

[The Sacred Tales]

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THE SACRED TALES: I*

Winter 170/1 A.D. I believe that I shall speak like Homer's Helen. For she says that she would not tell all "the toils of stout hearted Odysseus (*Odyssey* 4. 241)." But she selects, I think, some one deed of his and narrates it to Telemachus and Menelaus. And I myself would not tell all the achievements of the Savior, which I have enjoyed to this very day. Nor at this point shall I add that Homeric phrase, "not if I had ten tongues, ten mouths (*Iliad* 2. 489)." For this were too little. Not even if I should surpass all human strength, speech and wisdom, could I ever do justice to them. I have never been persuaded by any of my friends, who have asked or encouraged me to speak or write about these things, and so I have avoided the impossible. For it seemed to be the same as if I should swim under water through every sea and next be compelled to render an account of how many waves I encountered, and how I found the sea at each of them, and what it was that saved me. For each of our days, as well as our nights, has a story, if someone, who was present at them¹, wished either to record the events or to narrate the providence of the God, wherein he revealed somethings openly in his own presence, and others by the sending of dreams, as far as it was

* Since no Greek text has been included, I have not provided an apparatus. I have noted only those places where I differ from the text which is printed by Keil; but I have not thought it necessary to indicate my disagreements with Keil's interpretations. Four manuscripts comprise the tradition of the *Sacred Tales*. In order of quality, they are A (Laurentianus LX 3, written in the 10th century for the Bishop Arethas); S (Urbinae Graecus 122, also from the 10th century); T (Laurentianus LX 8, from the 11th century); and D (Laurentianus LX 7, from the 12th century). In my estimation, the most serious corruptions in the *Sacred Tales* are misreadings of "an uncial" bookhand, and are therefore quite early. Lacunae occur, but much less frequently than Keil suspected. Occasionally in some or all manuscripts, there are traces of the annoying habit of tidying up textual corruptions, and thereby making them harder to detect.

¹ I S I accept *παρών* mss.; cf. II 56, IV 20. Keil emended *παρ' ἐν*.



