



HUMSAM

PRISEN

QUO VADIS, DOMINE?

Total devotion and martyrdom in the Acts of Peter

Abstract by Jan Bremmer

In my contribution, I will concentrate on the way the *Acts of Peter*, a Christian kind of novel from the late second century, portrays the apostle's martyrdom and how the text presents certain ideals for how to behave in the face of persecution and impending death. In several ways, the second half of the second century is a time of fundamental change for the emerging Jesus movement, when their membership really takes off. It cannot be chance that the same period of time witnesses a number of fictional works about the apostles, who are ascribed a semi-divine status, culminating in their martyrdom. In the case of Peter, his martyrdom contains the iconic scene that has inspired the 1896 novel *Quo vadis* by the Polish novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz and the famous movie *Quo vadis* (1951), which we will take into consideration as well. I conclude with some comparative observations on modern Islamic martyrdom.