritual excellence that he promises not to conceal anything from her, but to reveal everything to her “with certainty and openly”. She is the blessed one who will “inherit the whole Kingdom of the Light”.

From The Pistis Sophia we see the growing interest in Mary among Gnostic Christians, who valued knowledge (*gnosis* in Greek) above all. She has come to be regarded as a source of hidden revelation because of her intimate relationship with Jesus.

Gospel of Mary

The Gospel of Mary, written in the second century, goes even further than The Pistis Sophia in portraying Mary as a source of secret revelation because of her close relationship to the Savior. At one point Peter asks, “Sister, We know that the Savior loved you more than the rest of women. Tell us the words of the Savior which you remember—which you know but we do not nor have we heard them” .

Gospel of Mary

The Gospel of Mary reports that several of the disciples were none too impressed by Mary's purported insights into heavenly things. Andrew responded to her revelation by saying "I at least do not believe that the Savior said this. For certainly these teachings are strange ideas". Then Peter asked, "Did he really speak privately with a woman and not openly to us? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?" But Levi speaks up for Mary, "Peter, you have always been hot-tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Savior knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us".

The Essene Order of the Blue Rose

- Believe that Mother Mary and Mary Magdalene were Essenes and taught about Blue Rose healing.
- The Blue Rose healing teachings are said to have originated on Venus under the direction of Melchizedek and were brought to Earth by Mother Mary.
- Word Essene stems from “Assaya” in Aramiac and means “healer”. The Essenes were called “Therapeutae” in Egypt from which our word therapist is derived. This form of healing is associated with love and compassion.
- Order of Blue Rose is special order for most faithful followers following the path of the Essene Way.
- The Essenes believed that the Christ Ray is carried in both feminine and masculine and that Mary Magdalene was considered to be the feminine Christ. They believed in receiving direct knowledge from God achieved through the “Sacred Marriage” or union of male and female within.

The Essene Order of the Blue Rose

- After the crucifixion, while still in Israel, Mary Magdalene established her own teaching and called it The Order of the Blue Rose. Many of Jesus's followers would not accept a woman as their leader.
- Mary Magdalene fled to Egypt and ultimately the south of France where her order became known as The Order of the Magdalene.
- It is said that Jesus gave Mary Magdalene a blue rose the night before he was taken into custody as a symbol of his undying love and his promise of comfort.
- According to the Order of the Blue Rose, Jesus gave to the world an entire new set of gospels—the Essene Christian Gospels—which were circulated amongst the early Christian gnostic churches until Constantine sent out forces to confiscate all copies.

The Essene of the Blue Rose

- Some brave Essene-Christian monks went to India and deposited a copy of the Essene-Christian new testament in the Mystery School Library of a Buddhist monastery. This manuscript, “The Gospel of the Holy Twelve” was later moved to a monastery in Tibet and ultimately translated into English by Reverend Gideon Jasper Ouseley and is available today.
- Rev. Ouseley was ultimately forced to leave the Church of England after releasing the translation and several attempts were made to assassinate him and his house set on fire twice.
- In the early 1920s, Dr. Edmond Szekely discovered an ancient manuscript in the Vatican while doing research. This Manuscript is “The Essene Gospel of Peace”.
- Upon publishing “The Essene Gospel of Peace”, Dr. Szekely was banished by the Vatican and all other Christian organizations of the time.

The Gospel of the Holy Twelve

Fulfilling "The Law" Within

The Gospel of the Holy Twelve declares that in order to achieve eternal life, "The Law" must be fully obeyed. In this respect this text shows us a very "Essene" Jesus indeed, with his unequivocal focus on "The Law" that must be obeyed. But "The Law", to Jesus, was not altogether the same Law written in the Hebrew Old Testament, but rather a universal Law pre-written into the inner being of Man. The Law given by Moses, Jesus claimed, had been altered, betrayed and adulterated by the priests of Persia during the Jewish people's captivity there. The true Law given by Moses was, this scripture maintains, the same ancient Law that is pre-written in the hearts of all men—the "Law of Love and the unity of all life in the One-Family of the All-Parent".

This work teaches that living in accordance to the inner Law is the key to salvation, Eternal Life, and the Kingdom of Heaven. It teaches that if one experiences the *death of the soul*, it is not because one was condemned by God or anyone else, but by being self-condemned. Whatever the evil doers suffer after death would be that which they themselves created in their own unconscious souls prior to their deaths by betraying the Law, the sense of right and wrong, that is pre-written into our inner being.

The Gospel of the Holy Twelve

Making the Two into One

In the gnostic "Gospel of Thomas", "Gospel of Philip", and "Gospel of Truth" found at Nag Hammadi, reconciling and integrating the dual nature of all being is a main focus of this text. God is repeatedly called not "Father", but the Father/Mother, or the All-Parent. His attributes are repeatedly described with equal-but-opposite word pairings such as "love and wisdom", "head and heart", "soul and spirit", "within and without", "right and left", and "male and female", or the "Oneness" of the divine pair. But by whatever name, what is constantly being mentioned, advocated, described and declared is that salvation comes through the reconciliation and integration of these two primordial elements of being.

Manuscript 17,202

- WHAT do we know about Manuscript 17,202?
- WHEN was it written and by whom?
- IS there more to the story than meets the eye?



What is Manuscript 17,202

- Dating to around 570 AD, written in Syriac, a Middle Eastern language closely related to Aramaic.
- Found in the Macarios monastery in Egypt, one of the oldest monasteries in the world and sold to an Egyptian antiquities dealer who then sold it to the British Library in 1847.
- Titled “A Volume of Records of Events Which Have Shaped the World”.
- Represents an anonymous monks efforts to preserve a record of events, which, in his view, were earth-shattering in importance.
- Includes the story of Constantine’s conversion to Christianity, debates over the person of Christ, and other important early church history, hot topics for the day in his world.

What is Manuscript 17,202

- One manuscript from this library does not seem to fit the topic or time period. This is the story of Joseph the Just and Aseneth his wife. Since the story is largely focused on “Aseneth” it is frequently referred to as “The Story of Aseneth”.
- This document is introduced as having been translated into Syriac from a much older Greek work, possibly dating to the first or second century C.E., around the time of Jesus’s life or shortly thereafter.
- Filed away as an historical story on the lives of the biblical prophet Joseph and his wife Aseneth, who lived 1500 to 1700 years before Jesus, yet none of the story makes sense in light of what has previously been written about them or the time period and cultural in which they lived.

What is Manuscript 17,202

- We know the monk who possessed the story in the 5th century AD sought out an expert of ancient Syriac because he felt that the story contained a hidden true meaning. This hunch concerning the “Story of Aseneth” is confirmed by the expert. However the full response of the expert has been cut off and removed from the document.
- Hidden within the “Story of Aseneth” is an entirely different story. A tale of love, a holy, heavenly and earthly marriage, children and family, politics, betrayal and murder.
- As we shall see, this is a story which only makes imminent sense in the context of the early days of Christianity and circumstances point to the true identity of the main actors—Jesus and Mary Magdalene.
- Could the hidden story be the reason that so much relative to the family life of Jesus and Mary Magdalene were ultimately left out of the canonical gospels and early Christian church writings?

Decoding the Manuscript

- There is a history of unpleasant outcomes for those who strayed too far outside of the accepted view of orthodox Christian dogma existing almost to the present day.
- Reaching the truth requires an understanding of the norms in the location and the time and customs existing at the original production of the document.
- Typology – The study and interpretation of types and symbols, especially in the Bible.



What are the Most Important Clues?

- The story is simply not the story found in Genesis. In the book of Genesis it is his (Joseph's) story. In this document it is HER story.
- Something other than the biblical account drives the narrative in Joseph and Aseneth.
- The typology is distinctly Christian and not Jewish.
- In Moses of Ingila's translation of the document from Greek to Syriac in the 5th century, he alludes to a secret message encoded within Joseph and Aseneth that is "dangerous to discuss publicly".

What are the Most Important Clues?

- Early Christians interpreted biblical writings very differently than today. It is well known among scholars that in Eastern Christianity, where the Joseph and Aseneth text was preserved the longest, the preferred method of textual interpretation was typology.
- The major theological schools of Syriac Christianity specialized in seeing parallels between old and new testament writings.
- Figures and events from the Old Testament were seen through the eye of Christian faith as types or foreshadows of later figures and events.
- In their view, characters in the Old Testament were prototypes of characters in the New Testament.

What are the Most Important Clues?

- Typology also helped create a sense of continuum for early Christian writers as it created a link or bridge from the Old Testament to the new Christian teachings. For the early Christian writers, the Old and New Testaments then were one consistent story of salvation through Christ.
- In the first century educated people were influenced by Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought. To them the real task was to find the deeper, spiritual meaning, the unchangeable, eternal truths.
- The majority of early Christians took the growing library of Christian writings as authoritative and then read the message of Christian salvation back into the Old Testament.
- According to this view, the earlier writings depicted happenings that prefigured the events that were really intended.

The Four Main Components of *Joseph and Aseneth*

- The Meeting
- Aseneth's Rebirth
- The Marriage
- The Plot to Abduct "Aseneth" and Murder "Joseph" and the "Children"



The Meeting

- Unlike the story of Joseph and Aseneth in the Bible, here Aseneth quickly takes center stage. In the Bible there is nothing about Aseneth's appearance, beliefs, personality, values or character.
- Aseneth is described as an attractive woman with strong opinions of her own. She is described as having the virtues of the Israelite matriarchs, comparable to Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel. The biblical Aseneth did not live amongst Israelites.
- Aseneth's father has an impressive estate and Aseneth lives on the estate in a high tower with seven attending virgins. Mary Magdalene also had a well to do father and was said to live in a tower.
- In the older Jewish tradition, describing someone as God or Bride of God would be blasphemous.
- As we shall see, this is a story which only makes imminent sense in the context of the early days of Christianity.

The Meeting

- Joseph appears to Aseneth in a golden chariot wearing a white tunic and a purple robe with his head adorned with a golden crown with twelve golden rays of light like the rays of the shining sun. There is a royal scepter in his left hand and a plant like an olive branch in his right.
- The entire appearance of Joseph is reminiscent of ancient depictions of eastern deities such as Surya. The robe is reminiscent of the robes of royalty of ancient Rome and the olive branch typical of the mission of Jesus the Prince of Peace.
- Joseph rejects Aseneth's kiss and vows to return in eight days. After leaving he is moved to the following prayer: "In the name of the God who calls people from darkness to light, from error to truth, and from death to life I beseech You to renew and transform Aseneth."
- He prays that she may eat the eternal bread of life, drink the blessed cup, be counted amongst God's people and live forever.

The Rebirth of Aseneth

- Aseneth in mourning for seven days
- She throws out everything related to her former life
- She prays to God for forgiveness for speaking ill of Joseph
- A man from Heaven appears
- The holy communion and inner marriage



The Rebirth of Aseneth

- While Joseph is away, Aseneth weeps for a week and can not eat or sleep. She tosses all of her finest possessions and food and libations out the window to the dogs.
- Finally she prays for forgiveness and deliverance from her prosecutors whom she knows will come (a foreshadowing). She then sees the morning star and rejoices.
- Then a man from heaven appears—someone alike in every royal aspect to Joseph but his face was like lightning and his eyes like the splendor of the sun.
- He orders her to take off her black robe and provides a new one.
- He informs her that today her name has been written in the Book of Life and that she is renewed, refashioned and has been granted new life.

The Rebirth of Aseneth

- He tells her that she will eat of the bread of life, drink the cup of immortality, and be anointed with the ointment of incorruptibility.
- He tells her that God has given Joseph to her and that her new name shall be “City of Refuge”.
- He tells her that all nations shall take refuge in her and that those who give allegiance to God in repentance shall find in her security. He explains that Repentance is the daughter of the Most High, the mother of virgins who has prepared a heavenly bridal chamber for those who love her.
- He says God and the angels respect her.
- He then gives her a honeycomb. He eats a piece of the honeycomb and puts another in her mouth while tracing—in blood—the sign of the cross on the honeycomb.

The Rebirth of Aseneth

- Suddenly a multitude of bees fly up from the honeycomb and they envelop her.
- Some good bees fly upward to heaven. The evil bees which wish to harm her die, but are brought back to life by the angelic being.
- He then blesses her and her attendants and takes his leave.
- Clearly here Aseneth is front and center, totally unlike anything found in the Bible.

The Rebirth of Aseneth

- Why would Aseneth describe Joseph as God's Son which is surely Christian terminology and non-Torah. Joseph is, in a sense, a savior-like figure, but in a Jewish text would never be described as "God's Son".
- When the Angelic Being puts the honeycomb in Aseneth's mouth he traces the sign of the cross—symbolic of a completely Christian communion ceremony. How did that get here into a story on Joseph and Aseneth, preceding Christianity by over a thousand years?
- Why is Aseneth called a "City of Refuge"? After all, the biblical Aseneth is neither a "Bride of God" nor a "City of Refuge".
- What are we to make of the ceremony similar to holy communion some 1700 years prior to Christianity?

The Marriage

- The Wedding
- The Consummation
- The Children



The Marriage

- Joseph returns to find Aseneth dressed resplendently for her wedding with a crown of gold on her head and her face covered by a bridal veil.
- The manager of her father's estate greets her by saying, "The Lord God of heaven truly chose you to be the bride of his first born son."
- Aseneth recounts to Joseph her experience and they embrace for a long time. Aseneth receives from Joseph the spirit of life and wisdom and insists on washing Joseph's feet.
- Joseph and Aseneth are married.
- Anyone see any coincidences?

The Plot to Kidnap Aseneth and Kill Joseph and the Children

- There are seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine.
- Seeing Aseneth's great beauty the "Pharaoh's son" is jealous and desires her.
- He tries to bribe two of Joseph's brothers to forge an alliance with him in exchange for great wealth. The plan is to kill the Pharaoh and then Joseph and his children.
- The plot is foiled as Pharaoh's son is unable to kill his father.



The Plot to Kidnap Mary and Kill Jesus and the Children

- Joseph's loyal brothers come to the aid of Aseneth.
- The treasonous brothers throw themselves on Aseneth's mercy.
- She is forgiving, saying it is wrong to repay evil with evil.
- One of Joseph's brothers strikes the Pharaoh's son with a stone on the temple and he dies three days later.
- Pharaoh's son is unique to this narrative and is never mentioned in the story in Genesis.



The Plot to Kidnap Mary and Kill Jesus and the Children

- Joseph completely disappears in this narrative unlike the story in Genesis.
- In Genesis, Joseph is front and center and it is Aseneth who disappears.
- She is forgiving, saying it is wrong to repay evil with evil.
- In this story, the brothers divide along pro and anti-Aseneth lines. In the Bible story Aseneth is irrelevant to the brothers.
- With the vast difference between the plots, something else must be driving the narrative.



Joseph or Jesus?

- In the Syriac Christian context Joseph is a type of Jesus.
- The text does not relate the story of Joseph only to read Jesus into it. Rather, it actually seems to be relating the story of Jesus and using Joseph as a surrogate to mask this fact.
- Once this is understood, we can begin to make sense of the messianic language in *Joseph and Aseneth*, such as the references to the “Son of God” and “Savior”.
- In this context, many of the Christian sounding concepts in Aseneth’s dream come into clarity.



Joseph or Jesus?

- Seen in this aspect, *Joseph and Aseneth* come into light as a Christian story, a gospel if you will, about Jesus and Mary Magdalene.
- This could be the first written document making the true nature of Jesus's personal life apparent.



Joseph or Jesus? Why Hide It?

- If someone is burning your books and threatening your life you have to hide them or encode them. The use of typology serves that purpose.
- The second issue is hiding the author's depiction of Jesus in ways that the reader can understand the deeper message.
- For example, the authors of the New Testament were faced with a similar challenge to represent Jesus in terms that the audience can grasp.
- The author of Mark, for example, positioned Jesus as a miracle worker, devoting about a third of his message to that aspect.



Joseph or Jesus?

- In Matthew and Luke, Jesus's virgin birth is a main theme. This is not a Jewish concept, but is derived from the common idea in the 1st century C.E. that Roman Emperors and other deities, such as Dionysius and Mithra claimed virgin/divine births.
- The second issue is hiding the author's depiction of Jesus in ways that the reader can understand the deeper message.
- The idea was to demonstrate that Jesus was, at the very least, on par with the Roman Emperors and founders of the most popular religions of the time.
- It signaled the immense importance of his birth to the Gospel writers.



Joseph or Jesus?

- The author of the Gospel of John depicts Jesus as the 'Logos of the world'.
- How does the author of Joseph and Aseneth represent Joseph/Jesus and what message is he conveying?
- First, the author builds with gradual detail the physical appearance of Joseph wearing a white tunic, purple robe and a golden crown with twelve precious stones.
- This is indisputably to the 1st century C.E. reader a clear description of the garb of a Roman emperor.



Joseph or Jesus?

- Through this symbolism, the author is conveying his sense of Jesus as the true ruler of the world.
- However, the text then goes on further that he is more than a Roman ruler, he is the true king of Israel, God's anointed one.
- In addition, Joseph/Jesus is depicted carrying a royal scepter and an olive branch, symbolizing that Jesus is the True Vine and the fulfillment of humanity's hopes and dreams.
- Every symbol associated with Joseph in the manuscript seems to point to Jesus, and Jesus alone.



Jesus as Helios the Sun God?

- Joseph/Jesus is portrayed as a Sun God, with twelve rays of sunlight emanating from his crown.
- He has an impressive chariot covered with gold and drawn by white horses—a symbol of the sun whose movement across the sky was thought to be caused by the mighty steeds pulling a magnificent celestial chariot.
- Aseneth, facing the east, welcomes Joseph with these words; “Now I see the sun shining from his chariot and its radiance lights up our home.”
- In *Joseph and Aseneth*, Helios is clearly chosen to represent the power and significance of Jesus.



Jesus as Helios the Sun God?

- The choice is an interesting one, for Helios was the model for at least one Roman emperor and one major Roman religion.
- Julian, the 4th century Roman emperor, composed a Hymn to Helios in praise of the Sun god, proclaiming his allegiance to “King Helios”, describing him as the source of all truth and goodness similar to Plato’s Form of the Good.
- For this Julian earned the nickname “The Apostate” from the Christian emperors who preceded and succeeded him.
- Before and after Julian, Helios imagery was applied by Christians not to a Sun god but to Jesus, a “son” god.



Mr. and Mrs. Jesus, Our Lady Mary church in Galilee,
Circa 6th century AD



Jesus and Mary Magdalene as Helios and Vesta

- A mosaic, discovered in the 1930s and dating back to at least the 5th century C.E.
- Near Our Lady Mary church in Galilee, close to the home of Mary Magdalene.
- Depicts Jesus and Mary as the Sun God and Goddess and surrounded by the twelve disciples on the twelve lines of the zodiac.
- There are numerous mosaics in early C.E. Jewish synagogues which depict Jesus as Helios, something which would have been inconsistent with Jewish custom.[ai](#)

Aseneth or Mary Magdalene?

- Vesta in cotemporary 1st century C.E. times.
- Aseneth as a tower.
- Aseneth as a priestess.
- Aseneth as a church.
- Similarities to Mary Magdalene in the gnostic gospels.
- Her story in darshans through David Lewis.



Temple of Vesta in Rome



Roman temple to Vesta from the first century C.E.

In ancient Rome, women had the office of the Vestal Virgin (Latin: Vestales) who were the priestesses of the Roman goddess of the hearth, Vesta. Normally, there were four to six priestesses employed forming a clergy (collegia) at the shrine of Vesta in the Roman Forum which is pictured on this coin of the Emperor Titus (79-81AD). A small portion of the temple still stands today.

This importance of this illustrates the role of women. The Vestals performed rites associated with the goddess such as caring for the sacred objects in the shrine and inner sanctuary, preparing ritual food and officiating at public events during the yearly Vestalia (June 7-15). They also ritually prepared the bread (pane) which was offered on feast days and on New Year's day.

Vesta, cont.

The Roman writer, Plutarch (45-120 CE), wrote that their duties required them to remain chaste and male clergy were not allowed to participate in the rites concerning Vesta. This was regarded as fundamental to the security of Rome. They were charged with the duty to keep the sacred fire burning for if it went out Rome would fall as a popular legend. The Vestals took a vow of chastity in order to devote themselves to the study of state rituals that were prohibited to the male colleges of priests.

Aseneth as a tower

- In *Joseph and Aseneth*, the family home is adjoined by a tower. She occupies the top floor of the tower—she is the “tower lady”.
- Mary Magdalene lives in Migdal in Galilee, Migdal literally means tower.
- Remnants of a tower still remain today in the ancient town on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- Aseneth comes from a wealthy family as does Mary Magdalene. Mary is a prime financial supporter of Jesus.ⁱ

Aseneth as a tower

- In the Gnostic gospels Mary Magdalene plays a strong role in the early Christian church.
- After Jesus's crucifixion, she plays the lead role in rallying the disciples who are beset by doubt.
- She is revered by some of the apostles as Jesus's "foremost disciple" and "closest confidante".
- In the Gnostic gospels she comforts the disciples and handles their request to pass Jesus's secret teachings on to them.

Aseneth as a Preistess

- In *Joseph and Aseneth*, before she meets Joseph, Aseneth is a kind of pagan priestess with seven attendants virgins.
- Aseneth's tower is described as a kind of temple with an outer shrine and an inner Holy of Holies.
- This dual-chamber architecture parallels the temple in Jerusalem and the Phoenician temple in Tyre. This is not surprising as Hiram, the King of Tyre, helped Solomon build the temple in Jerusalem.
- Also, Aseneth's shrine is described as having a gold ceiling exactly like the temples in Jerusalem and Tyre.

Aseneth as a Church

- In an early Christian hymn from the same time period and location form which *Joseph and Aseneth* is thought to have been created, there is Hymn to Aseneth our Tower Lady which goes as follows:

You [Ephraim] are the son of Aseneth, the daughter of a pagan priest;
She is *the symbol of the church of the Gentiles*.

She had many children by the Crucified,
And every one of them is marked with the cross.

- In *Joseph and Aseneth*, Aseneth is named the “City of Refuge” by the angelic being in her dream. He tells her that many nations will take refuge in the Lord and she will protect those people who trust in God.
- Interestingly, in *Joseph and Aseneth*, Aseneth/Mary is renamed “Artemis”. In Greek, the name Artemis means “safe and sound”—that is, the goddess who gives refuge.

Artemis



Aseneth and Artemis

- Phoenician temples to Artemis were usually built on the shores of lakes and dedicated to Artemis Limnaia, meaning Lady of the Lake.
- In a hymn dedicated to Artemis, the Greek poet Callimachus calls Artemis the “Watcher over roads and towers”.
- Magdala’s tower, situated on the Via Maris and overlooking the harbors of the Sea of Galilee, was perfectly positioned as a temple dedicated to Artemis.
- In sum, the description of the Tower Lady in the *Joseph and Aseneth* story seems to match very well the known facts about Mary Magdalene.

Aseneth's Story

- When Joseph returns after 8 days, Aseneth rushes to meet him and Humbly asks God if she can be given to him as a servant so that she might wash his feet and serve him for the rest of her life.
- Recall the narrative in the Gospels where an unnamed woman, who has for centuries been identified with Mary Magdalene washes Jesus's feet and dries them with her hair.
- At the coming of age ceremonies for the goddess Artemis, girls would dedicate a lock of their hair symbolizing the virginity that they would be leaving behind.
- Could this act of hair drying, using Artemisian symbolism, indicate Mary's intention to wed Jesus?

Aseneth's Dream—the First Holy Communion?

- In Aseneth's dream, the angelic being places his hand over Aseneth's head and gives her a double blessing.
- First, he blesses her saying that “the secrets of the Lord” have been revealed to her. She now knows something about the mysteries of God.
- Then, he says, “Blessed are those who attach themselves to the Lord God Most High in penance because, from this honeycomb, they will live and eat forever.
- What is about to happen is of tremendous import—nothing less than a renewal of life and life everlasting!

Aseneth's Dream- the First Holy Communion?

- The heavenly Joseph tells Aseneth that the honeycomb contains the food of eternal life, made by the bees from the garden of Eden. It is the food of immortality.
- He breaks off a piece and traces in blood the sign of the cross and places it in Aseneth's mouth.
- Surely the reference here is a symbol of the holy communion from the Christian world and not something that would be identified with the lives and times of the biblical Joseph and Aseneth.
- Could the hidden story be anything but the heavenly wedding of Mary and Jesus preceding the earthly one?

Aseneth's Dream- What's up with the Bees?

- When the heavenly Joseph places the honeycomb in Aseneth's mouth, suddenly a swarm of bees fly up from the honeycomb. They totally envelop Aseneth. Some good bees fly upward to heaven, the bad bees die but are revived by the heavenly man who then blesses Aseneth and her seven servants and leaves.
- On the statue of Artemis at Ephesus, we see a startling sight. It appears her torso is covered with what look like beehives!
- Interestingly, the priestesses of Artemis' temple were called Melissai- that is bees. Her male priests were referred to as Essenes – or king bees!
- Both priestesses and priests were expected to live in purity for a year while serving in their capacity.

Aseneth's Dream- What's up with the Bees?

- When bees swarm it is usually when they are seeking a new hive or “place of refuge”. Could this be an additional part of the symbology? Perhaps the story is referring to the transition from the old to New Testament here?
- At this stage the queen bee is also transitioning from her virgin state to her mother state. Could the authors of *Joseph and Aseneth* be hinting here at the establishment of a new hive or “New Testament” that is a refuge for the Gentiles?
- In ancient Greek history, Artemis is also the twin of Apollo. Interestingly in *Joseph and Aseneth*, Aseneth and Joseph are identified both as husband and wife as well as brother and sister.

Rosslyn Chapel Altar



Rosslyn Chapel Decoded, Alan Butler and John Ritchie on the Apprentice Pillar

The authors say the tree that the apprentice pillar represents was said to have sprung up during Saint Matthew's teaching in Myrna in Turkey. This relates to accounts in the collection of early Bible stories known as the Apocrypha, which describe the saint's staff transforming into a fruit-bearing tree laden with honey. "It shall become a tree great and lofty and flourishing and its fruit beautiful to the view and good to the sight and the fragrance of perfumes shall come forth from it and there shall be a vine twining round it full of clusters and from the top of it honey coming down," the accounts said. The authors say the remains of centuries-old beehives were found under the roof of Rosslyn during recent restorations. They believe the roof may have been specially constructed to attract bees and that a hole directly above the altar would have allowed honey to drip onto the altar. Butler said: "Even within living memory, people remember honey dripping down from the roof onto the altar."

The Greatest Wedding of all Time

- A Challenging New View of Jesus as the Family Man
- The Wedding in *Joseph and Aseneth*
- What did the wedding of Jesus and Mary signify to early Christians?
- The Gnostic view of marriage as redemption.



A Challenging New Image of Jesus

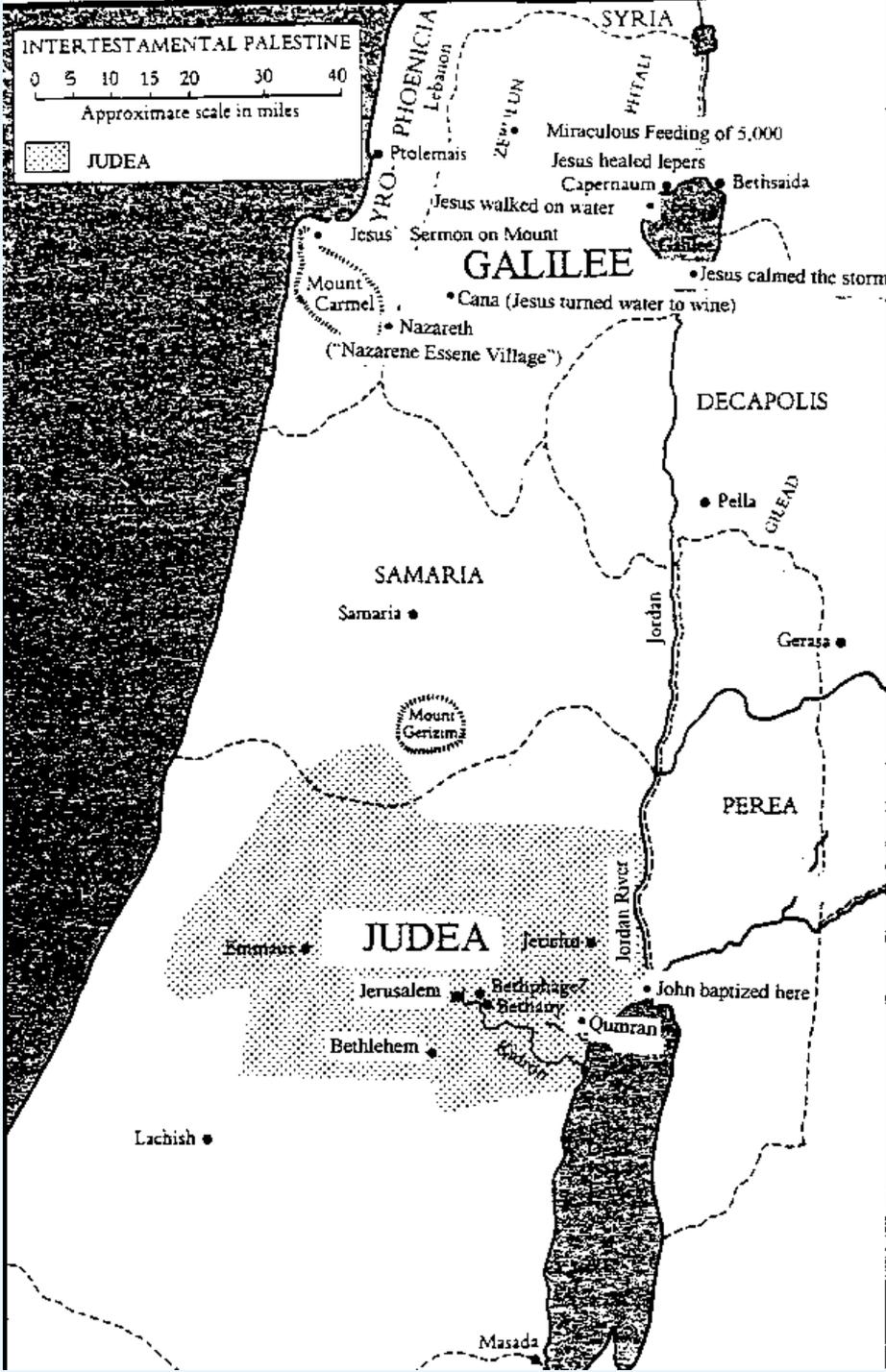
- According to the custom of the time, as a priest in the Davidic lineage, it would have been scandalous at the time for Jesus not to be married and foster children.
- From the Gospel of Philip, Jesus says: The mystery of marriage is great. Without it the world would not exist.
- In traditional Jewish weddings the family of the groom provided the wine. At the wedding at Cana, Jesus's mother Mary tells him more wine is needed for the guests, implying that it is Jesus's own wedding.
- The statements from the Gnostic gospels as well as Mary Magdalene's closeness to Jesus during the crucifixion and burial imply a more than ordinary relationship between them.

The Wedding in *Joseph and Aseneth*

- Aseneth's parents were there and the wedding was a big one—perhaps 2500 attended.
- Aseneth prepares for the wedding carefully, she dons her finest robe and jewelry and places a golden crown on her head.
- Joseph enters Aseneth's father's estate. He kisses her hand and she kisses his head.
- After the wedding the author of *Joseph and Aseneth* goes out of the way to inform the reader that the wedding is not consummated until some time after the ceremony. This very important clue tells us this wedding likely occurred in northern Galilee rather than Egypt or Judae. This custom was most widely practiced in northern Galilee, where the town of Cana happens to be located.

The Wedding in *Joseph and Aseneth*

- As the wedding commences, Pharaoh—the ruler—is astonished at Aseneth’s beauty and blesses her. The blessing is: “Blessed are you by the Lord God of Joseph (Jesus) because he is the firstborn of God and you will be called the daughter of God Most High and the bride of Joseph (Jesus) now and forever”.
- Could this be the actual verbatim rendition of the blessing bestowed on Jesus and Mary Magdalene?
- The wedding commences and the Pharaoh takes golden crowns and places them on both bride and groom. Still today, in Eastern Orthodox weddings the names of Joseph and Aseneth are invoked twice during this ceremony.
- According to the *Joseph and Aseneth* story, the celebration lasts for a week. After the celebration at some time the wedding is consummated and two children are born in time.



What did the Marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene Mean to the Early Church?

- From the point of view of the early orthodox and Pauline traditions it is clear they did not pursue but rather downplayed the thought of Jesus being married and having children.
- In the Gnostic tradition however, it made all the difference in the world. To them, in fact, it was the basis for human salvation.
- The Gnostic gospels more or less preserved historical teachings and are more closely derived directly from the early followers of Jesus, while the Pauline teachings which formed the basis of modern orthodox Christianity are derived mostly from teachings related directly to Paul from Jesus.
- The Pauline tradition focuses greatly on the crucifixion and resurrection, Gnostic tradition are focused on Jesus's life, vitality and most significantly the marriage through which they believed he linked heaven and earth.

The Gnostic View of Marriage as Redemption

- There is great similarity between the Gnostic view of marriage as redemptive and the narrative in *Joseph and Aseneth*.
- The emphasis in both is on life, happiness and redemption rather than suffering, death and salvation through participation in Christ's passion.
- In Gnostic cosmology, Jesus is descending to material form to redeem the wayward Sophia. In their eyes, Jesus is thus re-harmonizing the world for its return to an Edenic state.
- Seen therefore in a Gnostic light, Mary Magdalene is a co-redemptrix for humanity, for without her Jesus could not have wrought salvation.

The Plot to Kill Joseph and the Kids and Steal Aseneth

- The Pharaoh's son desires Aseneth.
- The Pharaoh tries to bribe two of Joseph's brothers to help kill the Pharaoh, Joseph and the children and take Aseneth.
- The plot begins to unravel as the Pharaoh's son is denied entrance to the Pharaoh's chamber.
- As Aseneth travels in a chariot to the city she is ambushed by the Pharaoh's son and soldiers.
- Joseph's brother Benjamin foils the attack and mortally wounds the Pharaoh's son.



The Plot to Kill Joseph and the Kids and Steal Aseneth

- Similarly to the analysis of the other elements of the Joseph and Aseneth story, the elements of this narrative do not match anything written in the Bible about Joseph and Aseneth.
- Are there corresponding circumstances in the life of Jesus and Mary Magdalene?
- In the Gospels there is a high level plot to kill Jesus involving the highest level of Roman authority.
- Other sub plots include the controversy with the Jewish High Priests Caiaphas and Annas, Herod Antipas, and Pontius Pilate as well as the treason of Judas.



The Plot to Kill Joseph and the Kids and Steal Aseneth

- In the *Joseph and Aseneth* story, there is a Pharaoh's son who after three days dies of his wounds. Meanwhile, in the gospels we have a Son of God who dies from his wounds and after three days is resurrected.
- They seem to be strange mirrors of each other. One is evil, is wounded and dies in three days. The other is good, dies and after three days lives again.
- When we substitute Jesus and Mary for Joseph and Aseneth, we are confronted with entirely new and puzzling questions about their married life together.



Surprising questions

- In the Gnostic gospels Mary confides to Jesus that she fears Peter because “he hates the female race”.
- Author Margaret Starbird has connected Mary the Magdalene’s disappearance from the canonical texts to historical circumstances in which she must have been in danger. Her personal view is that the early church was trying so hard to protect her from perceived threats posed by Roman authorities that she literally disappears from the canonical texts. What could these threats be?
- In the canonical gospels, Jesus cruises along until the very end of his life when he is beset by troubles from the Roman authorities instigated by the High Priests. Is there much more to this story?
- Jesus is greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering him yet a week later they have suddenly turned against him and he is crucified almost alone, with only his closest family attending and his disciples fleeing with fear. Is there more to this story than meets the eye?
- Is there any correspondence with the Pharaoh’s Son in Jesus’s time?

Are there Prime Candidates for the Pharaoh's Son?

- Herod Antipas. The son of Herod the Great, he is the Roman appointed ruler of the Galilee from 4 B.C.E. to 39 C.E.
- Druses. Son of Roman emperor who is involved in plots and counter-plot at the highest level and dies under mysterious circumstances.
- Germanicus. Roman emperor Tiberius' adopted son who was in the area of Galilee during Jesus and Mary's life there and who had conspired against his father, the emperor.



Is Herod Antipas the Pharaoh's Son?

- Herod Antipas is the Roman appointed ruler of the Galilee during Jesus's lifetime. The Gospels explicitly tell us that Herod Antipas plotted to kill Jesus. Some Pharisees in one instance warned Jesus to get away because Herod wanted to kill him.
- Jesus calls Herod a fox (Luke 13:32) referring to his crafty and cunning nature. It is apparent that others in Jesus's circle also were aware of Herod's intent.
- Herod Antipas had both the motive and means to kill Jesus. As the son of Herod the Great he could have been seen as a "Pharaoh's Son". Herod was educated in Rome and was head of a Hellenizing political movement called the Herodians. These were Jews that had adopted Greek culture and whom championed Herod Antipas as the "King of the Jews". This appellation is one that Herod aggressively sought throughout his reign from the Roman emperor. Some may have considered him in messianic terms, both religiously and politically.
- The Herodians believed that the road to salvation lay with a bona fide King of the Jews and a policy of accommodation with the Roman authority.

Is Herod Antipas the Pharaoh's Son

- Herod had an advisor similar to a director of homeland security named Chuza. Interestingly, it turns out that Chuza's wife, Joanna, was a significant financial supporter of the early Jesus movement and as such communicated often with Mary Magdalene, another significant financial supporter of Jesus.
- So, Jesus may have been very aware of Herod's machinations and had some foreknowledge of when to avoid certain places. If we monitor Jesus's movements, we can see that on many occasions he seems to avoid Herod's territory.
- Herod Antipas was bitterly disappointed that the Roman emperor Augustus had failed to grant him the title "King of the Jews". Instead he was given the title tetrarch, a much lesser title that galled him throughout his life.*ly*

Is Herod Antipas the Pharaoh's Son?

- From the standpoint of Herod and the Herodians, Jesus and his growing movement and John the Baptist and his growing movement were threats to the advancement of his political goals.
- At the request of his wife, Herod Antipas demonstrated his ruthlessness by executing John the Baptist after John criticized his divorce from his first wife. Certainly this must have put other groups, including the followers of Jesus, on notice regarding the danger of crossing Herod.
- Herod and Herodians would have been extremely suspicious of anyone promoting a new Kingdom of God, which would have been seen as a code word for regime change. The Gospels tell us that Jesus was beginning to draw the attention of local rulers, the temple High Priests and Roman rulers.

Is Herod Antipas the Pharaoh's Son?

- While many of the events in the *Joseph and Aseneth* narrative seem to lean towards Herod as a suspect, others do not.
- For example, the plot to kill the Pharaoh (emperor) in this case seems to be missing. Also, in the *Joseph and Aseneth* story the plot seems to be foiled and the Pharaoh's son dies. Here, this is definitely not the case.
- Ultimately, could the crucifixion be in part an attempt by Herod to complete such a plot? Maybe this could explain in part the desire of Mary to flee with her children to Egypt and ultimately France in order to avoid Herod?
- On the surface it would appear for the reasons above that Herod does not match the description in the *Joseph and Aseneth* story.

Is Druses the Pharaoh's Son?

- Druses is the biological son of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Like the reference in the Joseph and Aseneth story, Tiberius is often referred to as the “old lion”. This part of the story appears to match.
- Secondly, historical references indicate Druses did attempt to murder his father, the emperor, but was stopped short by the emperor’s palatial guards.
- Druses also seems to have personal characteristics matching the Pharaoh’s son. For example, he was a drunk, a womanizer and regularly frequented local brothels. What we know about Druses matches the description of the Pharaoh’s son in Joseph and Aseneth who is a “scheming, spoiled, temperamental individual who alternated between bravado and fear. Druses ultimately dies from poisoning in 25 C.E.
- Unfortunately, in Druses case, there is no evidence whatsoever tying him to the Middle East. And so it seems unlikely that Druses could be the Pharaoh’s Son from the story.

Is Germanicus the Pharaoh's Son?

- Germanicus is the adopted son of Emperor Tiberius. Like Druses, this certainly qualifies him to be a “Pharaoh’s son”. Germanicus was a highly popular general and well beloved by the people of Rome. His military campaigns in Germania were especially successful and his troops wanted to declare him emperor after the death of Emperor Augustus in 14 C.E.
- In 18 C.E. Germanicus is assigned to the governorship of the Middle East territory of the Roman Empire, settling in Antioch, Syria, just up the coast from Galilee. His many travels throughout the area brought him often through the trade routes through Magdala, Mary Magdalene’s hometown.
- At the same time of his new placement in his new role, Valerius Gratus (Pontius Pilate’s predecessor) appoints Caiaphas to the position of High Priest of Judae.
- When Jesus ultimately faced Herod Antipas, Caiaphas and Pilate, he was facing individuals appointed and overseen at some time by Germanicus.

Is Germanicus the Pharaoh's Son?

- From his base in Antioch, Germanicus would have had to pass through the Via Maris and then down the north-south highway that ran through Nabateae (Petra) all the way to Egypt. These roads crossed at one specific spot: a town called Magdala.
- Ostensibly, during a trip to Egypt to visit the pyramids, Germanicus met with people along the way and decreed that the price of corn should be lowered. This unauthorized decree greatly pleased the Egyptian people but enraged Emperor Tiberius.
- Meanwhile, Emperor Tiberius begins working through a minister named Piso to undermine Germanicus. Germanicus learns of the plot and raids Piso's home to find the home full of disinterred bodies, incantations and spells along with the name Germanicus spelled on magical tablets. Shortly afterward Germanicus becomes extremely ill and passes away in 19 C.E.
- Could Germanicus have met Mary Magdalene during his many travels through the region and sought to kidnap her? He had done something similar to another local religious leader shortly before.

Is Germanicus the Pharaoh's Son?

- The authors of the Lost Gospel believe that the Joseph and Aseneth equivalent to the Pharaoh's son is Germanicus. Germanicus was in the area and had a practice of similar deeds. Eventually he was killed before acting out any plot.
- Prior to the first Jesus and Mary Magdalene class we had a darshan with Ascended Lady Master Magda. During the Darshan she said she and Jesus personally met for the first time when he was 28 years and some months old. This would have occurred around 25 to 26 C.E. Therefore it appears unlikely that she and Jesus would have been married with children before Germanicus death in 19 C.E.
- Consequently, I would have to disagree with the authors who attribute the date of 15 C.E. to the wedding at Cana which appears to me to be off by many years.

New insights into the politics of the crucifixion.

- The Lost Gospels provide new insights into the political changes that ultimately result in the crucifixion.
- As mentioned earlier, with Germanicus passing in 19 B.C., the next in line for the emperor position was Tiberius's son Druses, who was less than loved by the people and a rather amoral man.
- Tiberius's chief administrator, a man named Sejanus, began plotting to marginalize Druses by having an affair with his wife, who then proceeded to have one of her servants poison Druses. Consequently, Druses passes on 26 C.E. apparently from natural causes.
- As Tiberius retires to his country estate, Sejanus begins to accumulate power and attempt to marginalize Tiberius. Ultimately Tiberius discovers the treachery and has Sejanus put to death in 29 C.E. All references to Sejanus were decreed scrubbed from existence by Tiberius.

New insights into the politics of the crucifixion.

- Back in Jerusalem, Pontius Pilate, who was close to and appointed by Sejanus finds himself on dangerous ground and closely watched by Emperor Tiberius' people.
- Caiaphas and Annas, the High Priests of the Temple, see their opportunity to press a weakened Pilate to deal with the upstart Jesus whom they hate.
- They corner Pilate by implying they will go to the Roman authorities and testify that Pilate is accommodating Jesus, whom they insinuate is trying to become the “King of the Jews” and challenge Roman rule.
- Pilate, backed in a corner, has Jesus arrested. It now appears possible that Jesus may have been in prison for months rather than a few days. This may help explain why the crowds who first cheered Jesus when he entered Jerusalem now were virtually nonexistent at his crucifixion.

Conclusions?

- The first three elements of the *Joseph and Aseneth* story are chock full of examples of narratives that are completely out of time and alignment with the biblical story of Jesus. The plot to murder Joseph and the children seems to remain an anomaly when we try to find a correspondence in the biblical and historical data relate to the lives of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.
- Still, when we substitute Jesus for Joseph and Mary Magdalene for Aseneth our story comes alive with new meaning in many ways.
- I would conclude that the Lost Gospels and manuscript 17,202 provide wonderful new insights into the life of Jesus and Mary Magdalene and open up new possibilities that demonstrate the marriage and family life of our most beloved couple who demonstrated for humanity lives of love of God, happiness, peace and grace in the middle of complex times. Let us pray that history soon correct the mistakes of the past that all may enjoy and embrace this new view of the lives of beloved Jesus and Mary Magdalene.
- The plot and politics of the time reveal two new reasons why Mary Magdalene references were purged from the early historical accounts.

Implications—Why Is This Story So Important Today?

- Provide clarity on Jesus's true teachings on family and community life as expressed in the hidden Essene teachings and through his true example of living a heart-centered life.
- Restore the true story of Mary Magdalene as a divine counterpart and Co-Christ and the template for a beautiful example of a true heavenly partnership that their marriage was.
- Through greater understanding of their true mission and life we can learn to bring a greater sense of the true Edenic state to the Earth.
- To understand true givingness, harmony and peace in the midst of difficult times and to understand the divine marriage in a deeper and practical sense.



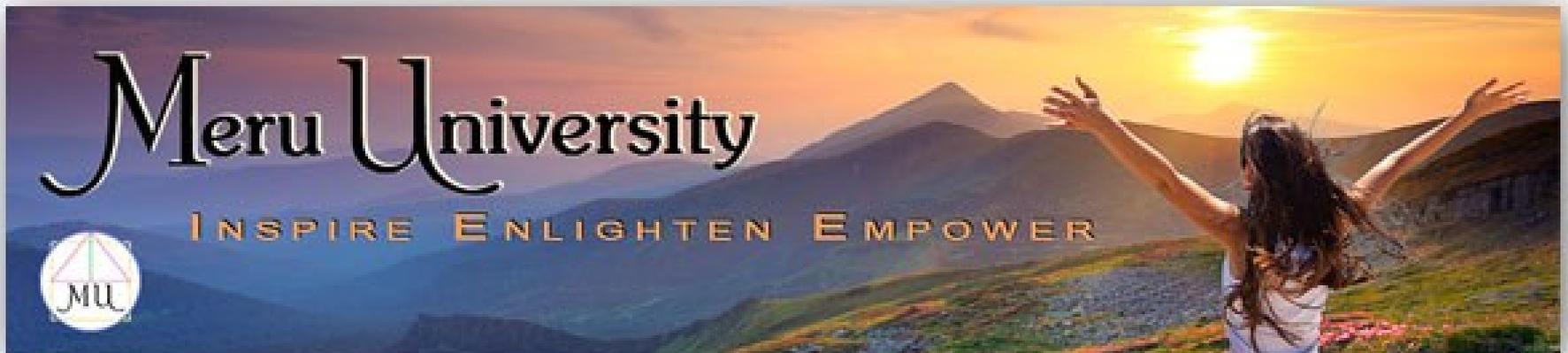
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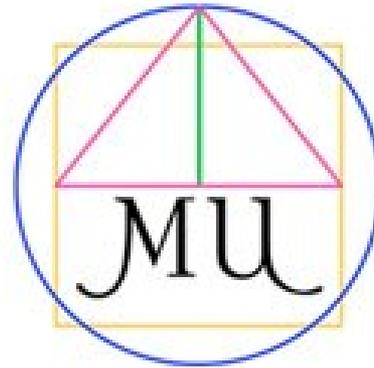
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