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# Tempered in the Christian Fire

Greek and Roman Wisdom Literature in Early Christian Teaching and Moral Traditions

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An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

# Tempered in the Christian Fire

Greek and Roman Wisdom Literature in Early Christian Teaching and Moral Traditions

By Zachary M. Domach

Central to the social and religious changes in Late Antiquity is the tension between the Greek and Roman cultural legacy and developing Christian thought. I begin this study, therefore, with an overview of some of the ways in which early Christians appropriated classical motifs, epic poetry, and philosophic elements. The reception of Greek and Roman wisdom literature among early Christians is particularly illustrative of that tension; Part II consequentially explores the educational environment of the ancient world and the role of wisdom literature therein. It also surveys the backgrounds of three wisdom traditions – the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* – that form the cornerstone of my investigative platform. Part III establishes what each wisdom tradition has to say on a particular topic. In Part IV I look at which topics are often connected, which never are, which are given greater emphasis, and what such topics tell us about ancient society. Part V is a reception study: it investigates how the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* were employed and shaped by Christians for Christians. Each tradition was "Christianized" in this sense, though by different means. A consideration, then, of the question of Greek and Roman wisdom literature within Christian teaching, especially among Christian intellectuals, leads directly into the larger question of the tension between pagan and Christian thought while offering concrete examples – the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* – of how that tension could be reconciled.

# Tempered in the Christian Fire

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# Contents

# Abbreviations

A list of abbreviations cited within the text. See bibliography for a full list of citations.

| | |
|---|---|
| *CCSL* | *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* |
| *CIL* | *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* |
| CJ | The Classical Journal |
| *CLE* | *Carmina Latina Epigraphica,* ed. F. Buecheler |
| *CML* | *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* |
| CPh | Classical Philology |
| *CSEL* | *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* |
| CQ | The Classical Quarterly |
| *DC* | *Disticha Catonis* |
| GVB | *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae*, volume V, letter B, ed. G. Giannantoni |
| H | *Diogenes the Cynic*: *Sayings and Anecdotes with Other Popular Moralists*, trans. R. Hard |
| *ICUR* | *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* septimo saeculo antiquiores, ed. G. B. De Rossi |
| *ILCV* | *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, ed. E. Diehl |
| *ILS* | *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae,* ed. H. Dessau |
| *JAAR* | *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* |
| LCL | Loeb Classical Library |
| NHC | Nag Hammadi Codices |
| *PG* | *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne |
| *PL* | *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina,* ed. J.-P. Migne |
| *REL* | *Revue des études latines* |
| *SC* | *Sources Chrétiennes* |
| *SS* | *Sententiae Sexti* |

# I. Introduction

> Whosoever believes one thing, but teaches his pupils another, this man has failed as much at teaching, it seems, as he has failed to be an honest man… Did not the gods lead Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, and Lysias in all learning? Did they not think themselves divinely filled, some with Hermes, others with the Muses? But I think that it is paradoxical that the men interpreting the writings of these men dishonor the gods once revered by those writers.[1]

This imperial rescript, passed by the emperor Julian in 362, forbids Christians to teach Greek or Latin literature, that is, to teach any form of primary or secondary education. The hypocrisy Julian highlights is central to the larger struggle between the pagan[2] cultural legacy and the

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[1] Julian *Epistle* 36 (*Rescript on Christian Teachers*) (excerpt): *ὅστις οὖν ἕτερα μὲν φρονεῖ, διδάσκει δὲ ἕτερα τοὺς πλησιάζοντας, οὗτος ἀπολελεῖφθαι τοσούτῳ δοκεῖ τῆς παιδείας, ὅσῳ καὶ τοῦ χρηστὸς ἀνὴρ εἶναι...Ὁμήρῳ μέντοι καὶ Ἡσιόδῳ καὶ Δημοσθένει καὶ Ἡροδότῳ καὶ Θουκυδίδῃ καὶ Ἰσοκράτει καὶ Λυσίᾳ θεοὶ πάσης ἡγοῦνται παιδείας. οὐχ οἱ μὲν Ἑρμοῦ σφᾶς ἱερούς, οἱ δὲ Μουσῶν ἐνόμιζον; ἄτοπον μὲν οὖν οἶμαι τοὺς ἐξηγουμένους τὰ τούτων ἀτιμάζειν τοὺς ὑπ' αὐτῶν τιμηθέντας θεούς.* Greek text from Wilmer Cave Wright, trans., *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, Volume III, LCL (London: William Heinemann, 1923), 117-118. Translated by author. The rescript is in many ways a reaction to Julian's predecessors' laws involving Christian clerics. It is (incompletely) preserved in Zonaras *Epitome Historiarum* XIII.12; Sozomen *Historia Ecclesiastica* V.18; Socrates Scholasticus *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.16.1; Theodoret of Cyrrhus *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.8. Similar rescripts are perhaps testified by Theodoret *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.4.2 and Socrates Scholasticus *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.12.7 which are preserved as *fragments* 7 and 6, respectively, in Wright's *Works of the Emperor Julian*. The rescripts' corresponding Latin edict may be found in *Codex Theodosianus* XIII.3.5. This rescript educed a number of responses. Ammianus Marcellinus remarked "that it was severe…. [and should be] consigned to perennial silence" (*illud inclemens… obruendum perenni silentio*) (*Res Gestae* XXII.10.7, XXV.4.20). Theodoret indicates that Christians understood it as barring their children from education (*Historia Ecclesiastica* III.4.2) and Sozomen records that a certain father and son sharing the name Appollinarius rapidly adapted the Bible into epics, tragedies, comedies, odes, etc. for Christian instruction (*Historia Ecclesiastica* V.18). Augustine testifies that the rescript compelled Marius Victorinus to resign his position as Professor of Rhetoric in Rome (*Confessions* VIII.II, V). A unique exception was granted by Julian to the Christian sophist Prohaeresius (Victorinus's equivalent in Athens), but it was refused (Eunapius *Lives*). The edict and rescript were overturned by Valentinian in 364 AD (*Codex Theodosianus* XIII.3.6).

[2] The term "pagan" is vague at best, if not outright problematic. The traditional divide, Christian versus pagan, is inaccurate. While "Christian" refers to a specific group i.e. those who worship Christ (albeit with the Christians themselves interpreting their beliefs very differently across time and geography), "pagan" can only be defined as those who are not Christian, i.e. those who do not worship Christ, and not Jewish. Not only is this definition amorphous (a "pagan" could be a polytheist, a Mithraic cultist, or atheist among many things) and falsely combines different groups, but it carries extremely negative connotations passed down through time. "Pagan" is derived from the Latin *paganus* meaning "from the countryside" and originally connoted an "unlearned" status. As Christianity asserted itself, *paganus* also took on the meaning "heathen." With this connotation "pagan" became a

burgeoning Christian identity in Late Antiquity. This paper examines one aspect of that struggle: the relationship of Christian thought to pagan wisdom literature in the later Roman Empire through the intersection of moral instruction and the treatment of such pagan literature by Christian intellectuals.

I begin this study with an overview of some of ways in which early Christians appropriated classical motifs, epic poetry, and philosophic elements. Part II explores the educational environment of the ancient world and the role of wisdom literature therein. I then survey the backgrounds of three wisdom traditions – the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* – which form the cornerstone my investigative platform. Many other ancient sources are referenced, but only these three traditions receive detailed treatment. All Greek and Latin translations of any of the ancient sources are my own except where otherwise noted. In Part III I establish what each wisdom tradition has to say on a particular topic. Part IV looks at which topics are often connected, which never are, which are given greater emphasis, and what such topics tell us about ancient society. Part V is a reception study: it investigates how the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* were employed and shaped by Christians for Christians. Each tradition was "Christianized" in this sense, but by different means. In Part VI, the conclusion, I revisit what has previously been said and mention further directions of inquiry.

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Christian concept, effectively creating an "us" versus "them" mentality in which the "them" group is anything but homogeneous. For convenience's sake, in this paper I use the term "pagan" to mean "non-Christian and non-Jewish" and often "Greek and Roman;" the reader, however, should be aware of the negative connotations attached to the term "pagan" and also be aware of its broad inclusivity. For more on "pagan" and "paganism" see Richard Rothaus, "Christianization and De-Paganization: the Late Antique Creation of a Conceptual Frontier," *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Hagith S. Sivan, (Hampshire: Variorum, 1996), esp. 300-301.

Religious change is central to the period of Late Antiquity; the juncture of the classical past and the rise of Christianity as the empire's dominant religion ushered in many new ideas as well as a transformation of many existing ones. No single study could ever hope to fully treat every aspect of religious change in Late Antiquity, let alone the social, economic, and political changes. By focusing on wisdom literature and its role in early Christian teaching I hope to contribute to modern scholarship's understanding of the reception of Greek and Roman literature among early Christians.

Nearly two millennia ago Tertullian observed that "Christians are made, not born" (*fiunt non nascuntur Christiani*).[3] Much the same may be said of certain elements in early Christian thought. The moral teachings of early Christians drew heavily upon the traditions of their pagan counterparts, both in theme and method – something that did not escape its critics. Though the new religion was viewed by the Roman world as a marginal, misguided sect at its inception, few of Christianity's early opponents knew much about it, as evidenced by their descriptions.[4] Particularly imaginative are Marcus Cornelius Fronto's reports of infant cannibalism and incestuous orgies.[5] Less chimerical and more perceptive are the critiques that the satirist Lucian and the physician Galen present in the late second century AD.[6] Their contemporary, the anti-

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[3] Tertullian *Apologia* XVIII.4.

[4] Pliny the Younger seeks the emperor Trajan's advice on how to deal with the Christians in his jurisdiction (*Epistle Concerning the Christian Religion* 10.96-97 ); Aelius Aristides, while impugning the philosophy of the Cynics, compares them to the Christians who also have twisted the established ways of an ancient religion (*Oration* 46.2); Marcus Aurelius portrays the Christians' boldness in the face of death as a matter of pertinacity, rather than motivated by the reason of philosophy, i.e. Stoicism (*Meditations* 11.3). Also see R. Joseph Hoffmann, ed. and trans., *Porphyry's Against the Christians: The Literary Remains* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1994), 142-143.

[5] Fronto, preserved in Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 9.5-7.

[6] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini*; Galen *De Pulsuum Differentiis* II.4, III.3; Arabic of *Εἰς τὸ πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκίνητον* (*Concerning the Prime Unmoved Mover*); *Plato Arabus* I; for a fuller discussion see Stephen Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (London: B. T. Batsford LTD, 1985), 142-45 and Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 11-16, especially 13-16. Galen has two references to the Jews,

Christian philosopher Celsus, wrote the first systematic attack; he argued that Christian morality was hardly unique, having much in common with other philosophies of the time.[7] Celsus also characterized Christians (and Jews) as foolish for reading the cosmology of the Old Testament (why worship heaven and angels but not the sun, moon, or stars?), the Genesis creation account (why would God – supremely powerful by nature – need to rest on the seventh day), the general begetting of children by extremely old people, and the immoral stories of the daughter of Lot (how much worse than the crimes of Thyestes, the hatred of Esau, and offenses of the brothers of Joseph.[8]

Similar criticisms to Celsus' were echoed by later men such as the Neoplatonist Porphyry and, as we have seen, the emperor Julian. Porphyry's fifteen book *Against the Christians* seems to have been especially effective (it provoked multiple counter-treatises, including one by Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicea, which ran thirty books).[9] A ban on anti-Christian teaching (probably in 448 AD under Theodosius II) which was primarily aimed at Porphyry ensured that only fragments of his work, of Celsus' discourse, and of a treatise by Julian, entitled *Against the Galileans* (also reputed to have been thirty books), are extant.[10]

An examination of Christian literature from Justin Martyr to Augustine demonstrates the validity of Celsus' primary charge: early Christian writers are heavily indebted to pagan

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one to Christians, and three to both groups. Three of these (one to the Jews and two to both) are preserved only in the Arabic tradition.

[7] Origen *Contra Celsum* I.4. For an English edition see Henry Chadwick, trans. *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1953), 8.

[8] Origen *Contra Celsum* V.6, VI.49, 61, IV. 43, 45-47.

[9] Hoffmann, *Against the Christians*, 164-65.

[10] R. Joseph Hoffmann, ed. and trans., *Julian's Against the Galileans* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), 76, footnote 225. See also David Hunt, "The Christian Context of Julian's *Against the Galileans*" in *Emperor and Author: The Writings of Julian the Apostate*, ed. Nicholas J. Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2012), 251. Also see Julian *Epistle* 37 (*Ad Atarbium*).

traditions in how and what they taught, even within the Bible itself. The ninth century patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, notes several Scriptural citations of foreign material, including Paul's inclusion of Epimenides' phrase "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons" in his pastoral epistle to Titus.[11] Earlier, in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul borrows an aphorism from Menander and Euripides.[12]

Luke, the author of the "Acts of the Apostles," also integrates popular Greek sayings. As the backdrop to Paul's debate in the Areopagus with a group of Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, Luke presents Paul in a role evocative of Socrates.[13] The author of Acts records Paul reciting the philosophers Epimenides and Aratus to the Athenians in a speech which contends that Greek philosophy is a harbinger of Christianity.[14]At a later point Luke quotes the

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[11] Leendert Gerrit Westerink, ed. Photius: *Epistulae et Amphilochia, vol. V: Amphilochiorum Pars Altera* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983), 193-194. On Titus 1:12 "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons" (*Κρῆτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί*) and Epimenides' *Cretica* see Harris, "Cretans," *Expositor* (April 1907): 332-337.

[12] On 1 Corinthians 15:33 "Bad company corrupts good character" and Menander's *Thaïs* fr. 218 Kock and Euripides' *Aiolos* 230 see Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. by James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 278–279.

[13] Acts 17:18-20; Xenophon *Memorabilia* I.1.1. Paul is accused of the same crime that Socrates was executed for.

[14] Acts 17:26-28: [26]*ἐποίησεν τε ἐξ ἑνὸς πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντὸς προσώπου τῆς γῆς ὁρίσας προστεταγμένους καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ὁροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν* [27]*ζητεῖν τὸν θεὸν εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὕροιεν, καὶ γε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα.* [28]*ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμεν, ὡς καί τινες τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν· τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν* (Nestle Aland 28). "From one man he [God] made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'" (New International Version). On the specific citations of Epimenides' *Cretica* and Aratus' *Phaenomenea* 5 in this passage see J. Rendel Harris, "A Further Note on the Cretans," *Expositor* (April 1907): 332-337. Also see K. C. Martin Dibelius, *The Book of Acts: Form, Style, and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 84. Dibelius notes "The words are introduced as a quotation from the poets… in accordance with literary convention. Luke seems to know the whole poem by Aratus and not only this verse. This is suggested by the fact that both the speech and poem contain some of the same ideas, and is confirmed by the way in which the quotation is introduced… it is clear that an educated man is making an allusion to contemporary literature." He also, however, remarks that the preceding words: 'for in him we live and move and have our being' are quite possibly not a direct quotation and "it should not be overlooked that the idea expressed in these words, and in support of which is added the quotation from Aratus, is one that would be familiar to people of culture." Finally, see also Photius *Amphilochia* 151.

maxim "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" in the conversion narrative Paul recounts to King Herod Agrippa II.[15] How did Luke and Paul encounter the sayings (and rhetorical forms) they used? In some cases they may have been citing specific Greek literature, but it is more likely they were familiar with popular maxims of the day. Such "wisdom" maxims, like the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, were a sub-genre of Hellenic philosophy.

In the generations after the Apostles, elements of philosophy, and therefore ideas of morality, played a significant role in the development of early Christianity. Some Christians strongly opposed any relationship between philosophy and Christianity: the late second/early third century author Tertullian cried, "What then has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What is there between the Academy and the Church? What is there between heretics and Christians? …Let those who have introduced a Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic Christianity consider [this]." (*Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid Academiae et Ecclesiae? Quid haereticis et Christianis? …Viderint qui Stoicum et Platonicum et dialecticum christianismum protulerunt*).[16] Nevertheless, the intellectual activities of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory

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[15] On Acts 26:14: "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." and various parallels in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 1624, Pindar's *Pythian Ode* 2.94, Euripides' *Bacchae* 795, a Latin version in Terence's *Phormio* 79, and to a lesser extent *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1396 see John C. Lentz, Jr., *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993), 84-87 and Dibelius, *The Book of Acts*, 84-86. Dibelius follows a similar train of thought as above with the Epimenides reference; he observes the phrase was "introduced simply because the author was an educated man, for only a familiarity with such phrases can explain the use of the saying here, where it is not really appropriate. The exalted, heavenly Christ speaks to Saul, or Paul, as is expressively observed here in the Aramaic language. A voice from heaven does not speak in proverbs, and, if the voice speaks in Aramaic, it will certainly not be to utter Greek proverbs. The proverb is not found in Semitic form; nor is it recorded in the other accounts of the same voice from heaven in Acts 9:4 and 22:7. It must therefore have been added by the author, in accordance with the style of what is the most literary of the three accounts of the conversion. It is intended to show that Paul is among those who have struggled against God in vain. It is also intended to provide for the educated reader the pleasure he will find in this kind of literary embellishment… Luke has ascribed a Greek saying to the voice from heaven. He wished to show by this that in his persecution of the Christians Paul was dashing himself against the driver's goad; it was a useless effort; ultimately he would have to submit."

[16] Tertullian *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 7 (*PL* 2, 20).

of Nyssa, and Augustine (among many other early Christian figures) are heavily influenced by Hellenic thought. The ethical system of Clement, for example, is manifested almost solely in the terminology of Greek philosophy.[17] Clement's *Stromata* equates philosophy for the Greeks with the law for the Jews, a connection found in Philo as well.[18]

Augustine's writings, moreover, are permeated by Neoplatonic ideas.[19] Neoplatonism, the philosophy established by Plotinus (c.204/5-270 AD) and developed by his student Porphyry (234-c.305 AD), merged the ideas of Plato with principles derived from Aristotle, Stoicism, and the Pythagoreans. Plotinus revisited questions of metaphysics which had been in abeyance among the philosophical schools: how can a man or human soul enter into communion with the creator deity (*δημιουργός*)? What theodicy harmonizes the omnipotence and omnibenevolence of this creator deity with the persistence, indeed, the very existence, of evil in the world? Such questions are, of course, present in Gnosticism, Manichaeism, and Christianity as well and it is not surprising that Augustine, in his *Confessions*, recounts how certain Neoplatonic texts left a considerable impression upon him.[20] He sees the Neoplatonists as knowing the goal, just not the way, i.e. Christ: they have presumption without confession.[21] Later on he elaborates, stating that the Neoplatonist texts lack mention of confession, sacrifice, afflicted spirit, humble heart, and God's love.[22]

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[17] Max Pohlenz, *Klemens von Alexandreia und sein hellenisches Christentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943), heft 3.
[18] Clement *Stromata* I.5.28; Philo *On Virtues* X.65.
[19] Henry Chadwick, *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17-25, 30-31, 55-56.
[20] Augustine *Confessions* VII.9.
[21] Augustine *Confessions* VII.20.
[22] Augustine *Confessions* VII.21.

At another point Augustine writes – in language extremely reminiscent of Plotinus – that while once he loved and experienced God and His beauty, he soon fell away again into old habits.[23] He feels that he should have held to the path he took to reach God: studying the beauty of bodies, then the soul, then the soul's inner power, then reasoning, understanding, abstracting, and finally God himself.[24]

Plotinus records a similar process: first the soul reasons upon what is right and good, then upon the foundation of such reasoning, i.e. the permanent "Right." He goes on to state that "there must be in us an Intellect which does not reason out but always possesses the Right, and there must also be the origin, cause, and God of Intellect" (*δεῖ τὸν μὴ λογιζόμενον, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ἔχοντα τὸ δίκαιον νοῦν ἐν ἡμῖν εἶναι, εἶναι δὲ καὶ τὴν νοῦ ἀρχὴν καὶ αἰτίαν καὶ θεόν*).[25] For Plotinus, the Intellect's "cause," its "God," "is not divided, but remains, and He does not remain in place – moreover, He is contemplated in many beings, in each and every one able to accept Him as another self" (*οὐ μεριστοῦ ἐκείνου ὄντος, ἀλλὰ μένοντος ἐκείνου, καὶ οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ μένοντος – ἐν πολλοῖς αὖ θεωρεῖσθαι καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν δυναμένων δέχεσθαι οἷον ἄλλον αὐτόν*).[26] Though Neoplatonic thought exercised a significant influence on Augustine, there are substantial differences in their thought as well, especially concerning the origin of evil, and one must take

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[23] Augustine *Confessions* VII.17. Compare with the language of Plotinus, *Enneads* VI.9.4. Plotinus also wonders why the experience of God is so fleeting (*Enneads* VI.9.10).
[24] Augustine *Confessions* VII.17.
[25] Plotinus *Enneads* V.1.11. Greek text from Armstrong, A. H., *Plotinus in Seven Volumes*, Volume V, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 48.
[26] Plotinus *Enneads* V.1.11. Greek text from *Plotinus*, Volume V, 48, 50.

care not to overestimate the importance of Neoplatonism in the writings of Augustine and other fourth and fifth century Christian writers.[27]

The integration of Neoplatonism and Christianity did not originate with Augustine; it can be found in Marius Victorinus, Ambrose, and others in the "intellectual life" within Rome and Milan.[28] If anything, combining Neoplatonism and Christianity was something of a popular endeavor among the well-educated Christians in the empire's major cities.[29] Ambrose, bishop of Milan and Augustine's mentor, depended closely on classical models. His sermons convey a close familiarity with Plotinus' ideas.[30] Ambrose's *De Officiis* (On Duties), furthermore, is closely modeled on the work of the same name by Cicero; it follows the same general organization, but uses biblical examples in place of those from Greek and Roman history and literature so that the result is an elegant blend of Stoic teaching and Christian doctrine.[31] In addition, his *De Obitu Theodosii* (On the Death of Theodosius) borrows ideas found in Seneca's *De Clementia* (On Mercy).[32]

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[27] Plotinus embraces the idea of a higher realm of immaterial intelligibility – creation stems from a supreme "One," a transcended being (or nonbeing) i.e. God. Augustine, of course, also believes in a monotheistic, transcendent God. Plotinus' Neoplatonist thought differs, however, in that the fall, the weakness, of the soul is its entry into Matter i.e. creation. For Plotinus, evil is intertwined with good in Matter (*Enneads* 1.8.11-12). Augustine sees man as tainting creation, rather than creation causing the fall of the soul. Indeed, Augustine sees creation as the proof of God's very existence and divine nature (*Confessions* VII.10, see also Romans 1:20).

[28] Marius Victorinus famously (in the ancient world) translated many Neoplatonic texts from Greek into Latin. He was also the very rhetor of Rome who was forced to resign due to Julian's *Rescript on Christian Teachers* (see note 1) and whose life (as recounted by Simplicianus) aided Augustine's conversion (*Confessions* VIII.2, 5).

[29] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, rev. ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 79-85, 89-90.

[30] Brown, 85-6.

[31] Ivor Davidson, ed. and trans., *Ambrose's De Officiis: Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, 2 Volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Also see Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994).

[32] Raspanti, Giacomo. "*Clementissimus Imperator*: power, religion, and philosophy in Ambrose's *De obitu Theodosii* and Seneca's *De clementia*." *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity* 7 (2007 – Boulder, Colorado): *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Andrew Cain and Noel Emmanuel Lenski (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009) 45-55.

As with Ambrose, Cicero was a major influence on Augustine. Book IV of his *De Doctrina Christiana* (On Christian Teaching), for example, borrows extensively from the rules of classical rhetoric and directly quotes Cicero' *De Oratore* (On the Orator) on several occasions, though much of the time paraphrase is the preferred method.[33] Cicero's legacy can be found among earlier Christian writers as well: Lactantius, the late third/early fourth century Christian rhetor and advisor to Constantine, composed his *Divinae Institutiones* (Divine Institutes) as a contrast to legal handbooks of the period; his complex Latin style is so imitative of Cicero's and his writing is so saturated with quotes from the earlier orator's works that he became known as the "Christian-Cicero" (*Cicero Christianus*).[34]

Pagan influence occurred in poetry as well. Ambrose's contemporary, Faltonia Betitia Proba, Christianized Latin epic poetry. Her *Cento Vergilianus de laudibus Christi* – fashioned entirely from Vergilian lines – celebrates the creation of the world and the life of Jesus. As much as Proba's Jesus echoes his biblical counterpart, he also mirrors the hero Aeneas.[35] Her predecessor Commodian, as we will see, also incorporated secular ideas into his compositions.

Even the black and white idea of a monotheistic Christianity and polytheistic paganism is largely untrue: monotheistic elements pervade Greek and Roman cults and their influence on early Christian thought is evident. Images of an astral immortality were popular during Late

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[33] See Augustine *De Doctrina Christiana* IV.12.27 and Cicero *De Oratore* I.69. Other examples may be found at *De Doctrina Christiana* IV.3.4, 7.21, 10.24, 17.34 and *De Oratore* III.146, I.146, I.78, I.101, respectively.
[34] Lactantius' quotations from Cicero are too numerous to list here; in *Divinae Institutiones* Book VI alone see 2, 5-6, 11-12,17-18, 20, 24-25 (*PL* 6, 633-732).
[35] Elizabeth A. Clark and Diane F. Hatch, *The Golden Bough, the Oaken Cross* (Chico, CA.: Scholar Press, 1981), 1.

Antiquity.[36] They can be seen in the writings and inscriptions of early Christians.[37] Many cults emphasized an afterlife located in heaven, among the sun, moon, and stars. Biblical literature includes few descriptions of the afterlife, all of them enigmatic, and yet Jerome uses the astral tradition when writing to Marcella about the death and funeral monument of the prominent pagan Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (c.315-384 AD): "now he is abandoned, naked, not in the milky palace of heaven… but bound in sordid gloom." (*nunc desolatus est, nudus, non in lacteo caeli palatio … sed in sordentibus tenebris continetur*).[38] He echoes the verses, albeit mockingly, found on Praetextatus' funeral monument in order to contrast his death with that of a Christian woman, Lea.[39]

Other examples of celestial imagery appear on funerary inscriptions such as that of wealthy Roman – and baptized Christian – Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus (*floruit* 358-390) and a particular Liberalis, described as a consul and martyr. According to the epitaph erected by his wife, Anicia Faltonia Proba (the granddaughter of the poetess Faltonia Betitia Proba), Probus was "taken into heaven from the lap of [his] beloved Proba" (*dilectae gremia raptus in aethra*

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[36] Dennis Trout, "The Verse Epitaph(s) of Petronius Probus: Competitive Commemoration in Late Fourth Century Rome," *New England Classical Journal* 28 (2001): 162-3. For epigraphic descriptions of astral immortality see *CLE* 688, 1371.

[37] Bert Selter, "*Eadem Spectamus Astra.* Astral Immortality as Common Ground between Pagan and Christian Monotheism," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 12: Monotheism Between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity*, ed. Stephen Mitchell and Peter Van Nuffelen (Walpole, MA.: Peeters, 2010), 74-75; Trout, 176.

[38] Jerome *Epistle* 23.3 (*CSEL* 54). Latin Text from Selter, "*Eadem Spectamus Astra.*" Translated by author. The funeral monument, commemorating Vettius Agorius Praetextatus and his wife, Fabia Aconia Paulina, now rests in the Capitoline Museum. The full Latin text, which Jerome responds to, is available in *CIL* VI.1779 = *ILS* 1259. For a translation and related documents see Brian Croke and Jill Harries, *Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Rome: A Documentary Study* (Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1982), 106-108.

[39] Maijastina Kahlos, "Fabia Aconia Paulina and the Death of Praetextatus – Rhetoric and Ideals in Late Antiquity (CIL VI 1779)," *Arctos* 28 (1994): 17.

*Probae*) and will "join the heavenly choirs" (*hunc tu, Christe, choris iungas celestibus oro*).[40] Probus also "lives, blessed, in the eternal dwelling-place of paradise, who departing takes the new garments of the heavenly office" (*vivit in aeterna paradise sede beatus, qui nova decedens muneris aetherii vestamenta tulit*).[41]

Liberalis is the subject of an *elogium* set up on the Via Salaria Vetus by an unknown Florus. He is labeled as a consul and martyr, having the fortune of being sent "to the stars" by the "annihilating rabid fury" of an angered *princeps* (*plus fuit irato quam gratio principe felix, quem perimens rabidus misit ad astra furor*).[42]

Probus's contemporary, Pope Damasus I (bishop of Rome 366-384, penned a series of short verses (Latin: *elogia*) collectively known as the *Carmina Epigraphica Damasiana* which parades the virtues of early martyrs, underscores their victory through defeat, and situates their souls in heavenly realms – possibly inspiring later funerary verses like Probus'.[43] They include astral motifs in verses such as "the tombs keep the bodies of saints for venerating; the kingdom of heaven has taken [their] exalted souls for itself" (*corpora sanctorum retinent veneranda sepulcra / sublimes animas rapuit sibi regia caeli*) and "they, on account of the merit of blood and having followed Christ through the stars, sought celestial asylum and the kingdoms of the pious" (*sanguinis ob meritum Christumque per astra secuti / aetherios petiere sinus regnaque piorum*).[44]

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[40] *CIL* 1751-1756=*CLE* 1347=*ICUR* II.4219=*ILCV* 63. See also Selter, "*Eadem Spectamus Astra,*" 68-72; Trout, 161, 164. For the relationship of Faltonia Betitia Proba and Anicia Faltonia Proba see Clark and Hatch, *Golden Bough*, 97.
[41] Trout, 164.
[42] *ICUR* II.101.23=*CLE* 904=*ILCV* 56=*ICUR* X(1992)27256; Trout, 171.
[43] Trout, 169-70.
[44] Anton Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana: recensuit et adnotavit* (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1942), 16.2-3, 20.4-5.

Probus and Praetextatus are elite Christian and pagan representatives of Late Antique Rome, a period when Christians were especially grappling with how to reconcile classical learning with Christianity. Augustine sees this struggle as implicit within the different systems represented by the two cities: the *civitas huius mundi* and the *civitas Dei*. As a young man he so loved Book IV of the *Aeneid* that he "wept for dead Dido" (*plorare Didonem mortuam*); as a slightly older youth the *Hortensius* of Cicero inspired him with a great love of wisdom and prompted his first mature exploration of the Scriptures (though at the time found them lacking eloquence and sophistication and pathetically simple in style).[45] Even after his conversion and newfound recognition of the vanity of classical literature, however, Augustine never abandoned it; rather, he pondered how such texts might be used in a Christian context and, as we have seen, made regular use of Cicero and Neoplatonic thought.[46]

The oneiric vow of Jerome, Augustine's contemporary, before the judgment seat – "Lord, if I ever will have possessed secular books [or] have read [them], I have denied you" (*Domine, si umquam habuero codices saeculares, si legero, te negavi*) – comes after a long effort to justify his reading of Cicero and Plautus.[47] Despite recounting this vow in 384 AD, Jerome's later writings continue to be infused with classical allusions; it seems that Jerome could not un-learn his Roman education, even if he could resist the eloquence of Cicero for the cause of Christ.

Like Jerome and Augustine, John Chrysostom (*On Vainglory and the Raising of Children*), Gregory Nazianzen (*Carmina*, *Oration* 43: *In Laudem Basili Magni*), and Basil of

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[45] Augustine *Confessions* I.13, III.4-5, VIII.7. Latin text from James J. O'Donnell, ed., *Augustine Confessions* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992), 10.
[46] Augustine *De Doctrina Christiana*. On the vanity of classical literature see *Confessions* VII.21, III.6; *De Civitate Dei* VII.
[47] Jerome *Epistle* 22.30 (*CSEL* 54, 189-91).

Caesarea (*Ad Adolescentes de Legendis Gentilium Libris*) all express an awareness of the seeming tension between Christianity and Greek *paideia*; like Jerome and Augustine, they each attempt to resolve this. As we will see, Diogenes the Cynic, along with other elements of the popular wisdom culture which Late Antique individuals shared, played a key role in this resolution for many of the Christian intellectuals.

Basil's adherence to the elements which channeled this wisdom culture (Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Diogenes, and Plutarch) is exceptionally clear in his *Ad Adolescentes de Legendis Gentilium Libris* (Letter to Young Men on the Reading of Gentile Works) and illustrates how one Christian intellectual intertwined the two world views.[48] Basil's thoughts were foundational for much of the Christian philosophy of education through Byzantine times and, indeed, much of the Christian intellectual history in the east.[49] Basil's *de Legendis Gentilium Libris* while citing numerous specific examples, is nevertheless largely concerned with striking a balance on an intellectual level. For an idea of how this occurred at the practical level, we must turn elsewhere.

Wisdom literature is one such place. It was present in the lives of everyone from young school children to learned old men. Most importantly, it illuminates several ways in which a conventional Greek and Roman genre was adopted by Christians and shaped for Christians. Of course, just how the Greek and Roman materials took on Christian forms was rarely straightforward (or universal). Sometimes Christians directly adopted elements, intentionally or unintentionally, from their pagan forerunners and contemporaries. Sometimes Greek and Roman

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[48] Basil of Caesarea *Ad Adolescentes de Legendis Gentilium Libris* (*PG* 31, 563-90).
[49] Derek Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996) 79; Derek Krueger, "Diogenes the Cynic among the Fourth Century Fathers," *Vigilae Chrisitanae* 47, no.1 (March 1993): 35.

components passed to Christians in the framework of previous Jewish adaptation.[50] Many times Christians encountered Greek and Roman materials, and especially wisdom literature, in the schoolroom.

## II. Morality and Gnomic Collections

### The Roman School

The teaching of popular morality and ethics occurred on many levels in antiquity; it can be found in (but is not limited to) the plays of Menander, the *Leges Iuliae* of Augustus, the writings of Seneca, and the schools of ancient philosophy. Indeed, philosophy was considered the standard guide to the moral life. Thus Celsus' comparison of Christian morals with those of the philosophers is not unexpected. From a young age, morality was instilled in school children through copying, memorization, and recitation.

Just as Julian objected to Christians teaching classical texts that they surely did not believe in, Christians objected to the use of pagan texts in the instruction of young believers. Lactantius, John Chrysostom, and Augustine all denounced pagan literature for its immoral stories and polytheism.[51] In many cases these objections are quite similar to the modern question

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[50] Walter T. Wilson, *Love Without Pretense: Romans 12:9-21 and Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2, Reihe 46, (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991), 91-199. Wilson describes part of Paul's letter to the Romans as a "sapiential discourse on Christian ethics" which "extends to the level of composing fairly long and sophisticated ethical arguments of [Paul's] own creation in while making use of ideas and methods that are international in scope" (148, 204).

[51] Lactantius *Divinae Institutiones* I.9-21(*PL* 6, 156-242); John Chrysostom *Homily 5 on Titus* (*PG* 62, 692-93); Augustine *De Civitate Dei* VII; *Confessions* VII.21. Plato, too, considered the tragedy and poetry of Homer and Hesiod among others to contain immoral stories which might corrupt the young. See *Republic* II.377e-383c, III.387a-398b, X.595a-608b.

parents and schoolteachers find themselves asking in regard to the television, film, and video game consumption of their children: how inclined are we to imitate what we see represented?

Yet because the educational system of the Late Antiquity was centered around the study of Greek and Latin literature, the young Christian, like his pagan peers, read, copied, and recited the traditional authors and learned the pagan pantheon. Tertullian argued against any exposure to licentious literature (and one suspects he would have done away with the classics completely had he seen a way), but most Christian intellectuals took a more pragmatic approach: it is difficult to conceive what suitable alternative there could have been at this point, particularly for the non-elite.[52]

The Roman school was not so much a place as an environment; in general, schools lacked a dedicated space. Unlike the modern classroom with its rows of desks, whiteboard, and themed decorations, the ancient grammar school was usually noisy, poorly lit, and temporary in design. Students interacted with the teacher individually, reciting lines, reading lessons, or receiving direction. Their personal slaves, the pedagogues, ensured discipline. Desks were unknown and bookshelves rare. The students themselves, or their pedagogues, supplied papyrus rolls, wax writing tablets, pens, ink, and lamps.[53] Early in their lessons, students faced material which was beyond their understanding: the act of creating a faithful representation, either by hand or verbally, was more important than comprehension.

As the student's literacy advanced, the exercises slowly gained more meaning. Quintilian, the first century rhetorician and author of a treatise on education, writes "I wish also that the

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[52] Tertullian *De Spectaculis* 17 (*CSEL* 20).

[53] *W. Martin Bloomer, The School of Rome: Latin Studies and the Origin of Liberal Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 12-13.

lines, which will be set forth for the imitation of writing, should not carry idle notions, but some virtuous teaching" (*ii quoque versus, qui ad imitationem scribendi proponentur, non otiosas velim sententias habeant sed honestum aliquid monentes*).[54] In practice these "lines" to be copied were standard excerpts of poets and playwrights such as Homer and Euripides and pithy wisdom maxims known as gnomes (Greek: *γνώμαι* from *γιγνώσκειν* "to know") or apophthegms (or "apothegms" Greek: *ἀπόφθεγματα* from *ἀποφθέγγεσθαι* "to speak one's opinion plainly"). Such "maxims normally purport to embody the forever and universally valid findings of common human experience; they are ethical conclusions which, through their literary formulation, become available for future edification and manipulation… in various ethical situations."[55] Gnomes, and their Latin equivalent *sententiae*, were sayings along the lines of modern phrases such as "If you have nothing nice to say, say nothing at all."

Pseudo-Plutarch's *De Liberis Educandis* (On the Education of Children) and Philo's *De Congressu Quaerendae Eruditionis Gratia* (On Mating with the Preliminary Studies) convey educational ideas analogous to Quintilian and many Christian intellectuals. John Chrysostom, for example, has similar ideas on education to Ps.-Plutarch (corporeal punishment, early marriage, courtesy to slaves) and Quintilian (the role of the father).[56] Moreover, Philo explores the connection between wisdom and philosophy using the Jewish figures of Hagar and Sarah, a

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[54] Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* I.1.35. Translated by author. Latin text from Harold Edgeworth Butler, trans., *The* Institutio Oratoria *of Quintilian with an English Translation*, LCL (London: W. Heinemann, 1921-22), 36.
[55] Wilson, *Love Without Pretense,* 19.
[56] M. L. W. Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture in the later Roman Empire: together with an English translation of John Chrysostom's Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up their Children* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1951), 77-78.

connection later developed implicitly by Paul and explicitly by Clement.[57] For the ancients, wisdom and philosophy were not distinct categories: philosophy was as concerned with wise living as it was with ideas.[58]

**Wisdom Genres**

Wisdom collections, or gnomologies, comprise part of an extended literatary tradition long predating the time of Philo, Quintilian, and Ps.-Plutarch. Gnomic elements are present in Roman, Greek, and even the older Near East literary traditions.[59] Students in Late Antiquity studied the Greek and Latin languages and thus the scope of this paper is limited to these literary traditions. Gnomic material appears in the earliest Greek literature: it is recognizable in Homer and Hesiod and undeniable in later authors. Poetry and teaching complemented one another. Poets were renowned for instructive verses. Politicians such as Solon wrote poetry. He later became known as one of the "Seven Sages," a group whose sayings formed the cornerstone of much of Greek wisdom literature.

Moral elements were not limited to gnomes. Greek and Latin also includes terms for longer texts such as *chreiai* (Greek: *χρεία* meaning a "use" or "advantage;" Latin: *exempla*, "sample" or "example"), anecdotes associated with a specific figure that conveyed a moralistic or instructive purpose. Proverbs (Greek: *παροιμίαι*; Latin: *proverbium*) comprise a third

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[57] David J. Zucker and Rebecca Gates Brinton, "'The Other Woman:' A Collaborative Jewish-Christian Study of Hagar," In *Perspectives on Our Father Abraham: Essays in Honor of Marvin R. Wilson*, ed, Stephen A. Hunt (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 370-71.
[58] Robert L. Wilken, "Wisdom and Philosophy in Early Christianity," in *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. by Robert. L. Wilken (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 144.
[59] Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 120.

category. The final category, fables, is less easy to define because neither Greek nor Latin includes a distinct word for it. Indeed, every word they employ has other connotations, and none of which can be linked to a specific form of "fable" and not to others.[60] Between Greek and Latin there are no less than nine different words for a fable: *αἰνός*, *αἴνιγμα*, *λόγος*, and *μῦθος* in Greek; *apologatia*, *apologus*, *fabella*, *fabula*, and (the vulgar form) *affabulatio* in Latin.[61] Fables functioned both as serious literature and copying exercises in school.

Gnomes, *chreiai*, proverbs, and fables are found throughout the extant corpus of classical texts. They appear in papyri, inscriptions, literature, and independent collations. Gnomes were generally composed by a cultured elite, probably for oral distribution as well as their own written circulation. *Chreiai* and *exempla* are tales about exemplary individuals and were usually composed, like gnomes, by highly educated men. On the other hand, proverbs and fables, such as the notable stories of Aesop, likely have a socially lower beginning.[62]

The four genres are not always distinct. As hinted at above, the boundaries between them are often vague. *Chreiai* and fables are regularly mixed. Gnomes and proverbs are treated as distinct by some authors, but as gnomes entered popular circulation and acquired proverbial forms through poetry the line between them blurred. For example, Aristotle writes "Further, some of the proverbs are also gnomes" (*ἔτι ἔνιαι τῶν παροιμιῶν καὶ γνῶμαί εἰσιν*).[63] Later rhetoricians found the genres of moral literature, and especially the differences between gnomes

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[60] Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5-6, 25-26, 84.
[61] Morgan, *Morality*, 57.
[62] Morgan, *Morality*, 3-6.
[63] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.21.12. Greek text from W. D. Ross. ed., *Aristotle: Ars Rhetorica* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959). Translated by author.

and *chreiai*, intriguing. The first century AD Alexandrian sophist Aelius Theon links gnomes and *chreiai* together in his *Progymnasmata* (Preparatory Exercises), dividing them as follows:

> A *chreia* is a brief saying or action making a point, attributed to some specified person or something corresponding to a person, and gnome (*γνώμη*) and reminiscence (*ἀπομνημόνευμα*) are connected with it. Every brief gnome attributed to a person creates a *chreia*… The gnome, however, differs from the *chreia* in four ways: the *chreia* is always attributed to a person, the gnome not always; the *chreia* sometimes states a universal, sometimes a particular, the gnome only a universal; furthermore, sometimes the *chreia* is a pleasantry not useful for life, the gnome is always about something useful in life; fourth, the *chreia* is an action or a saying, the gnome is only a saying… A *chreia* is given that name *par excellence*, because more than the other (exercises) it is useful for many situations in life, just as we have grown accustomed to call Homer "the poet" because of his excellence, although there are many poets.[64]

Theon himself demonstrates the lack of any fixed definition for the genres: at first he describes a *chreia* as sometimes "not useful for life" while later he seemingly contradicts himself by remarking that "more than the other (exercises) it is useful for many situations in life."

A similar, if more precise, definition is given by Hermogenes of Tarsus in his second century AD *Progynmnasmata*:

> [A *chreia*] differs from a gnome in that the latter is a bald statement while the *chreia* often takes the form of a question and answer, and again in that the *chreia* may describe an action while the gnome consists only of words, and again in that the *chreia* identifies a person who has acted or spoken while the gnome does not identify a speaker.
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> Much is said by the ancients about different kinds of *chreia*, (for example) that some of them are declarative, some interrogative, some investigative…

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[64] Aelius Theon *Progymnasmata* 96-97 translated in George Alexander Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 15. I have substituted "gnome" for "maxim" in Kennedy's translation for consistency.

> Gnome is a summary statement, in universal terms, dissuading or exhorting in regard to something, or making clear what a particular thing is. Dissuading, as in the following (Iliad 2.24), "A man who is a counselor should not sleep throughout the night"; exhorting, as in the following (Theognis 175), "One fleeing poverty, Cyrnis, must throw himself / Into the yawning sea and down steep crags." Or it may do neither of these things but explain the nature of something; for example (Demosthenes I.23), "Undeserved success is for the unintelligent the beginning of thinking badly."
>
> Furthermore, some gnomes are true, some plausible, some simple, some compound, and some hyperbolic. An example of a true one is, "It is not possible for anyone to lead a life without some pain"; of a plausible one, "I never ask who a man is who enjoys bad company, knowing that such he is as those with whom he likes to be"; of a simple one, "Wealth can even make men benevolent"; of a compound one (Iliad II.204), "Many lords are not good, let there be one lord"; and of a hyperbolic (Odyssey 18.130), "Earth bears nothing frailer than man."[65]

Theon and Hermogenes are more concerned with function than form when classifying gnomes and *chreiai* in their respective *Progymnasmata*, a predilection present in Plutarch (who finds Menander superior to Aristophanes because of his interpolation of moral teaching) and Quintilian (whose examination of the term *sententia* and its sub-categories consumes a full thirty-five paragraphs).[66]

Gnomes were one of the primary ways in which moral values were passed from one generation to the next.[67] Gnomic collections emerged in the Hellenistic age and continued to be collated in Late Antiquity. There are common themes across many of these anthologies, although

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[65] Hermogenes of Tarsus *Progymnasmata* 6-9 translated in George Alexander Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 77-78. I have substituted "gnome" for "maxim" in Kennedy's translation for consistency.
[66] Plutarch *Moralia* 853; Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* VII.5.
[67] Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1986), 61-64.

some are narrower than others. The *Golden Verses*, for example, instill wisdom through a Pythagorean lens; others revolve around a character or historical figure.[68] This latter type often sacrifices any sort of topical cohesion and relies on the biographic subject to bind the collection together. Popular figures of this type were Diogenes the Cynic and his vicious one-liners, Democritus and his maxims, and the characters of Diogenes Laertius and Lucian. Some of the more open ended collations, such as the various collections of the *Menandri Sententiae* (Sayings of Menander) and the anthology of Joannes Stobaeus, cover numerous themes and present multiple opinions on each subject. Still other gnomologies, such as the *Sentences of Sextus* (*Σεξτου Γνώμαι*) and the *Distichs of Cato* (*Catonis Disticha*), instruct on a general matter through more specific themes. It is these last two texts, along with the Cynic tradition of Diogenes, which this monograph examines, looking not only at their overarching beliefs, but at the similarities and differences in their thematic content and the implications these themes have for both pagan and early Christian moral education. Once we have established what these three traditions are saying, then it becomes possible to explore their role in the balance struck between Christianity and Greek *paideia*, and the greater implications this has on the transformation of religious and social thought in Late Antiquity.

**Cynicism and the Sayings of Diogenes**

Diogenes was born *c.*404 BC in Sinope, a Milesian colony situated on the southern coast of the Black Sea. Although ancient Sinope lay on the outer periphery of the Greek world, it enjoyed a prosperous existence as the final stop on a trade route stretching to the upper Euphrates

[68] Johan C. Thom, *The Pythagorean Golden Verses: with Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 86-9, 91-2.

valley. It is not unlikely, therefore, that Diogenes grew up in a well-off family and that he had some formal education. Tradition holds that his father, Hicesias, was a banker and that while Diogenes was supervising the mint for his father, he (or his father) adulterated the coinage. Upon discovery of the deed, Diogenes (possibly with his father) fled into exile, eventually settling in Athens.[69]

Tradition also holds that Diogenes was first introduced to Cynicism through a meeting with Antisthenes, the student of Socrates. Antisthenes, as the story goes, discouraged pupils and threatened to hit Diogenes with his stick. Diogenes' persistence in the face of such a threat impressed Antisthenes and the philosopher changed his mind, accepting Diogenes as a student.[70] This tale, however, seems to be a later creation meant to connect Diogenes to earlier philosophies.[71] While in Athens Diogenes would have certainly encountered Socratic thought, and its corresponding ascetic derivative as advocated by Antisthenes, it is improbable that he ever directly studied under Antisthenes, despite such entertaining anecdotes. Diogenes did develop certain Socratic ideas to their extreme; Plato, tradition holds, considered him "a Socrates gone mad" (*Σωκράτης μαινόμενος*).[72]

To understand Diogenes' place within the Socratic succession, some chronology is necessary. He is reported to have been an old man (*γέρων*) of seventy or eighty years old during the 113th Olympiad (328-325 BC), making a birthdate around the end of the fifth century likely.[73] As Socrates died in 399, it is very possible Diogenes interacted with the philosopher's students,

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[69] Diogenes Laertius *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* VI.20-21.
[70] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.21.
[71] Robin Hard, trans., *Diogenes the Cynic: Sayings and Anecdotes with Other Popular Moralists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), xiii, xv-xvi.
[72] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.54; GVB59; H134b; Aelian, *Historical Miscellany* 13.46; GVB59; H134a.
[73] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.79.

but almost certainly not the man himself. He lived through the majority of the fourth century (Diogenes Laertius records he was nearly ninety at his death), long enough that he could well have met a mature Alexander the Great.[74] In the wisdom tradition these two men came to symbolize opposites: Alexander as never content with how much he had conquered and Diogenes as satisfied with whatever nature provided in the moment. This dichotomy is best exemplified by the tale in which the only service Diogenes required of Alexander was that the young king move out of his sun.[75] Tradition maintains that Diogenes and Alexander died on the same day in June 323 (a notion almost certainly inspired by the symbolic association of the two men) and it is probable that Diogenes did die around the advent of the Hellenistic Age, though perhaps somewhat after Alexander if Diogenes Laertius' chronology is to be believed.[76]

The Stoicism of Zeno was the most prominent moral philosophy during this period. While later Stoics would distance themselves from the provocative characteristics of Cynicism, early Stoicism contained decidedly Cynic features. Zeno's interactions with Crates, Diogenes' leading successor, led to the development of the stern ethical guidelines central to his thought. Although Diogenes was removed by a generation from both Socrates and Zeno, he came to be seen as the link between Stoicism and Socrates.[77]

Socrates' moral philosophy is too subtle and extensive to receive more than cursory treatment here. The fundamental points for this discussion are that Socrates radically changed

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[74] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.76.
[75] Plutarch *Life of Alexander* 14; *On Exile* 15, 605de*;* GVB32; H236c; Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 5.32.92; GVB33; H236b; Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.38; for other interactions of the king and philosopher see *Lives* VI.32, 44, 45, 63, 68; Epictetus III.22.92; *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 96-7, 104; *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 96, f. 88$^{v}$, no.13; GVB34-40; H239-4.
[76] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.79; Hard, *Sayings*, xi.
[77] Hard, *Sayings* xi.

moral thought by questioning traditional mores, arguing that the paramount good is found in the good of the soul, which is the moral core of the self. Consequentially all goods found outside the soul – reputation, health, physical pleasure – are of secondary value.[78] His pupil, Antisthenes, established the mild asceticism of Socrates into an explicit system. Diogenes pushed this systematic asceticism to its utmost.

Diogenes is commonly known today for his eccentric behaviors and biting wit. He is famous for choosing the life of a beggar in the streets of Athens. Diogenes wore a coarse, doubled folded cloak, finding it suitable for warmth in winter and coolness in summer. All his possessions fit in the satchel he carried everywhere. Having no house, his many sleeping places were doorways, public spaces, and even a large urn on occasion.[79] The Socratic idea that one can become rich by being satisfied with little and thus somewhat ward off shifts of Fortune appealed to Diogenes. He took this idea to the extreme: by satisfying only his most fundamental needs and desires as directly as possible – ignoring other needs and desires as illusion – he would require next to nothing and thus be virtually secure from the fickleness of Fortune. Diogenes forewent more than just material luxury and pleasure; he sought to isolate himself from conventional social and cultural attitudes, living much as an animal does.

Diogenes's life, although striving to be apart from social norms, became a public fixture in Athens: no house meant no privacy. Inspired by a mouse, Diogenes deliberately mimicked the life of an animal.[80] He ate whatever food he could find in the streets, defecated wherever, and

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[78] Hard, *Sayings* xii; Xenophon *Memorabilia* I.6.2-10.
[79] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.22-23.
[80] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.22; Aelian, *Historical Miscellany* 13.26; GVB172; H9b.

even masturbated in public, finding it a simple solution to his sexual desires.[81] He expressed his contempt for social conventions through such behaviors. His animal-like conduct earned him a nickname: the Dog (Greek: *κυῶν*).[82] Those who imitated his lifestyle received the title "dog-like" or Cynics (Greek: *κυνικός*). The nickname may also derive from his habit of figuratively barking like a dog to get his ideas across: acerbic speech and provocative behavior were Diogenes's preferred approaches, quite different than the moral reflection and reasoned dialogues of Socrates.

Diogenes was not "cynical" is the modern sense: for him, a failure to reject the values of society leaves one as nothing more than an anonymous member of the crowd; true humanity and individuality is only found when one shuns conventional society. This particular thought is illustrated in one of Diogenes' more famous anecdotes: having lit a lamp in the daylight, he roamed the streets of Athens explaining himself as looking for "a man" or perhaps a "human being" (*ἄνθρώπος*).[83] Lighting a lamp in the daylight was an aphoristic symbol for a pointless undertaking; in doing so, Diogenes alleged any search for a man in Athens was in vain.[84] Not just a good man or an honest man, but any man at all, i.e. someone who did not conform to the masses, but embraced true human nature and individuality. Diogenes sought for people to become fully human by changing their lives, just as he had. He was a social critic and conveyed a serious message. Only following the rediscovery of Diogenes Laertius' writings in the Renaissance did "cynical" and "cynicism" acquire their modern definitions, as people interpreted

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[81] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.46, 56, 58, 69; Dio Chrysostom *Oration* 8.36; Julian *Oration* 6.202c; Plutarch *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 21, 1044b; GVB147; H37c.
[82] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.40, 45, 61, 78.
[83] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.41; Maximus the Confessor 70.20; GVB 272; H56b.
[84] Hard, *Sayings*, ix.

Diogenes' humor purely negatively. To fully appreciate Diogenes the Cynic and his sayings, one must ignore the modern meaning of a "cynic."

Unlike other sapiential literature such as the *Sentences of Sextus* and the *Distichs of Cato*, the Sayings of Diogenes were never an established collection in antiquity. The formal writings of Diogenes himself are no longer extant save their titles. His teachings have survived as a series of *chreiai* and gnomes in numerous ancient sources.[85] Many *chreiai* have alternative versions and adaptations; one scholar has estimated that, accounting for these variations, there are over a thousand *chreiai* attributed to Diogenes.[86] In Aelius Theon's examination of the *chreia*, noted above, seven of his twenty-nine examples are *chreiai* attributed to Diogenes; Hermogenes of Tarsus uses one Diogenes *chreia* out of three; Aphthonius of Antioch, the late fourth century rhetorician and friend of Libanius, uses one Diogenes *chreia* out of four (and appears to be dependent on Hermogenes for his selection); Nicholas of Myra, the fifth century rhetorician based in Constantinople, uses one out of eight.[87]

The Greek and Latin witnesses for Diogenes and other early Cynics originally came to us in anonymous manuscript collections. The most significant of these gnomologia are the *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, a Byzantine collection of apophthegms contained within *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 743, and the anthology of Joannes Stobaeus. Other sayings and *chreiai* attributed to Diogenes stem from works of known authors such as Cicero, Musonius Rufus, Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, Lucian, Clement of Alexandria, Athenaeus, Aelian, and Maximus the Confessor among others.

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[85] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.80.
[86] Henry A. Fischel, "Studies in Cynicism and the Ancient Near East: The Transformation of a Chria" in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1968): 374.
[87] Krueger, "Diogenes," 32, also see note 17.

The best source for material on his life is Diogenes Laertius, a third century AD biographer of Greek philosophy. His *Lives and Opinions of the Ancient Philosophers* delivers the only detailed, if indiscriminating, account of the early Cynics. Diogenes Laertius' section on Diogenes the Cynic begins with a sparse biography of the philosopher's early life, detailing only his exile and introduction to asceticism. It quickly moves into an apothegmatic structure, consisting of proverbs delivered usually as repartee. Some of his sayings stand alone; other sayings form the core of *chreiai*. This wisdom material forms nearly all of Diogenes' biography, though it is without chronology or much organization.

None of the sayings attributed to Diogenes were definitively uttered by him and many of the anecdotes associated with him are outright fictitious. Not unusually, the *chreiai* surrounding Diogenes cloud his real self. Anonymous wisdom material from the oral tradition became associated with well-known figures over time. Similarly, sayings once attributed to lesser-known individuals were ascribed to better-known ones. This transfer of foreign material into a particular figure's tradition of *chreiai* makes it necessary to study that figure's recorded teachings to understand what are truly his own ideas; Diogenes, by communicating his thoughts chiefly through witty humor and unconventional behavior, attracted more extraneous material than most famous figures, much of it completely unrelated to Cynicism. Even after separating the clearly foreign matter, the numerous remaining *chreiai* cannot be firmly established as originating with Diogenes.[88] Nevertheless, they represent the tradition of who Diogenes was perceived to be: the historicity of the attributed *chreiai* and gnomes was secondary to their aptness for the figure, suggesting that the conception of Diogenes was well established and understood. Whether or not

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[88] Hard, *Sayings*, xxi-xxii.

he actually said these exact phrases or ever encountered a particular situation (such as meeting Alexander the Great, if indeed that monarch would have cared enough to specifically seek out the Cynic) is irrelevant to this paper; what matters is these are the words which were passed down through antiquity and which were perceived as exemplifying the Cynicism of Diogenes.

**The *Sentences of Sextus***

The *Sentences of Sextus* is a collection of 451 gnomes with an overtly Christian tone. The volume is constructed as a guide to achieving moral and spiritual excellence. Generally speaking, the *Sentences* follow an ascetic Christian outlook, although certain concessions are made. For example, the author never expects his readers to live a life of solitude in the desert or to reject all possessions. Indeed, Sextus anticipates some readers will be married and some may even have children – though, of course, this will add difficultly to one's life.[89] Overall the maxims are concerned with the "faithful" man and entrance into moral and spiritual perfection: entrance into a *civitas Dei*.

The collection lacks a cogent lay out, evincing a wisdom tradition formed over time which expanded as new verses were added.[90] As such, there is little thematic unity: sometimes a group of three or maybe five gnomes on the same subject will appear (which seems to reflect Sextus' practice of taking selected gnomes from a source in whatever order he found them originally). On occasion a longer thematic unit may be found centered on the four cardinal

[89] *SS* 230b
[90] Wilken, 145.

virtues or on a general gnome followed by specific admonitions.[91] A given thematic group is unlikely to have any "real progression of thought … from beginning to end [but may be] organized by means of a number of interlocking, inconsistently applied devices, including catchword, linkword, anaphora, and inclusion, as well as an apparent attempt to group sayings according to length."[92] These methods of organization are also used to form "chains of thematically unrelated sayings, with no obvious thematic, syntactic, or lexical interconnection at all."[93] These groupings, however, are the exception, not the norm; generally Sextus' content varies from gnome to gnome without transition.[94] Themes often reappear in later gnomes and gnomic groups, but the return could follow just five verses later or well over one hundred. The subjects, as we will see, focus on both the tangible and the arcane, ranging from wealth and self-control to the soul and fate.

The proverbs were originally written in Greek and assembled during the second century, presumably by a 'Sextus.' Exactly who this Sextus was and whether he was the author or editor of the *Sentences* in their present form is unknown. His identity has been hotly debated since ancient times; more recently, investigation has delved into the origins of the text itself: was it a pagan text that corresponded to Christian beliefs, or was even influenced by them? Or was the *Sentences* written by a Christian for Christians? Henry Chadwick has convincingly demonstrated that the answer lies somewhere in the middle: "a Christian complier has edited, carefully revised

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[91] Walter T. Wilson*, The Mysteries of Righteousness: the Literary Composition and Genre of the Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, Series Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 40 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994), 51-52; Alan Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source: Genre, Synchrony, and Wisdom Redaction in Q* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 121-122.
[92] Wilson, *Love Without* Pretense, 74-75.
[93] Kirk, 121.
[94] Henry Chadwick, ed. and trans., *The Sentences of Sextus: A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 153.

and modified a previous pagan collection (or perhaps collections)."[95] In many cases the Christian redaction is nothing more than the substitution of a single word (*πιστός* "faithful" for *σοφός* "wise" being a popular interpolation), implying that the pre-existing pagan *vorlage* was already quite agreeable to the redactor.[96]

The *Sentences* have much in common with the *Sententiae Pythagoreorum* and the *Clitarchi Sententiae*, both collections of Pythagorean sayings, Porphyry's *Ad Marcellam*, the Instructions of *Papyrus Insinger*, and other gnomic works – even sayings of Jesus, both canonical and non-canonical.[97] Chadwick, for example, notes that "there are not a few instances where the text of Clitarchus bears every mark of being the original form which Sextus revised in a Christian direction."[98] Sextus also depended upon Scriptural passages (the Gospel of Matthew being especially popular) for twenty of his maxims.[99] The *vorlage* of the *Sentences*, then, is a compilation of pagan wisdom literature and Christian sources.

This conclusion places the *Sentences* in a particularly fascinating context; such editing would demonstrate a very specific way in which Christian teaching borrowed and modified classical morality. Citing the *Sentences'* "very large number of parallels" with the writings of Clement of Alexandria, their use in Origen, and their inclusion in the Gnostic library at Nag Hammadi, Walter Wilson, furthermore, suggests that the gnomology may well have been

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[95] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 138.
[96] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 138, 147, 154; Walter T. Wilson, *The Sentences of Sextus*, Wisdom Literature from the Ancient World 1 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 25.
[97] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 73-94, 140-162; Wilson, *Sentences*, 11-29; Wilken, 154; Wayne Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: the First Two Centuries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 71-72.
[98] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 157.
[99] Wilson, *Sentences*, 25-29.

complied by an Egyptian. If so, the analogous – and ascetic – ideas found in the *Sentences* and early Egyptian monastic literature bear further investigation.[100]

The manuscript tradition of the *Sentences* is, as such traditions go, fairly straightforward. There are only two surviving witnesses to the original Greek text: *Codex Patmiensis* 263 (tenth century) and *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 742 (fourteenth century). They differ considerably in their internal structure; *Patmiensis* 263, in particular, diverges substantially from the order found in *Vaticanus* 742 and most other non-Greek versions.[101] The Latin version has notably more witnesses (the earliest of which dates to the seventh century), all stemming from the late fourth century translation by Tyrannius Rufinus.[102] This tradition was first critically edited by Johann Gildemeister in 1873 from fourteen manuscripts. [103] Anton Elter's 1892 edition adds a fifteenth and Chadwick's notes a sixteenth in 1959.[104] In the fifth or sixth century translations, somewhat looser than Rufinus', were made into Syriac; they also exhibit a more pronounced Christian perspective. The oldest extant Syriac manuscript dates to the mid-sixth century.[105] Around 130 maxims from the collection appear in Armenian, ascribed as proverbs of Evagrius Ponticus.[106]

The Greek, Syriac, and Armenian manuscript traditions augment the corpus of the *Sentences* with additional maxims.[107] *Vaticanus* 742 extends the list from 451 to 610, about 45 more than the additions to *Patmiensis* 263. The Syriac witnesses attest to many of these

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[100] Wilson, *Sentences*, 11.
[101] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 3-4.
[102] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 4-5.
[103] Johann Gildemeister, *Sexti Sententiarum Recensiones Latinam, Graecam, Syriacas Conjunctivi Exhibuit* (Bonnae Ad Rhenum: Apud A. Marcum, 1873).
[104] Anton Elter, *Sexti Pythagorici, Clitarchi, Evagrii Pontici sententiae. Gnomica* 1 (Leipzig: C. George, 1892); Chadwick *Sentences*, 4.
[105] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 6-7; Richard A. Edwards and Robert A. Wild, eds. and trans., *The Sentences of Sextus* (California, Scholar's Press, 1981), 4.
[106] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 7-8; Edwards and Wild, *Sentences,* 4-5.
[107] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 8; Edwards and Wild, *Sentences,* 4.

additions, with lesser support in the Armenian translation.[108] Rufinus' version, an early and close translation of the Greek, includes only 451 maxims, thus distinguishing the original aphorisms from later additions.

A selection of the *Sentences* was also translated fairly early on into Coptic. One hundred and twenty-eight maxims were found in Codex XII at the Gnostic library buried at Nag Hammadi. The Coptic manuscript dates to the fourth century and contains eight unique variants. Other variants found are supported by the Syriac tradition. The Coptic version agrees more often with *Vaticanus* 742 than *Patmiensis* 263 and almost never supports *Patmiensis* 263 against all other witnesses. It also corroborates the order of the *Sentences* found in *Vaticanus* 742 and Rufinus.[109]

By the third century the *Sentences* was becoming well known among Christians; Origen directly cites the *Sentences* twice and draws from it on numerous other occasions. The first quotation is found in his *Contra Celsum*, the same work where he responds to Celsus' charge about the similarity of Christian morality to that of the philosophers. At this point Origen is refuting Celsus' remarks about the irrationality of Christians' refusal to eat meat sacrificed to idols.[110] He concludes his response by quoting an aphorism in the *Sentences*: "while the eating of animals is morally indifferent, abstinence is more reasonable" (*ἐμψύχων χρῆσις μὲν ἀδιάφορον, ἀποχὴ δὲ λογικώτερον*).[111]

The second passage mentioning Sextus by name is found in Origen's *Commentary on Matthew*. Specifically, he is interpreting the first part of Matthew 19:12: "For there are eunuchs

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[108] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 8.
[109] Edwards and Wild, *Sentences,* 3-5.
[110] Origen *Contra Celsum* VIII.30 (*PG* 11, 1560).
[111] *The Sentences of Sextus* maxim 109. Hereafter *SS*.

who were born as such from their mother's womb; there are also eunuchs who were castrated by men; and there are eunuchs who castrated themselves for the kingdom of heaven."[112] This admittedly intriguing verse was something of a hot topic in the second century (and later) and there is evidence of literal interpretation of this text in the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr.[113] Eusebius alleges that Origen, full of youthful zeal, castrated himself.[114] In the late fourth century even Augustine, finding himself hindered from embracing Christianity by his sexual desires, contemplates the meaning of Matthew 19:12: *Audieram ex ore veritatis esse spadones qui se ipsos absciderunt propter regnum caelorum, sed 'qui potest,' inquit, 'capere, capiat.'* (I had heard from the mouth of truth that 'there are eunuchs who have castrated themselves on account of the kingdom heaven.' But he says, 'Let he who is able to accept [this], accept it.'")[115] In the writings of Basil of Caesarea and John Chrysostom one finds an adamant stance against it[116] – a stance Origen (for whom this had personal resonance if Eusebius is to be believed) at first seems to take before ambiguously citing Sextus.[117] Origen comments:

> But we, once having conceived a Christ of God (as) the Word of God 'according to the flesh'[118] and according to the letter, now no longer (are) thinking so, (and) we no longer approve as honorable those understanding even the third (kind of) eunuchization for themselves on the pretext of the kingdom of heaven; and we would not waste any more time with the refutation of the one willing to understand the third (kind of eunuchization) bodily alongside the first two, if we had not seen those who had dared

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[112] *εἰσὶν γὰρ εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς ἐγεννήθησαν οὕτως, καὶ εἰσὶν εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες εὐνουχίσθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ εἰσὶν εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες εὐνούχισαν ἑαυτοὺς διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.* Translated by author.
[113] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 110-111; Justin Martyr *1 Apologia* 29.
[114] Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* VI.8.
[115] Augustine *Confessions* VIII.1 Latin text from O'Donnell 88.
[116] Basil *Epistle* 115; John Chrysostom *Commentary on Galatians* 5:12.
[117] *SS* 273
[118] 2 Corinthians 5:16

> (to do so) and we had not encountered those able to stir a too warm soul – believing, yet illogical – towards such a daring act. But Sextus says in the Sentences, a book referred to by many as trustworthy: 'Cast out every part of the body inducing you to be unchaste; for (it is) better to chastely live without the part than destructively with the part.'[119] And having moved forward in the same book, he again gives occasion regarding the same thing, (when) he says: 'You may see men cutting off and throwing away their own limbs in order to keep the rest of their body healthy; how much better (to do so) in the name of being chaste?'"[120]

In the above passage, Origen not only quotes two separate maxims of Sextus, but he calls the gnomology "a book referred to by many as trustworthy," suggesting its widespread readership and popularity.

Origen also refers to Sextus in his first sermon on Ezekiel when he quotes an anonymous "wise and faithful man" (*sapiens et fidelis vir*). While expounding on who may understand the mysteries of the Bible, he writes "I freely confess the opinion said by a wise and faithful man, which I often utter: 'It is dangerous even to speak the truth about God.'[121] For not only are the false things said concerning him dangerous, but even those which are

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[119] *SS* 13

[120] Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* XV.3 (*PG* XIII, 1257-1260): *Ἡμεῖς δὲ Χριστὸν Θεοῦ, τὸν Λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ κατὰ σάρκα καὶ κατὰ τὸ γράμμα ποτὲ νοήσαντες, νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκοντες, οὐκ εὐδοκοῦμεν ὡς καλῶς ἐξειληφόσι τοῖς καὶ τὸν τρίτον εὐνουχισμὸν ἑαυτοῖς προφάσει τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐπάγουσι· καὶ οὐκ ἄν ἐπὶ πλεῖον προσδιετρίψαμεν τῇ ἀνατροπῇ τοῦ τὸν τρίτον παραπλησίως τοῖς προτέροις δυσὶ σωματικῶς ἐκλαβεῖν θέλοντος, εἰ μή καὶ ἑωράκειμεν τοὺς τολμήσαντας, καὶ ἐντετεύχοιμεν τοῖς δυναμένοις θερμοτέραν κινῆσαι ψυχὴν, καὶ πιστὴν μὲν, οὐ λογικὴν δὲ, πρὸς τὸ τοιοῦτον τόλμημα. Φησὶ δὲ Σέξτος ἐν ταῖς* Γνώμαις*, βιβλίῳ φερομένῳ παρὰ πολλοῖς ὡς δοχίμῳ· Πᾶν μέρος τοῦ σώματος τὸ ἀναπεῖθόν σε μή σωφρονεῖν, ῥῖψον· ἄμεινον γὰρ χωρὶς τοῦ μέρους ζῆν σωφρόνως ἤ μετὰ τοῦ μέρους ὀλεθρίως. Καὶ πάλιν προβὰς ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ βιβλίῳ, ἀφορμὴν δίδοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ παραπλήσιον, λέγει· Ἀνθρώπους ἰδοις ἄν ὑπὲρ τοῦ τὸ λοιπόν τοῦ σώματος ἔχειν ἐρρωμένον ἀποκόπτοντας αὐτῶν καὶ ριπτοντας μέρη· πόσῳ βέλτιον ὑπὲρ τοῦ σωφρονεῖν;* Translated by author.

[121] *SS* 352

true and uttered inopportunely create danger for the speaker."[122] He also quotes the same saying in his *Commentary on John* XX.6. In the preface to his *Commentary on the First Psalm* (no longer extant, but an excerpt of the preface has been preserved in Epiphanius), Origen again cites the same maxim from the *Sentences* along with another one: "when you speak about God, you are judged by God" (*ὅτι λέγεις περὶ θεοῦ, κρίνῃ ὑπὸ θεοῦ*).[123]

Origen's employment of the *Sentences* is natural in light of his instruction under Ammonius Saccas, the very man who also taught Plotinus.[124] Just as Neoplatonism incorporated Pythagorean elements, the *Sentences of Sextus*, as noted above, have many parallels among Pythagorean sayings and even within the writings of Porphyry, suggesting a common source.

At the end of the fourth century Tyrannius Rufinus of Aquileia translated the *Sentences of Sextus* into Latin at the request of Avita, niece of Melania the Elder and wife of Apronianus.[125] Rufinus is well known for his Latin translations of Greek Christian writings, especially those of Origen; his goal was twofold: to make the Greek texts accessible to those who could read only Latin and to champion the works of Origen. In the case of the *Sentences*, he was responding to Avita's desire for theological light reading; his efforts met with remarkable success, further confirming the popularity of the *Sentences* in Late

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[122] Origen, *Homily on Ezekiel* I.11: *Confiteor libenter a sapiente et fideli viro dictam sententiam, quam saepe suscipio: de deo et vere dicere periculum est. Neque enim ea tantum periculosa sunt quae false de eo dicuntur, sed etiam quae vera sunt et non opportune proferuntur, dicenti periculum generant*. Latin Text from Marcel Borret, ed. and trans., *Origène: Homélies sur Ezéchiel, SC* 352 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1989), 80. Translated by author.
[123] *SS* 22 in Epiphanius *Panarion* LXIV.7.3.
[124] Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* VI.19.
[125] Chadwick and Murphy date the translation of the *Sentences* to 398-400 AD. For further details see Chadwick, *Sentences*, 117; Francis X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 119-23, 234; Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 167-8.

Antiquity. Rufinus' version was soon embraced by the monk Pelagius, who cited several of Sextus' aphorisms in defense of his theological views to Augustine.[126] His translation, however, did not sit well with Jerome, whose quondam friendship with Rufinus likely played a not insignificant role in his criticism of the work.

**The Author, Compiler and Purpose of the *Sentences of Sextus***

But who compiled the sayings, editing them for Christian use? While Chadwick has demonstrated this person was a probably a later redactor and not the original "Sextus," we must look to the sayings themselves to discern his purpose.

As we will see, the *Sentences* share many themes with other non-Christian gnomic traditions. While this is partially because of the *Sentences'* origin as a non-Christian text, I suggest it is also an intentional decision on the part of the compiler. He wanted his collection to resemble, at least in part, the content of other gnomologies. There are several possible reasons for this, depending how he imagined the function of the *Sentences*. For example, Robert Wilken has remarked, "If [the compiler] was an apologist for Christianity… he may have found his work more effective if he did not identify Jesus as the source of his teaching."[127] Yet there are only a dozen or so maxims in the *Sentences* which closely resemble sayings of Jesus from the canonical Gospels, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri.[128] Therefore while these particular maxims are probably drawn either directly from those texts or share a source with them, I do not

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[126] Augustine *De Natura et Gratia* LXIV.77 has Pelagius quoting *Sentences of Sextus* 36, 46, and 60. See John A. Mourant and Wiliam J. Collinge, trans., *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, Fathers of the Church 86 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002):82-83 and Chadwick, *Sentences*, 121.
[127] Wilken, 157.
[128] Wilken ,154.

find it likely that the *Sentences of Sextus* was intended as a covert Christian apologetic text, though it may have been used this way on occasion.

A second possible function of the *Sentences* was as a school text, much as the *Distichs of Cato* were used. The compiler has assembled a collection mimicking the content of other popular sapiential traditions while adding in a general ascetic slant and corresponding verses about the soul, God, and the "faithful" man. In this setting, verses from the *Sentences* would have been copied by children learning to read and write in Greek (or perhaps Latin, once Rufinus' version had gain sufficient circulation). The compiler may have found this an early answer to that question would plague Christian teaching: "Is it appropriate to use classic pagan texts in the teaching of Christians and children?" If this was indeed a concern of the complier, he certainly devised a clever response by taking such pagan sayings and reframing them with Christian teachings.

Finally, a third purpose of the *Sentences'* present form may have been as a Christian version of an ancient self-help book, a practical guide to wisdom and "wise" living. As Christianity came to be seen as a new philosophy in the late second century, philosophy itself was changing. The academy structure of earlier philosophers in their corresponding schools had given way to street preaching, similar in many ways to that of Diogenes. The philosopher came to be seen as living the wise life, an ideal toward which all men should strive.[129] While many areas of philosophy continued to revolve around knowledge, others, such as the Cynicism of Late Antiquity, required disciplined action and thought patterns as a means of molding and transforming one's life into that of a wise man, i.e. the philosopher. Proverbial sayings, not

[129] Wilken, 159.

treatises on kingship and law, were the foundation of this kind of philosophy. Individuals memorized such sayings to regulate their lives. Galen describes this practice in this *On the Passions of the Soul*:

> You may be sure that I have grown accustomed to ponder twice a day the exhortations attributed to Pythagoras—first I read them over, then I recite them aloud.
>
> It is not enough for us to practice self-control over our anger; we must also cleanse ourselves of voluptuous eating, carnal lust, drunkenness, excessive curiosity, and envy… Moreover, while we are novices in all these matters, we must ask others to watch over us and inform us of any error into which we fall; later on, let us, without our tutors' help, keep watch over ourselves and be on our guard in order that we may take less to eat than those who are dining with us and that we may keep away from the dainty foods while we eat the healthful foods in moderation.[130]

Galen charts out a progression towards the ideal lifestyle: novices require the oversight of others to live moderately, but more advanced students are able to supervise themselves. In his case, he reads and recites various Pythagorean sayings – many of which he cites at other points in his treatise. Sextus' book, like its secular cousins, probably functioned in a similar manner, only for the audience of early Christians. Origen seems to indicate this in his brief remarks on the collection. In his *Contra Celsum* he calls the *Sentences of Sextus* a book "which even the multitude of Christians have read" (*ᾗ καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν χριστιανῶν ἀναγεγραμμένῃ*).[131] And in his *Commentary on Matthew*, as discussed earlier, he describes the gnomology as "a book referred to by many as trustworthy" (*βιβλίῳ φερομένῳ παρὰ πολλοῖς ὡς δοχίμῳ*).[132]

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[130] Galen *On the Passions of the Soul* VI. Translation from Paul W. Harkins, trans., *Galen on the Passions and Errors of the Soul* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press: 1963), 49-50.
[131] Origen *Contra Celsum* VIII.30 (*PG* XI, 1560).
[132] Origen *Commentary on Matthew* XV.3 (*PG* XIII, 1260).

**The *Distichs of Cato***

The history of the *Distichs of Cato* is no less rich than that of the *Sentences of Sextus*, although it perhaps lacks some of the controversy the *Sentences* generated among early Christians. Who the original author of the *Distichs* was is unknown; Cato the Elder eventually became associated with them, likely because he was seen as a source of wisdom, but there is little substantiation for a middle Republic creation. Thematically, the *Distichs* ignore matters relating to government – politics, foreign affairs, or military topics – which Cato the Elder often concerned himself with.[133] Instead the collection is seemingly Stoic in content, advising on relationships with family and friends, money, fate and death, reputation, and the broader community. The *Distichs* is an artifact of classical Roman antiquity and as such reproduces many of the values of that era; its verses are interested in the secular and the practical and employ a calculating, even suspicious, view of human motives: opportunistic and self-serving approaches and actions are regularly recommended. It is the morality of a *civitas huius mundi*. Mention is made of the gods, but they are distant; only Fortune plays an active role in the daily lives of mortals. The *Distichs* themselves lack an overarching attitude, although they are indubitably pagan with some stoic inclinations, and instead offer instructions in regard to situations the reader is expected to encounter, such as responsibility for actions undertaken while intoxicated.[134] In many ways the work is a diluted conflation of the notions established in Augustan and Silver Age Latin literature.

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[133] Marcus Porcius Cato, *Speeches*; *frags. of Origines*; *De Re Militari* (not extant, but the title is self-explanatory).
[134] *DC* 2.21

Among the earliest evidence for the *Distichs* is a funerary epitaph that includes one couplet.[135] Its date is contested, ranging from the late first century AD to the middle of the second.[136] Additional evidence for the *Distichs'* origin stems from two works of the Christian poet Commodian. His *Instructiones* includes five near or exact maxims and another two can be found in his *Carmen Apologeticum*.[137] But like the creation date of the *Distichs* themselves, it is unknown when Commodian flourished, although the third century continues to receive the most support.[138] The internal evidence of the maxims themselves, however, shed further light on their date of composition.

Unlike the *Sentences*, the *Distichs* follow a standard structure. They are in verse, specifically dactylic hexameter couplets: a combination unique among extant Latin literature.[139] Examining the popularity of specific metrical patterns within the hexameter, Serena Connolly has persuasively argued for a much earlier date than the third or fourth century AD. Based on similarities to the meters of Vergil and Horace (and dissimilarities to the works of Ennius and

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[135] *CIL* VI.11252 = *CE* 756adn. = *CE* 1567: *Oppi, ne methuas Lethen, nam stultum est, tempore et om / ni dunc mortem metuas, amittere gaudia vitae*. Compare with *DC* 2.3: *Linque metum leti; nam stultum est tempore in omni / Dum mortem metuis, amittere gaudia vitae.* The writer of the inscription seems to have borrowed from the *Distichs* because the meter does not work in the inscription, which also quotes more than just the *DC* 2.3.

[136] See Matteo Massaro, "Una coppia affiatata: *CLE* 959," in *Metric Inscriptions of the Roman Republic/Die metrischen Inschriften der römischen Republik*, ed. By P. Kruschwitz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 271-298 for the first date and Robert J. Newman, "*Cotidie meditare.* Theory and Practice of the *meditatio* in Imperial Stoicism," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung* II.36.3, ed. By W. Haase and H. Temporini (Berlin: 1972), 1473-1517 for the second date, respectively.

[137] Marcus Boas, ed., *Disticha Catonis* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1952), LXXII-LXXIII. Also see Wayland Johnson Chase, *The Distichs of Cato: A Famous Medieval Textbook* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1922), 1. Texts in *CSEL* 15.

[138] Some scholars believe a date of the late fourth or fifth century is more likely. See Pierre Courcelle, "Commodien et les invasions du V$^{e}$ siècle," *REL* 24 (1946): 227-46, especially 239-46 and Jean-Paul Brisson, *Autonomiesme et Christianisme dans l'Afrique romaine de Septime Sévère à l'invasion vandale*, Paris: Editions E. du Boccard, 1958, 390-91. For a fuller discussion see Jean-Michel Poinsotte, "Commodien dit de Gaza," *REL* 74 (1996) 272-273. Jean-Michel Poinsotte suggests the period between 250 and 313 (*Commodien: Instructions,* Collection des universités de France, série latine 392 (Paris: 2009), xv).

[139] Serena Connolly, "The Meter of the *Disticha Catonis*," *CJ* 107, no.3 (2012): 314.

Lucilius, both early Republican poets around the time of Cato), she finds a date in the first century AD much more likely.[140] In addition to fitting with the evidence from the funerary epitaph, Connolly points out that this is congruent with Commodian's other non-Christian quotations, which mostly stem from first century AD authors.[141] She also notes that the fourth distich from Book III contains a possible allusion to members of the Blandi and Blaesi families – an allusion which only works if there were more-or-less contemporary individuals from each family with reputations for oratorical skill and deception at the time of the verse's composition.[142] Only two individuals, Q. Junius Blaesus and C. Rubellius Blandus, fit the description; both date to the reign of Tiberius.[143]

Furthermore, she proposes that the "Cato" of the *Distichs* is actually Cato the Younger. Connolly argues that his popular reputation for virtue and philosophy in the first century AD makes the younger Cato a likely inspiration for the *Distichs*.[144] The motifs of friendship and community found throughout the collection harmonize more with ideals associated with Cato the Younger, a famous Stoic, than those with his great-grandfather.[145] Finally, a first (or second) century date suggests that the funerary epigraph was inspired by the *Distichs*, rather than by a common saying which the *Distichs* later incorporated.

Teresa Morgan takes the more traditional view, citing the "suspicious absence of quotations from the [*Distichs*] in authors of the first and second centuries" and the heavy

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[140] Connolly, "Meter," 315-19.
[141] Connolly, "Meter," 319.
[142] *DC* 3.4 *Sermones blandos blaesosque cavere memento; simplicitas veri fama est, fraus ficta loquendi*
"Remember to beware flattering and lisping talk; the truthful man is renowned for his candor; the man speaking deceitfully for falsehoods."
[143] Serena Connolly, "Disticha Catonis Uticensis," *CPh* 107, no.2 (April 2012): 125-128.
[144] Connolly, "Disticha," 121-125.
[145] Connolly, "Disticha," 121.

Christianization in "the versions which have come down to us," and believes the collection was formed after the first and second centuries (or at least was not in circulation then).[146] Yet while there is ambiguity surrounding creation dates, the *Distichs* were certainly in existence by the reign of Valentinian II (r. 375-392). A medical letter to the emperor from Helvius Vindicianus, the *comes archiatrorum* (overseer of the chief physicians) and proconsul of Africa, illustrates the *Distichs'* circulation among Roman elites in the late fourth century.[147] Vindicianus' letter is the earliest record attaching the name Cato to the gnomology.[148] The letter gives the *Distichs* a strong *terminus ante quem* of the late fourth century.

In addition to their poetic structure, most of the couplets employ an imperative verb – often negative – urging the reader to action.[149] The work as a whole is commonly divided into four books of uneven length; specifically of forty, thirty-one, twenty-four, and forty-nine distichs

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[146] Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87.

[147] Helvius Vindicianus, of African origin, was a well-known medical authority of the fourth century. He is traditionally believed to have held the proconsulship of Africa from 379-382 AD, but a law from August 378 in the the *Codex Theodosianus* suggests he may have held this position earlier (10.19.9). There is a second law addressed to him in September 379 (13.3.12). Augustine records that he was crowned victor of a poetry contest by Vindicianus (probably in 382) and that around the same time Vindicianus also advised him to give up the pursuit of astrology, somewhat of an unusual position among ancient physicians (*Confessions* IV.3 VII.6). Vindicianus was the teacher of Theodorus Priscianus, the translator of some of the works of Hippocrates into Latin, and the author of several textbooks and medical treatises, none of which are extant, save some forewords and fragments. One such fragment is a collection of prescriptions, of which only the *Epistula ad Valentinianum* (containing the quotation from the *Distichs*) survives; this fragment is preserved in later work of Marcellus Empiricus of Bordeaux, the *De Medicamentis* (*CML* 5, $^{2}$1968, pp. 46-53). For more on Vindicianus see Alain (Madrid) Touwaide, "Vindicianus." Brill's New Pauly. Antiquity volumes edited by: Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, Brill Online, 2012. Reference. EMORY UNIVERSITY. 11 November 2012 <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/vindicianus-e12204990>.

[148] Vindicianus slightly misquotes the *Distichs* and "Cato" as often saying the latter half of *DC* 2.22: *Quod cum pati coepisset infirmus, flens et gemens illud Catonis saepe dicebat: "Corporis exigua medico committe fideli;" ego autem dico: et perito.* (And when he had begun to endure an illness, with tears and groans he often used to say that (distich) of Cato's: "Commit the trivial (matter) of the body to a faithful physician;" I, however, say: and to a learned one.) Compare with the second line of *DC* 2.22 in Boas' critical edition: *corporis auxilium medico committe fideli* (Commit the care of the body to a faithful physician). Vindicianus seems to have confused 2.22 with 2.9: *corporis exigui vires contemnere noli.* See Boas, LXXIII, 127-28.

[149] Verse 1.32a is typical: *Ignotum notis noli praeponere amicis* ("Do not prefer an unknown man over known friends")

respectively. There is no particular organization to these books, either topical or otherwise. The latter three books each have a preface in verse exhorting the reader to follow the wisdom contained in its maxims; Book I probably did as well, but it is no longer extant. The gnomology itself is preceded by fifty-six extremely short proverbs in prose; most consist of just two words in the Latin such as *virtute utere* (exercise virtue) or *nihil mentire* (never lie).[150] These succinct proverbs are introduced by their own preface, also composed in prose.[151] The switch from prose to verse and from short proverbs and prefaces to distich is noteworthy for more than just style. It is "very certain" that the prose prefaces and proverbs have a different author than the original text and consequently are a later addition to the main work.[152] Because these prose additions are not part of the core text and may have become attached to the *Distichs* after antiquity I have not included them in my topical charts nor will I investigate them here.

In the medieval period the *Distichs* served as a common schoolbook for the instruction of choir boys in the Latin language. It particularly influenced the Middle High German poetry of Hartmann von Aue, Gottfried von Straßburg, and Wolfram von Eschenbach in the tenth century.[153] One hundred and fifty years later even Geoffrey Chaucer gives a nod to Cato in the *Canterbury Tales*.[154] The *Distichs* continued to be read and used throughout the Renaissance and the Reformation eras, appearing in various vernacular imitations and parodies and in critical editions published by Desiderius Erasmus, Maturinus Corderius, and Joseph Scaliger among

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[150] Numbers 35 and 44
[151] For more on the prose additions to the *Distichs* see Boas, 11-30 and Bloomer, 158-160.
[152] Chase, 11.
[153] David A. Wells, "Fatherly Advice: The Precepts of 'Gregorius', Marke and Gurnemanz and the School Tradition of the 'Disticha Catonis.'" *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994): 296-332.
[154] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Miller's Tale*. In reference to the carpenter: "He knew no Catoun, for his wit was rude." Catoun is Middle-English/Norman for Cato.

others.[155] Summarizing the collection's reputation, Erasmus remarks that the *Distichs* is "suitable towards good learning, not to say that these verses are so conducive to the eloquence of Roman discourse and toward good habits" (*quod ad bonas pertineat literas, nedum hosce versus tanta Romani sermonis mundicie tamque ad bonos mores conducibiles*).[156]As late as the eighteenth century, we find Benjamin Franklin invoking Cato in his *Poor Richard's Almanac*.[157]

The *Distichs* remained popular, at least in part, because the moral themes they address continued to resonate with individuals throughout the centuries. Many of the themes in the *Distichs* overlap with those in the Sayings of Diogenes and the *Sentences of Sextus*, although there are some significant differences in their interpretations. By studying the differences and similarities in the themes across these three wisdom traditions I will be able to isolate which motifs early Christians emphasized and which they ignored.

## III. Thematic Material

### Methodology

The Sayings of Diogenes and the early Cynics survive in both Greek and Latin traditions. They are collated in G. Giannantoni's *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* (Naples, 1990) which provides the main basis for Robin Hard's useful English language compilation of the various Cynic sayings and anecdotes. In citing various Sayings of Diogenes I have included the original source as well as the reference to Hard's translation and to the Greek or Latin text within

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[155] Boas, LII-LIV.
[156] *Opuscula aliquot Erasmo Roterrodamo castigatore*, preface (Louvain: Thomas Martens, 1514).
[157] Chase, 11.

Giannantoni. Hard is abbreviated as "H" and Giannantoni as "GVB," indicating its locations within volume V letter B of *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae*.

For the purposes of this paper I have adhered to the numerical order of the *Sentences of Sextus* preserved in *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 742 and Rufinus' version. This arrangement is followed by the English editions of Henry Chadwick (1959), Edwards and Wild (1981), and Walter Wilson (2012), the latter two of which acknowledge the Coptic version from the Gnostic library at Nag Hammadi (NHC XII.1).[158] There are 451 gnomes in the *Sentences of Sextus* plus some forty additions which are labeled with a letter after their numeral when relevant. I have treated the additions as entirely separate gnomes; hence all percentages, as seen in Appendix A, are out of a net total of 491, not the standard 451. For the text of Rufinus's Latin translation I use Henry Chadwick's critical edition.[159]

Although the receptions of the *Distichs* have been well studied, the couplets themselves have received comparatively little attention. There is only one (relatively) recent critical edition of the *Catonis Disticha*, that of Marcus Boas (1952).[160] His text, written in Latin, forms the basis of my investigation. There has not been an exhaustive study of the *Distichs* in English published in the last century and Wayland Johnson Chase's translation, the most recent in English, is over ninety years old.[161]

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[158] Richard A. Edwards and Robert A. Wild, eds. and trans., *The Sentences of Sextus* (California: Scholar's Press, 1981); Walter T. Wilson, *The Sentences of Sextus*, Wisdom Literature from the Ancient World 1 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012). Wilson's critical edition also doubles as a considerable study, with countless examples, of the Greek and Roman context of the ideas expressed by the *Sentences*.

[159] Henry Chadwick, ed. and trans., *The Sentences of Sextus: A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

[160] Marcus Boas, *Disticha Catonis* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1952).

[161] Wayland Johnson Chase, *The Distichs of Cato: A Famous Medieval Textbook* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1922).

What follows is a systematic analysis of the maxims found in the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato*.[162] Nearly all gnomes fit into one of fifteen primary thematic groups. On the secondary topics only a handful of gnomes speak and there are a few topics to which just one gnome testifies. My investigation deals with the primary thematic groups: virtue, faith, self-control, actions, learning, transgression, the soul, God, wisdom, speech, women, family, friends/associates, wealth, and fortune/fate. In Appendix A I have organized those groups into several charts to reflect both the actual number of gnomes addressing a particular topic and what percent of the overall collection is spent on that topic. Because the Sayings of Diogenes were never an independent gnomology in antiquity, only the *Sentences* and the *Distichs* are placed within charts. Every theme is found in each tradition except for two: the *Distichs* have no maxims on faith or the soul. Because individual proverbs often fall under multiple theme groups these percentages do not have a summation of 100% nor do the thematic totals equal the net number of gnomes.

**Virtue and Faith**

Virtue is present throughout gnomic collections in general and particularly so in the *Sentences*. The maxims are limited to the practice of virtue and do not concern themselves with its development. They often present vague directions such as "even in the smallest things, live

[162] Throughout the analysis I use the masculine pronoun to refer to readers, authors, students, and teachers. Not only does this reflect the original language when pronouns are employed, but it reveals the gnomes' attitude about virtue, wisdom, learning, etc. in regard to gender. This is not to say that women are absent from education and wisdom literature (Rufinus, as we have seen, translated the *Sentences of Sextus* in Latin at the request of Avita) or that the education of young girls was different than young boys; it does accent, however, the male audience the authors had in mind. For more on women and education see Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 74-101.

strictly" (*μέχρι καὶ τῶν ἐλαχίστων ἀκριβῶς βίου*).[163] No direction is given to what strict living actually is. In other situations, however, the virtue is explicit: "for the greatest virtue of morals always is patience" (*maxima enim morum semper patientia virtus*).[164]

The *Distichs* are far less concerned with a life of virtue than the *Sentences* but do contain a few relevant couplets advising the upright man (*cum recte vivas*) to disregard the insults of bad men or warning the reader not to commit wrongs against the just man (*hominem iustus*).[165] The Sayings of Diogenes generally link asceticism with virtue, but contain similar material to the *Distichs*, teaching that insults have no effect on a good man.[166]

In the *Sentences* the virtuous man is the elect man, that is, the man of God who does nothing unworthy of God.[167] Sextus charges his readers to live as ones who are next to God in rank, treating the body as a temple and never providing a reason for criticism from the world.[168] The optimal way to do this is to honor God, studying and imitating him with a pure and sinless heart.[169] No one can ever be like God, but those who come as close as possible he will love most.[170] Virtuous thoughts will lead to virtuous actions and therefore a virtuous character.[171] And

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[163] *SS* 9: Rufinus' version reads "even in the small things, live carefully" (*etiam in minimis caute age*). Also see Luke 16:10: *ὁ πιστὸς ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ καὶ ἐν πολλῷ πιστός ἐστιν, καὶ ὁ ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ ἄδικος καὶ ἐν πολλῷ ἄδικος ἐστιν* (NA28). "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much" (NIV).
[164] *DC* 1.38
[165] *DC* 3.2, 4.34
[166] Olympiodoros *Commentary on Plato's 'Gorgias'* 476a, 22.2; GVB270; H81.
[167] *SS* 2, 3, 4
[168] *SS* 34, 35, 38, 220
[169] *SS* 44, 46b
[170] *SS* 45; this verse and the ones mentioned before it evoke middle Platonic and Neoplatonic conceptions of the *telos* as derived from Plato (*Theaetetus* 176a-b) and developed in Philo (*Legatio ad Gaium* II.1) and, later, Plotinus (see introduction).
[171] *SS* 56

character reflects lifestyle, thus a devout character leads to a blessed lifestyle.[172] The man of God will desire only what God desires and consider only things appropriate before God to be good.[173]

Sextus is not unaware of the challenge the virtuous man faces and consequently informs the reader he will never find a plethora of believers because such goodness is rare.[174] This is unfortunate because if a man does not truly have faith (and a little faith is no better than none) it is impossible to live well and life is a disgrace.[175] The faithless person, in truth, is a dead man in a living body; conversely, the faithful person is a god in a living body.[176] To be faithful a man must do nothing unworthy of God and be without sin (although if he should sin, it is advisable not to commit the same sin twice).[177] The faithful man is elect, chosen by God, and the goal of his piety is single-fold: friendship with God.[178] He is secure in the hand of God, needing God and God alone.[179] The faithful man will not act poorly toward anyone; his life is a guide for every good deed.[180] The reader is exhorted to honor faithfulness by being faithful.[181] He is to treat both his neighbors and all pious men as he would treat himself.[182]

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[172] *SS* 326a, 326b
[173] *SS* 131, 132, 134, 381
[174] *SS* 243
[175] *SS* 6, 196, 400
[176] *SS* 7a, 7b
[177] *SS* 5, 8, 247
[178] *SS* 1, 86b
[179] *SS* 49, 419
[180] *SS* 166, 212
[181] *SS* 189
[182] *SS* 87 "Treat a pious person as yourself." and *SS* 89 "As you expect your neighbors to treat you, so treat them." Also note *SS* 90, 179, 189, and 210b. See pages 79-80 for Sextus' views on the treatment of friends and associates. Here we can see a Late Antique transmission of the "Golden Rule" in the Judeo-Christian tradition. In Jewish literature, see Leviticus 19:18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself" (NIV). Also see Leviticus 19:34, Tobit 4:15, and Sirach 31:15. In Christian literature, see Luke 6:31: *Καὶ καθῶς θέλετε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς ὁμοίως* (NA28). "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (NIV). Also see Matthew 7:12, Luke 10: 25-28, and Galatians 5:14.

Those who desire to be faithful are warned that no deception will stay hidden for long for drastic situations always reveal the man of faith.[183] Certain behaviors – deceitful, cowardly, and servile natures – cannot coexist with faith.[184] Moreover, bodily passions will not surface in the heart of a faithful man; only upon overcoming worldly lusts and controlling his stomach and genitals can a man be considered faithful.[185]

This ascetic thought is similar to the Cynicism of Diogenes; he held "the noblest of men" (*τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐγενέστατοι*) to be "those who disdain riches, reputation, pleasure, and life, and thus are above their opposites: poverty, ill repute, pain, and death" (*οἱ καταφρονοῦντες πλούτου, δόξης, ἡδονῆς, ζωῆς, τῶν δὲ ἐναντίων ὑπεράνω ὄντες πενίας, ἀδοξίας, πόνου, θανάτου*).[186] Moreover, Diogenes taught that virtue cannot coexist with wealth; the two are mutually exclusive.[187] Diogenes once called a young man's blush the "hue of virtue" (*τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸ χρῶμα*); for the Cynic, honestly and modesty, in both character and possessions, could not be divorced from virtue.[188] Sextus' thoughts on the relationship of a virtuous man and God are similar to Diogenes', who held that good men are image of the gods.[189] Nevertheless, Diogenes also admonished listeners to be wary of attractive appearance, which is no replacement for virtue and often disguises an uncultivated interior.[190]

Despite his remark that good men are images of the gods, Diogenes put very little stock in traditional religious practices. He found such conventions short-sighted and even hypocritical.

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[183] *SS* 200, 325
[184] *SS* 169, 170
[185] *SS* 204, 209, 428, 437, 438
[186] Stobaeus 4.29.19; GVB302; H78.
[187] Stobaeus 4.31.88; GVB 221; H141.
[188] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.54; GVB399; H269.
[189] Diogenes Laertius VI.51; GVB354; H330.
[190] Maximus the Confessor 44.15; GVB378; H322.

For example, the Cynic remarked that a couple offering a sacrifice for the birth of a son had failed to offer a sacrifice regarding how he would turn out.[191] On another he occasion he noted that people pray for one thing while acting in the complete opposite direction, especially in regard to good health.[192] Going further, Diogenes dismissed the idea that initiation into a mystery cult alone could ensure privilege in the afterlife and disparaged superstitions, the interpretation of dreams, and divination.[193] Those who limit themselves by superstitious beliefs or who consult diviners he considered particularly foolish because they were concerned with the intangible while blind to the false steps of their physical life.[194]

**Self-Control and Actions**

The extreme ascetic outlook of Cynicism and the milder approaches of the *Sentences* and the *Distichs* agree that self-control is always to be sought after. Sextus finds it to be the foundation of piety and the wealth of a wise man.[195] He points out that though the length of a man's life is uncontrollable, he can govern whether he lives properly or not.[196] Cato charges the reader to seek whatever is just and honorable while avoiding foolish things (which are rightly denied) and the evil pleasures so that he might protect his reputation.[197] Diogenes teaches that no

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[191] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.63; GVB 343; H197.
[192] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.28; Stobaeus 3.6.35; GVB345; H195, 196.
[193] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI, 39, 42; Plutarch *Quomodo Adulescens Poetas Audire Debeat* 4.21; GVB326, 339; H198-199b.
[194] Diogenes Laetius *Lives* VI. 24, 43, 48; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* VII.4.25.1; *Codex Patmos* 263.59; GVB375, 327, 346, 463, 471B; H206-210.
[195] *SS* 86a, 294, 334
[196] *SS* 255
[197] *DC* 1.31. 4.17

labor holds value unless it favors the soul rather than the body and that those controlled by their desires are just like slaves who must answer their master's summons.[198]

According to all three traditions, excess, decadence, pleasure, and passion are to be avoided at all costs or even specifically fled from.[199] Similar to Diogenes' teaching on the incompatibility of virtue and wealth, the *Sentences* hold that excess, decadence, pleasure and passion are intertwined, together hindering noble things and moderation of the body.[200] They lead to injustice, regrets, poor decisions, and, worst of all, they cause a man to defile God.[201] In the *Distichs* physical health is never to be compromised for pleasure (*voluptas*), although there should be room for joy (*gaudium*) in life in order to better suffer burdens.[202] In fact, all three traditions concur that disease comes from excess and passions.[203]

Because whatever a man honors most rules him, Sextus notes the utmost care must be taken to avoid becoming a slave of passion, in body and in soul.[204] Only when the best things govern a man, will he himself then rule whatever he chooses (although he is to remember there is a greater danger in judging than in being judged, especially because God is his judge).[205] Thus the faithful man ought to strive to conquer the body and its pleasures in any and every way (including Origen's example of self-castration, if Eusebius is to be believed) rather than slave away at their urging.[206]

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[198] Stobaeus 3.7.17; GVB292; H68 and Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.66; GVB318; H151.
[199] *SS* 68, 101, 140; *DC* 2.6; Stobaeus 4.29.19; GVB302; H78.
[200] *SS* 71b, 139, 141, 142
[201] *SS* 138, 206, 429
[202] *DC* 2.28, 2.30, 3.6
[203] *SS* 207; *DC* 4.24; Stobaeus 3.6.17; GVB317; H156.
[204] *SS* 41, 42, 75a, 75b
[205] *SS* 43, 182, 184
[206] *SS* 70, 71a, 78, 273, 274a

For Sextus, the man of self-control is always serious, occasionally smiling, but never doing something as undignified as laughing.[207] He is in absolute control of his tongue and his mind is pure, free of sin and the abode of God: it never longs for what is unnatural or what should not be done.[208]

On physical matters, the gnomologies have more instructions. Body oils are appropriate, but to be used sparingly; perfumes not found among the holy and honorable should be disdained.[209] Control of sleeping habits is essential.[210] Drunkenness is never acceptable and food should be carefully moderated.[211]

Moderation in food is the largest concern for Diogenes. Of all his sayings or anecdotes concerned with self-control ones involving food predominate. He is recorded as uttering the famous proverb that "others live to eat, but I eat to live" (*Διογένης τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους ἔφησε ζῆν, ἵνα ἐσθίωσιν, αὐτὸν δὲ ἐσθίειν ζῇ*).[212] He characterized the stomach as the mythical whirlpool "Charybdis," sucking down life itself (*τὴν γαστέρα Χάρυβδιν ἔλεγε τοῦ βίου*) and even went so far as to make the hyperbolic claim that tyrants arise from those who eat too extravagantly.[213] Diogenes argued that if athletes and performers could conquer (*κρατοῦσιν*) their stomachs for the sake of their bodies, how much more everyone ought to conquer their desires for the sake of moderation (*σωφροσύνης*).[214]

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[207] *SS* 278, 279, 280a, 280b
[208] *SS* 57a, 57b, 61, 69, 91a, 99, 151, 153, 178, 181, 205
[209] *DC* 4.4
[210] *SS* 253b; *DC* 1.2; *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 195; GVB180; H152.
[211] *SS* 265, 269, 270, 435; *DC* 2.21, 4.10, 4.30
[212] Stobaeus 3.6.41; GVB182; H25.
[213] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.51; GVB181; H155 and Julian *Oration* 9, 199a; GVB196; H158.
[214] Stobaeus 3.5.39; GVB451; H67.

Financial self-control is also a prominent concern of Diogenes. Wealth should be used appropriately, not wantonly on prostitutes (*πόρναις*) and vain indulgences.[215] Foolish impulse buys, such as fancy houses, reflect a character of wastefulness.[216] Such squandering results in poverty by necessity; the wise man, of course, chooses poverty by force of reason (*κατὰ γνώμην*).[217]

For Diogenes, being frugal with money does not excuse self-indulgence in other areas such as food, sexual intercourse, and even sleep.[218] Indeed, those subordinate to these three vices he labeled triple-slaves (*τριδούλους*).[219] Love (*ἔρως*) is the occupation of those having leisure; something most people seem to have an abundance of, rotting themselves alive (*ζῶντας σήπειν ἑαυτούς*) with baths (*λουτροῖς*) and sexual pleasures (*ἀφροδισίοις*).[220] Like prostitutes (*πόρναι*), courtesans (*ἑταῖραι*), particularly beautiful ones (*εὐπρεπεῖς*), are to be avoided for they easily gain dominion over many men and are comparable to a lethal mixture of sweet honey and milk (*θανασίμῳ μελικράτῳ*).[221]

Sextus, revealing his ascetic undertones, extends self-control to sexual desires as well.[222] Both husband and wife are to live a marriage of moderation because passionate intercourse is the

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[215] Stobaeus 4.31.48; GVB424; H160.
[216] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.47; GVB233; H161.
[217] *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 169; GVB191; H162a and Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.50; GVB191; H162b.
[218] Stobaeus 3.6.37; GVB317; H157.
[219] *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 195; GVB180; H152.
[220] Stobaeus 3.6.36; GVB104; H295 and Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.51; GVB198; H163.
[221] Stobaeus 4.21.15; GVB 208; H167 and Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.61; GVB209; H166.
[222] *SS* 232, 240

same as adultery.[223] Sexual intercourse outside of marriage is always intolerable; even thinking about adultery makes a man (or woman) an adulterer (*μοιχός*): thus it is with every sin.[224]

Without moderate, generous, and just actions no one can live in agreement with God.[225] Sextus, therefore, exhorts his reader to think about God in all actions and respond accordingly: it is God alone who confirms the good deeds of human beings.[226] Cato, too, directs men not to draw attention to their own deeds.[227] Sextus warns that any desire to be commended for upright deeds should be followed with an expectation to be blamed for sins.[228] Furthermore, the Sextine reader is told to cultivate an attitude which does not complain over what must or must not be done.[229] It is an attitude that seeks to serve others, but is not corruptible by peer pressure.[230]

In general, reason should guide every action; careful thought beforehand will avoid the repetition of past errors.[231] Cato recommends a man attempt only what he is able to do and avoid initiating anything doomed to fail.[232] He should learn from the examples of others, both good and bad.[233] Inactivity and sloth are undesirable in mind and body (and if present in one will soon affect the other), but so too is the presence of over-activity which will inevitably lead to poor performance or illness (*κακοπραγμονῶν*).[234] Everything a man does ought to be constructive in

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[223] *SS* 231, 235, 239
[224] *SS* 233. See Matthew 5:28: *ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ βλέπων γυναῖκα πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι αὐτὴν ἤδη ἐμοίχευσεν αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ* (NA28). "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (NIV).
[225] *SS* 399
[226] *SS* 59, 94, 95a, 222, 224, 303, 304
[227] *DC* 1.15
[228] *SS* 289
[229] *SS* 388, 389a
[230] *SS* 112, 336
[231] *SS* 74, 93
[232] *DC* 3.14, 4.33
[233] *DC* 3.13
[234] *SS* 262, 335; *DC* 3.5

nature (such as the zealous practice of his skill-set).[235] Diogenes was the paragon figure of this kind of constructive activity, even as an old man. One anecdote records his response to those who thought he should ease up because of his age: "If I were running a long-distance race, would I slacken up when approaching the finish-line, rather than push more?" (*εἰ δόλιχον ἔτρεχον, πρὸς τῷ τέλει ἔδει με ἀνεῖναι καὶ μὴ μᾶλλον ἐπιτεῖναι;*).[236]

Sextus instructs that any activity or deed should complement a man's speech, not contradict it.[237] This fits with Diogenes' lessons on speech and action: he taught that those who say the proper things but fail to practice what they preach, so to say, are just like a lyre because it produces beautiful music but cannot hear it.[238]

**Learning**

While learning is key to life in each gnomology, it functions more ambivalently in the Cynic moral tradition. The *Sentences* demonstrate that learning the things of God will lead to wisdom.[239] Learning, however, must be attempted only under a qualified teacher because the study of improper teachings (that is, heresies) is dangerous and sinful.[240] Yet faith is predicated on learning; without it, a man cannot love God.[241] A love of learning and knowledge in a believer causes him to act in truth; still, a desire for education should never surpass a man's love

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[235] *DC* 4.21
[236] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.34; *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 202; GVB83; H384a-b.
[237] *SS* 90
[238] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.64; Stobaeus 3.23.10; GVB320; H284a-b.
[239] *SS* 450
[240] *SS* 248, 290, 338
[241] *SS* 451

for God. Eventually he will reach a point when learning becomes "superfluous for the soul" (*πολυμαθία περιεργία ψυχῆς*).[242]

The *Distichs*, however, place no ceiling on knowledge. More is always better. As seen above, the *Distichs* teach that an inactive mind is imprudent.[243] Without teaching, life becomes an image of death.[244] Knowledge is to be desired, carefully nurtured, and used.[245] Like Sextus, Cato emphasizes the need for a good teacher and instructs the reader to pass on knowledge in turn because teachings of the good things must be spread (*propaganda etenim est rerum doctrina bonarum*).[246]

Both the *Sentences* and the *Distichs* differ significantly from Diogenes' doctrine regarding education. Nearly all the proverbs concerning Diogenes and education put the latter in a negative light, or at best assign it a secondary value. Nevertheless, education is useful once moderation has been achieved, but not before.[247] Cynicism applied this to all the standard subjects: geometry, music, and literature.[248] Even the arts of rhetoric and oratory Diogenes dismissed.[249] Public recitations and festival plays are for the foolish.[250] Diogenes, as Sextus later would, valued virtue above learning. He reasoned that grammarians had no business studying the hardships of Odysseus while remaining blind to their own, just as musicians tune their lyres but not their souls, as mathematicians study the heavens but not where their own feet tread, as

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[242] *SS* 384, 249
[243] *DC* 3.5
[244] *DC* 3.1
[245] *DC* 4.21, 4.27, 4.29, 4.48
[246] *DC* 4.23
[247] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.103; H96.
[248] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.104; H96.
[249] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.41; GVB501; H219.
[250] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.48; GVB393; H99 and Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.24; GVB487; H98.

orators zealously expound virtuous matters while never practicing such things themselves.[251] Virtue must provide the foundation for education, not education for virtue. Moreover, teaching these subjects is unjustifiable as long as there are people who need to be instructed in virtuous living.[252]

Diogenes came to be seen as something of a counterpart to Plato. Whereas Plato's ontological dualism and theories won him an intellectual reputation, Diogenes' simple lifestyle and rancorous wit were often portrayed as mocking aspects of Plato's reputation. On one occasion Diogenes accuses Plato of never giving what was asked of him nor answering the questions put to him (*οὕτως οὔτε πρὸς τὰ αἰτούμενα δίδως οὔτε πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτώμεν' ἀποκρίνῃ*).[253] Another *chreia* features Diogenes asking Plato why he needs to write a book of laws when he'd already written a *Republic* which included laws.[254]

Learning, however, is not completely disregarded. Just as education cannot substitute for virtue, wealth cannot be a surrogate for learning. A rich but uneducated man is like a sheep with a golden fleece: pretty to look at, but nothing remarkable on the inside.[255] In one of the few truly positive remarks on learning in Diogenes' Cynic tradition he says that education comes with a high cost, but bestows high honor: it is like a golden victory crown.[256] Diogenes recognized women could learn as well as men, although he said so by employing typical misogynistic

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[251] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.27-28; GVB374; H97.
[252] Stobaeus 2.1.23; GVB372; H104a and *Gnomologium Parisinum* 7; H104b.
[253] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.26; GVB55; H124b.
[254] Stobaeus 3.13.45; GVB64; H123.
[255] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.47; GVB232; H326 and *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 633, f. 115$^{v}$; GVB379; H327. See also Aelius Theon *Progymnasmata* 5.97; GVB388; H328.
[256] Stobaeus 2.31.92; GVB381; H324.

humor, calling a girl studying letters a "sword being sharpened."[257] Diogenes said that anyone who already possessed an education and a virtuous life, being both extremely clever (*εὐφυέστατος*) and very well mannered (*ἤθη κράτιστος*), had nothing to learn from him.[258]

Education is good because, while it is no substitute for virtue, it does provide self-control (*σωφροσύνη*) for the young, encouragement (*παραμυθία*) for the old, wealth (*πλοῦτος*) for the poor, and ornamentation (*κόσμος*) for the rich.[259] Nevertheless, learning must always be undertaken with discernment. Just as the *Sentences* and the *Distichs* recommend instruction by a good teacher and warn against the intake of improper teaching, Diogenes advises readers of books to only absorb what is truly valuable and to throw away (*ἀπορρίπτειν*) everything else.[260]

**Transgression**

The typical word for a transgression in the *Sentences* is *ἁμάρτημα* (sin), although other words such as *κακία* (wickedness, evil) and *ἀδίκιον* (injustice, malversation) are not uncommon.[261] Rufinus translates *ἁμάρτημα* as *peccatum*, *κακία* as *malitia*, and *ἀδίκιον* as *iniustitia et inpietas*. The inclusion of *inpietas* reflects the traditional Latin emphasis on duty and piety. Each of these words has its own connotations within classical literature. All are found in Christian texts as well, but *ἁμάρτημα* and *peccatum* especially have a Christian context. The word for sin in the Septuagint, Gospels, and other New Testament literature is *ἁμάρτημα*; like Rufinus' translation of the *Sentences*, Jerome's Vulgate translation of the Bible uses *peccatum* in

[257] *Gnomologium Parisinum* 4; H334.
[258] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.64; GVB392; H272.
[259] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.68; GVB380; H271.
[260] *Codex Neapolitanus* II D 22, no.49; GVB378; H291.
[261] *SS* 11, 174, 297a, 297b; 208a; 208b

the Latin. *Peccatum* is also found throughout many other Christian works such as the writings of Augustine and Lactantius.[262] Cato, interestingly, employs the word *peccatum* as well, although with its pre-Christian connotation of a "fault" or "transgression;" he also uses other diction such as *crimen* (offense, crime).[263] Few Sayings of Diogenes deal with wickedness; when they do, they approach it from an ethical perspective, without the religious overtones of "sin." For example, one saying of Diogenes points out that a blameless man, one knowing he has done no evil deed (*κακόν*) will be less seized by fear (*ἧττον φοβοῖτο*) and have greater confidence (*θαρσοίη μάλιστα*).[264]

Concern with sin is essential for the believer in the *Sentences*. Just as the reward of the faithfull man is eternal, so is the punishment of the sinner.[265] This is certain because sin cannot be hidden from God: it leads to destruction.[266] God holds sinners accountable after death.[267] All sin is a disease upon the soul; there are not varying degrees of sin and even the smallest things matter for every sin should be considered profane.[268] Sextus never fully clarifies how a man can know a sinner, but he does offer a few guidelines: the blasphemous tongue reveals an evil mind, which is home to sin, and one with an evil soul will flee from God.[269] Even Cato contributes something here: with time, all transgressions (here plural: *peccata*) will be revealed.[270]

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[262] Augustine *Confessions* I.1: *Et laudare te vult homo, aliqua portio creaturae tuae, et homo circumferens mortalitatem suam, circumferens testimonium peccati sui et testimonium quia superbis resistis* ("And man, some part of your creation, wishes to praise you, carrying around his mortality, and carrying around the evidence of his sin and the evidence that you resist the proud"). Latin text from O'Donnell 3.
[263] *DC* 2.8, 1.5
[264] Stobaeus 3.24.14; GVB305; H278.
[265] *SS* 14
[266] *SS* 66, 203, 208b, 397
[267] *SS* 39
[268] *SS* 10, 11, 208a, 297a, 297b
[269] *SS* 62, 83, 313
[270] *DC* 2.8

Sin itself is left tantalizingly undefined, although it seems to be anything that displeases God, that is, anything immoral.[271] It certainly reflects poorly on one's teachers.[272] Sin is never caused by God or by food or drink, but by an evil demon and evil character.[273] Though neither the hand nor eye actually sins, a man ought to reject any part of the body that might cause him not to live abstinently. [274]

Sextus and Cato understand that transgressions occur in even in the virtuous man (*nemo sine crimine vivit*).[275] Sextus directs the reader to acknowledge his sin should it happen (*ἁμαρτάνοντα δὲ γινώσκειν ἄμεινον ἢ ἀγνοεῖν*); Cato commands that the transgressor immediately castigate himself (*cum quid peccaris, castiga te ipse subinde*), although it is still wise to hide anything which shames from other people lest they make it worse through blame (*Quod pudeat, socios prudens celare memento, ne plures culpent id quod tibi displicet uni*).[276]

**The Soul and God**

The soul is something all believers should be concerned with and Sextus treats it accordingly. The evil demons which tempt believers into sin take ownership of evil souls,

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[271] *SS* 314
[272] *SS* 174
[273] *SS* 110, 114, 305
[274] *SS* 12, 13. See Matthew 5: 29-30: [29]*εἰ δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ὁ δεξιὸς σκανδαλίζει σε ἔξελε αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ· συμφέρει γάρ σοι ἵνα ἀπόληται ἓν τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα σου βληθῇ εἰς γέενναν.* [30]*καὶ εἰ ἡ δεξιά σου χεὶρ σκανδαλίζει σε, ἔκκοψον αὐτὴν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ· συμφέρει γάρ σοι ἵνα ἀπόληται ἓν τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα σου εἰς γέενναν ἀπέλθῃ* (NA28). "If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [30] And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell" (NIV). Also see Matthew 18:8-9 and Mark 9:43-47. For Origen and self-castration among early Christians see the introductory section to the heading "The *Sentences of Sextus*" above.
[275] *DC* 1.5
[276] *SS* 283; *DC* 2.7, 4.40

although they are powerless to hinder a good and faithful soul from following God's way.[277] The soul is of far more importance than the body because a man is only in jeopardy when his soul is in jeopardy.[278] Nevertheless, the soul is in constant danger from the world: every passion it has is an enemy of reason and wisdom, and by extension, God.[279] Only when a man removes his passions can the soul be mastered; until that point the soul does not know God nor is the body truly faithful.[280] The body and soul are intimately connected, thus is it essential to remain pure in body and be able to let things go when necessary.[281] All physical pleasures – gluttony, sexual intercourse, etc. – torture the soul; the needs of the body should be fulfilled with moderation and those of the soul with devotion.[282] The body itself is temporary while the soul is eternal and should be trained consequently, rejoicing over things worthy of praise, but disregarding trivial matters.[283] When it is time for judgment, whatever the soul chases while dwelling in the body will accompany it as evidence.[284] The body, however, is not entirely without merit. It must be pure precisely because it houses the soul, a noble purpose given by God.[285]

The soul may be cleansed by refuting a foolish opinion or hearing the word of God. It is always striving toward heaven (a dangerous journey in which it often comes under attack) and reaches God through wisdom, faith, and his word.[286] Through God's power, the soul of a wise man is always attuned to God, always perceives God, always walks with God, and is always in

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[277] *SS* 348, 349
[278] *SS* 318
[279] *SS* 205
[280] *SS* 75b, 136, 209
[281] *SS* 301, 320, 346
[282] *SS* 345, 411, 412, 413
[283] *SS* 55, 77, 323, 414, 415a
[284] *SS* 347
[285] *SS* 320, 346, 448, 449
[286] *SS* 24, 40, 103, 167, 402, 415b, 420

communion with God.[287] It is faithful and pure, prophesying God's truth, and is filled with a limitless desire to serve God.[288] The believer should love only God more than his soul: a noble soul is next in value to God and is itself a god in a body.[289]

God himself is wise and good, the epitome of righteousness from whom nothing can be hidden.[290] He does not listen to one who loves pleasure.[291] His greatness cannot be fully grasped and his name is unknowable.[292] Without worship, no one can even begin to know God.[293] His actions, although they can be mysterious, are for the betterment of humanity.[294] He guides the good deeds of men, is the cause of all things men do well, and is the source of the good life.[295] The things he gives, such as pure and sinless power to a faithful person, cannot be taken away.[296] God is never insensible, although he will not heed the prayer of a man who disregards the needy.[297] Those who do share with the needy, however, bring joy to God.[298] In fact, the only appropriate offering to God is to do good deeds for men because of him.[299] God alone offers salvation and only to those of his choosing; the believer, however, may pray to God for the salvation of others.[300] Should that prayer, or any other, be granted by God one should be

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[287] *SS* 416, 417, 418, 421
[288] *SS* 287, 441
[289] *SS* 82d, 106b, 129, 292, 376a
[290] *SS* 26, 30, 66
[291] *SS* 72
[292] *SS* 27, 28
[293] *SS* 369
[294] *SS* 31, 33
[295] *SS* 104, 113, 215
[296] *SS* 36, 92, 404
[297] *SS* 25, 217, 380
[298] *SS* 382
[299] *SS* 47
[300] *SS* 373, 374

regarded as having power from God.[301] Prayer is not something to be taken lightly: one never should seek the impossible from God and anything unworthy of him; instead one should pray to receive not what one wishes but what is necessary and useful.[302]

Not only do the subjects of the soul and God receive far less attention, if any, in the Sayings of Diogenes and in the *Distichs*, but they are perceived far differently. Diogenes is recorded referencing the soul just twice and the *Distichs* make no mention of it at all. The Cynic philosopher and Sextus agree that the soul of certain individuals is the indwelling of divinity. For Diogenes "the Muses dwell… in the souls of the disciplined (or educated)" (*αἱ Μοῦσαι κατοικοῦσιν… ἐν ταῖς τῶν πεπαιδευμένων ψυχαῖς*); for Sextus "the soul of a religious man is a god in a body" (*ψυχή ἀνθρώπου θεοσεβοῦς θεός ἐν σώματι*).[303] Diogenes also links the soul to friendship, calling a friend "one soul resting in two bodies" (*μία ψυχή ἐν δυσί σώμασι κειμένη*).[304]

Both Diogenes and Cato comment briefly on the gods. Cato reminds his readers they are mortal and therefore should be concerned with mortal affairs, not with gods in heaven.[305] Moreover, while in the *Sentences* prayer and communion with God are desirable, the reader of Cato is directed never to seek the god's will through lot or divination because he is sovereign and makes that decision without human input.[306] In addition, there is no mention of the god's rejoicing over good deeds.

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[301] *SS* 375
[302] *SS* 29, 88, 122
[303] Papyrus Michigan inv. 41.1.6-7; GVB387; H314 and *SS* 82d.
[304] Stobaeus 2.33.10; GVB416; H313.
[305] *DC* 2.2
[306] *DC* 2.12

Most intriguing, the Catonian reader is to avoid the sacrifice of animals (which displeases the god) and burn incense (*tus*) instead.[307] While several centuries earlier this exhortation would have seemed odd – in the Greek and Roman world, animal sacrifices were, after all, a hallowed gift to the gods seeking to win their service or approbation – the *Distich's* remarks on animal sacrifice correspond with the Neoplatonic thought of Porphyry (and circumstantially support a late imperial composition date of the *Distichs*). Like Celsus, Porphyry was an anti-Christian pagan philosopher and often criticizes Christianity through Judaism and vice versa. He attacks the Jewish practice of animal sacrifice as cruel and advises his reader to abstain from such methods.[308] The Greeks and Romans were hardly unused to blood and animal sacrifices; for a third century Roman like Porphyry to suggest that a particular group's sacrificial practices were detestable is notable. While it is improbable that Cato's reasoning against performing animal sacrifices is the same as Porphyry's, it is quite possible the author of the *Distichs* was influenced by similar shifting patterns of thought.

Diogenes' comments on religious life – mentioned above – illustrate the widespread popularity of sacrificial practices in the Hellenistic period. In one apophthegm the verb *θύω* ("to sacrifice or offer by burning") is used twice.[309] But although one may expect Diogenes' clearly vitriolic outlook on religious practices to be reflected in his views on divinity, his Cynicism instead presents an ambiguous take on divinity. His thought, not unsurprising, differs from the *Sentences* and (sometimes) the *Distichs* in that it is polytheistic.

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[307] *DC* 4.38
[308] Gillian Clark, trans. *Porphyry: On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 2000), 2.26.
[309] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.63; GVB343; H197.

Various traditions seem to have preserved, or attributed, incongruent views to him. Cicero, for example, records that Diogenes' found that "the prosperity and favorable circumstances of the wicked refute all the strength and power of the gods" (*improborum prosperitates secundaeque res redarguunt, ut Diogenes dicebat, vim omnem deorum ac potestatem*).[310] He also cites Diogenes' giving the example of Harpalus, the successful Aegean pirate, as "providing witness against the gods" (*contra deos testimonium dicere*).[311] Tertullian, the early Christian author, presents an agnostic and typically pragmatic Diogenes: when questioned if the gods exist he answers "I do not know, except that it is expedient (that they do)" (*Diogenes consultus… item, "an dei essent, nescio," inquit, "nisi ut sint expedire"*).[312] Epictetus and Diogenes Laertius, on the other hand, each acknowledge an atheistic tradition around Diogenes, but record the philosopher himself dismissing it in his usual acerbic style: having been asked if he "esteemed the gods," Diogenes replied, "And how could I not, when I consider you (to be) hateful to the gods?" (*Λυσίου τοῦ φαρμακοπώλου πυθομένου εἰ θεοὺς νομίζει, "πῶς δέ," εἶπεν, "οὐ νομίζω, ὅπου καὶ σὲ θεοῖς ἐχθρὸν ὑπολαμβάνω;"*).[313]

**Wisdom**

An aim prominent in Diogenes' Cynicism, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* is wisdom.[314] The Sayings of Diogenes teach that a wise man – the philosopher – is often

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[310] Cicero *On the Nature of the Gods* III.88; GVB335; H211.
[311] Cicero *On the Nature of the Gods* III.83; GVB335; H210.
[312] Tertullian *Ad Nationes* 2.2; GVB337; H213.
[313] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.42; GVB334; H214b. For a slightly different account of the same encounter see Epictetus III.22.90-1.
[314] *DC* 4.12

not recognized or is mistaken for one merely pretending to have wisdom.[315] Even pretending to have wisdom, however, is somewhat redeeming in that it indicates a desire for wisdom.[316] It is not easy to achieve wisdom; in order to do so one must overcome a natural tendency to neglect oneself and reproach others.[317] Too often, Diogenes found, someone guilty of a poor lifestyle rebukes another for the same thing.[318] Such self-neglect in turn hinders self-instruction and wisdom.[319] Indeed, Diogenes notes that though people are willing to pay for lamp oil to see in darkness, most are unwilling to pay anything to become wiser and thus recognize what is best in life (*τὰ τῷ βίῳ βέλτιστα*).[320]

Furthermore, when asked "What is the most difficult thing?" (*τί χαλεπώτατον*), he answered, "knowing oneself" (*τὸ γιγνώσκειν ἑαυτόν*), reasoning that self-love (*φιλαυτία*) too often blinds one to personal failings.[321] Knowing oneself goes beyond self-instruction: it is the ability to recognize what is truly human.[322] Those with this knowledge are human beings (*ἄνθρωποι*); everyone else is simply a member of the crowd (*ὄχλος*).[323] Wisdom is best instilled in youth before familiarity with the crowd obstructs one's willingness to receive instruction; in one maxim Diogenes likens admonishing the old (*γέροντα νουθετεῖν*) to treating a corpse (*νεκρόν ἰατρεύειν*).[324]

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[315] *Codex Patmos* 263, no.60; H21.
[316] *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 174; GVB365; H84 and Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.64; GVB364; H85.
[317] Stobaeus 2.31.61; GVB315; H275.
[318] John of Sardis, *Commentary to Aphthonius' Progymnasmata* p.40, 11-13; GVB388; H282.
[319] Stobaeus 3.1.55: GVB384; H274.
[320] Stobaeus 2.31.74; GVB316; H290.
[321] Maximus the Confessor 69.18; GVB308; H310.
[322] *Codex Patmos* 263, no.55; GVB331B; H57.
[323] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.50; GVB273; H58.
[324] Maximus the Confessor 16.12; GVB383; H332.

Despite all of his rhetoric on wisdom, Diogenes' preference for simplicity and practicality remained constant. He had no use for the fancy logic and reason of the orator which traded wisdom for clever speech. Diogenes Laertius clearly illustrates this in the following story: "After someone syllogistically concluded that he had horns, having touched his forehead [Diogenes] said 'I don't see any.' Also likewise, after someone said that there is no motion, having stood up, he began walking around." (*πρὸς τὸν συλλογισάμενον ὅτι κέρατα ἔχει, ἁψάμενος τοῦ μετώπου, 'ἐγὼ μέν,' ἔφη, 'οὐχ ὁρῶ.' ὁμοίως καὶ πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα ὅτι κίνησις οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀναστὰς περιεπάτει*).[325]

Although the teleological aim of the *Sentences* is to be in communion with God, the immediate goal is wisdom. Sextus devotes a significant portion of his text to the origin of wisdom: it comes from God and thus the wise man enjoys an intimate relationship with God.[326] Wisdom is closely tied to self-control, an idea found in Philo, Musonius Rufus, Clement (citing Epicurus), and Stobaeus as well.[327] Wisdom eludes the man who thinks he is wise, but comes to him who knows he is not.[328] Again, we have echoes of Greek philosophy, although of a much earlier origin than Neoplatonism: there are strong Socratic roots behind the concept that a man cannot attain wisdom until he knows he is not wise.[329]

Indeed, Sextus parallels Diogenes' teachings that such a man – the philosopher, the sage (*σοφός*) – is rarely recognized by others; he seems useless to the general population.[330] To a

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[325] *Lives* VI.38-9; GVB479; H117.
[326] *SS* 24, 97, 143, 144, 244, 287, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 406, 415b, 416, 417, 418, 421, 422, 423, 424, 439, 450
[327] *SS* 294, 301, 389b; Philo *De Somniis* II.40; Musonius Rufus *frag.* 34; Clement *Stromata* VI.2.24.8; Stobaeus 3.17.11
[328] *SS* 199, 333
[329] Plato *Apology* 21d.
[330] *SS* 145, 214

fellow wise man, though, he is invaluable.[331] He who does recognize a wise man and consequentially honors him is honored in return, while he who does not dishonors himself, goodness, and God.[332] The sage is above earthly matters: he cannot be forced into action nor harmed; if his body is killed, his soul is set free from its chains.[333]

The wise man is prudent with his time, ignoring temporary things, such as wealth, instead focusing on the origin of what is good.[334] He endeavors to exceed everyone in good judgment.[335] He seeks to mature his reason, thereby knowing himself and the good within him.[336] The philosopher is serious-minded at all times.[337]

The *Distichs* take a different approach to wisdom. There is no mention of God or even good; wisdom, rather, accompanies the savvy and pragmatic man. This man can be stern like the Sextine philosopher, but is also gentle and changes his manner to suit the circumstances.[338] For the sake of a joke he may even appear foolish.[339] The Sayings of Diogenes included a similar thought: wise men use humor (*ἱλαρότης*) to sweeten their associations with unpleasant people.[340] The Catonian wise man is found in all levels of society, even among slaves.[341] He controls his success and failures, mentally preparing for difficult days ahead of time.[342] He learns from experience and from study, although he is not so foolish as to believe everything he reads – a

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[331] *SS* 147, 218
[332] *SS* 219, 226, 229, 246
[333] *SS* 302, 306, 322, 363a, 363b, 392
[334] *SS* 100, 227, 252
[335] *SS* 332
[336] *SS* 315, 316, 398
[337] *SS* 278
[338] *DC* 1.7
[339] *DC* 2.18
[340] Antonius Melissa II.32.61; GVB330; H292.
[341] *DC* 3.10
[342] *DC* 2.24, 4.3

thought found earlier in the Sayings of Diogenes.[343] He never stops learning for life is a teacher of infinite lessons; its lessons, however, are rarely bestowed upon those who simply have many years behind them, but on those who intentionally foster growth through learning.[344]

In the *Sentences*, it is knowledge itself, and not victory in an argument, that brings wisdom.[345] The philosopher will never claim to be wise nor boast about anything for it is his discretion, not his tongue, that God values.[346] Wisdom is found not only in the words of a sage, but in his silence.[347]

**Speech**

Maxims involving words and speech receive the most attention of any topic in both gnomologies and feature prominently among the Sayings of Diogenes as well. Each text is very concerned with the exercise of verbal restraint. In the *Sentences*, this can be seen especially in theological matters while in the *Distichs* it is centered on cultivating a shrewd reputation. In the Sayings of Diogenes verbal self-control is seen as an extension of the ascetic lifestyle.

Not unsurprisingly, both Sextus and Cato applaud truthfulness.[348] Diogenes, on the other hand, takes a more indirect approach by condemning falsehood and pointing out that the truth is bitter (*πικρός*) and distasteful (*ἀηδής*) to the mindless (*ἀνόητοι*).[349] In the *Sentences* truthfulness

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[343] *DC* 2.27, 3.18. On Diogenes also see *Codex Neapolitanus* II D 22, no.49; GVB378; H291.
[344] *DC* 3.1, 4.27, 4.29, 4.48
[345] *SS* 187
[346] *SS* 284, 389b, 426
[347] *SS* 427
[348] *SS* 158, 165a; *DC* 3.3, 3.4
[349] *Excerpts from Manuscripts of Florilegia of John of Damascus* 2.31, 22; GVB313; H289.

is close to wisdom, and therefore God.[350] More surprisingly, Sextus sanctions the occasional lie should the situation call for it.[351] He is very aware of worldly deception and advises the reader not to believe everything that one hears.[352] Cato, too, warns his reader to be on the lookout for deceptive words.[353] In distich 1.26 he even condones similar repayment in speech: "the friend who feigns with words and is not faithful in [his] heart, to him do likewise: thus having done so [his] artifice is mocked" (*qui simulat verbis nec corde est fidus amicus, tu [cui] fac simile: sic ars deluditur arte*).[354]

Diogenes is concerned with all empty didacticism, and particularly with flatterers and hypocritical rhetors. He condemns those who pretend to be philosophers but engage in sophism (*ἐριστικῶς ἐρωτῶντα*).[355] Any word or argument spoken only to please is a strangling sweetened with honey (*μελιτίνην ἀγχόνην*).[356] Conversely, the best thing men can offer is frankness (*παρρησία*).[357] Diogenes considered those who flatter and inform on others to be wild beasts.[358] One descriptive apophthegm has Diogenes playing on the similarities of the words *κόραξ* (crow) and *κόλαξ* (flatterer) as he comments that "it is much better to fall victim to crows than to flatterers, who devour good men while they are still living" (*πολύ κρεῖττον εἶναι ἐς κόρακας ἀπελθεῖν ἢ ἐς κόλακας, οἵ ζῶντας ἔτι τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς τῶν ἀνδρῶν κατεσθίουσι*).[359] Even Plato does not get a free pass: "After Plato saw [Diogenes] washing vegetables, he went forward [and]

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[350] *SS* 168
[351] *SS* 165d, 165e. Sextus, however, also condemns lying at various points (159, 165c, 393).
[352] *SS* 404
[353] *DC* 1.27, 4.20
[354] Boas' text reads *tu qui fac simile: sic ars deluditur acte*, although *cui* seems to fit better grammatically and *arte* better in terms of vocabulary. Chase, alternatively, reads *tu quoque fac simile: sic ars deluditur arte*.
[355] Stobaeus 3.33.14; GVB363; H116.
[356] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.51; GVB505; H221.
[357] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.69; GVB473; H222.
[358] Maximus the Confessor 11.31, 22.20; GVB423-4; H319-20.
[359] Athenaeus 6, 254c; GVB425; H321. *κόρακας ἀπελθεῖν* is phrases essentially meaning "go to hell."

softly said to him, 'if you began to flatter Dionysus, you would not need to wash vegetables:' to which he – likewise softly – replied, 'And if you were to wash vegetables, you would not (have to) flatter Dionysus'" (*ὅτι Πλάτων θεασάμενος αὐτὸν λάχανα πλύνοντα, προσελθὼν ἡσυχῇ εἶποι αὐτῷ: 'εἰ Διονύσιον ἐθεράπευες, οὐκ ἂν λάχανα ἔπλυνες:' τὸν δ' ἀποκρίνασθαι ὁμοίως ἡσυχῇ, 'καὶ σὺ εἰ λάχανα ἔπλυνες, οὐκ ἂν Διονύσιον ἐθεράπευες'*).[360]

As seen above in his remarks on education and wisdom, Diogenes disparaged the vain talk of orators whose words did not conform to their actions.[361] Likewise, someone who outwardly praises another for overcoming his desire for wealth while inwardly envying the super-rich deserves only condemnation.[362] And yet speech, rhetorical arguments, and reason themselves are not bad; indeed, Diogenes remarked that to be properly prepared for life there is a need for argument (*λόγος*).[363] That argument, however, must not be empty.

Sextus, Cato, and Diogenes agree it is undesirable to be a braggart; Cato even goes so far as to suggest that a man should proclaim the actions of others while leaving his own unnamed.[364] The *Sentences* teach that flattery will only lead to more sin for the sinner and, for the faithful man, the love of renown will lead to the loss of renown.[365] But whereas Sextus tells his readers that it is dishonorable to receive public laudation (God should receive credit for whatever a man does well), Cato merely advises his readers to judge the praise they receive and reject it should they find it to be false.[366] Diogenes adopts a much more extreme position, saying "When many

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[360] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.58; GVB56; H125.
[361] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.28; GVB504; H224.
[362] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.28; GVB237; H142.
[363] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.24; GVB303; H111.
[364] *SS* 284, 432; *DC* 1.15; Stobaeus 3.22.40; GVB306; H325.
[365] *SS* 149, 188
[366] *SS* 286, 390; *DC* 1.14

praise you, then consider yourself to be worthy of nothing, but whenever no one (does so), and others blame (you), then (consider yourself to be worthy) of much" (*ὅτε οἱ πολλοί σε ἐπαινῶσι, τότε νόμιζε ἑαυτόν μηδενός ἄξιον εἶναι, ὅταν δὲ μηδείς, ἀλλὰ ψέγωσι, τότε πολλοῦ*).[367]

The collections are acutely cognizant of the power of words and exhort the reader to always think before speaking.[368] Diogenes considered negative words spoken about him to reflect a poor inner character.[369] Sextus wrote that words are not to be wasted for wisdom goes hand-in-hand with brevity of speech.[370] All three traditions teach that garrulousness and vain talk demonstrate ignorance while silence avoids foolish words.[371] Thus it is important not to fight over small issues lest small words become great as anger impedes the mind.[372] And when among believers, the *Sentences* advise listening before speaking.[373] But just as a man should know when to be silent, all three wisdom traditions encourage him to speak when the moment is right, either to discourage wrongdoers or to offer advice, though it may be unwelcome.[374] Knowing when to speak and when to be silent are of equal importance.[375]

In the *Sentences*, whereas knowledge of God will produce a man of few words, excessive talking will not only lead to sin, but cannot avoid it.[376] The *Distichs* also declare that the man who minds his tongue and wisely keeps silent is near to God (*virtutem primam esse puto*,

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[367] *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 633, f. 199$^{v}$; GVB435; H76.
[368] *SS* 151, 153, 154; *DC* 1.10. Particularly humorous is *DC* 2.9: *corporis exigui vires contemnere noli: consilio pollet, cui vim natura negavit* (Do not despise the strength of a small body: prudence thrives, for whom Nature strength denied).
[369] *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 179; GVB429; H350.
[370] *SS* 152, 156, 253a
[371] *SS* 157; *DC* 1.12, 3.19; Stobaeus 3.34.16; GVB475; H273.
[372] *DC* 2.4, 2.11
[373] *SS* 171a, 171b
[374] *SS* 160, 161, 162b; *DC* 1.9, 3.15; Stobaeus 3.13.42; GVB307; H223.
[375] *SS* 164b; Stobaeus 3.34.16; GVB475; H273.
[376] *SS* 155, 430

*compescere linguam: proximus ille deo est, qui scit ratione tacere*).[377] For the reader of the *Sentences*, there is no greater need for economy of words than when discussing God. Silence is better than careless words concerning God for it is better to throw away (*προέσθαι*; in Rufinus: *perdere*) a life than a single word about God.[378] A man should only speak well about God, and only then if he is blameless.[379] Still, it is dangerous to speak even the truth about God because a true word about God should be honored as God himself.[380] The true word about God is God's word and it is through God's word that the soul ascends to God.[381] Thus the blasphemer, the man who slanders God with falsehoods, is the most impious of men; he is abandoned by God.[382]

Yet the reader is warned to talk less about God than about the soul and even then not to talk about God with just anyone.[383] He is to say nothing about God to the godless, the multitude, those of a vile nature, those corrupted by fame, those with an impure soul, and those with an undisciplined soul.[384] A man is to consider the souls of his audience: he is free to share about God with those whom he seeks to persuade, but with the caveat that he who speaks a word about God to those with no right to hear becomes a betrayer of God.[385]

The final measure of a man's words is his actions, an idea also found in Diogenes' remarks on empty rhetoric. Sextus explains that a man's life should reflect his words and those words are the test for his actions.[386] Before speaking about God, he should secure a reputation

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[377] *DC* 1.3
[378] *SS* 362, 366, 431
[379] *SS* 84, 173, 223, 225, 356, 410
[380] *SS* 352, 355
[381] *SS* 353, 357, 420
[382] *SS* 85, 175, 367, 368
[383] *SS* 350, 361
[384] *SS* 351, 354, 360, 401, 407, 451
[385] *SS* 195, 358, 365
[386] *SS* 177, 408

through works of love.[387] All believers are to be of few words, but of many deeds; they are to do great things rather than just promise them.[388]

**Women and Family**

The *Sentences* and the *Distichs* are concerned with the relationship between spouses, especially in how the wife may affect her husband. But while the *Distichs* follow the conventional views on marriage of Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle (which place marriage as a function of political, social, and natural order through reproduction and household management), the *Sentences* adopt the more personal approach of Homer and Plutarch (in which the physical and emotional communion (*κοινωνία*) is as essential as the economic communion).[389] Sextus, for example, notes a believing wife should exercise moderation (*σωφροσύνη*); if she does, she glorifies her husband.[390] Plutarch, in his *Coniugalia Praecepta* (Advice to the Bride and Groom), praises the modest (*σώφρων*) wife numerous times.[391]

For Cato, however, a wife's worth is not in her modesty, or even in her dowry, but in her usefulness (*frugi*).[392] This perspective is clearly seen in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* as

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[387] *SS* 359
[388] *SS* 185, 383
[389] See Cynthia Patterson, "Plutarch's *Advice to the Bride and Groom: Traditional Wisdom through a Philosophic Lens*," in *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom and a Consolation to his Wife: English Translations, Commentaries, Interpretative Essays, And Bibliography,* edited by Sarah Pomeroy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 135-137, and Judith Evans-Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 60.
[390] *SS* 235, 237
[391] Plutarch *Coniugalia Praecepta,* 9, 25, 26. In *Plutarch's Advice,* edited by Sarah Pomeroy.
[392] *DC* 3.12

Ischomachus and Socrates converse about the duties and training of a wife.[393] Xenophon characterizes the marriage as a relationship of equals. In doing so he grants the wife equal moral potential; indeed, the superior partner is the one who contributes the most.[394] While his version of the partnership recognizes a greater degree of virtue in the wife than later authors such as Aristotle or the Pythagoreans, it comes short of distinguishing an emotional bond.[395]

Susan Treggiari has demonstrated the profound impact of the Greek philosophical tradition on Roman marriage ideologies, an impact which can be seen in the *Distichs*.[396] Cato, ever pragmatic, recommends leaving a wife if she should begin to be irksome (*nec retinere [uxorem] velis, si coeperit esse molesta*.[397] This is the same adjective used in a similar thought by Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus, censor in 131 BC.[398] Stobaeus, in his gnomic anthology, lists numerous sayings regarding this exact subject from much earlier witnesses such as Menander.[399] Plutarch, following a different tradition, discourages divorce, noting marriages often need time to ripen.[400] Sextus expands this thought, considering divorce shameful because it is a sign that the husband is unable to govern his wife.[401] He recognizes that a wife has her own

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[393] Sarah Pomeroy, trans. *Xenophon's Oeconomicus* VII, especially VII.5-32 in *Xenophon Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Also see the commentary on marriage on pages 58-61.
[394] Xenophon *Oeconomicus* VII.13
[395] Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 183-204, especially 186.
[396] Treggiari, 183-228.
[397] *DC* 3.12; Plutarch, despite is his earlier comments about marriage needing to ripen, seems to condone the divorce of a wife of poor character whatever her dowry, birth, or beauty. See *Coniugalia Praecepta* 22.
[398] Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae* I.6.
[399] Stobaeus 4.22.3.
[400] *Coniugalia Praecepta* 2.
[401] *SS* 236

mind and he advises the husband to respect his wife so that she will respect him in turn, another apophthegm also found in Plutarch.[402]

Cato, too, acknowledges that a husband may be fortunate enough to have a useful wife; if so, he is to mark well her words.[403] He ought to be wary, though, of her tears which can manipulate his thoughts.[404] Though overall distrustful of women, this distich does ascribe one noteworthy positive element to the wife: she is "useful" not only in the traditional manner (procreation, dowry, family connections, etc.), but for her advice, i.e. her mind.

Another influence on Cato's perspective may have been the Stoic philosopher Seneca. Like Xenophon, Seneca affirmed that women are the moral equals of men and elsewhere writes that the roles of a husband and wife are equal as well.[405] In his *De Matrimonio* (On Marriage), which is no longer extant but survives in fragments, Seneca seems to have endorsed marriage – even for philosophers – and emphasized loyalty to the husband.[406] Chastity (*pudicitia*) is the wife's greatest virtue; the connotation of *pudicitia* is broader than physical fidelity, but implies devotion and reliability to the husband in all areas.[407] Nevertheless, Seneca appears to have included a section impugning sensuality and excess pleasure.[408]

Jerome, ever the champion of asceticism, seized upon this aspect of Seneca's work (along with many other sources, both Christian and non-Christian) in his *Adversus Iovinianum* (Against Jovinian) which is more of a treatise on virginity and Christian asceticism than a work

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[402] *SS* 238; *Coniugalia Praecepta* 39.
[403] *DC* 3.23
[404] *DC* 3.20
[405] Seneca *De Consolatione ad Marciam* 16.1; *De Beneficiis* 2.18; Treggiari, 215.
[406] Treggiari, 215-18; see also Seneca, *Epistle* 9.17-8; *De Consolatione ad Helviam* 13.3.
[407] Treggiari, 218-19.
[408] Treggiari, 216-19.

countering Jovinian.[409] Jerome's references to Seneca provide most of our knowledge of the *De Matrimonio* (including its title), but as those references are chiefly geared toward Jerome's attempts to prove his adversary Jovinian wrong about the relative virtues of virginity and marriage discerning between what is Seneca speaking and what is Jerome is often murky.[410] Overall, however, it is clear that while Seneca maligned a lack of temperance in marriage (not surprising given his Stoic outlook), he supported the institution.

Diogenes is silent regarding wives. One lone maxim records him endorsing an open society in which wives, and therefore sons, are held in common by all because everything consists of universal particles; this remark, however, is out of character for Diogenes and likely later became attributed to him as Diogenes Laertius suggests.[411] Humorously, the same maxim also mentions that Diogenes supported cannibalism: a theme found as well in a brief passage of Theophilus' *Apologia ad Autolycum* which accuses Diogenes of encouraging children to sacrifice and eat their parents.[412] Diogenes' view on children is probably closer to his other statements on the stubbornness of the old.[413] For example, Diogenes is recorded as comparing clay pots to the training of children: before being fired they are malleable, but afterward they can

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[409] Jerome's hostility towards marriage seems to have come as something of a surprise to his friends and soon after the *Adversus Iovinianum* began circulating in 393 AD he penned a verbose apology to the Roman senator, and married man, Pammachius. See Jerome *Epistle* 48 (*CSEL* 54).
[410] Treggiari, 216-18; for Jerome's views on Christian marriage and divorce in his other writings and their differences from the Roman perspective of the time see Evans-Grubbs, 248-50, 53.
[411] *Lives* VI.72-3; GVB132, 128; H215.
[412] *Apologia ad Autolycum* 3.5; GVB134; H216.
[413] Maximus the Confessor 16.12; GVB383; H332.

no longer be shaped.[414] He also taught that sons should respect their fathers.[415] Conversely, fathers are to provide for all the needs of their sons.[416]

Sextus understands that marriage and raising children is a difficult task and considers it acceptable to renounce (*παραιτεῖσθαι*) marriage for the sake of God.[417] If a man chooses to marry and beget children, he accepts responsibility to raise them properly: Cato counsels teaching them an art or trade if he has no riches to offer them.[418] The children must also learn to love both parents with equal devotion.[419] Sextus takes a broader approach and holds that one, whether child or adult, should love all relatives (*ὁμόφυλος*).[420] Of utmost importance, however, is the children's faith; the parents should be more grieved by immorality among their living children than by their children who no longer live.[421] In fact, the faithful man endures the loss of his children with thankfulness.[422]

**Friends/Associates**

The Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences*, and the *Distichs* offer words of wisdom in regard to friends and associates. Diogenes, as we have seen, defined a friend as "one soul resting in two bodies."[423] Sextus paraphrases the "Golden Rule" at several points, but most noticeably in maxim 210b when he instructs "As you wish your neighbors to treat you, treat them also" (*ὡς*

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[414] Stobaeus 2.31.87; GVB382; H293.
[415] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.65; GVB396; H270.
[416] Stobaeus 4.26.23; GVB394; H288.
[417] *SS* 230a, 230b
[418] *DC* 1.28
[419] *DC* 3.24
[420] *SS* 106a
[421] *SS* 254, 256
[422] *SS* 257
[423] Stobaeus 2.33.10; GVB416; H313.

*θέλεις χρήσασθαι σοι τοὺς πέλας, καὶ σὺ χρῶ αὐτοῖς*).[424] Cato urges the reader to love others and, if possible, serve even those he does not know since friends acquired by favor are more useful than a crown.[425] All three traditions call for patience and compromise when the reader is in a quarrel with a friend.[426] They also advise generosity toward others and gratitude in all things, even rebukes.[427]

In the *Sentences*, the believer should not mistreat or act inappropriately toward anyone.[428] A man should never require something inappropriate of someone else, but pray for the will to do good even to adversaries (although it is best that he consider no one an adversary in the first place).[429] Cato realizes that people change with time, but rather than let the friendship lapse if a friend's manner changes, the reader should remember his previous pledge of friendship.[430] Similarly, Diogenes considered one of the prime purposes of friendship to be accountability.[431] Instruction is an obligation of friendship; one should keep a friend virtuous.[432] Moreover, anyone possessing virtue ought to be regarded as a friend.[433]

Tested friends are valuable assets for the Catonian reader: they guard a man's secret thoughts and provide support in times of illness (if no friends come in times of need, it is not the

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[424] *Codex Patmiensis* 263 reads *ὡς θέλεις χρήσασθαι σοι τοὺς πέλας, καὶ σὺ τοὺς πέλας χρήσασθαι*. *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 742 replaces *πέλας* (neighbors) with παῖδας (children). For a look at the "Golden Rule" within the *Sentences of Sextus* and the Judeo-Christian literary tradition see footnote 182.
[425] *DC* 1.11, 2.1
[426] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.68; GVB419; H303; *SS* 293; *DC* 1.34, 1.36, 2.11.
[427] *Codex Patmos* 263, no.66; Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.29; GVB246c, 277; H301-2; *SS* 210a, 24; *DC* 1.20, 1.40, 3.9, 4.42.
[428] *SS* 211, 212
[429] *SS* 105, 180, 331
[430] *DC* 4.41
[431] Stobaeus 3.13.44; GVB149; H87.
[432] Plutarch *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 36, 74c; GVB420; H297.
[433] Themistius *On Virtue* 43 ff. Sachau; H95.

gods' fault, but his own).[434] Diogenes agrees that good friends are an anchor in troubled times.[435] Cato counsels his readers to look at a man's life, not his wealth, when seeking a faithful friend.[436]

Diogenes does not see friends as inherently useful as Cato, but emphasizes the relationship: a true friend, for example, will never accept a mean or careless word (*φαῦλον λόγον*) concerning a friend.[437] In all such matters, friends have confidence in one another.[438] If someone does speak ill about their friends, it is best to be that individual's enemy.[439] Too often, however, people diligently select their traveling companions for long voyages while welcoming just anyone as a companion for life.[440]

**Wealth and Fortune/Fate**

Another key subject for the three wisdom traditions is wealth and material possessions. Diogenes, Sextus and Cato agree that the wealth and a love of riches will not bring fulfillment.[441] Diogenes viewed all possessions as unnecessary; even Socrates, with his little house, couch, and sandals, was too attached to material goods.[442] Diogenes, on the other hand, once told a thief who was stealing the money bag he used as a pillow, to get on with it so he could go back to sleep.[443] The Cynic philosopher, furthermore, is recorded as teaching that love of money (*φιλαργυρία*) is

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[434] *DC* 1.23, 1.32, 2.22, 4.13
[435] Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca* I, p.125, 3-4; GVB417; H296.
[436] *DC* 4.15
[437] Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca* I, p.125, 5-6; GVB418; H304.
[438] *Gnomologium Monacense Latinum* 24.3; GVB438.
[439] Maximus the Confessor 10.25; GVB428; H306.
[440] *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 197; GVB415; H300.
[441] *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 181; Stobaeus 4.39.20; GVB300-01; H106a-b; *SS* 274b; *DC* 4.1.
[442] Aelian *Historical Miscellany* 4.11; GVB256; H135.
[443] *Gnomologium Lindenbrogium* no.1; GVB243; H22.

the mother-city (*μητρόπολις*) of all evils.[444] Gold appears pale because so many plot (*ἐπιβουλεύω*) to possess it.[445] He colorfully described wealth as the "vomit of fortune" (*τὸν πλοῦτον τύχης ἔμετον εἶναι*).[446] Those who hoard wealth fare little better in his eyes: they are actually "wealthy-beggars" (*μεγαλόπτωχος*).[447] Their desire for more riches is insatiable; though they already have much, they yearn for yet more.[448] This hints at the core of Diogenes' thought on wealth: virtue cannot co-exist with wealth.[449] Poverty, on the other hand, is the driving force behind virtue and philosophy.[450] For Diogenes, wealth is defined not by gold and possessions, but by self-sufficiency (*αὐτάρκης*).[451] In such a way – by living in the moment, ruled by no desire – one can find happiness.[452] A desire for wealth, like desires for food, sleep, and physical pleasures, is another area of life which needs to be checked by self-control. Interestingly, however, several maxims imply that wealth can be somewhat redeemed by its use. If hoarded, it is clearly a waste and has led to a life which is no life; if used correctly, it will make one a wealthy individual in Diogenes' eyes in addition to the world's.[453] Exactly what the correct use is, however, is never stated.

Sextus, too, although employing a different reasoning, urges his reader that possessions are obstacles of the world (even gold is powerless to save a man's soul from evil) and therefore fleeting; rather, he who professes to follow God ought to embrace a simple lifestyle and share his

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[444] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.50; GVB228; H138.
[445] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.51; GVB227; H318.
[446] Arsenius p.209, 11; GVB220; H139.
[447] Stobaeus 3.10.62; GVB240; H140.
[448] Stobaeus 3.10.45; *Codex Patmos* 263, no.67; GVB229, 246d; H146-7.
[449] Stobaeus 4.31.88; GVB221; H141.
[450] Stobaeus 4.32.11; GVB223; H19.
[451] *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 180-1; GVB241, 361; H16-7.
[452] *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 181; Stobaeus 4.39.20; GVB300-01; H106a-b.
[453] *Codex Palatinus Graecus* 297, no.71, f. 118$^{r}$; *Codex Patmos* 263, no.54; GVB231, 246b; H144, 148.

wealth with other believers.[454] For the sake of the needy he must also tithe regularly, even if the recipients are ungrateful, and he must never do so for the attention of mankind, but rather because love for humanity is essential for the man of God.[455] Indeed, whenever sharing, it is best to do so out of contempt for possessions.[456] Material wealth is not worthy of honor: wisdom is.[457]

The *Distichs*, while acknowledging that a lust for wealth creates a void of happiness, do not condemn possessions themselves; instead they are very aware of wealth's temporary status and encourage careful management, wise saving, frugal spending, and even learning a trade.[458] It is appropriate for a man to advance his riches, but risk should always be avoided.[459] For a man to spend wealth to satisfy his desires is also good, but he must take care to never gain the reputation of a spendthrift or, on the other hand, that of a penny-pincher.[460] In times of poverty, the reader should be content and patient, remembering he emerged naked at birth, and always be thankful for any possessions.[461] More important than wealth, however, is the health and safety of his body; it must be secure before any pursuit of riches is undergone.[462] Cato, too, encourages generosity, but only under certain conditions: first, when a man receives a request he should be liberal in order to secure the goodwill of the supplicant(s); second, when he possesses much and nears death.[463]

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[454] *SS* 116, 227, 228, 242, 295, 296, 405 52, 330
[455] *SS* 52, 328, 330, 342, 371, 372
[456] *SS* 82b
[457] *SS* 191, 192
[458] *DC* 1.24, 1.39, 2.17, 4.19
[459] *DC* 4.7
[460] *DC* 2.19, 4.16
[461] *DC* 1.21, 3.11, 4.35
[462] *DC* 1.6, 4.5, 4.36
[463] *DC* 3.9, 4.8

Death is never distant for the Catonian reader. He faces continual reminders of his own mortality.[464] Rather than be paralyzed by a fear of death, however, a man should fully live each day because it may be his last.[465] Because of the fragility of his life, any hope to profit from another's passing is wrong.[466] Nevertheless, hope itself should be tightly held, even at the point of death.[467] Fortune is a fickle thing and changes on a whim: in times of adversity hope is essential.[468] Moreover, there will always be a man whose lot in life is currently worse than one's own present circumstances.[469] In times of peace and abundance, though, a man must be prepared for misfortune to strike at any moment.[470] Bad men will experience times of success, but the reader is not to worry: Fortune will have her way with them as well (though that is not a cause for rejoicing, no matter how tempting).[471]

Cato's understanding of the arbitrariness of Fortune is an echo of Diogenes' fundamental outlook: the Cynic, when asked what he had gained from philosophy, replied "If nothing else, that at least then I have been prepared for every Fortune" (*εἰ καὶ μηδὲν ἄλλο, τὸ γοῦν πρὸς πᾶσαν τύχην παρεσκευάσθαι*).[472] On another occasion he said that he thought he could see Fortune ready to attack him, but unable to land a blow because of the immunity his squalid lifestyle granted

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[464] *DC* 4.37
[465] *DC* 1.22, 1.33, 2.3, 4.43
[466] *DC* 1.19, 4.47
[467] *DC* 2.25
[468] *DC* 4.26
[469] *DC* 4.32
[470] *DC* 1.18, 4.26
[471] *DC* 2.23, 4.47
[472] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.63; GVB360; H113.

him.[473] It seems Fortune did occasionally strike him, however, because he would thank her for training him through such mishaps.[474]

Because of the prevalence of Fortune, someone once said to Diogenes that life is bad; he corrected them, arguing that it is not life itself which is bad, but a life lived badly.[475] How one lived was essential to him. On a different occasion he remarked, "Why live, if you have no interest in living well?" (*τί οὖν,ζῇς, εἰ τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν μὴ μέλει σοι;*).[476] Living well takes an intentional mindset; each day must be diligently approached.[477] Anything less and people will naturally do only what they need to live, falling short of doing what they need to live well.[478]

He approached old age and death in much the same way. While Diogenes considered old age to be life's winter-time (*χειμών*), he himself refused to relax even as an old man.[479] He taught that death was not evil and, characteristically, berated a man for lamenting that he would die in a foreign land; after all, Diogenes pointed out, "From every direction, the road to Hades is the same." (*πανταχόθεν γὰρ ὁδὸς ἡ αὐτὴ Ἅιδου.*)[480] Despite death's inevitability, much as Cato later would, Diogenes encouraged people to cling to that most precious thing in life: hope.[481]

Fortune exists in the universe of the *Sentences*, but because it does not control God's Grace (if it did, it would control God as well), it is merely an extension of his will. Only two

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[473] Stobaeus 2.8.21; GVB148; H114.
[474] *Codex Patmos* 263, no.58; Stobaeus 4.44.71; GVB331e, G351; H115a-b.
[475] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.55; GVB310; H108.
[476] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.65; GVB362; H109.
[477] Plutarch *On Tranquility of Mind* 20, 477c; GVB464; H112.
[478] Stobaeus 3.4.85; GVB311; H110.
[479] Maximus the Confessor 41.24; Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.34; *Gnomologium Vaticanum* 202; GVB83, 85; H312, 384a-b.
[480] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.68; Maximus the Confessor 36.19; GVB86-7; H390, 392. The fear of dying, and being buried, in a foreign land was embedded in classical society. Centuries later Monica, the mother of Augustine, would struggle with this as well, only overcoming it in her last years. That she did so was considered praiseworthy by Augustine and his contemporaries. See *Confessions* XI.9 for Augustine's account of Monica's death.
[481] Stobaeus 4.46.20; GVB329; H309.

maxims mention it in the collection, and only then to dismiss it: since God is greater than fate, and since faith, not fate, produces a believer, it is of no concern.[482]

## IV. Wisdom, Society, and Religion

### Overlapping Themes

Many of the proverbs fall into multiple categories. When this happens, it tends to be the same topics overlapping again and again. A single gnome will often advise on self-control and actions, self-control and wealth, or self-control and virtue. Transgressions frequently correspond with actions or deeds. Wealth and friendship regularly intersect. Some themes appear with many other subjects, such as wisdom, speech, virtue, self-control, and, in the *Sentences*, God. Faith, the soul, and God are also closely entwined. None of this is surprising. It is natural, for example, for wisdom and speech to overlap: "wisdom follows brevity of speech" (*βραχυλογίᾳ σοφία παρακολουθεῖ*).[483]

Certain topics, however, are never linked. The lack of connections among topics can be more revealing than the connections which are present. For example, learning is connected (both positively and negatively) with virtue and wisdom, but never with friends and associates or fate. Women and fate are not linked, nor are friends and associates related to matters of self-control, fate, or family. Fate, it seems, has a time-honored dominion over wealth, but can be checked by self-control and virtue, or even (for Sextus) faith.

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[482] *SS* 436a, 436b
[483] *SS* 156

In the *Sentences* women are never linked with wisdom, faith, God, or the soul. In this way the *Sentences of Sextus*, though Christianized and in the format of a general wisdom handbook, are male-oriented and more similar to the Sayings of the Desert Fathers (*Apophthegmata Patrum*) than to the *Lausiac History* of Palladius which includes entries on many women including both Melania the Elder and Melania the Younger. This suggests these regions of a man's life never crossed, although other literature presents us with a very different picture.[484]

On the other hand, Cato, though misogynistic in outlook, does connect women and wisdom: "Remember to bear the tongue of [your] wife if she is useful" (*uxoris linguam, si frugi est, ferre memento*).[485] On another occasion he advises: "Do not wish to keep [your wife], if she should begin to be irksome" (*nec retinere velis, si coeperit esse molesta*).[486] Diogenes associates women and learning, but with the trenchant observation that they are then a "sword being sharpened."[487]

**Gnomes and Society**

The gnomes and *chreiai* form an incomplete picture of ancient society in the later Roman Empire. No maxim mentions government, law, or the military. They do not present a cohesive doctrine or way of life. There are internal contradictions within each collection. In one sense, they are timeless: there are no contemporary references (*chreiai* attributed to Diogenes being the

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[484] See, for example, Prudentius' account of the martyrdom of Agnes (*passio Agnetis*), the lives of Melania the Elder and Younger, or the *Lausiac History* mentioned above.
[485] *DC* 3.23a
[486] *DC* 3.12
[487] *Gnomologium Parisinum* 4; H334.

exception by their very nature). They are highly personal, and often practical, in nature. At best, we have a set of appropriate actions for readers. This set, however, is not inclusive and certainly not exhaustive.

Between the gnomologies, some themes do stand out. Wealth, wisdom, speech, self-control, and actions are pertinent to all. Wealth is temporary. Wisdom is highly desirable. Speech is tied to wisdom and to relationships with God and other men. Self-control is necessary for a good life. Actions are to be undertaken with much care and forethought.

Life tends to be a sequence of interactions with the external and internal. More specifically: with friends and other men, a wife, wise men/philosophers, and food, wine, and pleasure; and God or Fortune, one's own soul, and one's own body. Some relationships are best avoided (those with evil demons), some moderated (those with physical pleasure), and others highly desired (those with wise men, virtuous men, faithful friends, and God himself).

The reader is also presented with a selected stock of roles with which to identify: the student of wisdom and knowledge, the wise man, the faithful man, the virtuous man, the sinner, the rich man, the poor man, the drunkard and glutton, the husband, and the friend. These roles are diverse enough that they do not indicate a particular social or economic sphere; in fact, they seem to be appropriate and applicable for every class of society. They are certainly more universal than the moral systems of philosophers or the elite educational writings of Quintilian, Ps.-Plutarch, Philo, Cicero, and John Chrysostom.

**Pagan and Christian Moral Teachings in Wisdom Literature**

Throughout this paper I have attempted to highlight the areas in which the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* agree and disagree. The similarities

and disagreements are generally not absolute, but a difference in degree. Thus far I have mentioned these areas only to illustrate the subjects found in each collection. Now I will examine the ramifications those subjects have on pagan and early Christian moral education.

The absence of any mention of faith or the soul in the *Distichs* is unsurprising; these are concepts with strong Christian overtones and one does not expect to encounter them in pagan wisdom literature, at least not in any remarkable quantity. Likewise, the virtuous man, transgression, and God receive no more than seven statements between them. Early Christianity did not invent these notions, but it did emphasize them in ways other religions and moral systems did not. Virtue was of course valued before the advent of Christianity, but it is seen as an aspect of self-control and wisdom rather than as an entirely separate entity, albeit one that has deep ties to faith, the soul, and God.

Though they stress virtue, the Sayings of Diogenes – attributed to a pre-Christian figure – similarly give little thought to any divine being, faith, or transgressions. The gods, with the exception of Fortune (*Τύχη*), are uninterested in human affairs. Religious behavior and superstitious beliefs are mocked. In the *Distichs*, too, God is depicted as distant and impersonal when he is mentioned at all. His power is implied, but never with the innate goodness of the Christian God. Instead Fortune (*Fortuna*) dominates daily life. Her favor falls on both the good and the wicked and is apt to change at any moment. Transgressions are more along the lines of an error or mistake (*peccatum*) or an offense (*crimen*) than a moral "sin."

Wisdom, speech, self-control, and wealth are major themes in both gnomologies. Each tradition agrees that wisdom is desirable, but whereas Diogenes and the *Distichs* see it as useful for navigating life, the *Sentences* view wisdom as a stepping stone to God. The *Sentences*, furthermore, focus less on wisdom (*σοφία*) itself than on the individual who possesses and

practices wisdom, i.e. the sage (*σοφός*). Wise speech, the outward sign of a faithful and virtuous man, is the most straightforward way to transmit wisdom. While the speech of a believer is to be carefully weighed when speaking about God and theology, it generally receives treatment similar to that by Diogenes and Cato. Some things, such as truth and modesty, are universal in ancient morality.

The ascetic Christian concept of self-control clearly has counterparts in pagan thought. Moderation with food, wine, and sleep are common to each gnomology. Only in the *Sentences*, however, is there a connection to the soul. Because it is necessary to master the body in order to purify the soul, all pleasures (including sexual intercourse with one's wife) must be held in check.[488]

Wealth and possessions are dealt with very differently. Although there are some commonalities (wealth is not permanent, riches do not bring fulfillment, generosity is admirable, etc.), it is the differences that are striking. Cato teaches diligence and discrimination in financial matters and supports the advancement of personal wealth when gain is certain and risk is minimal. Diogenes, of course, had no use for possessions: for him, a single bag, simple cloak, and walking staff were wealth enough. Anything more would eradicate the Cynic's independence, leaving him vulnerable to the expectations of society and the whims of Fortune. Sextus, too, places little value in possessions. They, like bodily pleasures, are things of this world and thus, at best, unnecessary for salvation and, at worst, impediments to wisdom and virtue. They are to be shared with other believers in order to be used for a greater purpose. Though there are parallels with Cynicism in that material possessions can hinder wisdom and virtue, the

[488] Though this is also present in Stoic thought, even if not the *Distichs*.

relationship of wealth and salvation in Sextus' moral teachings is a remarkable departure from Diogenes' thought. It likely emerged directly from canonical literature such as the Acts of the Apostles ("All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.") and the Gospel of Matthew ("Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'") [489]

Learning and knowledge are imperative across the Sayings, the *Sentences*, and the *Distichs*. Each tradition supports an active mind and instruction under good teachers (one wonders how many unqualified schoolmasters and pseudo-philosophers the average citizen encountered). For Diogenes, though, learning is never superior to virtue and self-control. The development of virtue allows an education to properly function, but can never substitute for it. Sextus' emphasis on learning is similar to the Greek and Roman value of philosophy and moral teaching. But while the *Distichs* see learning as a catalyst for success and wisdom in life (the opposite of Diogenes' view), the *Sentences* go further and, as usual, connect it with God. Sextus' maxims also remark that learning will eventually become useless for the soul. Apparently it is possible for a believer to become too erudite.

In terms of the morality conveyed through wisdom literature, what most separated the Christian outlook from the pagan outlook was their divergent perspectives concerning human agency and teleological purpose. Operating under the assumption that a creator God had

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[489] Acts 2:44-45 and Matthew 19:21 (NIV), respectively. NA28 Greek text: [44]*πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύσαντες ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινὰ* [45]*καὶ τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις ἐπίπρασκον καὶ διεμέριζον αὐτὰ πᾶσιν καθότι ἄν τις χρείαν εἶχεν·* (Acts 2:44-45); *ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι, ὕπαγε πώλησον σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα καὶ δὸς τοῖς πτωχοῖς καὶ ἕξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολούθει μοι* (Matthew 19:21). Also see Luke 12:33 and 18:22.

fashioned an ordered world (and by extension, universe), the Christian's morality derived from that creator God's will. Any egocentric desires were, by nature of the ordered world, inconsistent with the creator God's will and therefore of secondary value at best. The purpose of a Christian's life reached beyond his own instincts, his surroundings, even the behaviors of the society around him. Selfless actions were encouraged and God became the primary motivation behind speech, thoughts, and actions.

The approach of the Greek and Roman worlds, conversely, approved actions based on personal desires; its normal values placed one's own interests in the center, rather than those of the Christian creator God. The Sayings of Diogenes do, of course, teach self-denial as do the *Sentences of Sextus*, but even here the self-denial of the Cynic serves himself while the self-denial of the Christian advances the will of the creator God.

Before drawing more concrete conclusions, it will be necessary to investigate other gnomic collections in depth to see if they have a similar distribution of topics and imperatives regarding them. Having asked what exactly the gnomic authors are saying, it then becomes possible to investigate subsequent questions such as "why did the author say that" and "where did he find that saying" or "from what tradition is he drawing?"

From the Sayings, the *Sentences*, and the *Distichs*, however, a limited picture does emerge. There are general themes – virtue, self-control, actions, learning, wisdom, speech, women, family, friends/associates, wealth, and fortune/fate – which are found to one degree or another in each text. With exception for certain overtly Christian motifs (transgression, the soul, faith, and God), the same themes dominate in each gnomology. These themes often have similar foundations, but are approached through a pagan, almost stoic, perspective in the *Distichs*,

through a mildly ascetic, Christian perspective in the *Sentences*, and an extremely ascetic, Cynic perspective in the Saying of Diogenes.

## V. The Christianization of Pagan Wisdom and Morality

### Wisdom Traditions in the Context of the Early Church

The most basic questions the Cynic teachings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* raise, however, are not founded on any particular theme, but harken back to the tension between the pagan cultural legacy and Christian thought: can one system of morality build on another? Is the influence of Greek and Roman (and even Jewish) thought upon early Christian morality appropriate or should there be a clear division between the two? Is it permissible, even beneficial, for Christian morality to have at least a partial foundation in pagan philosophic and wisdom traditions? The Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* each demonstrate a different way Christians harmonized that tension at the practical level.

### Cynicism, Asceticism, and Diogenes in Late Antiquity

The Sayings of Diogenes endured long after the Hellenistic era practitioners of Cynicism ceased to roam the streets of Athens. Little is heard of Cynicism during the late Roman Republic, though it evidently had garnered (or perhaps maintained) a negative reputation. Cicero remarks: "Indeed, the Cynics' entire doctrine of philosophy must be rejected, for it is inimical to modesty, without which nothing can be upright, nothing honorable" (*Cynicorum vero ratio tota est*

*eicienda; est enim inimica verecundiae, sine qua nihil rectum esse potest, nihil honestum*).[490] More unflattering mentions of Cynics are present in authors ranging from Horace and Martial to Aelius Aristides and Lucian.[491] During the first two centuries AD Cynicism experienced a revival, with advocates preaching on street-corners and filling every city.[492] Demetrius, the first century Cynic friend of Seneca, receives a rare positive report.[493] Despite the apparent pandemic of Cynics, only twelve are known historical figures in the late first and second centuries, and, of these twelve, only five (Demetrius, Dio Chrysostom, Demonax, Oenomaus of Gadara, and Peregrinus Proteus) have enough testimony to receive significant treatment.[494] Lucian is the source for two of the five, although he approaches them quite differently.

Lucian depicts Demonax (who was his teacher) as the best (*ἄριστος*) of all philosophers and, as such, one who ought to be emulated.[495] Demonax embraced many forms of philosophy, but above all imitated Diogenes.[496] Lucian, on the other hand, views Peregrinus Proteus as an attention-seeking fraud though the latter did, at least, have the same teacher – Agathoboulos the Egyptian – as Demonax.[497] Peregrinus is a particularly intriguing figure because he was not only reputed to have been a Cynic, but also a Christian.

This idea of a Cynic-Christian is not as surprising as it might seem at first: Diogenes was a recurring figure in the developing Christian intellectual culture; early Christians, at least

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[490] Cicero *De Officiis* I.148. Latin text from Walter Miller, *M. Tullius Cicero: De Officiis with an English Translation*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913).
[491] Horace *Sermones* I.4.93, II.1.85; *Epistles* I.17.18; Martial IV.53.1-8; Aelius Aristides *Oration* 46.2; Lucian *De Morte Peregrini*.
[492] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 3; *Fugitivi* 16.
[493] Seneca *De Beneficiis* VII.
[494] James A Francis, *Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 60.
[495] Lucian *Demonax* 2.
[496] Lucian *Demonax* 5.
[497] Lucian *Demonax* 3; *De Morte Peregrini* 17.

learned ones, were familiar with the wisdom tradition of Diogenes and his lifestyle. Through grammatical and rhetorical exercises in school Christians were introduced to the Sayings of Diogenes. He was the archetypal pagan ascetic (though, for many Christians, he took his shamelessness too far) and as such fascinated Christians in Late Antiquity.[498]

As we have seen, Cynicism was mentioned by many authors and poets of the early empire. During this time Diogenes became a stock character type (*πρόσωπον*), recognizable by his sayings, lifestyle, and worn cloak and staff. In this role he materializes in the works of Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, and Epictetus.[499] While it was not until later antiquity that the study of proverbs and *chreiai* became fully systematized, they were in use in elementary education as copy exercises from the early empire.[500] Quintilian advocates their use and Seneca cites various gnomes as easy-to-memorize examples for children.[501] There is much evidence for the use of the Sayings of Diogenes as verses to copy and memorize in the schoolroom.[502]

As Christianity developed, sayings attributed to Diogenes continued to flourish in the schoolroom and even outside of it. Diogenes' stock character became integrated into Christian literary culture, a curiosity from centuries ago to be used as an example both positive and negative. Origen, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus all praise Diogenes' and the Cynics' paucity in their writings and even cite Diogenes as an ascetic

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[498] Krueger, *Symeon*, 92.
[499] Dio Chrysostom *Orations* 6, 8, 9, 10; Plutarch *Life of Alexander* 14; *On Exile* 15, 605de; GVB32; H236c; *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 21, 1044b; GVB147; H37c; *Quomodo Adulescens Poetas Audire Debeat* 4.21; GVB326, 339; H198-199b; Epictetus III.22.60, 88, 91-2.
[500] John Barns, "A New Gnomologium: With Some Remarks on Gnomic Anthologies I" *CQ* 44, no. 3/4 (July – October 1950): 136.
[501] Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* I.1.35-36; Seneca *Epistle* 33.
[502] Barns, "A New Gnomologium I," 136. Also recall from above that in Aelius Theon (first century) uses seven Diogenes *chreia* out of his twenty-nine examples; Hermogenes of Tarsus (second century) uses one out of three; Aphthonius of Antioch (late fourth century) uses one out of four; Nicholas of Myra (fifth century) uses one out of eight (Krueger, "Diogenes" 32, also see note 17).

paradigm in defense of monasticism.[503] Gregory Nazianzen uses Diogenes as the archetype of someone living in poverty for the sake of others.[504] On another occasion he cites Diogenes as an example that Christians could learn from moral pagans, much "as gathering roses from the thorns" (*ὅσα ῥόδ'ἐξ ἀκανθῶν συλλέγων*).[505]

Cynic shamelessness and immodesty, however, was not to be admired or imitated; Augustine disgustedly writes that "Those dog-like philosophers, that is to say the Cynics, did not see this; what else do they proclaim against a human sense of modesty other than a dog-like opinion, that is a filthy and shameless opinion?" (*Hoc illi canini philosophi, hoc est Cynici, non uiderunt, proferentes contra humanam uerecundiam quid aliud quam caninam, hoc est inmundam inpudentemque sententiam?*).[506] John Chrysostom, though he employed Diogenes as an ascetic exemplar, also condemned his immodesty and, most unlike the Apostles, his desire for glory.[507] As well, Theodoret of Cyrrhus denounced Diogenes and other Cynics on similar charges though he too applauded Diogenes' poverty.[508]

The Christian handling of Diogenes' significance is a key aspect of their synthesis of the pagan culture. Moreover, its positive and negative treatment from author to author, or even within the same author, reflects not only the differing opinions towards Diogenes and the pagan legacy among Christian intellectuals in general, but also the mixed image – both ascetic and

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[503] Origen *Contra Celsum* 2.41, 6.28, 7.7 (*PG* 11, 861-2, 1337-8, 1429-30); Basil of Caesarea *Ad Adolescentes de Legendis Gentilium Libris* IX (*PG* 31, 585-6); Theodoret of Cyrrhus *De Providentia Oratio* VI (*PG* 83, 649); John Chrysostom *Adversus Oppugnatores Vitae Monasticae* 2.4, 5 (*PG* 47 336-40).
[504] Gregory Nazianzen *Epistle* 98.
[505] Gregory Nazianzen *Carmina* I.2.10, 11.215-227 (*PG* 37, 696).
[506] Augustine *De Civitate Dei* XIV.20.
[507] John Chrysostom *Liber in Sanctum Babylam contra Julianum et contra Gentiles* 8-9 (*PG* 50, 545-6); *Homily on 1* Corinthians 35.4 (*PG* 61, 302).
[508] Theodoret of Cyrrhus *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* 1.24, 50; 3.53; 6.20; 12.32, 46, 48-9.

immodest – of Diogenes those intellectuals had inherited through the conglomerate of *chreiai* ascribed to the Cynic.

The ascetic practices and teachings of early Christianity, especially among the monastic movement of the fourth and fifth centuries, had much in common with Cynicism. While asceticism has a smorgasbord of forms across time and geography, for our purposes it will be useful to follow the definition promulgated by Richard Valantasis, namely that asceticism may be seen as "performances within a dominant social environment intended to inaugurate a new subjectivity, different social relations, and an alternative symbolic universe."[509] There are two key ideas here. First, asceticism involves some sort of "performance" (despite the assumption that Christian ascetic humility avoids show) and consequentially an audience (which may be social, divine, or personal).[510] For Cynics, that audience was social – the city of Athens in the case of Diogenes; for Christian desert ascetics, the audience could be social (a small community), divine (one's unseen Father in heaven who sees what is done in secret), or personal. In this last case it may be either "the 'other self,' the deconstructed person, the thoroughly socialized being who is being rejected; or it may be the new emergent person, the one who is the imaginary being who is being fashioned into existence by asceticism."[511]

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[509] Richard Valantasis, "Constructions of Power in Asceticism," *JAAR* 63, no. 4 (Winter 1995), 797. For an overview of the approaches to and perspectives on asceticism see Elizabeth A. Clark, "The Ascetic Impulse in Religious Life: A General Response," in *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent Wimbush and Richard Valantasis, 505-510 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[510] Valantasis, "Constructions," 798. See Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991) for an exploration of the significance of what the audience observes, notes, and records in terms of performance, not only of the ascetic, but of Christian exemplars in general.

[511] Valantasis, "Constructions," 798.

Second, asceticism involves a new subjectivity wherein "the ascetic develops a subjectivity alternative to the prescribed cultural subjectivity."[512] If "subjectivity" is denoted as "the historically and culturally determined status of human identity" realized in "the person that a society authorizes and designates as an agent, an actor, and a subject," then a new subjectivity is effectively an identity which either does not conform to or actively opposes the standard set of social roles within a particular cultural environment.[513] Thus asceticism is more than a set of prescribed acts; it requires an intentional re-forging of identity. Nevertheless, the ascetic performance consists of "learned and repeated activities and behaviors."[514] It is these prescribed acts, these repeated behaviors, in which the more obvious parallels (self-sufficiency, simplicity, and a lack of indulgence) between Cynicism and Christian asceticism are most evident.

Less evident connections are present in the literature of both early Christians (Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, etc.) and non-Christians (Lucian, Julian, etc.). Even the Sayings of Diogenes and writings of Paul have some close similarities. For example, Diogenes says that "the love of money is the mother-city of all evils" (*τὴν φιλαργυρίαν εἶπε μητρόπολιν πάντων τῶν κακῶν*), a proverb later cited by Paul: "for the love of money is the root of all evils" (*ῥίζα γὰρ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἐστιν ἡ φιλαργυρία*).[515] Whether Diogenes and Paul were drawing from a common proverb or the latter meant to cite the former, both traditions agree on the underlying concept: the love of money is behind all evils.

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[512] Valantasis, "Constructions," 795.
[513] Richard Valantasis, "Competing Ascetic Subjectivities in the Letter to the Galatians," in *Asceticism and the New Testament*, ed. Leif Vaage and Vincent Wimbush, 211-230 (New York: Routledge, 1999): 213.
[514] Richard Valantasis, "A Theory of the Social Function of Asceticism," in *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent Wimbush and Richard Valantasis, 544-552 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 548.
[515] Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VI.50; GVB228; H138; 1 Timothy 6:10a.

Christians often employed the same rhetorical techniques as the Cynics, especially the use of a proverb in response to a question. For example, this is often the format of the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, a text which in both form and subject matter has many parallels to the Sayings of Diogenes. The lifestyle promoted by the Cynics and the Desert Fathers shares a basis of self-abnegation and rejection of society, although this second attitude – remarked upon by Augustine above – was exercised very differently by Cynics and Christians.

Some Cynics were jailed or even martyred for speaking out against Roman authority figures.[516] Peregrinus Proteus, the second century Cynic-Christian satirized by Lucian, immolated himself in a manner similar to that of a Christian martyr. Lucian's narrative paints Peregrinus in very negative light: he began his adult years in vice, progressing from adultery, to pederasty, and finally to patricide.[517] Such recriminations are common to the genre and demonstrate Lucian's approach: Peregrinus is depicted "as a living character type, a variation on the parvenu of dubious origins, rising by dishonest means, notoriously immoral, and profiting by ignorance."[518]

After the death of his father, so Lucian's account goes, Peregrinus fled from country to country, eventually settling in with a Christian community in Palestine. Here his fortunes took turn for the better:

> In a short time he showed them to be children, becoming a prophet, leader, the head of the synagogue, and everything by himself. And he not only interpreted and explained their books, but he himself wrote many. And they stood in awe of him as a god, consulted him as a lawgiver, and assigned him as their patron, just after that one

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[516] Cassius Dio *Historia Romana* LXV.15.5; Herodian, *Ab Excessu Divi Marci* I.9.2–5.
[517] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 9-10.
[518] Francis, 56.

> whom they still worship, the man crucified in Palestine for bringing this new cult into the world.[519]

Peregrinus soon became the victim of persecution and was imprisoned for some time before the governor of Syria pardoned him.[520] At this point Peregrinus returns home to find many of his possessions gone and the issue of his father's murder still at large; to appease the townspeople and silence his enemies, he donned the garb of a Cynic and publicly donated his inheritance to the local government. He was at once declared: "The only philosopher, the only patriot, the only emulator of Diogenes and Crates!" (*ἕνα φιλόσοφον, ἕνα φιλόπατριν, ἕνα Διογένους καὶ Κράτητος ζηλωτήν.*).[521]

Peregrinus then returned to the Christians, but, having eaten some forbidden food, was exiled from their community.[522] It was at this point that he trained with Agathoboulos in asceticism.[523] Now a Cynic philosopher, Peregrinus traveled to Rome and, in keeping with what seems to be the Cynic custom of the time, he began to slander the emperor, Antoninus Pius; unlike some of his predecessors, he was not beheaded, but merely banished by the city prefect.[524]

The chronicle continues with Peregrinus moving on to other locations, such as Greece, and engaging in similar activities. The climax of Lucian's narrative is Peregrinus's death by

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[519] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 11: *ἐν βραχεῖ παῖδας αὐτοὺς ἀπέφηνε, προφήτης καὶ θιασάρχης καὶ ξυναγωγεὺς καὶ πάντα μόνος αὐτὸς ὤν, καὶ τῶν βίβλων τὰς μὲν ἐξηγεῖτο καὶ διεσάφει πολλὰς δὲ αὐτὸς καὶ συνέγραφεν, καὶ ὡς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνοι ἠδοῦντο καὶ νομοθέτῃ ἐχρῶντο καὶ προστάτην ἐπεγράφοντο, μετὰ γοῦν ἐκεῖνον ὃν ἔτι σέβουσι, τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν ἐν τῇ Παλαιστίνῃ ἀνασκολοπισθέντα, ὅτι καινὴν ταύτην τελετὴν εἰσῆγεν ἐς τὸν βίον.* Greek text from A. M. Harmon, trans., *Lucian: Works with and English Translation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1936). The word Lucian uses for "leader" is *θιασάρχης* which literally means "leader of *θίασος*," i.e. of a Bacchic revel. Lucian thus portrays Peregrinus in the role of a leader of Bacchic worshipers, Jews, and Christians.

[520] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 12-14.

[521] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 14-15.

[522] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 16.

[523] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 17.

[524] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 18.

immolation at Olympia. While his fellow Cynics looked on (and some even held torches), Peregrinus leapt onto a pyre and died, having declared he would return after death as a "spirit of the night" (*δαίμονα νυκτοφύλακα*) as predicted by the Sibyl.[525] This declaration of apotheosis and spectacular means of death immediately spawned Christ-like tales of his return; one man reported seeing him walking around in white garments (*ἐν λευκῇ ἐσθῆτι*).[526]

Lucian's satirical portrayal of Peregrinus is a condemnation of frauds and those who believed them, such as Christians. Aulus Gellius, on the other hand, presents a very different view of Peregrinus Proteus; rather than a histrionic charlatan, Aulus Gellius describes Peregrinus as "a serious and steadfast man" (*virum gravem atque constantem*) upon visiting the Cynic in his shack outside of Athens.[527] Lucian, no doubt, would have seen Aulus Gellius as having been taken in by Peregrinus' scam.[528] Yet however much (or little) truth there is in Lucian's biased account, Peregrinus is an example of how the Christian and Cynic lifestyles could converge in one man (albeit at different stages in his life).

Another figure who embodied both Christian and Cynic lifestyles was Maximus, the philosopher and usurper patriarch of Constantinople (although his Cynic's shaggy hair needed to be trimmed for the ceremony).[529] When Maximus first arrived in Constantinople in 379 AD he appeared in typical Cynic garb, though he had converted to Christianity some time earlier.[530] Gregory Nazianzen, the bishop (and soon-to-be patriarch) of Constantinople, gave two orations

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[525] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 27-9, 35.
[526] Lucian *De Morte Peregrini* 40.
[527] Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 8.3.
[528] Aulus Gellius's brief, positive account of Peregrinus Proteus is important in establishing the Cynic-Christian's historicity. One scholar, for example, has written "To make his point, Lucian invents a mock Cynic-turned-Christian priest" (Hoffmann, *Porphyry's Against the Christians*, 145-5.
[529] Gregory Nazianzen *De Vita Sua* 915-23 (*PG* 37, 1091-93).
[530] Gregory Nazianzen *De Vita Sua* 767-68 (*PG* 37, 1082).

in his honor; Maximus is described as a "philosopher" and the orations largely function as an apology and (conditional) panegyric on philosophy.[531] Describing philosophers in general (and with a Cynic on his mind) Gregory uses language reminiscent of Christian monastics and late Neoplatonist philosophers: "their splendid garments are angelic as is also the brilliance exhibited by their bodies" (*εἴπερ ἀγγελικὸν ἡ λαμπροφορία χαί ἡ φαιδρότης ὅταν τυπώνται σωματικῶς*).[532] He continues his praise, even invoking a comparison with the martyrs themselves.[533] After Maximus' nearly successful attempt to assume the bishopric a few months later, Gregory's attitude toward Maximus cooled considerably, but, remarkably, not his attitude towards the example of Cynics: it was several years later when he called Diogenes a "rose" among the thorns.

The mid-fourth century composition of the *Life of Antony*, ascribed to Athanasius, the patriarch of Alexandria, is a prime example of the Christian asceticism of its time. Though aspects of its historicity may be questionable, its lasting influence necessitates consideration: the *Life of Antony*, for instance, played a pivotal role Augustine's conversion.[534] Antony lived the life of a desert hermit, an ascetic in every aspect. Through his biography, however, Antony's example came to impact a wide spread of admirers, most of whom were not desert monks; in this way Christian asceticism could inspire without being adopted in the precise manner of the

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[531] Gregory Nazianzen *Orations* 25 and 26 (written in the months before Maximus temporarily unseated Gregory as patriarch in 380) refer only to a "philosopher," not Maximus by name. The identification of the protagonist of the *Orations* 26 and 26 as the Maximus of the *De Vita Sua*, however, is definite.
[532] Gregory Nazianzen *Orations* 25.2 (*PG* 35, 1199-1200).
[533] Gregory Nazianzen *Orations* 25.3 (*PG* 35, 1201-1202).
[534] Augustine *Confessions* VIII.6, 12.

desert.[535] For Augustine, this meant answering the call to asceticism first in a city-career, then as a bishop with many demands on his time. The *Life of Antony* and similar works provided a paradigm for a spiritual role model, not necessarily of exact imitation, but of an authoritative master whose life demonstrated that the world could be renounced successfully.[536]

Much of Peregrinus' authority derived from his ascetic practices; by donning the garb of a Cynic, Peregrinus gained the credentials of a philosophic tradition renowned for its rejection of societal norms.[537] Ascetic practices are the foundation of Diogenes' authority. They are the foundation of Antony's and the Desert Fathers' authority.[538] In both traditions asceticism has an integral part in establishing the individual's authority, but there are significant differences, as noted above, in the expression of Cynic asceticism and Christian asceticism.

For the Cynic, asceticism meant learning to be satisfied with simple, often visceral actions: food, drink, and sex are not to be abstained from; rather, the search for more extravagant pleasure is to be overcome. Simple and instant gratification allowed the Cynic to remain unshackled to the desire and dependence on society. It granted immunity to the whims of Fortune. Instinct and the truly basic needs of life, not desire, were to be the Cynic's driving force.

For the ascetic Christian, excess and indulgence are to be avoided as well. But instead of relying on simple and instant gratification (public defecation, masturbation, etc.) to overcome desires, the Christian is to suppress – or if possible, banish – those desires, subordinating them to

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[535] Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 93.
[536] Rousseau, 94.
[537] Francis, 53-81.
[538] Rousseau, 25-32.

the will of the creator God.[539] This is a key difference between the two systems: the Cynics' asceticism is a physical asceticism which then frees the mind from the yoke of society; the Christian asceticism is a mental asceticism which then frees the body from its own egotistic interests. In this way Diogenes could be admired by Christians for his poverty, but also criticized for his shamelessness.

Despite this subtle, yet fundamental, difference both the Cynics and Christians were denounced by their opponents on similar grounds in the fourth century. The emperor Julian, for example, criticized the Cynics with the same reasoning he used to justify his edict against Christian teachers: hypocrisy. Julian, true to his Hellenic inclinations, admired Cynicism as a philosophy, but wrote two orations rebuking the Cynics of his day: one chastises a specific Cynic, Heracleios̨, for misrepresenting the gods (and doubles as a panegyric of mythology, advancing Julian's pagan agenda); the other reprimands Cynics in general for hypocrisy and failing to understand Diogenes or realize his intentions.[540] In this latter oration, Julian defends Diogenes' actions and reputation which had come into question by fourth century Cynics by pointing out that Diogenes was distinguishing between actions motivated by nature and actions motivated by society. Diogenes ought to be the benchmark for the Cynics of his day, indeed, for all philosophers.[541]

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[539] Geoffrey Harpham sees the Christian ascetic as not only subordinating his or her desires but also as re-channeling them in order to achieve transformation. He writes that "Desire is, of course, asceticism's abiding problem. But it is simply wrong to say, as so many have, that Christian asceticism excludes desire, for it manifestly exploits the desires to achieve spiritual perfection, to be united with God, to reach a condition of stability and permanence. While asceticism recognizes that desire stands between human life and perfection, it also understands that desire is the only means of achieving perfection, and that the movement towards ideality is necessarily a movement of desire" (*The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 45).

[540] Julian *Oration* 7*: To the Cynic Heracleios* and *Oration* 6*: To the Uneducated Cynics*, respectively.

[541] Julian *Oration* 6.

As late as the seventh century, Cynicism continued to be linked with Christianity. Leontios, bishop of Neapolis, composed the (possibly fictional) account of Symeon the Holy Fool.[542] The *Life of Symeon* fits into the early Christian hagiographic tradition, but also draws from the Cynic lifestyle – and Diogenes especially – in its portrayal of Symeon. For example, Symeon made a habit of public defecation; an action that is hardly in line with the lives of other Christian "holy men" of Late Antiquity, but which has a striking precedent in the figure of Diogenes.[543]

Throughout the Byzantine era, Diogenes persisted as an important figure in gnomologies. Twelve *chreiai* of Diogenes appear in John of Damascus's *Sacra Parallela*, a gnomic anthology along the lines of Joannes Stobaeus' earlier collection.[544] Unlike the Stobaeus gnomology, however, the *Sacra Parallela* consists mostly of sayings ascribed to Christian authors (especially theologians) compiled early in the eighth century. The twelve *chreiai* of Diogenes are among the few non-Christian sources John of Damascus employed.

In this way Diogenes endured as a compelling figure through Late Antiquity into the Byzantine era. For some, both pagan and Christian, his lifestyle was a benchmark of asceticism; for others it was the opposite, an example of the immodest life. And for John Chrysostom and Theodoret of Cyrrhus it was both.

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[542] Evagrius Scholasticus, writing near the close of the sixth century, speaks of a historical Symeon who acted mad in public and could well be, despite a slight incongruity in dates, the Symeon Leontios writes of (*Ecclesiastical History* 4.34). Cyril Mango concludes this is the case and that Leontios intentionally shifted the date of Symeon's life in order to claim oral witness. For his reasoning see Mango, "A Byzantine Hagiographer at Work: Leontios of Neapolis," in *Byzanz und der Westen*, ed. I. Hutter (Vienna, 1984): 25-41. Derek Krueger, on the other hand, argues for a fictional account in *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996) 19-35.

[543] Krueger, *Symeon*, 92-6.

[544] *PG* 95, 1070-1388; 96, 9-442.

Diogenes and Cynicism in Late Antiquity remained a mostly Greek phenomenon.[545] The Christian monastic movement and the Desert Fathers originated in the Greek-speaking world. It was the Greek Christian intellectuals – Origen, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, Theordoret of Cyrrhus – and the Greek gnomologies – Joannes Stobaeus, John of Damascus – which ensured the ubiquity of Diogenes. He was certainly known to Latin authors such as Cicero, Tertullian, and Augustine, but never permeated the Latin world as he did the Greek.[546] To understand how pagan wisdom traditions were received in the west we must turn to the *Sentences of Sextus* and the *Distichs of Cato*.

**The *Sentences of Sextus* and the Origenist Controversy**

The *Sentences of Sextus* play an important, albeit secondary, role in the vitriolic clash between Tyrannius Rufinus and Jerome at the turn of the fifth century AD. The clash, however, originated with neither Rufinus nor Jerome and cannot be properly understood (just as the *Sentences*' role in it cannot be understood), without a grasp of the Origenist controversy and the surrounding attempts at creating a systematic theology of the Christian faith.

Born in 185 AD, Origen (surnamed Adamantius) of Alexandria flourished throughout the first half of the third century AD. He produced countless (and now mostly lost) exegetical commentaries, works of textual criticism, and theological writings. Origen primarily wrestled with ante-Nicene issues, such as Gnostic determinism, and was the first Church Father to devise a systematic Christian theology. With the First Council of Nicaea in 325, the Church began

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[545] Krueger, "Diogenes," 31.
[546] Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 5.32.92; GVB33; H236b; *On the Nature of the Gods* III.88; GVB335; H210-11; Tertullian *Ad Nationes* 2.2; GVB337; H213; Augustine *De Civitate Dei* VI.11.

moving towards an established doctrine, formally distinguishing between heresy and orthodoxy. Much of this movement in the fourth century concerned Trinitarian questions: the subordination or non-subordination of the Son to the Father and the divinity or the created-status of the Holy Spirit. In the latter half of the century, questions of theodicy (the reconciliation of God's goodness, justice, and power with the evils and sufferings of life) stirred debate in the Church and brought Origen's theology onto the center stage.

The debates in the late fourth and early fifth centuries were not simply reincarnations of their predecessors in the second and third. Similar themes – anthropomorphism (the attribution of human characteristics to God) and determinism – were revisited, but in response to a different religious environment. Gnosticism in the late fourth century, for example, was hardly the heretical threat it had been two centuries earlier, while the concept of "determinism" (election theology) found new advocates among Manichaeism and astrology. The influence of asceticism, particularly, focused the controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries around the body – on creation, reproduction, marriage, and eschatology.[547] Origen's teachings offered new points of endorsement and challenge to the ascetic debate. Charges of "Origenism" quickly became synonymous with heresy, although few in the Latin West were truly knowledgeable of Origen's theology and "Origenism" meant different things to different people.[548]

The beginnings of the Origenist Controversy of the fourth century are found not with Rufinus and Jerome, but with Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, and John, bishop of Jerusalem. As the present paper does not permit a full discussion of the clash's inception and subtleties, the following outline will suffice.

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[547] Clark, *Controversy,* 5-6.
[548] Clark, *Controversy,* 85-158.

Epiphanius was a learned man with a narrow outlook who heavily relied on force of will to achieve his agenda. A staunch opponent of any and all heresies, he had "assembled a dossier of opinions attributed, in garbled form, to [Origen]" and sought, therefore, to expurgate Origen from the minds of all Christians.[549] To his alarm, the very bishop of Jerusalem, John, was an admirer of Origen. In early 393 AD, before confronting John of Jerusalem, Epiphanius encouraged a band of monks, under the leadership of a certain Atarbius, to approach both Jerome and Rufinus within their neighboring Palestinian monasteries for a formal disavowal of Origenism.[550]

Before this point both Jerome and Rufinus had been great admirers of Origen and frequently praised him; friends from boyhood, they had both studied under Didymus the Blind, who instilled in them great respect for the Alexandrian theologian.[551] They were not alone in their appreciation for Origen: Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen compiled a collection of Origen's works in an anthology known as the *Philocalia*.[552] These men and others used Origen's writings, regardless of his "mistakes" (he was pioneering theology at a time, after all, when most of the Church's positions had not been established), because of the "tremendous advantages they possessed."[553]

The appearance of Atarbius and his fellow monks elicited very different reactions from Jerome and Rufinus. The former complied immediately, while the latter barred his gate, refused to see the visitors, threatened them with violence if they would not leave, and declared "My

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[549] J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York, NY: Harper & row Publishers Inc., 1975), 197-8.
[550] Kelly, *Jerome*, 198.
[551] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 65.
[552] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 66.
[553] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 67.

teachers I will neither accuse nor change" (*magistros meos nec accuso nec muto*).[554] Later that year, while visiting Jerusalem, Epiphanius himself preached an acerbic polemic against Origen (and, by association, Bishop John).[555]

Epiphanius was visiting Besanduc in early 394 when a delegation, which included Jerome's younger brother Paulinian, arrived from Bethlehem. Aware that the Bethlehem monastic community needed priests to celebrate mass, Epiphanius (probably with Jerome's collusion) had the twenty-eight year old seized and ordained. Besanduc geographically lay outside John of Jerusalem's jurisdiction, but because Paulinian had been ordained to serve specifically in Bethlehem, John had solid grounds for protest, which he did.[556] Epiphanius dismissed his charges and blamed John's indignation on his regard for Origen, whom he pugnaciously branded the "spiritual father of Arius."[557] The situation quickly escalated with Rufinus and Melania the Elder (who had co-founded the monastery on the Mount of Olives with Rufinus) supporting John while Jerome and his fellow monks at Bethlehem sided with Epiphanius. As a series of aggressive letters between John and Epiphanius ensued, the once amicable relationship Rufinus and Jerome shared turned sour.[558]

In 396 AD John of Jerusalem appealed to Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, for mediation. Theophilus, not yet an adversary of Origenism, dispatched one of his priests, Isidore, to evaluate the growing feud. But after Isidore indiscreetly revealed himself to be a firm

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[554] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 69-70.
[555] Kelly, *Jerome*, 199.
[556] Kelly, *Jerome*, 200-2.
[557] Epiphanius *Epistle ad Iohannem Episcopum* (=Jerome *Epistle* 51) 3 (*CSEL* 54).
[558] Kelly, *Jerome*, 201-4.

Origenist, attempts at reconciliation failed.[559] Isidore left carrying a letter from John to Theophilus (now lost), known as "John's Apology," which defended his stance and shifted blame for the clash onto Jerome while professing a desire for peace. John even noted that Jerome himself had translated several of Origen's works and once admired him; Jerome, placed in an awkward position, responded with several letters including the philippic *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum*, addressed to Pammachius in early 397.[560] A few months later, however, the quarrel drew to a close as Theophilus' diplomacy engendered an uneasy reconciliation.[561] Following the resolution, Rufinus left for the west, accompanied part of the way by Jerome (their friendship seemingly having weathered the storm).[562]

The peace of 397, however, was transient and the Origenist controversy soon resumed with Rufinus and Jerome now at the center. Rufinus, while undoubtedly aware of the ire his actions would evoke, yearned to introduce his icon to the Latin west. Thus when the Roman nobleman Macarius, writing a treatise against astrology, prevailed upon Rufinus to introduce him to some of Origen's works (which were critical of astral determinism and supportive of free will), Rufinus translated the first book of Pamphilus' *Apologia pro Origene* and added a short treatise of his own entitled *De Adulteratione librorum Origenis* ("Concerning the Adulteration of Origen's Works").[563] This latter writing argues that the mistakes in Origen's theology were later

[559] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 76.
[560] Kelly, *Jerome*, 205-7.
[561] Kelly, *Jerome*, 207-9.
[562] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 81.
[563] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 83-9.

interpolations by heretics, much as happened to the *Recognitions* of (pseudo-)Clement, the *De Synodis* of Hilary of Poitiers, and the letters of Cyprian.[564]

In 398 Macarius soon requested more translations of Origen and Rufinus obliged, rendering the *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* (Latin: *De Principiis*; English: "First Principles") into Latin. Defending his translation, Rufinus includes a preface which acknowledges he has left out certain undesirable passages and even substituted more orthodox passages from other works of Origen when necessary. He also, however, claims to be simply following in the steps of his predecessor, Jerome, who already has elegantly – and with similar discrimination toward heterodox passages – translated "more than seventy" homilies and several commentaries on the Pauline epistles by Origen, a man whom Jerome named "second after the Apostles."[565] Word of Rufinus' (as of yet unpublished) translation, with its preface, reached Jerome in Bethlehem and he quickly realized that he was in danger of being branded an Origenist again – guilty by association this time around. In a detailed public letter sent to Pammachius and Oceanus in 399 Jerome lays out his defense.[566] Postponing all his other current enterprises, he also produced a completely new, excessively literal (and essentially polemical) translation of the *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* intending to reveal the dangers of Origen's teachings and, of course, to show what Rufinus had omitted.[567]

Earlier that year, in spring, Rufinus departed from Rome for Aquileia, having first secured a letter from Pope Siricius which affirmed his orthodoxy.[568] Once settled in, he continued his series of translations with Latin editions of eight homilies of Basil of Caesarea,

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[564] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 86-8.
[565] Rufinus, *praefatio*, Origen, *De Principiis* I (*CCSL* 20, 245); *Apologia* II.13 (*CCSL* 20, 93); Clark, *Controversy*, 164-5; Murphy, *Rufinus*, 92-5.
[566] Jerome, *Epistle* 84 (*CSEL* 55).
[567] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 105.
[568] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 92; Jerome, *Apologia* III, 21 (*PL* 23, 472).

nine homilies of Gregory Nazianzen, and the *Sentences of Sextus*.[569] Unfortunately for Rufinus 399 proved to be the year when much of the support he enjoyed would dissipate.

Pope Siricius died in November of 399. His successor, Anastasius, knew little of Origen and would prove to be far more well-disposed to the anti-Origenist party.[570] That same year Theophilus, following in Jerome's footsteps, abruptly began condemning Origenism – an act which required him to anathematize one of his city's most famous figures. Until 399 Theophilus had supported the Tall Brothers – four revered Nitrian desert monks with Origenist outlooks – even making one of them the (unwilling) bishop of Hermopolis.[571] After a clash with his priest Isidore and with the Tall Brothers, who backed Isidore, Theophilus appropriated Origenism as a means to assault his enemies while protecting his own position.[572]

Unlike the Tall Brothers, most desert monks were anthropomorphites, rejecting Origen's intellectualism and conceiving of God corporeally; many of these monks violently protested an anti-anthropomorphic pastoral Theophilus had delivered in early 399. Seeing an opportunity to sway a multitude of monks to his side, he condemned the Tall Brothers, the Nitrian community, and affirmed the corporeality of God.[573] The Tall Brothers fled to Constantinople where they were well-treated by John Chrysostom. Theophilus had previously failed in a bid several years prior to get Isidore elected patriarch of Constantinople (and thus expand his influence), but now

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[569] Murphy, *Rufinus,* 115-23, 234.
[570] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 126.
[571] The Tall Brothers were Ammonius, Dioscorus, Eusebius, and Eutimius. See Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VI.7 (*PG* 67, 685a) for a fuller explanation of Theophilus' relationship with the Tall Brothers.
[572] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 128.
[573] Kelly, *Jerome*, 243-4.

he had another opportunity: John Chrysostom's charity toward the Tall Brothers let Theophilus raise charges of Origenism against Chrysostom, charges which ultimately led to his exile.[574]

Theophilus sent an envoy to the new pope, asking his endorsement of his condemnation of Origenism. The envoy strategically stopped by Bethlehem on his way to Rome and secured a solid alliance between Jerome and Theophilus against Origenists everywhere and particularly John of Jerusalem.[575] In Rome, meanwhile, Jerome's confidante Marcella was lobbying Anastasius for a denunciation of Origenism and, with her acolyte Principia, distributing anti-Origenist propaganda in the streets (including side by side Latin translations by Rufinus and Jerome of select passages of Origen's *De Principiis*, intended to show how Rufinus' had doctored the translation).[576] The arrival of Theophilus' letter, with its explanations of the evils even a mere reading of Origen's works could bring about, proved the tipping point: Anastasius, now convinced of the dangers of Origen's teachings, convened a synod which anathematized Origenism.[577]

The rift between Rufinus and Jerome continue to grow throughout 399 and 400 and in 401 Rufinus published the labor which had consumed him for a full two years: the *Apologia contra Hieronymum*.[578] That same year Jerome released two books of his *Apologia contra Rufinum*, quickly written before he had the full text of Rufinus' *Apology* in hand; a third book followed in 402 after he received the full text.[579] The feud continued until Rufinus' death in 410 (or even past it, for Jerome was never one to let go of a grudge), despite the pleas for

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[574] Clark, *Controversy*, 22; Kelly, *Jerome*, 261-3.
[575] Kelly, *Jerome*, 245-6.
[576] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 127.
[577] Kelly, *Jerome*, 246-7; Murphy, *Rufinus*, 126-9.
[578] Kelly, *Jerome*, 249.
[579] Kelly, *Jerome*, 251-8.

reconciliation from men such as Augustine.[580] Nevertheless, the intervention of Chromatius, bishop of Aquileia, mitigated at least Rufinus' side of the discord.[581] He continued to translate Origen's works until his death, but almost entirely kept out of the controversy, only alluding to it in the preface to his translation of the *Commentary on Romans*.[582] Jerome, for his part, vilified Rufinus every chance he could, even after the other's death, and regularly referred to him by abusive nicknames such as the "Scorpion," the "Sea-Serpent," and the "Grunting Pig" (*Grunnius Corocotta Porcellius*).[583]

The respective apologies of Rufinus and Jerome were more than self-justifications; while Rufinus passionately defends his translation of Origen and his own orthodoxy, he also reveals that the altercation with Jerome went much deeper than theological outlooks. Many issues which had been simmering for years were suddenly vented and additional disagreements that each had hinted in their writings since 393, or even before, take on new significance. For example, one quarrel was over who really authored the *Apologia pro Origene* which Rufinus had translated for Macarius in 397 – the martyr Pamphilus (a view supported by Rufinus) or the Arian-heterodox historian Eusebius (as argued by Jerome).[584]

The discord between Epiphanius and John of Jerusalem over ecclesiastical jurisdiction and Paulinian's ordination seems to have trickled down to Jerome and Rufinus as well.[585] Jerome's writings also indicate that further issues were at stake: we hear of a disagreement

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[580] Augustine *Epistle* 73.6 (=Jerome *Epistle* 100) (*CSEL* 55).
[581] Murphy, *Rufinus*, 152-55.
[582] *PG* 14, 1291-2; Murphy, *Rufinus*, 154.
[583] Kelly, *Jerome*, 257; Murphy, *Rufinus*, 155.
[584] Rufinus *Prologus in Apologeticum Pamphili Martyris pro Origene* (*CCSL* 20, 233); Jerome *Epistle* 84, 11 (*CSEL* 55, 133-4); *Apologia* I.8-11, 13; *Apologia* II.15, 23; *Apologia* III.12 (*CCSL* 79, 7-12, 48-9, 59-60, 83-5).
[585] Epiphanius *Epistle ad Iohannem Episcopum* (=Jerome, *Epistle* 51) 1-2 (*CSEL* 54); Jerome *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum* 10, 40-1 (*PL* 23, 379, 410-11); *Epistle* 82. 4, 8 (*CSEL* 55, 111, 114-5).

concerning whether the Nativity should be commemorated with the Feast of the Epiphany in January (as celebrated in Jerusalem) or with Christmas in December (the western tradition followed by Jerome) and over the maternity of Mary, as opposed to her virginity and purity.[586] Another argument concerns asceticism: Rufinus asks how his opponent could accuse Origen of heretical teachings when Jerome himself had – in rather "pagan" (i.e. "Manichaean") language – taken his advocacy for virginal women too far in his *Adversus Iovinianum* (the same treatise in which he cites the *Sentences'* 231st aphorism) and on another occasion blasphemously labeled his friend Paula the mother-in-law of God (*socrus Dei*) when she dedicated the virginal Eustochium to Christ.[587]

In response, Jerome questions the strength of Rufinus' ascetic commitment and particularly his wealth, comparing it to that of Croesus, Darius, and Sardanapalus.[588] He implies that the Jerusalem monastery of Rufinus and Melania the Elder is a place of luxury, calling Rufinus a Nero at home and a Cato in public.[589]

Moreover, Rufinus writes that earlier Jerome had not only boasted that Porphyry, the nemesis of Christianity, was his teacher, but also that beyond lauding Origen as "second only to the Apostles," he had proudly translated many of Origen's works.[590] Indeed, shortly before his visit in 393 AD from the anti-Origenist band of monks led by Atarbius and his subsequent turnaround on the Origen question, Jerome completed his *De Viris Illustribus*, a list of 135

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[586] Hagith Sivan, "On the Way to Bethlehem: Mary between Jerome and John of Jerusalem," *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009): 374-81.
[587] Rufinus *Apologia* II.5, 42-3 (*CCSL* 20, 86-7, 116-7); Jerome *Epistle* 22.20.
[588] Jerome *Apologia* I.17, III.4 (*CCSL* 79, 16, 76); *Epistle* 57.12 (*CSEL* 54, 526).
[589] Jerome *Epistle* 125.18 (*CSEL* 56, 138).
[590] Rufinus *Apologia* II.9, 12-3 (*CCSL* 20, 93).

"illustrious men." In it he not only devotes an entry to Origen, but gives the Alexandrian theologian the lengthiest account in the entire work, in which he is careful

> not to be silent concerning [Origen's] immortal genius, because he understood dialectics, as well as geometry, arithmetic, music, grammar, and rhetoric, and accordingly taught all the schools of philosophers so that he had also diligent followers of secular literature, and lectured to them daily, and the crowds which flocked to him were astonishing. These, therefore, he received so that through the occasion of secular literature, he might establish them in the faith of Christ.[591]

Jerome structures his *De Viris Illustribus* chronologically, beginning with Simon Peter and other Apostles before moving on to entries of men such as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Ammonius Saccas, Cyprian, Antony, Hilary of Poitiers, Damasus, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Maximus the Cynic, and Gregory of Nyssa as well as less usual suspects like Seneca the Younger. Jerome concludes his *De Viris Illustribus*, it may amuse the reader to note, with himself as the 135th entry.

The use of the pagan classics in Christian teaching, either through allusion or direct quotations, and the proper tenets of translation were further issues of contention. Rufinus is concerned with Jerome's use of Cicero, Vergil, Horace, and other non-Christian authors. He accuses Jerome of copiously citing such texts throughout his works and consequentially corrupting women and children.[592] Particularly troublesome for Rufinus is Jerome's inconsistent

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[591] Jerome *De Viris Illustribus* 54 (*PL* 23, 663-68): *illud de immortali eius ingenio non tacens, quod dialecticam quoque et geometriam, et arithmeticam, musicam, grammaticam et rhetoricam, omniumque philosophorum sectas ita didicit, ut studiosos quoque saecularium litterarum sectatores haberet, et interpretaretur eis quotidie, concursusque ad eum miri fierent: quos ille propterea recipiebat, ut sub occasione saecularis litteraturae in fide Christi eos institueret.*

[592] Rufinus *Apologia* II.6-8.

stance on the matter: previously Jerome had vowed not to possess or read pagan authors.[593] Having broken that vow, how can Jerome grumble about deception on Rufinus' part?[594] Jerome first notes that that vow was for the future: he could hardly forget the education of his youth. Then he excoriatingly retorts that it is readily apparent Rufinus has never studied Latin literature at all (though he insinuates that – unless he is very much mistaken – Rufinus must be reading Cicero in secret).[595] On other occasions "Jerome represents the translation of Greek into Latin as an act of Christian *virilitas*. To hide the appropriation of other knowledge is to perform some kind of emasculating linguistic drag, ineffectively mimicking instead of masterfully seizing."[596] Rufinus, on the other hand, views translation as "a humble act of fellowship through which only appropriate Christian documents should be transmitted."[597]

The authority of the Septuagint was a long standing (and exceptionally nasty) issue between Rufinus and Jerome. The former questions Jerome's authority in abandoning the Septuagint (the version of the Scripture, which, after all, had been passed down by the Apostles themselves) and in excluding certain books (i.e. the Apocrypha) long accepted by churches: surely a translation – especially one which was produced word-for-word by seventy independent men (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) – is more authoritative than one made by a single man? Indeed, Rufinus asserted that Jerome's study of Hebrew under the rabbi Baranina (whom Rufinus, no doubt having learned the effect of nasty nicknames from Jerome, sardonically calls

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[593] Jerome *Epistle* 22.30 (*CSEL* 54, 189-91).
[594] Rufinus *Apologia* II.4-8.
[595] Jerome *Apologia* I.30 (*CSEL* 79, 30-1); *Epistle* 70 (*CSEL* 54, 700-708).
[596] Jerome has Ambrose in mind as per the introduction. .Andrew S. Jacobs, "'What Has Rome to do with Bethlehem?' Cultural Capital(s) and Religious Imperialism in Late Ancient Christianity," *Classical Receptions Journal* 3, no. 1 (May 2011): 36.
[597] Jacobs, 42.

Barabbas) and his subsequent translation of the Hebrew version of the Scriptures into Latin is nothing short of a furtive attempt to adulterate the purity of Christian teachings with "Jewish" designs.[598]

In 388 AD, well before the Origenist controversy, Jerome had already defended his use of Hebrew in his preface to *Hebraicae Quaestiones.*[599] In the second book of his *Apologia* Jerome gives extremely detailed counterclaims to the criticism of his Hebrew to Latin translation, noting that even Jesus himself quoted from the Hebrew and not the Greek Septuagint. Over several chapters Jerome points to his prefaces to the books he translated from Hebrew as evidence that he uses the Septuagint in addition to the Hebrew text.[600]

The process of translation was a continual source of discord for Rufinus and Jerome. Rufinus, as we have seen, was a prolific translator; Jerome, too, produced a significant amount of translations, but also spent substantial time on original writings (including a letter to Pammachius which doubles as a treatise "On the Best Method of Translating.")[601] While it took the teachings of Origen to reveal many of the differences between the childhood friends, a large portion of those differences arose from differing outlooks in translation methodologies. Both men believed their approach was the more accurate and sought every opportunity to impugn the talents of the other.[602]

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[598] Rufinus *Apologia* II.32-41 (*CCSL* 20, 107-116).
[599] *CCSL* 72.2.
[600] Jerome *Apologia* II.24-35 (*CCSL* 79, 60-72).
[601] *Epistle* 57 (*CSEL* 54).
[602] Jerome *Apologia* I.19, II.18 (*CCSL* 79, 19, 52-4); Rufinus *Apologia* II.31 (*CCSL* 20, 106-7); *De Principiis* I, *praefatio*, 1 (*CCSL* 20, 245).

In 395 Jerome had written a letter to Pammachius on what he considered to be the best method of translation.[603] Jerome, characteristically, builds his case through examples of classical authors. He begins by listing the examples of Cicero's translations of Plato's *Protagoras*, Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, and certain orations of Aeschines and Demosthenes. A quotation from Horaces' *Ars Poetica* follows: "nor will you care, as a literal translator, to render [texts] word for word" (*nec uerbo uerbum curabis reddere fidus interpres*).[604] Jerome concludes his case by citing the poets of Latin New Comedy – Plautus, Terence, and Caecilius – and their methods of Romanizing Greek plays, especially those of Menander; these playwrights, Jerome adduces, prioritize the beauty and charm of the original work, rather than the precise terminology.[605]

As this letter was written during the early stages of the quarrel, and before Rufinus' fateful translation of the *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*, Jerome's writing is less polemical than in his *Apologia contra Rufinum*. Nevertheless, it is not entirely *sine ira et studio* as he does criticize Rufinus' more literal style and, near the letter's conclusion, slips in the first of his three comparisons of Rufinus' living style to that of Croesus and Sardanapalus.[606] The latter two occur in book I of his *Apologia* (written before Rufinus' translation was published) and book III (written after).[607]

The next hint we hear of stylistic differences concerning translation is in Rufinus' preface to his Latin version of *De Principiis* where, as mentioned above, Rufinus admits omitting certain material and interpolating other passages, but says he is only following what Jerome has already

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[603] Jerome *Epistle* 57.
[604] Horace *Ars Poetica* 133.
[605] Jerome *Epistle* 57.5.
[606] Jerome *Epistle* 57.11-2.
[607] Jerome *Apologia* I.17, III.4 (*CCSL* 79, 16, 76).

done, i.e. pursuing the higher objective of not merely translating, but creating.[608] Nothing further is heard until each man's respective *Apologia* is released and any remaining semblance of friendship disappears.

Rufinus' *Apologia* attacks Jerome's translation style and, in particular, his letter to Pammachius. Rather than espouse the "best" (*optimum*) method, Rufinus writes, it teaches "the absolute worst" (*totum pessimum*).[609] Jerome's counter is that it seems as if Rufinus never had a grammar teacher: his complex sentences often end up with words transposed all over the place.[610] In his third book a now thoroughly bellicose Jerome holds nothing back, remarking "I was not so foolish, however, that I condemned your ignorance which no one can more strongly indict than you yourself while you write" (*Imperitiam autem tuam non tam stultus eram ut reprehenderem, quam nemo potest forties accusare quam tu ipse dum scribis*).[611]

Going back to the source of the latest round of contention, Rufinus expounds on his *De Principiis*' preface, further defending his decision to translate it, at least in part, into Latin.[612] Rufinus' supporters apparently criticized Jerome's literal counter-translation as making both the good and bad in Origen available to the Latin public while Rufinus had only made available the good.[613] Jerome retorts that even what Rufinus did translate should be considered bad and thus his own retranslation was necessary to clear up the falsified nature of Rufinus' version.[614] He

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[608] Rufinus *praefatio*, Origen, *De Principiis* I (*CCSL* 20, 245).
[609] Rufinus *Apologia* II.8 (*CCSL* 20, 89).
[610] Jerome *Apologia* I.17.
[611] Jerome *Apologia* III.6 (*CCSL*79, 78-9; *PL* 23, 461).
[612] Rufinus *Apologia* II.31.
[613] Jerome *Apologia* I.6.
[614] Jerome *Apologia* II.11a.

contends that Rufinus overstepped his bounds by making Origen more orthodox; he was asked to turn a Greek book into Latin, not to correct it.[615]

Ironically, Jerome is attacking Rufinus for doing what he himself had done when translating Origen: omitting certain sections and generally adopting a less-than-literal approach. While at all other points Rufinus falls on the side of literalism and Jerome on that of free translation, the *De Principiis* has them switch roles: Rufinus defends his loose rendering while Jerome produces a painfully accurate version.[616] Even within their respective *Apologiae* this self-contradiction can be seen. Jerome defends his free translation of the second psalm at one point while Rufinus calls Jerome's treatise on free translation the worst method possible.[617]

While the two men clearly preferred a particular method of translating (for Rufinus, literalism was best; for Jerome, literalism came second to eloquence), each proved capable of using the opposite approach when they deemed it more appropriate, as in the case of the *De Principiis*. This suggests that their dispute, although framed in terms of theological outlooks and translation practices, was by this point more about holding a grudge than anything else. Rufinus and Jerome, much as Pelagius and Augustine, agreed on far more than they disagreed: they were childhood friends, fellow students under the tutelage of Didymus the Blind, and, even after they ended up on different sides of the altercation between Bishops Epiphanius of Salamis and John of Jerusalem, able to reconcile as demonstrated by Jerome's companionship on the first leg of Rufinus' westward journey of 397. Yet Rufinus' stubbornness in his unceasing translations of

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[615] Jerome *Apologia* I.6, II.11a.
[616] Jerome *Apologia* II.18.
[617] Jerome *Apologia* I.19; Rufinus *Apologia* II.8.

Origen clashed with Jerome's pugnacious nature to produce a schism which lived on in Jerome's writings even after Rufinus had died.

The *Sentences of Sextus* have a noteworthy role in the rift between Rufinus and Jerome and, by extension, the Origenist controversy. Although Origen's quotations of the *Sentences* testify to its popularity among early third century Christians, its reach was especially bolstered by Rufinus' Latin version. Published in 399 between his translation of the *De Principiis* and his *Apologia contra Hieronymum*, the *Sentences* entered the drama just before the peak of tension between Rufinus and Jerome. As such, they, and Rufinus through them, became a perfect target for Jerome.

Rufinus' translation quickly became a popular read among Latin speakers; a decade and a half after its publication Jerome bitterly acknowledges "it is being read throughout many provinces" (*per multas provincias legitur*).[618] Jerome's polemical attitude toward the *Sentences* centered on Rufinus' implication in the preface that 'Sextus' was in fact Xystus, bishop and martyr of Rome (known today as Pope Xystus II). In his *Commentary on Ezekiel*, *Epistle to Ctesiphon*, and *Commentary on Jeremiah* Jerome strongly disagrees with any association of the *Sentences* with Xystus, preferring instead Sextus the Pythagorean. The references become increasingly negative toward Rufinus and the *Sentences* (although their translator had died well before Jerome published any of these three works) perhaps because of the collection's growing popularity.

In his *Commentary on Ezekiel* (414), Jerome warns his readers regarding the *Sentences of Sextus*:

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[618] Jerome *Commentary on Jeremiah* IV.41(*CSEL* 59, 267).

Which book, translating into the Latin language, a certain one wished to embellish with the name of Xystus the martyr, not reflecting that in the entire volume, which he needlessly divided into two parts, the name of Christ and of the apostles is not mentioned at all. No surprise that he transformed the heathen philosopher into a martyr and bishop of Rome, when also he exchanged the first book of the [*Apology*] *for Origen* by Eusebius of Caesarea with the name of Pamphilius the martyr, so that by such a eulogizer he might more easily win over for Roman ears the most ungodly books, "The First Principles."[619]

Then in the anti-Pelagian letter to Ctesiphon of 415 Jerome writes:

However, who could suitably convey that rashness – no, his madness – which has ascribed a book of the Pythagorean [philosopher] Sextus (a man without Christ and a pagan) to Xystus a martyr and bishop of the Roman church? In this [book] much concerning perfection is discussed according to the dogma of the Pythagoreans which makes man equal to god and says that he is of God's substance; so that [those] who do not know that the volume is by a philosopher, drink – under the name of a martyr – of the gold cup of Babylon. Furthermore, in that same volume there is no mention of prophets, patriarchs, apostles, or Christ, so that he asserts that there was a bishop and martyr without faith in Christ![620]

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[619] Jerome *Commentary on Ezekiel* VI (*PL* 25): *Quem librum quidam in latinam linguam transferens, martyris Xysti nomine voluit illustrare, non considerans in toto volumine, quod in duas partes frustra divisit, Christi nomen et apostolorum omnino reticeri. Nec mirum si gentilem philosophum in martyrem et Romanae urbis episcopum transtulerit, quum Eusebii quoque Caesariensis primum pro Origene librum Pamphili martyris vocabulo commutarit, ut facilius tali laudatore libros impiissimos* Περὶ Ἀρχῶν *Romanis conciliaret auribus.* Translated by author.

[620] Jerome *Epistle* 133.3 (*CSEL* 56, 246-7): *Illam autem temeritatem, immo insaniam eius, quis possit digno explicare sermone, quod librum Sexti Pythagorei, hominis absque Christo atque ethnici, inmutato nomine Xysti, martyris et Romanae ecclesiae episcopi, praenotavit? In quo iuxta dogma Pythagoricorum, qui hominem exaequant deo et de eius dicunt esse substantia, multa de perfectione dictuntur, ut, qui volumine philosophi nesciunt, sub martyris nomine bibant de aureo calice Babylonis. Denique in ipso volumine nulla prophetarum, nulla patriarcharum, nulla apostolorum, nulla Christi fit mentio, ut episcopum et martyrem sine Christi fide fuisse contendat*. Translated by author.

Finally, in the incomplete *Commentary on Jeremiah* (composed 417-19) Jerome continues this theme, assailing "wretched Grunnius" (now dead for over half a decade) because he

> translated into Latin one book of Sextus the Pythagorean, a most heathen man, and divided it into two volumes, and dared to publish them under the name of the holy martyr Xystus, bishop of the city of Rome, although they contain not a mention of Christ or of the Holy Spirit or of God the Father or of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. And this book with his customary indiscretion and madness he called a Ring. It is read throughout many provinces, and especially so by those who preach freedom from passion and sinlessness.[621]

Jerome's criticism is founded in some truth; it is almost certain that 'Sextus' was not Pope Xystus II. Sextus the Pythagorean (or perhaps a Stoic with Pythagorean inclinations) philosopher was a favorite of Seneca, who referenced him and his wisdom in five of his letters.[622] This Sextus then, and not Xystus, appears to be the originator of many of the ideas behind the *Sentences*; he certainly lent his name to the collection.

But Rufinus himself never actually names Xystus as the author, and certainly did not invent such an tradition himself, as Jerome seems to imply. The Greek and Syriac versions, independent of the Latin tradition, also ascribe the *Sentences* to Xystus.[623] Together these

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[621] Jerome *Commentary on Jeremiah* IV.41 (*CSEL* 59, 267): *miserabilis Grunnius… Sexti Pythagorei, hominis gentilissimi, unum librum interpretatus est in latinum divisitque eum in duo volumina et sub nomine sancti martyris Xysti, Romanae Urbis episcopi, ausus est edere, in quibus nulla Christi, nulla spiritus sancti, nulla dei patris, nulla patriarcharum et prophetarum et apostolorum fit mentio. Et hunc librum, solita temeritate et insania Anulum nominavit, qui per multas provincias legitur, et maxime ab his qui* απαθειαν *et impeccantiam praedicant.* English translation by author. The final phrase, "Those who preach freedom from passion and sinlessness," is almost certainly a reference to Pelagius. See also Michael Graves, trans. and Christopher A. Hall, ed., *Jerome: Commentary on Jeremiah*, *Ancient Christian Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2011), 135.

[622] Seneca *Epistles* 59.7-8; 64.2-5; 73.12-15; 98.13; 108.17-18.

[623] Gildemeister, xxxi; John of Damascus *Sacra Parallela* A24; Chadwick, *Sentences*, 130.

indicate that there was a strong tradition relating the work to Xystus; Jerome's accusations inflate and distort Rufinus' role in attributing the collection to the former pope. In his preface Rufinus notes the sayings have been attributed to Xystus by tradition. He tentatively puts this forth in the phrase: "I have translated Sextus into Latin, who they say is the same Sextus who among you, that is, in the city of Rome, is called Xystus, decorated with the Glory of a bishop and martyr." (*Sextum in Latinum verti, quem Sextum ipsum esse tradunt qui apud vos id est in urbe Roma Xystus vocatur, episcopi et martyris Gloria decoratus*).[624] This is hardly the bold statement one expects to find after reading Jerome. Rufinus clearly was aware of the problems with the tradition and mentioned it because Avita and Apronianus themselves lived in Rome.

Much like his use of Origen, Jerome's other writings betray his *volte-face* attitude toward the *Sentences*. While he repeatedly complains about their popularity and association with Xystus II, Jerome himself was not above using them when convenient. In his *Commentary on Ezekiel*, shortly before he impugns Rufinus' translation, Jerome cites the 231st aphorism and says it is beautifully (*pulchre*) phrased.[625] In 393, twenty-one years earlier, in his *Adversus Iovinianum* he had amiably quoted the same proverb in his own translation which antedates that of Rufinus: "the origin of love, indeed, was honorable, but [how] deformed the extent! It makes no difference, however, how honorable the cause of a man's unsoundness might be. Whence from Xystus, in the *Sentences*: the too passionate lover is adulterous with his own wife." (*Origo quidem amoris honesta erat, sed magnitudo deformis! Nihil autem interest quam ex honesta*

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[624] Latin text from Chadwick, *Sentences* 9. Translated by author.

[625] Jerome *Commentary on Ezekiel* VI: *pulchre in Xysti Pytagorici sententiolis dicitur: Adulter est uxoris propriae amator ardentior* ("It is said beautifully in the 'short sentences' of Sextus the Pythagorean: the too passionate lover is adulterous with his own wife"). Even here, however, Jerome avoids Rufinus' exact translation which is: *Adulter etiam propriae uxoris omnis inpudicus* ("And yet every shameless [man is] adulterous with his own wife") (*PL* V.XXV).

*causa quis insaniat. Unde et Xystus in sententiis: Adulter est, inquit, in suam uxorem amator ardentior*.)[626]

Jerome, then, had no qualms about using the *Sentences* himself. His criticism towards Rufinus' use of the name of Pope Xystus II for a pagan philosopher also seems thin in light of Rufinus' own preface and the independent Greek and Syriac traditions. Jerome's true issue with the *Sentences*, specifically in their Latin form, stemmed from his longstanding quarrel with their translator. Following Rufinus' rendering of the *De Principiis* into Latin, the tension between Jerome and his childhood friend reached a new high, but even then he did not take issue with the *Sentences*. It was not until 414 that Jerome published his first criticism. With the memories of the Origenist controversy still fresh and the Pelagian controversy looming overhead, he saw the *Sentences* as a means to belittle Rufinus' reputation, advancing his own position in the process.

The debate surrounding Origen's writings was the larger issue of the time, though even there we must wonder if Jerome truly considered all of Origen's teachings heterodox. In addition to the many positive remarks he wrote during his pre-controversy years concerning the Alexandrian theologian, in 393 he (as Theophilus later would) showed no hesitation in completely reversing his position towards Origen; in doing so Jerome firmly secured for himself a powerful ally in the bishop of Salamis and, six years later, the new pope. Jerome, like Bishops John, Epiphanius, and Theophilus, was undoubtedly playing church politics, but to what extent is beyond the scope of this paper. For present purposes it is sufficient to say that Jerome more than once showed himself willing to switch sides on an issue when it suited him.

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[626] Jerome *Adversus Iovinianum* I.49. Latin text from Chadwick, *Sentences* 119, footnote 2. Translated by author.

**The *Sentences of Sextus* beyond the fourth century**

The *Sentences* were also involved in the Pelagian controversy, the next debate which consumed fifth century theologians. Much of the theology central to the Pelagian controversy arose from the same roots as the writings of Origen. The Alexandrian theologian had defended Christianity against Gnosticism and astral determinism with a theological system that eulogized free will; although his specific answers had been discarded, the need to resolve issues of God's theodicy and human freedom persisted. Eventually, this led directly to the formation of Augustine's theology of original sin and other foundational concepts behind western Christianity.

Pelagius quotes verses 36, 46a-b, and 60 as a source of support for his views to Augustine. In his *De Natura et Gratia* (On Nature and Grace) Augustine accepts Pelagius' attribution of the *Sentences* to Pope Xystus II; over a decade later, however, he writes in his *Retractationes* (Reconsiderations) that he has since learned (probably through the circulation of Jerome's works) that the *Sentences* were not written by a pope, but by Sextus the philosopher.[627]

Jerome's charges continued to impact the *Sentences'* reputation in the following centuries. Yet despite his negative remarks and its association with such unorthodox individuals as Origen, Rufinus (if one was reading Jerome), and Pelagius, Latin copyists continued to link the gnomology with Pope Xystus II as did the scribes of the Greek and Syriac versions.[628] In the late fifth century or early sixth it seems that the *Sentences* exchanged their pagan reputation for a

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[627] Augustine *De Natura et Gratia* LXVI.77; *Retractiones* II.68: "At that time there came into my hands a certain book of Pelagius… the book in which I replied to him… I therefore called *On Nature and Grace*. In that book, I defended certain words, which Pelagius quoted as the words of Xystus the Roman bishop and martyr, as if they were in fact the words of that same Xystus, for that is what I thought. But afterwards I read that they were the words of Sextus the philosopher, not Xystus the Christian" in Mourant, *Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, 21.
[628] Gildemeister, xiv-xxiii, xxxi; John of Damascus *Sacra Parallela* A24; Chadwick, *Sentences*, 4-6, 123-4, 130.

heretical one (perhaps, as Chadwick remarks, a "slight improvement in its status, since it at least suggests that the work was intended to be Christian.")[629] Sixth century additions to the first chapter of the *Decretum Gelasianum* list the *Sentences of Sextus* in a catalogue of apocryphal texts, admonishing that the work is: "an apocryphal book of proverbs which was written by heretics and entitled with the name of Saint Xystus" (*liber proverbium qui ab haereticis conscriptus et sancti Xysti nomine praenotatus est apocryphus*).[630]

Isidore, the early seventh century archbishop of Seville, was familiar with this heretical status and Augustinian support of the proverbs as the work of the Pope Xystus II (*De Natura et Gratia* XLVI.77, in all probability), which caused him no small degree of confusion. He was apparently unaware of both the indictments of Jerome and the revised opinion Augustine included in his *Retractations*. Isidore could not dismiss the heretical taint entirely, but neither could he ignore the opinion of the most blessed Augustine. To resolve the conflict, Isidore adopted an old formula which Rufinus had once used regarding Origen and concluded that the true proverbs of the martyr must have been interpolated by heretics. He writes:

> Xystus, the bishop of Rome and martyr, composed a book of proverbs after the fashion of Solomon with such concise eloquence that the individual sayings are explained in individual verses. The heretics, assuredly, inserted certain things against the ecclesiastical faith into the little work so that the assertion of perverse doctrines might be received more easily under the name of so great a martyr. But let he who remembers himself [as] orthodox read what is approved and receive those [sayings] which are not contrary to the truth. Certain people, however, think that the book must come from things said by the heretics, not by Xystus. The most blessed Augustine

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[629] Chadwick, *Sentences*, 122.

[630] Andreas Thiel, ed., *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum Genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Hilario usque ad Pelagium II* volume 1 (Brunsbergae: In Aedibus Eduardi Peter, 1868), 464; Chadwick, *Sentences*, 122.

refutes, however, this opinion, when he acknowledges in one of his works that this work was composed by the aforementioned martyr."[631]

The *Sentences* remained a favorite well into the medieval period, especially within monastic circles where their pithy structure and moderately ascetic perspective found an eager audience. Two aphorisms are cited in the early sixth-century *Regula Magistri* (Rule of the Master), an anonymously assembled collection of monastic precepts.[632] The first of these resurfaces in the slightly later *Regula Benedicti* (Rule of Saint Benedict).[633] A third maxim is quoted in the late sixth century *Regula Columbani* (Rule of Saint Columban).[634]

As a very early Christian wisdom text, the *Sentences* reveal one way in which pagan tradition was redacted for the beliefs and needs of second century Christian communities. Unlike the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences* did not balance pagan and Christian teaching by appealing to the example of a well-known historical figure. Rather it appealed to a conventional

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[631] Isidore of Seville *De Viris Illustribus* I (*PL* 83, 1084): *Xystus episcopus Romanae urbis et martyr composuit ad instar Salomonis librum proverbiorum tam brevi eloquio ut in singulis versibus singulae explicentur sententiae. Cui quidem opusculo haeretici quaedam contra ecclesiasticam fidem inseruerunt, quo facilius sub nomine tanti martyris perversorum dogmatum reciperetur assertio. Sed is qui catholicum sese meminit, probando legat et ea quae veritati contraria non sunt recipiat. Quidam autem putant eundum librum ab haereticis, non a Xysto, fuisse dictatum. Refellit autem hanc opinionem beatissimus Augustinus, qui in quodam opere suo ab eodem martyre hoc opus compositum esse fatetur.*

[632] Maxim 145 "*scriptum est: Sapiens paucis verbis innotescit*" (it is written: the sage is known by few words) and maxim 152 "*nam et Origenes [sententiam] sapiens dicit: Melius est lapidem in vanum iactare quam verbum"* (for also the wise Origen spoke [the opinion]: it is better to throw a stone in vain than a word). They can be found in chapters X and XI, respectively. The *Regula Magistri's* attribution of maxim 152 to Origen perhaps indicates the "Master" learned of the proverb not through Rufinus's Latin version, but through some other writer to whom the works of Origen were familiar (Chadwick, *Sentences*, 124-125). This is further supported by the difference in diction: to express the phrase "in vain," Rufinus writes *frustra* as opposed to *in vanum*. Latin text from Chadwick, *Sentences*, 124. English translation by author. See also *La Régle du Maître*, *SC* 105, Introduction, texte, traduction et notes par Adalbert de Vogüé (Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1964): Vol.I 436.

[633] *Regula Benedicti* Chapter VII "*…sicut scriptum est: Sapiens verbis innotescit paucis"* (just as it is written: the sage is known by few words). Latin text from Bruce L. Venarde, ed. and trans., *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2011), 52.

[634] *Regula Columbani* Chapter IX (*PL* 80, 215) "'*maius est,' ut scriptum est, 'periculum iudicantis quam eius qui iudicatur.'"* This quotation of maxim 184 follows Rufinus' version exactly.

format – the gnomic collection – to express non-conventional ideas, both socially and morally. The *Distichs*, on the other hand, appealed to both a historical figure and a conventional format.

**The Christianization of Cato through the *Distichs of Cato***

The closest thing to a universal textbook which the ancient world produced, the *Distichs of Cato* promised students of Latin an initiation into the educated and proper world of Roman men like Cato the Elder (or Younger). The wisdom couplets remained well known for nearly two millennia, far surpassing the popularity of the Saying of Diogenes or the *Sentences of Sextus.* The *Distichs* were known to early Christians. As we have seen, the Christian poet Commodian quotes from the collection multiple times in both his *Instructiones* and his *Carmen Apologeticum*, although without reference to any 'Cato.'

In the *Instructiones*, for example, Commodian writes that "he, who worships the forbidden gods, tastes the evil joys of life from where it is permitted" (*gustat unde licet, ille qui Deos adorat vetitos, mala gaudia vitae*).[635] Similar diction is used by the *Distichs* at one point: "if you desire to preserve an honorable reputation while you live, flee with your mind the things which are the evil pleasures of life" (*si famam servare cupis, dum vivis, honestam; fac fugias animo, quae sunt mala gaudia vitae*).[636]

Later on, Commodian pens "and when you are a defendant to yourself, condemning your very self with yourself as judge" (*cumque reus tibi sis ipsum te iudice damnans*).[637] The corresponding text in the *Distichs* reads "what you deservedly suffer, remember to bear patiently;

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[635] Commodian *Instructiones* I.35.15 (*CSEL*15). Latin text from Boas LXXII.
[636] *DC* 4.17
[637] Commodian *Instructiones* II.23.7 (*CSEL*15).

and when you are a defendant to yourself, condemn your very self with yourself as judge" (*quod merito pateris, patienter ferre memento; cumque reus tibi sis, ipsum te iudice damna*).[638] On two other occasions in the same work the poet employs the *Distichs*, in the latter instance conflating several verses from Cato into a single thought of his own.[639]

Commodian also cites the *Distichs* twice in his *Carmen Apologeticum*. Specifically he writes "be wise before you see what is impending" (*estote prudentes quod imminet ante videte*).[640] The analogous Catonian verse reads "Observe what follows and see beforehand what is impending: imitate that god (Janus), who observes each side" (*quod sequitur specta quodque imminet ante videto: illum imitare deum, partem qui spectat utramque*).[641]

At another point Commodian also writes "who is a better doctor if not a victor who has suffered wounds?" (*quis melior medicus nisi passus vulnera victor?*)[642] The same phrase (*quis melior medicus*) is found in the *Distichs:* "Seek help from someone familiar if by chance you should take ill; there is no better doctor than a faithful friend" (*auxilium a notis petito si forte laboris; nec quisquam melior medicus quam fidus amicus*).[643]

Despite Commodian's quotations, however, the Distichs were not edited (or rather, interpreted) into a more Christian form, as the *Sentences* were, until well after Late Antiquity.[644] This treatment of the *Distichs* is part of the common practice of Christianizing classical texts and

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[638] *DC* 3.17
[639] Commodian *Instructiones* II.12.3 (*CSEL*15): (*Luxurias vita, quoniam labor imminent armis*); II.12.15 (*tu tibi praeterea in Belian parcere noli*). The parallel passages are *DC* 2.19 and 1.14, 19, and 2.21, respectively. See Boas, LXXII-LXXIII.
[640] Commodian *Carmen Apologeticum* 67 (*CSEL*15).
[641] *DC* 2.27
[642] Commodian *Carmen Apologeticum* 15 (*CSEL*15).
[643] *DC* 4.13
[644] In the medieval period "Cato was converted into a Christian moralist." See Richard Hazelton, "The Christianization of 'Cato': The *Disticha Catonis* in Light of Late Mediaeval Commentaries," *Mediaeval Studies* 19, (1957): 157-173, especially 162-165.

figures. Thus far we have seen two examples: the integration of the Cynic lifestyle with Christian asceticism and the redaction of the *Sentences of Sextus*. While the redaction of the *Distichs* is similar to that of the *Sentences*, it is best viewed as part of a tradition in which Christians claimed for their own pagan figures of the past.

The Christianization of Seneca, the Stoic philosopher who so admired Sextus the Pythagorean sage and was much quoted by Jerome in the *Adversus Iovinianum*, is a particularly famous example of that tradition. The *Passio Petri et Pauli* attributed to Linus, Bishop of Rome and (in some traditions) the successor to Peter himself, may be one of the earliest reflections of such a tradition, though in its present form it is post-Nicene: it depicts a very amiable relationship and letter exchange between Seneca and Paul the Apostle.[645] Tertullian, uncharacteristically generous, describes Seneca as "often one of our own" (*saepe noster*).[646] Lactantius, writing at the beginning of the fourth century and seemingly unaware of any connections between Seneca and Paul, writes "He could have been a true worshipper of God, if someone had advised him" (*potuit esse verus Dei cultor, si quis illi monstrasset*).[647]

By the fourth century a series of epistles between Seneca and Paul were widely circulating. Though the men were contemporaries, the correspondence is almost certainly a forgery; extant, there are eight letters purportedly from Seneca and six responses purportedly from Paul.[648] Augustine was aware of the letters and, in his *Epistle to Macedonius*, uses them to justifying quoting the philosopher: "Seneca, who lived in the time of the Apostles (also of whom

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[645] Jan Nicolaas Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca*, Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), 10-11.
[646] Tertullian *De Anima* XX (*PL* 2, 682).
[647] Lactantius *Divinae Institutiones* VI.24.13-14 (*PL* 6, 725).
[648] Sevenster, 12-14.

there are certain letters to Paul the Apostle), deservedly says: 'He who hates the wicked, hates everyone.'" (*merito ait Seneca, qui temporibus apostolorum fuit, cuius etiam quaedam ad Paulam Apostolum leguntur epistolae: omnes odit, qui malos odit*.)[649] In his *De Civitate Dei* (City of God), Augustine excuses why there is no mention of Christianity in Seneca's works: "He did not dare, however, to mention the Christians, already then most inimical towards the Jews, either one way or the other, lest he either praise them against the ancient custom of his country, or reprove them, perhaps, against his own will" (*Christianos tamen iam tunc Iudaeis inimicissimos in neutram partem commemorare ausus est, ne vel laudaret contra suae patriae veterem consuetudinem, vel reprehenderet contra propriam forsitan voluntatem*).[650] Despite his inclinations, even Jerome, on account of the letters' widespread popularity, included Seneca in his late fourth century list of 135 illustrious men (the very list in which, as we saw earlier, he also included Origen and himself). He writes:

> Lucius Annaeus Seneca of Cordova, disciple of the Stoic Sotion and uncle of Lucan the Poet, was [a man] of most moderate life, whom I would not place in the category of saints except that those letters of Paul to Seneca and Seneca to Paul, which are read by many, urge me. In these, written when he was Nero's teacher and the most powerful man of that time, he says that he wishes he were in such a place among his countrymen as Paul was among Christians. This man was put to death by Nero two years before Peter and Paul were crowned with martyrdom.[651]

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[649] Augustine *Epistle* 153.4. Latin text from Sevenster 11, footnote 3.
[650] Augustine *De Civitate Dei* VI.11.
[651] Jerome *De Viris Illustribus* 12 (*PL* 23, 629-30): *Lucius Annaeus Seneca Cordubensis, Sotionis Stoici discipulus, et patruus Lucani poetae, continentissimae vitae fuit, quem non ponerem in catalogo Sanctorum, nisi me illae Epistolae provocarent, quae leguntur a plurimis, Pauli ad Senecam, et Senecae ad Paulum. In quibus cum esset Neronis magister, et illius temporis potentissimus, optare se dicit, eius esse loci apud suos, cuius sit Paulus apud Christianos. Hic ante biennium quam Petrus et Paulus coronarentur martyrio, a Nerone interfectus est.*

Other classical giants were also Christianized: Justin Martyr argued that Socrates and Heraclitus were Christians since they lived according to the *λόγος*.[652] He also saw Musonius Rufus as a moral teacher, a perspective found in Origen as well.[653] The Alexandrian theologian viewed Epictetus, too, in much the same way.[654] Two Christian recensions of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, attributed to Nilus of Sinai, the disciple of John Chrysostom, were in circulation throughout the latter part of Late Antiquity.[655]

Vergil became a Christian prophet. His fourth *Eclogue*, addressed to Gaius Asinius Pollio, speaks of the birth of a child, "a new offspring descends from heaven on high" (*nova progenies caelo demittitur alto*). The child will usher in a golden age and was later interpreted as foretelling the birth of Christ. This explicit "Messianic" reading of Vergil was first made in the *Oration to the Assembly of Saints*, attributed to Constantine by Eusebius of Caesarea.[656] Vergil is portrayed as deliberately obscuring the poem's true meaning so as not to alarm the Roman authorities or bring persecution against himself.[657] Like Constantine, Faltonia Betitia Proba uses the fourth *Eclogue* in her *Cento Vergilianus de laudibus Christi*, linking it to Jesus and the coming of a golden age.[658] Earlier authors, including Minucius Felix and Lactantius, also understood Vergil as testifying to the Christian God in both the *Aeneid* and *Georgics*.[659]

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[652] Justin Martyr *1 Apologia* 46.3.
[653] Justin Martyr *2 Apologia* 8.1; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.66.
[654] Origen *Contra Celsum* 6.2.
[655] *PG* 79, 1285-1312.
[656] Jeremy M Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Makings of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 120-21.
[657] Constantine *Oration to the Assembly of Saints* 19- 20 (*PG* 20, 1289-1300).
[658] Proba *Cento* 34: *iam nova progenies, omnis quem credidit aetas* (now a new offspring, whom every age believed in.) This line is an amalgamation of Vergil's *Eclogue* IV.7 and *Aeneid* VII.680. Latin text from Clark and Hatch, *Golden*, 18.
[659] Minucius Felix *Octavius* 19: *Aeneid* VI.724 and Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* I.5: *Aeneid* VI.724 and *Georgics* IV.221.

In the case of the *Distichs*, the figure who was to be Christianized is, of course, Cato. The process was very gradual; unlike the *Sentences*, the *Distichs* underwent a change in their interpretation rather than their content (although in the Carolingian period some minor editing did occur).[660] Their employment, even survival, is somewhat surprising in the ever increasingly self-consciously Christian society of the medieval period. But Latin was the language of the Vulgate and thus reading Latin was central to all who attended school. Roman school texts such as the *Distichs* provided an easy introduction to the language of Scripture.

The *Distichs* were evidently held in quite high regard (much more so than its literary quality leads one to expect). Before quoting a distich, Walter Map (1140–c.1208-10) refers to Cato as "the wisest of men after Solomon" (*virorum post Salomonem sapientissimus*).[661] An unknown commentator of the same period wrote in the lower margin of one manuscript of the *Distichs*: "Solon, you teach me many words, but you, Cato, teach me even more" (*multa Salo sed plura Cato me verba docetis*).[662]

By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Cato was used as Christian moralist and some even believed, quite anachronistically, that he had been a Christian himself, though he was generally considered more of a wise pagan.[663] Richard Hazelton has traced out the conversion of Cato through a careful study of medieval commentaries on the *Distichs*; the commentaries not only reveal how Cato came to be interpreted, but also how extensively the *Distichs* were used in

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[660] *DC* 2.2: *An di sint caelumque regant, ne quaere doceri: cum sis mortalis, quae sunt mortalia, cura* (Whether there are gods and [whether they] rule heaven, do not seek to be taught: when you are mortal, attend to [those things] which are mortal), for example, understandably caused some difficulty among Christian interpreters and was replaced by *Mitte archana dei caelumque inquirire quid sit* (Let go of asking what is the secret of God and heaven). Hazelton, 161, footnote 20.

[661] *De Nugis Curialium* V. Latin text from James Montague Rhodes, ed., *Walter Map: De Nugis Curialium*, Anecdota Oxoniensia (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1914), 230.

[662] Cited in Johann Huemer, *Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien*, XXXII (1881), 421.

[663] Hazelton, 163-4.

schools.[664] The four books of the *Disticha*, for example, became associated with the four cardinal virtues of Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance (although the distichs are not arranged in any such order, nor any order at all, over the four books.)[665]

The following example from a commentary is typical:

> 'Cherish your precious parents not with unequal devotion;
> and do not offend your mother if you wish to be good to your parent.'[666]

'Cherish not unequally.' Construct: 'Cherish,' that is 'love,' 'your parents,' that is your father and mother, who are strictly speaking said to be your parents. 'Cherish' I say 'with devotion,' that is affection with love and fear, 'not unequally,' ('and not' instead of 'and' and instead of 'not') and 'do not offend your mother,' that is do not offend or tempt her in some things, 'if you wish to be good to your parent,' that is if you wish to appease your parent.' For it is written: "Honor your father and mother so that you may live long above the earth."[667] Just as if it should say do not offend your father nor mother and so you will be good for your father and mother. Whence the verse:

> Be truly devoted concerning these who bore you;
> and do not spurn your mother if you do not wish to offend your father.

Concerning your spiritual father, according to certain ones it is read thus: do not offend your mother, that is the Holy Church, as long as you wish to be good to your father, that is to Father God, and so forth.[668]

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[664] Hazelton, 164.
[665] Hazelton, 165-7.
[666] *DC* 3.24; Boas' critical edition reads "Love your precious parents with equal devotion; do not offend your mother, as long as you wish to be good to your parent" (*Aequa diligito caros pietate parentes; nec matrem offendas, dum vis bonus esse parenti*).
[667] Exodus 20:12.
[668] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canonici Latin Classical 72, fol. $60^{r}$-$82^{r}$ (saec. xiii):

*Dilige non egra caros pietate parentes;*
*nec matrem offendas, si vis bonus esse parenti*

The commentary not only offers a guide to the Latin syntax, but also expounds the distich for the reader. It interpretively defines "cherish" (*dilige*), "parents," and "devotion" (*pietate*) while ensuring that the reader connects "not unequal" (*non egra*) with "devotion" and "devotion" with "cherish." The second part of the verse receives the clear Christian treatment when "do not offend" (*nec offendas*) becomes "do not tempt" (*non scandalizes*).[669] The commentary then links this to Exodus 20:12 and the following distich (which contains similar themes). It concludes by instructing that one's mother is the Holy Church (*sancta ecclesia*) and one's fathers is Father God (*deus pater*).

Such strikingly Christian readings can be found for every distich in the medieval commentaries. The motive behind this exegesis is not difficult to surmise: as the *Distichs* were being used propaedeutically, it was imperative that easily impressionable schoolboys not glean the wrong message from their Latin primer. The schoolmasters, consequentially, reinterpreted the *Distichs* in light of Christian thought. This is not as far a leap as it may seem at first: the Biblical book of Proverbs has clear structural and thematic counterparts to the *Distichs* and the general tone of both Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus is not without similarity to the *Distichs'* often despondent or resigned outlook. Many of the commentaries draw parallels between

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*'Dilige non egra.' Construe: 'Dilige,' id est ama*, '*parentes,' id est patrem et matrem, qui dicuntur proprie parentes. 'Dilige' dico 'pietate,' id est affectum amoris et timoris, 'non egra,' ('nec' pro et et pro non) et non 'offendas matrem,' id est non ledas in aliquot vel scandalizes, 'si vis bonus esse parenti,' id est si vis placare parenti. Scriptum est enim: "Honora patrem et matrem ut sis lengevus super terram." Quasi diceret, non offendas patrem ne matrem, et ita eris bonus patri et matri. Unde versus:*

*'Esto pius vere super hos qui te gennere;*
*nec spernas matrem nisi vis offendere patrem.'*

*Secundum quosdam, de patrem spirtuali legitur sic: 'Non offendas matrem, id est sanctam ecclesiam, dum vis bonus esse patrem, id est deo patri, et cetera.'*

[669] *Scandalizo,* the Latinized form of the Greek *σκανδαλίζω* meaning "to cause to stumble," had acquired a particularly Christian connotation by this period. It is a popular New Testament verb, being used in all four gospels as well as throughout Paul's letters. Overall it appears in various forms about 30 times.

individual distichs and verses in Proverbs.[670] The Christianization of Cato, then, was not the direct Christianization of a classical figure, as with Seneca and Vergil, or an appeal to the example of such a figure, as in Diogenes and his lifestyle. Rather, it was the natural consequence of an intentional effort among medieval commentators to expound the *Distichs of Cato* in light of Christian truth so as to discourage any dangerous, secular reading of the verses.

## VI. Conclusion

A consideration of the question of pagan wisdom literature within Christian teaching, especially among Christian intellectuals, leads directly into the larger question of the disharmony between pagan and Christian thought, a question that troubled minds of individual Christians from Jerome and Augustine to Boccaccio and Petrarch. It is a question that played no small role in the bitterness between Rufinus and Jerome and, in our present day, continues to make itself known in the tension between church and state, between religion and society.

A century ago J. E. B Mayor aptly observed: "When a Greek or Roman philosopher or rhetorician became a Christian he did not at once forget all the learning of the past."[671] A study, then, of the Sayings of Diogenes, the *Sentences of Sextus*, and the *Distichs of Cato* contributes to our understanding of how early Christians balanced the Greek and Roman legacy around them with the developing theologies of the early Church. Within a comparative purview, the prevalence of subjects within these three wisdom traditions illuminates which ideas were connected and emphasized (or ignored) within pagan wisdom literature and within its Christian

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[670] Hazelton, 163-4, footnotes 30-31.
[671] J. E. B. Mayor, ed. and Alexander Souter, trans., *Q. Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Apologeticus: The Text of Oehler, Annotated, with an Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), xii.

counterparts. Further avenues of pursuit are readily apparent here: to glean a fuller picture of which subjects were important to the ancients, both Christian and non-Christian, it will be necessary to investigate other gnomic anthologies and wisdom literature such as the *Menandri Sententiae*, the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, and the Byzantine anthologies of Joannes Stobaeus and John of Damascus.

Additional investigations of early Christian concepts of education as found in Lactantius, Basil, John Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine among others will also shed more light onto how well-educated Christians adapted their classical learning into new approaches. Unlike the gnomes and *chreiai*, which present us with individual verses for memorizing, copying, and reciting, these formalistic approaches present education at a more conceptual, abstract level (although specific examples are given in such writings as well). How exactly these approaches differ from and build upon those presented in the works of Cicero, Philo, Quintilian, Ps.-Plutarch, and Aulus Gellius, and how non-Christians (particularly Porphyry, Julian, and Libanius) responded to such approaches, gives texts like those examined in this paper a greater context. This context can be extended well beyond the time of Jerome and Augustine: the sermons of Caesarius of Arles, for example, present one picture of Christian education and its transmission to the laity in early sixth century Gaul.

For present purposes, however, it is enough to note that the distinct ways in which the receptions of the texts themselves were manifested among Christians demonstrate three specific responses to the larger question. Diogenes was employed as a good example and as a bad example by both pagans (Julian and Cicero, respectively) and Christians (Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, respectively). Sextus adopted the traditional structure of the gnomic collection

in order to convey Christian concepts. Cato became a Christian moralist whose distichs were interpreted through the lens of Christian Scripture.

The wisdom offered by each of these figures was “tempered in the Christian fire,” that is to say it was shaped by Christians for a new audience. From their perspective the wisdom was purified, like raw ore refined in a smelter, and strengthened because it now was instilled with Scripture. In its purified form such wisdom became suitable as didactic texts and reading material for the Christian youth. Though many early Christian intellectuals cautioned or outright proscribed the use of secular literature, the ease of reinterpreting or rewriting the extensive wisdom traditions of the ancient world ensured the survival of pagan wisdom literature through various Christian manifestations.

# Appendix A: Distribution of Primary Subject Groups

## The Sentences of Sextus

**491 Maxims Total (451 maxims plus 40 additions from the *Vaticanus Graecus* manuscript)**

| | Virtue | Faith | Self-Control | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Maxims | 53 | 47 | 76 | 18 |
| Percent of Overall Text | 10.80% | 9.57% | 15.48% | 3.67% |

| | Learning | Transgression | Soul | God |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Maxims | 9 | 33 | 46 | 30 |
| Percent of Overall Text | 1.83% | 6.72% | 9.37% | 6.11% |

| | Wisdom | Speech | Women | Family |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Maxims | 70 | 79 | 4 | 9 |
| Percent of Overall Text | 14.26% | 16.09% | 0.81% | 1.83% |

| | Friends/Associates | Wealth | Fortune/Fate | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Maxims | 14 | 59 | 2 | 32 |
| Percent of Overall Text | 2.85% | 12.02% | 0.41% | 6.52% |

*Percentages do not have a summation of 100% nor do subject totals equal the quantity of net maxims because the individual maxims often fall into more than one subject group.

# The Distichs of Cato

**144 Maxims Total**

| | Virtue | Faith | Self-Control | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Maxims | 3 | 0 | 12 | 12 |
| Percent of Overall Text | 2.08% | 0% | 8.33% | 8.33% |

| | Learning | Transgression | Soul | God |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Maxims | 10 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Percent of Overall Text | 6.94% | 1.39% | 0% | 2.08% |

| | Wisdom | Speech | Women | Family |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Maxims | 14 | 25 | 5 | 4 |
| Percent of Overall Text | 9.72% | 17.36% | 3.47% | 2.78% |

| | Friends/Associates | Wealth | Fortune/Fate | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Maxims | 22 | 23 | 16 | 16 |
| Percent of Overall Text | 15.28% | 15.97% | 11.11% | 11.11% |

*Percentages do not have a summation of 100% nor do subject totals equal the quantity of net maxims because the individual maxims often fall into more than one subject group.

# Appendix B: Index of Primary Gnomic Subjects

## The Sayings of Diogenes

**Maxim numbers correspond to entries in *Diogenes the Cynic*: *Sayings and Anecdotes with Other Popular Moralists,* translated by Robin Hard. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a selection of sayings and *chreiai* from the larger Diogenes' corpus which are found throughout this paper.**

| Subject | Maxim |
|---|---|
| Virtue | 76 77 78 79a 79b 81 82 84 141 269 322 330 |
| Faith | 194 195 196 197 198 199a 199b 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 |
| Self-Control | 25 67 68 146 151 152 155 156 157 158 160 161 162 163 166 167 190 295 360 |
| Actions | 143 235 284a 284b 384a 384b |
| Learning | 96 97 98 99 101 102 103 104a 104b 119 120 123 124b 219 271 272 291 324 326 327 328 334 |
| Transgression | 278 |
| Soul | 313 314 |
| God | 211 212 213 214a 214b |
| Wisdom | 57 84 85 117 274 275 290 292 310 332 |
| Speech | 76 111 116 125 219 221 222 223 224 273 284a 284b 289 292 319 320 321 325 350 |
| Women | 83 215 333a 333b 334 335 336 337a 337b 338 339a 339b 339c 363 |
| Family | 215 216 270 288 293 |
| Friends/Associates | 72 73 87 88 95 282 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 313 |
| Wealth | 17 19 22 106a 106b 110 135 138 139140 141142 143 146 147 148 318 326 327 328 |
| Fortune/Fate | 108 109 110 112 113 114 115a 115b 309 312 317 390 392 |
| Other | 317 |

# The Sentences of Sextus

**491 Gnomes Total (451 Gnomes plus 40 additions from the *Vaticanus Graecus* manuscript)**

| Subject | Maxim |
|---|---|
| Virtue | 2 3 4 9 10 14 15 17 21 24 34 35 37 38 44 46b 47 48 51 56 58 60 61 64 65 67 79 95a 95b 104 119 120 129 131 132 133 134 135 150 167 176 190 194 198 199 234 243 252 292 326a 326b 381 395 |
| Faith | 1 5 6 7a 7b 8 36 46a 48 49 54 55 58 82d 86b 87 88 95a 97 98 122 166 169 170 171a 188 189 196 200 204 209 212 220 223 224 247 257 264b 325 380 400 402 419 428 437b 438 441 |
| Self-Control | 9 10 16 41 42 43 57a 57b 59 61 68 69 70 71a 71b 72 74 75a 75b 78 80 82a 86a 89 90 91a 94 99 101 112 136 138 139b 140 141 142 146 151 153 178 179 181 182 183 184 205 206 207 216 231 232 233 235 239 240 253b 255 265 269 270 273 274a 280b 288 294 334 411 412 428 429 435 437 438 445 448 449 |
| Actions | 47 93 222 262 298 303 304 305 328 335 336 359 383 388 389a 390 399 408 |
| Learning | 174 248 249 250 251 285 290 338 384 |
| Transgression | 10 11 12 13 14 39 62 66 82e 83 85 102 107 110 114 149 155 174 175 203 208a 208b 225 283 297a 297b 298 305 312 313 314 327 370 |
| Soul | 24 40 75b 77 82d 103 106b 116 129 136 139a 167 205 208a 208b 209 287 292 301 313 318 320 323 345 346 347 348 349 361 362 397 402 407 411 412 413 414 415a 415b 416 417 418 420 421 441 448 |
| God | 22 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 33 36 47 49 63 66 72 92 104 106b 113 114 215 217 369 373 374 375 376a 376b 382 404 |

# The Sentences of Sextus

**(continued)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Wisdom | 24 44 100 103 143 144 145 147 148 181 187 199 214 218 219 226 229 244 245 246 252 258 275 278 279 280a 280b 281 282 284 287 289 301 302 306 307 308 309 310 311 315 316 319 322 332 333 344 363a 363b 389b 391 392 394 398 403 406 415b 416 417 418 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 430 439 450 |
| Speech | 23 53 74 83 84 85 109 123 126 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162a 162b 163a 163b 164a 164b 165a 165b 165c 165d 165e 165f 165g 168 171a 171b 173 177 185 186 195 198 223 225 243 253a 259 277 284 286 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 365 366 367 368 383 393 401 407 408 409 410 420 430 431 432 451 |
| Women | 235 236 237 238 |
| Family | 106a 230a 230b 236 238 254 256 257 340 |
| Friends/Associates | 105 107 180 210a 210b 211 212 213 241 245 293 299 328 331 |
| Wealth | 15 17 18 19 20 49 50 52 70 73 76 78 81 82b 91b 92 108a 108b 109 111 115 116 117 118 121a 121b 127 128 130 137 172 191 192 193 227 228 242 260 263 264a 266 267 268 271 274b 291 295 296 300 317 329 330 339 342 377 378 379 382 405 |
| Fortune/Fate | 436a 436b |
| Other | 32 63 82c 124 125 197 201 202 221 261 272 276 287 321 324 337 341 364 371 372 385 386b 387 396 433 434 440 442 443 444 446 447 |

# The Distichs of Cato

**144 Gnomes Total**

| Subject | Maxim |
|---|---|
| Virtue | 1.38 3.2 4.34 |
| Faith | |
| Self-Control | 1.2 1.31 2.6 2.21 2.28 2.30 3.6 4.4 4.10 4.17 4.24 4.30 |
| Actions | 1.1 1.5 1.15 1.35 2.7 3.5 3.13 3.14 4.7 4.19 4.21 4.33 |
| Learning | 1.3 3.1 3.5 3.18 4.6 4.21 4.23 4.27 4.29 4.48 |
| Transgression | 2.8 4.40 |
| Soul | |
| God | 2.2 2.12 4.38 |
| Wisdom | 1.7 1.14 2.5 2.18 2.24 2.27 3.10 3.18 4.3 4.12 4.18 4.27 4.29 4.48 |
| Speech | 1.3 1.9 1.10 1.12 1.13 1.14 1.15 1.16 1.25 1.26 1.27 2.4 2.9 2.11 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.7 3.15 3.19 3.20 3.23 4.20 4.25 4.49 |
| Women | 1.8 3.12 3.20 3.23 4.47 |
| Family | 1.28 1.32 3.8 3.24 |
| Friends/Associates | 1.11 1.20 1.23 1.32 1.34 1.36 1.40 2.1 2.11 2.20 2.22 2.29 3.2 3.9 4.13 4.15 4.28 4.31 4.41 4.42 4.45 4.47 |
| Wealth | 1.6 1.20 1.21 1.24 1.29 1.37 1.39 2.17 2.19 3.9 3.11 3.12 3.21 4.1 4.5 4.7 4.8 4.16 4.19 4.35 4.36 4.44 4.47 |
| Fortune/Fate | 1.18 1.19 1.22 1.33 2.3 2.23 2.25 3.1 3.22 4.3 4.22 4.26 4.32 4.37 4.43 4.46 |
| Other | 1.4 1.17 2.10 2.13 2.14 2.15 2.16 2.26 2.31 3.16 3.17 4.2 4.9 4.11 4.14 4.39 |

# Appendix C: Index of Ancient Authors and Texts

**The index is organized into the following categories:**
**1. Greek and Roman Writers and Texts**
**2. Jewish Writers and Texts**
**3. Canonical, Deuterocanonical, and Apocrypha Books**
**4. Christian Writers and Texts**
**5. Medieval Writers and Texts**
**6. Anthologies and Collections (Ancient)**
**7. Anthologies and Collections (Modern)**

## 1. Greek and Roman Writers and Texts

## 2. Jewish Writers and Texts



## 3. Canonical, Deuterocanonical, and Apocrypha Books



## 4. Christian Writers and Texts

## 5. Medieval Writers and Texts

## 6. Anthologies and Collections (Ancient)



## 7. Anthologies and Collections (Modern)

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