## THE BRETHREN OF THE LORD AND TWO RECENTLY PUBLISHED PAPYRI

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CATHOLICS agree and disagree about the brethren of the Lord. They disagree on the question who exactly were the parents of these near relatives of the Savior. They all agree that they are not sons of the Blessed Mother, a truth which is an obvious conclusion from the dogma of the perpetual virginity of our Lady and which is firmly proved by Scripture and tradition. My present purpose is to present briefly the arguments from Scripture and the early tradition of the Church which show that the brethren of the Lord cannot be children of our Lady. At the end of the article I shall discuss two recently published papyri which exemplify the use of the word brother in the sense of near relative.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS

First let us examine the texts, as they are found in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. We can collect the following data. From the Annunciation until the end of the hidden life at Nazareth there is no mention of any brethren. In the public life these brethren appear four times. The first occasion is after the miracle at the marriage feast of Jesus' mother and brethren and disciples went down to Cap-Cana. harnaum and stayed there some days (John 2:12). The second incident occurred once while the Savior was speaking to the crowds. His mother and brethren were standing outside and sought to speak to Him (Matt. 12;46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21). The third episode is at Nazareth when our Lord returns there and the people, scandalized at His learning, speak of His brethren and His sisters (Matt. 13:53-57; Mark 6:1-4; cf. Luke 4:16-22). Finally, before the feast of Tabernacles His brethren urge Him to go up to Jerusalem and manifest His power publicly. Then St. John adds "... not even his brethren believed in Him" (John 7:1-5). Outside the Gospels they are mentioned three times, once in the Acts and twice in St. Paul. After the Ascension the apostles are steadfast in praver with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and His brethren (Acts 1:14). In his letters

Paul claims the same right as the other apostles and the brethren of the Lord (I Cor. 9:5) and speaks of seeing James, the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19).

Any difficulty drawn from these verses against the perpetual virginity of our Lady can be answered by showing, first, that the term brother can mean a near relative, and secondly, that certain texts positively show that the brethren cannot be Mary's children.

#### MEANING OF THE WORD BROTHER

In the New Testament the phrase "brethren of the Lord" comes to us either as the translation of words spoken originally in Aramaic (Matt. 12:47; 13:55) or else they were written down by St. Paul and the evangelists, all of whom, with the exception of St. Luke, were Jews writing in Greek. No one, then, can reasonably exclude the possibility of the term being colored by a Semitic background.<sup>1</sup> Therefore we shall consider first the meaning of the Hebrew word for brother, *ah*, then the sense of the Greek word  $\delta\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\deltas$  in the New Testament.

Ah, the Hebrew word for brother, can mean brothers descended from the same father and mother, or half-brothers. It can also have the meaning of relatives. Thus Abraham calls Lot his brother (Gen. 13:8), although Lot was his brother's son (Gen. 12:5). Similarly Jacob calls himself Laban's brother, "Thou art my brother," although he is Laban's sister's son (Gen. 29:12-15). Not only nephews but also first cousins could be spoken of as brothers. This is clear from I Par. 23:21-22: "The sons of Moholi: Eleazar and Cis. And Eleazar died, and had no sons but daughters: and the sons of Cis their brethren took them" (i.e., the first cousins married them). Even more distant relatives could be included under the term. Aaron's sons Nadab and Abiu were destroyed before the Lord for offering strange fire (Lev. 10:1). Then "Moses called Misael and Elisaphan, the sons of Oziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said to them: Go and take away your brethren from before the sanctuary, and carry them without the camp" (Lev. 10:4). Those whom Moses refers to as brethren would be first cousins once removed, since Aaron was the first cousin to Misael and Elisaphan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cf. P. Joüon, S.J., *L'Évangile de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ.* Traduction et commentaire du texte original grec, compte tenu du substrat sémitique (Paris, 1930), pp. x-xx.

Finally, the word by extension designates relatives in general, and that is the way St. Jerome understands it in Jacob's challenge to Laban: "And Jacob, being angry, said in a chiding manner: For what fault of mine, and for what offence on my part hast thou so hotly pursued me, and searched all my household stuff? What hast thou found of all the substance of thy house? Lay it here before my brethren and thy brethren, and let them judge between me and thee" (Gen. 31:36-37). Esau, Jacob's brother, was not present and Laban had no brother.<sup>2</sup> From the consideration of these instances one can readily see why Brown-Driver-Briggs lists the second meaning of *ah* as "indefinite-relative," and Gesenius-Buhl (17th ed., 1921) gives as the second meaning, relative of any kind (*Verwandter jeder Art*).<sup>3</sup>

That the word brother should be used for cousins is not a mere coincidence but almost a necessity of the Hebrew language. Lagrange explains the situation thus. Since neither Hebrew nor Aramaic possessed a word for cousin, the term brother was inevitable in many cases. One could say the son of the paternal uncle, but one had to say the son of the brother of the mother, or the son of the sister of the mother, or the son of the sister of the father. Jacob, rather than say to his cousin that he is the son of the sister of her father, says to her first that he is the brother of her father, adding that he is the son of Rebecca (Gen. 29:12). The word brother was indispensable for indicating briefly a group of cousins of different branches. One said brothers so as not to be obliged to say, for instance, the sons of the paternal uncle and the sons of the sister of the mother.<sup>4</sup>

The Hebrew and Aramaic usages are clear. The LXX employed  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\deltas$  to translate all the examples cited above in which brother has the meaning of near relative.<sup>5</sup> It is true that no classical or *Koiné* 

<sup>2</sup> Jerome, De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae adversus Helvidium liber unus (PL, XXIII, 198). St. Jerome's work, especially cols. 194–202, remains the storehouse for answers to objections against the virginity of our Lady drawn from the brethren of the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Jerome: "Jam nunc doceberis quattuor modis in Scripturis divinis fratres dici, natura, gente, cognatione, affectu" (Adv. Helvidium, 14; PL, XXIII, 197).

<sup>4</sup> M. J. Lagrange, O.P., *Évangile selon saint Marc* (5e éd.; Paris, 1929), p. 80. His note on the brethren of the Lord (pp. 79–93) is one of the classic modern discussions of the subject.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. E. Hatch and H. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint (Oxford, 1897), I, 20-22.

examples are given for such a meaning of brother in the new Liddell and Scott.<sup>6</sup> However, there is no reason to think that St. Paul and the evangelists felt any more repugnance to using  $\delta\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\delta s$  in the Hebrew and Aramaic sense than they felt about many other words which are recognized as Semitisms. Moreover, it is just as impossible to consider the term brethren of the Lord without studying its origin in an Aramaic-speaking community as it would be to ask what is the meaning of Christ without considering the meaning of the Hebrew word Messias.<sup>7</sup>

#### TWO DIFFICULTIES

Here we may mention two difficulties which, proposed baldly, may seem unworthy of consideration, but unfortunately occur with some variations in popular and occasionally even in learned works. The first objection is that words are to be taken in their obvious meaning. And the obvious meaning of brothers is those who have the same father and mother. To this we may reply that the meaning of a word can be obvious in two ways. Either the obvious meaning may be the first meaning of the word or it may be the meaning evident from the consideration of the context and all pertinent facts. That the first meaning of the word is not necessarily to be taken is clear from many examples. Otherwise we would need to say that God has eyes and a hand and an arm, that He becomes angry, that He changes His mind when He repents. Hence, correctly understood, the obvious meaning of a word is that which is determined by the context and the parallel passages.<sup>8</sup>

The second objection is that we should take words in their natural sense. It is more natural to understand the word brothers to mean sons of the same father and mother. The answer can be that something may be natural in two ways. A meaning may be natural because it is acceptable as not doing violence to the usage of the word and to the

<sup>6</sup> H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, revised by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (Oxford, 1940), I, 20. Under  $\delta\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\deltas$  and  $\delta\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\deltas$  are given only LXX examples for the sense of kinsman, kinswoman.

<sup>7</sup> Lagrange, Marc, pp. 80-81.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. Fernandez, S.J., Institutiones Biblicae (ed. 4a; Rome, 1933), I, 394-401; A. C. Cotter, S.J., Theologia Fundamentalis (Weston, 1940), pp. 693-94.

context. And in that sense a natural meaning is a possible or probable or certain meaning of a word. The other sense in which natural can be taken is that meaning which we today would naturally and almost instinctively give to a word. And this meaning of the term natural is not to be accepted, for we would run the risk of reading our own modern thoughts into the words used by the ancients. This warning has been sounded by the Holy Father in his recent encyclical. The "ancient people of the East, in order to express their ideas, did not always employ those forms or kinds of speech which we use today; but rather those used by the men of their times and countries. What those exactly were the commentator cannot determine as it were in advance, but only after a careful examination of the ancient literature of the East."9 Not infrequently, "when some persons reproachfully charge the Sacred Writers with some historical error or inaccuracy in the recording of facts, on closer examination it turns out to be nothing else than those customary modes of expression and narration peculiar to the ancients, which used to be employed in the mutual dealings of social life and which in fact were sanctioned by common usage."10 It seems that the use of the term brothers in the sense of relatives is a case in point.

#### ARGUMENT FROM THE TEXTS

The word brother, then, being capable of meaning full brother or near relative, the question is to be decided from Scripture and tradition. All four evangelists furnish us facts which show that the brethren cannot be sons of our Lady. St. Luke does this in connection with the Annunciation; St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John in describing the crucifixion.

The argument from St. Matthew and St. Mark is based upon a combination of the account of the visit to Nazareth and an item mentioned in their account of our Lord's death. When He came to Nazareth the people were scandalized at His learning and said, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" (Matt. 13:55–56; cf. Mark 6:3). Of these brethren the first two are James and Joseph. Matthew has James

<sup>9</sup> Divino Affante Spiritu, NCWC translation, §36. <sup>10</sup> Ibid., §38.

and Joseph, while Mark in the Greek text has James and Jose.<sup>11</sup> The persons are the same, Joseph being the ancient pronunciation and Jose a pronunciation much favored by the rabbis. Now among the women present at the crucifixion Matthew and Mark mention a Mary (whom no one today would identify with our Blessed Mother) and they call her the mother of James and Joseph (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40).12 These two men with the same names and mentioned in the same order (Matt. 13:55; 27:56; Mark 6:3; 15:40) seem clearly to be the first two brethren of the Lord. It is not so common that the first two brothers in two different families should have the same name. When an author who has mentioned Tames and Joseph speaks of a woman as the mother of James and Joseph, he no doubt designates the same persons. Now if James and Joseph are not sons of the Blessed Mother, neither are Simon and Jude, whom the people of Nazareth mentioned only after James and Joseph.<sup>13</sup> The people said, "Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Jude?" (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3).

In St. Luke the argument is drawn from the Annunciation. When Gabriel tells our Lady that she is to conceive and bear a son, she replies, "How shall this happen, since I do not know man?" (Luke 1: 34).<sup>14</sup> These words manifest our Lady's firm determination ever to remain a virgin, a resolution which God respected and approved, as is clear from the remainder of the account of the Annunciation. Therefore St. Luke thus makes known the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Mother and thus excludes the possibility of the brethren being Mary's children.

The fourth Gospel also furnishes an argument. When our Lord is dying He entrusts His Blessed Mother to the Beloved Disciple (John

<sup>11</sup> In Matt. 27:56, Lagrange, Tischendorf, and Westcott-Hort read Joseph, while Merk, von Soden, and Vogels prefer Jose; cf. Lagrange and Merk *in h. l.* Since Joseph and Jose are the same person, this textual difference does not affect the argument.

<sup>12</sup> Matt. has, "Mary the mother of James and Joseph." Mark reads, "Mary the mother of James the Less and Joseph."

<sup>18</sup> Lagrange, Marc, p. 83; cf. Jerome, Adv. Helvidium, 13-14 (PL, XXIII, 196). Lagrange also argues from the presence of the definite article,  $\delta v i \delta s \tau \eta s$  Maplas. The Son of Mary is a sufficient designation for Christ; therefore she had no other children (cf. Mark 6:3).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. J. J. Collins, S.J., "Our Lady's Vow of Virginity (Luke 1, 34)," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, IV (1943), 371-80, especially 378-79.

19:26–27). This could hardly be likely, if Mary had then four sons to take care of her.<sup>15</sup>

Before leaving the New Testament texts we may profitably consider more particularly the case of James, the brother of the Lord. He, if anyone, was most likely to be a son of Mary, since he is called by preeminence the brother of the Lord. Now James was an apostle, as St. Paul tells us (Gal. 1:19). He was not an apostle in the sense of one who went out to convert the nations, because he remained at Jerusalem as bishop. Therefore he was only an apostle, if he was called to be one of the Twelve. Now among the apostles he cannot be James, the son of Zebedee, who was martyred in 44 A.D., for James the brother of the Lord is active long after that time, at the Council of Jerusalem and when St. Paul returns from his third missionary journey. James the son of Zebedee being excluded, James the brother of the Lord must be identified with the only other James among the apostles, James, the son of Alphaeus. And if he is the son of Alphaeus, he is not the son of our Lady. This is a point insisted upon by St. Jerome.<sup>16</sup>

One objection can be raised against identifying James, the brother of the Lord, with any of the apostles. St. John said that His brethren did not believe in Him, and we can hardly say that the apostles did not believe in Him. Two answers may be given. One is that of Knabenbauer, that the unbelief here is not total, but they did not believe in Him sufficiently. This attitude would not be foreign to the apostles, who even at the Ascension were looking for an earthly kingdom. The other answer is to understand the word of total unbelief in the mission of our Lord. However, St. John's statement could permit one or more exceptions. Lagrange adopts this solution and remarks that the critics should not exaggerate this difficulty. John is very general and does not exclude an exception any more than Mark.<sup>17</sup>

The evidence from the texts may be summed up thus. No New Testament writer speaks of sons of our Lady. St. Paul indicates that James, the brother of the Lord, was an apostle, whom we may identify with James of Alphaeus. St. Matthew and St. Luke in their account

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Jerome, Adv. Helvidium, 13 (PL, XXIII, 195); Lagrange, Marc, p. 81; J. B. Lightfoot, Epistle to the Galatians (London, 1896), p. 272. See also his entire dissertation on "The Brethren of the Lord," *ibid.*, pp. 252–91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Lagrange, Marc, p. 85; Jerome, Adv. Helvidium, 13-14 (PL, XXIII, 196).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Lagrange, Marc, p. 85.

of the virgin birth exclude older brothers of our Lord. St. Luke, by citing our Lady's words, "I do not know man" (Luke 1:34), shows that Mary was ever a virgin, thus excluding any brothers. St. Matthew and St. Mark identify two of the brethren as sons of a Mary other than the Blessed Mother. St. John portrays the mother of Christ at the cross as a widow without any son to support her.<sup>18</sup> The proper understanding of these texts, therefore, clearly upholds the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God.

#### EARLY TRADITION CONCERNING THE BRETHREN

Now let us examine the argument from tradition. How did the early Church understand the term brethren of the Lord? Did the first Christians think they were sons of Mary? An authority of prime importance is Hegesippus, fragments of whose works are preserved by Eusebius. Hegesippus was a native of Palestine and, according to Eusebius, knew the successors of the apostles. In his old age he wrote under Pope Eleutherius (174-189) recollections which he had no doubt acquired for the most part from the Church of Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup> Probably he had spoken with some of the descendants of the brethren, as did Julius Africanus fifty years later.<sup>20</sup> Now Hegesippus makes the following statement: "After James the Just had suffered martyrdom for the same reason as the Lord, Symeon, his cousin, the son of Clopas, was appointed bishop, whom they all proposed because he was another cousin of the Lord."21 This statement is clear. Both James, the brother of the Lord, and Simeon, son of Clopas, were cousins of the Lord. Furthermore, we may notice that Hegesippus does not stop to explain that brother is taken in the sense of cousin. He presupposes that all know brother in such a case has the meaning of cousin.<sup>22</sup>

So clear is tradition in affirming that the brethren of the Lord are not Mary's children that Helvidius, arguing to the contrary, could cite only Tertullian and Victorinus of Pettau. Jerome denied flatly that

19 Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Hist. eccl., II, 23, 3; A. Durand, S.J., "Frères du Seigneur," DAFC (4e éd., 1924), II, 132. His article is one of the most complete Catholic treatments.

<sup>al</sup> Hist. eccl., IV, 22, 4 (K. Lake, Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History [New York, 1926], I, 375). Lightfoot's translation, "as the second in succession, being cousin of the Lord" (Galatians, p. 276), is refuted by Lagrange, Marc, p. 89.

22 Durand, art. cit., col. 133.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

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Victorinus took brothers in any sense except that of near relatives. Tertullian, he admits, did deny the perpetual virginity of our Lady, but Tertullian, he says simply, is not a man of the Church. Neither did Tertullian claim to be giving the tradition of the Church on that point. From the time of Jerome to the present day no evidence has been discovered to weaken the unanimity of the tradition.<sup>23</sup>

The tradition of the early Church is shown also by its reaction to those who claimed that our Lady had other children besides Christ our Lord, and by the use of the term, the Virgin Mary. As soon as the perpetual virginity of our Lady was denied, the members of the Church with one voice protested.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, our Lady is called the Virgin from the earliest times. This is the basis of Jerome's appeal to Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Justin the Martyr.<sup>25</sup> If Mary had seven children, one of them bishop of Jerusalem, would men have spoken of her as the Virgin Mother of Christ?<sup>26</sup>

### TWO RECENTLY PUBLISHED PAPYRI

The data of the New Testament and of tradition are quite sufficient to defend the perpetual virginity of our Lady. However, we can be grateful for further confirmation of a minor point in our thesis, the finding of new examples of brother used with the meaning, near relative. Two documents hitherto unnoticed by Catholics, so far as I know, seem sufficiently important to be quoted in our textbooks, and, because all may not be able readily to consult the magazine in which they are found, I am taking the liberty of citing them at some length. They were published in the *Harvard Theological Review* for January, 1942, in an article by V. Tscherikower and F. M. Heichelheim entitled, "Jewish Religious Influence in the Adler Papyri?"<sup>27</sup>

The papyri date from the end of the second and the beginning of the

<sup>28</sup> Lagrange, Marc, p. 92; Durand, art. cit., col. 144; Jerome, Adv. Helvidium, 17 (PL, XXIII, 201-2).

24 Durand, art. cit., col. 145.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., col. 136; Jerome, Adv. Helvidium, 17 (PL, XXIII, 201-202).

<sup>26</sup> Durand, art. cit., col. 140.

<sup>27</sup> V (1942), 25–44; the occasion of the article was the following publication, referred to on p. 25, n. 1: "The Adler Papyri. The Greek texts edited by Elkan Nathan Adler, John Gavin Tait and Fritz M. Heichelheim. The Demotic texts by the late professor Francis Llewellyn Griffith, LL.D., F.B.A. (1939). Oxford University Press," first century B.C., and were written by a pagan. This is the description:

[The Adler papyri] are a complete archive of Greek and Demotic legal papyri written at Pathyris, a small town of Upper Egypt. They are dated between 134 and 89 B.C., and belonged to a certain Horus, son of Nechoutes,  $\Pi \epsilon \rho \sigma \eta s \tau \eta s \epsilon \pi \iota \gamma o \nu \eta s$ , and other members of his family. These contracts of loans, deeds of sale and of renunciation, oaths, marriage settlements, and the like, have much in common with other documents written at Pathyris during the same period.<sup>28</sup>

The principle figure, Horus, and his family are pagan. However, the editors of the papyri suggest that there are occasional traces of Jewish influence, and they cite as one proof two papyri which use  $\delta\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\deltas$  in the sense of kinsman.

Disagreeing with the editors, Professor V. Tscherikower of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, who is preparing a *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicorum*, claims that  $\delta\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\delta s$  in the sense of kinsman is not due to Jewish influence. These are his words:

A further proof of the influence of Judaism on Horus and his family is found by the editors in the expression  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta s$ , used as 'kinsman.' 'It might be worth noting in this connection that the expression  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta s$  = "kinsman," only known up to now from the Septuagint and perhaps influenced by the Hebrew and Aramaic languages, may be used also in Adler Gr. 7 as it is in P. London Inv. 2850 (ined).'

The following objections may be made to this statement.  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\deltas$  is used in the sense of 'kinsman' in P. Adler Gr. 7; but in P. Adler Gr. 8, another deed of sale written seven days after the first text and mentioning the same persons. Paous is called  $\sigma v\gamma\gamma\epsilon v\eta s$  of Thaibis, not  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\deltas$ . We may draw from this the conclusion that the use of  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\deltas$  as 'kinsman' was not constant in the family of Horus, but an occasional expression. In fact, we have no more than two instances of such use.

Furthermore in P. London. Inv. 2850 col. II 15 the word is used for 'nephew' and in P. Adler Gr. 7 for the 'son of the nephew'....

It could be well understood, in my opinion, that a precept of the Bible might impress a pagan reader so much that he was willing to follow it, but it is very difficult to imagine that the special use of a single word in the Bible would lead to the same result. It may be added that the word  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\dot{s}$  for 'kinsman' occurs in the Septuagint, as far as I can see, only eight times in Genesis and once in Job. It seems, therefore, not to have been very common even among the Jews of Hellenistic Egypt.<sup>29</sup>

28 Art. cit., p. 25.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-33. He cites as LXX examples Gen. 13:8; 14:16; 24:15, 48; 29:12, 15; 31:23, 32; and Job 42:11. For άδελφή as 'kinswoman' cf. Gen. 24:6; Job 42:11.

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The meaning of  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta s$  as 'kinsman' and that of  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\eta$  as 'kinswoman' can be easily understood in the passages of the Septuagint to which Dr. Tscherikower refers, as translation of Hebrew *ah* and *ahoth*; but such a meaning is completely alien to Greek, and there must be a reason why only two papyri connected with Horus... use  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta s$  similarly to the Septuagint. The fact that  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta s$  was replaced by  $\sigma v\gamma\gamma\epsilon v\hbar s$ ... as Dr. Tscherikower rightly observes, might even be an indication that the use of  $\dot{a}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta s$  as 'kinsman' was so alien to the Greek of Ptolemaic Egypt that the parties to the contract had been advised by some officials to change the term.<sup>30</sup>

He then concludes that the use of the term in the sense of near relative is due to the influence of Jewish neighbors.

In any case, it seems to be more likely, under these circumstances that Horus had seen and read a text of the Septuagint, and especially of the Pentateuch, one of its earliest translated parts, in the possession of one of his Jewish neighbors in the small town of Pathyris. This is more probable than to believe with Dr. Tscherikower that  $\dot{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\deltas =$ 'kinsman' might be an inexplicable peculiarity of Hellenistic Greek unconnected with Semitic influence.<sup>31</sup>

Then comes an important remark showing that the non-Catholic scholar sees the importance of the papyri for our apologetics. Dr. 'Heichelheim says:

A final decision will have a bearing on the translation of  $\dot{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta s$  in the Gospels. Dr. Tscherikower's interpretation of the facts removes serious philological objections against the well known patristic and Roman Catholic translation of  $\dot{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta s$  as 'kinsman' in the case of the relatives of Christ. This meaning of the term remains alien to the *Koiné* according to my explanation, as most Protestant theologians have believed up to now; but this argument will have to be omitted or modified in future, if Dr. Tscherikower's point of view should be accepted.<sup>32</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we may summarize our findings thus. The word brother in the Gospels, because of its Semitic background, can mean relative. Furthermore, the Gospel texts and the tradition of the first four centuries exclude the possibility of the brethren of the Lord being sons of the Blessed Mother. Finally, two recently published papyri give us two pre-Christian examples of the Greek word brother used with the meaning kinsman.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Art. cit., p. 36.
<sup>31</sup> Loc. cit.
<sup>32</sup> Loc. cit.
<sup>33</sup> On the brethren of the Lord cf. also L. C. Fillion, S.S., The Life of Christ (St. Louis, 1928), I, 419-23; L. de Grandmaison, S.J., Jésus Christ. Sa personne, son message, ses preuves (Paris, 1927), I, 309-10; H. Lesètre, Dictionnaire de la Bible (Vigouroux), II, 2403-5; J. Sickenberger, Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1931), II, 580-82.

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