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Signature:

_____   _____
Ryan T. Woods   Date

PROVIDENCE AND PAIDEIA IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ALEXANDRIA
By
Ryan T. Woods
Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Division of Religion
Historical Studies in Theology and Religion

_____
Lewis Ayres
Co-Director

_____
Anthony Briggman
Co-Director

_____
Carl Holladay
Committee Member

_____
David Pacini
Committee Member

Accepted

_____

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

_____
Date

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By

Ryan T. Woods
M.A., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2005
B.A., Taylor University, 2002

Advisor: Lewis O. Ayres, D.Phil.
Co-Advisor: Anthony A. Briggman, Ph.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

"Providence and *Paideia* in Early Christian Alexandria"
By Ryan T. Woods

In this dissertation, I investigate reflection on divine providence and the formation of *paideia* (school culture) in Christian Alexandria (c. 100-250). My research focuses on a conceit developed in the writings of Clement and Origen of Alexandria that divine providence functions as an educator. This cosmic pedagogy serves as a model for the Christian teacher, who participates in a divine economy of instruction. It frames discussions of free will, ethics, and the interpretation of canonical texts, providing a point of comparison with other educational traditions in late antiquity. Faulty paradigms and selective reading of the evidence has led scholars to mischaracterize the Hellenic features of their thought as evidence of dependence or even corruption of a Christian essence. Although Clement and Origen develop this conceit using philosophical and literary discourse, I argue that their primary loyalty lies with the biblical narrative. In this respect, they built upon the pre-existing traditions of the Alexandrian Judaism from which they emerged. I devote particular attention to the adoption of philological techniques to interpret Scripture as a curriculum of ascent, and to the idealized depictions of the "divine" educator as the product of this *paideia* in the writings of these Alexandrian Christians. Clement and Origen see Hellenic culture as a useful instrument for clarifying and articulating Christian identity, but remain wary of its limitations. What emerges from my analysis, then, is not the dilution of a pure expression, but the translation of a religious tradition into a new idiom.

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But most of all, I dedicate this dissertation to Kim, who understands what my research means for me, and Henry, who does not yet. Kim managed many facets of our lives together as I crafted this project. She tolerated prolonged stints of mental and physical absence as I researched and wrote this dissertation. Throughout my studies, she radiated love, humor, and honesty. If I did not become a better scholar during my doctoral studies, I certainly became a better person because of her. My obligations to her surpass my ability to repay her. Henry was born a mere five months before I defended this dissertation. His arrival has brought unspeakable joy and enthusiasm to both of us. He may have been puzzled at his dad's removal from the house for extended periods of time and the ubiquity of the computer when his dad was home. But if he was confused about these things, he was never confused about his affection for me. He flashed excited smiles at me whenever I took study breaks to play with him. What neither he nor his mom will ever comprehend is just how much they gave me as I labored over this research. I stand in their permanent debt to them, and offer this monograph as a meager tribute.

PROVIDENCE AND PAIDEIA IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ALEXANDRIA

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Figures

PROVIDENCE AND *PAIDEIA* IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ALEXANDRIA

In this dissertation, I investigate reflection on divine providence and the formation of

paideia in Christian Alexandria (c. 100-250). I will analyze how Clement and Origen evolve

these traditions to describe the operations of divine providence and to fashion a Christian

paideia. To map out their literary configurations, I investigate the conceit that divine providence

functions as an educator, noting how the Christian teacher participates in this cosmic pedagogy.

Where much research divorces the philosophical dimensions of providence as a form of

cosmic instruction from the literary project of constructing a Christian *paideia,* this study

integrates these discourses. Because divine providence reflects harmony among the cosmos, the

economy of salvation narrated in Scripture, and the moral life, it has ramifications for

cosmology, pedagogy, hermeneutics, and ethics. Because the Son as Word and Wisdom

mediates divine providence, it encroaches upon theological and Christological articles of

doctrine. Because the Alexandrians draw from the reservoirs of both Scripture and pagan

thought, it necessarily includes both philosophical and theological reflection. Whatever heuristic

value lies in distinguishing these dimensions, allowing for conversation among them appears

both justified and elucidating.

This dissertation is also a study of the development of a regional Christian tradition. By

anchoring discussion in the community at Alexandria, I pursue greater clarity in my cultural

description and in my evaluation of traditional development. Having isolated certain

providential features from the fragmentary evidence of earliest Alexandrian Christianity, I

endeavor to connect these original traditions to their later expressions in the literature of Clement

and Origen. Although the study focuses on Alexandria, neither geography nor politics

demarcates its boundaries. Rather, I explore this city as a literary culture whose borders remain fluid. Itinerancy marked the lives of these Alexandrians; conflict and opportunity necessitated travel. Clement immigrated to Egypt as a young man, and departed later in life to escape persecution. A native Alexandrian, Origen lectured on a Mediterranean circuit and settled eventually in Caesarea. Their mentors, students, opponents, and correspondents were dispersed along the Mediterranean littoral "like frogs around a pond" in Plato's unimprovable phrasing. Neither the bearers of this tradition nor the tradition itself was static. Thus, although the study restricts itself as narrowly as possible to Alexandria, it transgresses these territorial confines as freely as necessary.

By examining how Alexandrian Christians challenge, revise, and deploy discourse about divine providence, I will reassess the relationship between Christianity and Hellenization that historiography on the subject has fostered. Earlier studies of Alexandrian Christianity rely preponderantly upon typologies of assimilation, resistance, and synthesis. Each of these typologies presupposes a conceptual distinction between Greek culture and the Christian faith--a distinction that depends upon discredited interpretations of both culture and history. Christian origins are ineradicably Hellenistic. Any reconstruction that neglects this historical datum risks rendering its subjects unintelligible. The realities remain far more complicated and interesting than these paradigms entail. In Alexandria, Christianity developed in *competition* with other communities, appropriating certain features, repudiating others, and revising still others.[1] Alexandrian Christians discuss divine providence in a manner that reflects conversation with

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[1]On this trope of intercommunal competition, see Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

pagans, philosophers, Jews, and Gnostics--all of whom inhabited Hellenized worlds of discourse. These groups contended over texts, practices, ethics, and politics. To suppress these rivalries is to remove elements constitutive of Christian identity in Alexandria. It also eliminates a valuable resource for explaining certain distinctive features of Alexandrian Christianity.

In discussing divine providence, the Alexandrians use philosophical arguments to set limits upon philosophical enquiry, and exploit divisions among philosophers to maintain the priority of divine revelation. They criticize the parochialism of the Greek traditions by exposing their dependence on barbarian antecedents. Yet they also accept presuppositions about divine immutability, the operations of divine providence, and human free will. Their scriptural hermeneutics resemble reading practices current among Stoic and Platonic commentators, as well as among Jewish interpreters of Scripture.

Viewed within this nexus of associations, the question of how these thinkers fashion a religious tradition in the context of culture becomes more complicated. Each writer's position is more than the sum of its appropriations. The conceit of divine providence as a teacher frames discussions of free will, ethics, education, and biblical interpretation. In this dissertation, I develop the thesis that Clement and Origen evolved this conceit using philosophical and literary discourse, but that their primary loyalty lies with the biblical narrative. They see Hellenic culture as a useful instrument for clarifying and articulating Christian identity, but remain wary of its limitations. What emerges from my analysis, then, is not the dilution of a pure expression, but the translation of a religious tradition into a new idiom.

ON HELLENIZATION

When Alexander of Macedon embarked upon his program of territorial expansion, he also galvanized a cultural exchange whose significance surpassed even his military exploits.

"Hellenization" describes the influence of Greek literary, artistic, social, political, philosophical, and religious customs upon these occupied territories, as well as the developments that exposure to the civilizations of the Middle East, Egypt, and Central and South Asia wrought upon their conquerers.   A term that Johann Droysen[2] popularized in his accounts of this epoch, "hellenization" is a phenomenon whose influence can prove difficult to specify. Droysen himself deployed the term variously, placing fluctuating chronological and geographic limits on it. Momigliano later observed that Droysen "never reached clarity about the main characteristics of the [Hellenistic] period he set out to explore," bequeathing a tissue of ambiguities to successors who took up the term.[3] Some of this ambiguity derived from Droysen's attempts to press an ancient term into new uses. In antiquity, the verb ἑλληνίζειν and its cognate expressions referred "almost exclusively" to language (cf. Acts 6.1), and only rarely to cultural productions and institutions.[4]

Yet, a significant exception to this convention occurs in 2 Maccabees 4.7-17, which licenses Droysen's use of "hellenization" as an organizing principle of history. It also illustrates how the components investigated in this study--providence and *paideia*--arise organically from the conflicts that this hellenization creates. These verses relate the rise of Jason to the position of high priest, and his aspirations both to "destroy the lawful ways of living" and to introduce "new

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[2]*Geschichte Alexanders der Grossen* (1833) and the incomplete *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (1836-43) Droysen considered them thematically unified, and reissued them together, with *Geschichte Alexanders der Grossen* as the first volume of the latter series.
[3]Arnaldo Momigliano, "J.G. Droysen between the Greeks and Jews," *History and Theory* 9.2 (1970), 139-40.
[4]Martin Hengel and Christoph Markschies, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: SPCK, 1989), 7. Although Hengel and Markschies concern themselves with the early period, the uses widen considerably during the Christian period, particularly in apologetic literature and in the polemics of the "culture wars" during the reign of Julian.

customs contrary to the law" (4.11). During his tenure, there arose "such an extreme of

Hellenization and increase in foreign ways" that the priests discontinued their service in the

temple in favor of Greek pursuits (4.13-14). The narrator's censure focuses on Jason's "delight"

in "establishing a gymnasium right under the citadel" (cf. 4.9-10, 12). This was a calculated

provocation, for the gymnasium was a symbolic center of Greek civilization, the place where

Hellenic instruction (*paideia*) was transmitted.[5] It was emblematic of the advance of Hellenism

that now threatened Israel's religious culture and identity.

Such "lawlessness" and disdain for ancestral custom provoked judgment: "For this

reason heavy disaster overtook them, and those whose ways of living they admired and wished to

imitate became their enemies and punished them. It is no light thing to show irreverence to the

divine laws--a fact that later events will make clear" (4.16-17). Divine providence assigns a

punishment proportionate to the offense: those who devoted themselves to foreign customs were

humiliated by the very persons they sought to imitate. Even against overwhelming odds, the

Maccabeans overcome the "Hellenizers" with the assistance of divine providence. Here the

narrator presents a popular religious conception of providence, but the question also implies a

philosophical dimension that concerns the interactions of God with humanity. Indeed, so

prominent had reflection on "the relationship between God and man, i.e., the problem of

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[5]Moses Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 40. This represents an important counterpoint to Christoph Markschies' claim that Hellenism refers only to language and institutions. Here, language cannot be the opprobrium, since the Maccabean history is written in Greek. What makes the gymnasium offensive to these Jews is less the institution itself than the cultural mores it transmits. Cf. Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche Theologie und ihre Institutionen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 43-108; "Intellectuals and Church Fathers in the Third and Fourth Centuries," *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land,* ed., Ora Limor and G. G. Stroumsa, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 239-56.

providence" become that Daniélou identifies it as the center toward which "all philosophical

speculation" was oriented by the end of the second century.[6] These became contested questions

not only for the Maccabeans, but also for Christians in the Roman Empire. How should the

church articulate its identity within Greco-Roman culture?

Answering this question became the *Lebenswerk* of Adolf von Harnack, who formulated

Hellenization as *the* problem for church history.[7] In his celebrated lectures, "What Is

Christianity?" (*Das Wesen des Christentums*), Harnack deploys the conceit of the kernel and the

husk to define the task of the historian of dogma. Christ had preached a simple gospel, which

Harnack condensed into three principles: "Firstly, the kingdom of God and its coming.

Secondly, God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul. Thirdly, the higher

righteousness and the commandment of love."[8] These propositions form the essential content of

the Gospel, its peculiar kernel of truth. This kernel transcends the vicissitudes of history, but

remains embedded in history--the husk that forms around it. It is the task of the historian first to

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[6]Jean Daniélou, *Origen,* trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 74. John
David Dawson reflects Daniélou's judgment, pointing out in his article the various ways that
Origen's doctrine of the Christ's "coming down" responds to a tension current in Neoplatonic
circles that concerned the reconciliation of the transcendent immutability of the gods and their
providential activity in the human realm. Cf. Dawson, "The Third Century: Christian Teaching,"
in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature,* Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, and
Andrew Louth, ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 227-35.
[7]Though he furnished the most significant critical account of Hellenization, Harnack's insight
was not original. Ancient authors such as Porphyry had long charged that Christian intellectuals
such as Origen "played the Greek"; in the early modern period, the dissenting historian Matthieu
Souverain's *Le platonisme dévoilé* (1700) anticipated certain allegations that Harnack made
about how the "Greek soil" corrupted the seeds of the primitive faith. Souverain, *Le platonisme
dévoilé ou Essai touchant la Verbe platonici* (Paris: Fayard, 2004).
[8]Harnack, *What Is Christianity*? (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 51.

distinguish the kernel from the husk, and then to expose the "history of the husk."[9] In carrying

out this task, one phenomenon above all impresses the historian: Hellenism. Characterizing the

essence as a *Geist,* Harnack envisioned it hovering

> bodiless and seeking a body. The spirit, no doubt, makes to itself its own body,   but it
>
> does so by assimilating what is around it. The influx of Hellenism, of the Greek spirit,
>
> and the union of the Gospel with it, form the greatest fact in the history of the Church in
>
> the second century, and when the fact was once established as a foundation, it continued
>
> through the following centuries.[10]

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[9]Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 58. I am indebted to King's penetrating exposition of Harnack's interpretations of hellenization and Gnosticism.

[10]Harnack, *What Is Christianity*?, 199-200. William Rowe has called attention to this dimension of Harnack's modeling of the essence as a "bodiless spirit": "What at first appears to be nothing more than the transmigration of the Christian spirit to another body *is really its alliance with another spirit*. Hellenization suddenly seems much more dangerous than transmigration… What we called transmigration now looks more like the dangerous arrangement of parasitism in which one life form attaches itself to another, and the latter functions as a 'host' of the former." Rowe, "Harnack and the Concept of Hellenization," in Wendy Helleman, ed., *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 76-7. Italics mine. E.P. Meijering analyzes Harnack's conception of Hellenization and the revisions he made to his theory in response to his (almost exclusively German) critics in Meijering, *Die Hellenisierung des Christentums im Urteil Adolf von Harnacks* (Amsterdam: Holland Publishing Company, 1985). For recent discussion of Hellenization, see P. Neuner, "Die Hellenisierung des Christentums als Modell von Inkulturation," *Stimmen der Zeit* 213.6 (1995), 363-76; Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993); J. Pelikan, "De-Judaization and Hellenization: The Ambiguities of Christian Identity," in *The Dynamic in Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: Villanova University Press, 1970), 81-124. Among case studies of Hellenization, see especially Rebecca Lyman, "The Politics of Passing: Justin Martyr's Conversion as a Problem of Hellenization," *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 36-60; S.R. Shimoff, "Hellenization among the Rabbis: Some Evidence from Early Aggadot concerning David and Salomon," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 18.2 (1987), 168-87. More general surveys can be found in Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of*

However inexorable, this transmigration of essence through historical "bodies," is never an antiseptic process. For in the progress of Hellenization, the husky excrescence began to stifle the simple piety of the Gospel under a regimen of law, mystery, and obscurantism. This development culminated in the Catholicism of High Middle Ages, which the Protestant Reformation challenged. Because one cannot confine the problems associated with *Hellenismus* to the early centuries of Christianity, one must keep vigilant watch over the essence. In Harnack's conception, then, the historian's task becomes the task of the reformer.[11]

The most important crucible of Hellenism was in the culture and institutions associated with *paideia.* In the development of the Alexandrian school, Harnack discerns a momentous transition in the life of the church. Its emergence heralded the arrival of "scientific" (*wissenschaftliche*) theology. "The Alexandrian school of catechists was of inestimable importance for the transformation of the heathen empire into a Christian one, and of Greek philosophy into ecclesiastical philosophy," Harnack maintained. "In the third century, this school overthrew polytheism by scientific means whilst at the same time preserving everything of

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Greek Culture and the Reception of the Classical Tradition, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 11-166; Glen Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); David E. Aune, "The World of Roman Hellenism," *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 19-37.

[11] At several points in his *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries,* Harnack posits this connection directly. To cite just one instance: "But the reasons for the triumph of Christianity in that age are no guarantee for the permanence of that triumph throughout the history of mankind. Such a triumph rather depends upon the simple elements of the religion, on the preaching of the living God as the Father of men, and on the likeness of Jesus Christ. For that very reason, it depends also on the capacity of Christianity to strip off once more any collective syncretism and unite itself to fresh coefficients. The Reformation made a beginning in this direction." A. von Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries,* trans. James Moffatt (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), 1.397.

any value in Greek science and culture."[12]

This "scientific" preservation of Greek philosophy augured both promise and peril. By providing a vernacular in which to express the faith, it proved to be an instrument "of great moment" to the church in its missionary expansion. Yet with it came the seductions of Hellenism, and the possibility of diluting the Gospel. Too often, in Harnack's view, the synthesis that resulted proved disastrous. "Materials valuable and useless alike, sheer fantasy and permanent truth which could no longer be neglected, all were of course mixed up in a promiscuous confusion…"[13] The enhanced intelligibility and stature that Alexandrian Christianity had gained from its assimilation to Hellenism came at the expense of the Gospel. Harnack's conclusions on the legacy of Clement sound a plangent note: "…we cannot deny that the Church tradition was here completely transformed into a Greek philosophy of religion on a historical basis, nor do we certify the Christian character of Clement's 'dogmas' in acknowledging the evangelical spirit of his practical position."[14]

Harnack's research amplified the presence of Hellenistic thought in the Christian literature of Alexandria. Yet further advance required *Quellenforschungen:* identification of the provenance and character of this dependence. To this end, Harnack superintended the production of *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller* (GCS), and *Texte und Untersuchungen* (TU), series that

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[12] Harnack, *The History of Dogma* 2.319.

[13] Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity,* 1.297. Strikingly, in his critique of the metaphysical syncretism that resulted from this "promiscuous confusion," Harnack isolated three individuals among the "prominent teachers" who "remained conscious of the limitations of knowledge": Marcion, his disciple Apelles, and (to a lesser extent) Irenaeus. Cf. 1.298-9n1.

[14] Harnack, *The History of Dogma* 2.330. Harnack is less withering in his criticism of Origen, but concludes his review by remarking that Origen's philosophy marked the "definite transformation of the rule of faith into the compendium of a Greek philosophical system." (2.380).

furnished critical editions of Greek Christian authors and catalogued their appropriations of

classical and Hellenistic literature (among other things). These editions provided further impetus

to examine the relationship between Christianity and culture that surrounded them. Hal Koch's

monograph *Pronoia und Paideusis* epitomizes these efforts. Building on the research of Eugene

de Faye, Koch identified convergence between Origen and his Middle Platonist and Stoic

contemporaries on such issues as free will, philosophy of history, and theodicy. To Koch,

providence as *paideia* formed the *Grundmotiv* of Origen's thought: the divine order of the

cosmos and history directed the education of humanity. In this respect, Origen synthesized

Christianity with Hellenism by exploiting the Platonic conception of God educating the

universe.[15] Werner Jaeger, a pioneer in the study of education in antiquity, endorsed Koch's

reading of Origen and the other Alexandrians, maintaining that Origen

> finds the evidence of this Logos and of Providence in the history of humanity and builds
>
> up a picture of history that comprises and welds together the facts both of biblical history
>
> and of the history of the Greek mind. *Paideia* is thus the gradual fulfillment of divine
>
> providence.[16]

Thus, "the character of ancient teaching is best understood in light of the synthesis it achieved

with Greek cultural ideals," achieved first in Alexandria.[17] Unlike Harnack, he perceived this

synthetic "Hellenization" as benign. The reconciliation of the Christian faith and Greek culture

culminates in the assimilation of these diverse traditions and a recognition that "an ultimate unity

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[15]Plato, *Laws* X, 897b: ὁ θεὸς παιδαγώγει τὸν κόσμον.

[16]Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1961), 67.

[17]John David Dawson, "Christian Teaching," 236.

existed between them, and a common core of ideas…"[18] Lurking beneath apparent

contradictions between Hellenism and Christianity lies a collective substratum of humanistic

ideals. For Jaeger, the real tension resides not in the opposition of the Christian religion to Greek

culture, but in the opposition of Christian religion to Greek *religion*. Once one divests Greek

culture of religious content at odds with Christianity, no antithesis remains.

Despite mounting evidence of correlation between the thoughts of the Alexandrians and

their literary contemporaries, Harnack and Koch failed to convince everyone with the

conclusions they drew from this evidence. Correlation of thought entails neither dependence nor

function. According to these critics, the Alexandrians despoiled the "riches of Egypt"--

philosophy--as an expression of Christocentric piety and service to the church. Because Harnack

and his retinue largely neglected commentaries, sermons, and devotional tracts, they tended to

depreciate the spiritual and pastoral dimensions of Alexandrian thought, a criticism that Walther

Völker had raised in *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes* and *Der wahre Gnostiker nach*

Clemens Alexandrinus.[19] The architects of the *thélogie nouvelle* developed Völker's point yet

further. If Harnack saw the Alexandrians as harbingers of a fatal embrace with hellenism, these

French scholars perceived them--and Origen in particular--as mentors for the church's

engagement with modern culture.[20] This rehabilitation of Origen the Spiritual Mentor in the

work of Henri de Lubac, Henri Crouzel, and others transformed the "still too popular depiction

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[18] Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia,* 39-40.

[19]Völker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1931); *Der Wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* TU 57 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952)..

[20] Here I remain dependent upon C. Kannengiesser, "A Century in Quest of Origen's Spirituality," *Origene: Maestro di vita spirituale,* SPM 22, ed. Luigi F. Pizzolato and Marco Rizzi (Milan: Università Cattolica, 2001), 10-13.

of Origen as being almost completely intellectual, esoteric, and rationalist," into "the apostle and

the man of the Church that he was above all else."[21] In this conception, the Alexandrians

represented an antidote both to secular rationalism and to the arid scholasticism dominant in mid-

century Catholicism.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, historiographic and theoretical developments

further complicated the dominant narrative of Hellenization that Harnack and his disciples had

promulgated. Research began to erode the conventional distinctions between Palestinian and

Hellenistic Judaism on the one hand, and Jewish and Hellenistic Christianity on the other. In the

"Hellenized" Judaism of Alexandria, Harnack had perceived anticipations of the synthesis

between Greek culture and Christianity, which he contrasted to the resistance of Palestinian

Judaism to any mixture with foreign cultures.[22] Martin Hengel's magisterial *Judentum und*

Hellenismus undermined this fashionable dichotomy.[23] Capaciously researched and amply

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[21]Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture according to Origen,*
trans. Anne Englund Nash. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007)*,* 60.

[22]Indeed, there is an inconsistency between Harnack's understanding of Hellenization in Judaism
and in Christianity. He portrays the Hellenization of Judaism as a positive development, a
necessary *preparatio evangelica* that catapulted a provincial faith into a world religion. Judaism,
however, remained too parochial and resistant to cultural assimilation to embrace Hellenization.
As the surrounding paragraphs demonstrate, Harnack cast a gimlet eye toward the Hellenization
of Christianity. What made Christianity a world religion also threatened to corrupt its essence. In
the first chapter, I problematize this bivalent picture by tracing the Jewish roots of Alexandrian
Christianity. Here, the tension between the positive and negative valences of Hellenization in
Harnack could not be more acute. That Alexandrian Christianity - the harbinger of "promiscuous
confusion" - could have emerged from the matrix of Alexandrian Judaism - a pinnacle of Judaism
as world religion - is an inconvenient truth for the master narrative of Hellenization.

[23] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the
Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols. ET trans. John Bowden. (Fortress: Minneapolis, 1975). Later
in his life, Hengel revisited this research, and produced an epitome with the collaboration of
Christoph Markschies. Cf. Hengel and Markschies, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea*, above n.4.
Although Hengel's research has gained widespread acceptance, it has also sustained sharp

documented, Hengel's magnum opus exposed the influence of Hellenism in Palestine from an

early date. In various ways, David Runia, John Collins, Pieter van der Horst, and others have

substantiated the main elements of Hengel's thesis and expanded its scope considerably. They

have also demonstrated a more intimate relationship between nascent Christianity and Judaism

than the earlier consensus held.[24] Complementing this historical insight has been an evolution in

cultural studies.

Poststructural critics challenge the tendency of early cultural theory to reify and oppose

abstractions such as "Christianity" and "culture". Culture, they charge, is as inescapable as

language--and perhaps just as elusive. Postcolonial theorists focus attention on the construction

of identities among subject peoples in pluriform societies. They discard categories such as

"antithesis" or "synthesis" as insufficient to capture the complexity of cultural interpenetration.

Rather, such peoples exist in a fluid condition of hybridity, without obvious delineations to

separate these constituent cultures.[25]

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criticism from certain quarters. See for example Louis Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Hengel demonstrated conclusively that Palestinian Judaism was not free from the influence of Hellenic culture, but the extent and character of this influence remains open to debate.

[24]Two early contributors to this line of exploration include Jean Daniélou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea, vol.2: Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, ed. trans. J. A. Baker. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973).
J. Pelikan, "De-Judaization and Hellenization," 81-124.

[25]Recent attempts by scholars of Early Christianity to deploy postcolonial theory include Daniel Boyarin and Virginia Burrus, "Hybridity as Subversion of Orthodoxy? Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity," *Social Compass* 52.4 (2005), 431-41; J. Rebecca Lyman, "Hellenism and Heresy," *JECS* 11.2 (2003), 9-22; Stamenka Antonova, "Barbarian or Greek: The Charge of Barbarism and Early Christian Apologetics," PhD diss., Columbia University, 2008; Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Benjamin H. Dunning, *Aliens and Sojourners: Self as Other in Early*

A recent article by John David Dawson exposes the deficiency of these older paradigms

of faith and culture and their portrayals of Alexandrian Christianity. Such paradigms, Dawson

maintains, presuppose a conceptual opposition between the ideals of Hellenism and the

normative content of Christian faith. Synthesis requires antithesis. Dependent as they are upon

confident demarcations of "Christianity" from "culture," these synthetic accounts no longer

appear plausible. "Religion" and "faith" are inextricable from the cultures that incubate them.[26]

They are expressions of culture, not entities discrete from it. Dawson elaborates,

> The problem with this view is not the claim that "Christian faith" and "Greek cultural
>
> ideals" intermixed, but rather the suggestion that ancient Greek Christians could espouse
>
> a "Christian faith" that was, in its essential origin or character, somehow sufficiently
>
> independent of Greek culture to make its subsequent "mixing" with that culture
>
> possible.[27]

Such a claim is only credible, Dawson maintains, "on the basis of a theological claim about the a-

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Christianity (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

[26] This literature making this point is rich and diverse, but some of the more important accounts include: Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).; Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984); Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Ibid., *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Tomoko Mazusawa, "Culture," Mark Taylor, ed. *Critical Terms in Religious Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 70-93; Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparisons of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Ibid., *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[27] Dawson, "Christian Teaching," 236.

cultural (or even anti-cultural) nature of divine revelation."[28] In some respects, Dawson's

critique ratifies Harnack's point about the gospel's cultural accommodation. But where Harnack

had imagined an essential *Geist* animating the various incarnations of the Gospel, Dawson sees

Christian teaching as itself a cultural phenomenon that includes "spiritual sensibility, textual

interpretation, and philosophical reflection."[29] To distinguish the kernel from the husk would be

impossible, since the kernel itself is the product of culture. Putting the point more bluntly,

Dawson points out, "there was no Christian faith for a Greek Christian that was not, from the

very outset, an ingredient in that individual Christian's existing cultural formation…[that] they

could not escape even had they wanted to."[30]

Though it alters the parameters of cultural description, this observation hardly

undermines the enterprise of discerning the identities of Alexandrian Christianity. Rather, it

illuminates how Christians negotiated their "distinctive" identities using resources from within

their evolving cultural matrix. Dawson observes, "It was a contest… fought out by members of

Greek culture over competing constructions of their identity, as authorized by alternative

authoritative texts."[31]

As Gregory Thaumaturgus' *Address of Thanksgiving* demonstrates, however, this choice

did not entail an invidious choice between Athens and Jerusalem. One might pursue an eclectic

curriculum in Greek wisdom as a propaedeutic (or complement) to the study of Scripture.

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[28]Ibid.
[29]Ibid., 222, 236.
[30]Ibid., 236.
[31]Ibid. Here, perhaps, Dawson and Francis Young overstate the case for the Bible replacing the classics of poetry or philosophy at the heart of the pagan curriculum. For Clement and Origen, these writings continued to have their uses, although they remained auxiliary to the Scriptures as the focus of this education.

Christian intellectuals such as Clement and Origen thus evolved cultural discourses that

"changed the rules" of this contest. "… Origen and those who followed him were able to make

even Platonic philosophy the site of a distinctively Christian *paideia* grounded not only in

theoretical reflection and hermeneutical ingenuity, but in the practices of bodily ἄσκησις,

personal and corporate prayer, and freely accepted martyrdom."[32]

Much recent research on Alexandrian Christianity has addressed these cultural

negotiations by integrating the study of hermeneutics, rhetoric, and practice. Dawson,[33] David

Brakke,[34] Karen Jo Torjesen,[35] Frances Young,[36] Bernard Neuschäfer,[37] and Lewis Ayres[38] have

demonstrated how the development of a scriptural canon and hermeneutics formed an important

component of cultural fashioning and *paideia* in Alexandria. In particular, they examine the

rhetorical and philosophical strategies Clement, Origen, and others deployed to articulate

identity. Scholars have not abandoned *Quellenforschung*, but presently carry it out with greater

methodological sophistication: Annewies van den Hoek,[39] Arkadi Choufrine,[40] and David

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[32] Ibid., 237. Despite the significance Dawson attaches to these spiritual and bodily practices, his article devotes disproportionate attention to the theoretical features of this *paideia.*
[33] John David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Ibid., *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
[34] David Brakke, "Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt: Athanasius of Alexandria's Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter," *Harvard Theological Review* 87.4 (1994), 395-419.
[35] Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Structure in Origen's Exegesis* Patristische Texte und Untersuchungen 28 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1985).
[36] Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002).
[37] Bernard Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe*. Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 18 (Basel: Reinhardt, 1987).
[38] Lewis Ayres, *The Rise of Scripture,* forthcoming.
[39] Annewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the* Stromateis, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1988); Ibid., "How Alexandrian Was

Runia[41] epitomize this trend. Cosmology tends to be a crucible in which these strategies are

forged, and this subject has attracted considerable scrutiny recently. In her monograph

Christology and Cosmology, Rebecca Lyman explores how Origen, Eusebius, and Clement

"borrowed and modified common formulas of Late Antiquity to express particular theological

concerns."[42] Lyman's examination displays how social and intellectual contexts conditioned

these borrowings and modifications and shaped the development of cosmological models.

Hendrik Benjamins revisited some of the issues Koch had analyzed decades earlier.[43] Comparing

Origen to his philosophical antecedents and contemporaries on the issue of freedom of the will,

Benjamins discovered a wide range of affinities with respect to the maintenance of the world in a

harmonious order. Yet the Alexandrian Christian's view diverged from his counterparts in an

important respect. Origen interpreted free will as a corollary of divine care for the individual,

identifying cosmic providence with the divine economy narrated in Scripture.

A final vista of research has addressed the relationship between *paideia* and *oikonomia.*

Richard Layton's investigation of Didymus the Blind quarried the Tura Papyri for a series of

exchanges between the Alexandrian instructor and his students on issues ranging from biblical

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Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and His Alexandrian Background," *HeyJ*
(1990), 179-94; Ibid., "The Catechetical School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic
Heritage," *HTR* 90.1 (1997), 59-87.
[40]Arkadi Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria's
Appropriation of His Background* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).
[41]David T. Runia, *Philo and the Church Fathers: A Collection of Papers,* Supplements to
Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: Brill, 1997).
[42]J. Rebecca Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen,
Eusebius, and Athanasius.* Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: OUP, 1993).
[43]Hendrik Benjamins, *Eingeordnete Freiheit: Freiheit und Vorsehung bei Origenes* (Leiden:
Brill, 1994).

interpretation to moral formation, providing greater social density to the descriptions of Alexandrian *paideia.* Layton emphasizes the "nexus" between biblical scholarship and ethical reflection, identifying the mimetic dimensions of education as the "hinge" linking literary and social concerns.[44] Layton's study drew upon precedents: in 2001, the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* dedicated an issue to the theme of participation in the divine economy. Judith Kovacs[45] and Joseph Trigg[46] contributed articles exploring the ways that Clement and Origen, respectively, identified their pedagogical strategies with the providential organization of the cosmos.

In the present study, I challenge and elaborate on these recent contributions, considering how these mimetic conceits of providence as *paideia* reflect both the developing Alexandrian tradition and its relationship to its surrounding culture. From its origins to the contributions of Clement, and Origen, I investigate how Alexandrian Christians negotiated their identities by both exploiting and challenging discourses of providence and *paideia.* What emerges is not a synthesis of Christianity and Hellenism, but a contest staged within Hellenism over proper instruction and the interpretation of texts. My argument is that concerns endemic to Christian doctrine and life shape the construction of Christian teaching in Clement and Origen. Although they exploit the resources of pagan culture, they subordinate these borrowings to Christian revelation, and exercise caution in how they deploy these resources.

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[44]Richard Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 8.
[45]Judith L. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria," *JECS* 9.1 (2001), 3-25.
[46]Joseph W. Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia:* Reflections of Origen's Understanding of Divine and Human Pedagogy in the *Address* Ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus," *JECS* 9.1 (2001), 27-52.

SYNOPSIS OF ARGUMENT

How one answers the question of Christian origins in Alexandria shapes how one views subsequent development of the themes of providence and *paideia* in the literature of Clement and Origen. I begin therefore by wading into the contested question of Christian origins in Alexandria. After considering the positions of historical skepticism and original heresy, I argue that the Alexandrian Christian community grew out of the matrix of Alexandrian Judaism, and only gradually became differentiated. This means that Clement and Origen worked out of existing traditions of Judaism and Christianity. Although they forged new directions in using the resources of philosophy and literature to articulate their religious identity, they could draw on pre-existing traditions for navigating Hellenic culture.

In the next two chapters, I trace the outworking of these origins in Clement and Origen, the two most prominent thinkers associated with the development of Christian thought in this metropolis. I show that scholars have often over-emphasized the Hellenic dependence of Clement's thought at the expense of its Jewish roots. This mischaracterization emerges from faulty paradigms, selective reading of the evidence, and arbitrary privileging of certain writings in the Clementine corpus. At the center of Clement's thought is the progressive revelation of mysteries through the interpretation of Scripture, not speculation plagiarized from Plato. Likewise, I demonstrate that Origen perceives both Scripture and the cosmos as "texts" full of mysteries that demand wise interpreters. Far from disparaging matter and history - the traditional charges leveled against his "Hellenic" tendencies - providence therefore depends upon them to cultivate a spiritual sensibility.

Clement and Origen's notions of Scripture's progressive revelation entails the use of mystery to deter the unworthy and stimulate the adept to cultivate virtue. By definition,

mysteries require interpretation and an interpreter. In the fourth chapter, I examine how both

exploited philological techniques developed by philosophers and grammarians to interpret these

mysteries in a fitting and edifying manner. The final chapter investigates Gregory

Thaumaturgus' *Address of Thanksgiving* as an idealized depiction of the product of this *paideia*.

After demonstrating that its presentation of Origen corresponds to what we encounter in his

writings, I attempt to show that it also fits the curricula one finds in Clement and Origen. This

means that the instructor, who has passed through this curriculum and progressed toward

assimilation with God, becomes a personal embodiment of divine providence. I conclude the

chapter by considering how it frames the questions of Greek wisdom and how this compares with

scholarly perceptions of Hellenization.

CHAPTER 1: AT THE ORIGINS OF ALEXANDRIAN CHRISTIANITY:

TEXTS, TRADITIONS, TRAJECTORIES

How one answers the question of Christian origins in Alexandria shapes how one views subsequent development of the themes of providence and *paideia* in the literature of Clement and Origen. I begin therefore with a consideration of the contested question of Christian origins in Egypt. In the past, scholars have concluded from the paucity of the surviving evidence either that nothing can be said of the primitive forms of Alexandrian Christianity (Harnack, Bardy, Bagnall), or that these origins were deliberately obscured by later ecclesiastical authorities because they deviated from later canons of orthodoxy (Bauer, Koester, Griggs). Both positions have ramifications for the themes of this study. A position of studied agnosticism about the earliest forms of Christianity in Alexandria entails that very little in the way of stable traditions can serve as the trajectory for Clement's and Origen's reflection on divine providence and education. If one finds Bauer's theses of original diversity and heresy compelling, then the resources from which Clement and Origen construct their position tend toward dependence on Greek philosophy and gnosticism.[1] Following others (Klijn, Modrzejewski, Jakab, Pearson, Runia), I defend a third possibility: that the Alexandrian Christian community grew out of the matrix of Alexandrian Judaism, and only became differentiated from Judaism after the insurrection of 115-17. This means that Clement and Origen worked out of existing traditions of Judaism and Christianity. Still working within an experimental phase of Christian theology there, they located themselves on a spectrum of positions for exploiting the resources of pagan culture and philosophy.

To substantiate this hypothesis, I suggest the need for a more rigorous analysis of the

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[1]For a recent study of the connection between heresy and conflicts with non-Christian culture and society, see C. Scholten, "Die Funktion der Häresienabwehr in der Alten Kirche," *Vigiliae Christianae* 66 (2012), 229-68.

literary sources. Four methodological problems, in particular, have beset earlier studies. First, scholars tend to focus exclusively on literature produced in Alexandria, and have discounted the importance of literature circulated in Alexandria. This approach underestimates the communication of Alexandrian Christianity with other centers of Mediterranean Christianity. Second, the production - and distribution - of texts says very little about their reception and use among reading audiences. Close attention to both rhetorical functions and the later reception history of the document can help to furnish this context. Third, the tendency to infer the existence of communities from texts overdetermines the evidence by underdetermining the community. A single reading community may read and write eclectically. To circumscribe communities with the labels "Jewish-Christian," "apocalyptic" and "Hellenistic wisdom" ignores the possibility that these texts are not mutually exclusive, and that a single community may read and use them all. Finally, previous studies have tended to portray ecclesiastical structures that fostered these developments in anachronistic ways. Far from being mature entities, the Alexandrian bishopric and the catechetical school matured over time, nurturing various theologies and shaping their expressions. The literature reflects these institutional challenges and changes.

My own approach is to identify and analyze texts that either originated or circulated in Alexandria by 180-200: *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Teachings of Silvanus*, *Sentences of Sextus*, the *Kerygma Petrou*, Fragments of Basilides and Valentinus, and *Against Heresies*. Despite obvious diversity among these writings, I isolate three prominent themes that animate them: the character of the teacher and his wisdom, the ordering of the universe in the shaping of salvation, and the interpretation of the law in the light of Jesus Christ. I maintain that these themes provide the scaffolding for an understanding of divine providence educating humanity through the cosmos and through the text of Scripture. Although anchored in Judaism, these concepts proved fecund resources for the fashioning of Christian identity in Alexandria.

The Mystery of Alexandrian Origins

In his *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Adolf von Harnack declares, "the worst gap in our knowledge of early Christian history is our almost total ignorance of the history of Christianity in Alexandria and Egypt up until 180."[2] Likewise, Gustave Bardy remarks that the origins of Alexandrian Christianity are "shrouded in almost complete obscurity."[3] A. F. J. Klijn identifies these professions of historical agnosticism as representative of the first stage in the historiography of Christian origins in Alexandria.[4] A skepticism toward traditional accounts marks this stage off from its pre-critical antecedents. In the legends of Marcan or Petrine foundations, the procession of bishops catalogued in Eusebius, and a textual variation that locates Apollos in Egypt, these scholars found slender evidence for any firm conclusions. Rather than engage in conjecture, they preferred to pass over these origins in critical silence.

In a refined form, this agnostic position still finds adherents.[5] The obscurity that darkens these origins, however, is a relative obscurity. As Gilles Dorival observes, Alexandria represents an extreme instance of the uncertainty that shrouds Christian origins in general.[6] When one ventures outside the confines of the New Testament canon, the evidence for primitive Christian communities is sparse until the second century everywhere. Dorival advises caution toward pronouncements on the first century, but notes that the quantity, quality, and diversity of sources

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[2] Harnack, *Mission and Expansion*, 2.158-9.

[3] G. Bardy, *La question des langues dans l'Église ancienne* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1946), 1.38.

[4] A.F.J. Klijn, "Jewish Christianity in Egypt," in Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring, *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity,* Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 161-2.

[5] More recently, Roger Bagnall has championed this position, leveling a devastating attack against reconstructions that depend upon early dating of New Testament papyri. R. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[6]Gilles Dorival, "Les débuts du christianisme à Alexandrie," *Alexandrie: une mégapole cosmopolite: Actes du 9ème colloque à Beaulieu-sur-Mer, les 2 & 3 Octobre 1998* (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, 1999), 157-58.

improves dramatically in the early decades of the second.[7] Consequently, most reconstructions

of Alexandrian Christianity in the first century depend upon evidence from the second. Scholars

disagree about the reliability of this procedure, with some proposing linkages between earlier

Jewish and pagan sources and second-century Christianity, and others discrediting these

extrapolations as tenuous.[8]

The Bauer Thesis: Orthodoxy, Heresy, and Diversity

> With his speculation that the earliest forms of Egyptian Christianity were diverse and

heterodox, Walter Bauer inaugurated what Klijn designates as the second stage. For Bauer, the

very reticence of the sources demands scholarly enquiry, not professions of ignorance:

> [the sources] are too uncommunicative. Something ought to be found in them! Now
>
> these sources were certainly seen and inspected, if not written, by churchmen. What
>
> reason could there have had for being silent about the origins of Christianity in such an
>
> important center if there had been something favorable to report?[9]

This silence casts a disquieting shadow over Alexandrian origins. In Bauer's reconstruction, the

legends that later "ecclesiastical" sources propagate to fill this void take on conspiratorial

dimensions.

> His narration of this *damnatio memoriae* turns on a winnowing of the sources on the

criteria of authenticity, place of composition, and orthodoxy. Like earlier critics, he dismisses

the Marcan foundation myth that Eusebius provides as a contrivance born of desperation. The

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[7]Ibid., 165-66. See also, Birger A. Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt,* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 12.

[8]See, for example, Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity,* 82-99. Representative of a more skeptical attitude toward this approach is Krister Stendahl, who declares that "nothing" can be known of Christian origins in Alexandria, *Paul among the Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Fortress: Philadelphia, 1976), 70. Roger Bagnall has likewise cautioned against the seductions of early dating and historical retrojection.

[9] Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* , trans. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 44-5.

succession of ten bishops that follow the apostle "are and remain for us a mere echo, a puff of smoke; they scarcely could ever have been anything more than that."[10] He disputes the Alexandrian provenance of many primitive materials, such as the *Epistula Apostolorum* and 2 Clement.[11] Others, such as the fragmentary remains of the *Kerygma Petrou* and the New Testament manuscripts, he simply ignores. Although he concedes that the *Epistle of Barnabas* originated in Egypt, he disparages its "orthodoxy". The remnants of this earliest period are disproportionately unorthodox, from the "gnostic" Barnabas to the writings of the heresiarchs Basilides, Valentinus, and Theodotus. Eager to paper over these deviant beginnings, later writers invented genealogies that joined apostolic origins to an episcopal succession.

Initially neglected by all but a cadre of German scholars, Bauer's provocative argument has come to reconfigure the discussion of Christian origins. Critics have adopted certain provisions and criticized others, but they must all grapple with his claims. Most scholars register Bauer's complaint against historiography that imposes anachronistic categories upon the evidence, and recognize the diversity of norms and traditions within earliest Christianity.[12] Like those of his teacher, Adolf von Harnack, Bauer's study promoted the study of competing traditions in early Christianity without privileging the strands that eventually triumphed.[13] This

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[10] Ibid., 45.

[11] On this count, Bauer was probably correct. In a recent article, Charles E. Hill furnishes compelling evidence that the *Epistula Apostolorum* originated in Asia Minor. 2 Clement is more likely Egyptian.   Cf. Hill, "The *Epistula Apostolorum*: An Asian Tract from the Time of Polycarp," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7 (1999), 1-53.

[12] Bauer is sometimes credited with pioneering the thesis that Christian origins were doctrinally pluriform, but Anglican polemicists of the Restoration anticipated these arguments by several centuries. In their exchanges with Catholic interlocutors, they found this tactic useful in defending a *iure divino* episcopal authority untainted by popery, and a latitudinarian stance toward dissenters. Cf. Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England: The Politics of Royal Supremacy 1660 - 1688* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), 129-62, esp. 151ff.

[13] Michel Desjardins has posited that the scholarly trajectory was already in place by the time Bauer published his monograph: "the existence of pre-catholic forms of Christianity, the diversity of early Christianity, and the suspicion of catholicism coupled with a fresh appreciation of the non-catholic understandings of the Christian message." Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond:

has provided an enormous impetus to the recovery of diversity and conflict in the study of

Christian origins. Even his argument that heretical trajectories preceded and outnumbered their

proto-orthodox counterparts continues to generate reflection, if not acceptance. The abundance

of Egyptian literature later deemed heterodox lends a certain credibility to this theory of "original

heresy".[14] To Bauer's partisans, the publication of the contents of the library at Nag Hammadi

represents further confirmation of this intuition. Here was material testimony to varied

speculation that did not conform to the standards of orthodoxy promoted by Rome and its

surrogates.

What complicates any evaluation of Bauer's thesis is the sheer range of subjects it

contemplates. It provides at once a narrative of the regional development of Christianity, a

consideration of unity and diversity in communities throughout the Mediterranean, and an

account of how orthodoxy came to triumph over heresy. These different dimensions form a

synthesis with a definite polemical orientation. Although he aspired to scholarly impartiality, his

sympathies clearly lie with *haeresis*. He inverted the traditional narrative of origins by

maintaining that what was later designated heresy - not orthodoxy - represents the earliest and

most preponderant stratum of Christianity . Bauer sought to deny orthodoxy its privileged status

of originality, and to show that its victory coincided with the expanding reach of an

"ecclesiastical Christianity" centered in Rome. This position coincides strikingly with his

personal commitments.[15] The original circumstance of autochthonous diversity mirrors the

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On Recent Scholarly Discussions of Αἵρεσις in the Early Christian Era," *Second Century* 8 (1992), 68.

[14]Indeed, scholars such as Helmut Koester, "Gnomai Diaphorai: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity," in James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, ed., Trajectories through Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 114-57, Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979), and Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), continue to endorse Bauer's thesis as basically correct.

[15]Although I highlight the importance of confessional orientation in fixing Bauer's critical

Protestant ideal. "Right-believing" and heresy provided a useful aperture for this polemic, for the development of this distinction struck at the doctrinal and institutional roots of Roman hegemony.[16] As Christoph Markschies tartly suggests, fantasy (*Wunschvorstellung*) rather than critical evaluation led Bauer to reconstruct early Christian history along the lines that correspond seamlessly to the ideals of *Kulturprotestantismus.*[17]

Subsequent critics have exposed the tension that these polemical ambitions create between the two parts of Bauer's thesis. To declare that diverse beliefs antedated orthodox unity is one matter. This claim entails that Christian origins were pluriform, and that the demarcation of right belief from deviation represents a later development. When Bauer goes on to maintain that heresy preceded orthodoxy, therefore, he contradicts himself. Either heresy and orthodoxy are anachronistic to this earliest period, or they are not. But one cannot argue that these retrospective distinctions were nonetheless present earlier. This inconsistency regarding "orthodoxy" and "heresy" has raised the hackles of critics. Karen King remarks that his recourse to these labels "re-inscribes" the very division he labors to collapse.[18]

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horizons, one could also explore the influence of romantic and skeptical currents in the scholarly milieu in which he worked. Cf. P. Henry, "Why Is Contemporary Scholarship So Enamored of Ancient Heretics?" *Studia Patristica 17.1* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), 125-26.

[16]As Simon Mimouni observes, the definitions of orthodoxy and heresy map directly onto the tensions between Rome and its dissenters: "L'orthodoxie c'est le christianisme de l'Église de Rome, c'est une institution dont l'episcopat est la cheville ouvrière, c'est une grandeur juridique et politique. Inversement, l'hétérodoxie, c'est tout simplement, ce qui n'est pas le christianisme de l'Église de Rome." S.C. Mimouni, "Étude critique: La question de l'hérésie, ou de l'orthodoxie et de l'hétérodoxie," *Apocryphon* 20 (2009), 270.

[17]Christoph Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche Theologie und ihre Institutionen: Prolegomena zu einer Geschichte der antiken christlichen Theologie*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 354-355. "…Bauer rekonstruierte diejenige Form von antikem Christentum, die seiner liberal-protestantischen Wunschvorstellung einer richtigen Organisationsgestalt von Kirche entsprach: Am Anfang der Kirche stand eine erstaunliche Vielfalt, die sogennante apostolic Tradition ist eine tendenziöse Konstruktion, und die Einheit der Kirche wird am Anfang jedenfalls nicht über die Einheit der Lehre definiert - dieses Bild ähnelte aber deutlich jener Vision einer freien und zugleich lebendigen Kirchlichkeit, die liberale Theologen zu Beginn des Jahrhunderts propagierten."

[18]King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: HUP, 2003), 115.

Recent scholarship has clarified the matter by demonstrating that αἵρεσις acquired a

negative reputation only over time.[19] In antiquity, it designated only a coherent and distinctive

teaching founded on rational principles, usually tracing its lineage to a charismatic founder.

Various medical and philosophical αἱρέσεις advertised these articles of doctrine as well as their

intellectual pedigree to prospective students. They distinguished themselves from rivals by

engaging in polemics and propounding their own positions on topics of interest. Membership in

a αἵρεσις took on a positive valence, for it reflected capacity for deliberation among various

schools of thought. The first traces of pejorative connotations appear in early Judaism and

Christianity. Members of an established tradition sought to cast certain beliefs as dangerous

innovations and their exponents as deviants. Where Philo and Josephus use αἱρέσεις to identify

positions staked within Judaism, representatives of the emerging Pharisaic consensus branded

some apostates with an equivalent Hebrew expression: *minim*. Evidence for this development

can be discerned in Acts 24.20, in which Jewish authorities characterize followers of "the way"

of Jesus Christ as disciples of a αἵρεσις, an illegitimate tributary of their system. In other

references in Acts, the term assumes more neutral meanings, but in the New Testament epistles,

αἵρεσις is uniformly negative. Alain Le Boulluec has convincingly argued that the notion of

heresy that we understand gained currency with Justin. Justin contrasted heretical doctrines with

standards of orthodoxy, and constructed intellectual genealogies to expose their recent origins.[20]

In his hands, the former virtues of heresy - a celebrated founder, a distinguished line of descent, a

coherent tissue of doctrine, and adherence by choice - became vices insofar as it departs from the

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[19]Here, I rely on the excellent summary of scholarship provided in Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 72-82; see also N. Brox, "Häeresie" *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 13 (1986), 248-97; M. Simon, "From Greek *Hairesis* to Christian Heresy," in W. Schoedel and Robert Wilken, *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 101-16; Alain
[20]M. Simon, "From Greek Haeresis," 101-16; A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe et IIIe siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985).

beliefs espoused in the "school" of orthodoxy . Properly speaking, then, heresy begins with heresiology.

Critics have long recognized this problem in Bauer's work. To avoid this quagmire, recent scholars have designated the strands that eventually prevailed "proto-orthodoxy." But even this coinage imposes a linear continuity that may not always be present.[21] More promising results have followed from analyses that frame the discussion in rhetorical and institutional terms. In his magisterial *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe et IIIe siècles*, Le Boulluec pursues the strategy of examining the orthodoxies that precede orthodoxy, and tracing the representations that heresiologists deployed to differentiate orthodoxy from heresy. Christoph Markschies defends the fascinating thesis that institutional development furnishes the context for the flourishing and regulation of diversity. Both studies reveal that at this primitive stage, diversity draws its expressions from a varied lexicon. Right belief is only one of the relevant categories for the articulation of identity and difference, a vocabulary that also includes jealousy, rivalry, schism, and deviation.

Bauer's methods and conclusions have also attracted sharp criticism. Detractors charge that he relies on arguments from silence, selective use of evidence, questionable categories, and tendentious interpretations to reach his conclusions.[22] His forceful claim that the silence of the

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[21]Even Bauer's defenders acknowledge this. See Gerd Lüdemann, *Ketzer: Die andere Seite des frühen Christentums,* (Stuttgart, Radius, 1996).

[22] Kraft and Krodel's English translation includes an appendix that catalogues the immediate reception of *Orthodoxy and Heresy,* 286-316. More recently, Thomas Scheck translated Walther Völker's scathing review that appeared shortly after the publication of Bauer's study: Völker and Scheck, "Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum,"* *JECS* 14.4 (2006), 399-405. The best overviews of the literature are contained in Hans Dieter Betz, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity: Some Critical Reflections on Georg Strecker's Republication of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei in ältesten Christentum,"* *Interpretation* 19 (1965), 299-311; Daniel Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* during the Last Decade *HTR* 73 (1980), 289-98; Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 65-82; Mimouni, "La question de l'hérésie," 265-79; Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche theologie,* 337-83; Lewis Ayres, "Introduction" *JECS*

sources reflects a deliberate campaign to suppress deviation is a hypothesis that must be proved, not a conclusion supported by evidence. Likewise, he dismisses the apostolic legends and episcopal successions that appear in Eusebius as fabrications devoid of any historical value.[23] Without much ado, then, he forecloses on the possibility of any alternatives to his explanation, and proceeds to consider the sources.

Polemic overshadows critical engagement in his reading of the evidence, leaving the reader with an uneven set of arguments. In many cases, he offers an original analysis of these materials. Yet where the literary evidence fails to substantiate his suspicions, he rejects it, ignores it, or tailors it to suit these intuitions. No reason is given for excluding the possibility of an Egyptian provenance for the Epistola Apostolorum. No mention is made of the surviving New Testament manuscripts recovered in Egypt, the *Sentences of Sextus,* or the Kerygma Petrou, all of which attest the presence of non-gnostic trajectories in Egypt. No consistent taxonomy is developed to classify important terms such as "Judeo-Christianity" or "gnosticism." This leads to some idiosyncratic judgments. For example, he brands Barnabas a gnostic, a label that few scholars have found persuasive. These conclusions have become even less tenable in recent years, because research has dismantled the stable categories of gnosticism and heresy that form the premise of Bauer's identifications .[24] Even more reliable heretics, such as Basilides and

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14.4 (2006), 395-8. A few full-length studies have been devoted to the topic, including: Thomas A. Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Church* (Queensland, Ont.: Edwin Mellen, 1988); Robert M. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993); Arland J. Hultgren, *The Rise of Normative Christianity,* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).

[23]It might be argued that, given the scope of his study, he is purposely elliptical, and simply relies on the conclusions of earlier scholarship. Itself a sort of argument from silence, this claim accounts for his rejection of the authenticity of these sources, but falls short of proving their sinister intentions.

[24]Even on the older definitions of gnosticism, this represented a controversial identification. More recently, scholars have questioned the utility of gnosticism as a category. See Michael Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: PUP, 1999); Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: HUP, 2005).

Valentinus, have been rehabilitated by recent studies by Winrich Löhr and Christoph Markschies.[25] Although their findings remain controversial, they reveal the extent to which these designations have become contested in contemporary scholarship. If Bauer illuminated the diversity of Christian origins in Alexandria, later studies have undermined his claim of original heresy and cast doubt on the evidence he marshals to support it.

Jewish Origins

In addition to their criticism of Bauer's methods, later critics noticed a serious lacuna in his research, whose presence he acknowledges, but fails to develop. Near the beginning of his survey of Alexandrian Christian origins, he cites Karl Müller, who observes, "It is precisely because of the strength of the Jewish community in Alexandria that Christianity cannot have long been absent…"[26] Yet because such a tradition does not fit within his neatly constructed divisions of "ecclesiastical" and heterodox Christianities, Bauer devotes little effort to exploring "Jewish Christianity" in Egypt except to note in passing that one could not classify such a phenomenon "ecclesiastically oriented."

Even his admirers conceded this oversight. Georg Strecker, who supervised a later *Auflage* of Bauer's classic study, included a lengthy appendix ("On the Problem of Jewish Christianity") addressing this deficiency, concluding that consideration of this problem would have furnished "an additional substantiation of Bauer's historical perspective."[27] Others maintained that such considerations undermined his interpretation. Renewed interest in these Jewish origins of Christianity and a contraction of the distance between Palestinian and "Hellenistic" Judaisms characterize what Klijn distinguishes as a third stage in historiography of

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[25]Löhr, *Basilides und seine Schule,* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), and Markschies, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins,* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).
[26] Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy,* 46.
[27] Ibid., 241-85; the citation comes from 285.

Alexandrian origins.

If Alexandrian Christianity evolved within a Jewish matrix, then the silence of the sources may reflect the gradual differentiation of the Christian community from Judaism rather than embarrassment over heretical origins. Joseph Modrzejewski comments,

> If primitive Christianity had not left any marks on Egyptian soil until the end of the second century, it was because it had been annihilated along with the entire body in which it was immersed - the Jewish community of Egypt.[28]

On this interpretation, the church emerged from within the vibrant Jewish community of Alexandria, and defined itself in relation to these roots. The charged atmosphere of the Jewish insurrections of 115-17 may have provoked sharper demarcations between these traditions: it is around this time that the Kerygma Petrou defines Christians as a "third race." A range of relationships toward Judaism presented themselves. One could continue to practice a form of "Judeo-Christianity," though the insurrections made Alexandria an inhospitable environment for too close an identification with Judaism. Alternatively, one could abandon Judaism by jettisoning its scriptures entirely, as disciples of Marcion did, or by radically reinterpreting them, as Valentinus and his retinue did. Finally, one could occupy mediating positions by preserving certain features of Judaism, and rejecting or revising others.

Perhaps assuming that the revolt fostered extremism, Modrzejewski himself fails to appreciate the appeal of these mediating positions. He posits that the extinction of the Jewish community in Alexandria in these revolts augured the triumph of "pagano-Christians" in their midst. Having disavowed the insurrections, these "pagano-Christians" survived the violence and emerged as the architects of Alexandrian Christianity. But, as Pearson and others have observed, this narrative obscures continuities that link Judaism prior to the revolt and Christianity after it.

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[28]J. Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt: From Ramses II to Emperor Hadrian.* trans. R. Comman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 227.

The mutiny against Rome may have provided the stimulus for differentiation from the Jewish community of Alexandria, but did not require Christians to make an absolute break with its Jewish inheritance.

Sources for this reconstruction of "Judeo-Christianity" come from eclectic quarters, but taken together, make a persuasive case. Colin Roberts first pointed to the diffusion of the scribal convention of the *nomina sacra* in manuscripts recovered in Egypt as material evidence of a linkage with the Christian community in Jerusalem. More recently, Larry Hurtado has demonstrated that this practice of abbreviation with superlineation of words with devotional significance (the four most common *nomina sacra* are Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός, Κύριος, and Θεός) represents a distinctively Christian variation on the reverence Jewish scribes showed for the divine name. Like Roberts, he conjectures that this practice originated among copyists in the first century Jerusalem church. Because the *nomina sacra* appear even in the earliest manuscripts, they indicate at least the influence of Palestinian Christianity in Alexandria at a very early date, and perhaps the Jerusalem origins of the Egyptian church.

The literary record reflects similar continuities between Alexandrian Christianity and Alexandrian Judaism. The preservation of the Philonic corpus in Clement's writing marks the first incontrovertible appearance of the Jewish thinker's work in Christian literature.[29] So

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[29]"After all the 'ifs', 'maybes', and 'probably,' it is a great relief to reach an author of whom we may be absolutely certain that he knew Philo, had read his writings, and even had some of them, as it were, on his desk. Clement is the first Christian author to make explicit mention of Philo, twice calling him a 'Pythagorean' and once referring to his works (the *De vita Moysis*)." David Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 132. Annewies van den Hoek subtitled her monograph on Clement's use of Philo in the *Stromateis* "An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model." In it, she catalogues 205 instances of appropriation. These borrowings and citations focus especially on the interpretation of Scripture. She posits that this concentration represents a distinctive channel of influence for Clement: "Philo… was his master in the use and interpretation of the Pentateuch, skills that other traditions did not provide. In addition, Philo's vision that made it possible to link philosophical concepts with the biblical message was of great influence…" van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and his Use of Philo in the* Stromateis: *An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (Leiden: Brill, 1988),

instrumental was Philo to the formation of Alexandrian Christianity that Eusebius finds in his

description of the Therapeutae an account of the primitive monasticism as practiced by early

converts of Mark, and the seventh-century Syriac historian Barhadbsabba 'Arbaya credits him

with founding a school of biblical exegesis at Alexandria.[30] If neither of these portraits of *Philo*

Christianus has much claim to authenticity, they at least attest the consanguinity later authors

detected between the Christianity that flourished in Alexandria and this Jewish sage.[31]

Philo represents only the most identifiable strand of Jewish tradition in Alexandrian

literature. Among others, Clement cites extracts from the work of Alexandrian Jewish authors

Aristobulus, Demetrius the Chronographer, and Artapanus, as well as the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.

Not all Jewish influences are identified by name. One could look also at the significance of

references Origen makes to interpretive "traditions" communicated to him by his anonymous

"Hebrew master." In all likelihood, this spectral figure was a Jewish Christian who may have

resided in Alexandria or in Caesarea.

Numerous points of contact appear between Jewish wisdom literature and its Christian

successors. *The Teachings of Silvanus* and the *Sentences of Sextus* draw from Jewish as well as

pagan sources. If one accepts van den Broek's identification of *Eugnostos* as a Jewish document,

then the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* provides a most striking example of the proximity between these

literatures.[32] Discovered at Nag Hammadi, this document refashions the gnomic musings of

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223, 229.

[30]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 2.16-17; *Cause of the Foundation of the Schools* 375.6 - 376.4. The Syriac writer, a bishop in Halwan, sees in this genealogy the unreliable foundations of allegorical interpretation, and even the primal stirrings of the Arian heresy. I owe the latter reference to Runia, 5-6.

[31]Goehring offers the plausible suggestion that the "elite ascetic life" was "so central to [Eusebius'] understanding of Christianity that it pushes itself back into his recovery of Christianity's formative years." Cf. Goehring, "The Origins of Monasticism," in Attridge and Hata, eds. *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 236.

[32]See R. van den Broek, "Eugnostos and Aristides on the Ineffable God," in van den Broek, *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* (Leiden,: Brill, 1996), 23; see also 117-30.

Eugnostos - also present in the Nag Hammadi repository - as the wisdom Christ revealed to his disciples. Here, a redactor may have christianized a Jewish text by putting it in the mouth of Christ.[33] If nothing else, this maneuver signals both possession of Jewish materials and a high regard for their content.

Even where the Christian tradition in Alexandria is more hostile to its Jewish heritage, it engages with Hebrew materials in a manner that reveals familiarity and even a measured respect. Rather than simply denigrating the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish traditions, these antagonists criticize through appropriation. Barnabas ventilates a polemic against Judaism by adopting reading practices that mirror haggadic and halakhic traditions. Likewise, Valentinus offers a reinterpretation of these Scriptures as a "mental apocalypse" that interiorizes the progress of the divine economy.[34] Re-interpretation could take other forms. Gerard Luttikhuizen has chronicled the tendency of certain "gnostic" apocrypha to revise Genesis along with Jesus traditions.[35] While producing radical results, this practice could claim precedent in earlier Jewish traditions.

In this study, I hope to trace the Jewish roots of the Alexandrian church from some of its earliest documents. I will maintain that currents within the Jewish tradition provide the substratum for the later trajectory of Alexandrian Christianity. All the effects of the alleged hellenization of Alexandrian Christianity were already present in Alexandrian Judaism. Significant departures from this Jewish matrix are attributable to the distinctive doctrinal content and the distinctive institutional challenges of the nascent church. The depiction of the operations of providence as a form of divine pedagogy, and the fashioning of the human educator as an image of a divine archetype features prominently in the articulation of Alexandrian Christian

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[33]Similarly, the Sibylline Oracles show various strata of development, with Christians taking over both the generic form and the actual words of Jewish apocalyptic.

[34]D. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria,* (Berkeley: University of California, 1992).

[35]G. Luttikhuizen, *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions*, (Brill: Leiden, 2006).

identity. In the remainder of the chapter, I wish to show that both the raw materials and scaffolding for this literary construction were present at an early stage. But first, I need to navigate a number of important methodological concerns.

Methodological Concerns

The first concern regards the restriction of evidence to literature produced in Alexandria. Bauer and others rely upon a geographical model that privileges literary provenance at the expense of literary circulation and use. This approach has the effect of depreciating the influence that imported literature exercised in Christian Alexandria. The documentary evidence suggests a picture that departs markedly from this depiction of hermetic isolation. Recently, scholars have emphasized the fluidity of travel and the speed with which literature was disseminated throughout the empire.[36] Egyptian Christians not only produced their own literature, but also consumed materials from around the Mediterranean world.

Fragmentary vestiges of this transmission appear among the archives recovered at Oxyrhynchus. Alongside the indigenous survivals are works produced elsewhere: the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a fragment from *Adversus Haereses,* the canonical gospels, and Paul's letters. These findings are pregnant with implications for the much-vaunted claims of diversity in Egyptian Christianity. Colin Roberts points out that the presence of primitive New Testament manuscripts in Egypt suggests that a proto-orthodox contingent may have existed alongside the proto-heterodox. Sometimes the volume or the dating of these copies is significant. More manuscripts of the Shepherd of Hermas survive than of the canonical gospels in the second century.

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[36]Blake Leyerle concludes her helpful survey of travel and communication in Christian antiquity with the following observation: "Thus, despite rates that strike us as impossibly slow and fraught with danger and delays, travel and communication were swifter and more readily effected in the early Christian period than at any previous time… All our sources suggest that early Christians believed they lived in a time of extraordinary mobility. But we know what they could not - namely, that this ease of travel would not be surpassed until the age of the steam engine." Leyerle, "Communication and Travel," in P. Esler, *The Early Christian World* (London: Routledge, 2004), 472-3.

Likewise, the appearance of *Adversus Haereses* in Oxyrhynchus only a few years after its

publication indicates a rapid exchange of information through communication networks that

connected this village to the Mediterranean world. Even the heretics may have been more

diverse than Bauer recognized. The evidence for an early appearance of Marcionism, though not

dispositive, seems plausible. Although it is difficult to determine how readers received this

literature, its availability at an early date helped to shape the contours of Alexandrian

Christianity.

But how exactly does the literary record reflect the development of institutions? A

characteristic response to this question has been to translate literary sources directly into

communities and social practices. In its simplest form, this strategy constructs the community

around the literature: hence, the Johannine community, the Pauline school, or the Valentinian

church. There are some advantages to this model. It subjects the texts in question to close

scrutiny, and demands attention to the patterns of discourse that shape the projected audience.

In many cases, however, this proves a speculative exercise, since communal diversity is

not identical with literary diversity. The relationship between texts and communities is

complicated. Without supporting evidence, it is tenuous to conclude that a community is a

monolith constructed around a single text. A single community may produce and consume a

variety of literature. It may use literature for purposes that range from liturgical reading to

refutation. The reception of this literature may restore harmony or create friction between

producer and receiver. Even a community that reveres a text may interpret it in ways alien to the

ostensible intentions of the text. The eclectic array of their literature itself means little more than

that Egyptian Christians produced, consumed, and preserved a variety of documents. It says

nothing firm about the attitudes with which they received it or the uses to which they put it.

A more sophisticated species of this approach is to extrapolate the existence of various

social groups from positions mentioned in this literature.[37] This method has the advantage of

acknowledging a diversity of positions within single texts, and maintaining that groups coalesce

around discrete issues. But once again, defining a community around a single issue obscures its

dynamic, multidimensional character. Communities may tolerate diverse positions or suppress

them. Disagreements may entail central or peripheral issues. The issues themselves may be

related to one another - or not. With the passage of time, communities may develop and change.

Only closer attention to the rhetoric of the sources, the institutional structures, and the trajectory

of a text's reception can illuminate the communities that produce and interpret these texts.

A recent attempt to isolate strata of the Alexandrian church from the literary record

illustrates the promise and peril of this typological method. Roloef van den Broek quarries the

early literature and identifies six groups.[38]

1. Jewish Christians, whose numbers declined precipitously after 117;

2. Apocalyptics, who assumed the imminence of the eschaton;

3. The *simpliciores,* who adhered to surface interpretations and eschewed theological

speculation;

4. Encratites, who practiced severe forms of bodily asceticism;

5. Gnostic Christians, which van den Broek associates with an insight on the origin of

the elect and viewed salvation as liberation from an inhospitable cosmos;

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[37]Although I use R. van den Broek's typology as an illustration of this strategy, one could also
mention the conclusions of Gilles Dorival, who argues for the existence of Christian gnostics,
"true" Christian gnostics (i.e., disciples of Clement), *simpliciores*, Marcionites, and Jewish
Christians. Because it eliminates the troublesome categories of apocalyptics and Encratites, this
represents an improvement on van den Broek's model, but the lines of demarcation remain fuzzy.
Cf. Dorival, "Les Débuts du christianisme à Alexandrie," 166-72.
[38]R. van den Broek, "Alexandrië in de tweede en de derde eeuw: van christelijke pluriformiteit
naar kerkelijke eenheid," in A. Houtepen, ed. *Breekpunten en keerpunten: beslissende
historische momenten en factoren in het oecumenisch proces* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 72-81. I
follow closely the synopsis of this article that appears in Runia, *Philo in Early Christian
Literature,* 121.

6. Platonizing Christians, who articulated the Christian faith in the idiom of Greek

philosophy.

Van den Broek draws on close scrutiny of the literary record to reconstruct these groups, so we

can be certain that these represent positions within the primitive Alexandrian church. Yet

difficulty arises when one tries to distinguish among these types.[39] The boundaries are

particularly porous among the latter three classes. Those van den Broek designates Gnostics

articulated their convictions in Platonic idiom just as Platonizing Christians such as Clement did.

The regulation of the body is consistent with their convictions as well. The impetus for

Encratism may have arisen from literal interpretation, eschatological fervor, or Greek

philosophy, tethering this group in turn to the *simpliciores*, apocalyptics, Gnostics, or Platonizing

Christians. It is possible to see the *simpliciores* as a remnant of Jewish Christians who became

disenchanted with the influence of Hellenic categories on the faith, or as a less-educated stratum

of the Alexandrian church. Unfortunately, the literary evidence does not warrant more precise

delineation of these groups, limiting the utility of this typology.

Even where literary representations reflect social realities, the existence of stable

communal entities lurking below the texts may be a mirage. In a recent publication, David

Brakke offers a memorable illustration of this point. He invokes Philip Rousseau's vivid

comparison of rivalries between early Christians to a horse race whose outcome is known. It is

"like watching a rerun of a race while fixing your eyes confidently on the outsider you know to

have won as he inches unexpectedly forward along the fence."[40] Rousseau deploys the image to

criticize assumptions that the outcome was a *fait accompli*. The triumph of orthodoxy, presented

[39]Admittedly, these distinctions can be made, though I would suggest that the borders are considerably more contestable, and their utility considerably less palpable than most critics recognize.
[40]Cited in David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity*, (Cambridge: HUP, 2010), 7.

in the annals of the victors as foreordained, was never so inevitable. Nonetheless, Rousseau

retains the basic contours of the image for its heuristic value. It acknowledges the diversity and

competition that characterized early Christianity. This represents an advance on models that

privilege the proto-orthodox position and perceive diversity as deviation from an original,

normative essence.

Yet by assuming continuity and stability of identity among the competitors, the horse-

racing analogy invites the same invidious comparisons. Brakke observes, "In the laudable effort

to emphasize the diversity of early Christian groups and movements, we tend to create stable

'name brands,' which interact and compete with each other like so many brands of breakfast

cereal on a grocery store shelf."[41]   Distinctions among religious communities are rarely so

clearly defined. Religions, according to Robert Campany, "are neither fully integrated systems"

nor "containers into which persons, ideas, practices, and texts may be fit without remainder."[42]

They develop in the flux of a changing world as they respond to stimuli from within and without.

Even competition itself can prompt reconfiguration of these identities. The assumption that the

literary depictions correspond directly to discrete, self-enclosed social entities therefore demands

interrogation. After all, the demarcation of the boundaries was precisely the issue under

negotiation, and differentiation among these constituencies took place unevenly over the course

of the contest. Neither the results of this "horse-race," nor even the identities of its contestants

were fixed and immutable.

It is better to follow Attila Jakab in seeing Alexandrian Christianity as a heterogenous

"movement" that nourished varied "currents" of spiritual and intellectual expression.[43] Within

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[41]ibid., 9.

[42]Cited in ibid. 10.

[43]Attila Jakab, *Ecclesia alexandrina: Evolution sociale et institutionelle du christianisme alexandrin, IIe et IIIe siècles* (New York: Lang, 2001), 65. His judgment deserves full citation: "Isoler ces écrits suppose également le morcellement d'un christianisme numériquement faible

these currents, one can trace how the texts articulate identity and develop strategies of self-differentiation.[44] The topics broached, the rhetorical negotiations of these topics engaged, and the doctrinal stances adopted provide us with the most stable basis for historical reconstruction. The extent to which these textual representations were embodied in social practice depends upon the character and context of the evidence.

The institutional structures of early Christianity form an important dimension of this historical context. In a certain respect, Bauer's thesis concerns the machinations of later institutions as much as the beliefs of their progenitors. If the earliest representatives of Alexandrian Christianity developed traditions independent of ecclesiastical structures, their successors sought to subordinate these heterogeneous strains to uniform doctrine and discipline. Egypt presented peculiar challenges to consolidation. Diverse beliefs flourished in a loosely-organized constellation of communities. Bauer maintains that, "everything we know of [Egyptian] Christianity… clearly has grown up apart from all ecclesiastically-structured Christendom until far into the second century… "[45] Only with the accession of Demetrius to the bishopric did "ecclesiastical Christianity" emerge, along with its desires to centralize authority and secure orthodoxy. As the prestige of ecclesiastical institutions grew, officials saw the advantages of grounding their authority in precedent. The fictions recorded in Eusebius' history form the residue of this struggle to concentrate power.

This perspective continues to shape how historians evaluate the reception of *Adversus*

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en groupes, avec des structures et des organisations sinon différentes, du moins diverses. Les chances pour trouver des arguments valables dans nos sources lacunaires en faveur de ces hypothéses sont maigres… Dès lors, il est peut-être plus approprié de parler de 'courants' pour penser et vivre ce même christianisme que de faire état des christianismes."
[44]This is the approach adopted by Alain LeBoulluec, and now, by David Brakke.
[45]Ibid., 48, 59.

Haereses in Egypt. A recent history of Egyptian Christianity illustrates both the explanatory

power and the deficiencies of this type of interpretation. In his survey of Egyptian history, C.W.

Griggs suggests,

> The close relationship between Alexandria and the West may have begun, rather than
>
> continued, with the heresy hunting inaugurated by the appearance of Irenaeus' work in
>
> Alexandria, and one may then account for the distinction being drawn during the next
>
> century between orthodoxy and heresy in Egypt.[46]

Although Griggs hedges his remarks as "conjectural" and devoid of "sufficient corroborative

evidence," their appeal is obvious. This narrative explains the paucity of early sources in Egypt

and their alienation from the "ecclesiastical Christianity" of the West by positing a sort of

Alexandrian exceptionalism. Somehow, Christianity here evolved apart from the embrace of

Rome and its monarchical bishops. Isolated from its peers, and lacking institutional prestige, the

episcopacy in Alexandria failed to impose uniformity of doctrine or discipline. Consequently, a

variety of "Christianities" flourished. The arrival of a powerful bishop and a powerful tract in

defense of orthodoxy brought Egypt into the orbit of Rome and the "ecclesiastical" West.

Adversus Haereses furnished the terms and the justification for consolidation; Demetrius

supervised it.

This reconstruction explains some idiosyncrasies in the early literature, but closer

inspection of the evidence for "Alexandrian exceptionalism" reveals a tottering foundation. To

conclude that this community developed on such a different trajectory from that of

"ecclesiastical" Christianity is premature. We have already seen from the papyrological record

that Egyptian Christianity was an avid consumer of texts produced throughout the Christian

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[46]Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity,* 33. Griggs eschews Bauer's hypothesis of heretical origins
in Egypt, preferring to see the development of Egyptian Christianity as a movement from a more
"broadly-based literary tradition and a less-defined ecclesiastical tradition" to a more "stringent"
and centralized tradition that approximated peer institutions in Syria and Rome.

world. Rome itself hosted its share of heretics, and its hierarchy may have been just as decentralized at this stage of development as Alexandria's. Even less convincing is the picture Griggs paints of *Adversus Haereses* galvanizing a heresy-hunting expedition. If this interpretation were true, one would expect to find evidence of this treatise's widespread adoption and use. But the influence of Irenaeus remains slight - though not absent - in the two principal sources for this period of Egyptian Christianity, the writings of Clement and Origen.[47] Finally, lack of information about the early succession of bishops in Alexandria need not entail isolation or conspiracy. What the evidence does suggest is that influence resided in two particular institutions: the presbyteriate and the "school" of Alexandria." These idiosyncrasies of the Eusebian report may reveal important continuities between Jewish and Christian institutions in Alexandria.

A conspicuous feature of the narration of the origins of Christianity in the *Ecclesiastical History* is the language Eusebius employs to characterize the succession of leaders.

> In the eighth year of Nero's reign, Annianus became the first to succeed the evangelist Mark in ministry (τὴν λειτουργίαν διαδέχεται) to the congregation of Alexandria.[48]
> In the fourth year of Domitian, Annianus, the first [to serve] the congregation of Alexandria, died after completing twenty-two years [of ministry]. Abilius succeeded him (διαδέχεται δ᾽αὐτὸν) as the second.[49]

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[47] The poverty of references to Irenaeus in U. Treu's *Register* to the GCS edition of Clement's writings illustrates this problem acutely. The editors were able to ferret out only five references to the work Irenaeus in the entire Clementine corpus. Of these, one draws upon a tradition about the translation of the Septuagint that originates with the *Letter of Aristeas*. Two others feature material drawn originally from *Epistle of Barnabas*. Of course, if the conventional assignment of Alexandrian provenance to *Barnabas* is correct, and if one could substantiate its influence in Irenaeus, then one could demonstrate a linkage between Alexandria and the West in the early second century.

[48] Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 2.24.

[49] Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 3.14. The section that immediately precedes this one mentions the installment of Anencletus as bishop of Rome after Linus.

After Nerva reigned a little longer than a year, Trajan succeeded him. In the first year of

Trajan's reign, Cerdo succeeded (διαδέχεται) Abilius, who had led the congregation of

Alexandria for thirteen years. [Cerdon] was the third president (προέστη) of that same

congregation after the first, Annianus.[50]

Near the twelfth year of Trajan's reign, the bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) of the congregation of

Alexandria, whom we mentioned a little earlier, departed this life. Primus was called to

the ministry (λειτουργίαν κληροῦται) of that same congregation, [and became] the

fourth from the apostles.[51]

… Justus succeeded Primus, who passed on in the twelfth year of his presidency (τῆς

προστασίας).[52]

… Eumenes succeeded to the presidency (τῆς προστασίας) of the congregation of

Alexandria in the sixth place (κλήρῳ) [from the apostles], after his predecessor had

fulfilled eleven years.[53]

But in Alexandria, Marcus was appointed pastor (ἀναδείκνυται ποιμὴν) after Eumenes

had completed thirteen years. When Marcus rested from the ministry after ten years,

Celadion took over the ministry of the Alexandrians' church.[54]

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[50]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 3.14. This report on the succession of leadership in Alexandria is
sandwiched between reports of the imperial succession and the devolution of episcopal
leadership in Rome. Like Cerdon, Clement is the\ third bishop of Rome after Paul and Peter, but
Eusebius does not identify Alexandria as supporting their own episcopacy here.
[51]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 4.1. Here again, episcopal succession in Rome is paralleled to Alexandrian
succession.
[52]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 4.4. Once again, reports about Roman succession are in the immediate
context. Interestingly, the successions of the Jerusalem bishops appear just afterward.
[53]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 4.5.5. Unaccountably, Lake translates κλήρῳ as "as [the sixth] bishop."
Again, a Roman succession and Jewish insurrection frame this discussion.
[54]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 4.11.6. Here again, a comparison to the Roman succession is suggested.

… Now when Celadion had presided (προστάντος) over the congregation of the

Alexandrians for fourteen years, Agrippinus took up the succession…[55]

Eusebius varies his descriptions of these successions, so one must be careful to allow for some

flexibility when interpreting them. Nonetheless, a few important observations surface from

comparison of these genealogical accounts. Only the third member of this succession, Cerdon, is

explicitly designated a bishop. This appears as a glaring contrast to Rome, which favored an

episcopal polity from its apostolic foundations onward. To the discerning reader, the difference

would be evident, since in all but one of these passages, the appointment of Roman bishops

figures into the immediate context--sometimes even forming part of the same sentence.

Alongside the generic vocabulary of succession, the charge of the community in

Alexandria features two more distinctive descriptions. Most frequently, Eusebius characterizes

this leadership as "ministry" (λειτουργία) or as "presidency" (προστασία). The latter title is

particularly interesting, since it appears to indicate a distinctive post in the Alexandrian church.[56]

As such, it may provide more evidence of continuity with Alexandrian Judaism. The elders who

governed the affairs of the Jewish community designated a "chief" (προστάτης; *rosh ha-*

knesset) to administer the synagogue. An epigraphic discovery illustrates this connection. In

Alexandria, only the pedestal remains from a statue that commemorated the service of Artemon,

son of Nikon, who functioned as προστάτης of the synagogue.[57] While more commonplace,

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[55]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 4.19. Episcopal succession in Rome appears in the immediate context, as does that in Antioch.

[56]In the *Ecclesiastical History,* Eusebius uses it with cognate expressions over twenty times, but reserves it for the Alexandrian and Jerusalem churches except for two occasions: once in reference to Clement of Rome, the other in reference to the heretic Syneros.

[57]*CIJ* 2.1447; Horbury-Noy 20. Interestingly, Artemon is identified as a "Judaizer," prompting some to conclude that this statue celebrated a benefaction to a non-Jewish association rather than a synagogue. Although this construal cannot finally be excluded, the vocabulary seems too pitch-perfect to be plausible. Jews generally called their assemblies synagogues, while those outside the faith could employ any number of synonymous designations for their own

λειτουργία also populates Second Temple and rabbinic literature as a loanword to express service to a religious community.

Jerome furnishes yet another interesting detail regarding ecclesiastical polity in Alexandria. Later in life, he dashed off a letter to a correspondent named Evangelus to protest the "madness" (*uecordiam*) of deacons claiming precedence over presbyters. His strategy is to argue that presbyters and bishops are equal except for the ordination of the latter.[58] No deacon would dare usurp the duties of a bishop. Yet by claiming priority over presbyters, Jerome argues, deacons are attempting to do just that. Drawing upon the testimony of apostolic practice, he maintains that the installment of a single presbyter as bishop preserved ecclesiastical unity by discouraging the formation of factions around competing elders. A single bishop elected from the presbyteriate could adjudicate disputes, ensure doctrinal uniformity, and administer discipline. To clinch his point, Jerome refers to a primitive tradition in the Alexandrian see:

> For even at Alexandria, from the time Mark evangelized it until the episcopates of Heracles and Dionysius, the presbyters always appointed as bishop one chosen from among themselves and placed in a more exalted rank.[59]

This custom reveals the parity between presbyters and bishops. Not only do the presbyters elect the bishop, but the ordinand comes from among their own ranks. It also illustrates Jerome's principle that the idiosyncrasies of polity in any one city should not become normative for all. On these grounds, Jerome dismisses the convention in Rome of appointing presbyters at the recommendation of deacons as a "paltry exception" that fosters insolence.[60] Closer inspection of the Scriptures should curb this abuse. After all, he reasons, the apostles handed on traditions with roots in the Old Testament. The order of bishops, presbyters, and

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associations. See Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 96.
[58]Jerome, *ep.* 146.1.
[59]Jerome, *ep.* 146.1.
[60]Jerome, *ep.* 146.2.

deacons corresponds to the leadership of Aaron, the sons, and the Levites in the temple.[61]

Corroboration of this tradition of presbyterial appointment comes over a century later from Severus of Antioch (c. 518-519). The occasion of his letter to Emesa concerned similar irregularities of tradition. A peripatetic Armenian named Isaiah alleged that a single cleric had appointed him as bishop just before that official had expired. Severus declared this election fraudulent, since it departed from the customary regulations for installing bishops. What complicated his attempts to invalidate Isaiah's ordination was the diversity of customs for consecrating bishops. History afforded a bewildering variety of precedents that claimants like Isaiah could invoke.

To suppress these claims, Severus defends the principle that later procedures render earlier customs obsolete. "For in ecclesiastical regulations, those that are faithfully formed in the churches at a later time displace the ancient ones."[62] He furnishes two illustrations of this principle, in which he contrasts the former procedures with those that prevail "subsequently" (ܒܬܪܟܢ). Cyprian had demanded that converts from heresy undergo orthodox baptism as a precondition for fellowship. Nicene canons struck down this principle, invalidating any attempts at "re-baptism". Severus refers to the Alexandrine tradition Jerome mentions as his second example:

> Even the bishop of the noble city of the Alexandrians, which is renowned for its fidelity
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> to orthodoxy, from ancient times was appointed by presbyters. But subsequently, in

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[61]This was a staple of comparison in earliest Christianity, even in Rome. There is a "conscious patterning" of the hierarchy "after the traditions of the Temple and the priesthood of ancient Israel," according to Charles Bobertz. He suggests that the "givenness" of this idea transferred the mediatorial functions of the priestly cultus to the episcopate. Bobertz, "The Development of Episcopal Order," in Attridge and Hata, eds. *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 183-211, esp. 189.

[62]E.W. Brooks, *The Sixth book of the Select Letters of Severus Bishop of Antioch* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), 2.3.236:

ܕܚܘܩܨܐܝܬ ܚܕܐܬܐ܆ ܡܐ ܐܣܝܐܬܐ ܗܠܐ ܚܪܝܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܟܘܟܒ ܚܐܩܛܐ ܗܟܠ ܘܡܐܢ ܣܐܡܐܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܨ ܚܠܨ ܒܬܪܟܢ ܚܬܝܐܠ

agreement with the rule (ܨܡܐ) that has prevailed everywhere, the solemn consecration of

their bishop is performed by bishops. No one disparages the regular practice that

prevails in the holy churches and reverts to ancient custom, which has yielded to clear,

approved, deliberate, and holy ordinances.[63]

The departure of Nicene canons from the ancient traditions observed by Cyprian or the

Alexandrians furnishes no grounds for depreciating these customs. On the contrary, Severus

offers fulsome tributes to those who transmitted these customs: the bishop of Carthage is "divine

among the bishops" and the Alexandrians are distinguished in their orthodoxy. His point is

rather that the rulings of an ecumenical council have ecumenical implications. Whatever claims

to legitimacy presbyterial appointment of bishops once held, the regulations adopted at Nicaea

supersede them..

These references suggests a possible alternative to Bauer's skepticism about the first

bishops in Alexandria. Although Jerome intended only to check the ambitions of certain

deacons, he pursues this end by raising the stature of the presbyteriate to rough equality with the

bishopric. Similarly, the Alexandrian custom he mentions may reveal that the true locus of

authority lay with the presbyters, with the bishop functioning as a titular *primus inter pares*.

What impresses Jerome about this tradition is both its antiquity and its durability. Alexandria

maintained this presbyterial form of leadership - a Jewish survival - for much longer than its rival

dioceses.[64] Well into the third century, aspirants to the bishopric still had to consolidate

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[63]Brooks, II/3, 237-8.

[64]Bobertz notes that the Jewish synagogue furnished the paradigm for early Christian
governance. Bobertz, "The Development of Episcopal Order," 185. . On the institutional
evolution in Alexandria, see Jakab, *Ecclesia Alexandrina,* 176-215; H. Hausschildt,
"Πρεσβύτεροι in Ägypten im I.-III. Jahrhundert nach Chr.," *ZNW* 4 (1903), 235-42; William
Telfer, "Episcopal Succession in Egypt," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 3.1 (1952), 1-13; E.
Wipszycka, "The Origins of the Monarchic Episcopate in Egypt," *Adamantius* 12 (2006), 71-89;
A. Camplani, "L'autorappresentazione dell'episcopato di Alexandria tra IV e V secolo: questioni
di metodo," *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 21 (2004), 147-85.

influence among the presbyters. The lack of detail about these early leaders therefore may attest to their relative impotence in the polity. Only gradually did figures such as Demetrius begin to concentrate power in the episcopate and develop networks of power to exert their influence over these elders.

The distinctive organization of the Alexandrian church shaped the trajectory of its development by nurturing diversity, and by intensifying conflict. Devoid of intermediate layers of hierarchy, the "flat structure" (Bagnall) of church management encouraged variety and independence of expression, so long as the bishop remained ineffectual. This arrangement promoted the local autonomy and theological experimentation that characterized early Egyptian Christianity. To master this loose confederation of assemblies and shifting alliances among the Egyptian presbyters required charisma, drive, and an authoritarian streak. Neither surpassing talent nor autocratic personalities are lacking among the bishops of Alexandria. The collision of ambitious individuals such as Demetrius and Athanasius with their competitors produced a volatile history. As the episcopate became more assertive, the presbyters and their partisans mutinied. While its ecclesiastical conflicts were not unique, the distinctive polity favored in Alexandria tended to exacerbate them. Without an established hierarchy to deflect or absorb these tensions, bitter personal quarrels polarized the church. These institutional tensions illuminate the rivalries and schisms that punctuate the history of Egyptian Christianity. From Origen's strained relations with Demetrius to the Arian controversy, the structures that promoted diversity also exaggerated centrifugal tendencies.

Another important locus of institutional authority in Alexandria was its catechetical school, which featured such luminaries as Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen. The reconstruction of this "school of Alexandria" has occupied researchers over the past two centuries. This endeavor raises many of the same critical questions that the recovery of Christian origins in Alexandria has. This is unsurprising, since the principal source for this enquiry is also Eusebius'

Ecclesiastical History. Again, much turns on the credibility of the church historian's account.

Eusebius introduces the catechetical school in the fifth book of his history, and it is not too much to see it as a turning point in his narrative.

> At that time, a man very distinguished by his training (ἐπιδοξότατος κατὰ παιδείαν), whose name was Pantaenus, directed the teaching (διατριβῆς) of the faithful in Alexandria. For from ancient custom a school of sacred letters had existed among them. This school has persisted even into our time. We have heard that it is administered by persons proficient in reason and in their zeal for divine matters. Tradition (λόγος) holds that at the time Pantaenus was particularly celebrated, and that he had been steeped in the philosophical way of life (ἀγωγῆς) of those designated Stoics… [He] continued to direct the school at Alexandria until his death, expounding (ὑπομνηματιζόμενος) the treasures of the divine teachings *viva voce* and in writing.[65]

His student, Clement, himself a noted expositor of Scripture, succeeded him.[66] Eusebius records that Clement was charged with instruction (κατηχήσεως) at Alexandria. Among his pupils was Origen, a prodigy who began to preside over the school at the age of eighteen.[67] When Clement absconded to avoid persecution, Demetrius entrusted Origen with sole charge of instruction. Later, Heraclas (later a bishop of Alexandria) relieved the young director of the elementary

> training, so that he could concentrate on advanced teaching.

Opinions differ on whether this portrait of the catechetical school represents a convenient fiction or a credible report. Two recent critical assessments dramatize this contrast.[68] Following in a line of distinguished commentators, Roloef van den Broek maintains that while

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[65]*hist. eccl.* 5.10.1.
[66]*hist. eccl.* 5.11.1; 6.6.1.
[67]*hist. eccl.* 6.3.3. Note the similarity of language to the succession of presbyters.
[68]In the ensuing discussion of van den Broek and van den Hoek, my debt to Birger Pearson's examination of the issue should be obvious. Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity,* 26-32.

Eusebius presents the catechetical school as a mature organ of the church from its inception, the actual development was more complex. He finds the Eusebian presentation of the absolute fealty of the enterprise to church tradition and authority implausible: "The whole idea of a Christian school with a διαδοχή of teachers handing down a fixed tradition of learning to their pupil successors is completely false, at least until the second decade of the third century."[69] He posits that the first instructors operated independent of church authority. They promoted biblical scholarship, and sought to integrate the culture of *paideia* in their intellectual pursuits. Although some provided instruction in the church, they remained lay instructors, not ecclesiastical functionaries. "There was," van den Broek contends, "no school in the sense of a Christian academy with a regular teaching program."[70] Only under the auspices of powerful patrons such as Demetrius did the catechetical school become an apparatus of the church. Indeed, several catechists eventually rose to the office of bishop. Yet the increasing prestige of the bishops made them wary of competition from within the school. On the grounds that the bishop possessed sole jurisdiction in matters of doctrine, Theophilus (385-412) suspended its operations. From its origins in the instruction offered by independent scholars, the "school of Alexandria" underwent constant negotiation with the "church of Alexandria."

Annewies van den Hoek is more sanguine about the affiliation of the school with the church. In part, this optimism reflects a different approach to the evidence. Where van den Broek fastens on the instability of the account in *hist. eccl.,* van den Hoek seeks corroboration of the basic outlines of the Eusebian account in the Clementine corpus. This yields a different assessment: "Both Clement and Origen speak of a continuous tradition, in which they place themselves… When Eusebius speaks of a succession, he is not so far off because he seems to

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[69]Roloef van den Broek, *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity*, 199.
[70]Ibid., 200-01.

reflect the intention that is implicit in the statements of the very people he describes."[71] Her

analysis pays close attention to the ways that Clement represents his teaching. Interestingly, the

terminology of "school" (διδασκαλεῖον) is absent in Clement's surviving work, an omission van

den Hoek attributes to a conscious avoidance of gnostic jargon. On the other hand, Clement

pioneers the use of κατήχησις to denote the instruction of baptisands. Such data suggests to her

that the sharp distinction her countryman makes between school and church was foreign to

Clement. Indeed, she deduces that "teaching and scholarship within the penumbra of the church

was a long-established activity in Alexandria well before Origen."[72] The literary evidence

suggests to her that Clement and the other instructors of the school functioned within the church.

She finds in this affirmation grounds for accepting Nautin's proposal that Clement the "blessed

presbyter" mentioned in a letter by the bishop Alexander of Jerusalem is none other than

Clement of Alexandria.[73] If van den Broek sees the history of the school as the result of

independent teachers coming under tighter control by church authorities, van den Hoek sees it as

an organic development within the church. In one reconstruction, the independent origins of the

school contain the germs of controversy with the church; in the other, the intimate connection

between church and school amplifies any differences between their leaders.

    Both accounts contain elements of truth. It is justifiable for van den Broek to distrust the

frictionless narrative of the school's development that Eusebius relates. He is on firm ground in

insisting on the institutional development of the school over time. What he misses is the parallel

institutional development that the church experienced during the period Eusebius chronicles.

This consideration blunts van den Broek's proposition that the instructors in the Alexandrian

school operated as lay directors rather than as presbyters. The lack of traditional "church"

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[71]Annewies van den Hoek, "The Catechetical School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage," *HTR* 90 (1997), 76.

[72]ibid., 86.

[73]Nautin, *Lettres et écrivains chrétiennes des IIe et IIIe siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 1961), 114-18.

language may reflect the changing form of ecclesiastical structures rather than the autonomy of the instructors. Here, van den Hoek provides a valuable counterpoint. Clement's testimony undermines the sharp distinction between clergy and laity that lies at the bottom of van den Broek's reconstruction. Yet Clement's commitment to the life of the church does not necessarily entail his appointment as a presbyter. She also omits what I shall argue is perhaps the most important testimony for divining Clement's view of the church, *str.* 6.12. Although it lies beyond the scope of van den Hoek's essay, the question of discrepancies between Clement's musings and the church historian's exposition looms in the background.

Neither of these eminent scholars devote sufficient attention to exploring how the incubation of the Alexandrian church within the matrix of Alexandrian Judaism might illuminate the origins of the school.[74] This might explain Eusebius' description of the school as arising "from ancient custom" (ἐξ ἀρχαίου ἔθους). Indeed, he elsewhere uses similar language to designate the persistence of Jewish customs in the church, most notably in the Quartodeciman controversy.[75]

Although scholars posit that much Jewish and Christian literature preserved in Alexandria originated in a school context, the evidence for its institutional structures has proved

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[74]Van den Hoek wonders whether Christian biblical scholarship in Alexandria had any connection to an earlier school of biblical scholarship, and suggests Philonic influence on the Alexandrian school, but does not develop the connections I trace below. See van den Hoek, "The Catechetical School of Alexandria," 82.

[75]Cf. *hist. eccl.* 5.23.1 - 5.24.33. In his exposition of this conflict between Victor, the Bishop of Rome, and the Asian churches who chose to celebrate Easter concurrently with the Jewish Passover, Eusebius refers to the latter practice as arising "from more ancient tradition" (ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀρχαιοτέρας), yet not as a settled custom (ἔθους ὄντος) in churches elsewhere, which followed apostolic tradition instead (5.23.1, 3-4). He reports that Irenaeus discouraged Victor from excommunicating churches simply for "maintaining a tradition that arises from ancient custom" (ἀρχαίου ἔθους - 5.24.13). Rather, this "peaceful" intermediary reminded the Roman primate that one of his predecessors, Anicetus, preserved communion with Polycarp, who celebrated the Quartodeciman Easter after his apostolic mentor, John. Alexandria, however, did not follow Quartodeciman ritual, as the letter of the Palestinian bishops attests (5.25).

elusive.[76] The presence of rival sages and teachers within the synagogue is well-attested in

Judaism.[77] Philo mentions the operation of "thousands of schools" (μυρία διδασκαλεῖα) to

inculcate Jewish values.[78] He also provides us with invaluable evidence of private instruction (*in*

Gen. quaest. et resp.) and communal instruction (*vit. cont.).[79]* But it is difficult to venture

descriptions of this teaching with any social density, providing scholars with an impetus for

investigation.

Wilhelm Bousset famously applied the methods of source criticism to expose the

presence of teaching notes in Philo and in Clement.[80] Maintaining that consistencies in the

arguments signaled the presence of lecture transcriptions, Bousset located *non sequiturs*

throughout these materials and concluded that these infelicities witnessed the presence of a

schools in Alexandria. His work drew withering criticism for its tendentious and idiosyncratic

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[76] "It is a paradox that although many writings in the Hebrew Bible and in Second Temple
literature are the products of school activity, there is very little discussion of schools in the texts
themselves. Relevant sources from the Second Temple period provide only indirect and
incidental evidence of Jewish education. Most of the direct evidence for school education comes
from later, rabbinic sources." Benedict T. Viviano, "Education," in J.J. Collins and Daniel C.
Harlow, eds. *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 561. See
also R. Doran, "Jewish Education in the Seleucid Period," P.R. Davies, ed., *Second Temple
Studies 3: Politics Class and Material Culture,* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 116-
32; N.H. Drazin, *History of Jewish Education from 515 BCE to 200 CE* (Baltimore: JHUP,
1940); E. Ebner, *Elementary Education in Ancient Israel during the Tannaitic Period* (New
York: Bloch, 1956); B. Ego and H. Merkel, eds. *Religioses Lernen in der biblischen,
frühjudischen und frühchristlichen Überlieferung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); S. Safrai,
"Education and the Study of Torah," in S. Safrai and M. Stern, *The Jewish People in the First
Century,* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union, 1976), 2.945-70; B.T. Viviano, *Study as Worship: Aboth
and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).
[77] See, for example, J. Blekinsopp, "The Sage," in idem, *Sage, Priest, and Prophet: Religions and
Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 9-65.
[78] Philo, *spec.* 2.62.
[79] On a private setting for the Questions and Answers, see esp. G.E. Sterling, "'The School of
Sacred Laws': The Social Setting of Philo's Treatises," *VC* 53 (1999), 148-64.
[80] W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom: Literarische
Untersuchungen zu Philo und Clemens von Alexandria, Justin und Irenäus,* (Göttingen:
Vandenhoek and Rupprecht, 1915). See also R. Goulet, *La philosophie de Moïse: Essai de
reconstitution d'un commentaire philosophique préphilonien du Pentateuque* (Paris: Vrin, 1987).

handling of the evidence.[81] Critics pointed out that many instances that Bousset had flagged as

incongruities followed principles of organization that he simply had failed to appreciate. His use

of contradiction as an indication of school activity met with similar skepticism. More valuable

was Bousset's attention to the technical vocabulary scattered throughout this literature, which

made an educational milieu a possibility if not a certainty.

A recent monograph by Maren Niehoff on Jewish exegesis and Homeric scholarship

augurs a more promising approach.[82] Noting that Alexandria represented an epicenter of literary

criticism in the ancient world, Niehoff compares the diverse strands of biblical scholarship in

Alexandrian Judaism to the Homeric scholia produced by critics in the Brucheion. She discovers

evidence that Jewish scholars were acutely aware of these critical practices, and applied these

literary methods to Scripture, "comparing mythical stories to their counterparts in Homer's epics,

interpreting the Binding of Isaac in the context of ancient child sacrifice, and offering text

emendations of various kinds."[83] This spectrum of critical sensibilities among the Jewish authors

testifies to a creative engagement with the surrounding culture and to lively controversy within

their own community on the subject of biblical scholarship.

What forms this exegetical scholarship took remains elusive. Perhaps a constellation of

private and communal instruction occurred, with varying levels of institutional endorsement.

Irrespective of their status, these scholars and their disciples played an important role in the

religious life of the Jewish and early Christian community. Niehoff notes a tendency -

especially pronounced in Philo's work - toward increasing centralization of authority and

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[81]J. Munck, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), 127-204.

[82]Maren Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria,* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011).

[83]Ibid., 187.

codification of the role of the independent scholar.[84] The function of these instructors in

Christianity may have followed a similar trajectory, particularly as bishops sought to consolidate

their influence over rivals such as the independent instructor by becoming more demanding

patrons.[85]

One way to test this hypothesis is to apply van den Hoek's methods to other early texts

that circulated in Alexandria, to examine how they represent instructors and instruction, and to

compare these results with antecedent notions in Alexandrian Judaism. For the purposes of this

thesis, I wish to isolate how opinions coalesce around three subjects: the character of the

instructor, the wise plan of providence, and the interpretation of Scripture. These questions arise

out of Judaism, but develop considerably in the changing milieu of second-century Alexandria.

Most pertinently, they lay the foundations for the conception of the human educator as

participant in the divine economy of instruction, progressively assimilated to God even as he

assimilates others. How Clement and Origen fashioned this image from Jewish, pagan, and early

Christian sources occupies the rest of the study.

The Sources

Epistle of Barnabas

Until recently, scholars remained agnostic about the provenance and date of Barnabas.

Klaus Wengst comments, "Lässt sich also der Barnabasbrief mit Warscheinlichkeit in

chronologischer Hinsicht recht genau fixieren, so ist das in bezug auf seinen Enstehungsort leider

nicht möglich."[86] Nearly every region in the Mediterranean world has been championed as a

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[84]Ibid, 158-68.

[85]One of the few to suggest this connection is M.P. Roncaglia, "Pantène et le did scalée
d'Alexandrie: Du Judéo-Christianisme au Christianisme Hellénistique," in Robert H. Fischer,
ed., *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus,* (Chicago: Lutheran School of Theology Press, 1977), 211-33.

[86]Wengst, *Schriften des Urchristentums,* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984),
115. So also, Puech, Vielhauer, Hvalvik, and Prostmeier. I am deeply indebted to the discussion
of James Carlton Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas WUNT 64* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994),

potential site of its composition, and beyond the *terminus a quo* of 70 and *terminus ad quem* of 135, there is scant agreement regarding its time of production. Nonetheless, many -- including Hilgenfield, Harnack, Lightfoot, Daniélou, Kraft, Pearson, and Runia-- have suspected that this epistle had originated in Alexandria around the turn of the first century.[87] More recently, a number of scholars have become more outspoken in assigning Barnabas to Alexandria. Even if not incontrovertible, the reasons for favoring this Egyptian metropolis warrant more confidence than any other site of production, and no disqualifying considerations undermine this judgment.

In an exhaustive discussion, James Carleton Paget reviews the customary arguments for preferring an Alexandrian provenance. He begins by pointing out that the reception history of Barnabas begins in Alexandria. Clement, Origen, and Didymus all cite the text and regard it as authoritative. Codex Sinaiticus, a specimen of the Alexandrian text-type, includes Barnabas in the New Testament, indicating the esteem in which these scribes held it. Moreover, the allegorical interpretations Barnabas retails anticipate a reading practice that became influential in Alexandria. These hermeneutical affinities suggest a common ancestry. Finally, scholars have fastened on the author's allegation in 9.6 that pagan priests in Syria and Arabia were customarily circumcised. Surviving evidence discredits this claim in the two regions Barnabas mentions, but confirms that Egyptian priests did follow this practice. From this datum, commentators have deduced that the author simply transposed the customs of his native land - Egypt - onto those of foreign territories. In terms of its influence and its perspective, an Alexandrian *Sitz im Leben* seems plausible.[88]

30ff.

[87]See the exhaustive survey in ibid.

[88]Besides the reference to priestly circumcision, another detail in 7.8 may provide local flavor. There, Barnabas mentions the custom of tying the red thread that encircled the goat's head to the shrub Rachil. He comments that this shrub was unique in providing sweet, comestible fruit in the desert. J.R. Harris contends that this must be the Ghurked or Arak plant, which is closely associated with the Egyptian desert. Although this argument is hardly dispositive, it is plausible.

Yet none of these arguments is determinative, as Paget points out.[89] Veneration for a

text is not a reliable indication of place of origin. The Shepherd of Hermas, whose Roman

provenance no one disputes, also occupies a prominent position in Alexandrian literature. Even

more significantly, large portions of the New Testament corpus appear in corners of the empire

remote from their origins. The supposition that Alexandria held some monopoly on figural

interpretation likewise encounters difficulties. While there are demonstrable continuities

between Barnabas, Clement, and Origen, one can also point to parallels in Melito, Justin,

Irenaeus, and Tertullian. The conjecture that Barnabas superimposed Egyptian practices on other

territories stands on firmer ground, but remains a hypothesis. In any case, it is not decisive, since

it merely indicates that his information about hieratic customs in Egypt was better, not that he

must have lived there.

These difficulties have led scholars to propose alternative places of composition, yet the

evidence for these sites is even more tenuous. Syria-Palestine and Asia Minor remain the most

important claimants. Noting affinities with rabbinical modes of argument and the apocalyptic

cast to the letter, Prigent, Shukster, and Richardson have posited a Syro-Palestinian origin. They

identify parallels between Barnabas and Christian literature in this region in order to demonstrate

their origins in a common milieu. Yet these arguments are exposed to the same criticisms

leveled against those who treat allegory as the unique possession of Alexandrian Christianity.

Paget wonders,

> Is it really the case that people only thought like the rabbis, or the Qumran covenanters in
>
> Syria-Palestine?… Furthermore, if parallels with Alexandrian authors prove nothing
>
> about the origin of Barnabas in Alexandria on the grounds that Barnabas was using

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See Paget, *Epistle of Barnabas,* 41.

[89]Ibid., 32.

sources, cannot the sameargument be used against supposed parallels with Syro-

Palestinian authors?[90]

A similar fate greets Wengst's a case for Asia Minor as the provenance of Barnabas. His

argument turns on parallels between the Ignatian correspondence, the Pastorals, and Barnabas.

He tethers these continuities to the grand hypothesis that the latter represent different expressions

of a common tradition, and provide important evidence of the contested legacy of Paul in Asia

Minor. Here again, however, the affinities prove either too superficial or too generic. Many of

the parallels are debatable; where a stronger claim for continuity can be made, it is not exclusive

to literature circulating in Asia Minor. The pervasive distribution of the Pastorals, in particular,

frustrates attempts to fix Barnabas in this region. If Paulinism courted controversy, this

controversy was not contained in one corner of the Mediterranean.

In recent years, Prostmeier and Paget have refined the arguments for an Alexandrian

provenance by discarding perspectives that essentialize geographical traits and by replacing them

with a closer analysis of the antecedent traditions and later reception of Barnabas in Alexandria.

Inspection of the parallels between Jewish literature produced in Alexandria and Barnabas

reveals significant continuity of thought. Following the work of Martin, Paget identifies at least

six instances in which Barnabas appears to participate in the interpretive traditions of

Alexandrian Judaism: the double creation of man (6.8-19); the Sabbath and the eighth day (15.1-

9); the rays of the divine son (5.10); the exegesis of the two goats (7.1-10); the exegesis of the

heifer (8.1-6); and the exegesis of the serpent on the pole (12.5-7).[91] There are differences, but

the evidence of influence is difficult to ignore.

The tissue of continuity is even more compelling when one examines the nature of

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[90]Ibid., 34.

[91]Ibid., 37. He notes, with evident satisfaction, that these are precisely the places that Prigent and others have instanced as rabbinic influence, their premise for assigning the letter to Syro-Palestine in 37n.186.

Barnabas' reception in Alexandria. Even if a book's acclaim in a particular region does not

entail its composition there, the nature of its retrieval can fortify the possibility. Kraft makes the

perceptive observation that "Clement is still the best commentary on Barnabas." Beyond the fact

that Clement cites Barnabas with reasonable frequency, he also sees exegesis as the primary

mediation of gnosis, and reserves higher insights for those worthy of them.[92] In addition to seven

explicit citations of Barnabas, Clement draws frequently on traditions present in Barnabas

without attribution. These include figural and ethical interpretations of Torah that recall

antecedents in the Letter of Aristeas and Philo. Further commonalities in outlook arise from

comparison with the Sibylline Oracles and the Kerygma Petrou, two documents scholars assign

to Alexandria at times contemporary with the appearance of Barnabas. All this comports nicely

with the thesis that Alexandrian Christianity arose from a Jewish matrix. Both the Jewish

parallels and the anti-Jewish polemic in Barnabas suggest proximity to the Jewish communities.

This proximity might also explain why Barnabas identifies his opponents as "they" rather than

designating them by name. If Barnabas remains difficult to place, it fits the milieu of a nascent

Christian community in Alexandria struggling to differentiate itself from Judaism.

Kerygma of Peter

The remaining vestiges of the Kerygma of Peter (KP) survive in fragmentary form in the

writings of Clement and Origen of Alexandria. Clement regards it as apostolic, often introducing

his citations with the formula "Peter remarks in his Kerygma." Origen remains more

circumspect about the authenticity and authority of the KP, perhaps because of its tainted

association with the Valentinian commentator Heracleon. Because of its preservation by

Clement and Origen and its thematic continuity with later expressions of the Alexandrian

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[92]So Alain le Boulluec notes in his commentary on *Stromateis* II: "Pour [Clément] en effect la gnose est inséprable du déchiffrement de l'écriture. Sur ce point il est en parfait accord avec Barnabé." 226, cited in Paget, 39n.197.

tradition, scholars are nearly unanimous in assigning the Kerygma of Peter an Alexandrian provenance.[93] Other details, such as allusions to the worship of cats (fr. 2), strengthen this position. It is more difficult to specify a date of composition. The KP exhibits characteristics of both the sub-apostolic corpus and of the apologists, making it hard to narrow the time frame.[94] Schneemelcher defines the extremities at 80 - 140, and no scholar has yet transgressed those expansive limits. Positing connections to Ignatius and Hermas, Zahn placed the treatise between 90-100.[95] Reagan regarded it as the most primitive exemplar of the apologetic form, and likewise placed its composition at the end of the first century.[96] Neither proposal for an early date is persuasive, for they are premised on questionable reconstructions and slender evidence. The KP has affinities with the world of the Apologists, yet lacks deliberate engagement with gnosticism that one might expect from a later treatise. All these considerations favor a date in the first two or three decades of the second century.[97]

Its Petrine attribution and its repeated references to "the twelve" stake yet another claim to ancestry from the Jerusalem community of Christians (fr. 3). The first Alexandrian reference

[93]Hilgenfield demurs from this judgment, volunteering that Greece offers a more likely setting for the composition, but presents no evidence to support this opinion. In her Habilitationsschrift, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Christologie der Ignatiusbriefe* (Habil. Tübingen, 1963), Elze places KP in Asia Minor, but Paulsen has exposed the tenuous character of the parallels she draws between Theophilus of Antioch and the Ignatian correspondence. Cf. H. Paulsen, "Das Kerygma Petri und die urchristliche Apologetik," *ZKG* 88 (1977), 12-13. The theology and idiom of KP corresponds to many of the later developments in that Egyptian metropolis. Coupled with the references in the writings of Clement and Origen, these affinities make it hard to place KP outside Alexandria.

[94]Indeed, as Paulsen points out, the variations on dating this "first apologetic" treatise tends to reveal unexamined assumptions about the transition from the *Kleinliteratur* of the Apostolic fathers to the *Hochliteratur* of the Apologists. Like the narrative that supports it, this periodization remains devoid of evidentiary support. Cf. Paulsen, "Das Kerygma Petri," 1-37.

[95]T. Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuch, 1892) 2.831.

[96]J.N. Reagan, *The Preaching of Peter: The Beginning of Christian Apologetic* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1923).

[97]Von Dobschutz, *Das Kerygma Petri kritische untersucht* TU 11.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1891); Schneemelcher and Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 2.94-95; Paulsen, "Das Kerygma Petri," 13. .

to Christians appears in the KP, which designates them members of "a third race." Indeed, much

of the document is dedicated to differentiating Christianity from both Jewish and pagan

traditions. It converges with Jewish affirmations of a transcendent God who creates and reveals

his law, yet argues for the fulfillment of prophetic aspirations in Jesus Christ. It also alleges that

Jews venerate angelic intermediaries, a charge that reflects tendencies in Philo and the Hekhalot

literature of early Jewish mysticism. Likewise, it maintains that pagan philosophy ascertains

some truths about God, but casts doubt on its ability to perceive ultimate realities without

ancillary revelation. These points set a trajectory for the development of Alexandrian theology.

For example, Clement invokes the text both to impose limitations on the knowledge of God and

to elaborate a Logos Christology (fr. 2). What KP represents is an embryonic stage in the

development of "mainstream" Alexandrian traditions that found its consummate expression in

the writings of Clement and Origen.

Fragments of Basilides

A Christian philosopher and teacher, Basilides was active in Alexandria in the earlier

part of the second century (117-138). The sources divulge few biographical details, except the

lineage of his teaching. He associated himself with Glaucias, an interpreter of Peter. This

genealogy conferred an apostolic imprimatur on the teaching of Basilides. The Stoic ethic must

have impressed him, for in several fragments he applies its categories to hermeneutical and moral

problems that confronted early Christians. Yet his tastes are eclectic, and other passages suggest

the influence of other rhetorical and philosophical traditions. If one measures the influence of a

teacher on the discipleship he fosters and the criticism he attracts, Basilides must have become

an eminent figure in Egypt. From the time his son Isidore succeeded him as preceptor until the

fourth century, the school founded on his teachings functioned continuously. At the same time,

Irenaeus and Clement denigrated various articles of doctrine ascribed to him. Eusebius mentions

that Agrippa Castor also published a refutation of Basilides, but this polemic is no longer extant.

About ten fragments of Basilides survive, along with another nine extracts from his school.

Winrich Löhr has recently anthologized these fragments and commented extensively upon them.

In his exposition, he dissociates Basilides from gnosticism, arguing that the fragments portray a

Christian scholar whose philosophical interests helped to shape his hermeneutics.

Fragments of Valentinus

Born in a village near the Nile Delta, Valentinus trained in Alexandria and attracted a

following there between 117-138. Since Clement preserves the only surviving fragments of his

corpus, it seems plausible that Valentinus composed these extracts in Egypt.[98] In the later 130s,

he relocated to Rome, where he participated in ecclesiastical affairs and founded a school. His

bid for an episcopal seat in Rome foundered when Justin exposed his teaching to withering

criticism and support coalesced around another aspirant, Pius I. Little else is known of his life

and career. He was a contemporary of Basilides, whose profile resembles his own. Like

Basilides, he claimed apostolic pedigree for his teaching. He sat under the tutelage of Theudas,

purportedly an intimate of Paul. Valentinus also left behind a talented circle of disciples,

including Theodotus, Heracleon, and Ptolemy. His writing betrays familiarity with contemporary

philosophical sources. Where a residual Stoicism surfaces in the writings of Basilides, Middle

Platonism informs Valentinus' hermeneutic. As with Basilides, it is difficult to characterize his

relationship with gnosticism. The work of Markschies, in particular, has complicated any

reflexive identification of Valentinus with gnosticism. What emerges from the fragments is an

interpretation of Scripture refracted through the lens of Platonism, and articulated with rhetorical

flair.

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[98]I find plausible but not compelling the arguments of Layton and Tardieu that Valentinus also composed the Gospel of Truth. Nonetheless, Markschies raises important challenges to this opinion, and exposes some important discrepancies between the GT and the fragments. Cf. Markschies, *Valentinus Gnosticus?* 340-47.

Excerpta ex Theodoto

At the end of *Codex Laurentianus*, the exclusive manuscript witness to Clement's *Stromateis*, two excerpts from another document appear. The *Eclogae Propheticae* contains a wide-ranging commentary on a number of Old Testament texts, and appears to represent Clement's own exegesis. The other text, the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, features the expositions of Theodotus, a representative of the Eastern strain of Valentinianism. Because nothing else is known of him, and the text itself forms a composite of various opinions (including those of Clement himself), conclusions about the thought of Theodotus must remain tentative. But the text does preserve valuable information about Valentinus' successors in Egypt in the latter half of the second century. In particular, it reveals a dramatic expansion of the myths of creation and an interest in exploiting the reading practices of the *grammaticus*.

Teachings of Silvanus

Recovered from the cache of documents at Nag Hammadi, the Teachings of Silvanus represents an early specimen of Christian wisdom literature. It draws in equal parts from Jewish sapiential literature and Greco-Roman philosophical reflection. Alcinous and Marcus Aurelius mingle promiscuously with Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon. The purpose of this tractate is didactic: to assimilate students to God by domesticating the passions and cultivating virtue. The author repackages these familiar tropes as Christ's wisdom. This limns the embryonic outlines of the wisdom Christology that Clement, Origen, and others later developed. The coherence of its content with later Alexandrian thought suggests its production there. In any case, no one has proposed an alternative provenance. Paleographers date its Coptic translation to the early fourth century. However, internal evidence points to a much earlier publication of the Greek original. The author's familiarity with the major divisions of the Old and New Testaments, the stage of its development of the *descensus ad inferos* episode, the affinities with Middle Platonism and Stoicism, and the continuity with the later reflection of Clement and Origen all suggest a date

late in the second or early in the third century. Yet many of the traditions it draws upon are even

more ancient, and portions may reflect the outlook of an early second-century milieu.

Sentences of Sextus

A gnomic anthology of four hundred fifty-one sayings, the Sentences of Sextus

represents one of the earliest and most widely disseminated collections of Christian wisdom

literature. Because of its congruity with Alexandrian theology and its invocation by Origen,

scholars contend that it originated in Alexandria in the late second or early third century.

Clement and Origen are not the only ones conversant with the Sentences. Rufinus translated the

Greek original into Latin, and Jerome denigrates it. Nor was its appeal confined to the

Mediterranean littoral. A considerably embroidered Syriac version jostles for attention with a

Coptic extract preserved in the Nag Hammadi library and Armenian and Georgian distillations.

Like Silvanus, it integrates biblical reflection with Hellenistic and Jewish wisdom traditions. Of

particular interest is its extensive assimilation of Pythagorean aphorisms drawn from the

sententiae Pythagoreorum and the *Clitarchi sententiae* - both of which collections later figure

into Porphyry's *ad Marcellam*.[99] The simplicity and incantatory rhythm of the aphorisms made

this collection popular in both scholarly and monastic contexts. Indeed, Samuel Rubenson

identifies it as "one of the few texts that can be used as a bridge between late Egyptian wisdom

literature and the early Egyptian monastic exhortations."[100] Several monastic *regulae*, including

Benedict's, exploit the wisdom of the Sentences, extending its influence far beyond the borders

of Egypt. Yet the work that most closely resembles this anthology is an indigenous product: the

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[99]A richly detailed analysis of these appropriations can be found in Wilson, *Sentences of Sextus*, (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012), 11-29. Wilson suggests that both Sextus and Porphyry used editions of these two anthologies that are no longer extant. This ingenious solution accounts for variations in the wording and ordering of the source material in these two anthologies.
[100]Rubenson, "Wisdom, Paraenesis and the Roots of Monasticism," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* ed. James Starr and Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 529.

Stromateis of Clement.

Irenaeus of Lyons, **Adversus Haereses**

Thanks to the survival of a papyrus fragment in the repository at Oxyrhynchus, it is

possible to identify a *terminus ad quem* for the Egyptian reception of *Adversus Haereses*. In

1903, Grenfell and Hunt published a document that they dated no later than the middle of the

third century, and perhaps as early as the latter part of the second. Paleographers have tended to

settle on a date of around 200 CE.[101] Although they could not identify the source of the citation,

the editors observed that this fragment includes Matthew's account of the baptism of Jesus (Mt.

3.16-17). It was J. Armitage Robinson who recognized that *P.Oxy.* 3.405 reproduced a segment

of *haer.* 3.9.2-3. These scholars were primarily interested in this fragment as a witness to the

Western Text of the New Testament. But others soon appreciated its significance for Egyptian

Christianity and for the reception history of *Adversus Haereses*. Colin Roberts pointed out that

this extract of a recently completed treatise testifies to lines of communication between the

Alexandrian church to the West.

> Irenaeus' work was written at Lyons about A.D. 180, and in this scrap we should
>
> recognize not only the first fragment of a manuscript of Christian literature contemporary
>
> with its author, butevidence of the immediate circulation of this powerful attack on
>
> Gnosticism among the Egyptian churches, and yet another witness to the close
>
> relationship between the church of Alexandria and the West.[102]

Far from ending the isolation of Alexandria from the West, the appearance of this excerpt so

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[101] C.H. Roberts, "Early Christianity in Egypt: Three Notes," *JEA* 40 (1954), 92-6; see also the discussion in A.. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, *Irenée de Lyons: Contre les heresies* 3.1 Sources Chrétiennes 210 (Paris: Cerf, 1974), 126-31. LDAB dates it between 150 - 250 - contemporary with Origen and Clement. B. Hemmerdinger and M. Richard, "Trois nouveaux fragments de l'*Adversus haereses* de Saint Irenée," *ZNW* 53.3-4 (1962), 252-55.

[102]Roberts, "Early Christianity in Egypt," 94. The "other evidence" of affiliation with Western Christianity is the circulation of biblical texts.

soon after its composition suggests pre-existing correspondence with other centers of

Christianity. Within only a few years of its composition, *Adversus Haereses* had arrived in a

provincial town downriver from Alexandria.[103]

Divine Providence, Human Responsibility, and the Economy of Salvation

In his arresting study of the symbol in ancient literary criticism, Peter Struck contends

that because ontological principles configure the relationship between signifier and signified,

they also govern reading practices. This observation helps to explain the hermeneutical

disagreements that arose in Alexandria, where different understandings of the operations of

divine providence generated conflict. For Alexandrian Judaism and Christianity, the Scriptures

represent an extension of the work of God in the world.[104] If the cosmos is orderly, then it can

serve as a conduit for the education of humanity. This harmonious administration of the world

suggests the operation of similar principle of order in the Scripture. On the other hand, less

discernible supervision of the cosmos fragments the economy of the Scriptures into uneven

strata. Only an elect race who has been emancipated from illusion and entrusted with mythic

explanations can penetrate the layers of mysteries. Where a writer locates himself along the

continuum between these two extremities shapes his understanding of both interpretation and the

interpreter.

Two particular tensions confronted Alexandrian Christians in their reflections on divine

providence. From Judaism, authors such as Barnabas sought to harmonize the transcendence of

God with his immanent presence in creation. One way to achieve this is to maintain that God

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[103]Harry Gamble instances it as one example of "the speed with which a text could be disseminated across the ancient world." Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 82; cf. 82-143.

[104]Typical of this sentiment is fr. 10 of the *Kerygma Petrou*, which Clement introduces in *str.* 6.15.128.3: "And a littler later he adds again that the prophecies take place by divine providence, affirming here, 'For we have come to know that God has truly disposed these things, and we are saying nothing apart from Scripture.'"

surpasses human perception, yet directs the world in a manner that reveals divine ordering.
Hence, Barnabas conceives God as ruling (κυριεύων) the entire world, and conferring wisdom,
understanding, perception, and knowledge through this governance. This administration of the
world is transparent enough that even pagans can infer the existence of God from its operations.
In Clement's estimate, this was the position that the author of the *Kerygma Petrou* staked out:

> Then he adds, "Worship this God, [but] not as the Hellenes do" ... So then, he does not
> say, "Do not worship the God whom the Hellenes [worship]," but "[to worship this God,
> but] not as theHellenes [worship]." He replaces the manner of worship, but does not
> proclaim a different [God].[105]

Nonetheless, this knowledge of God remained fragmentary, oblique, and obscured by idolatrous
tendencies. Clement claims that the author intends by the "Hellenic manner of worship" the
sanctification of objects over which God has granted authority to humankind. The privileging of
these expedients as sources of provision signals ingratitude and practical atheism. However
evident the traces of divine wisdom in the world, the path to contemplation of divinity in all its
splendor remains fraught with challenges.

The author of the *Kerygma Petrou* condenses this tension between transcendence and
immanence in a succinct formula: "containing, but not contained."[106] This description appears in
a series of antitheses that attempt to distinguish God from creation:

> Therefore, recognize that there is one God, who created the beginning of all things, and
> who possesses authority over the end. [Know that] the one who sees all things is

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[105]Fr. 3a. Clement, *str.* 6.5.39.4-40.2

[106]On the philosophical origins and traditional development of this formula, see W. Schoedel,
"Enclosing, but not Enclosed: The Early Christian Doctrine of God," *Early Christian Literature
and the Christian Intellectual Tradition,* ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken, (Paris:
Beauchesne, 1979), 75-84. See also Schoedel, "Topological Theology and Some Monistic
Tendencies in Gnosticism," in Martin Krause, ed. *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour
of Alexander Böhlig,* (Leiden: Brill, 1972) 88-108, esp. 88-99.

invisible, and that *he who contains all things is himself uncontained*, that the one on

whom all things depend and by whom all things exist has no dependence, and that the

one who created all things by the Word of his Power - that is to say, the Son - is

incomprehensible, eternal, incorruptible, and uncreated.[107]

God transcends the world in such a way that he sustains it without becoming a component of it.

This consideration terminates in a negative theology. Limitations hobble language when its

referents transcend sensation.

This formula provided the scaffolding for further reflection. The *Teaching of Silvanus*

elaborates the principle of "containing, but not contained" by modeling divine providence on

intellect directing the body, and by distinguishing knowledge from comprehension. The analogy

of God to mind generates some difficulties, since mind traditionally occupies a place in the body.

Location contains an entity, which signals its priority over the inhabitant. It also subjects it to

the entropies of corruption, diminution, and death. Yet the author insists that if mind occupies a

location, it also transcends space in its operations. No location can contain mind, since every

place lies within mind's ambit. "For how can it be in a place when it contemplates every

place?"[108] He settles on a scholastic distinction. With respect to its subsistence (ⲔⲀⲦⲀ

ⲐⲨⲠⲞⲤⲦⲀⲤⲒⲤ), mind is in a place, but with respect to conception (ⲔⲀⲦⲀ ⲦⲈⲠⲒⲚⲞⲒⲀ), the

mind is not in a place. More exalted still is God, who exists in no place whatsoever. The logic of

containment excludes the possibility of locating God in the coordinates of space and time. "If

you localize the Lord of all in a place, then it is fitting for you to say that the place is more

exalted than he who dwells in it. For that which contains is more exalted than that which is

contained."[109]

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[107]Fr. 2a. Clement, *str.* 6.5.39.1-3
[108]Teaching of Silvanus, NHC VII, 99.
[109]Teaching of Silvanus, NHC VII, 100.

Yet the problem of obtaining knowledge of this entity remains vexed. How does one come to know an incomprehensible being, who exists in remote transcendence? The author of Silvanus introduces a distinction between essence and economy to carve out a restricted understanding of God. "With respect to his power, he fills every place, but in the exaltation of his divinity, nothing contains him. Everything is in God, but God is not in anything."[110] Because God fills every place, and all things exist "in" God, there is ample opportunity to reflect on the character of divinity. Yet these actions only gesture toward the agent's limitless plenitude and splendor. Comprehension of this magnitude beggars human capabilities. Hence, Silvanus intimates that while it is "not difficult to know the Creator of all creatures," it is "impossible to comprehend his likeness (ⲡⲓⲛⲉ) - not just for humankind, but also for the angelic host."

Not everyone found this formula and the model it advanced so persuasive. To these critics, the world seemed a fragile conduit for the activity of a supremely transcendent God. It is difficult to discern the just operations of providence in a cosmos fraught with apparent defects. This consideration led Basilides and his disciples to posit a distinction between the supreme God and the creator. While the world is unique, God is not (fr. 4, 14). Likewise, Valentinus maintains that a demiurge mediated the fashioning of humanity (fr. 1,4). This craftsman failed to model the form of humanity with perfect fidelity to the paradigm (fr. 4). Yet neither Basilides nor Valentinus depreciate creation. Despite the inscrutability of its operations, Basilides nonetheless retained an assurance that justice governs the cosmos. Over the *longue durée* of psychic transmigrations, providence apportions to each soul its deserved fate. Even the agonies of martyrdom and the sufferings of innocents purge the accumulated transgressions of the soul. If Valentinus concedes the imperfections of the modeled form of man, he also recognizes its resemblance to its archetype. The "seed of higher existence", a filament of divinity implanted

[110]Teaching of Silvanus, NHC VII, 101.

within this form, shimmers with majesty (fr. 1). In *Summer Harvest*, Valentinus hymns the harmonious organization of the cosmos (fr. 8). Where the Kerygma Petrou and Silvanus discern a transparent order to creation, governed by a supreme creator, Valentinus and Basilides present a more complicated picture. An intermediary separates the supreme God from creation, and first principles explain the incongruities between divine perfection and the apparent defects of the world.

A second problem concerned the compatibility between divine providence and human responsibility. If providence governs human affairs, to what extent are human agents responsible for their behavior? This question was a subject of lively discussions in late antiquity, with Stoics, Epicureans, Peripatetics, and Platonists all seeking to carve out a space for human agency. These reflections take on an increasingly juridical cast in the first centuries of the common era. At stake is the foundation of all law, for all precepts assume that subjects are capable of carrying them out. If the world is determined by necessity, however, obedience to these precepts is not "up to us." The grounds for reward and punishment evaporate. Without human responsibility, these become arbitrary designations.

This debate on human responsibility impinged upon Christian discourse, but assumed a broader theological significance. Discussions of freedom and necessity impinge upon the dynamics of faith and the purpose of the divine economy. Clement maintains that Basilides denied that faith was a "rational assent of the soul exercising free will" (ψυχῆς αὐτεξουσίου λογικὴν συγκατάθεσιν), and charges that he and Valentinus regarded it as a natural property of an elect race.[111] Such an understanding, Clement alleges, trivializes the instruction of the Old and

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[111]*str.* 5.1.3.2-4. Winrich Löhr maintains that this "gnostic fatalism" is an invention of the heresiological imagination, but it is difficult either to verify or falsify this conclusion on the basis of the fragmentary evidence that survives. It appears to be a rhetorical topos, but stylized convention does not necessarily entail unreliable representation. Moreover, as Annewies van den Hoek has demonstrated, Clement's citations tend to be more precise when he is reproducing

New Testament and the descent of the Savior. If election implants faith in the individual, the

divine economy and scriptural injunctions merely awaken dormant tendencies. This collides

with statements in Sextus, the Teachings of Silvanus, and the Kerygma Petrou, for whom the

providential ordering of the universe permits the exercise of free will, and salvation entails

purification through obedience.[112]

These theological stances had significant practical implications as well. Basilides avers

that martyrs suffer not "by the plotting of some power", but by the ministrations of providence.

Whatever appearances might suggest, the tribulations visited upon these confessors remain just.

Basilides insists that no sufferer is devoid of sinfulness. Even those who seem innocent must

"have committed sins other than what they realize," or harbored intentions to transgress.

Basilides compares these moral exemplars to an infant who

> has never sinned, or, more precisely, has not actually committed any sins, but has
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> sinfulness within itself (ἐν ἑαυτῷ δὲ τὸ ἁμαρτῆσαι ἔχον). Whenever it endures
>
> suffering, it receives benefit, profiting by many unpleasant experiences. Just so, if by
>
> chance a grown man has not sinned by deed and yet suffers, he endured the suffering for
>
> the same reason as the newborn baby: he had sinful inclination (τὸ ἁμαρτητικόν)
>
> within himself , and the only reason he has not sinned [in deed] is because he has not had
>
> the occasion to do so. Consequently, one must not say that he has no sinfulness.

the definitions and arguments of his opponents--a point not lost on gnostic doxographers.
Although insufficient to discredit his argument, this datum is inconvenient. Cf. Winrich Löhr,
"Gnostic Determinism Reconsidered," *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1992), 381-90; Annewies van
den Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria: A View of Ancient Literary
Working Methods," *Vigiliae Christianae* 30.3 (1996), 223-43, esp. 233.
[112]*sent.* 312, 380, 423; KP *fr.* 10; NHC VII.88.

Even if one has committed no sin, the inclination to do sin makes him liable to judgment. Yet

Basilides discerns that these sufferers are also beneficiaries. Martyrdom is an honor reserved for

virtuous souls. Rather than suffer as adulterers or murderers (in intention or in deed), martyrs

suffer "because they are disposed by nature to be Christians." This consideration relieves their

torment, "leading them to believe that they are not really suffering." Through their agonies,

providence purges the residual traces of sinfulness. The terrors of martyrdom pale in comparison

to the benefits of sanctification.

This analysis of the suffering of martyrs contrasts sharply with those favored by

Clement, and later Origen. They contend that we do not possess virtue innately, but rather that

our endowments of free will fit us to the reception of virtue. This adaptation requires the

salvation by "instruction, purification, and the performance of good works."[113] As Hendrik

Benjamins demonstrates in his monograph *Eingeordenete Freiheit*, Origen's theological

orientation distinguishes his treatment of providence and free will from those of his pagan from

those of his pagan antecedents and contemporaries. Although Origen draws liberally on these

philosophical traditions, his orientation is quite different. Consideration for the divine economy,

salvation, and reshapes the discussion of these contentious questions.

The Hermeneutics of the Law and Prophets in Light of the Gospel

The author of the *Kerygma Petrou* designates providence as the architect of prophecy:

"For we have come to know that God has truly disposed these things, and we are saying nothing

apart from Scripture."[114] Just as the providential administration of the cosmos shows a divine

order, so also the economy of salvation reveals the purpose of the Scriptures. Christ's fulfillment

of prophetic aspiration establishes a new covenant that forms a new cultus and a new people.

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[113]*str*. 5.1.3.3-4.
[114]KP *fr*. 10; cf. Clement, *str*. 6.15.128.3.

> For we have found in the Scriptures, that it is just as the Lord says: "Behold I am establishing for you a new covenant, unlike the one I established for your fathers on Mount Horeb." He establishes a new covenant. For what has reference to the Hellenes and Jews is old, but we are Christians, who worship as a third race the same God in a new manner.[115]

A "third race" that is neither Hellenic nor Jewish emerges from this fulfillment of Scripture. If they worship the same God as the Hellenes and Jews, they do so in a different way.

This new reality prompts hermeneutical revision. As "Law and Word," Christ's life, death, and resurrection now occupies the focal point of the Scriptures. The KP maintains that the "books of the prophets" testify to this. But this testimony is more explicit in some places than in others.

> But when we handle the books of the prophets that we have, some of which name designate Jesus the Christ by parables, others by riddles, and still others directly and explicitly, we find also his advent, his death, and his cross and all the other punishments the Jews inflicted upon him, and the resurrection and assumption into the clouds, before the foundation (destruction?) of Jerusalem, just as all these things were written that it was necessary for him to suffer and the things to come after him. Recognizing this, we believed in God through the things written about him.[116]

The relationship of the prophecy to Christ determines the reading practice. Some of these books offer "word for word" testament; others employ the oblique means of "parables and riddles" to signify these events. This diversity suggests the adoption of an eclectic hermeneutic. Where the representation is direct, the interpreter can dwell on the surface of the text. Where the

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[115]KP *fr.* 5; cf. Clement, *str.* 6.5.41.4-6.
[116]KP *fr.* 9; Clement, *str* 6.15.128.1-2.

correspondence between signifier and signified is less transparent, the interpreter should explore

a figural mode of interpretation.

Like the *Kerygma Petrou*, the *Epistle of Barnabas* regards the prophets as the privileged

conduits of revelation about Christ: "For through the prophets the Master has made known

(ἐγνώρισεν) to us what has happened and what now is, and he has given us the first fruits of the

taste of what is yet to come" (1.7). These oracles require illumination, however, and Barnabas

devotes most of his letter to Christological interpretation of the scriptures. He writes with the

expressed intention of cultivating perfect knowledge (τελείαν... τὴν γνῶσιν) in the faithful

(1.5). As we have already observed, the author treats exegesis as a mediation of gnosis. Chief

among these "gnostic" intimations is the proprietary nature of Christ's covenant. Barnabas

pointedly excludes the Jews from a share in this relationship. It is not both "ours and theirs."

Whatever claim they might have had to the Mosaic covenant was forfeit by their idolatrous

response at Sinai. When Moses smashed the tablets of the law, he was signifying a more

decisive rupture of the covenant of God with Israel. This was an inspired act of creative

destruction, however. The breaking of the law anticipated a greater purpose. It took place "in

order that the covenant of Jesus, his beloved, might be sealed in our hearts, in the hope brought

by faith in him" (4.6-8; 14.1-5).

In Barnabas' gnostic exposition, parables and enigmas feature prominently. The author

exhorts his audience to "learn what γνῶσις says" when it invites them to enter a land flowing

with milk and honey (6.9-10; cf. Exod. 33.1, 3). Before proceeding, he pronounces a benediction

upon the Lord, "who placed the wisdom and knowledge of his secrets among us." Wisdom here

refers to the ability to decipher the mysteries lodged in the prophetic text: "For the prophet is

speaking a parable of the Lord. Who will understand it but the one who is wise and learned, who

loves his Lord?" In this case, entrance into the "land flowing with milk and honey" envisages a

new creation, into which a "new man" leads a new covenanted people. This instance illustrates

the larger hermeneutical principle that Barnabas adopts: the individuals and institutions of Israel prefigure Christ and his people during the last days. Hence, the sacrificial cultus of Israel presages the sacrificial death of Christ. Down to the details of priestly use of the gall and vinegar, (7.3-5) the placement of wool amid thorns (7.6-11) and the tying of scarlet wool to a piece of wood (8.1-5), these practices reveal everything in advance (προεφανέρωσεν) about Christ's passion.

Christ's fulfillment of these archetypes reconfigures the physical sites and devotional practices prescribed in the law as internal dispositions in his followers. Barnabas enjoins his audience not to identify the Temple with any corruptible edifice. In the new dispensation, the temple denotes "the dwelling of God in our heart," (14.4; 16.7-9). Likewise, the traditional markers of Jewish identity - circumcision and the dietary laws - signify spiritual practices. Physical circumcision, Barnabas argues, fails even to distinguish Jews from Gentiles, since others observe this ritual. What he envisages is rather the circumcision of the ears and heart, a purification that prepares the initiate for the reception of knowledge (9.1-6). From the dietary legislation, the author divines behavioral prescriptions. Prohibitions on the consumption of pigs and carnivorous birds, for example, warn people of the covenant against the evils of luxuriance and predatory behavior (10.1-11).

All these "parabolic" interpretations might appear inscrutable and elusive to the uninitiated. But this is precisely Barnabas' point. The ability to decipher these mysteries is not a natural property, but a supernatural gift. Those who have not received this endowment are incapable of fathoming this gnosis 10.12). Barnabas uses the language of sensation to characterize this spiritual understanding: "And thus the things that have happened in this way are evident to us, but are obscure to them, *because they have not heard the voice of the Lord*" (8.7). To "hear this voice," one must have receptive ears and a pure heart. As he explains in 10.12, the understanding of the Lord's commands turns on the cleansing of these faculties: "We however

speak as those who know the commandments in an upright way, as the Lord wished. For this reason he circumcised our hearing and our hearts, that we might understand these things." Without the circumcision of the ears and heart, these enigmas remain impenetrable.

The surviving extracts of Theodotus develop this theme of esotericism by projecting a mythic framework for interpretation, and by applying philological strategies to the text of the Old and New Testament to bear out this framework. "The Savior," Theodotus claims, taught the apostles first figuratively and mystically, later in parables and riddles, and finally clearly and openly when they were alone."[117] This tripartite pedagogy reserves clarification of these concealed modes of instruction for an elite cadre of disciples. What elucidates these enigmatic teachings (and the scriptures that witness them) is a mythic substratum that lurks just below the surface of the text. For example, Theodotus distinguishes the visible from the invisible components of Jesus' identity based upon their relationship to the aeonic pleroma:

> The visible part of Jesus was Wisdom and the Church of the superior seeds, which he put on through the flesh, as Theodotus says. But the invisible part is the Name, which is the Only-Begotten Son. Thus when he says "I am the door," he means that you, who are of the superior seed, shall come up to the boundary where I am. And when he enters in, the seed also enters with him into the Pleroma, brought together and brought in through the door.[118]

What appears to be a simple metaphor to express Christ as the means through which one attains salvation contains greater profundity. Not only is Jesus the portal to everlasting life, but his flesh - Wisdom and the Valentinian elect it contains in itself - transports these elect "seeds" into the pleroma through the Only-Begotten. Without the supporting mythic structure, it would be

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[117]Clement, *exc.* 66. Note that the reference to "enigmas and riddles" matches the description of the KP above.
[118]Clement, *exc.* 26, 32-33.

difficult to arrive at the pleromatic exposition Theodotus proposes.

To defend this exegesis, Valentinians like Theodotus and Heracleon exploited philological techniques developed by the *grammaticus*. They turned to prosopology, the exercise of ascertaining the identities of the speaker and referents of a discourse, to partition the elements of Jesus' identity into their syzygies.

> And when he says "The Son of Man must be rejected and insulted and crucified," he seems to be speaking of someone else, that is, of him who has passion… And he died at the departure of theSpirit which had descended upon him in the Jordan, not that it became separate, but was withdrawn in order that death might also operate on him, since how did the body die when life was present in him? For in that way death would have prevailed over the Savior himself, which is absurd.[119]

By claiming that this prediction of the passion referred to someone else, Theodotus avoids the problematic question of how a divine Savior could suffer death. The Spirit, which had descended upon Jesus at his baptism, now is "withdrawn" to allow death to take its course.

The author now turns his attention to Psalm 110, a *locus classicus* for the theological reflection on the ascension. Having harrowed death, the "psychic Christ" assumes an honorific place at the right hand of the Creator. But this image of triumph doubles as an image of vulnerability. Ingeniously, Theodotus pairs this with a prophecy of messianic passion in Zechariah 12.10 ("that they may look upon the one they have pierced"). This raises a similar problem, for how does a psychic entity exhibit physical vulnerability? To resolve this issue, Theodotus refers to yet another messianic passion text and draws upon lexical parallels to propose an alternate interpretation.

Now the psychic Christ sits on the right hand of the Creator, as David says, " Sit on my

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[119]Clement, *exc.* 61.

right hand " and so on. And he sits there until the end "that they may see him whom they pierced." But they pierced the appearance, which is the flesh of the psychic one, "for," it says, "a bone of him shall not be broken," just as in the case of Adam the prophecy used bone as an allegory for the soul. For the actual soul of Christ deposited itself in the Father's hands, while the body was suffering. But the spiritual nature referred to as "bone" is not yet deposited but he keeps it.[120]

This exegetical practice, which the grammarian Dionysius Thrax terms *glossematikon*, attempts to identify similar instances of a word in order to clarify its meaning. Here, Theodotus makes reference to another passion oracle to illuminate what "piercing" entails. Whatever it means, it cannot include the breaking of any bone. He then turns to his lexicographical researches to uncover an important detail. In Genesis 2, he contends, "bone" functions allegorically to indicate a "soul," since the soul of Eve was formed from Adam's rib, and referred to as "bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh." A sophisticated array of philological strategies helped to substantiate this mythic apparatus.

One index of how successful Theodotus and his colleagues were in their use of these myths and techniques is the degree to which their antagonists took up similar strategies to refute them. It is worthwhile to observe that the fragment of *haer.* 3.9.2-3 preserved in *P. Oxy.* 3.405 addresses a similar concern. The baptism represents a *crux interpretum,* since the Valentinians mark it as the point at which the cosmic Christ assumed his earthly receptacle. The last section of the Oxyrhynchine fragment includes a lacunose version of the gloss, "for it was not then that the Christ descended into Jesus, nor is Christ one person and Jesus another."[121] Irenaeus is at pains to emphasize that the "Savior of all", the "Word of God," assumed flesh in all his fullness

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[120] *exc.* 62.
[121] γὰρ τότε ὁ Χ𝔰 […] τὸν Ιν οὐδ' ἄ[λλος…] ἄλλος δὲ Ι[𝔰…]. It ends with a proclamation of Jesus as the "Word of God, Savior of all and Sovereign of heaven": Θυ ὁ Σωτ[ὴρ κυ[ριεύω[ν…].

and was anointed *by the Spirit*. He observes that the apostles pointedly avoided designating this

a descent of the "Christ" or the "Savior from on high."[122] Rather, they narrated the descent of the

Spirit of God.[123]

To defend his position, Irenaeus quarries both the New Testament and prophetic

literature to establish "the entire meaning" (*uniuersam… sententiam*) of the apostles. The

disintegration of Christ proceeds from a fractured hermeneutic, so Irenaeus brings together

evidence from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul. His synthesis culminates in his celebrated

doctrine of the *recapitulatio*--that there is "one God" and "one Christ" who "comes throughout

the entire economy (*dispositionem*, οἰκονομίαν) gathering together all things into himself."[124]

The divine economy follows a sequence of unbroken continuity, a sequence that interpreters

must respect. Having established this coherence, Irenaeus pronounces those who separate Jesus

from Christ, or multiply his identity with aeonic intermediaries to be "outside the economy"

(*extra dispensationem*).[125] He clinches his point with a variant of 1 John 4.3: "Every spirit *which*

partitions Jesus is not from God, but is from the Antichrist."[126] To refute the Valentinians,

Irenaeus meets them on their own ground. His case against them turns on the exposition of a

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[122] *haer.* 3.17.1. Irenaeus makes use of Is. 11.2 here as well.

[123]Clement makes a similar point in *exc.* 23-24. He observes that the Valentinians say that Jesus is the Paraclete. They do not know, he maintains, "that the Paraclete, who now works continuously in the Church, is of the same power and substance as he who worked continuously according to the Old Testament."

[124] *Unus igitur Deus Pater, quemadmodum ostendimus, et unus Christus Iesus Dominus noster, ueniens per uniuersam dispositionem et omnia in semetipsum recapitulans. haer.* 3.16.6.

[125] *haer.* 3.16.8.

[126]A tenth-century manuscript of the New Testament from Mt. Athos suggests that Clement and Origen may have taken this reading from Irenaeus. Codex Lavra, contains a marginal note that Irenaeus, Origen, and Clement all preserved an unusual variation in 1 John 4.3. Where other texts read "every Spirit *that does not confess Jesus* is anti-Christ," they read "*that partitions Jesus*." The likelihood that each of these three sources--and only these three--would preserve this anomaly independently is slender. Given Clement's affiliation with Origen, a plausible trajectory for transmission runs from Irenaeus through Clement to Origen. Moreover, the marginalia performs an invaluable service by specifying where one encounters this variation in each writer: *haer.* 3, Clement's *On the Pascha* and the seventh book of Origen's commentary on Romans.

counter-narrative of the *recapitulatio*, and on a polemical exegesis of relevant texts to undermine any bifurcation of Jesus' identity.

The Instructor as Image of Divine Providence

As the foregoing analysis of scriptural interpretation in Alexandria demonstrates, the interpreter occupied a privileged position. Entrusted with higher wisdom, and trained in exegesis, he mediated gnosis by unraveling the mysteries of the text to his audience. Whether privy to the fulfillment of prophetic foreshadowing in Christ, or to the mythic underpinnings of the gospel, or to the tradition of the apostles, this individual exercised authority in his judgments.

Although the *Sentences of Sextus* and the *Teaching of Silvanus* devote relatively little attention to the finer points of exegesis, they do illuminate the position of the "sage" in the community. Of particular interest is the way that they fashion this personality as the embodiment of divine providence. So completely has the sage purified his words and conduct, that he mirrors divinity on earth. Not only does he teach by delivering precepts, but he also instructs by his conduct. Both Clement and Origen draw upon this understanding of the wise man as the "image of God" in projecting an idealized image of the interpreter. Neither distinguished the biblical scholar from the sage, or academic engagements from the pursuit of holiness. Wisdom obtained from the text of Scripture ought to transform not only the expositor's audience, but the expositor himself.

Although its classification as "wisdom literature" is accurate, Wilson observes of the *Sentences of Sextus*, that "its focus is not on wisdom as such (σοφία), but on the person who embodies wisdom most fully, the sage (σοφός)."[127] The sage participates in divine wisdom at such a profound level "that he presents (307)… and mirrors (450) God to others (7a, 82d,

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[127]Wilson, *Sentences of Sextus*, 32.

376a)."[128] Consequently, the *Sentences* urge veneration of the sage as the "living image of

God."[129] This designation was commonly applied to rulers in the Hellenistic and Roman period.

Here, the sage usurps the functions of a king. This is not the only displacement that Sextus

envisages. Only five gnomes later, what Paul entrusts to sound teaching (Rom. 6.17) is

transferred to the sage. The kingdom of God, which Matthew apportions to the poor in spirit,

belongs to the patrimony of the sage in Sextus.[130]

 The sage's assumption of roles traditionally allotted to other authorities reflects his

unique participation in the divine economy. God governs the universe with justice and

benevolence, and the sage is the highest expression of these virtues. This makes the actions of

the wise man a privileged medium of divine providence. Governance by God becomes the basis

for governance of others.[131] The sage benefits others by modeling the godly life, but also serves

as the conduit of divine power and judgment. His intellect constitutes "a mirror of God."[132]

Wilson remarks on the audacity of this claim. While philosophical literature had long described

mind in general in such terms, Sextus restricts the mirroring capacity to the sage's intellect. This

represents perhaps the most brazen transference, for here Sextus draws upon a hypostatized

description of Wisdom that Christians traditionally referred to Christ (Wisd. 7.22ff). But this is

perhaps the point the author impresses upon his audience: the mind of Christ has so transformed

the sage as to make him "another Christ."

 Just as the divine economy entails the negotiation of relationships with diverse persons

over time, so the sage adapts his conduct to his audience. As Wilson points out, "insofar as it

takes the activity of God as its model, the vocation of the sage requires that he interact with a

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[128]*Sentences of Sextus*, 36.
[129]*sent.* 190.
[130]*sent.* 195, 311.
[131]*sent.* 182-84.
[132]*sent.* 450.

broad range of people in a variety of ways."[133] Nowhere is this principle clearer than in the

text's scrupulosity regarding speech about God. Part of the sage's caution about theological

discourse derives from his reverence for its content. A gnome that appears thrice in Origen's

extant corpus warns, "To speak even the truth about God entails no small risk."[134] Given the

sacrosanct character of this speech, there is peril in disseminating such truths to the unworthy.

Hence, the author enjoins the reader "Do not dare to speak to an impure soul about God."[135]

The sage should even take precautions not to divulge higher wisdom unwittingly ("Never

unknowingly share a word of God with someone of a sordid nature.")[136] Even the last gnome

reminds the reader of his obligation to observe this code of speech ethics: "Do not dare to speak

to an intemperate soul about God."[137] If Wilson is correct that this saying also provides direction

for the deposition of the text, it would represent a fitting closure to a theme this gnomic

anthology develops at length: care must be taken to protect the sanctity of wisdom.[138]

The *Teaching of Silvanus* offers an exposition that, while less concentrated on the sage,

impresses many of the same points about the transforming effects of wisdom from a different

vantage point. Where Sextus offered the lapidary wisdom of aphorisms, Silvanus unfolds a

program of moral purification through continuous discourse. He addresses the reader in the

manner of Solomon as "my son." To domesticate the passions that corrupt the soul, the wise

must choose the proper guide: **"**Enlist your guide and your teacher. The mind is the guide, and

reason is the teacher" (ⲛⲟⲥ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲥ. ⲡⲥⲁϩ ⲇⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ).[139] Closely related

to this injunction is the admonition to follow Christ, who is "God and teacher" (ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ

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[133]Wilson, *Sentences of Sextus*, 36.
[134]*sent.* 352.
[135]*sent.* 407.
[136]*sent.* 401.
[137]*sent.* 451.
[138]*Wilson, Sentences of Sextus*, 424.
[139]NHC VII, 85.23-27.

ⲡⲥⲁⲍ).[140] Zandee suggests that the author exploits a symmetry between the dictates of reason

(*logos*) and the commandments of Jesus, the incarnate Logos. At the least, the author's own

instruction mediates this wisdom. In fact, he so interweaves his own directions with those of

reason and Scripture as to make the boundaries demarcating them fluid. He exhorts the reader to

"accept the education and the teaching" (ⲭⲓ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲛⲧⲡⲁⲓⲇⲓⲁ ⲙⲛ ⲧⲉⲥⲃⲱ) and to "put on

holy teaching like a robe" (ⲧⲉⲥⲃⲱ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲧⲁⲁⲥ ϩⲓⲱⲱⲕ ϩⲱⲥ ⲥⲧⲟⲗⲏ).[141] His teaching

is continuous with divine instruction, and must be received in the same manner:

> Do not deviate from my teaching, and do not acquire ignorance, *lest you lead your*
>
> *people astray*. Do not flee from the divine and the teaching which is within you, for he
>
> who is teaching you loves you very much. For he shall bequeath to you a worthy
>
> austerity… You know the way… I teach.[142]

The first line suggests that the intended recipient of *Silvanus,* or perhaps its "imagined

final product" (Valentiasis) occupies a position of leadership. By investing himself with the

raiment of wisdom - the teaching communicated by the text - he can discharge his functions more

responsibly. As in Sextus, the providence of God provides the model for wise leadership:

> If it is good to rule over a few, how much better is it that you rule over everyone, since
>
> you are exalted above every congregation and every people, are prominent in every
>
> respect, and are a divine reason (ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲅⲭⲓⲥⲉ ⲙⲙⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲙⲛ ⲟⲩⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲛⲑⲉⲓⲟⲥ),
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> having become master over every power that kills the soul.[143]

Mastery over one's own passions forms the precondition for mastery over the collective tempers

of others.

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[140]NHC VII, 110; cf. VII, 91.
[141]NHC VII, 87.4-35.
[142]NHC VII, 87.4-35.
[143]NHC VII, 87.33- 88.

This program of purification assimilates the adept's conduct to that of Christ. Foremost among Christ's attributes is his humility. His assumption of humanity marks the pinnacle of this virtue. Despite his divinity, he condescended to humankind: "He who has exalted man became like God not in order that he might bring God down to man, but that man might become like God."[144] Through Christ's humiliation, the path of purity becomes evident. As Silvanus later claims, "The one who makes himself like God is one who does nothing unworthy of God, according to the statement of Paul, who has become like Christ."[145] Indeed, all who belong to the household of God are "traces of God" (ⲀⲢⲎ ⲬϤ ⲚⲓⲘ ⲚⲐⲈⲓⲟⲚ).[146] This exalted paradigm of spiritual leadership becomes, in the hands of Clement and Origen, the template for the task of interpretation and the role of the interpreter.

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[144]NHC VII.111.
[145]NHC VII, 108.
[146]NHC VII, 115.

CHAPTER 2: PROVIDENCE AS DIVINE PEDAGOGY IN

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

In *str.* 7.2-3, Clement develops a Christology that advances providential supervision as the context for the configuration of a Christian *paideia*. As agent of the divine economy, the Word designs a sequence of education that assimilates humanity to God. He begins by harmonizing the cosmos and endowing persons with moral responsibility. These activities frame a hermeneutic in which Scripture can purify disciples and guide their ascent to divinity.

Earlier scholars interpreted this conception as evidence of the Hellenization of Christian discourse.[1] This conclusion emanated from both synthetic paradigms they adopted and the *Quellenanalysen* which they used to substantiate them. Historiographers in this tradition sometimes speak as if Alexandrian Christianity can be understood as the aggregate of its constituent influences.[2] Closer scrutiny of the form and content of this conceit, suggests a

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[1]Lilla, for example, argues that "the idea of Christ as redeemer of all humanity by means of his sacrifice… is replaced by the esoteric idea of gnosis," Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: OUP, 1971), 159.

[2]"…our enquiry into the various aspects of Clement's system has shown that it represents the meeting-point of three distinct streams: the Jewish-Alexandrine philosophy, the Platonic tradition (which includes both school-Platonism and Neoplatonism) and Gnosticism. No part of Clement's thought can be adequately understood without taking these three factors duly into account." Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria,* 227. Lilla's study at least has the virtue of recognizing Clement's eclecticism, though he tends to reduce the scope of this diversity to a tripartite composite. Eschewing such diversity, others prefer to identify Clement with one school or another, pronouncing Clement a model Platonist, as Bigg does, or a marginal Stoic, as Pohlenz does; cf. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: OUP, 1880); Pohlenz, *Klemens von Alexandria und sein hellenisches Christentum,* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Rupprecht, 1943). Acknowledging diverse influences, Raoul Mortley nonetheless detects a heterodox Gnostic element animating Clement's thought, which he details in his *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d'Alexandrie*, (Leiden: Brill, 1973). Such speculation led Karlfried Froehlich to infer that Irenaeus or Tertullian might have perceived Clement more as a renegade than a representative of orthodoxy; Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church,* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 16. Not a shred of evidence supports this fanciful conjecture. Fortunately, more nuanced analyses of Clement's use of sources have appeared since these monographs. Of especial significance are A. Méhat, *Étude sur les* Stromates *de Clément d'Alexandrie* Patristica Sorbonensia 7. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966); E. Clark, *Clement's Use*

different conclusion. This Alexandrian tradition takes on more significance than the sum of its

appropriations.[3]

In this chapter, I will first trace how Clement presents the economy of salvation as divine

pedagogy. I will focus on the ways providence adapts itself to human need, how it promotes

advance, and how its training culminates in assimilation to God. Taking his written corpus as a

curriculum of ascent, I illustrate how this drama of salvation forms the context for Clement's use

of Greek philosophy. First, I will explore a constellation of questions that have coalesced around

the organization of the Clementine corpus. After reviewing the arguments on the Clementine

"trilogy," I will conclude that both the *Stromateis* and the fragmentary remains of the

Hypotyposeis represent the pinnacle of his teaching, the *Didaskalos*. Both, I will suggest, are

modeled on the educational activities of the Word, whatever superficial correspondence they

share with pagan analogues. Next, I examine the unusual form of the *Stromateis* and the author's

propensity for esotericism. Clement regards his own writing as a conduit for gnostic instruction,

and models his own teaching on the "parabolic" discourse of Christ. This teaching culminates in

Scriptural interpretation, but seeks to purify the student before exposing the mysteries of the text.

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of Aristotle: The Aristotelian Contribution to Clement of Alexandria's Refutation of Gnosticism,
(New York: Mellen, 1977); D. Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneignung in den Stromateis des
Clemens von Alexandrien* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983); Annewies Van den Hoek, *Clement of
Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the* Stromateis. Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 3.
(Leiden: Brill, 1988); David Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen: Van
Gorcum, 1993); Arkadi Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of
Alexandria's Appropriation of His Background* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).
[3]With a trenchant comparison of this "doxographical approach" to "stamp collecting," Eric
Osborn criticizes its indifference to the problems which confronted the author and the actual
arguments the writer evolves to address them; Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy*
(Cambridge: CUP 1981), 12, 279. On Lilla's biography of Clement, Runia opines: "Precisely on
account of its predominant emphasis on Clement's sources… this study, for all its competence,
has remained rather controversial. The method is surely excessively reductionistic. Clement's
thought is almost fully reduced to its component parts, for the most part taken over from other
traditions and then covered over with a thin topping of Christian adaptation and application.
There is no central locus which guides and determines his thought." Runia, *Philo in Early
Christian Literature*, 153.

Finally, I will investigate how Clement marshals his notion of pedagogy as a prophylactic against

the fragmented cosmology and hermeneutics of Marcionite, Valentinian, and Basilidean

interpreters. Although Clement draws extensively on philosophical discourse on providence and

human responsibility to devise his system, I argue that he subordinates it to the integrity of the

text and the Christian life.

By transforming pagan intellectual traditions into media for divine instruction, Clement

endorses a broader engagement with culture. At the same time, he exposes both their

unacknowledged ancestry and deviations from the Word's educational curriculum. I trace the

origins of this critique in Plato and Philo, showing how Clement appropriates and reshapes these

understandings of *paideia*. Redefined as the Word's teaching, Clement's vision of Hellenic

wisdom is derivative and fragmentary, but fertile preparation for the gospel nonetheless.

PROVIDENCE AS *PAIDEIA*: ADAPTATION, ADVANCE, AND ASSIMILATION TO GOD

ADAPTATION

Clement dedicates the second chapter of *Stromateis* 7 to promoting the Word's activity

as a model for the gnostic instructor. This Word is "the supreme excellence, which orders all

things in accordance with the Father's will, and with inexhaustible and undiminished power

guides the universe in the best way, through which activities it operates, while contemplating its

hidden designs."[4] Unrivaled perfection and power characterize the activities of the Son. As

"paternal Word," he eclipses all angelic powers, "displaying the holy administration (οἰκονομία)

for the sake of the one who placed [those powers] in subjection."[5]

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[4]*str.* 7.2.5.4.
[5]*str.* 7.2.5.6.

Yet this expression of paternal power is also an expression of paternal care. Clement enlists Plato to defend this notion. Drawing on the Athenian philosopher's defense of divine providence, he maintains that God's perfection and power requires concern for all. He casts this argument as a dilemma: "For either the Lord does not take consideration for (οὐ φροντίζει) all men… or he does care (κήδεται) for all."[6] Lack of consideration could arise only from ineptitude, unwillingness, or ignorance, none of which is compatible with divinity. Because the Lord is omnipotent, he *can* maintain all creation in his care; because he is neither ignorant nor distracted by pleasure, he *does* maintain all creation in his care. Even minutiae fall under his administration, since dereliction in any degree compromises the goodness of providence.[7] No more suitable government could be devised.[8]

Although the Word supervises the cosmos benevolently, not all perceive this supervision equally. Because persons recognize the divine economy in varying degrees, the Word teaches them in different ways, adapting himself to his audience.[9] Clement favors the epithets

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[6]*str.* 7.2.6.5. Plato, *Laws* X 885b, 900d-905d. Clement draws from a Platonic lexicon to claim that neglect (ἀμέλεια), laziness (ῥᾳθυμία), and indolence (τρυφή) are incompatible with divine providence. Likewise, he reproduces the Platonic argument that providential neglect must stem from either lack of virtue, capability, or ignorance. Finally, Clement retains the provision that providential supervision includes even the most inconsequential matters, a particular point of emphasis in *Laws* X. It is a rare oversight that Stählin fails to recognize this pervasive inheritance, though he does furnish references to the relevant literature in *str.* 7.3, where the Platonic influence is more obvious. Clement deduces the same argument for divine providence as does Socrates in *Laws* X: that any neglect for the operation of the world entails deficiency of power, goodness, or knowledge, none of which is an appropriate predicate of divinity. The nomenclature of divine "care" and "indolence" that appears in the Platonic dialogue reappears in this section. Even the objection concerning neglect in the slightest matter find direct analogues in *Laws* X.
[7]*str.* 7.2.9.1. Clement identifies this as a consequence of the Son's identity as the "Father's Power." On this nomenclature, see M. Barnes, *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, (Washington: CUA Press, 2001), esp. 94-124.
[8]*str.* 7.2.7.1-8.6.
[9]This concern with adaptability appears both in pagan literature and in Scripture. Seneca counsels teachers to adapt themselves to the needs of their students in *ep. mor.* 64.8-9. Maximus of Tyre apparently composed an oration with the title "That a Philosopher's Discourse is

"multifarious" (πολύτροπος) and "multi-voiced" (πολύφωνος) to characterize this diversity

of educational strategies: "He becomes multi-voiced and multifarious for the salvation of

mankind."[10] Like the Scriptures that channel the Word's teaching, an underlying unity of

purpose harmonizes the disparate components of this curriculum. The Teacher dispenses

instruction using different arrangements, but each stimulates progress toward salvation.

Clement provides a concise taxonomy of these educational strategies in *str.* 7.2.6.1:

This is the Teacher, who trains the gnostic by mysteries, and the believer by good hopes,

and the hard of heart by corrective discipline through perceptible activity. For this

reason, his providence is in private, in public, and everywhere.[11]

There is here a neat symmetry between the varied means of education and the varied audiences to

whom they are addressed. The Teacher reserves training in the mysteries for a select cadre of

disciples, but publicly extends hope to those who believe, and operates on an even larger scale to

convert the hard of heart. Providence is everywhere, but adapts its teaching to its audiences.

This adaptation takes three principal forms. First, Clement envisions the Word as an

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Adapted to Every Subject". Paul's desire to become all things to all people seems to reflect this principle. Clarence Glad's *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychology* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), explores parallels between this Pauline posture and the treatise *On Frank Criticism* of the Epicurean Philodemus. For these references, I am indebted to J.L. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria," *JECS* 9.1 (2001), 10-11.

[10]*prot.* 1.8.3. πολύτροπος appears with greater regularity in Clement's writing, and it is nearly always pregnant with Christological and soteriological implications. The "various and sundry ways" that Heb. 1.1 (πολυτρόπως καὶ πολυμερῶς) in which prior revelations anticipate the incarnation may provide the touchstone for Clement's usage. E.g. *paed.* 1.5.12.1; 1.8.66.4; 3.8.43.2; *str.* 1.5.29.4-5; 1.7.38.6; 6.7.58.2. In *strom.* 6.7.60.1, he attributes the same epithet to the gnostic. In *prot.* 1.5.3, Clement applies the title of πολύφωνος to humanity, a microcosm, who, tuned "by the Holy Spirit," becomes an instrument of "many voices." He sometimes uses this term to depict the Word or the Spirit harmonizing diverse voices: cf. *prot.* 9.88.3; *strom.* 7.7.43.4.

[11]*str.* 7.2.6.1. ὁ διδάσκαλος οὗτος ὁ παιδεύων μυστηρίοις μὲν τὸν γνωστικόν, ἐλπίσι δὲ ἀγαθαῖς τὸν πιστόν, καὶ παιδεία τῇ ἐπανορθωτικῇ δι᾽ αἰσθητικῆς ἐνεργείας τὸν σκληροκάρδιον. ἐντεῦθεν ἡ πρόνοια ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ καὶ πανταχοῦ.

Educator who instructs humanity through his providential administration of creation.[12] This

consideration shapes the horizons of his cosmological speculation. An important element of this

exercise of divine providence is the Word's concern for fashioning the world in such a way that

it cultivates human virtue:

> That providence begins by ordering the world, and the heavens, the course of the sun's
>
> orbit and the movement of the other heavenly bodies, all for the sake of humanity. Then,
>
> it concerns itself with humanity itself, for whom it had undertaken all these other labors.
>
> And because it considers this its most important work, it guides the human soul on the
>
> right path by the virtues of prudence and temperance, and equips its body with beauty
>
> and harmony. Finally, it confers upon the actions of humanity rectitude and some of its
>
> own good order.[13]

This harmonious order of creation and superintendence of the cosmos form an apparatus

for divine instruction, but cannot of themselves ensure human flourishing. Humankind is not

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[12]Here, Karen Jo Torjesen's otherwise perceptive essay, "Pedagogical Soteriology from Clement to Origen" adopts misleading language. Maintaining that Clement transforms the "Christos Didascalos" of Irenaeus into "Christos Paedagogos," she observes that the Alexandrian amplifies the role of the Logos from governing the economy of the salvation alone to the providential guidance of all human history. She exploits the German distinction between the *Lehrer* and the *Erzieher* to characterize this development, summarizing the work of the Paedagogos primarily as training by "dispelling ignorance and overcoming reluctance" and the work of the Didascalos as articulating doctrine (372). Yet it is important to note that this "transformation" leaves certain features of the Irenaean model of Christos Didascalos intact. Clement retains teaching (the preserve of Christos Didascalos in Torjesen's parlance) in his conception of the operations of the Logos rather than simply replacing it with providential discipline (the work of Christos Paedagogos). He distinguishes the healing of the passions as the necessary preparation for the inculcation of doctrine. In sum, the Logos persuades, heals, and teaches: cf. *paed.* 1.2.1-1.3.3. Torjesen recognizes this, appending a brief reflection on the layout of the *Stromateis* as illustrative of Clement's notion of Christos Diasacalos (373). Whatever its heuristic value, it might be more precise to suggest that Clement augments the Irenaean presentation of Christ the Teacher (Christos Didascalos) by offering a complementary presentation of Christ the Tutor (Christos Paedagogos) rather than identifying this development as a transformation of Christ the Teacher into Christ the Tutor.   Karen Jo Torjesen, "Pedagogical Soteriology from Clement to Origen," *Origeniana Quarta,* Lothrop Lies, ed. Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1987, 370-73.
[13]*paed.* 1.2.6.5-6.

virtuous or "saved" by nature; rather, nature equips persons with the self-determination necessary to cultivate virtue. As we will see, Clement formulates this position as a response to those who maintain that humanity is the vitiated product of a demiurge, but that an elect possess goodness as a natural property. Clement objects that we do not possess virtue innately, but rather are "adapted to the reception of virtue."[14] "For it was the law from the beginning," he maintains, "that virtue should be the object of voluntary choice."[15]

If virtue is not the product of volition, humanity cannot be held responsible for their actions, and the distribution of rewards and punishments is arbitrary. This would destroy the common notions of morality and law. Divine providence therefore respects the will's self-determination. He persuades rather than predestines. Since coerced behavior is incompatible with moral development, the Word prevails upon only those who are willing. "He does not compel the one who is able to receive salvation from him by choosing and carrying out from Him what pertains to laying hold of the hope."[16]

Scripture represents the Word's second mode of adaptation to humanity. Clement declares that Scripture "rekindles" the good of creation.[17] and "forms the short road to salvation."[18] The diversity of souls whose ailments Scripture must heal necessitate a variety of instructional devices. In his *Paedagogus*, Clement provides an elaborate taxonomy of the strategies represented in the scriptural record. "By threatening he admonishes, by reproaching,

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[14]*str.* 6.11.95.5 - 6.12.96.3. Although he does not identify his antagonists here, in *str.* 5.1.3.2-4, Clement derides Basilides--and later Valentinus--for denying that faith was "a rational assent of the soul exercising free will," but rather "an undefined beauty belonging immediately to the creature." Such an understanding, Clement alleges, trivializes both the precepts of the Old and New Testament and the coming of the Savior. Salvation by "instruction, purification, and the doing of good works" remains incompatible with a definition of faith--or virtue--as a property of nature endemic to the human being.
[15]*str.* 7.2.9.3.
[16]*str.* 7.2.6.3.
[17]*str.* 1.6.35.1.
[18]*prot.* 8.77.1.

he converts, by bewailing, he pities, and by the voice of song, he encourages," he observes in one

of his less tedious catalogues.[19] It also furnishes examples for imitation and avoidance.[20] The

Old Testament theophanies illustrate yet another educational strategy: perceptible signs that

occur alongside instruction, confirming its authenticity and enhancing its intelligibility.[21]

Clement explains that the Lord "spoke through the burning bush because those people needed

signs and wonders" for their salvation.[22] Even the institutions, cultic practices, and histories of

Israel illuminate mystical realities. In deploying these varied means, the Word directs

contemplation to the proper object of worship.

Clement considers the Word's incarnate economy the third adaptation to humanity.

This descent of the Word proves divine care toward creation and provides a fitting

consummation to his program of instruction.[23] As the Power and Wisdom of God in creation, the

Son is "properly called the Teacher of those formed by him," and Scripture constitutes his

curriculum, but his instruction becomes most effective in the flesh. Clement maintains that the

Word "does not abandon care for men by being drawn aside from pleasure, who, by assuming

flesh that was by nature susceptible to suffering, trained it to the condition of impassibility (ὃς

γε καὶ τὴν σάρκα τὴν ἐμπαθῆ φύσει γενομένην ἀναλαβὼν τήν ἕξιν ἀπαθείας

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[19]*prot.* 1.8.3. Compare Seneca *ep. mor.* 95.65: *Posidonius non tantum preceptionem, sed etiam suasionem, et consolationem, et exhortationem necessariam iudicat.*

[20]*paed.* 1.2.

[21]Examining his treatment of Abraham's migration, Arkady Choufrine finds that Clement understands theophany as illumination. Arkady Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany,Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria's Appropriation of His Background,* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 77-158.

[22]*prot.* 1.8.3. Cf. *prot.* 1.8.1-4ff.

[23]*str.* 7.2.6.5. From the context, I take it that the Word "becomes" (γενομένῳ) the Lord of all precisely because he exercises providential concern for all, and demonstrated this care so consummately in the incarnation. Care, for Clement, seems to be less an intrinsic quality of divinity than the expression of other divine attributes.

ἐπαίδευσιν)."[24]   The Teacher does not dwell in a state of hedonistic invulnerability. To neglect

students for the sake of pleasure is to abdicate the responsibility of an educator. So far was the

Word from such pursuits that he exposed himself to suffering to lead humanity out of its

suffering state.[25]

These adaptations cohere with one another and follow a progressive sequence. A

particularly intimate relationship exists between scriptural and incarnational instruction of the

Word. Both serve as conduits of instruction in the righteousness and goodness of God. Perhaps

with Marcion in his sights, Clement proclaims, "…justice came down upon men, both in the

Scriptures and in the flesh; in the Word and in the Law, drawing men to a salutary repentance,

for it is good."[26] Commenting on this passage, Mondésert remarks, "Clement speaks… of a sort

of first incarnation of the Logos in letters, preceding that in the flesh and already realizing, in the

midst of men, a presence of the justice of God which works for their salvation."[27]

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[24]*str.* 7.2.7.5; cf. also *str.* 7.2.6.5: "So the one who assumed flesh susceptible to suffering was not operating under luxuriant indolence."

[25]"A hater of man the Savior can never be, who, because of his exceeding love of humanity, did not despise human flesh's susceptibility to suffering, but invested himself with it, and has come for the common salvation of men" (*str.* 7.2.8.1). In his polemic against Marcionism in *paed.* 1.8.62.1-2, Clement adduces the Word's assumption of human flesh as the supreme evidence of the goodness and philanthropy of the Creator.

[26]*paed.* 1.9.88.3. Here Clement may be drawing upon the tradition embedded in the Kerygma Petrou (The Preaching of Peter), an apocryphal text which designates the Lord "Law and Word". Cf. *str.* 1.29.182.3; 2.15.68.2; *ecl. pr.* 58.1ff. (cf. Is. 2.2-3, Mic. 4.2). Still, the conjunction of Law and Word also appears frequently in pagan philosophy (Heraclitus, *fr.* 2, 114; Plato, *Laws* II 644d-645c; Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus* 2, 12, 24, 38-39), in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period, (Philo, *migr. Abr.* 130; 4 Macc. 1.13-35, 5.16-38), in the New Testament canon (Jn. 1.17; Rom. 3.19; James 1.21, 25), and in the writings of early Christianity (Justin, 1 *apol.* 39.19; *dial.* 11.2, 12.4, 110.2; Irenaeus, *haer.* 4.34.4; Melito, *pasch.* 6-10; *fr.* 15). Michel Cambe suggests that early Christian writers used this conjunction to establish continuity with the past, and to identify Christ as the hermeneutical and cultic principle who creates this "new alliance" of Law and Logos. Cf. Cambe, *Kerygma Petri,* CC Series Apocrypha 15, (Brepols: Turnhout, 2003), 284-313, esp. 301-304; Carl Andreson, *Logos und Nomos: Die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christendom,* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1955), 189, 326.

[27]Claude Mondésert, *Clément d'Alexandrie: Introduction à l'étude de sa pensée religeuse à partir de l'écriture.* (Paris: Aubier, 1944), 99-100.

Clement also emphasizes the continuity of creation and the unfolding of the divine

economy in Scripture that culminates in the arrival of Christ. He cautions, "Take providence

away, and God's plan for the Savior appears a legend, leading us on according to 'the elemental

spirits of the universe' and not according to Christ."[28] Instruction that follows Christ must

recognize the Creator. It identifies the machinations of providence, and "teaches us, so far as we

can, to exercise our likeness to God and to accept God's plan as the directive power for the

whole of our education."[29] These are indispensable prolegomena to any understanding of

Scripture or Christ. For Clement, then, the incarnation coheres with the other interventions in the

economy of instruction.

ADVANCE

Through these adaptations, the Word follows an order of instruction that heals the

passions and teaches in discrete stages. Preserving this sequence is important, Clement suggests,

for restoration of well-being must precede the acquisition of knowledge:

> In fact, if a person is sick, he cannot master any of the things taught him until he is
>
> completely cured… Just as our body needs a physician when it is sick, so, too, when we
>
> are weak, our soul needs an Educator to cure its ills. Only then does it need the Teacher
>
> to guide it and develop its capacity to know, once it is made pure and capable of
>
> retaining the revelation of the Word.[30]

A therapeutic regimen purifies the soul for the reception of teaching. Each stage of the Word's

marks progress toward perfection: "The philanthropic Word, anxious to perfect us in a way that

leads by stages to salvation, makes effective use of an order adapted to our development. First he

persuades (προτρέπων), then he educates (παιδαγωγῶν), and after this he teaches

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[28]*str.* 1.11.52.2. The Pauline reference is to Col. 2.8.
[29]*str.* 1.11.52.3.
[30]*paed.* 1.1.3.1.

(διδάσκων)."[31]

These notions of progressive advancement find analogues throughout the philosophical literature of Clement's time. The principle that educators ought to guide their disciples by prescribing a sequence of instruction formed a corollary to the ancient opinion that education "should be reserved for those who merit it."[32] Each gradation of instruction thus served both preparatory and evaluative purposes. In the *Republic, Laws,* and *Symposium,* Socrates specifies a regimen of "preliminary training" (προπαιδεία) to initiate students into the contemplative life. Plato's disciples attempted to identify a coherent sequence of instruction in his heterogenous corpus. Concerned to reflect the progress toward virtue in their curricula, Albinus and Apuleius of Madaura each devote attention to Plato's προκοπή.[33]

This enthusiasm for sequential instruction reached its zenith under the later Stoics. The surest signs of Stoic preoccupation with the sequence of instruction lie in the controversies it occasioned, the criticism leveled against it, and the new forms of expression it generated. With his insistence that ethics follows logic and precedes physics, Chrysippus seems to have marked an important transition in this tradition.[34] Even Plutarch, an outsider, knew how to exploit tensions among Stoics regarding this order. He pillories the infelicities of Chrysippus and other

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[31]*paed.* 1.1.3.2.

[32]H.I. Marrou, *History of Education in Antiquity*(Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1982)*,* 33.

[33]John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists,* (London: Duckworth, 1985), 300, 329.

[34]*st. rep.* 1035 A. From the considerable variation of organizational schema, Long and Sedley deduce that while certain continuities persisted across schools, each Stoic master put his individual "spin" on the sequence of instruction. LS 26, 160-1. One result of this variation within Stoicism is a spectrum of attitudes toward the authority of texts for training students. Gregory Snyder points out that Stoic instructors vary markedly when it comes to the literature assigned for reflection, exercising discretion over and even independence from the "canonical" texts of the tradition; cf. Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews, and Christians,* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 14-44, esp. 40-44. See also, Dillon, *The Middle Platonists,* 338; L. Alexander, "The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Greco-Roman Texts," in D.J.A. Clines, *The Bible in Three Dimensions,* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1990), 233-4.

Stoics in his *de Stoicis repugnandis*.[35] Plutarch may have benefited from internal dissension in

the ranks of the Stoa. In a thinly veiled critique of preoccupations with advancement, Epictetus

devotes a brief sermon (*diss.* 1.4) to defining true προκοπή as the cultivation of moral rectitude,

not erudition.

Nor was such devotion confined to wrangling over curricular organization. Ordered

instruction took on new appearances in later Stoicism, particularly in epistolary and oratorical

genres. In the *Epistulae Morales* of Seneca, for example, Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier

ascertains a program of moral formation:

> Seneca has projected a pedagogic movement, based upon Stoic morals and presupposing
>
> the whole system of Stoic philosophy; the needs of the educational progress produce the
>
> rhythm of the composition, such as variation between more doctrinal parts in descriptive
>
> language and more paraenetic parts in prescriptive language immediately aiming at
>
> practice.[36]

Where Stoics and Platonists locate this προκοπή in the literature of their respective

traditions or in individual teachers, Clement identifies it with the saving teaching of the Word.

God orchestrates a particular sequence of instruction, and Scripture--rightly interpreted--

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[35]Plutarch disputes the organization of topics proposed by Chrysippus, alleging inconsistency in the constant invocation of physics (and its *infima species*, theology) to resolve the problems of logic and ethics, which are prior subjects according to Chrysippean doctrine. Cf. *st. rep.* 1035 A-F. To this charge of incongruity, certain Stoics appealed to the notion that no part is given preference over another, resulting in the creation of an irretrievably "mixed transmission," (τὴν παράδοσιν μικτὴν ἐποίουν), in which subjects interpenetrate each other; Diogenes Laertius 7.39-41.

[36]"Seneca's Collection of Epistles: A Medium of Philosophical Communication," *Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Bible and Culture: Essays in Honor of Hans Dieter Betz,* ed. A. Yarbro Collins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 109, cited in Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy," 9. Cf. also Gabriele Kuen, *Die Philosophie als "dux vitae": Die Verknüpfung von Gehalt, Intention und Darstellungsweise im philosophischen Werk Senecas* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1994). For a comparison of Senecan *profectus* with that of Clement, cf. A. Méhat, "Les orders d'enseignement chez Clément d'Alexandrie et Sénèque," *Studia Patristica* 2.2 (1957), 351-7.

enshrines this sequence in textual form. As the source of all teaching, the Word provides the organizing center of this curriculum. The Law and Prophets therefore represent a coherent tissue of instruction, "since the Testaments, chronologically two, granted in the divine economy with an eye to the stage of progress (προκοπὴν), are one in power, Old and New, being presented by the one and only God through his Son."[37] An instructor adopts different strategies at different stages of development, yet always for the same purpose. Differences in these economies reflect adaptation to the progress of the auditor rather than radical discontinuity. There is therefore "taught only one process of salvation proceeding from prophecy to its fulfillment in the gospel, through one and the same Lord."[38] This shared orientation toward salvation unites the Word's curriculum.

The first stage of instruction is practical and moral. The self-same Educator persuades to alter habits, furnishes exhortations and examples to reform actions, and consoles to heal the passions.[39] Without this prior therapy, growth in knowledge would be impossible. Using a direct form that is comprehensible to all, these commands and consolations purify initiates for the reception of higher wisdom. The prophets and "disciples of the Spirit" point out that it is "impossible to receive these words in their true sense without having completed a probationary period of learning."[40] Clement remarks that although the prophets and apostles lacked familiarity with the techniques of "philosophical exercises" (γυμνάσματα), the Holy Spirit nevertheless exploited them in Scripture.

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[37]*str.* 2.6.29.2.
[38]*str.* 2.6.29.3.
[39]*paed.* 1.1.1-3.
[40]*str.* 1.9.45.2. While the referent of "apostles" is evident, the identity of the "disciple(s) of the Spirit" is unclear in this passage. But the only other reference to this term in Clement's work (*str.* 5.4.25.5) identifies this enigmatic figure as "the spiritual man and Gnostic." This identity forges the connection between the use of concealment in scriptural instruction and its *mimesis* in Gnostic instruction.

Conversely, the esoteric features of the text discourage those who have not passed through these prescribed stages from the higher teaching. This "prophetic and didaskalic Spirit" employs deliberately obscure (literally "concealed") speech "because the capacity to listen with understanding does not belong to everyone."[41] Shrouded by parables and enigmas, these mysteries remain accessible only to those who have mastered the preliminary disciplines. Only to those who put them to trial through faith, and persist in seeking truth do these Scriptures reveal their mysteries.

Although Scripture preserves this curriculum of graded ascent, its present form does not reflect the proper sequence of education. Clear instruction appears alongside obscure teaching without obvious demarcation. Materials intended for neophytes sometimes follow enigmas reserved for the advanced. Without an expositor, the mysteries of the text might remain beyond the ken of everyone, and furnish the pretext for all sorts of misconceptions. These "Scriptures of the Barbarian philosophy" therefore require an "interpreter and a guide" (ἐξηγητοῦ τινος καὶ κατηγητοῦ).[42] Clement points out that this strategy is hardly peculiar to Christianity. The Pythagoreans expelled Hipparchus for revealing the doctrines of its progenitor in plain writing. Plato famously exploited myth as a vehicle of both concealment and revelation. Both the Epicureans and Stoics controlled access to their writings to prevent the uninitiated from handling them.

In the case of the "Barbarian philosophy" of Christianity, two considerations are paramount. First, the progress of the divine economy determines the extent of disclosure, and to whom these disclosures are made. Citing Ephesians 3.3-5, Clement maintains that God has revealed to "his holy apostles and prophets" the mystery of Christ that he concealed from

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[41]*str.* 1.9.45.1. Cf. *str.* 5.9.57.2.
[42]*str.* 5.9.56.3. He adduces Paul's call to separation of righteousness from iniquity in 2 Cor. 6.15-18 to underscore this point.

previous generations.[43] In other ages, the contours of this mystery lay hidden, but the arrival of

Christ unveiled their true purpose to the saints. Paul and other interpreters to whom this mystery

has been entrusted now guide their disciples to salvation.

Second, Clement claims that Paul distinguishes between the content revealed to every

believer and the mysteries reserved for the mature.[44] Col. 1.27-28 directs its audience to warn

"πάντα ἄνθρωπον in all wisdom, that we may present πάντα ἄνθρωπον perfect in Christ."

Clement reasons that πάντα ἄνθρωπον must envisage "all the person" rather than "every

person," since the latter expression would require that everyone has faith, an assertion that

experience contradicts. Not even the faithful are necessarily designated by "perfect," for not all

believers attain "all the riches of the full assurance of knowledge to the acknowledgement of the

mystery of God in Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge."

All have faith, but gradations of knowledge and wisdom distinguish believers from one another.

Why else, Clement asks, would Paul entreat God to provide for him to make known the mystery

of Christ? He seizes upon Heb. 5.12-14 and 6.1 to buttress this position. The "milk" of the first

principles of the doctrine of Christ nourishes "infants" in the faith, but "solid food" sustains

those who have graduated to the pursuit of perfection.[45]

Clement populates his writing with illustrations of this distinction between clear and

obscure statements in Scripture, and the consequent necessity of an interpreter. An example

drawn from the *Epistle of Barnabas* is particularly intriguing, given its exposition of a native

Alexandrian text. Because Clement believes that Paul's erstwhile partner wrote this letter, he

regards it as authoritative, though it was later excluded from the canon. *Barnabas* might seem an

anomalous choice, since its author deliberately adopts a simple style to enhance understanding

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[43]*str.* 5.10.60.1.
[44]*str.* 5.10.61.2-4.
[45]*str.* 5.10.62.2-4.

(6.5). But, displaying "a clearer trace of gnostic tradition," he interprets Moses' invitation to enter the land of inheritance as a gnostic reference to Christ.

> What does knowledge (γνῶσις) say? Learn. Put your hope in Jesus, who will be manifested to you in the flesh. For humanity is the "suffering land". For Adam was fashioned from the face of the earth. Why then does it say: "[Enter] into a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey?" Blessed be our Lord, brothers [and sisters], who has placed among us wisdom and understanding of matters he has hidden [from others]! For because it is characteristic of only a few to proceed to these [hidden matters], the prophet says, "Who will understand the Lord's parable except the one who is wise, and understanding, and loves his Lord?"[46]

From this passage, Clement gathers that the Lord conceals truths in Scripture so that only the wise can recover the treasury of meaning lurking beneath the surface of the text.

The same concerns for the unity of the divine economy and the restriction of these mysteries to a select few become evident from his exegesis of *Barnabas*. First, the "hidden" content of the text reveals Christ. Clement's orientation toward the "mystery of Christ" remains thoroughly Pauline. Even when cloaked in the impersonal language of territorial inheritance, the text points its reader to Jesus. Moreover, this *sensus plenior* approximates the truth more closely than the superficial meaning. How could a physical land subject to dispossession - the "suffering land" of Adam's patrimony - represent the consummation of God's promises? In the estimation of Barnabas and Clement, it points rather to a greater inheritance provided by the Second Adam. Second, these interpretations of the Lord's "parable" are available only to a select few: "the wise, the understanding, and those who love the Lord." All who have faith are in Christ, but they vary

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[46]*str.* 5.10.63.4-6, citing *ep. Barn.* 6.8-10, Prov. 1.6, and Is. 40.13, and perhaps alluding to Matt. 19.11.

in their understanding, wisdom, and love. Those who are more advanced in these virtues serve as guides to others seeking this wisdom.

Only a gnostic teacher can "uncover the lid of the ark" and "illuminate" the obscurities and "hidden matters" of the Scriptures.[47] Paul himself confirms this when he promises to come to the Romans "in the fullness of the blessing of Christ" (Rom. 15.29). Clement maintains that this fullness, delivered "according to the revelation of the mystery sealed in eternity but now made evident through the prophetic Scriptures," designates "gnostic communication."[48] These articles Paul reserved for the "mature". Catechetical instruction furnishes "milk" for the faithful, but the gnostic aspires to the "meat" of "mystic contemplation," which constitutes "the flesh and blood of the Word - that is, the apprehension (κατάληψις) of divine power and being."[49]

Clement counsels a path to this mystic contemplation that begins with negation. His devotional sensibilties and epistemological presuppositions shape the contours of his exegetical practice. Like Moses, one must enter into the "thick darkness" where God dwells, invisible and ineffable.[50] "The gnostic Moses" therefore proscribed the multiplication of temples, altars, and sacrifices to indicate that God is incapable of circumscription.[51] Because God transcends space and time, and even human conception, one cannot know what he is, only what he is not.[52] Although Clement permits certain names and attributes to be predicated of God, they are necessarily catachrestic and restricted in their application. Predicates, after all, depend upon properties, parts, or mutual relation, which God in his simplicity lacks.

Approach to God therefore requires the "sacrifice" of separation (χωρισμός) from the

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[47]*str.* 5.10.64.4.
[48]*str.* 5.10.64.4, 6.
[49]*str.* 5.10.66.2, 4.
[50]*str.* 5.12.78.2.
[51]*str.* 5.11.74.3-6.
[52]*str.* 5.11.71.3.

body and its passions. Clement alleges that the philosophers derived these principles from

Moses. Hence, Plato defined philosophy as the "practice of death," and the Pythagoras instituted

a regimen of exercises to separate his disciples from the objects of sense and contemplate the

deity with the mind alone.[53] Those who neglect this training deceive themselves by conceiving

God just as they do all other sensible phenomena. To characterize God using only the sensory

realm is to confuse creation with Creator. As Clement points out, God has provided us with "ten

thousand things he does not share." The anthropomorphisms Scripture employs - God's eyes and

ears, and his resentments - must therefore be taken in their allegorical sense (ἀλληγορεῖσθαι).[54]

     This deeper set of mystical associations signified by the text suggests to Clement the

means of ascent through Scripture. He offers fascinating expositions of the Tree of Life and

Abraham's journey to Moriah to illustrate this point. Moses indicated divine Wisdom through

the figure of the Tree of Life, planted in Paradise.[55] In this "Paradise," which Clement takes to

signify the world in which all creation grows, the Word blossomed and bore fruit, giving life to

those who had not tasted these fruits of immortality. Yet not without the "wood of this tree,"

Clement reasons, did the Word enter into our knowledge. On the contrary, "our life was hung on

it, that we might believe." This Wisdom Solomon called "a tree of immortality to those who take

hold of her" (Prov. 3.18). To Clement, this can only signal that all wisdom springs from Wisdom

itself - the Word.

     Likewise, Abraham perceived Moriah "from afar" only on the third day, a detail that

Clement interprets as an allegory for the stages of ascent. One begins by focusing on good things

on the first day, and occupies the second with the purification of desire. On the third day, "the

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[53]*str.* 5.11.67.1.
[54]*str.* 5.11.67.3.
[55]*str.* 5.11.72.2-5.

eyes of the understanding are opened by the Teacher who rose on the third day."[56] Such

expositions reflect the esoteric character of Scripture, and the necessity of a teacher to interpret

these mysteries. The consummate Teacher, of course, is Christ. But the inspired expositor of

Scripture also guides others on the road to perfection in imitation.

ASSIMILATION TO GOD

For Clement, the pursuit of perfection involves infinite progress. As recent studies have

illuminated, assimilation to God, deification, and perfection serve as the dominant metaphors for

salvation in Clement.[57] Informed by both biblical and philosophical traditions, he conceives this

"divinization" as a progressive transformation rather than an instantaneous translation.[58]

Salvation entails purification and continual growth in understanding. This assimilation continues

forever, a process Clement expresses through the oxymoronic language of an "endless end"

(τέλος ἀτελεύτητον):

> We have the promise of reaching a fulfillment of purpose that never comes to an end
>
> (τέλος ἀτελεύτητον) if we obey the commandments (that is, God), and live in their
>
> light faultlessly, in full understanding derived from the revealed knowledge of God's
>
> will. The greatest possible likeness to the Word, the hope of being established fully as
>
> adopted sons through the Son, that is our purpose: a sonship which constantly glorifies
>
> the Father through the "great high priest" who saw fit to call us "brothers" and "fellow-

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[56]*str.* 5.11.73.1-2.

[57]Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis,* 178-191; P. Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria: A Project of Christian Perfection* (London: T&T Clark, 2008); N. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition,* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 121-40.

[58]Although the language of "assimilation to God" has a Platonic ancestry (cf. *Theat.* 176b), Clement takes pains to demonstrate its consanguinity with Scripture, maintaining that its requirement of humility and references to the "law of God" (leg. 4.715e - 716a) point to Scripture. Cf. *str.* 2.22.132.1-4.

heirs."[59]

Adherence to divine precepts renders one increasingly like the Divine Preceptor, yet not in such a way that it blurs the distinctions between God and humanity. To perceive divinity itself as a human *telos* is to commit a category mistake that annuls Clement's repeated insistence on divine infinity and incommensurability. As Arkadi Choufrine observes, "God is there not as an end to pursue, but rather as a pattern to imitate."[60] The Word's scriptural instruction intimates this pattern; his arrival (παρουσία) models it.

Clement therefore casts human fulfillment of purpose as imitation rather than apotheosis. Articulated here in biblical idiom, Middle Platonists staked out a similar interpretation. Plutarch enjoins his audience, "Consider that God, according to Plato, by putting himself in the midst of all that is noble as a pattern (τὸ παράδειγμα), hands on human virtue, which is a kind of assimilation to himself, to those who are able to follow God."[61] This understanding of assimilation to God preserves an ontological distinction between God and humanity. Clement points out that human finitude and flaws will always prevent complete absorption into deity. The highest perfection is "never to sin in any way," he observes, yet this is strictly true only of God.[62] Because God is perfect, this imitation becomes an "endless end" of increase in resemblance to the exemplar.

THE ORDER OF GNOSTIC INSTRUCTION: THE QUESTION OF THE TRILOGY

Presuming that Clement regarded his own teaching as representative of gnostic instruction, some important questions arise regarding its sequence. Although Clement does not issue programmatic statements outlining his curriculum, he provides a tantalizing description of

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[59]*str.* 2.22.134.1-2.
[60]Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis,* 179. I am indebted to Choufrine for his references to the passage in Clement above and the citation from Plutarch which follows.
[61]Plutarch, *ser.* 550D. Cf. Plato, *Theat.* 176e-177a.
[62]*paed.* 1.2.4.

the progressive stages of education at the beginning of the *Paedagogus,* a passage we have

already explored:

> The philanthropic Word, concerned to perfect us in a way that leads by stages to
>
> salvation, makes effective use of an order adapted to our development. First he
>
> persuades (προτρέπων),then he educates (παιδαγωγῶν), and after this he teaches
>
> (διδάσκων)."[63]

Except for the final activity, each of these divisions corresponds directly to a treatise in

Clement's own oeuvre: the *Protrepticus* "persuades" and the *Paedagogus "*educates," just as

Clement's description portends. But no extant treatise has the title *Didaskalos.* Speculation

about whether the *Stromateis* represents the third installation in this trilogy has intensified since

Eugène de Faye first expressed reservations about its traditional equation with the *Didaskalos.*[64]

In a monograph that continues to set the terms for critical discussion of the subject, this *fin-de-*

siècle scholar documents numerous instances in which the *Stromateis* defers the exposition of

important doctrines, never to resume discussion.[65] From this generalization, he concludes that

because the *Stromateis* fails to address the content associated with the *Didaskalos,* it cannot be

identified with it. How, indeed, could one consider this fractured collection of reminiscences a

repository of doctrine when it avoids sustained consideration of creation, the soul, prophecy, the

resurrection, and the Holy Spirit? De Faye suggested that these suspended topics, coupled with

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[63]*paed.* 1.1.3.2.

[64]An exhaustive listing of the bibliography on this contested question would take up many pages, so I restrict myself to listing sources not discussed below: Carl Heussi, "Die *Stromateis* des Clemens Alexandrinus und ihr Verhältnis zum *Protreptikos* und *Pädagogos,*" *ZWT* 45 (1902), 465-512; Johannes Munck, *Untersuchungen über Clemens,* 9-126; Giuseppe Lazzati, *Introduzione allo studio di Clemente Alessandrino* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1939); E.L. Fortin, "Clement and the Esoteric Tradition," *Studia Patristica* 9 (1966), 41-56; Walter H. Wagner, "Another Look at the Literary Problem in Clement of Alexandria's Major Writings," *Church History* (1968), 251-60.

[65]de Faye, *Clément de Alexandrie,* 81-83; 106, 108, 113-16.

the digressive character of the *Stromateis,* indicates a writer whose ambitions have outstripped his capabilities. In the words of a more recent commentator, Clement's project "soon grew out of proportion, turning into an amorphous body because of the writer's inability to channel the flow of his ideas according to a definite plan."[66]

Reappraisals by Andre Méhat and Eric Osborn have weakened the credibility of this view of the *Stromateis* as inchoate ramblings. Clement offers clear reasons for his obscure presentation. Though he meanders, he confines his reflections to defined parameters. Méhat in particular has labored to identify analogues to the generic conventions and literary devices that appear in the *Stromateis.*[67] If Clement's style appears alien to modern readers, it was not foreign to readers in late antiquity.

But opinion still divides on the question of whether the *Stromateis* can be identified with the *Didaskalos.* Commenting on the veiled presentation that Clement favors, Eric Osborn maintains that the *Stromateis* delivers teaching, but articulates it in a form that defies scholarly expectations. Indeed, the oblique character of the presentation itself suggests to him the significance of its contents: "There is no point whatever in filling the first chapter of the *Stromateis* with intricate argument in favor of written teaching, if the *Stromateis* are not going to teach...If the *Stromateis* are not the *Didaskalos*, they have nothing to hide"[68] Neither the *Protrepticus* nor the *Paedagogus* require such an elaborate apologia for their contents. This signals to Osborn that Clement is embarking on a different enterprise in the *Stromateis* than in these rudimentary works. By Clement's own admission, they reproduce oral teaching that he has

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[66]Bogdan Bucur, "The Place of the *Hypotyposeis* in the Clementine Corpus: An Apology for 'The Other Clement of Alexandria,'" *JECS* 17.3 (2009), 323n.35.

[67]Méhat, *Études sur les* Stromates*,* 96-114.

[68]Osborn, "Teaching and Writing," 342-3. He speculates that the missing first page of the treatise may have contained more explicit references to the Logos as Teacher.

inherited. They are not then, "merely notes that teach. They are notes which have taught."[69] Scattered throughout the *Stromateis,* then, is precisely the instruction projected for the *Didaskalos* at the beginning and end of the *Paedagogus.*

Closer scrutiny of Osborn's interpretation reveals both its virtues and its deficiencies. Where de Faye's *Stromateis* reveals a writer whose subject constantly recedes before him, Osborn is concerned to demonstrate how it realizes the aspirations of its author. By examining Clement's reflections on writing, he shows that the unusual form of the *Stromateis* remains compatible with its purpose.

Yet the approach becomes Procrustean when he argues for its identity with the *Didaskalos,* a conclusion he reaches only by exaggerating the significance of his evidence and excluding alternative interpretations. Much of his argument turns on a deduction that stylistic idiosyncrasies in the *Stromateis* betoken a transition to teaching content. These considerations are hardly determinative. Clement uses an esoteric form to conceal matters of importance, but that does not entail that these matters must be the promised content of the *Didaskalos.* To allege that the departures of the *Stromateis* from the *Protrepticus* and the *Paedagogus* identify it as the *Didaskalos* on the grounds that "the only other kind of discourse which Clement has envisaged is that of the Logos in the *Didaskalos*" is to assume a conclusion that must be proven.[70] Osborn never countenances the possibility that the *Stromateis* might fall outside Clement's trilogy or that it might condense the content of the *Protrepticus* and the *Paedagogus* for a gnostic audience. However conspicuous, his ruminations on written teaching at the beginning of a document do not necessarily mean that the document itself contains written teaching.

For all these faults, however, Osborn's article has the virtue of focusing attention on a

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[69]Ibid.
[70]Osborn, "Teaching and Writing," 343.

pivotal question: does the *Stromateis* address the material Clement anticipated of the

Didaskalos? To regard the *Stromateis* as the *Didaskalos,* one must demonstrate that it contains

the material *Clement* projects of the Teacher, not that it fulfills the expectations scholars foist

upon it. Surprisingly few scholars--including de Faye and Osborn--have investigated Clement's

reflections on teaching and the Teacher as a means to adumbrate the content of the *Didaskalos.*

    This is not to say that the secondary literature on this problem is devoid of such

consideration. Invariably, writers seize upon a pair of programmatic descriptions that bookend

the *Paedagogus:*

> Yet that same Word does teach. It is simply that in this work we are not considering him
>
> in that light. As Didaskalos, he explains and reveals through instruction, but as a
>
> Paedagogos he is practical… Just as our body needs a physician when it is sick, so, too,
>
> when we are weak, our soul needs the Paedagogos to cure its ills. Only then does it need
>
> the Didaskalos to guide it and develop its capacity to know, once it is made pure and
>
> capable of retaining the revelation of the Word.[71]

> There are many things, too, spoken in enigma, and many things by way of parables that

benefit those who chance upon them. But, the Paedagogos insists, my function is no longer to

> teach these things; now we need the Didaskalos to explain these holy words, to whom we
>
> should go. Therefore, it is time for me to lay aside leading you as Paedagogos, and for
>
> you to hearken to the Didaskalos.[72]

    From these twinned passages, the reader can identify certain activities of the Didaskalos.

First, Clement distinguishes the functions of the Paedagogos from those of the Didaskalos as the

therapy of the passions in the first instance, and the development in knowledge of the Word in

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[71]*paed.* 1.1.2-3.
[72]*paed.* 3.12.97.

the second. The relationship between the two is sequential and interlocking: the soul that lacks

virtue cannot retain these revelations, just as "if a person is sick, he cannot master any of the

things taught him until he is first completely cured."[73] By following the guidance of the

Paedagogus, the initiate embarks upon a program of moral formation requisite for the reception

of higher knowledge.

Second, exegetical traditions feature prominently in the instruction of the Didaskalos.

This characteristic appears more explicitly in the latter citation, but both passages maintain that

interpretation is paramount. Such exposition is necessitated by the enigmatic and parabolic

content of the holy words themselves. Where the *Paedagogos* instructs by drawing from

practical imperatives in Scripture, the *Didaskalos* cultivates knowledge by expounding upon its

mysteries.[74] Bogdan Bucur illustrates this difference with an example also drawn from the

Paedagogus. Elaborating on the subject of whether Christians ought to encircle their heads with

garlands, Clement provides a mystical exposition of the presence of the Word in the burning

bush that connects it to the thorny bush that furnished a crown for the crucified Christ. As if to

excuse his excursus, he pronounces, "I have departed from the pedagogic manner of speech by

introducing a didaskalic one. I return to my subject."[75]

A final observation, almost too obvious to mention, concerns the identity of the

Didaskalos with the divine Word. In a study that still merits attention, Friedrich Quatember

condensed this insight into a provocative new interpretation. Clement's references to the

Teacher envisage the *person* of the Divine Logos rather than the *writings* of a human instructor.

Nowhere does the *Didaskalos* figure into the bibliographic inventory Eusebius catalogues in his

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[73]*paed.* 1.1.3.

[74]To the aforementioned excerpts is sometimes added a passage from *paed.* 1.3.8.3, which specifies that the didaskalic form of discourse is "powerful and spiritual, observing precision, and occupied in the contemplation of mysteries."

[75]*paed.* 2.8.76 at Bucur, "The Other Clement of Alexandria," 322.

church history. Nowhere does a reference to a writing entitled *Didaskalos* appear among the

numerous allusions Clement makes to his other treatises. Nowhere, in fact, can one discover

incontrovertible evidence that Clement ever thought of the Didaskalos as anything but the Logos

himself. When Clement instructs his audience to hearken to the voice of the Didaskalos,

Quatember avers, he intends that they listen to the Word, not to a human instructor. The search

for a third installation to this curriculum is a futile exercise, for the Didaskalos is a person, not a

literary production.

Quatember's contribution garnered attention as much for the decisive way it severed the

Gordian knot of controversy as for its rigor. Grounding his position in close textual analysis, he

discredits the whole enterprise at a stroke. Yet the argument proves too much. If one were to

bracket the appearance of the *Paedagogus* in the Eusebian and Photian catalogues, and ignore a

single reference in *strom.* 6.1, one could plausibly arrive at the same conclusion about it as

Quatember did about the Didaskalos. No references in the extant literature would support its

existence as a document rather than a person. In both cases, Clement evolves a personal

description, but this hardly excludes the possibility of a corresponding literary entity. This

consideration illuminates a privileged conceit in his literature: he understands his own discourse

to mediate the voice of the Logos.[76] As an instructor, Clement conceives his own teaching as a

participation in the curriculum of the heavenly economy. The putative content of the Didaskalos

would therefore feature this mimesis, since it reveals knowledge through explanations of enigma

and parable.

Most commentators conclude discussion of Clement's pedagogy here, content to have

limned a composite sketch of the Didaskalos. Whether or not the *Stromateis* satisfies these

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[76]See Judith Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher" 3-25 ; U. Neymeyr, *Die Christliche Lehrer,* 63-79; Silke-Petra Bergjan, *Der fürsorgende Gott: Der Begriff ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ der Gottes in der apologetischen Literatur der Alten Kirche* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 155-70.

criteria varies from reader to reader. However, the case is clearer than this. If Clement

occasionally defers further elaboration of "didaskalic" content in the *Paedagogus,* he displays no

reservations about doing so in the *Stromateis.* At the beginning of *str.* 6, Clement suggests that

where the *Paedagogus* nurtured the disciple in the elementary principles of the faith, "in these

pages" one encounters the more advanced materials of gnostic piety and the resolution of

difficulties associated with coming of the Lord.[77] Knowledge and contemplation lie irresistibly as

the goal of Clement's discussion here, just as the *Paedagogus* anticipates the *Didaskalos*.

Although the *Stromateis* devoid of the concentrated exegesis one might expect to find in the

Didaskalos, such expositions can be located throughout its pages, and especially in *str.* 5.

Moreover, his emphasis in *str.* 6.12 on Scripture - the Word's teaching - as the curriculum that

facilitates the τέλος of contemplation is consonant with that purpose. It seems plausible, then,

that the *Stromateis* fulfills the three characteristics of the *Didaskalos:* higher wisdom and

exegetical insight that facilitate a personal encounter with the Word.

　　　　Yet this insight should not foreclose discussion of the Clementine trilogy. Two

important articles have reshaped the discussion of the trilogy, and deserve careful scrutiny before

rendering a final verdict. Taken together, they provide an alternative identification of the

surviving remnants of the *Hypotyposes - Stromateis 8, Eclogae Propheticae, Excerpta e*

Theodoto, and the *Adumbrationes* - as the *Didaskalos*. I will suggest a simple addition to this

thesis: this evidence counsels augmentation of the identification of the *Didaskalos* with the

Stromateis, not abandonment. The *Stromateis* and the vestiges of the *Hypotyposeis* jointly

constitute the *Didaskalos*.

　　　　In his seminal article, "La fin des *Stromates* et les *Hypotyposes* de Clément

d'Alexandrie," Pierre Nautin contends that the fragments that conclude the only surviving

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[77]*str.* 6.1.1.3-4.

manuscript of the *Stromateis* represent extracts of the *Hypotyposeis*.[78] Scholars have long

puzzled over the anomalous end of *Codex Laurentianus,* the eleventh-century manuscript that

provides the exemplar for all extant copies of the *Stromateis.* Aside from some initial truncation,

it preserves *in extenso* a continuous copy of the first seven books. Yet the remaining content

appears heterogenous and abridged. One can divide it into three parts. Under the title *Stromateis*

VIII appears a discussion of philosophical character. It includes a meditation on the dominical

saying "Seek and you will find" (Mt. 7.7) following some theoretical considerations of

"demonstration" (*str.* 8.1.1.1 - 8.5.15.1), a polemic against skepticism (*str.* 8.5.15.2 - 8.8.24.9),

and a taxonomy of different species of causes (*str.* 8.9.25.1 - 8.9.33.9).   Following this section

comes an anthology of fragments identified as the *Excerpta e Theodoto,* (whose true title is

"Epitomes of the [Teachings] of Theodotus and the So-called Eastern Doctrine at the time of

Valentinus"). Nautin infers from the title and the polemical commentary within that the author

was not himself a Valentinian, and that he epitomized these teachings in order to refute them.

The final section, titled the *Eclogae Propheticae* ("Extracts from the Prophets"), preserves

commentaries on Genesis, Daniel, Hosea, and Psalm 19. They seem to be a digest condensed

from a larger exegetical work. All three parts, Nautin maintains, are unquestionably of

Clementine provenance. Not only do they occur in the same manuscript of a work that is

indisputably Clement's, but the content finds analogues in his other writing.

On the basis of a careful investigation of the manuscript tradition, programmatic

statements in the *Stromateis,* and its later reception history, Nautin conjectures that the scribe of

Laurentianus - or one of his antecedents - deliberately abridged the final book of the *Stromateis*

and the *Hypotyposeis.* The peculiarity of this edition derives from the idiosyncrasies of its

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[78]Pierre Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates* et les *Hypotyposes* de Clément d'Alexandrie," *Vigiliae Christianae* 30 (1976), 268-302.

copyist rather than the improvidence of its author, reconsideration of his earlier views, or the encroachments imposed by genre or circumstance.

> Elle n'est pas la reproduction exacte de celle de Clément, mais l'oeuvre d'un copiste qui avait à copier les *Stromates* avec leur suite, les *Hypotyposes,* et qui, manquant de papyrus, de temps ou de courage, n'a transcrit à partir du *Stromate* VIII que des extraits.[79]

Nautin points to analogues to this scribal practice in the papyri recovered at Tura. In fragments recovered there, one finds extracts of Origen's *Contra Celsum* and the *Commentary on the Romans* preserved alongside a homily on the Witch of Endor. This heterogenous collection closely resembles the discontinuous and condensed notes that appear at the end of *Laurentianus*. The fact that these eccentricities accumulate near the conclusion of the manuscript suggest that the exigencies of "papyrus, time, or resolve" would have been more acutely sensed, and more likely to dictate the scribal decision to epitomize these documents.

Nautin supports this interpretation with considerations internal and external to the text of the *Stromateis.* He demonstrates that Clement modifies the program of the *Stromateis* at several points to accommodate a more expansive treatment of the material. These revisions can be summarized in tabular form:

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[79]Ibid., 298. Nautin considers that the copyist's final abridgement may have been dictated by ideological concerns. The portions extracted display preoccupation with heretics such as Tatian and Theodotus, the concern with Pantaenus, and New Testament apocrypha - all of which represent material distinctive to this text (301).

str. 1.1.15.2	*str.* 2.1.1.1-3	*str.* 4.1.1.1-3	*str.* 6.1.1.1	*str.* 7.15.89.1; 7.18.110.4

Having sketched out the contours of Clement's project, Nautin makes the following observations.

First, Clement proposes that the *Stromateis* should contain a preliminary section of ethics,

followed by a physics in two divisions: exposition and refutation of existing physical doctrines,

and epoptics. Despite refinements at each stage, Clement never abandons this fundamental

schema. Second, although Clement completes his ethics by the end of *Stromateis* 7, he continues

to defer the physics for later discussion. This confirms de Faye's insight that Clement's prolixity

~~overwhelmed his principles of organization. Yet Nautin's exposure of these changes need not~~

1. Ethics: Removal of obstacles to moral purification	**1. Ethics:** Theory of virtues, along with prodigies and the symbolic genre thieved by the Greeks	**1. Ethics:** The martyr as the model of perfection, virtues, and the symbolic genre thieved by the Greeks	**1. Ethics:** The gnostic alone truly pious, against the charges of impiety leveled by the Greeks	**1. Ethics:** Complete
			2. Apologetic: Against "the Greeks and the Barbarians" on the coming of the Savior	**2. Apologetic:** Against "the Greeks and the Jews" on the coming of the Savior
2. Physics: *a. First Part:* Exposition and refutation of the principal sects	**2. Physics:** *a. First Part:* Exposition and refutation of the philosophical sects	**2. Physics:** *a. First Part:* Exposition and refutation of the philosophical and heretical sects	*:*	**3. Physics:** *a. First Part:* Resolve difficulties raised by "Greeks and Jews", the opinions of the philosophers and heretics "on first principles"
b. Second Part: Epoptics, or contemplation "beginning with the creation of the world"		*b. Second Part: Epoptics,* or contemplation beginning with a commentary on Genesis		*b. Second Part: Epoptics,* or contemplation beginning with a commentary on Genesis

of this conjunction of "first principles" and epoptics. In discussing the logion of the rich man

traveling through the eye of a needle, Clement mentions that one encounters its higher

signification, "which is the mystery of the Savior… in the exegesis concerning first principles

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[80]Ibid., 291. Nautin suggests only the previous explanation, but the later judgment of Photius indicates that Clement's writing may have acquired a heretical reputation among later readers.

and theology."[81] This bipartite division neatly summarizes the two parts of the projected physics. But their interpretive character also suggests the identification of these fragments with Clement's chief exegetical work: the *Hypotyposeis*. From these affinities, Nautin deduces that the remaining fragments represent the extracted conclusion of the *Stromateis* and the surviving vestiges of the *Hypotyposeis*. He summarizes how the contents of *Laurentianus* reflect the congruity of intention and realization in the following chart:[82]

External testimony from Eusebius and Photius corroborates this identification. Eusebius describes the *Hypotyposeis* as consisting of "concise interpretations of all canonical Scriptures, not passing over even the disputed writings."[83] In it, he mentions Pantaenus by name as his teacher, and records his interpretive traditions.[84] The *Eclogae Propheticae* displays this exegetical orientation, and features a reference to Pantaenus (*ecl.* 56.2), although it does not explicitly identify him as Clement's instructor. Even more striking are the correlations between

[81]Ibid., 292; the reference is to *div.* 26.8.
[82]Ibid., 298.
[83]*hist. eccl.* 6.14.1.
[84]*hist. eccl.* 6.13.2. ἐν οἷς ὀνομαστὶ ὡς διδασκάλου τοῦ Πανταίνου μνημονεύει ἐκδοχάς τε αὐτοῦ γραφῶν καὶ παραδόσεις ἐκτέθειται.

these fragments and Photius' description of the *Hypotyposeis.*[85] The Byzantine cleric repeats the

observation that Clement identifies traditions of Pantaenus in this work. But he adds that it

furnishes interpretations of Genesis and the Psalms, which appear in the *ecl.* He also catalogues

objectionable doctrines that appear in its pages, including the designation of the Son as the "first-

created" and scandalous views about Eve. Both these deviations find analogues in the *Excerpta e*

Theodoto. Apparently, Photius failed to distinguish Clement's views from those of the

Works of Clement	Parts Preserved in *Laurentianus*

Stromateis
    1. Ethics (*str.* 1-7)
    2. Apologetic against the Greeks and Jews
    (*str.* 8 -)
	str. 1-7
	str. 8.1.1.1 - 8.8.24.6

Hypotyposeis
    1. Physics, Part I: Critique of the Sects
        a. The Philosophers: On First
Principles
        b. The Heretics
    2. Physics, Part II: Epoptics, or allegorical
        commentary on passages of Scripture
	str. 8.9.25.1 - 8.9.33.9
	
	exc.
	ecl.

Nardi, have dismissed this article as singular and "perplexing," a "personal solution" that follows

in a long tradition of speculation about the Clementine trilogy. Yet idiosyncrasy does not

discredit a hypothesis any more than cavalier dismissal persuades. Unlike earlier "personal"

theories, the French scholar's conjectures derived from scrutiny of the manuscript evidence, a

close reading of Clement's own writings, and a careful appraisal of their reception in later

literature. No challenge to Nautin's interpretation has yet discredited his evidence or suggested a

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[85]Photius, *bibl.* 115. Clement himself announces that the physics begins with the causes of the world, then proceeds to a discussion of Genesis and an "ascent" to theology; cf. *strom.* 4.1.3.
[86]This is a point explored at great length in P. Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria on Trial* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
[87]Nautin,"La fin des *Stromates,*" 297. Cf. Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 6.24.3.
[88]Bucur, "The Other Clement of Alexandria," 326. He instances *inter alia* R. Heine, "The Alexandrians," 117-21; U. Neymeyr, *Die Christliche Lehrer,* 84; R. Feulner, *Clemens von Alexandrien: sein Leben, Werk, und theologisches Denken,* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006), 33-36; and H. Fiskå Hägg, *Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism,* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 61, 198.

more plausible alternative. Indeed, a consensus appears to be building around this view. In recent years, the eminent Clement scholars Patrick Descourtieux and Alain Le Boulluec have both confirmed Nautin's position.

Among the scholars who have adopted this reconstruction is Bogdan Bucur, who used these findings to recover the importance of neglected portions of the Clementine corpus. In an article entitled, "The Place of the *Hypotyposeis* in the Clementine Corpus: An Apology for 'The Other Clement of Alexandria,'" Bucur alleges that scholars have tended to disregard *strom.* 8, *exc.,* and *ecl.* The identification of the *Stromateis* with the *Didaskalos* has diminished the significance of these fragments for reconstructing Clement's thought. Moreover, the difficulty of ascertaining their function and relationship to the rest of the Clementine corpus make them "le tourment des critiques" (de Faye). "Inferior in style, dubious in content, and certainly marginal in importance for Clementine studies," they were long consigned to the periphery.[89] Nautin's revisionist interpretation rescued these fragments from marginality. For if these documents contain Clement's epoptics, they represent the pinnacle rather than the periphery of Clement's teaching.

Bucur augments Nautin's case. He suggests that the foci of Photius' distaste reveal something of their place in Clement's writing. The fact that Photius abhorred the *Hypotyposeis,* and found offensive certain portions of the *Stromateis,* but declared the *Paedagogus* devoid of unsound content may, Bucur alleges, "provide insight into the hierarchical organization of the Clementine writings." The more esoteric the content, the more Photius bridled, suggesting increasing concentrations of doctrinal content. The summit of Clement's theology and course of gnostic instruction - and, perversely the "abyss of heresy" in the patriarch's estimation - is the

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[89]Bucur, "The Other Clement of Alexandria," 313. Typical of these assessments is the evaluation of Heine, who purports that "Neither [the *exc.* nor the *ecl.*] contribute much to our understanding of Clement." Heine, "The Alexandrians," 120.

Hypotyposeis.

Bucur reasons that the organizational schema that Nautin reconstructs in the *Stromateis* would also comport well with contemporary analogues in the Greco-Roman and Jewish world. Following the suggestions of Pierre Hadot and Laura Rizzierio, he maintains that Clement's trilogy replicates the increasingly standardized order of ethics - physics - epoptics. Yet its reservation of the spiritual exegesis of Genesis and the prophets may also show the residue of Tannaitic convention and Merkabah mysticism. Gershom Scholem and Guy Stroumsa have already identified parallels to the Tannaim and Merkabah in Origen; it would not be surprising if Clement originated these traditions. Bucur concedes that the *Stromateis* fulfill the description Clement provides of the *Didaskalos,* but only in part:

> A still higher and clearer exposition of Christian doctrine would have followed, using
> Scripture in such a way - selection of certain themes and passages, use of allegory - as to
> … offer students the opportunity to listen to the *Didaskalos*.[90]

Focused as he is upon recovering the "other Clement of Alexandria," Bucur can be forgiven for diminishing the importance of the *Stromateis* and its symbiotic relationship with the fragmentary remains of the *Hypotyposeis.* Yet his description provides grounds for amplifying the connection between the two works. Like the *Hypotyposeis,* the *Stromateis* also exercises "selection of certain themes and passages." On many occasions, it provides allegorical exegesis. That it principally covers the ethics rather than epoptics does not disqualify it as the *Didaskalos.* Too many scholars have posed the question as a binary opposition: either the *Stromateis* is the *Didaskalos,* or it is not. If it is not, then something else - extant or not - must be the *Didaskalos*. Closer consideration of the intimate relationship between the *Stromateis* and the *Hypotyposes* exposes these oppositions as false dichotomies.

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[90]Bucur, "The Other Clement of Alexandria," 335.

If one abandons exclusive identification of one or the other as the *Didaskalos,* a ready solution is at hand. The *Stromateis* and the *Hypotyposeis* constitute the *Didaskalos* in two interlocking volumes: ethics and physics. Both contain the elements projected for the *Didaskalos.* The fluid boundaries that mark the end of the *Stromateis* and the beginning of the *Hypotyposeis* in *Laurentianus* demonstrate how closely they were linked in the manuscript tradition. Noting that they are of equal length (ἰσάριθμοι) at eight books each, Eusebius devotes proportionate coverage to each part. If Eusebius is attempting to summarize Clement's doctrines, his expansive treatment of these two works indicates that he believes they are the repositories in which teaching is concentrated. Even their full titles indicate their affinity: the subtitle of the *Stromateis,* ὑπομνήματα and ὑποτυπώσεις are often synonymous.[91] Together, then, the *Stromateis* and the *Eclogae Propheticae* and *Excerpta e Theodoto* represent the consummation of Clement's program of gnostic instruction.

WRITING AND TEACHING IN THE *STROMATEIS* : ESOTERICISM, SCRIPTURE, AND THE LIMITS OF HELLENIC WISDOM

One of the most salient features of the *Stromateis* is its unusual style: digressive, indirect, and cryptic in parts. Ever since de Faye alleged that the *Stromateis* represent unsystematic rambling, scholars have debated whether this elliptical style represents a deliberate strategy or an inchoate tissue of annotations.[92] Without exception, scholars ratify de Faye's judgment on the meandering character of the *Stromateis.*

Yet to conclude from this observation that Clement was a scribbler incapable of

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[91]Méhat instances the title of Sextus Empiricus' epitome of skeptical doctrines, Πυρρωνικαὶ ὑποτυπώσεις, ἢ ὑπομνήματα (*Étude sur les* Stromates*, 108n.69).

[92]Eugène de Faye, *Clément de Alexandrie: Étude sur les rapports du Christianisme et la philosophie Grec au IIe siècle.* Paris: Éditions Ernest Leroux, 1898.

systematic expression forecloses the question of literary function. More significantly, it ignores

Clement's own reflections on discursive strategy, which provide clear motives for obscure

presentation. He mentions that gnostic instruction involves the "capability of delivering, in a

way suitable to God, the secrets veiled in truth." As an exegesis of the introductory sections of

the *Stromateis* demonstrates, Clement maintains a mode and sequence of instruction proper to

written form, by modeling his presentation of gnostic truth on Wisdom's exposition in Proverbs.

Although analogues to this approach can be found, especially in the *Phaedrus*, a distinctively

Christological and scriptural orientation governs Clement's written pedagogy. The Word's

teaching provides both context and counterpoint to the questions of written instruction

articulated in the Platonic dialogues.

Like Socrates, Clement harbored serious reservations about committing this exhibition to

"annotation" (εἰς γραφὴν ὑπομνηστικὴν).[93] Ambivalence colors his depiction of written

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[93]The *locus classicus* for the distinction between written and unwritten instruction is *Phaedr.*
274b-277a, and the influence of this discussion looms large in the opening portions of the
Stromateis. But also relevant--and sometimes overlooked--is Plato's Seventh Epistle. In it,
Socrates (or more likely, a later pseudepigrapher, although the distinction was lost on Clement)
criticizes a former student for publishing the content of their discussions as his own. In this
letter, Socrates maintains, "There is no writing of mine about these matters, nor will there ever be
one. For this knowledge is not something that can be put into words like the other sciences; but
after long-continued intercourse between teacher and pupil, in joint pursuit of the subject,
suddenly, like light flashing forth when a fire is kindled, it is born in the soul and immediately
nourishes itself" (341c). He later adds, "…it is barely possible for knowledge to be engendered
of an object naturally good in a man naturally good. But if his nature is defective, as is that of
most men, for the acquisition of knowledge and the so-called virtues, and if the qualities he has
have been corrupted, then not even Lynceus could make such a man see… For this reason anyone
who is seriously studying high matters will be the last to write about them and thus expose his
thought to the envy and criticism of men" (343e, 344c). Note, however, that he continues by
claiming that he should not have written them down even for the sake of remembrance, since "if
the soul has once grasped them, there is no danger of their being forgotten, since they are
contained in the briefest of formulae (344e). Though Socrates provides the most salient
representative of this tradition, such skepticism about the utility of written instruction was not
confined to his disciples; for a compendium of these views, see Loveday Alexander, "The Living
Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts,"
221-47.

traditions. Although he concedes that the husbandry of souls includes both forms of instruction,

Clement sometimes contrasts written traditions unfavorably with their unwritten counterparts.[94]

This exposes a fundamental tension in the *Stromateis*. On the one hand, Wisdom is philanthropic

and communal, and stable expression in writing promotes these virtues.[95] Yet committing

instruction to writing limits its adaptability and risks indiscriminate exposure of mysteries. In

many places, Clement vividly conveys the perils of entrusting the Word to souls that have not yet

undergone purification.[96] A teacher who addresses his auditors directly can use "time as a test

and judgment to come to a verdict":

> He distinguishes the one who is capable of hearing from the rest. He keeps an eye on
>
> their words and ways, their character and life, their impulses and attitudes, their looks,
>
> their voice, and the parting of the ways, the rock, the well-trodden path, the ground that
>
> bears fruit, the countryside that is thick with trees, the land that is fertile, excellent,
>
> praised, the soil that is capable of multiplying the seed.[97]

By contrast, the one who speaks "through annotations" (διὰ ὑπομνημάτων) can exercise no

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[94]E.g. *str.* 1.1.13.2-4: "Now secret matters are entrusted to speech, not to writing, *as is the case with God*" (italics mine). In the latter portions of this passage, he contrasts the weakness of these memoranda to the generative power of their archetypes.

[95]*str.* 1.1.1.2.

[96]For example, note his deployment of 1 Cor. 11.30-31 to express the afflictions that beset those who fail to examine their souls sufficiently in *str.* 1.1.10.5, or his hyperbolic comparison of divulging proprietary information to an unworthy person to arming a child with a knife in *str.* 1.1.14.3; cf. also *str.* 1.1.8.1; 1.2.21.2. This use of mysteries to deter the morally unfit is a convention shared alike by early Christian wisdom literature (cf. Sextus, *sent.* 352, 401, 407, 452; *Teachings of Silvanus,* NHC VII, 102), Mishnaic precept (t. Hagigah 2.1; cf. Origen, *in cant. cant. comm.* praef.), and pagan exegetical tradition (cf. Ps-Plutarch, *vit. Hom.* 92: "… if Homer reveals these ideas through enigmatic and mythic language, this should not be unexpected, for the reason is the nature of language and the custom of the ancients. They did this so that lovers of learning, delighted by a certain elegance, might more easily seek and find the truth, while the ignorant would not scorn what they could not understand.").

[97]*str.* 1.1.9.1. Kovacs takes this to mean that Clement pointedly eschewed a written *Didaskalos,* preferring to exploit the potential of the *Stromateis* to reveal and conceal simultaneously. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy," 24.

such discretion. For these reasons, the elders from which he gleaned his tradition eschewed

writing.[98]

This consideration partly determines the literary genre he favors for preserving written

teaching. He claims that his own work is not "rhetorically shaped for exhibition," but rather

serves as a modest "collection of annotations (ὑπομνήματα) treasured up against old age, a

remedy against forgetfulness, an artless reflection and sketch of vivid, living originals: both the

words I was considered worthy to hear and the genuinely memorable men from whom I heard

them."[99] Such comments have led some to conclude with de Faye that the *Stromateis* is an *aide-

memoire* of fragmentary sketches rather than fully realized teaching.[100]

Yet even miscellanies and annotations can instruct.[101] Clement may have modeled his

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[98]*ecl.* 27.1-7: Now the elders would not write because they did not want to undermine their preoccupation with the teaching of the tradition by another, namely writing it down… But convinced, perhaps, that getting the composition right, and the substance of the teaching are entirely separate matters, they deferred it to others naturally endowed (as writers)… Speaking in writing, the elders circulating deposit uses the writer for the purpose of a transmission that leads to the salvation of those who are to read… This is why [the gnostic] actually seeks to determine whether it would be worse to give to the unworthy or not to hand down to the worthy…"

[99]*str.* 1.1.11.1. Compare to *Phaedr.* 276d, which closely parallels Clement's own pronouncement: "The gardens of letters he will, it seems, plant for amusement, and will write, when he writes, to treasure up reminders for himself, when he comes to the forgetfulness of old age (ὑπομνήματα θησαυριζόμενος εἰς τὸ λήθης γῆρας ἐὰν ἵκηται) and for others who follow the same path…" Plutarch, in *tranq. an.* 464F, reminisces: "I selected passages on the tranquility of the mind from my notes (ὑπομνήματα) which I happen to have made for myself, supposing that for your part you requested this discourse not in order to listen to an elegant style, but for beneficial use." Cf. also *cohib. ir.* 457 D-E.

[100]de Faye, *Clément d'Alexandrie,* 78-111, 126-48.

[101]Andrew Itter instances Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* as an illustration of the didactic quality of miscellanies. In the preface, Gellius describes both *Stromateis* and *Didaskalika* as miscellaneous works, leaving open the possibility that the *Stromateis* need not exclude the possibility of instruction. Clement himself identifies his literary peers as Heraclitus' *On Nature,* Pherecydes of Syros' *Theology,* the poetry of Euphorion, Callimachus' *Causes,* and Lycophron's *Alexandra*--works replete with "enigmatic utterances… whole books that present the mind of the writer veiled" (*strom.* 5.8.50.2-3). Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria.* Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 97 (Brill: Leiden, 2009), 17n40. Jaap Mansfield points out that such "enigmatic" forms of speaking and writing were common in antiquity. See his *Prolegomena: Questions to be Settled before the Study of an Author or a Text,*

own work on that of Valentinian teachers, who epitomized their doctrines as ὑπομνήματα.[102] In

the hands of a skilled writer, this genre became a versatile instrument of expression. Annewies

van den Hoek has demonstrated that these "annotations" served a variety of purposes in the

world of late antiquity, from excerpting reading material for future research, to abridging existing

manuscripts, to recording the content of lectures.[103]

In keeping with the conventions of this versatile genre, Clement frequently extracts

choice quotations. Throughout, he exercises discretion both in what he includes and in how he

includes it. He studiously avoids discussion of certain subjects "in the exercise of selection,

because I was afraid to write what I guarded against speaking."[104] On other matters, he favors an

allusive manner of presentation: "At some things my treatise will hint; on some it will linger;

some it will merely mention. It will attempt to speak imperceptibly, to display secretly, and to

demonstrate silently."[105] This canny description ought to give pause to those who disparage the

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(Leiden: Brill, 1994). Cf. also Méhat, *Étude sur les* Stromates, 96-106.

[102]Méhat, *Étude sur les* Stromates, 106-112, offers a thorough analysis of this genre. Of interest is the fact that Irenaeus alleges (*haer.* 1 praef.) that certain followers of Valentinus favored the genre of *hypomnemata*; Origen reports in *in Io. comm.* 6.92 that Heracleon used this term to title his commentaries .

[103]van den Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria," 225-7. For example, Eusebius reports that Papias worked from *hypomnemata* in the initial stages of the composition of Mark. Of these different senses of annotation, the use of digests and excerpts find ready analogues in the *Stromateis*. Bousset's claim that much of Clement's oeuvre (and certainly the *Stromateis*) transcribes lecture notes is intriguing, but impossible either to verify or to falsify. He favors a form critical approach that focuses especially on discontinuities of thought, which he takes to be definitive of lecture notes rather than formal treatises. But these judgments about the linearity of arguments range from the more plausible to the highly subjective. Johannes Munck featured an eviscerating critique of *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb* in a monograph on Clement. In excruciating detail, he exposed the flaws of this Gattungsgeschichtliche methodology and the tenuous character of many of Bousset's conclusions. Cf. W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom: Literarische Untersuchungen zu Philo, Clemens von Alexandria, Justin, und Irenäus.* Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 23, (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Rupprecht), 1915; J. Munck, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria* (Stuttgart: 1933), 127-204.

[104]*str.* 1.1.14.3ff.

[105]*str.* 1.1.15.1.

Stromateis as random, incoherent, or disordered.[106]

Clement never realized, of course, that he had to measure up to scholarly abstractions of systematic instruction.[107] Nowhere does Clement express an intention to communicate doctrine clearly or completely. Rather, he fabricates "carpets" of annotations precisely to sequester knowledge from those lacking the requisite training and to kindle recognition in those prepared to receive gnostic understanding. The underdetermined character of the *Stromateis* is calculated to deter the unworthy and to stimulate those capable of understanding to further investigation. In this way, it is not so much unsystematic as "multi-systematic."[108]

Scholars tend to anchor this pedagogy squarely within Platonic traditions of skepticism toward the written word. Extensive linguistic and thematic correspondences seem to confirm this intuition.[109] Yet Clement freely adapts Plato to his own purposes, and subordinates philosophical concerns to those of biblical wisdom. In perhaps the most exhaustive tracing of this Platonic ancestry, Dietmar Wyrwa shows how a Platonic *Grundlage* determines the shape of Clement's

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[106]de Faye: "."Einar Molland, *The Conception of the Gospel in the Alexandrian Theology* (Oslo: Oslo, 1938), 12: "Clement is no systematician and no scholastic, and no thinker capable of penetrating analysis." J. Ferguson follows Molland and de Faye in this regard in his *Clement of Alexandria* (New York: 1990), 106.

[107]Although the *Protrepticus* and the *Paedagogus* are demonstrably more cohesive, programmatic treatises, Méhat perceptively observes that the further one progresses in their sequence of education, the more diffuse the style becomes. He notes in particular the anticipation of the digressive style of the *Stromateis* in the final two books of the *Paedagogus*. Cf. Méhat, *Étude sur les* Stromates, 35.

[108]Eric Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria,* (Cambridge: CUP 1957), 7-8. Fortunately for researchers interested in Clement, this mode of instruction and the motives that animate it are more revelatory of its author than conventional forms of teaching. Osborn remarks, "The aim is to say something which the ordinary forms of connected description could not say. The technique gives greater insight into the mind of the writer than any ordinary technique can give."

[109]Cf. *inter alia* de Faye, *Clément de Alexandrie,* ; Eric Osborn, "Teaching and Writing in the First Chapter of the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria," *JTS* 10 (1959), 335-43; S.R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: OUP, 1971). Stroumsa detects the influence of Jewish esotericism; cf. G. Stroumsa, "Clement, Origen, and Jewish Esoteric Traditions," *Origeniana Sexta,* Leuven: Brepols, 1995), 58-9.

reflection on method at the inception of the *Stromateis*.[110] Mapping out a dense nexus of allusions, he contends that Clement associates texts both to express and to moderate Plato's suspicion of written instruction.

Clement describes the literary production of the *Stromateis* as "a collection of memoranda (ὑπομνήματα) for myself, a treasure for old age (εἰς γῆρας θησαυρίζεται), a remedy against forgetfulness (λήθης φάρμακον), an unskilled reflection (εἴδωλον ἀτεχνῶς) and a rough sketch of those vividly living words, which I thought it suitable to hear, and the men [from whom I heard them]."[111] This description draws closely from the discussion in *Phaedrus* 274e - 276d. There, Socrates counsels Phaedrus that "it seems that for amusement (παιδιᾶς χάριν) he will plant gardens in letters, and when he writes, he will write to treasure up his memoranda for when he comes to the forgetfulness of old age (ἑαυτῷ τε ὑπομνήματα θησαυριζόμενος, εις τὸ λήθης γῆρας ἐὰν ἵκηται), and for others who follow the same path."[112] Moreover, Socrates also depicts the written word as a dim reflection (εἴδωλον) of the living voice, an invidious comparison that seems to mark Clement's writing as well. Wyrwa does not discuss the agrarian imagery much, but here again, Clement shares this imagery with Plato (cf. *str.* 1.1.9.1; 1.10.3-4).

Likewise, he draws on Platonic justifications for refraining from writing. He reveals that he has omitted discussion of certain matters in the *Stromateis*, "thoughtfully making my selection from my fear of writing what I have refrained from speaking." These disclosures might foster misunderstandings and imperil the reader. Rather dramatically, Clement compares the dissemination of these sensitive articles among the unworthy to arming a child with a knife![113]

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[110]Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneigung,* 30-46.
[111]*str.* 1.1.11.1.
[112]*Phaedr.* 276d.
[113]*str.* 1.1.14.3.

To support this practice, he cites directly from the second Platonic epistle: "For it is impossible that things written should never be divulged."[114] By restricting transmission to oral instruction, Clement seems to be heeding a Platonic imperative.

Clement also appeals to Plato to enhance the prestige of the written word. At the inception of the *Stromateis,* Clement remarks, "I consider it a fine thing to leave good children to posterity. Children are the offspring of the body, but writings are the offspring of the soul."[115] The phrasing hews closely to that of Diotima's interview with Socrates in *symp.* 206b7, in which she relates how lovers of the good strive to possess it forever: "It is giving birth in beauty, both in body and in soul."[116] The soul begets disciples who share in its quest for virtue.[117] Here, Clement intimates that writing provides a suitable medium for the reproduction of the good, a conclusion that stands in tension with the position Socrates stakes out in the *Phaedrus* and *ep.* 2.

From these appropriations, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Clement is a critical consumer of Plato. But one could still contend that his esotericism responds to a series of problems imported from Hellenic wisdom. Even if he does not endorse everything he cites, a discourse exogenous to Scripture appears to have defined the contours of this pedagogy. This seems difficult to establish. Wyrwa points out that, while Clement shares some of Plato's misgivings about the written word, he shows more confidence in it. Still, he adopts a panoply of different strategies to keep it from defiling impure readers: silence, ellipses, allusions, and enigmas. Wyrwa contends that both the Bible and tradition furnish the paradigms for the "truth

[114]*str.* 1.1.14.3-4; *ecl.* 2.3-4.
[115]*str.* 1.1.1.2.
[116]Wyrwa strengthens the allusion by including later reflection on the topic in *symp.* 208e1 - 209e4, wherein Diotima touts the higher forms of wisdom as spiritual offspring; cf *Die christliche Platonaneigung,* 38.
[117]Diotima instances "the fine children (i.e., citizens formed by his law) that Lycurgus left behind him in Sparta as deliverers," along with Solon, and all those who fostered "manifold virtue" (παντοίαν ἀρετήν) throughout the world. Cf. *symp.* 209d-e.

that makes evident in writing things that are unwritten."[118]

Yet Platonic appropriation does not exhaust Clement's literary strategy. Only attention to what Alain le Boulluec calls "le système des doubles références" allows one to appreciate Clement's understanding of teaching.[119] Truncated as it is, the beginning of the received text of the *Stromateis* invokes not Plato, but the Shepherd of Hermas--functional Scripture in Clement-- to raise the questions of textual instruction.[120] Clement therefore inaugurates the discussion with an endorsement of written tradition, not with a philosophical *aporia*.

Moreover, Clement uses Scripture to revise the Platonic imagery, sometimes in ways that undermine its intent. As we have already seen, he reconfigures the Platonic metaphor of the "children of the soul" engendered by dialectic as readers rather than interlocutors.[121] "Wisdom" displaces νοῦς as the master of the soul, a substitution Clement highlights both by his use of the qualifier "philanthropic" (Wisd. 1.6) and by his citation of Prov. 2.1-2. Both these qualifications suggest a Christological reference. If his description of these ὑπομνήματα as a remedy for forgetfulness recalls the Platonic locution in *Phaedr.* 276d, it suggests a different evaluation of their reliability. Where Plato sees writing as a feeble simulacrum of the ideal realm, Clement stresses its efficacy as a vehicle of salvation.

Likewise, Clement adopts Plato's position that the orator must divine the souls of his audience in order to heal them, but appeals to dominical example rather than Platonic convention to justify a cryptic approach. In his incarnate ministry, according to Clement, "The Lord did not

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[118]*str.* 1.1.10.1: ἡ ἀλήθεια ἡ ἐγγράφως τὰ ἄγραφα δηλοῦσα. Compare 6.131.5: ἐγγράφου ἄγραφος .. παράδοσις. Wyrwa remarks, "So sind die Geheimnisse der Gnosis in den 'Teppichen' ebenfalls ἐγγράφως ἄγραφα." Wyrwa, *Die christliche Platonaneigung,* 45.
[119]Alain Le Boulluec, "Pour quoi, pourquoi, comment? Les *Stromates* de Clément d'Alexandrie," *Alexandrie Antique et Chrétienne: Clément et Origène* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006), 97. My subsequent points draw from his discussion in 97-108.
[120]Hermas*, vis.* 5.4.
[121]*strom.* 1.1.1.1; cf. Prov. 2.1-3; 1 Cor. 4.15; *Phaedr.* 278a; *Symp.* 209a-d; *Theat.* 150d.

disclose to the many what did not belong to the many, but to the few to whom he knew that they belonged, who were capable of receiving and being molded according to them."[122] Even where Clement directly invokes Plato (and later Pythagoras), he uses the epithet "the philosopher of the Hebrews" to indicate the Athenian's fidelity to the Hebrew tradition and his dependence upon it. Harmonizing citations from Isaiah 55.1 and Prov. 5.15 reinforce this subordination.[123] Hence, Le Boulluec concludes, "la force principale est conférée au langage biblique, qui domine les réminiscences grecques pour engendrer le modèle destiné à gouverner l'attitude attendue du lecteur."[124]

He might have gone even further. One could understand these prefatory remarks in the *Stromateis* as a desultory commentary on the Proverbs, a Scriptural repository of wisdom. The following chart demonstrates how saturated these opening sections are with references to Proverbs[125]:

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[122] *strom.* 1.1.13.1-2. Although it occurs in the excerpts of Theodotus, Clement seems broadly to endorse the following statement: "The savior taught the apostles a first category of doctrines by types and mysteries, a second category by parables and insinuations, and a third category of doctrines by clear and unadorned means only," *exc.* 66.4.

[123]*str.* 1.1.10.2.

[124]Le Boulluec, "Les *Stromates* de Clément d'Alexandrie," 98.

[125]Nor is Proverbs the sole focus of Clement's eclectic citation of Scripture, which includes ample citation of Matthew, the prophets, and Paul.

From the questions it raises about the ethics of writing to the benefits of "Greek" education,

Proverbs, rather than Plato, sets the agenda in the initial divisions of the *Stromateis.* Clement

reflects on his use of Scripture at the end of 1.5: "The passages of Scripture I have quoted yield

Location in *str.*	Reference in Proverbs	Topic
str. 1.1.1.3	Prov. 2.1-2	Availability of wisdom to all who listen
str. 1.1.2.1	Prov. 3.1	All who heed Wisdom are "sons" of Wisdom
str. 1.1.10.1	Prov. 5.15	Necessity of approaching the truth in purity
str. 1.1.14.1	Prov. 9.9	Speaking wisdom to the wise

Lord."[127] This paradigmatic teaching of the Lord in Scripture he characterizes broadly as

"parabolic," which he defines in *str.* 6.15 as featuring "a narration based on some subject which

is not the principal subject, and leading him who understands to what is the true and principal

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[126]*str.* 1.5.32.3.
[127]*str.* 1.1.9.2-3.

str. 1.4.27.2-3	Prov. 2.3-7	Necessity of seeking out wisdom reverentially
str. 1.5.28.1	Prov. 3.23	Firm foundation established by ascribing goodness to providence
str. 1.5.28.4	Prov. 4.8-9	Protection from deception by sophistry afforded by Wisdom
str. 1.5.29.2	Prov. 4.10	The pluriformity of wisdom
str. 1.5.29.3	Prov. 4.18	Different routes for different righteous
str. 1.5.29.6	Prov. 5.3	Philosophy does not flatter
str. 1.5.29.7-8	Prov. 5.5-8, 11	Pursuit of pleasure as foolishness
str. 1.5.29.9; 1.5.31.1	Prov. 5.20	Benefits of pagan education provisional and limited
str. 1.5.32.2	Prov. 3.11-12	Pedagogical benefits of discipline

soul" toward its proper objects by an oblique presentation.

PAIDEIA AND POLEMIC: MARCION, BASILIDES, AND VALENTINUS

Clement did not configure providence as divine *paideia* in a vacuum. Throughout, he remains in conversation with interlocutors past and present. In laying out his understanding of the goodness and justice of God, and the responsibility of humanity, he engages in polemic against Marcion, Basilides, and Valentinus along with their acolytes. Although he occasionally reflects positively on their teaching, more often than not he criticizes it. In some cases, he turns their own expressions against them. Hence, the shared vocabulary and conceptual apparatus need not imply affiliation. Of particular interest is the way he exploits this educational conceit to inveigh against these groups.

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[128]*str*. 6.15.126.4.
[129]*str*. 6.15.126.2.
[130]*str*. 6.15.127.1.
[131]*str*. 1.1.10.4.

He devotes *paed.* 1.8 to rebutting the stance of "those who maintain that the just is not good." Although he nowhere identifies his antagonists by name, their position aligns them with the disciples of Marcion of Sinope. Marcionites discovered the evidence of despotism in the fear the deity of the Old Testament cultivated. On definitional grounds alone, Clement charges, this allegation fails to discredit divine goodness. It refuses to distinguish the minatory form of divine discourse from its remedial effects--a fatal deficiency, since the one who fears God "will turn his own heart" (Sir. 21.7). More significantly, it neglects the supreme proof of divine philanthropy in the incarnation. By subjecting himself to human frailty, the Word "made a trial of the weakness of our flesh."[132] Whatever suffering the demiurge permitted humanity, the Word experienced in the flesh. Far from incompatibility with goodness, this exposure marks its pinnacle.

But Clement does not content himself with having dislodged this position on such general considerations. Rather, he brings the panoply of divine *paideia* to bear against these critics, depicting admonition as an expression of divine benevolence. He begins with what he regards as a self-evident truth: the Lord hates nothing. If he did hate anything, reasons Clement, it would never exist, since the cause of all being would never create something that he hated. None of what exists, then, can be objects of divine hatred.

In some sense, then, God must love all his creation, and particularly humankind, "the noblest of beings". After all, if God were not interested (οὐ κήδεται) in humanity, he would not concern himself (ἐπιμελεῖται) with it at all. Clement considers such apathy incompatible with love for humanity. God articulates this concern for humanity by bestowing advantages upon it-- particularly by educating it. "He manifests this care in deed," Clement avers, "by educating

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[132]*paed.* 1.8.62.1.

people through his Word, who shares by nature in his love for humanity."[133]

Clement reconciles the incongruity between the good and the just by defining justice as a species of goodness appropriate to this divine education. God dispenses benefits to guide humanity to salvation through progress in virtue. By definition, virtue must be intrinsically good, irrespective of whether it is enjoyable to practice. Consequently, this providential cultivation of virtue is not always pleasurable or expedient for its beneficiaries to endure. It sometimes involves fear and pain.

Virtue must also be pursued without compulsion. Human agents are free to choose actions that are either virtuous or vicious. When people behave viciously, divine "benefits" take the form of chastisements intended to restore them to the path of virtue. These corrections indicate not hatred of humanity, but concern for it. "Because he is a good Educator," Clement avers, "he wisely assumes the task of correcting by means of reproach."[134] Sometimes discipline accomplishes what praise cannot. Indeed, for God to permit vice to flourish with impunity would be to neglect the training of his children: "…if he deliberately overlooks [evil], than wickedness takes root, because of mankind's infidelity."[135]

Moreover, discipline expresses care rather than ventilates anger. Clement observes, "The punishment that God imposes is not due to anger but to justice, for the neglect of justice contributes nothing to our improvement."[136] The perception that discipline produces benefits is no anomaly. Clement finds attestation for this principle not only in the prophets and in the allegory of the True Vine, but also in Plato, who remarks in the *Gorgias,* "Now all who are

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[133]*paed.* 1.8.63.3.
[134]*paed.* 1.8.66.2. The evidence of this goodness Clement draws once again from the Educator's assumption of human frailty. In the previous sentence, he notes, "… it is not from hatred that the Lord reproves men, for instead of destroying him because of his personal faults, he has suffered for us."
[135]*paed.* 1.8.70.2.
[136]*paed.* 1.8.68.3.

punished, in reality suffer what is good. For they are benefited by those who punish justly, because their soul is improved." [137]

Punishment therefore represents an important component of the Word's therapeutic regimen. Each chastisement is carefully calibrated to promote salvation in the individual. The Word "adapts himself completely to the disposition of each, by being strict with one and forgiving another."[138] Whatever momentary displeasure these "stripes and instruction of Wisdom" (Sir. 22.7) inflict, they nevertheless advance the good purpose of salvation. This makes justice an appropriate predicate of God. Far from contradicting the good, divine justice is an expression of it. In fact, God remains incapable of goodness toward humanity without justice.

Closer inspection of the Word's instruction exposes the bifurcation between justice and goodness, Savior and Creator, as an artifice. Clement enlists Deuteronomy 32.20 to make his point. In this passage, the Lord proclaims, "I will hide my face from them, and I will show what will happen to them." Commenting on this declaration, Clement calls attention to its delicate balance of severity and mercy: "Notice how God seeks their conversion in loving-kindness, and, in the very words with which he makes his threats, sweetly reveals the love he has for mankind."[139] This instance reveals the opposition between justice and goodness as a synthetic distinction that collapses under scrutiny. Both punishment and mercy express the Word's benevolent intention: "The aim of both mercy and correction (ἐλέγχου) is the salvation of the one being corrected."[140]

Likewise, amplifying the contrast between the "just" Father and the "good" Son runs

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[137]"Allegory" of the true vine (John 15.1; 8.66.4-5). Illustrations from Ex. 20.20; Plato, *Gorg.* 477a, in which the punished are benefited through the improvement of their souls. Eccli. 34.14. LS on "benefits" of Stoics.
[138]*paed.* 1.8.66.5.
[139]*paed.* 1.8.70.1.
[140]*paed.* 1.8.72.1.

aground on their unity in the gospel writings. Clement invokes Christ's prayer to the Father in

John 17.21-26 to buttress his argument. If the Son and the Father were irreconcilable, he

reasons, the Son's supplication of the Father and his claim to represent him authoritatively would

be incomprehensible. When the Son invokes the Father, he declares him good as well as just.

Rather than contradicting or correcting the Father, the Son brings the variable activities of the

Father, whom "no one knows," into coherent focus.[141] He reveals the Law which witnesses these

activities as beneficial training. In his execution of judgment, the Son reveals the Father's

justice, "… for God makes known to us the countenance of the grand scale of justice, Jesus,

through whom we know God as by a perfectly balanced scale."[142] Because of their loving

relationship, they share common attributes, and "one and the same God is both of these

things."[143]

By identifying the justice of the Creator with the goodness of the Son, Clement neatly

dismantles the Marcionite binary, and moves the locus of evil from the divine character to human

volition. "The blame," he maintains with Plato, "belongs to the one who makes the choice. God

is blameless."[144]   Far from being unjust, the Word responds to human wickedness with

measures designed to remedy these faults by persuasion rather than compulsion. "It is not

inconsistent," he pronounces, "that the Word who saves should make use of reproof in his care

for us."[145] This reproof awakens shame for sin, and points toward an antidote.

In the Word's curriculum, such chastisements become the instruments of therapy.

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[141]The reference comes from Mt. 11.27. Clement glosses this ignorance of the Father as "how he can be all these different things, until the Son came."
[142]*paed.* 1.8.71.3.
[143]*paed.* 1.8.73.1.
[144]*paed.* 1.8.69.1. Clement appropriates this saying from the Myth of Er that concludes Plato's *rep.* X, 617e. He balances this citation with a borrowing from Romans 3.5-6, which denies the injustice of the God who inflicts punishment for human wickedness.
[145]*paed.* 1.8.74.2.

Lurking beneath the appearance of divine wrath is the reality of divine philanthropy. Displays of indignation reveal "God falling into a passion for the sake of man, for whom the Word of God also became man."[146] A God who assumes human frailty and even human flesh exemplifies love, not hatred. Malice emanates from the human exercise of free will, not from the Father.

Clement adopts a similar posture toward his Valentinian and Basilidean interlocutors, exploiting this Scriptural curriculum as the context for his defenses of the divine economy and human free will. Basilides and his disciples perceive faith as a natural disposition (φυσικήν), a matter of election realized through intuitive apprehension (καταλήψει νοητικῇ) rather than by deliberation.[147] Faith therefore shares both individual and cosmic dimensions. Its presence in the world depends upon a determination prior to the world that is disclosed in personal disposition and aspiration.

Exponents of the Valentinian system rely upon an asymmetrical conception of faith and knowledge (γνῶσις), in which faith belongs to persons "in simplicity," but knowledge is reserved for an elect race. This entails a subordinate conception of faith, which functions as a rudimentary virtue. Only the privileged few graduate to the higher mysteries of knowledge. Natural endowment rather than training determines access to gnostic mystery. "They desire [gnosis] to dwell within them," Clement acidly observes, "according to the superiority of the seed sown in them."[148]

The affinity between these intuitions and Clement's own teaching is unmistakable, but the contrast is also stark. Basilides and Valentinus render faith the product of a "natural

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[146]*paed.* 1.8.74.4.
[147]*str.* 2.3.10.1.
[148]*str.* 2.3.10.2.

superiority" rather than "free choice."[149] Such an understanding dissolves human responsibility.

Drawing upon a common philosophical trope, Clement alleges that this depreciation of free will

obliterates distinctions of honor and praise.[150] Humanity itself is reduced to the status of

puppets, animated by external machinations rather than self-determination.

Commentators rightly point out the philosophical pedigree of these remarks, but neglect

how they function in Clement's polemic. He concludes the discussion in *strom.* 2.3 with a

fusillade of complaints: "The result is this: no baptismal gift from the Word, no sealing of

blessing, no Son, no Father." Such a conception of faith nullifies faith by reducing it to an

epiphenomenon of divine choice. Some divine power distributes these natural endowments, "but

without control of the foundation of salvation or faith springing from the will."[151] For Clement,

the principal concern is not that this determinism undermines the grounds of rewards and

punishments so much as that it destroys the credibility of the Christian life.

The polemic of *str.* 5.1 exposes the deficiency of this conception of faith as an inherent

property. By diminishing the role of free will, those who regard salvation as a natural disposition

make the divine economy superfluous. Neither Scripture nor the appearance of the Savior can

contribute anything to salvation.[152] For Clement, the saving economy of the Word's instruction

demands more than election and natural disposition:

> But if they declare that the visit (ἐπιδημίαν) of the Savior was necessary, then the
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> properties of nature vanish, since the elect are being saved by learning, by purification,
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> and by the performance of good works, but not by nature.[153]

Abraham's faith "by heeding the voice that promised" further illustrates this point. Credited as

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[149]*str.* 2.3.11.1.
[150]Cf. inter alia, Ps-Plutarch, *fat.* 574D; Cicero, *fat.* 17; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *fat.* 34.206.1.
[151]*str.* 2.3.11.2.
[152]*str.* 5.1.3.1-3.
[153]*str.* 5.1.3.4.

righteousness, his belief must have come as a consequence of election, according to the partisans

of Basilides and Valentinus. Yet this election is antecedent to the Savior, and remains devoid of

any functional connection to him. Here again, preoccupations with the divine economy, rather

than the finer points of a philosophical tradition motivate Clement's response. He draws upon

the late antique discussion of determinism and free will to illuminate an understanding of the

scriptural economy as a form of *paideia*. The teaching of the Word, which consists of "learning,

purification, and the performance of good works," requires the exercise of free will.

Consequently, Clement deploys the figure of the "seeds" of gnosis and the auxiliary

metaphors for instruction in a manner that differs sharply from that of his opponents. Where the

Valentinians discuss "seed" as an innate property governed by divine election, Clement makes

these seeds of gnosis stimuli to contemplation concealed within the Word's discourse.

Penetration of these mysteries follows not from antecedent election, but from response to

instruction. Like Abraham, one becomes righteous through hearing and believing. Abraham's

descendents, the true Israel, are stamped not by "physical signifiers," but rather by an openness

to persuasion through hearing.[154]

Faith and the knowledge that accompanies it require both divine pedagogy and human

response. Clement likens this interaction to playing ball, which depends upon a certain kind of

rhythm between the projector and the receiver. Likewise, instruction represents "a state worthy

of faith," when the faith of the audience conduces to learning.[155] Without this cooperation,

instruction becomes impossible. Clement returns to agrarian imagery to clinch his point:

So earth, when fertile, cooperates with the planting of seeds. There is no benefit in the

best instruction if the learner is not ready to receive it, or prophecy for that matter, or

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[154]*str.* 2.6.28.4.
[155]*str.* 2.6.25.4.

preaching, if the hearers are not open to persuasion.[156]

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[156]*str.* 2.6.26.1.

CHAPTER 3: COSMOS, SCRIPTURE, AND THE PEDAGOGY OF THE SOUL IN ORIGEN

Origen inaugurates *de principiis* with a paradox that exposes the pedagogical orientation of his treatise. He observes that disciples of Christ derive the knowledge necessary for life from the very words and teaching of Christ (*ab ipsis Christi verbis doctrinaque suscipiunt*).[1] Even before his incarnate ministry, the Word adumbrated this teaching through Moses and the prophets, so Origen does not restrict this instruction to that dispensation. Against those who fragment it into disparate parts, Origen maintains that Scripture preserves a single tissue of doctrine. This lays the foundation for a consistent articulation of doctrine. Yet transmission of these teachings generates diversity rather than unity. Christ's followers contest the meaning and application of his words. These interpretive conflicts concern not only trivial matters, but also articles of consequence: the nature of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and their relationships to creation. Division on these matters threatens to disrupt the continuity of Christ's words and teaching.

To resolve these conflicts of interpretation, and to restore the teaching of Christ to coherent expression, Origen dedicates his treatise to the articulation of a "connected body of teaching" derived from Scripture.[2] In this chapter, I will argue that he construes this teaching as the edification of the spiritual "senses" through the texts of the cosmos and of Scripture. Earlier scholarship provides the orientation for this exegesis of *princ*. Hal Koch's monograph *Pronoia und Paideusis* first explored the cosmic pedagogy that Origen develops in his writing. Maintaining that Origen's conception of divine providence as an educator forms the *Grundmotiv*

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[1]Origen, *princ*. praef. 1.
[2]*princ*. praef. 10.

of his Christology, Koch traces the outworking of this model in cosmology, ethics, and theodicy.

Yet his discussion of scriptural interpretation in this ecology is muted. More recently, Karen Jo

Torjesen studied the educational dimensions of Origen's hermeneutics. She examines the

interpreter's task of revealing the pedagogy of the text to his audience. Her research provides

valuable insights on Origen's exposition of the scriptures, but leaves mostly unexamined the

relationship between divine providence's operation in the world and in the text. My research

builds on these contributions by integrating these two sites of education in a reading of *de

principiis*.

What unites these twin dimensions of divine pedagogy is Origen's distinctive

Christology. Here, I supplement my reading of *de principiis* with the first two books of his

Commentary on John. The Word accommodates this need by organizing creation and

"becoming" many things. This adaptation culminates in the Incarnation. In his coming, the

Word discloses the latent meaning of both creation and Scripture, and sets in motion their

transformation in the world to come. This incarnational focus provides a counterpoint to those

who present Origen's thought as inimical to body and history. Far from depreciating the material

realm, he sees it as a vehicle of spiritual transformation.

I conclude the chapter by analyzing Origen's treatment of two difficulties that arise from

the operations of divine providence. The first concerns the relationship between providence and

human responsibility. Although this discussion has many analogues in late antique philosophy, I

demonstrate that Origen's understanding of the divine economy as pedagogy shapes his response

in a way that distinguishes him from his contemporaries. Because souls use their freedom

differently, their advance through this curriculum varies. They possess free will, the seed of both

sinful diversity and spiritual progress. If human souls did not bear responsibility for their

conduct, God would be culpable for evil, and the panoply of instruments he uses to educate

humanity neutralized. Consequently, the Word administers creation without encroaching on

human freedom. Origen's reasons for balancing providential supervision with human

responsibility derive more from biblical than from philosophical concerns. Determinism nullifies

the divine economy, the commands recorded in Scripture, and judgment for deviation from them.

A second concern coalesces around the scriptures themselves. What does one make of

the manifold impossibilities, incongruities, and irrelevancies in the pages of the bible? Here

again, the educational function of Scripture grounds Origen's response. To adapt to these

gradations of psychic progress, the Word conceals this higher meaning in the "texts" of nature

and Scripture. By design, this wisdom is not transparent to untrained perception. This

educational strategy deters the unworthy and stimulates the virtuous. It promotes perfection

through stages of ascent. I close the chapter, therefore, with a consideration of Origen's didactic

conception of eschatology.

THE SPIRITUAL SENSE: DIVINE PEDAGOGY AND THE SOUL'S PROGRESS

At the inception of *princ.,* Origen declares that as "Spirit," God exists as a "simple

intellectual unity," devoid of any defects bound up with material composition.[3] No decay or

physical constraints limit his activity. This state contrasts markedly with the finitude and flux of

corporeal experience. On the principle of "like perceives like," the corporeal senses cannot

discern spiritual realities. God's splendor exceeds the narrow limits of their perception and

defies unmediated vision. As the sun blinds the eyes with its fiery incandescence, so the purity

of the divine essence transcends the frailties of the human intellect. One must therefore

encounter "the radiance of God's nature" (*radii… dei naturae*) through the activities of divine

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[3]*princ.* 1.1.6.

providence and the plan (*ars*) of this universe rather than by direct perception of God's nature.[4]

To receive this higher wisdom, humanity must cultivate the mind's "senses".[5] Origen advances the human mind as the closest analogue to this divine nature, insofar as its capabilities surpass those of the body. Its consanguinity with God enables perception.

> …there is a certain affinity (*propinquitas*) of the mind to God, of whom the mind itself is an intellectual image, and through which it can perceive (*sentire*) something of the divine nature, especially if it is purified and separated from bodily matter (*maxime si expurgatior ac segregatior sit a materia corporali*).[6]

The latter provision suggests the means of refining this vision. One must cultivate the mind to sharpen its perception. Origen depicts this education as a form of purification that raises the mind from its material entanglements and restores it to its spiritual state.

To some observers, this comment signals a depreciation of matter as the prison of spirit. Daniel Boyarin, for example, disparages Origen's hermeneutics of body and spirit as "a dualistic system in which spirit precedes and is primary over body."[7] Others have identified a Platonic residue in such statements, and fingered Origen as the conduit by which conflict between spirit and body entered Christian discourse. A superficial reading of this passage, allied with Origen's Christology and hermeneutics, seems to confirm this suspicion. A privileging of spirit at the

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[4] *princ.* 1.1.5-6.
[5] As John David Dawson observes, scholars tend to press Origen's hermeneutics into a binary opposition of "the spirit" to "the letter," and argue that Origen depreciates the "material" at the expense of the "spiritual". In fact, Origen unites the "letter" and the "spirit" for pedagogical purposes, favoring allegory as a means of cultivating a "spiritual sense". Cf. Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), esp. 47-80.
[6] *princ.* 1.1.7.
[7] Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California, 1994), 14.

expense of body seems to dominate this Alexandrian's spirituality.[8]

Yet, as David Dawson points out, this bifurcation of body and spirit owes more to Descartes than to Origen.[9] Foisting a Cartesian opposition of mind and body upon a third-century Alexandrian Christian unfairly saddles antiquity with the problems of modernity. Such anachronism also obscures Origen's own configuration of the relationship between body and spirit, which is richer and more nuanced than this "Platonist" caricature allows.[10] Origen understands body, soul, and spirit not as antithetical constituents, but as stages of a person's educational development or regression. Not conflict, but continuity characterizes their interrelationship. To understand how Origen conceives this economy, one must examine his distinctive understanding of spirit's fall and restoration.

Origen gained notoriety for conceiving this fall as the mind's assumption of soul and body. Noting the Pauline distinction between psychic and pneumatic individuals (1 Cor. 2.14; 14.15; 15.44), he posits that the soul (and, by extension, the body) is a provisional state rather than a permanent component of human identity.[11] In its perfected state, humanity will transcend the confines of the soul and return to the realm of pure spirit to commune with God. This ascent reverses the effects of the fall. Here, Origen playfully manipulates the etymology of ψυχή, "soul", from the verb ψύχεσθαι, "to cool". Ardent minds fall from participation in the "fire" of

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[8]Even such a stalwart defender of Origen as Jean Daniélou can speak of Origen's "underestimation of the value" of the body, the literal, and the sacramental. He faults Philo's legacy, refracted through Clement, for this trajectory. Although this influence "was sometimes productive of sound fruit," Daniélou charges that it also "contained the seeds of serious deviation from the truth." Cf. Daniélou, *Origen* trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 164, 179.

[9]Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading,* 50, 53.

[10]Indeed, Origen is no uncritical consumer of Plato. As Mark Edwards has shown in a perceptive and wide-ranging study of Origen's alleged "Platonism", Origen in fact rejected or modified many of the main tenets of the Platonism with which critics so often identify him. See Edwards, *Origen against Plato?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), esp. 158 on the soul and Scripture.

[11]*princ.* 2.8.3.

divine spirit and congeal into embodied souls. Each decline follows a singular course. Some

minds retain an element of their original vigor; others have lost nearly all vestiges of their former

state. The path to restoration therefore differs by individual, but the task remains the same. The

fallen spirit must "turn to its rest" (Ps. 116.7) and recover its equipoise.[12]

In recovering this primordial communion with God, the spirit returns to its purest

identity. Origen understands spirit to provide the fundamental constituent of personhood. Flesh

constitutes a transitory state characterized by susceptibility to corruption, but spirit persists

beyond the limits of perishability. This gives Origen's conception of personal identity a

futuristic orientation. Dawson observes, "… for Origen, identity is anchored in the future, and

who persons are now, in their fleshly configuration, does not exhaust their fullest identities,

which will only become realized over time."[13] To the extent that the mind governs the body in

the present, it reflects this future (and also creational) ordering. Yet if one allows the passions to

overtake the mind's operation, confusion and loss of identity ensues.

Origen finds in biblical language a valuable resource for expressing this understanding.

In a surviving fragment from the *Commentary on Lamentations*, he exploits the prophetic

account of Babylon infiltrating the gates of Jerusalem to portray how sin blunts the soul's

perception and plunges it into disorder. Jerusalem represents "the divine soul" in this oracle, and

the prophet dramatizes its enslavement to sin.[14] Lamentations 2.9 vividly narrates the breach of

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[12]*princ.* 2.8.4.
[13]Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading,* 80. This understanding of personal identity did not
achieve currency in the Christian tradition. Yet, it has a certain inner logic. Dawson follows this
point up with a striking analogy: "Remember, if you will, someone who has died. Has the flesh
of that person endured? Has his or her identity endured? And if you think memory bears witness
to the endurance of his or her identity, has that identity endured *apart from* the flesh, *because of*
the flesh, or *despite* the flesh?" (80 - italics his).
[14]*in Lam. frg.* 2, 8, 10, 21, 27. This metaphor of the self as a citadel appears prominently in
Marcus Aurelius, but Origen's usage may have been mediated by a source such as the *Teachings*

the city's gates. Origen takes this destruction to signify the collapse of the soul's sensitivity to

divine matters:

> Now the senses are the gates of the soul, and when it sins, they are overwhelmed by
>
> passions and become earthly. And the powers that guard these gates of the soul are
>
> relaxed when the sovereign mind and its ruling powers of reason have been destroyed by
>
> the passions, when both the law and order of the soul have perished and the soul
>
> becomes Babylon, which means "full of confusion," since it now has no provision
>
> supplied by God (μηδὲν ἔχουσα προνοητικὸν ὑπὸ θεοῦ βοηθούμενον).[15]

 The concluding epitaph is striking. Divine providence appoints the mind to rule the soul and

domesticate the passions. When these passions govern the soul rather than reason, the "law and

order" by which the mind administers it deteriorate, leaving it devoid of its divinely granted

resources.[16] Jerusalem's tranquility gives way to Babylon's confusion.

In Origen's thought, then, mind represents the rule of reason, and the body stands in for

the dissipating effects of the passions. When the mind rules, spiritual advance occurs; when the

passions gain sway, the spirit regresses toward corruption. Spiritual perception dims with

ignorance and moral decay, as the loss of rationality obscures the presence of spiritual realities

and passions throw the mind into confusion. Mismanagement of the self stands at the center of

this conception. Ceding authority to the passions causes dissipation, not the body itself. What

Origen labels "spirit" or "body" reflects alternately the wise supervision of reason or the misrule

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of Silvanus.

[15]*in Lam. frg.* 52. This use of martial imagery to describe the captivity of reason to the passions
had ample precedent. Among others, see Philo, *leg. all.* 3.116-17.

[16]Those philosophers who discard providence epitomize this loss of sensation, for they privilege
matter as the first principle rather than the Wisdom that organizes it, and pursue pleasure rather
than virtue. Hence, Origen follows the Stoics in criticizing Epicurean physics and ethics. Where
he credits the philosophers with participating in divine reason, he pointedly excludes those who
fail to posit divine providence.

of bodily appetites.

This governance of passion serves as the guiding principle of asceticism, the regulation of bodily desire through discipline. Its amenability to such efforts enhances the body's stature. Far from denigrating the body, then, ascetics elevated its significance as a locus of transformation. Origen and his successors did not seek so much to emancipate the soul from its bodily prison as to train the body to transcend its corruptible frailties. Joseph Trigg suggests that we retire the canard of "Origen the dualist" on consideration of his ascetic sensibility:

> It has become fashionable for some time to present Platonism and the biblical heritage as radically incompatible, especially in their attitude toward the body. Given the all-pervasive asceticism of early Christianity, Origen would have found such a position absurd. This point bears emphasis today. It would have seemed obvious to Origen and his fellow Christians and Platonists that asceticism does not imply hostility to the body. On the contrary, it is the natural outcome of a quite positive view that the body, properly disciplined, is a fitting vehicle during our life on earth for our ascent to God. This acceptance of the body and the sense of wholeness that it provided is precisely what separated Christians and Platonists from the Gnostics.[17]

There is little point in training the body if intrinsic flaws cripple it, or if it is unrelated to the soul. Trigg's insight suggests that Origen held a much more nuanced and dynamic understanding of the body than these caricatures permit.

As the Psalmist's exhortation to the soul to "return to its rest" suggests, the collapse of the mind is not without remedy. A person who has fallen into sin may recover his senses,

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[17]Joseph Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1993), 164-5.

"retrace his steps, and return to his former state."[18] Education restores spiritual vision by stimulating the development of the mind's faculties. This growth requires cultivation of both bodily and mental senses. One trains the body to bring its inclinations under the mind's direction. Although it lacks physical dimensions, the mind does possess intellectual capacity that expands and contracts. As with children, the mind of an undisciplined individual cannot endure the demands of exertion, and must be trained to receive instruction. One trains the mind "by exercises in the understanding" (*eruditionis exercitiis*) that enhance its capacities.[19] By degrees, it becomes capable of receiving Wisdom and "seeing" its administration of the cosmos. As its perception improves, it advances toward restoration.

This restoration will be brought to completion not immediately, but "through certain means and courses of discipline and periods of time (*modis et disciplinis et temporibus*)."[20] Rather than imposing rule by compelling subjection, the Son persuades rational creatures. Origen catalogues some of these means of incitement in *princ.* 3.5.8:

> [he persuades] by word, by reason, by teaching, by the exhortation to better things, by the best methods of education, and also by deserved and appropriate threatening… of those who contemptuously fail to care for their own salvation, advantage, and spiritual health… But how each person ought to be dealt with, consistent with the preservation of free will… is known to God alone, and to his only-begotten Son, through which all things were created and restored, and the Holy Spirit, through whom all things are sanctified.

Far from diminishing goodness, admonition and discipline benefit individuals in the early stages

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[18]*princ.* 1.3.8.
[19]*princ.* 1.1.6.
[20]*princ.* 3.5.8.

of education. Different individuals require different learning strategies. Those incapable of

listening to reason must learn by harsher measures. Origen mentions that God may "extort"

conversion through remedial punishments. Alternatively, the Son may conceal the truth from a

person until he can understand it. Once this preliminary training has purged the soul of

destructive passions, the Son can instruct the mind by more rational means. Only God in his

infinite wisdom knows which regimen is appropriate to a person.

What becomes clear in the assignment of these remedies is the significance of the body

as the locus of transformation. "The recovery," Dawson notes,

> cannot bypass, but rather must work through or more deeply into the body's inner depths,
>
> seeking the body's most authentic dimension in its former purely spiritual state from
>
> which it congealed into its present embodied state. The soul, then, is not radically
>
> "other" than the body or "trapped" in the body; bodies are what cooled and congealed
>
> souls have become, and souls are what bodies will one day be.[21]

In short, the tension of spirit and body is less ontological, and more eschatological in character.

What enshrines bodies with value is their creation of the Word in Wisdom, which "revalues the

bodily realm because it makes the body the soteriologically necessary site of the soul's recovery

of its former status as mind or spirit."[22] How the body serves as the site of transformation is the

focus not only of Origen's Christology, which links the providential supervision of the cosmos to

the interpretation of Scripture.

THE DIVINE EDUCATOR AND THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

The Word fashions both the cosmos and Scripture to cultivate the mind's spiritual

senses. In so doing, he adapts himself to human needs, "becoming many things" to guide

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[21]Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading,* 63-4.
[22]Ibid., 63.

humanity on the way to perfection. These "aspects of Christ", the ἐπίνοιαι Χριστοῦ, embed a

pedagogical order in both the universe and in the biblical text. The titles are drawn from

scripture, and limn a Christology that progressively educates humanity. Wisdom and the Word

endow creation with an internal principle of organization that produces virtue and godliness.

This same providential guidance shapes the scriptures themselves, reflecting a sequence of divine

revelation that guides the reader to repose.

Origen's discussion of the ἐπίνοιαι Χριστοῦ, ("the aspects of Christ") in his

Commentary on John and in *Peri Archon* remains fundamental to this interpretive functioning.

Since Hal Koch made these ἐπίνοιαι the signature of Origen's Christology, scholars have

contested their centrality.[23] Among others, Marguerite Harl maintains that Koch had privileged

this element at the expense of more important themes, such as the two natures of Christ.[24] She

argues that a disproportionate emphasis on the ἐπίνοιαι creates the false impression that

Origen's Christology focuses upon pedagogy when other metaphors are just as determinative.

Most of the evidence, too, comes from two early texts, so that the elevation of this conceptual

framework also involves a concentration on an early stage of Origen's reflection.

Origen's Christology is capacious enough to accommodate these perspectives. Though

both themes (the ἐπίνοιαι Χριστου and the two natures) have ramifications for scriptural

interpretation, the comparison consists of two disparate components. The two natures constitute

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[23]Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis.* Crouzel and Simonetti pronounce the *epinoiai* "le centre de la christologie d'Origène", *Traite des principes: Livres I-II commentaire* SC 253 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 30.
[24]Marguerite Harl, *Origène et la fonction revelatrice,* 229. Harl was right to an extent. At points, Koch's emphasis on the pedagogical features of Christology and his resistance to comparing Origen's thought with post-Nicene developments in dogma lead him to focus too narrowly on the *epinoiai.* See also A. Orbe, *La Epinoia* (Rome: Pontificalis Universitas Gregoriana, 1955); Henri Crouzel, "Le contenu spirituel des dénominations du Christ selon le Livre I du *Commentaire sur Jean* de Origène ," *Origeniana Secunda,* (Rome: Edizioni dell' Ateneo, 1980), 131-50.

a doctrinal formula, whereas the *epinoiai* address revelational modalities. Both are necessary to maintain the coherence of Origen's thought . The *epinoiai* are therefore not only consistent but interdependent with the doctrine of two natures.[25] Moreover, delineations of center and periphery tend to impose a systematic grid upon material that resists these distinctions, and to mistake frequency for significance. At times, Origen foregrounds one feature rather than another, but context dictates these points of emphasis rather than programmatic concerns.

Neither Harl nor Koch appreciates the full significance of polemical circumstance for the articulation of the *epinoiai.* Although Origen returns to these "aspects of Christ" in his later writings, they occupy a more salient position in Origen's Alexandrian writing than in his output from Caesarea.[26] Indeed, Origen's sustained expositions of the *epinoiai* occur in his earliest literary productions: in *de principiis* and at the beginning of the *Commentary on John.* In both documents, he anchors these titles in the person of Christ to prevent their disintegration into a pullulating immensity of aeons.[27] Christ remains a unity, but "becomes many things - or perhaps all these things - as the whole creation which can be made free needs him."[28] The titles indicate not hypostatic entities, but pedagogical functions.

As functions rather than entities, these aspects follow a schematic order and sequence.

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[25]Origen describes this symbiotic relationship in *princ.* 1.2.1: "First we must know this, that in Christ there is one nature, his deity, because he is the only-begotten Son of the Father, and another human nature, which in very recent times he took upon him to fulfill the divine purpose. Our first task, therefore, is to see what the only-begotten Son is, seeing that he is called by many different names (*qui multis… et diversis nominibus*) according to the circumstances and beliefs of the different writers." The *epinoiai* reveal Christ in both his natures.

[26]TLG lists 83 uses of *epinoia* in Origen's Greek corpus. Of these, 7 occur in c. Cels, 4 in *in Ier. hom*., and 9 in *in Matt. comm.* By contrast, over 30 appear in the first ten books of the *Commentary on John*. Origen's sustained exposition of the *epinoiai* has no real counterpart in later literature, though it remains a significant theme.

[27]As Origen points out in *comm. in Io.* 1.200, distinguishing the *epinoiai* is not the same as distinguishing different essences.

[28]*in Io. comm..* 1.119.

"Being many good things, the Savior possesses things conceived (ἐνεπινοούμενα) as first, second, and third."[29] Origen's treatment of the designation "Alpha and Omega" provides a helpful orientation to this sequence. The very character of the title and the fact that the same one is beginning and end implies a corresponding beginning and an end to the ἐπίνοιαι.[30] But while one can begin to arrange the ἐπίνοιαι in order, the elaboration of a precise taxonomy transcends human capability.[31] What is known is disclosed through Scripture. Scripture preserves this sequence intact: "those letters are the thoughts about the Son of God which are broken up into alpha and the letters that follow to omega, that heavenly matters might be read through them."[32] Hence, close scrutiny of these writings reveals much "about [their] order (τάξεως) and purpose (τέλους)."[33]

The appearance of these ἐπίνοιαι in John follows this sequence, progressively revealing aspects of the Son's identity. A certain symbiosis exists between the expositor's interpretation of the text and the Son's education of humanity, such that interpretation of the text directs the spiritual journey of the auditor. In her discussion of the relationship between the progress of the text and the advance of the individual in the *Commentary on John*, Agnès Aliau-Milhaud suggests that Origen "seems to want to show that the progress of the individual is inscribed in the same progress of the text." Frequently, this reflects the sequence (ἀκολουθία, εἱρμος) of the text, as it does in the ascription of titles to Christ. Where textual sequence is less evident, Origen exploits other elements to promote progress: transposing other texts that employ the same vocabulary or theme, for example. She further points out that Origen's practice in the

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[29]*in Io. comm..* 1.112.
[30]*in Io. comm..* 1.223.
[31]*in Io. comm..* 1.210.
[32]*in Io. comm..* 1.221.
[33]*in Io. comm..* 1.224.

Commentary on John does not correspond exactly to the hermeneutic expressed in *princ.* 4.2.1ff. Rather, to promote spiritual progress in the reader, the interpreter makes use of an arsenal of techniques as he navigates the text. This preoccupation with discovering progress in the unfolding of a text proves for Aliau-Milhaud a "*Leitmotiv* de exégèse origénienne, un thème directeur qui commande le choix des techniques d'interprétation."[34]

Origen devotes the first two books of his commentary to his exposition of the two primary *epinoiai,* Wisdom and Word. These aspects also feature prominently in his discussion of Christology in *princ.* 1.2.2ff. Origen considers Word and Wisdom - perhaps along with life and truth- as primordial, for they reflect God *in se,* rather than what God becomes for the sake of creation. Although it is impossible to imagine God ever bereft of wisdom or reason, God becomes "propitiation," "light," "firstborn from the dead," and "shepherd" because of us (δι' ἡμᾶς).[35] Because of their significance for both cosmology and interpretation, these traits deserve close scrutiny.

He commences his discussion of Christ in *princ.* 1.2.1 by identifying the celebrated discourse of Wisdom recorded in Proverbs 8.22-25 as Christ's:

The Lord created me the beginning of his ways for his works.

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[34]Agnès Aliau-Milhaud, "Progrès du Texte, Progrès de l'individu dans le *Commentaire de Jean* d'Origène," *Origeniana Nona* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 14-23, esp. 23.

[35]*in Io. Comm.* 1.116-24; cf. *princ.* 1.2.4. This consideration informs Origen's organization of the titles: they must be collected (συναγαγόντα), then evaluated (βασανιστέον) to determine "which of them came into existence later, and whether they would have become so numerous if the saints had begun and continued in blessedness" (1.123). This provides two, and perhaps three gradations for the titles: those that always existed, those that are contingent upon creation, and those contingent attributes that are assumed because of human sinfulness. Later, he distinguishes between qualified ("for us") and unqualified *epinoiai*, noting that while unqualified aspects such as wisdom and power sometimes occur in qualified form (e.g., 1 Cor. 1.30), qualified aspects such as redemption and sanctification never occur in unqualified form. See *in Io. Comm.* 1.240-52, along with the helpful discussions in Heine, Origen, *Commentary on John* (Washington: CUA, 1987), 83-4n.362, and Harl, *Origène,* 229. 121-22.

> Before he made anything,
>
> before the ages,
>
> > he established me.
>
> In the beginning,
>
> before he made the earth
>
> before the springs of the waters came forth,
>
> before all the hills,
>
> > he begets me.[36]

Seizing on linguistic correspondences, Origen observes that the predicates "firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1.15) and "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1.24) must describe the same subject.[37] Since Paul applies these epithets to Christ, he designates Christ as divine Wisdom. The Son is not some isolated exemplar of wisdom, but "a certain thing that makes people wise, by revealing and imparting itself to the minds of those who are rendered capable of receiving its virtue and understanding" (*praebentem se et mentibus inserentem eorum, qui capaces virtutum eius atque intellegentiae fiunt*).[38] Likewise, Origen regards it as absurd to decouple God from his Wisdom - for how can God ever be devoid of Wisdom? Therefore, Wisdom transcends the limits of "any beginning that we can speak of or understand."

As "the beginning of ways," Wisdom also serves as the template of creation. Origen conceives Wisdom as containing within herself "all the species and causes of the entire creation":

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[36]Origen makes much of the progressive aspect of the verb γεννᾷ in his sermons on Jeremiah; cf. *in Ier. hom.* 9.4ff.

[37]This reading practice of illuminating Scripture with Scripture follows an exegetical technique that scholars of Homer pioneered, "clarifying Homer by Homer." See chapter 4 for other examples of this strategy.

[38]*princ.* 1.2.2.

So because there inhered in this very subsistence of wisdom every power and form of the

creation that was to be, both of the things that exist primarily and of those that come

about secondarily, [all these things] being fashioned beforehand and arranged by the

power of foreknowledge (*virtute praescientiae praeformata atque disposita*), Wisdom,

speaking through Solomon on behalf of those created entities that had been, as it were,

outlined and prefigured (*descripta ac praefigurata*) in herself, says that she was created

as a "beginning of the ways" of God, which means that she contains within herself

(*continens scilicet in semet ipsa*) the beginnings, the causes, and the species of every

creature.[39]

He here riffs on a familiar *topos* in both Hellenistic and Jewish literature: the harmonious order

that providence creates.   In his *Commentary on John*, he depicts the Son as similarly prefiguring

(προτρανόω) in himself the plans of the system of thoughts (τοὺς τύπους συστήματος τῶν

ἐν αὐτῷ νοημάτων) of all things, likening this process to an architect drafting blueprints for a

house or a ship.[40] This notion of a mind ordering the universe according to the paradigm of

reason resonates with Middle Platonist thought in particular.[41]

   More significantly, this identification of Wisdom as the "beginning of all things" permits

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[39]*princ.* 1.2.2. By "primary" and "secondary", Origen probably means to distinguish reasonable
entities, which are prior (*principaliter,* προηγουμένως), from irrational beings, which are
secondary (*consequenter,* κατ᾽ ἐπακολούθησιν). Although Crouzel and Simonetti suggest as an
alternative the distinction between essence and quality, the context addresses cosmic rather than
taxonomic concerns. Cf. *princ.* 2.9.3. These *initia, rationes,* and *species* probably envisage the
logoi spermatikoi, reason as generative principle. *princ.* 1.4.5, 2.3.6; *in Io. comm.* 1.113-15, 244,
283; 2.126; *c.Cels.* 5.22, 39; 6.64. This also means that Wisdom originates the other *epinoiai.*
Origen is hardly alone here. Philo notes in *leg. all.* 1.43, "By using many titles (ὀνόμασι) for it
Moses has already made it evident that sublime and heavenly wisdom is of many names"
(πολυώνυμον).
[40]*comm. in Io.* 1.113-14.
[41]Philo, *somn.* 1.237 depicts mind deploying reason (λόγος) to bring confusion into order and
array (κόσμον καὶ τάξιν). See also Aristobulus frg. 5.9ff; ApCon 7.34.5-6.

Origen to connect Wisdom's speech in Proverbs ("God created me *the beginning* of his ways for

his works") with the Johannine prologue ("In *the beginning* was the Word."). The Word was *in

the beginning*, which is to say, the Word was *in Wisdom*.[42] This establishes both the logical

priority of Wisdom and its symbiotic relationship with the Word. As Wisdom, the Son is

considered as "the structure of contemplation and thoughts (τὴν σύστασιν τῆς περὶ τῶν ὅλων

θεωρίας καὶ νοημάτων) that circumscribe the universe." As Word, he is perceived as "the

communication of things contemplated (κοινωνίαν τῶν τεθεωρημένων) to rational beings."[43]

These communications express both harmony and enigma. In *princ.* 1.2.3, Origen emphasizes

that the Word exposes the mysteries and secrets (*mysterios et arcanorum rationem… aperiat*)

contained within Wisdom, acting as an interpreter of the mind's secrets (*arcanorum mentis

interpres*).[44]

This description of Wisdom and Word as mind and articulated thought bears a striking

resemblance to the ancient Stoic discrimination between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος ("immanent

reason," "thought") and λόγος προφορικός ("articulate reason," "discourse").[45] Though its

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[42]*comm. in Io.* 1.111, 113, 289-92. Origen is seeking also to harmonize these verses with Ps. 103.24: "He made all things *in Wisdom*."

[43]*comm. in Io.* 1.111.

[44]This notion of the secrets of creation had resonance not just for pagans - as G. Stroumsa suggests - but also for Jews. This was the principle underlying the practice of *ma'asah bereshit*, the interpretation of the mysteries of creation reserved for adepts. Note Wisdom 7.21-22a; 8.8.

[45]On the two *logoi*, the classic treatments remain M. Pohlenz, "Die Begründung der abendländischen Sprachlehre durch die Stoa," *Kleine Schriften* I (Hildesheim: , 1965), 79-86, and M. Mühl, "Der λόγος ἐνδιάθετος und προφορικός von der älteren Stoa bis zur Synode von Sirmium 351,"*ABG* 7 (1962), 7-56. For a recent doxography of the relevant sources, see K. Hülser, *Die Fragmente zur Dialektik der Stoiker* II (Stuttgart: Bad Canstatt, 1987), frg. 528-35. I am indebted to Adam Kamesar for indicating these resources along with many others in his richly documented article, "The *Logos Endiathetos* and the *Logos Prophorikos* in Allegorical Interpretation: Philo and the D-Scholia to the Iliad," Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 44 (2004), 163-81.

origins remain murky, the distinction had achieved currency by the time of Philo.[46] He

allegorizes Moses as the receptacle of divine thought, the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, and Aaron as the

λόγος προφορικός, the chosen instrument by which this thought is transmitted.

> Moses is mind (νοῦς) most pure and Aaron is its word (λόγος), and the mind has been
>
> trained (πεπαίδευται) to grasp holy matters in a manner that is fitting to God
>
> (θεοπρεπῶς), and the Word to translate (ἑρμενεύειν) them in a holy manner.[47]

As representative of the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, Moses perceives heavenly realities by intellectual

vision. Aaron exercises an interpretive function (ἑρμηνεύειν), in much the same way that Origen

envisages the Word transmitting the content of Wisdom.

Like Philo, Origen discerns the complementary relationship between Wisdom (λόγος

ἐνδιάθετος) and Word (λόγος προφορικός), though he sees them as pedagogical functions

discharged by a single person. This underscores the continuity between cosmos and text. The

Son that orders the elements in the universe in Wisdom to train humanity also orders the text of

the Word to edify it. Origen's second *Homily on Genesis* captures this symmetry:

> As we profess that God is incorporeal and omnipotent and invisible, so we confess with a
>
> sure and immovable teaching that he is concerned about (*curare*) the affairs of
>
> humankind, and that nothing happens in heaven or earth apart from his providence
>
> (*providentia*)… For providence is that by which he attends to and manages, and makes
>
> provision (*procurat et dispensat et providet*) for the things that happen.[48]

This same solicitude extends to the communication of these realities that providence arranges,

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[46]Philo, *mut. nom.* 66-9. He later links this contemplation to the wise mind.

[47]Philo, *mut. nom.* 208. Philo uses νοῦς and διάνοια interchangeably to signify λόγος ἐνδιάθετος; cf. *migr.* 76-81, 169; *quod deter.* 38-40, 126; Kamesar, "The *Logos Endiathetos* and the *Logos Prophorikos* in Allegorical Interpretation," 164n.2; Mühl, "Der λόγος ἐνδιάθετος und προφορικός," 17.

[48]*in Gen. hom.* 3.2.

since "it follows that he makes known what he wishes or what advantages humankind." The

wisdom with which the world is structured extends also to the communication of care in

Scripture.

As a good educator, the Son adapts himself to the diverse capabilities and needs of

humanity. In his *Commentary on John*, Origen reflects that these adaptations expanded the

number of aspects (ἐπίνοιαι) of the Savior. Although the Son possesses certain aspects in virtue

of his divinity, he "becomes many things, or perhaps all these things, as the whole creation that

can be made free needs him."[49] He appears as Wisdom "only to those who apply themselves to

wisdom in him."[50] Without such an interpreter, creation's disclosure of purpose might elude the

frail perception of human beings. Likewise, the Son functions as a physician only to those who

acknowledge the fragility of their condition. As light, he illuminates "the tender and weak eyes

of mortal man and little by little trains and accustoms [them] to bear the light in its clarity."[51]

Through creation and providence, the world and Scripture, the Son educates persons by revealing

their hidden purpose: to reveal himself.

This economy of instruction culminates in the Incarnation, in which the Son assumes the

humanity in order to transform it. Because it marks the ultimate condescension to human

weakness, it also marks a point of embarkation toward divinization. "The beginning of

learning," Origen observes in his *Commentary on John*, "is the Word made flesh, that he might

dwell among us who are able to receive him only in that manner first."[52] For those who cannot

endure divine nature in all its splendor, reception of Wisdom begins with the flesh. This

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[49]*in Io. comm.* 1.119, 123.
[50]*princ.* 2.7.3. In this passage, Origen likens the function of the Son to the ministry of the Holy
Spirit. Both descend to humanity and provide for its needs, though he associates the Son with
reason, and the Spirit with holiness..
[51]*princ.* 1.2.7.
[52]*in Io. Comm.* 1.107.

principle determines both the divine economy itself and testimony to it. Consequently, Origen explains that Christ's humanity, rather than his divinity, is proclaimed to these "infants".

In his life and teaching, Christ opens a path for transformation, an accomplishment authenticated by various signs. Origen begins with a standard apologetic trope. No other legislator ever commanded the allegiance of foreigners. Yet persons throughout the known world abandon their ancestral customs to follow Christ, even on the pain of persecution.[53] This achievement - despite formidable obstacles - testifies to the divine character of this teaching. Neither language nor culture can impede its progress.

What unites people also unites the Scriptures. In Christ, the messianic aspirations of Moses and the prophets are realized. Origen takes this fulfillment - along with the triumph of its proclamation - as dispositive proof of Scripture's divine inspiration:

> Now when we briefly demonstrate the divinity of Jesus, and exploit the words spoken
> prophetically of him [to do so], we show at the same time that the writings which
> prophesy about him are divinely inspired, and that the words that announce his sojourn
> and his teaching were spoken with all power and authority. For this reason, [these
> words] have prevailed over the elect drawn from among the nations.[54]

This demonstration of the unity and authority of the Scriptures represents a new possibility. Origen maintains that before the Incarnation, no such proof could be deduced. Only the prophets could discern the "spiritual sense" in its embryonic outlines.[55] Christ's sojourn illuminates "the inspiration (τὸ ἔνθεον) of the prophetic words" and unveils "the spiritual nature (τὸ πνευματικόν) of Moses' law." Now, even among those unable to explain its foundations, the

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[53]*princ.* 4.1.1-2. The argument reflects a similar apologetic strategy to that of Philo, who in *vit. Mos.* 2.17-36 maintains that no other legislator has attracted adherents from other nations.
[54]*princ.* 4.1.6.
[55]*princ.* 2.7.2.

Holy Spirit enables spiritual perception. Few Christians cling to circumcision or the sacrificial

cultus, because they see that Christ fulfills these types. Those who approach these Scriptures

with the care and attention (μετ' ἐπιμελείας καὶ προσοχῆς, *cum omni studio et reverentia*)

they deserve, find their vision directed from shadow to reality.

At the inception of his *Commentary on John*, Origen reflects on the question of whether

the Law and Prophets fit the definition of gospel, which he defines as "a discourse (λόγος)

containing a report of things which, with good reason, make the hearer glad whenever he accepts

what is reported, because they are beneficial."[56] It was a question contested by Marcionites and

by the disciples of Valentinus, so his response is significant. He pronounces that the Law and

Prophets are gospel, but only after Christ had come.

> before the coming of Christ, the Law and Prophets did not contain the proclamation
>
> which belongs to the definition of the gospel since he who explained (σαφηνίζοντος)
>
> the mysteries in them had not yet come. But since the Savior has come, and has made
>
> the gospel to be embodied (σωματοποιηθῆναι), he has made all things gospel, as it
>
> were.[57]

Nothing was gospel until Christ illuminated it as such, but now it encompasses all things.

Elsewhere, Origen records that when the Savior arrived, "the spiritual nature of Moses' law

came to light."[58] What the ancients cultivated "in copy and shadow" now bursts on the

consciousness of all those on whom the ends of the world has come (1 Cor. 10.11).[59]

This advent takes on eschatological significance, for it heralds the dawn of spiritual

perception. It has unveiled the truth immanent in the Law and Prophets, and thereby "showed…

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[56]*in Io. comm.* 1.27.
[57]*in Io. comm.* 1.32-33.
[58]*princ.* 4.1.6; cf. *in Io. comm.* 1.36-37..
[59]*in Io. comm.* 1.34.

to those wanting to become disciples of Wisdom what things were true in the law of Moses."[60]

This interpretation of the law points to the true worship that this first testament prefigured.

Because of Christ, all can worship spiritually, and no longer in figures. Innumerable multitudes

discern the archetypes that the law foreshadowed - though they do not always accompany this

discernment with a coherent explanation. But this new order anticipates consummation, and the

Old Testament as well as the New contains figures of the world to come.

FREE WILL AND THE EDUCATION OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSE

In this cultivation of the spiritual sense, divine providence configures both creation and

Scripture as "texts" to educate humanity. Indeed, Origen characterizes the starry empyrean as a

"heavenly tablet" and a "prophetic book" impressed with the glory of God.[61] Both the cosmos

and Scripture create an environment for human education that preserves human responsibility

and choice. This question of free will represents an indispensable feature of this pedagogical

framework. Describing this issue as "a problem of utmost urgency," Origen maintains that any

teaching that summons its hearers to renounce sin and strive for the good life depends upon

human responsibility, "for it assumes that they acknowledge that deeds worthy of praise or blame

lie within our own power."[62] At issue is the very possibility of a divine pedagogy operating in

the universe and in Scripture.

So closely does Origen associate Scripture and the cosmos in this educational program

that he describes them in relationship to each other. Addressing the contested phrase of Gen.

1.14, "Let them act as signs," he maintains that God creates the firmament to indicate rather than

to cause. God refuses to encroach upon human responsibility, and so these signifiers do not exert

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[60]*in Io. comm.* 1.34.
[61]See *in Io. comm*. 1.121; *phil*. 23.9-11.
[62]*princ*. 3.1.1.

control over people. "Rather," Origen suggests, "the whole heaven, being as it were God's book, can contain the future, as a book contains the future prophetically."[63] A certain isomorphism therefore exists between the capability of the heavens and prophetic literature to contain the future without determining it. Here, Origen draws upon Jewish tradition in which all the trials that await Israel are recorded.[64] Origen later remarks that in this respect, no disanalogy exists between "things in the law and things written in the heavens and in the stars."[65] Indeed, both can portend what is to come, but only to those trained to interpret them.

These starry signifiers exercise an important educational function for those who have advanced in their understanding and for the angelic host. Origen begins with those whose progress has carried them beyond the state of humanity:

> For those who surpass the human condition and those holy souls that have escaped the
>
> bondage of the present state, God created in the heavens beings that have been taught
>
> and will be taught by the revolution of the heavens to read the signs of God as if they
>
> were letters and characters.[66]

To these adepts, the harmony of the celestial spheres provides a grammar for interpreting manifestations of divine power. Engraved in the book of the heavens, these signs constitute [a book] worthy of God (ἐντετυπωμένων τῇ ἀξίᾳ βίβλῳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ οὐρανῷ). Just as in

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[63]*phil.* 23.15.

[64]Jubilees 32.20-26 elaborates on Jacob's vision of the ladder descending from heaven in the following manner: "And he saw in a vision of the night, and behold, an angel was descending from heaven, and there were seven tablets in his hands. And he gave them to Jacob, and he read them, and he knew everything which was written in them, which would happen to him and to his sons during all the ages. And he showed him everything that was written on the tablets." See also *Hekalot Rabbati* 6.3; *Prayer of Joseph*, frg. B. Origen knew the latter source; his mention of it in his Commentary on John forms one of our principal sources for this apocryphon.

[65]*phil.* 23.21.

[66]*phil.* 23.20. 3 Enoch 45:1ff. depicts the revelation of all the generations of the world imprinted upon a curtain (*pargod*). The angel Metatron discloses these mysteries to the patriarch "with his fingers, like a father teaching his son the letters of the Torah."

literature, the heavens contain some writing that merely informs, and other writing that both

informs and directs. Hence, the angels and powers who can discern these signs also recognize

"some for rejoicing in knowledge, others to receive as precepts."[67] In the latter capacity, the

angels read God's heavenly book to know when and how to participate in the divine economy.[68]

Conformity with these directions ensures that their work is synchronized with the movements of

providence, not random and out of place. This mirrors the effects of the "divine letters" on

humanity: they elicit disciplined (πεπαιδευμένη) rather than disorderly (ἀτάκτῳ) conduct.

Even toward the angels and powers, God exercises discretion in exhibiting these signs,

carefully apportioning knowledge to each recipient.[69] This provides fodder for Origen's polemic

against astrology. Not only is humanity in its current state incapable of divining the future from

the stars, but God has deliberately made these indications opaque to those who have not

advanced sufficiently to receive this knowledge. This principle explains the problematic

statement issued in Exod. 4.11, that God makes people blind and sighted, deaf and hearing, dumb

and speaking.[70] Origen takes this to mean that by divine providence, humankind sees in the

present, but remains blind to the future. Lack of foresight into one's future stimulates more

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[67]*phil.* 23.21. This reflects the two principal functions of the heavenly tablets that J.Z. Smith identifies in early Jewish literature: to refer to a heavenly law code (information and prescriptions), and to a book of destiny (information). *OTP* 2:714.

[68]This concern with synchronicity may have its origins in the conviction that the angelic liturgy is coordinated with its human counterpart. According to J.Z. Smith, early Jewish mystics held that the ritual chanting of the community of Israel becomes "personified in a heavenly figure named Israel who leads the celestial worship before the throne." *OTP* 2:701. He notes that in Hekhalot literature as well as in the Prayer of Joseph, this angelic Israel - "the firstborn of every living thing to whom God gives life" - functions as "the first minister before the face of God," who "calls upon my God by the inextinguishable name" (*Prayer of Joseph*, frg. A). Although the setting is not explicitly liturgical, Origen presents angelic execution of divine economy as a form of service and worship.

[69]*phil.* 23.20.

[70]*phil.* 23.11.

diligent striving.[71] Premature acquaintance with the future might make humanity complacent,

and even more vulnerable to the seductions of sin as its discipline (ἄσκησις) slackens.[72] It is

therefore expedient that we not know whether we will be good or evil, he concludes. "God, who

orders everything in the world wisely, blinds us to the future."[73]

Origen develops his understanding of the heavens as a "prophetic book" as a

prophylactic against the deterministic interpretations some placed upon the fourth day of

creation. At issue was the divine command to the heavenly luminaries to shine forth as signs

(εἰς σημεῖα) in Genesis 1.14. This issue assumed prominence, both because doctrines of astral

fatalism had widespread currency in the cultures of late antiquity, and also because many within

the faith were "distracted by the thought that human affairs may be governed by necessity."[74]

Whatever superficial appeal these doctrines hold, Origen deduces as a consequence nothing less

than "the complete destruction of human responsibility" (ἐξ ὅλων τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἀναιρεῖν).

Without free will, the criterion for discriminating praise from blame evaporates.

This consideration might be sufficient for the philosophers whose rhetoric Origen here

reproduces, but it is even more damaging to those within the faith. It undermines divine

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[71]The utility of foreknowledge was a contested subject in late antiquity. In *div.* 2.105, Cicero reports that Dicaearchus composed a tract arguing that divination was useless. Plutarch composed a defense of divination that survives only in fragments. Here, Origen may be countering the position Ptolemy advances in his manual on astrology, the *Tetrabiblos.* The Alexandrian naturalist maintained that knowledge of the future empowered one to attune one's conduct to the counsels of destiny (*tetra.* 1.3.10-17). Foreknowledge "accustoms and calms the soul by experience of distant events as though they were present, and prepares it to greet each of the things to come with peace and stability." He even observes that the Egyptians had assimilated astrology to medicine. Against this stance, Origen argues that concealment of the future is medicinal.

[72]*phil.* 23.10.

[73]*phil.* 23.10.

[74]*phil.* 23.1.

judgments no less than human judgments.[75] If one eliminates human responsibility, then one also

dismantles the panoply of educational strategies directed toward humanity. The threats

(ἀπειλαὶ) and promises of blessing (μακριότητες) predicated on a final reckoning dissipate

with it. Faith without responsibility or hope of realization becomes a futile pursuit. All the

interventions designed to cultivate it - the whole dispensation (οἰκονομία) administered through

the Law and Prophets, the advent (ἐπιδημία) of Christ, the efforts of the apostles to establish the

church - are therefore devoid of purpose as well. At stake then, is much more than philosophical

scruples; the integrity of the faith and the instruction that cultivate it depend upon human

responsibility.

There are ways to avoid these unpalatable consequences, but Origen maintains that they

fail to resolve the problem without generating new and more intractable problems. Some daring

(τολμῶντας) thinkers suppose that Christ suffered not by his own powers, but by necessity.[76]

The "good" Savior has no control over these evils, and consequently forfeits any responsibility

for them. No fault can be assessed to someone whose behavior arises irresistibly from outside

himself. Instead, some of these thinkers attribute evil activity to a "just" God, maintaining a

dichotomous tension between the "just" (δίκαιος) Demiurge, and the "good" (ἀγαθός) Savior.

Yet this strategy of shifting culpability has obvious defects. Origen charges these

thinkers with ascribing (προσγράφουσι) to God responsibility for all things evil and

blameworthy. No figure who creates or governs the world in such a way deserves to be called

"just" without violating the accepted understanding of that term. Moreover, the position that all

things must conform to astral diktat lies open to question as a determined proposition itself.

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[75]Origen develops a similar line of reasoning - that divine judgment entails human responsibility
- in *princ.* 3.1.1.
[76]*phil.* 23.1. He appears to mean the Marcionites, who distinguished between a "just" Creator
and a "good" Savior.

Those who formulate this position are either subject to the determining influence of the stars or not. If they maintain their determination by the courses of the stars, the reliability of their statements depends upon impressions communicated by an evil Demiurge. If they claim to be independent of this determination, they fall into inconsistency, since they must permit at least a modicum of freedom. The Marcionites, it seems, are hoist with their own petard.

Fatalists of every stripe err by overdetermining divine foreknowledge. Origen remarks that even the pagans posited that God knew the future, although they disagreed how God knew it: "…it is self-evident from the very conception of God that God knows each future event long before it will happen."[77] Scripture reinforces this "common conception" of divine foreknowledge. Daniel's vision of imperial succession, Isaiah's prediction of Cyrus' deliverance, and the oracle announcing Josiah's birth all purport to predict the future, an empty claim if God lacks the resources to issue successful forecasts. By both scriptural and philosophical estimates, God knows "what will certainly happen." But the very certainty of a divine prophecy - which, by definition, must happen as communicated - raises the specter of determinism. To many, what is foreknown truly is necessitated to occur, since it would be impossible for the person's conduct to be different than what God knew it would be.[78] The impossibility of events transpiring otherwise appears to erode human responsibility. Given a choice between defending either foresight or freedom, many prefer to privilege the "glorious attribute" of divine foreknowledge at the expense of what is up to us.

Origen avoids this fateful dichotomy by arguing that prospectively witnessing these events does not entail determining them. He first posits a distinction (διαστολή) between the different senses of "what will certainly happen" and then evolves a model of divine

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[77]*phil.* 23.4-5.
[78]*phil.* 23.7.

foreknowledge that preserves human responsibility. Without question, God knows "what will certainly happen." The crux of the issue lies rather in the interpretation of this statement. The conventional position construes it deterministically: the events God foreknows irresistibly come to pass, just *because* he foreknows them. But the statement hardly requires this causal gloss. If one allows that foreknowledge can operate infallibly without necessarily causing the events it foresees, it restricts the meaning to an epistemological claim. Things might have turned out differently, but God foreknows that they will not.

Favoring the latter interpretation, Origen develops a model for divine foreknowledge that separates foreknowledge from cause. The principle that Wisdom contains all causes within itself in the beginning is indispensable to this understanding.[79] At creation, God traversed (ἐπιπορεύεται) with his mind the entire concatenation of causes that constitute the future of the universe,

> seeing that because one thing occurs, another thing will follow, and that if this occurs, that will follow as a consequence, from which foundation, that will happen. And having traversed in this way to the end of all events, he knows what will happen, even though he does not at all cause any particular thing he knows to happen.[80]

The "traversal" of these events and their consequences before they occur has nothing to do with determining individual outcomes. Divine foreknowledge sees what will actually happen, but sight alone does not cause what will happen. Origen ventures an even more paradoxical (παραδοξότερον) conclusion. Just as any phenomenon is the particular cause of our perception, the future event is the peculiar (τοιάνδε) cause of the foreknowledge. "For it does not happen

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[79]This foreknowledge includes both comprehensive knowledge of each cause and effect and intimate acquaintance with how each agent will behave under different circumstances. Cf. *princ.* 1.2.2-3.
[80]*phil.* 23.8.

because it is known, but it is known because it will happen."[81]

Origen illustrates this paradox with an analogy drawn from human experience, and a biblical example. Seeing a reckless man embarking on a slippery path does not cause the man to fall. Even if an onlooker could be certain that he would falter, it would be inappropriate to blame this observer for the man's rashness. Likewise, foreknowledge in no way makes God responsible for events that are foreseen. Christ's betrayal at the hands of Judas provides another memorable example. Although Christ prophesied that Judas would turn traitor, his prediction in no way caused Judas to betray him. The certainty of his forecast had no bearing on Judas' culpability.[82] The choice was up to Judas, even though Christ predicted what decision Judas would make. Hence, the Scriptures reproach Judas for his perfidy, not Christ for his foreknowledge.

Not just praise and blame, but education depends upon this reconciliation of divine providence with human responsibility. What H.S. Benjamin designates as "ordered freedom" (*eingeordnete Freiheit*), forms a prerequisite to train humanity effectively.[83] If the universe was defective, progress would consist in a residue of accidents rather than in the results of learning. If souls were diverse by nature, rather than by choice, words of admonition (προτρεπτικοῖς) and instruction (παιδευτικοῖς) would be rendered pointless.[84] Education would be powerless to

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[81]*phil.* 23.8.

[82]Of course, free will must not to be detached from environmental context, not all of the causes of which we have control. But the only relevant consideration in assessing praise and blame is "what is up to us." Origen compares a man who cannot be temperate to a man who cannot fly. In principle, the intemperate man is capable of behaving temperately, but lacks the inclination and the self-control to do so. He is therefore held responsible for his conduct, even if he finds his sinful impulses irresistible, because he refuses to strive against them. This is altogether different from a man who cannot fly, because the latter is constitutionally incapable of flying, no matter how much inclination and self-control he possesses. *phil.* 23.9.

[83]See H. Benjamins, *Eingeordnete Freiheit: Freiheit und Vosehung bei Origenes,* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 71-98 Origen excludes chance as well as fate. A God who permits the free play of indeterminacy without any intervention is no better than the God of necessity.

[84]*phil.* 23.9.

reverse the inexorable march of necessity.

Yet experience - as well as the theoretical considerations already provided - undermines this position. Origen takes quite seriously the transformation of nature that education can produce.

> …education can take the most intemperate and savage of men, and, if they will follow her exhortation, can change them, so that the alteration and change for the better is very great, the most licentious men often becoming better than those who formerly seemed not to be such by their very nature, and the most savage changing to such a degree of gentleness…[85]

Nowhere is this evolution more evident than in the ascetic regulation of desire. He contrasts the responses to the same temptation of one man with another who "has undergone more instruction and discipline". Without having developed defenses against pleasure, the untrained man surrenders to it. But the one who has steeled himself by practice, and confirmed himself "towards the good by right convictions," masters his desires and resists these allurements.[86] The progress in regulating sexual appetites fostered by training tells against determinism.

Ascetic experience therefore reveals that free will is the locus of good and evil. Evil originates with human choice rather than innate constitution, and training can therefore rehabilitate the creature. This consideration alleviates divine liability for personal defects. To blame the Creator for the creature's faults is like holding a teacher responsible for the student's disregard for lessons.[87] It transfers responsibility illegitimately. Even here, the analogy to education needs qualification. The Word is far more unremitting in his care for humanity than

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[85]*princ.* 3.1.5.
[86]*princ.* 3.1.4.
[87]*in Io. comm.* 2.108; *princ.* 3.1.15.

any teacher is for his student: "He always puts forward what must be done, even if we disobey his commands, and give ourselves over to pleasures, and disregard his virtuous counsels."[88]

God calibrates this education to respond to the merits of each individual without encroaching upon free will. He cooperates with the exercise of human freedom in all its diversity, never resorting to compulsion or "irresistible impressions".[89] Divine foreknowledge and wisdom enables this intricate management of personality and circumstances. Because God alone knows the virtues that inhere in each person, he can account for individual needs in his instruction. He never designs trials for an individual that exceed her capability.[90] Rather, everything is arranged to profit the student.

God orchestrates even the time and circumstances of exposure to teaching to promote advancement.[91] He may refrain from administering healing therapy to a person if it would be more advantageous for him to encounter it in the future. Alternatively, he may design a battery of treatments to restore a person to well-being. Matters may be hidden or revealed. Even the hardening of the heart is remedial, a "kindly response" of God to recalcitrant wills.[92] Although the methods are various, the animating principle remains the same: "By an immortal and eternal law of equity and by the control of divine providence the immortal soul is brought to the summit of perfection."[93]

This careful supervision of human progress leads Origen to designate the Word as "the skillful farmer of all creation."[94] On this analogy, the differing wills of men represent "the tilled

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[88] *in Io. comm.* 2.108-9.
[89] *princ.* 2.1.2; 3.1.4.
[90] *princ.* 3.2.3.
[91] *princ.* 3.1.17-18; *phil.* 23.9-11.
[92] *princ.* 3.1.9-10.
[93] *princ.* 3.1.17.
[94] *princ.* 3.1.14. Elsewhere, he styles the Word "master of the universe" and "custodian of the

and the neglected land, though as land they are both of one nature."[95] Fruits and thistles grow

alongside each other. But the techniques of cultivation favored by the farmer vary considerably.

The Word tills the "land of thorns and thistles" and tends to the more productive soil all to

increase yield.

This title reveals why biblical idiom credits God as the source of growth Although

human exertions are significant, providential administration plays a much more important role.

A nautical analogy vividly illustrates this principle.[96] Having successfully weathered a storm at

sea, a sailor attributes his salvation from wreckage to God rather than his own navigational skill.

It is a grateful acknowledgement rather than a strict attribution of cause. This signals not the

inconsequentiality of his own prowess, but recognizes that God performs the greater role in this

economy. Through both Scripture and the universe, the Word superintends growth.

Origen provides a useful summary of his wide-ranging excursus on providence and free

will in *princ.* 3.1.24:

> To make progress is neither in our power apart from the knowledge of God, nor does the
>
> knowledge of God itself compel us, unless we ourselves contribute something towards
>
> the good. Neither does our power apart from the knowledge of God and the use of the
>
> power that properly belongs to us create any person for honor or dishonor, nor does the
>
> power of God alone fashion any person for honor or dishonor - unless he holds our own
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> choice, which inclines to the better or worse, as the ground of distinction.

Providence must superintend human progress by mediating knowledge of God, but this mediation

does not compel us. We must cooperate with the activity of providence. The motions of our

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city"; cf. *princ.* 3.1.18.
[95]*princ.* 3.1.10.
[96]*princ.* 3.1.18; 3.1.10-11.

own will in response to our advancing knowledge of God form the basis of honor or dishonor. This insistence on human responsibility, in some sense draws forth the varied ministrations of providence.[97] In turn, as we progress in purity, our understanding grows. This makes us more able to penetrate the mysteries of Scripture.

MYSTERIES IN SCRIPTURE AND IN THE BOOK OF THE COSMOS

God fashions both the cosmos and Scripture to cultivate the mind's spiritual senses. Indeed, Origen considers all of Scripture to be written "for the cure of the soul" (ἐπι τὴν θεραπείαν τῆς ψυχῆς).[98] Yet many scriptures seem quite devoid of these pedagogical purposes. In *princ.* 4.3.1-4, Origen compiles a catalogue of impossibilities, discrepancies, atrocities, and irregularities that seem to undermine the bible's usefulness as a medium of teaching. His response to these vexed questions is to advance a hermeneutic that maps the body (or "surface") of the text onto a substratum of spirit that trains readers at various stages up to perfection.

One might summarize Origen's hermeneutics as an attempt to reconcile the usefulness of the bible with its obscurity.[99] The latter is not incidental to the former, but forms a pedagogical

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[97]In the conclusion of his detailed monograph on the subject, Benjamins asserts that this focus distinguishes Origen from his contemporaries on free will: his conception is "im Gegensatz zu allem antiken Denken behauptet, daß nicht die Freiheit sich der Weltordnung underordnen muß, sondern die Weltordnung bei der Anordnung auf die Freiheit engestellt wurde." Benjamins, *Eingeordnete Freiheit*, 215.

[98]*in Io. comm.* 10.174. For further reflection on the uses of Scripture, see especially, R. Gögler, *Zur Theologie des biblischen Wortes bei Origenes* (Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1963), 282-364; Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure,* 108-47; H.J. Vogt, Die Lehre des Origenes von der Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift: Ein Vergleich zwischen der Grundlagenschrift und der Antwort auf Kelsos," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 170 (1990), 97-103; Elizabeth Dively Lauro, *The Soul and Spirit within Origen's Exegesis,* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 37-130; Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 193-226.

[99]The hymnic conclusion of the Community Rule (1QS) reinforces a similar point: "My eyes have gazed on what always is, on wisdom that has been hidden from mankind, on knowledge and prudent understanding hidden from the sons of men…" (1QS 11.5b-6).

strategy to benefit the variety of readers progressing to perfection.[100] He expresses this

conception using three memorable images: the distribution of keys to locked doors throughout a

single house, the regularity that governs the rules of grammar, and the celebrated image of the

spirit, soul, and body of Scripture.

Perhaps the most valuable testimony on this matter outside *princ.* 4 appears in the

prologue to the *Commentary on the Psalms*, which the compilers of the *Philocalia* preserved in

fragments. From the angelic proclamation recorded in Revelation 3.7-8, Origen declares that

Scripture has been "closed up" and "sealed with the key of David."[101] Only the "Lion of Judah"

possesses the authority to disclose this mystery. Mining Scripture for further references to sealed

books and keys, the Alexandrian exegete settles on Isaiah 29.11-12 and the dominical rebuke in

Luke 11.52, in which access to higher truth is prevented. This obscurity characterizes not just

these isolated texts, but the entire corpus of Scripture, "which is beyond question full of enigmas,

and parables, and dark sayings… hard to be understood by humankind, whose ears can discern

no more than faint echoes of the divine words."[102]

If the Scriptures confront the reader with obscurity, they nonetheless furnish the means

for illumination. In explaining how this works, Origen defers to a tradition that he claims to have

learned from his Jewish master.[103]

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[100]Dawson develops this point by noting the plenitude with which this understanding invests the text: "The Spirit, then, has written a single text for two different audiences: the small elite group of intellectual Christian seekers of γνῶσις, and the larger multitude of simple believers. But the Spirit did not wish to risk dividing the community into two distinct readerships by producing a single text susceptible of two utterly different readings. Rather, the Spirit made possible two readings of a single text that could finally cohere as a single, harmonious, integrated reading by a single community" (58).

[101]*phil.* 2.1.

[102]*phil.* 2.2.

[103]It is hard to know much about this anonymous Hebrew teacher; see references in *princ.* 1.3.4; 4.3.14; *in Ier. Hom.* 20.2.2. I am indebted to Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 62n132 for these

The whole inspired Scripture resembles, on account of its obscurity, many rooms that are

locked shut in a single house. A key lies next to each room, but it does not correspond to

it, and so the keys for the rooms are scattered, each not corresponding to those [rooms]

that they lie beside. And it is a substantial labor both to find the keys and to match them

to the rooms which they are able to open.[104]

Analogously, the only way to resolve the difficult of Scripture is to investigate other passages

that contain the answer: "We understand these obscure Scriptures when we take starting points

for understanding not from any other place than from other passages which have the

interpretation dispersed throughout them."[105] Paul's injunction to compare "spiritual things with

spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2.13) seems to Origen to endorse this hermeneutical strategy.[106]

This strategy reflects Origen's conviction that a coherent spiritual purpose animates all

Scripture. He insists that these words issue "with scrupulous accuracy" from the Holy Spirit

through human intermediaries to the writings themselves. The faithful transmission of this

revelation forms the foundation of a hermeneutic that privileges the sequence and form of

Scripture in its entirety. Without this attention, "the regularity (ἀναλογία) might escape our

notice, since the Wisdom of God extends to the whole of inspired Scripture, even up to the mere

letter."[107]

Here, Origen draws upon the language of the *grammaticus* to make his point. For

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references.

[104]*phil.* 2.3. My translation follows that of Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 62-3, with slight modifications.

[105]*phil. 2.2.*

[106]As Peter Martens points out, Origen relies primarily on this Pauline statement to secure his point. Yet he also appeals to John 5.39 ("Search the Scriptures") in *princ.* 4.3.5, and to Deut. 19.15/2 Cor. 13.1 ("Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses") in *in Matt. comm.* 10.15; *in Ier. hom.* 1.7.3. Cf. Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 61n.122.

[107]*phil.* 2.4.

ancient grammarians, ἀναλογία designates "the combination of words consistent [with reason]" (συμπλοχὴ λόγων ἀκολούθων, *conexus orationum consequentium*).[108] This predictable regularity grounds the rules of usage.[109] The second century Alexandrian grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus invoked ἀναλογία against those who favored a more inductive approach:

> …some people think that even if they don't pay close attention to theory, they will still get the grammar right. These people are a lot like those who have acquired the form of words simply by use, without any help from the facts of the written Greek tradition, and the regularity (ἀναλογία) inherent in their use… if they make a mistake with some form, they cannot correct their error because of their inherent ignorance.[110]

Grammar can be codified into rules because nothing is arbitrary. To ignore the regularity that informs usage forfeits the means to correct misuses, or to ferret out answers in difficult cases.[111] In the same way, a consistent purpose animates all Scripture. This entails that even the most inscrutable parts are not devoid of divine purpose.

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[108]Charisius 149.22; Doniatianus 275.12.

[109]In the ancient literature this "analogist" position is sometimes contrasted with its "anomalist" counterpart - the view that morphology and syntax is random and unpredictable. Cf. Aulus Gellius, *noct. Att.* 2.25. Modern scholars have increasingly abandoned any notion that "anomalism" ever existed as a consistent position. In a seminal article, D. Fehling demonstrated that all existing traditions of this dispute depend upon Varro, and provided plausible evidence to show that Varro constructed rather than reported the debate. See Fehling, "Varro und die grammatische Lehre von der Analogie und der Flexion," *Glotta* 35 (1956), 214-70; 36 (1957), 48-100. As David Blank points out, the tension stood rather between the position of rationalists such as Apollonius and empiricists such as Sextus Empiricus, who taught that language lacked such logical consistency, and could only be taught as ἐμπειρία, not a τεχνή. Origen is decidedly in the latter camp. Blank, *Ancient Philosophy and Grammar: The Syntax of Apollonius Dyscolus* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 3-5, 11-19.

[110]Apollonius Dyscolus, *synt.* 1.60.

[111]Blank summarizes this position by pointing out, "Once the cause of irregularity is understood, the irregularity is no longer a threat to the rule, since it follows a rule itself, and it is the knowledge of the rule which gives the analogical/rational system its flawless continuity (συνέχεια) allowing it to deduce the correct form of any and every linguistic phenomenon." Blank, *Ancient Philosophy and Grammar,* 17.

To defend this proposition, Origen again turns to the divine superintendence of creation. This maneuver reflects the close association between cosmology and hermeneutics that Marcionite and Valentinian interpreters observed. He maintains, "anyone who has accepted these Scriptures as coming from the Creator of the World must be convinced that whatever difficulties confront those who investigate the story of creation, similar difficulties will be found in the study of the Scriptures."[112] Providence administers the cosmos with skill down to the most inconsequential organisms. Nothing escapes its concern. In the same way, he maintains that Wisdom is communicated throughout the entirety of Scripture:

> …holy providence has delivered superhuman wisdom to the human race through the Scriptures, having sown, so to speak, saving words, [and] traces (ἴχνη) of wisdom in each letter as far as possible.[113]

Insofar as letters and words are capable of containing these profundities, they mediate this saving revelation. The traces of wisdom appear in each letter, leaving neither jot nor tittle out of place. Far from depreciating the letter as a mere cipher or "shell" of spiritual meaning, then, Origen regards it as an indispensable repository of meaning.

Origen makes a similar point at the beginning of *princ.* 4, and his comments frame the hermeneutic he proposes in the ensuing chapters. If the uninstructed fail to perceive divinity in the administration of the world, it is no cause for wonder. Some activities "show themselves

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[112]*phil.* 2.5.

[113]*phil.* 2.4. An example of this scrupulosity appears in the same exposition of the first Psalm, which introduces the commentary on the first twenty-five Psalms. Noting that numbers bear significance, and that the Creator exploited both the general scheme and the arrangement of details, Origen observes that the canonical books of the Old Testament number twenty-two, which corresponds to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. He maintains, "For as the twenty-two letters may be regarded as an introduction to the wisdom and the divine doctrines given to men in those characters, so the twenty-two inspired books are an alphabet of the wisdom of God and an introduction to the knowledge of realities." *phil.* 3.1.

most plainly to be works of providence." Others are more inscrutable, even to the point of

fostering disbelief. Yet this reflects not the absence or ineptitude of divine supervision, but rather

its wisdom. With "unspeakable skill," the Educator hides the plan of providence from those who

lack the maturity to appreciate higher knowledge. Only those who have advanced sufficiently

can penetrate the obscurity and see continuity beneath it. This holds true for Scripture as well.

Concealed under the figures of a "poor and humble style" lies the "hidden splendor" of its

teaching. Just as inability to discern the divine administration of the world does not discredit

divine providence, so failure to comprehend the "hidden splendor" of Scripture does not nullify

the divinity of its revelation.[114] In both cases, the interpreter must cultivate reverence and

humility wisdom to perceive the wisdom veiled in mystery.

This insight illuminates both the character of Scripture and how it ought to be

interpreted. Origen maintains that the principal function of Scripture is "to announce the

connection (εἱρμόν) that exists among spiritual events."[115] The Word of God organizes the

contents of Scripture to edify readers with this higher wisdom. In many cases, the events

narrated correspond with these "mystical events," producing a pleasing symmetry between the

historia and *theoria*. At other points, however, discrepancies threaten to undermine these

purposes. The suitability of a hermeneutic rests in its ability to reconcile these problems with the

divine intentions.

Origen articulates this understanding with a celebrated image that deserves close

consideration:

It is necessary, therefore, to register the meaning of the holy writings in a threefold way

upon one's soul, so that the simpler one may be edified by the flesh of the Scripture, as it

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[114]*princ.* 4.1.6-7.
[115]*princ.* 4.2.9.

were (this is what we call the obvious interpretation), while the one who has made some

progress [may be edified] by its soul, so to speak, and the one who is perfect… may be

edified by the "spiritual law" containing "a shadow of the good things to come."[116]

Few portions of Origen's surviving oeuvre have been subjected to such close analysis as this.

Scholars have spilled much ink in defining these senses and determining the consistency with

which Origen applied this understanding. Yet, as Peter Martens points out, this misses the

unified purpose of the various "senses" to edify its readers and to guide them to salvation. He

calls attention to the purpose clause that concludes this section: "For just as a person consists of

body, soul, and spirit, so in the same way does the Scripture, which has been arranged

(οἰκονομηθεῖσα) by God to be given for humanity's salvation (εἰς ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίαν)."[117]

The point, Martens declares, is that the scriptures "are an instrument of divine providence,

intended to advance the salvation of its readers and hearers."[118]

But there is more. Two facets of Origen's anthropology condition this image. First, the

parts of the self inventoried as body, soul, and spirit recalls our earlier discussion about Origen's

understanding of the self not as a composite of parts so much as a stage of progress or regress

from the realm of spirit. This seems to me to be precisely the point of this image. A person

"consists" not of stable components, but of a labile spirit that advances or recedes from its

goal.[119] Those at various stages of progress receive different forms of edification from the text,

yet without irreconcilable tensions erupting within the text itself.

Second, his understanding of the principle of homonymy (as well as the goal of

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[116]*princ.* 4.2.4.
[117]*princ.* 4.2.4.
[118]Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 197.
[119]For cognate uses of συνίστημι in Origen, see *c. Cels.* 6.61; *in Matt. comm.* 17.27; *frg* 31 *in 1 Cor*.

restoration to spiritual communion) ensures continuity between the inner and outer realities.

Origen sees these inner (spiritual) and outer (bodily) dimensions of human identity as

symmetrical. He explains this perspective in his *Dialogue with Heraclides*:

> Just as the outer human being has the same name as the inner, so also do the parts of his
>
> body, with the result that each part of the outer human being has a name corresponding
>
> to a part of the inner human being.[120]

Each part, and each sense in the outer realm has an analogue in the inner realm. No conflict

exists between these parts. Rather, developments in the outer self mirror the transformation

taking place within. By applying this analogy of the human personality with Scripture, Origen

emphasizes the unity rather than the division of the bible in its pedagogical orientation.

So what does one make of the litany of scriptural difficulties Origen lists in *princ.*

4.3.1ff.? Origen begins by criticizing hermeneutics that are unworthy of this divine purpose.

Jews and the *simpliciores* regard only a foreshortened sense of the letter as legitimate. In most

cases, he maintains, this approach produces useful interpretations.[121] This surface meaning

improves the multitude, for it was the Holy Spirit's intent to edify with the letter. But reading in

this restrictive manner also yields impossibilities, discrepancies, and scandals.[122] The Creator

behaves in a morally questionable manner, and his law takes on problematic dimensions.

Marcionites, Valentinians, and Basilideans seek to alleviate these tensions by quarantining the

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[120]*dia. Her.* 16.

[121]*princ.* 4.2.9; 4.3.4. Against those who would dissolve the historical completely in the spiritual sense, Origen maintains that far more passages are historically true than are exclusively spiritual. The incarnation, for example, resists reduction to a spiritual event, and the command to honor one's parents provides important moral guidance. Origen emphasizes not the subordination of *historia* to *theoria*, but the necessity of *historia* leading to *theoria*. Even where the letter is useful, higher matters may be interwoven.

[122]Although Origen suggests that the letter edifies in most circumstances, he elsewhere observes that the sheer volume of discrepancies makes an exclusively literal hermeneutic impossible. Cf., *comm. in Io.* 10.10, 14, 18-20, 27.

objectionable parts of Scripture or by taking refuge in mythopoeia.

All these strategies falter, Origen contends, for a single reason: "Scripture is not understood in its spiritual sense, but is interpreted according to the bare letter" (ἡ γραφὴ κατὰ τὰ πνευματικὰ μὴ νενοημένη, ἀλλ' ὡς πρὸς τὸ ψιλὸν γράμμα ἐξειλημμένη).[123] This is the heart of his hermeneutic. In his *Commentary on John*, he maintains that the task of the interpreter is to translate (μεταλαβεῖν) these material signifiers into the spiritual gospel. "For what," he enquires, "is the interpretation (διήγησις) of the gospel perceptible to the senses unless it is translated into the spiritual gospel?"[124] Taken in isolation from the spiritual sense, the letter creates insoluble problems for the interpreter. Yet these textual aberrations serve a pedagogical purpose. They conceal teaching "with words about the visible creation," and reserve them for those with the capacity to receive them. To those incapable of proceeding beyond the letter, the "spiritual sense" remains shrouded in mystery.[125] Incongruities in the text deflect further scrutiny until the reader has matured.

The same incongruities that deter the simple stimulate those who have advanced in their training to heed the spiritual sense. "If the utility of the law and the sequence (τὸ ἀκόλουθον) and refinement of the narrative (τῆς ἱστορίας) were completely self-evident," Origen reasons, "then we would not know that there was anything else that could be understood beyond what is obvious (παρὰ τὸ πρόχειρον) in the Scriptures."[126] Hence, where the narrative departs from the "sequence of intellectual truths," the Scriptures "wove into the story something that didn't happen, sometimes an event that couldn't happen, and at other times an event that could have happened but didn't." By exposing the inadequacies of the "bare letter," these "stumbling blocks,

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[123]*princ.* 4.2.2.
[124]*in Io. comm.* 1.45.
[125]*princ.* 4.2.8.
[126]*princ.* 4.2.9.

hindrances, and impossibilities" (σκάνδαλα, προσκόμματα, ἀδύνατα) point the way to edification.[127]

Just as in its direction of the universe, Wisdom organizes Scripture to reveal its riches only to those sufficiently advanced to receive them. This providential organization trains first with self-evident truths, but later makes use of mysteries that deter the immature but stimulate the advanced to further investigation. In Scripture, the Word translates from bodily signifier to spiritual signified. He is, as it were, "the interpreter of the mind's secrets."[128] In the texts of both Scripture and the cosmos, then, mysteries point to the necessity of an interpreter to preserve the edifying substratum that underlies these enigmas.

The problems that arise in the interpretation of Scripture, like those that arise from the contemplation of creation, come from human limitations rather than divine incompetence. It makes no sense to blame God for improvidence simply because one understands creation only with difficulty or not at all. Rather, the proper response to these mysteries is reverence. Origen contrasts this approach with that of his opponents. After repudiating the Creator in favor of "a god of their own invention," their contrivances and speculations remain unable to resolve the aporias they identify in the text. Whatever expediency these strategies might offer seems compromised by theological deficiencies. It would be wiser to be content with "our conception of God" and refrain from "godless and unholy opinions."[129] These mysteries will be unveiled

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[127]Peter Martens mentions an important exception to this principle. There are particular cases that violate this principle of careful organization. It is important to note that these are rare, isolated instances. But in such cases, the aberrations reflect the writer's poverty of style rather than an indication of higher wisdom dwelling in the humility of the written word. For examples of this, see *c. Cels.* 1.62; 6.1; *in Io. comm.* 13.364-67; *in Rom. Comm.* 3.1. In such cases, Martens (pace Neuschäfer) sees the operation of an important grammatical technique: the critique of style, or the κρίσις ποιημάτων. See Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 60-61n.120.
[128]*princ.* 1.2.3.
[129]*phil.* 2.5.

when progress has been made.

For many, this veil obscures these doctrines more than it reveals them. Against apostolic intentions, many neglect the contemplative sense (*sensum theorium*) these figures signify. Preoccupation with the "body" of the text leads the interpreter to seek bodily referents rather than spiritual vision.[130] This was even more true before the advent of Christ. Then, only the prophets and a cadre of others graced by the Holy Spirit possessed this spiritual perception (*sensus*): "scarcely anywhere was there one out the whole people who could get beyond the literal meaning and perceive something greater"[131] Their anticipation of earthly rather than spiritual fulfillment explains why the Jews rejected Christ. But Origen also represents many Christians as embracing this hermeneutic, if not its consequences. Although the literal gospel can still edify, it cannot be pursued to the exclusion of the heavenly wisdom it signifies. Those without acquaintance with this higher wisdom discern only the "letter," and ascribe physical characteristics to God.[132] Not only does this hermeneutic fail to extract fulfillments worthy of the divine promises. It also generates absurdities and impossibilities.

This pedagogical conceit governs the revelation of mysteries in both the world and the text. Koch observes that for Origen, the world of spiritual archetypes remains hidden from fallen souls. Only by arranging images and likenesses (*imaginem aliquam et similitudinem*) in the visible world is it possible for those living in the flesh to gaze upon these celestial realities. Wisdom mediates between these realms by harmonizing the cosmos for the education of humanity (*als Mittel zur Erziehung der Menschen*).[133] In his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Origen reflects on this mediation at length, suggesting that Paul teaches

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[130]*princ.* 2.11.1-3.
[131]*princ.* 2.7.2.
[132]*princ.* 1.1.2.
[133]Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis,* 45-6.

that the invisible things of God are understood by means of things that are visible, and

that the things that are not seen are beheld through their relationship and likeness to

things seen. He thus shows that this visible world teaches us about what is invisible, and

that this earthly scene contains certain patterns of heavenly things. So, it is possible to

mount up from things below to things above, and to perceive and understand from the

things we see on earth the things that belong to heaven.[134]

In hermeneutics as in cosmological speculation, the visible patterns lead to philosophical

contemplation: the grammar of the "text" culminates in spiritual vision. The *historia* of the

narratives enshrine "deeper truths than the mere record of history seems to reveal and may

contain a spiritual meaning in many passages, using the letter as a kind of veil for profound and

mystical doctrines."[135] This harmonious crafting of the cosmos and the faint outlines of higher

wisdom in the biblical text heighten the longing for the reality of things implanted in creation.[136]

The communication of spiritual wisdom through such humble instruments is cause for

wonder. Origen meditates on this at length in his *Commentary on John*, remarking, "How great,

then, must be our understanding, that we may be able to understand in a worthy manner the word

which is stored up in the earthen treasures of paltry language."[137] When the words on the page

are read, its sound reaches all ears. The surface meaning is evident to the bodily senses. But the

proper interpretation connects the bodily sense to its spiritual counterpart. To advance to this

higher wisdom, he concludes, one must possess "the mind of Christ".

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[134]*in cant. comm.* 3.12. He speculates that this harmonizing of the visible world to celestial
prototypes might extend even to such inconsequential objects as the mustard seed. Philo held a
similar position, that God planted Eden not as a paradise for himself (since he fills and contains
all things), but to discipline (ἀσκῶν) humanity in virtue, using earthly wisdom as a copy
(μίμημα) of the heavenly archetype; *leg. all.* 1.44-7.
[135]*princ.* 3.5.1.
[136]*princ.* 2.11.4.
[137]*in Io. comm.* 1.24.

Acquisition of this mind of Christ entails a transformation that this life can never

exhaust. The archetypes that these "copies and shadows" signify reside in a transformed cosmos.

On the new earth exist "the true and living forms of that divine service that Moses handed down

through the shadow of the law."[138] The end will consist of a return to the beginning, in which the

saints will inhabit a place of rest. Origen expressly avoids presenting this consummation as a

translation to the realm of ideas, a concept he regards as "alien to our mode of reasoning."[139]

According to Paul, he notes, creation will be delivered from corruption, not destroyed by it. The

tension lies rather between the now and the not yet, the inauguration of the new kingdom and its

consummation. This deliverance includes the renovation of both the spiritual and the bodily

natures that God has created. Consequently, the Creator restores the body to a state of beatitude..

> …we must understand that it is not the case that there is one body that we now use in
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> lowliness, corruption, and weakness, and that there will be a different one that we will
>
> use in incorruption, power, and glory. Rather, when it has cast aside these infirmities,
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> this same body will be transformed into an object of glory and made spiritual, so that
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> what was formerly a vessel of dishonor will become a vessel of honor and a habitation of
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> blessedness after it has been purified.[140]

God presides over the spiritual nature by educating the mind and will, gradually

remaking them after his image. As this instruction develops spiritual perception, it progressively

draws them to "that other earth and the instruction that is in it."[141] There, the Educator trains

them in the immutable precepts of heaven. This teaching transforms the denizens of the new

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[138]*princ.* 3.6.8. Here, Origen associates this service with the divine directions for the tabernacle recorded in Exod. 35.40: "See that you make all things according to the form and likeness which was shown you on the mount."
[139]*princ.* 2.3.6.
[140]*princ.* 3.6.6.
[141]*princ.* 3.6.9.

earth by persuasion rather than by fiat. It takes place "gradually and by degrees" (*paulatim et per partes*), over the *longue durée* of immeasurable ages.[142] Hence, Origen designates Paradise variously as a "lecture room," and "a school of souls" (*auditorio vel schola animarum*).[143] He compares this stage of instruction to its earlier dispensation.

> As in this earth, the law was a kind of schoolmaster (*lex paedagogus*) to those who by it were appointed to be led to Christ and to be instructed and trained in order that after their training in the law they might be able to receive the more perfect precepts of Christ more easily, so also that other earth, when it receives all the saints, first imbues and educates (*imbuat et informet*) them in the precepts of the true and eternal law in order that they may more easily receive the precepts of heaven which are perfect and to which nothing can ever be added… [After this preparation] Christ the Lord, who is king of all, will himself take over the kingdom; that is, he himself will instruct those who are able to receive him in his character of wisdom, after their preliminary training in the holy virtues (*post eruditiones sanctarum virtutem eos*), and will reign in them until such time as he subjects them to the Father who subjected all things to him.[144]

As before, progress depends upon individual merit and capability. Some will hasten to perfection; others will advance by fits and starts. The Educator persists in his work of improvement until all are rendered worthy to receive God.

In this process, Christ will restore stability to creation by establishing divine rule. Here, Origen's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15.28 against subordinationist critics reveals his

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[142]*princ.* 3.6.6.
[143]*princ.* 2.11.6.
[144]*princ.* 3.6.8-9.

understanding of this state of perfection.[145] From Paul's declaration that the Son will be

subjected to the Father after the Father has placed all things in subjection to the Son, some

interpreters inferred that the Son was inferior to the Father. Origen challenges this reading first

by noting its absurdity. Why should the status of an entity to which all things are not yet subject

suddenly decline when all things *do* become subject to him? Such an interpretation makes the

Son's coronation a degradation.

This incongruity exposes the root of the error. Subjection consists not in the stigma of

subordination, but in the restoration of rule. "Such men," Origen maintains, "do not understand

that the subjection of Christ to the Father reveals the blessedness of our perfection and

announces the crowning glory of the work undertaken by him."[146] Christ has returned creation to

its God. The transfer of the kingdom to the Father takes on both cosmic and interpretive

dimensions. It includes both the "totality of all ruling and reigning that he has amended

(*emendaverat*) throughout the universe" and "the revised and repaired precepts (*instituta*)

demanding obedience and subjection from the human race."[147] With rule restored, the mind

contemplates God alone as "all in all." This assimilation to God represents the final

consummation of spiritual vision, and the bodily nature itself will be resolved into the supreme

condition of contemplation.[148]

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[145]*princ.* 3.5.7.
[146]*princ.* 3.5.7.
[147]*princ.* 3.5.7.
[148]Jerome alleges in *ep.* 124.10 that Origen used the Pauline statement of God being "all in all" to teach that all bodily nature must be changed into "fine and spiritual bodies" (*omnem naturalem corpoream in spiritualia corpora et tenuia dicit esse mutandam*), and the whole of matter must be converted into a single body of surpassing purity (*cunctamque substantiam in unum corpus mundissimum et omni splendore purius convertendam*), and eventually resolved into the divine nature (*redigatur… in eam substantiam… in divinam videlicet*).

CHAPTER 4: THE GRAMMAR OF GRACE: PHILOLOGY AS DIVINE PEDAGOGY

In this chapter, I intend to trace how Clement and Origen exploit philological techniques from Hellenistic scholarship to interpret the Bible. My approach mirrors that taken by Bernard Neuschäfer and Peter Martens in their studies of Origen's reading practices.[1] No comparable study of Clement's exegesis exists. Neuschäfer and Martens use principles of interpretation enumerated in Dionysius Thrax's ancient grammar to structure their studies of Origen's use of these instruments, though each takes some liberty with this model.[2] Both provide an invaluable service by cataloguing instances of these exegetical techniques. Consequently, my debt to their research should be obvious. Yet, I seek to connect the appropriation of these grammatical techniques with the larger issues of the use of pagan scholarship in Christian teaching and the pedagogical functions of scripture in Clement and in Origen.

I begin by examining three principal techniques mentioned in the Dionysian repertoire: textual criticism, scientific enquiry, and literary analysis. My investigation of textual criticism focuses exclusively on Origen, since his compilation of the Hexapla occupies such an important position in the history of biblical scholarship, and since little can be gleaned of Clement's textual criticism from his extant corpus.[3] After defining scientific enquiry and literary analysis, I

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[1]Peter Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of an Exegetical Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2012); Bernard Neuschäfer, *Origen als Philologe* 2 vols. (Basel: Reinhardt, 1987). NUNLIST!!!!!
[2]The critical edition of Dionysius Thrax is G.Uhlig, *Dionysii Thracis: Ars Grammatica* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883). Scholia are available in A. Hilgard, *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammaticam* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901). An English translation of the *Ars Grammatica* appears in A. Kemp, "The *Teckhne Grammatike* of Dionysius Thrax," in *The History of Linguistics in the Classical Period,* ed. D. Taylor (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1987). For information on the role of the *grammaticus* in late antiquity, see R. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity,* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997); B. Schouler, "Un métier: la grammaire," in Brigitte Pérez and Michel Griffe, *Grammariens et philosophes dans l'Antiquit*é *gr*é*co-romaine* (Montpellier: Presses universitaires de Méditeranée, 2008), 15-52.
[3]This is not to say that Clement did not engage in such textual criticism; he complains about those who "twist the Scriptures to suit their own appetites" and denounces ascetic opponents who

illustrate each of these techniques with examples drawn from Clement's and Origen's writing. I then examine two other principles that have significant implications for their biblical interpretation: *Homerus ex Homero*, and prosopological analysis. I conclude this survey with a brief reappraisal of the role of allegory in these Alexandrian authors. Both Clement and Origen make extensive use of allegory, but scholarly preoccupation with it has come to overshadow the philological techniques that ground it. Throughout, I argue that Clement and Origen marshal this panoply of interpretive techniques to draw out the pedagogy of the biblical text.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM (τὸ διορθωτικόν)

If the Hexapla had survived as the sole product of Origen's biblical scholarship, his legacy as an interpreter might have been less rich, but also less complicated. Without the distracting problems of his allegorical flights of fancy and his speculative metaphysics, the Origen of the Hexapla maintains the respect of modern scholars. The effort required to compile this polyglot synopsis has never failed to impress them. Even R.P.C. Hanson, an unreconstructed critic of Origen, offers grudging admiration for this achievement.[4] These scholars have responded not only to his diligence, but also to his apparent modernity. Here is an ancient interpreter who anticipated the orientations and methods of critical scholarship by centuries. Like textual critics today, Origen compared variations to repair a manuscript tradition that had become rife with corruptions. He displayed an interest in recovering the original Hebrew that distinguishes him from his contemporaries. Although his controversies with the Jews may be a source of embarrassment today, he shows a genuine interest in Jewish traditions and

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insert "shameless" before God in *str*. 3.4.38.1-5, discussed below. But he does not engage so self-consciously in a philological program of textual criticism as Origen.

[4]Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

interpretations. In short, modern scholars prefer Origen the text critic to Origen the allegorist because he shares their own aims and methods.

However appealing this portrait of Origen as the archetypal text critic might appear, it remains a chimera. It depends on an anachronistic reading of the evidence that ignores the practices of textual criticism in late antiquity. It depends upon selective reading, neglecting tensions in Origen's programmatic statements about the Hexapla and omitting contrary evidence in his practice of textual criticism. Above all, it depends upon the estrangement of his textual criticism from his interpretation. The adulation for the Origen of the Hexapla comes at the expense of Origen the expositor. Yet no evidence supports this cleavage between the two.

In the following section, I hope to reconcile these conflicting portraits by demonstrating that Origen perceives textual criticism as a dimension of interpretation. I begin by exposing the deficiencies of attempts to account for the Hexapla as an apologetic instrument or as a text-critical apparatus to recover the purity of the Hebrew original. Each explanation captures an aspect of this project, but neither reads Origen's programmatic statements clearly enough, and neither accounts for his practice of textual criticism. I offer a closer reading of these programmatic statements and an examination of a few illustrations that challenge these existing accounts. Behind Origen's remedy of the texts lie the same principles he posits for interpreters and interpretation: the interpreter participates in the saving pedagogy of divine providence through exposition of the divine Scriptures.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM AS APOLOGETIC RESOURCE

A number of scholars have suggested that Origen compiled the Hexapla as an apologetic resource.[5] In their discussions with Jews, ignorance of textual and translational variations

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[5]Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1880), 124-5. Sebastian

disadvantaged Christian controversialists. Their Jewish interlocutors could discredit certain

interpretations of their Scriptures by pointing to textual corruption, mistranslation, and

misrepresentation. Isaiah 7.14 formed the *locus classicus* of this phenomenon. Like Justin,

Irenaeus, and Tertullian before him, Origen exploited the rendering of the Hebrew *almah*

("young woman") as παρθένος ("virgin") in the LXX as a harbinger of the virgin birth of Jesus.[6]

Yet this translation conveys a specificity in the Greek that is absent in the Hebrew. Aquila,

whose Greek translation maintains fidelity to the Hebrew, recognized this defect, and translated

almah as νεᾶνις ("young woman"). A Jewish antagonist - or even an educated pagan - could

neutralize this Christian proof text by showing that it turns on a mistranslation of the Hebrew.

To reclaim this oracle for Christology, the apologist must substantiate his case with further

philological evidence. Where his antecedents had relied upon this prophecy as dispositive proof,

needing no further explanation, Origen anticipates the objection. He parries with a lexical

consideration. In at least one passage, Israelite legislation seems to treat *almah* as "virgin" (Deut.

22.23-24). The context of Isaiah 7.14, which heralds the provision of a miraculous sign to Ahaz,

also seems to require the translation "virgin" rather than "young woman". "What kind of sign,"

Origen asks, "would that have been--a young woman who was not a virgin giving birth to a

child?"[7] Whether or not one finds this line of reasoning persuasive, it would be impossible

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Brock, "Origen's Aims as a Textual Critic of the Old Testament," in F.L. Cross, *Studia Patristica* 10 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), 215-18.

[6]Justin, *dial. Tryph.* 43.8; 67.1; 83.3; Irenaeus, *haer.* 3.21.1; Tertullian, *adv. Marcion.* 3.13; Origen, *c. Cels.* 1.34. For a detailed investigation of these arguments, see Adam Kamesar, "The Virgin of Isaiah 7.14: The Philological Argument from the Second to the Fifth Century," *JTS* (1990), 51-75. An important dimension of this question concerns to what extent Jews engaged in textual criticism. The evidence suggests a spectrum of opinions in Alexandria - which may have bequeathed upon Clement, Origen, and the other members of the Alexandrian school a variety of alternatives. See M. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), esp. 19-37, 112-30.

[7]*c. Cels.* 1.35. He also maintains that Immanuel, "God with us," is more fittingly the progeny of

without sensitivity to differences of transmission. The Hexapla serves as an exhaustive reference for such apologetic efforts.

A statement from his *Letter to Africanus* appears to confirm this intuition. In what Timothy Law designates "the only direct quote from Origen expressing what might be called a purpose statement" for the Hexapla, the Alexandrian proclaims that controversies with the Jews provided the stimulus for his labors. The immediate occasion came from within the church. Julius Africanus, an accomplished scholar in his own right, had challenged the authenticity of two narratives that appeared in the Septuagint. Philological anomalies and the absence of the Legend of Susannah and Bel and the Dragon in the Hebrew scriptures inclined him to disparage them as secondary accretions. Because they appear in the Septuagint, Origen defends retaining them. Yet his deference toward this authoritative translation does not absolve him of his obligation to study these texts:

> I am not making these statements because I am reluctant to search the Jewish texts, to compare (συγκρίνειν) all our [texts] with theirs, and to notice the variations (διαφοράς) among them. If it isn't arrogant to say so, we have largely accomplished this (πεποιήκαμεν) to the best of our ability… We are training ourselves not to be ignorant of the texts [circulating] among them, so that (ἵνα) in our discussions with the Jews, we might not cite to them readings that do not appear in their manuscripts (ἀντιγράφοις), and so that (ἵνα) we might exploit the texts circulating among them even if they don't appear in our books. For if we have prepared ourselves in this way, they won't look down at us under questioning, nor will they ridicule Gentile believers for being ignorant

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chastity than of intercourse.

of the authentic readings (ἀναγεγραμμένα) [circulating] among them, as is their custom.[8]

From this description, one can distill the components and the purpose of this enterprise. Origen represents this research as nearing completion, suggesting that he embarked upon it while still resident in Alexandria. He remarks that the compilation of the Hexapla entailed study of Jewish texts, synoptic comparison with his own manuscripts, and observation of any discrepancies among them. He provides little indication of how he used this information, except to gesture at its apologetic benefits. In particular, he wants to avoid the fruitless tactic of marshaling readings that do not appear in Jewish texts, and so to make some use of variations that are absent from the Christian Scriptures. He vividly conveys the derision Jews direct toward those who remain ignorant of these textual variations. This condescension derives from a proprietary conviction that the "authentic readings" circulate only among them. The Hexapla eliminated this disparity by providing access to the Jewish Scriptures.

Despite its superficial appeal, this explanation remains open to criticism. An apologetic purpose explains the interest in preserving the Hebrew readings alongside the Septuagint, but does little to account for the presence of the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Unless one countenances Nautin's suggestion that Origen built the Hexapla on the foundation of an existing Jewish synopsis, the function of these versions remains difficult to ascertain.[9] This,

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[8]*ad Afr. ep.* 9.
[9]P. Nautin, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 333-42. This hypothesis remains viable, but alternative explanations seem just as likely. His case for the Jewish source of the Hexapla turns on two considerations: the placement of the Septuagint, and the transliteration of Hebrew into Greek. If Origen considered the Septuagint authoritative, Nautin reasons, he would never have relegated it to the fifth column. The first, or even third column would make more sense. Moreover, Jews, not Christians, would have the interest and capability of recording the Hebrew and transliterating it into Greek. Although it is not possible to dismiss Nautin's conclusions, they remain underdetermined by the evidence he provides. Nautin assumes that the

of course, is only a hypothesis. No evidence contemporary with Origen exists to substantiate it.

Moreover, the position the Jews staked out in these controversies remained consistent: their texts

preserved the "authentic readings" because they approximated the Hebrew original.

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placement of the translations reflects their valuation, but offers no evidence to support this conjecture. Rather, the columnar order reflects proximity to the sense of the Hebrew on the one hand and to the Septuagint on the other: Aquila's translation is the most literal rendering of the Hebrew, and the versions of Symmachus (traditionally identified as an Ebionite Christian) and Theodotion (whose version of Daniel remained authoritative for the early church) provided the most suitable comparanda for the Septuagint. It is equally presumptuous to suggest that only Jews could have contributed the first two columns. The presence of Hebrew-speaking converts in early Christianity is not as dubious as Nautin suggests, making the labor practicable. Christians might have entertained interest in the Hebrew for a variety of reasons. If there were confrontations with Jews, the ability to cite Scriptures to them in their own tongue would have silenced their derision. But other considerations, such as theories of language, might have been piqued Christian interest. As Naomi Janowitz has demonstrated, Origen shared with the later rabbis the belief that the Hebrew language possessed immanent power, but only when correctly pronounced (e.g. *c. Cels.* 1.25). Translations of Hebrew dissipated its potency. Matthew Martin has even suggested that this might explain the organization of the Hexapla, though his case lacks the corroborative evidence necessary for confirmation. Cf. Janowitz, "Theories of Divine Names in Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius," *History of Religions* 30.4 (1991), 359-65; Martin, "Origen's Theory of Language and the First Two Columns of the Hexapla," *Harvard Theological Review* 97.1 (2004), 99-106.

A more serious liability comes from the absence of polemical applications of the Hexapla in the sprawling expanse of Origen's literary corpus. This paucity stands in tension with Origen's "purpose statement." If apologetic concerns alone animated his labors, why does the reader encounter so few examples of this function in his writing? This is even more striking in light of his claim that Origen maintained contact with numerous Jews, and among them, some rabbis.[10]   Few of these encounters seem to have been controversial. More often than not, his interest lies not in confuting Jewish opponents, but in learning from them, especially on interpretive *cruces.[11]*

Even where disagreements with the Jews arise, the character of the discussion is rarely polemical, and the appeal to textual differences is rarely determinative. In his *Commentary on Romans,* Origen mentions that he pressed his Jewish interlocutors on the defensibility of interpreting certain legal prescriptions in the Pentateuch literally.[12] They demurred, suggesting that discrepant texts were the least pressing of the differences that divided them. These disappointing results, coupled with the ascendant status of Christianity after Origen's death, changed the tenor of Christian exchanges with Jewish counterparts. The *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of the Hexapla reflects this trajectory. Tracing its use in the biblical scholarship of late antiquity, Bammel observes that the apologetic and polemical uses of the Hexapla recede, although they still remain.[13] This datum highlights a fundamental incongruity in the "apologetic" explanation. In their recent study, Grafton and Williams estimated that a copy of the Hexapla must have taken

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[10]*c. Cels.* 2.31.
[11]Nautin, *Origène*, 347.
[12]*in Rom. comm.* 2.9; cf. also *Lev. hom.* 4.7.
[13]C.P. Bammel, "Die Hexapla des Origenes: Die *Hebraica Veritas* im Streit der Meinungen," *Augustinianum* 28 (1988), 133-149, esp. 149: "… so hätten wir mehr von wissenshaftlichem Interesse und weniger Polemik bermerkt. Aber auch da, wo man es am wenigsten erwarten sollte, sogar in den Einzelheiten einer Übersetzung, können polemische Tendenzen im Hintergrund stehen."

up forty volumes of 800 pages (400 leaves) each; others have suggested that it may have been

even larger.[14] The staggering effort exhausted to produce this apparatus seems disproportionate

to the rewards of scoring a few debating points.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM ANCIENT AND MODERN

One finds references to the Hexapla and textual criticism not in Origen's apologetic

output, but in his commentaries and homilies.[15] In the very same section of his riposte to

Africanus cited above, Origen suggests a complementary purpose for these endeavors: "so that

we might not approve any counterfeit (τι παραχαράττειν) to the detriment of the churches

under heaven, and give pretexts for those who seek opportunities to slander those in [our] midst,

and to level accusations against the eminent members in our community."[16] Whatever the

identity of these agitators, Origen remains concerned to preserve the integrity of the text for the

benefit of the community. Similarly, he remarks that he employed diacritical signs with the

intention of "making such matters known *to us*" (ἵν' ἡμῖν γνώριμον ᾖ τὸ τοιοῦτον).[17] If he

pursued his textual criticism as a resource for encounters with those outside his community, he

also pursued it to profit those within it.

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[14]A. Grafton and M. Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book* (Cambridge: HUP Belknap, 2006), 104-5. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), xcvii, suggests fifty volumes. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint in Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 101, estimates that in a large modern critical edition, it would take up about 6,500 pages.
[15]Nautin, *Origène*, 347. He observes caustically, "Or ni ses commentaires si ses homélies n'avaient pour but de convertir les Juifs."
[16]*ad Afr. ep.* 9.
[17]*ad Afr. ep.* 7. Emphasis Timothy Law's. He remarks, "Origen gives no indication that this text [the Hexapla] was intended for use outside the church. Even though the scholars of the church might have been aided by such a tool as the Hexapla in their evangelistic mission, the mention of the apologetic use of the Hexapla should not be read as a rationale for the work of the Hexapla as a whole." Timothy Law, "Origen's Parallel Bible: Textual Criticism, Apologetics, or Exegesis?" *Journal of Theological Studies* 59 (2008), 14. Following J. Wright, he thinks the apologetic statement of purpose cited above functioned simply as a convenient defense of the project against its critics. De Lange and Nautin are more skeptical, and perceive Origen's comments as disingenuous.

But what purpose did these endeavors serve within the community? The answer turns on

his concern to "heal" the text of its corruptions. Such treatment became necessary because of

textual heterogeneity. In his *Commentary on Matthew,* Origen reflects on the pervasive variation

among the manuscripts.[18]

> But now it is clear that the variation among the manuscripts has become considerable,
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> whether from scribal neglect or from certain others' perverse boldness, [whether from
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> those who disregard] the emendation of the Scriptures, or even from those who add or
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> subtract according to their own fancy as they emend.[19]

In this exposition, *varia lecta* originate as acts of omission and commission. The failure of

scribes and interpreters to discharge their duties promotes different readings. By neglecting

textual criticism, these persons allow variations to proliferate. Others carry out emendation, but

follow idiosyncratic procedures, leaving a pastiche of discordant approaches.

Origen describes his own methodology as a sanative procedure:

So, with God's help, we have discovered that we can remedy (ἰάσασθαι) the variation

among the manuscripts of the Old Testament by making use of the remaining versions as

a criterion. For, when were uncertain of the Septuagint's reading because of the variation

among the manuscripts, we settled the matter on the basis of the remaining versions. We

retained the agreement among them. We designated with an obelus each of the

[readings] that does not appear in the Hebrew (although we dared not eliminate them at

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[18]The dominical response to the rich young ruler seems to have furnished the basis for his
comments: "And unless the manuscripts were discrepant with one another in many different
details, with the consequence that all the manuscripts of Matthew's gospel did not agree with
each other, and likewise, [did not agree with] the other gospels, then someone would consider
himself irreverent for suspecting that the Savior's command to the rich man, 'You shall love your
neighbor as yourself' had been interpolated."

[19]*in Matt. comm.* 15.14.

all), but we added with asterisks each of the other [readings], so that it might be evident

that we added readings from the other versions in agreement with the Hebrew text that

did not appear in the Septuagint. Whoever wants to can use them; but if someone takes

offence at this procedure, then he is free to accept or reject them as he wishes.

What this remedy intended has generated controversy among commentators, so it is best to begin

with the indisputable elements of this description. It is significant that discrepancy among the

texts of the Septuagint - not discrepancy among the versions, or disharmony with the Hebrew -

creates the need for healing. Although Origen does not specify how one "heals" the divergent

manuscripts, he does identify as his criterion the "remaining versions". This shorthand must

indicate the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Each of these *recentiores*

features a slightly different construal of the Septuagint, offering a range of translational and

interpretive options.[20] Harmony among the manuscripts raised no concerns; the Hexapla simply

preserved this agreement among the versions and the Septuagint. Where the readings diverged,

Origen used the diacritical markings that the Alexandrian editors of Homer had introduced a few

centuries earlier. He states that he and his assistants obelized portions of the Septuagint that did

not appear in the Hebrew. Although he acknowledges their secondary character, he remains

emphatic about retaining them in full. Asterisks designate the portions of the text that depart

from the Septuagint to follow the Hebrew. Origen concludes this description with a reminder

that he conceived the Hexapla as a critical apparatus rather than a definitive edition of the text.

Anyone with the requisite training can come to his or her own conclusions on how to remedy the

text.

Origen's description seems transparent enough, but it leaves open the question of

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[20]For a helpful overview of scholarly perspectives on the character of each of these translations, see Law, "Origen's Parallel Bible," 4-9.

purpose. A dominant strand of scholarship construes this purpose as a refinement of the Septuagintal text and the recovery of the "correct" version. Jellicoe pronounces, "His ultimate object was the discovery of a 'true' text of the LXX, and to this end he brings to his aid the other Greek versions known to him which might be of help in elucidating the Hebrew."[21] The latter clause introduces an important provision. On this interpretation, Origen regarded the Hebrew as superior to the Septuagint. To demonstrate this, Nautin adduces evidence from the commentaries and homilies, identifying numerous points at which Origen appeals to the Hebrew to correct the Septuagintal reading.[22] This was no uncritical pursuit for the Alexandrian. He distinguishes between intentional and unintentional sources of textual corruption, and recognizes that the text of the Hebrew itself was contested. The resemblance of this portrait to contemporary scholarship is not coincidental. On this interpretation, Origen becomes a progenitor of modern textual criticism, and his Hexapla an anticipation of the *apparatus criticus* that these critics deploy to reconstruct ancient texts.[23]

This attractive narrative has sometimes blinded scholars to the tensions it creates with the other positions Origen staked out. If his ultimate concern was to bring the Septuagint into conformity with the Hebrew, why had he touted the apologetic potential of his undertaking? Nautin and de Lange suggest that Origen remained disingenuous on this matter, preferring to cloak his intentions in the more palatable explanation of an evangelistic initiative.[24] His endorsement of the apologetic uses of this apparatus functions as a convenient subterfuge for this pursuit of the *Hebraica vera*. The bind this stance creates does not escape Nautin: "dans une

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[21]Jellicoe, *The Septuagint,* 102.
[22] *phil.* 14 on Gen 1.16; *in Ps. comm.* praef.; Ps. 2.1.Nautin, *Origène*, 351-61.
[23]So Nautin, *Origène,*353: "Mais il veut atteindre, au delà de la Septante et au delà de l'hébreu des exemplaires juifs, le texte hébreu primitif, c'est-à-dire *le texte original de la Bible*" (emphasis his).
[24]Kahle and Hanson take this stance as well.

Église qui avait canonisé une version grecque de la Bible, Origène affirmait la prévalence de l'hébreu."[25]

But the tension is sharper than Nautin admits. This position contradicts Origen's repeated confessions of the authority of the Septuagint. In his *Letter to Africanus,* Origen confronts the question of whether readings that appear in the Septuagint but are absent in the Hebrew remain binding for the church. He enquires, "When we notice such [variations], should we designate as spurious the copies used within our churches, and order our community to dispense with the sacred books in circulation among them, and coax the Jews, and persuade them to hand over copies that are pure and devoid of fabrication?" If he privileged the Hebrew rather than the Septuagint as the "canonical" version, then his response should have been positive. But Origen presumes a negative response. He contends that authority resides in the Septuagint, not in the Hebrew.[26] Even where he obelized portions of the Septuagint, he nonetheless retained them, leaving intact the "monuments of the fathers" (*Afr.* 8). This was not mere posturing, since the form of the Hexapla reflects the Septuagint's centrality every bit as much as it reflects the Hebrew's priority. Moreover, if Origen regarded the Hebrew as his criterion, there would be little point in including the other versions in his account, much less in affirming these versions (rather than the Hebrew) as his criterion for "healing" the texts. As other scholars have observed, these *recentiores* serve as poor expedients for reconstructing the Hebrew.[27] This

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[25]Nautin, *Origène,* 361.

[26]So Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in Service of the Church* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 73-74. Cf. *ad Afr.* 3-7. Sgherri has provocatively suggested that Hebrew played a relatively minor role in Origen's textual criticism, and that he carried out his purification of the Greek version without minimal reference to the Hebrew. Although there are exceptions to this convention, it cannot be easily dismissed. Sgherri, "Sulla valutazione origeniana dei LXX," *Bib* 58 (1977), 11-13.

[27] "Aquila can hardly be considered a reliable guide with respect to the original guide with respect to the Greek text, and Symmachus does not mirror the Hebrew on a purely mechanical level, lexically or syntactically." Law, "Origen's Parallel Bible," 12.

position accounts for Origen's practical interest in the Hebrew, but contradicts his testimony at too many points to remain plausible.

Aside from these incongruities, this explanation suffers from the anachronistic understandings of textual criticism that commentators have imposed upon them. The affinities between Origen's practice and that of contemporary scholars ought not blind one to the vast differences between them. Timothy Law vividly captures the liabilities entailed by this strain of interpretation:

> Even if we grant some sort of text-critical motivation behind Origen's work, we are still without justification for seeing that text-critical work in the same way as we understand LXX textual criticism to operate today. Nowhere does Origen indicate that his intention was similar to the type of activity instigated by Lagarde and Rahlfs, and continued by the Göttingen Septuaginta-Unternehmen.[28]

An investigation of Origen's application of the Hexapla reveals considerable diversity. He used the Aristarchian signs inconsistently, making it difficult to identify his intentions. On some occasions, he designates a reading as secondary, yet still comments on it. Frequently, he catalogues variations without discriminating between the original reading and the later accretions, as contemporary scholars do. Rather than advance these distinctions, Origen simply registers the differences, leaving the judgment to the interpreter's discretion. This follows the principle he articulated in his Matthew commentary, cited above: "Whoever wants to can use them; but if someone takes offence at this procedure, then he is free to accept or reject them as he desires."[29]

HOMER THE THEOLOGIAN: EDITORIAL AND GRAMMATICAL PRACTICE IN LATE

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[28]Ibid., 11.
[29]*in Matt. comm.* 15.14.

ANTIQUITY

The brand of textual criticism Origen practiced has its roots not in the modern tradition,

but in the conventions devised by the Alexandrian editors of Homer and enshrined in the culture

of the *grammaticus*. Both sought to contain the pervasive variation that accompanied textual

transmission. Ancient books were susceptible to the inaccuracies that manual reproduction

entailed.[30] With only a modicum of hyperbole, Marrou notes that the manuscript constituted

"such a fluid medium that… there were hardly ever two copies alike."[31] These discrepancies

often impinged on the meaning, making it imperative to clarify the reading as a precondition for

interpretation. The extent and character of this variability ensured that textual criticism did not

develop as a specialized pursuit independent of exegesis, but as a component of it.

When the grammarians developed their methodology, they made emendation of the text

(*diorthosis*) the initial stage of interpretation. This procedure took on particular urgency in the

classroom, where the necessity of bringing the student's copies into conformity with the

instructor's manuscript was acute.[32] Grammarians followed the conventional designations the

Alexandrian editors had evolved to stabilize the manuscript tradition. First, these editors

developed a standardized system of punctuation and accentuation to clarify the text for readers.

This improved the reliability of the text by removing a significant source of ambiguity and

obscurity. Second, in the margins of the manuscripts, they employed diacritical signs to indicate

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[30]Reynolds notes, "Texts copied by hand are quickly liable to corruption; to make an accurate copy of even a short text is a harder task than is generally realized by those who have not had to do it." Reynolds, *Scribes and Scholars* (Oxford: OUP, 1974), 7.

[31]H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1956), 230. The situation had only marginally improved by the third century; Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature,* (Oxford: OUP, 2000),111, avers, "Christian literature during the second and third centuries… is marked by the malleability of texts."; cf. also 105-11.

[32]I am indebted to Heine, *Origen*, 74.

points of interest and spurious additions. Finally, they produced scholia and commentaries to treat the salient features of the text and resolve the more refractory problems of interpretation.

Although these methods represented advances in literary criticism, they differ markedly from the protocols of contemporary scholars. One tendency that earned the Alexandrians notoriety was their propensity to designate lines as spurious (ἀθετεῖν) for reasons of impropriety (ἀπρέπεια).[33] L.D. Reynolds instances a revision suggested for an unflattering statement put in the mouth of Agamemnon, who refuses to accede to demands to release Chryseis (*Il.* 1.29-31). An Alexandrian scholiast disparaged these lines, commenting: "the lines are athetized because they weaken the force of the meaning and the threatening tone… it is also improper for Agamemnon to make such comments."[34] Such concerns naturally extended to theological matters.[35] Hence, Reynolds notes that Zenodotus condemned the lines in which the goddess Aphrodite carries a seat for Helen of Troy as inappropriate. Other critics athetized the affair between Ares and Aphrodite recorded in *Odyssey* 8. For Origen, too, ἀπρέπεια formed an important criterion for discriminating among readings where theological issues were at stake.

If the Alexandrians adopted a radical stance toward textual revision, they nonetheless followed a method that preserved the text intact, leaving it up to the reader to accept or reject their proposed emendations. Reynolds notes that this moderation carried significant implications for the transmission of Homer to subsequent generations: "… the Alexandrians avoided the temptation to incorporate all their proposed alterations into the text itself, and were content to note proposals in their commentaries; but for this restraint, our text of Homer would have been

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[33]Reynolds, *Scribes and Scholars,* 12. Origen adopts this *terminus technicus* on occasion.
[34]Ibid., 11-12.
[35]René Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 267-81.

seriously disfigured."[36] In fact, he observes that very few of these suggested revisions entered

into the textual tradition. Of the 413 redactions that Zenodotus prescribed, only six appeared in

the extant corpus of papyri and manuscripts of Homer. Even Aristarchus, the most influential

critic, was far from commanding universal acceptance.[37] Here again, Origen's textual criticism

mirrors the editorial practices developed at the Museion. His insistence on reserving judgment to

the reader marks him as a direct descendent of this tradition.

PROVIDENCE AND PEDAGOGY: ORIGEN AS TEXTUAL CRITIC

However, Origen also deviated from the conventions of the *grammaticus* that he had

learned early in his career. Embedded in his response to Africanus is a characterization of the

work on the Hexapla. There he describes his (and his assistants') labor as "examining

(γυμνάζοντες) the meaning (τὸν νοῦν) of the Scriptures in all their editions and variations." It

is striking that Origen extends this search for meaning to "all the editions and variations" of the

Scriptures. Not just the readings he favors, but all the variations serve as potential subjects of

interpretation.

This practice of commenting upon all the variations as well as the preferred reading in

the Septuagint demands investigation. Why did Origen bother with readings that he deemed

secondary? The most plausible explanation draws on Origen's understanding of how providence

fashions Scripture to edify the church. From his rejoinder to Julius Africanus, one can discern

his conviction that divine providence superintends the translation of the Septuagint. Origen asks

in disbelief,

> So then, even after it has furnished in the holy scriptures a source of edification
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> (οἰκοδομήν) for all the churches of Christ, does divine providence neglect those it has

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[36]Ibid., 12.
[37]Ibid., 12.

"purchased with a price," those "for whom Christ died" - [Christ] who, although he was

his Son, God, who is love, "did not spare, but delivered him up for all of us, so that with

him he might freely give all things to us?"[38]

Providence does not abandon the church once it has furnished the inspired Scriptures. It governs

the translation and transmission as well as composition of these writings. Origen maintains this

without minimizing the corruptions that had crept into the manuscript tradition of the Septuagint.

Not every variation is equally inspired. But his reverence for the Septuagint includes the

possibility of edification through variation.

Later in his preaching ministry, Origen models this procedure. Although most copies of

Jeremiah 15.10 read, "I have not helped; no one has helped me," he favors the Hebrew rendering:

"I have not owed, no one has owed me."[39] Less attested in the manuscript tradition, comparison

to the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion confirms the authenticity of the Hebrew.

Yet Origen refuses to limit his exposition to the Hebrew, pointing out that it is necessary to

discuss the commoner reading as well. He places the received version in the context of

instruction, perceiving the "help" as the benefit auditors who progress in wisdom bestow upon

their instructor. If, on the other hand, the Lord laments, "no one has owed me," he intends that

he is willing to lend spiritual valuables, but no one has yet accepted this funding. It stands both

as a testament to divine mercy and as a reproach to those who refused this generous offer. No

one owes anything because none has accepted the Lord's offer to retire his debts (cf. Lk. 7.40-

41). Origen suspects that faulty reproduction may account for the more common reading.

Philological concerns notwithstanding, he appears to privilege the Hebrew reading because he

finds its meaning more edifying. The language of debenture expresses a more profound truth

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[38]*ad Afr. ep.* 8.
[39] *in Ier. hom.* 14.3-4; 15.5.

than the language of instruction, even if both are legitimate interpretations.

In a discussion on the scope of the "world" (κόσμος) that the Word saves in his *Commentary on John*, Origen considers a textual variation on Hebrews 2.9. Most copies read, "*apart from* (χωρίς) God he tasted death for all," but other manuscripts declare, "he tasted death *by the grace* (χάριτι) of God."[40] Here again, Origen refuses to settle the matter. His death separated him from God, but this privation brought grace and salvation upon humanity. Indeed, to restrict the scope of this salvation to humanity is to diminish its plenitude and power. Origen claims that even the stars profit from this death.[41] The magnitude of this achievement provides the foundation for an important Christological accolade. The Word claims the title of Great High Priest "since he restores all things to the kingdom of the Father, causing the things that are lacking in each of the creatures to be supplied that they may be able to receive the Father's glory."[42]

These practices illustrate that Origen's conception of remedying (ἰάσασθαι) the texts cannot be assimilated to modern or ancient methodologies. Rather, it fits in Origen's unique schema of salvation as education. To the best of my knowledge, no commentator yet has observed that nearly every instance in which he draws from the lexicon of healing describes an act of divine salvation.[43] In *princ.* 3.1.13-18, he describes the different regimens that God prescribes, noting that the diversity of souls demand a diversity of cures. The Great Physician

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[40]*in Io. comm.* 1.255. This variation continues to appear in critical editions of the New Testament.

[41]*in Io. comm.* 1.257.

[42]*in Io. comm.* 1.258.

[43]TLG lists 62 occurrences of ἰάσασθαι in Origen's writing. Nearly all describe Jesus' healings, or develop salvific metaphors. It does not appear to have been regularly used of variant manuscripts in other grammarians and literary critics, although Nünlist points out that it was sometimes used to express the effects the poet had on its audience. Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 146n45.

adapts his remedies to his patients, applying gentle or severe treatments depending upon the nature of the disease. Both the timing and the tenor of these cures contribute to the restoration of health.

Even destruction can promote healing. The oracle in Jeremiah 13.14 scandalized some readers: "I will not spare and I will not pity their destruction."[44] To them, this unsparing pronouncement seemed incompatible with divine goodness. But Origen points out that virulent diseases require strong medicines.

> Consider the healer also, how, if he spares surgery from what needs surgery, if he spares sterilization from what needs to be sterilized because of the pains that accompany such aids, how the sickness festers and worsens. But if he proceeds in a bolder way, cutting and cauterizing, he will heal by not showing mercy, by appearing not to pity him who is cauterized and given surgery. So also God's plan is not for just one person but for the entire world. He oversees what is in heaven and what is everywhere on earth. He looks then to what is fitting for the whole world and everything that exists. He looks also, as far as possible, to what is useful to the individual, yet not if it profits the individual at the expense of the world.

However well-intentioned, a gentle prescription that fails to correct the disorder is no cure at all. It cannot even claim benevolence, for it does not heal the sufferer. Origen concludes by widening the scope of this healing. Not just the individual, but the whole cosmos is being healed under the supervision of divine providence.

Similarly, the variety of cures frustrates any monolithic definition of textual criticism. Origen follows neither modern critical principles nor ancient literary conventions exclusively.

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[44]*in Ier. hom*. 12.5.

Apologetic concerns remain present, but not determinative. Rather, edifying content, superintended by divine providence, provides the criterion for his textual criticism. Just as the remedy must be adapted to the disease, so textual criticism must be adapted to the problem it seeks to resolve. This configuration demands that the critic "heal" the disorder of the texts just as the archetypal Educator heals the cosmos through his Word.

SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY (τὸ ἱστορικόν)

The rendering of τὸ ἱστορικόν as "historical analysis" can narrow the scope of the methods practiced under its rubrics. Although this dimension of criticism entertains questions of facticity, it is better understood in the original sense of ἱστορία : as a scientific enquiry into the events narrated in the text, designed to illuminate the meaning. Interpreters exploit a variety of scholarly disciplines to clarify troublesome matters in the text. They might enlist the services of astronomy to explain a passage that mentioned the stars, knowledge of ancient customs to elucidate the practices narrated in a historical narrative, zoology to elucidate references to animals, or philosophy to disentangle a speculative question. In short, the character of the literary problem determines the discipline employed to resolve it.

Nearly every page of Clement and Origen's writing glitters with these encyclopedic insights. The range of information they marshal in their expositions impresses even their critics. Yet such displays of erudition can also be distracting to modern readers. It is therefore important to bear in mind the purpose of these exercises. What can come off as tedious fact-finding or pedantic indulgence in fact attempts to expose the rich structures of meaning dwelling in these details. This analysis follows from their conviction that each detail edifies the reader and contributes to the text's pedagogical intent. It demolishes the canard that the Alexandrians disregarded the plain sense of the text to embark on allegorical flights of fancy. Nothing could be further from the truth. They quarried every detail for significance, and used all the means at

their disposal to explain how each facet of the text contributed to this meaning.

Peter Martens suggests that Origen may have had this in mind when he commended the traditional curriculum of study (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία) to his erstwhile student Gregory:

> I urge you to extract from the philosophy of the Greeks all those general lessons and instructions that can serve Christianity, and whatever from geometry and astronomy will be useful for interpreting the holy scriptures. So, whatever the children of the philosophers profess about geometry and music, grammar, rhetoric, and astronomy, as ancillaries to philosophy, we also may profess concerning philosophy itself in relation to Christianity.[45]

Far from replacing one canon with the other, Origen sees these various pursuits as expedients to exegesis. Knowledge of geometry and grammar form part of a love of wisdom that, properly channeled, helps to unearth the treasury lodged in the niceties of the text.

Origen furnishes an example of this enquiry that also impinges upon his textual criticism. Despite ample manuscript evidence to the contrary, he suspects a textual corruption respecting the activities of Jesus recorded in John 1.28.[46] The majority of texts read, "These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan where John was baptizing." However, this location fails to tally with the topography of the Holy Land, at least as Origen understands it. The Bethany Origen knows is far removed from Jerusalem and the Jordan. However, a town called Bethabara lies in the vicinity of the Jordan. Drawing on his acquaintance with Palestinian topography, Origen deduces that a careless scribe must have mistaken Bethabara for Bethany.

This geographical detail is pregnant with implications. Origen remarks that Bethabara means "house of preparation," an apposite location for Christ to prepare the way for his ministry

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[45] *ad Greg. ep.* 1. See Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 50.
[46] *in. Io. comm.* 6.205.

by submitting to baptism. Bethany, the "house of obedience," belongs to a later station in the

unfolding of John's narrative. Origen sees this application of scientific enquiry as not only

compatible with his spiritual exegesis, but even indispensable to it. Insight about names and

locations provides an integral component in this quest for meaning: "… we must not neglect

precision concerning the names if we want to understand the holy scriptures completely."[47]

Another area of Origen's interest concerned meteorology. In discussing Jeremiah 10.13

("And he has raised up the clouds from the last of the earth, and he made lightning for the rain"),

he recalls information from his studies that helps to illuminate the latter portion of the verse. He

observes that "clouds" signify "holy ones" in the Old Testament. After all, Psalm 35.6 declares,

"Your truth ascends to the clouds," a statement that encompasses more than just the firmament in

its reference. Origen further underwrites this claim by referring to 1 Kg. 18.44, which narrates

how at Elijah's invocation, a cloud appeared "like the trace of a man."[48] Once he has established

this conceit, he explains that the summoning of these clouds from the end of the earth indicates

the elevation of the humble. But what then does one make of the reference to lightning and rain?

They might seem incongruous with this reading.

To resolve this question, Origen draws on his knowledge of metereology. He mentions

contemporary speculations about the cause of lightning to explain how these holy ones might

produce "lightning":

> Certain people maintain about these phenomena that the production of lightning from the
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> clouds arises from clouds that are rubbed against each other. For what happens with

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[47]*in. Io. comm.* 6.207; cf. 6.216. Origen also uses this instance to show the inaccuracy of the names recorded in the manuscripts. He elaborates on this by investigating the *varia lecta* surrounding Jesus' encounter with the Gerasene/Geradene/Gergasene demoniac, exploiting similar topographical details to exclude certain interpretations and to privilege others. Cf. 6.208 - 212.

[48]*in Ier. hom.* 8.3.1.

flintstones on earth, that when the two stones collide with each other, fire arises, they say happens also for clouds. When the clouds are struck against each other during storms, lightning occurs.[49]

This insight allows him to contend that from the conversation of holy persons - Moses with Joshua, Jeremiah with Baruch, Paul with Silvanus - lightning is created, along with rain. The lightning illumines the people of God, while the rain nourishes growth among them. What appears to be praise of divine sovereignty over the natural world becomes a statement about the appointment of leaders to edify God's people. An excursus on metereology permits Origen to maintain consistency in this interpretation.

Martens points out one of Origen's responses to Celsus demonstrates his familiarity with the competing schools of medicine.[50] Celsus had ridiculed the fragmentation of Christian identity into numerous sects. Not to be outdone, Origen retorts that all teaching that promoted life fostered the creation of sects. He instances the variety of schools that flourished within the study of medicine as the linchpin of his argument.[51] Elsewhere, he shows particular attention to medical teaching of the time. His exposition of the levitical practice of taking up the censor from the altar and filling one's hands with "finely composed incense" (Lev. 16.12) forms a point of departure for one such reflection. Origen takes this cultic reference in a Christological direction, with priestly rituals foreshadowing the actions of the "Great High Priest." His hands should be filled then, with holy works performed for the human race. Works pleasing to God, including

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[49]*in Ier. hom.* 8.4.2. The causes of thunder and lightning fascinated ancient scientists. Seneca devotes the longest book (Book II) of his *Naturales Quaestiones* to the causes and effects of thunder and lightning. He remarks that all authorities agreed that both thunder and lightning were produced simultaneously by clouds, and that the light emanating from them indicated the presence of fire. He agrees with Origen that the collisions and friction among clouds causes these phenomena. Cf. Seneca, *nat. quaest.* 2.12.2ff.

[50]Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 52.

[51]*c. Cels.* 3.12.

"explanation of the providence of God," function as fragrant offerings of incense.[52] Of particular

note to Origen are those incenses that run clear (frankincense), purify (myrrh), and protect

(galbanum, onyx). By drawing on his knowledge of these medicinal herbs, Origen can

enumerate the various offerings the church can consecrate to its God.[53]

In many historical narratives, Origen finds that discussion of customs facilitates

understanding of the text. When he comes to Matthew's account of the trial of Christ, he uses

his understanding of both Jewish and Roman conventions to heighten the drama of Pilate's

desperate attempts to avoid executing Jesus. As Pilate shrank from issuing the order to crucify

his captive, he tried to transfer responsibility to the crowd gathered in his chambers. "What

should I do about Jesus, who is called Christ?" (Mt. 27.22ff.) he asks, "What evil has he done?"

Origen contends that what appears to be vacillation on Pilate's part is actually an attempt to

intensify their guilt and shame them into abandoning their violent intentions. When this strategy

failed, he hoped to duck responsibility for putting an innocent man to death by washing his hands

of the matter. Origen recognizes that this was an unusual measure for a Roman proconsul

authority:

> Pilate, however, seeing that nothing [he was doing] was making any progress, availed
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> himself of a Jewish custom (*Iudaico usus est more*). [He did this] because he wanted to
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> appease them not only with his words concerning Christ's innocence, but also by his
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> very action, if they wanted [to listen to him]; however, if they didn't [want to listen, he
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> wanted], to condemn [them]. In doing this, he was not following any settled practice of

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[52]*in Lev. hom.* 9.8.2, 5. The second reference connects providence with scriptural interpretation.
[53]For another excellent example of medical information driving an interpretation, see *in Io. comm.* 20.3ff., which uses embryological information to distinguish between Abraham's "seed" and his "children" in the literal sense.

the Romans (*faciens non secundum aliquam consuetudinem Romanorum*).[54]

Pilate departs from precedent and even adopts a Jewish custom in his attempts to avoid responsibility for crucifying a guiltless man. His strategy succeeds in magnifying the guilt of the Jews, Origen remarks, yet fails to absolve him of responsibility. This interesting detail intensifies the suspense of the passage, and allows for greater elaboration of Pilate's conduct.

Clement endorses a similar position that comprehension of divine pedagogy requires attention to these preliminary disciplines. He finds the study of dialectic the most conducive to biblical interpretation, even maintaining that those who wish to track the progress of divine teaching (τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τῆς θείας διδασκαλίας) must approach Scripture with "a more dialectical method."[55] So convinced was Clement of the utility of this discipline in addressing the scriptures that he devoted the eighth book of the *Stromateis* - which immediately preceded his exposition of the Bible - to laying out principles of logic. He shows a similar enthusiasm for other pursuits, including music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, taking from each discipline its contribution to the truth.[56] He illustrates the utility of these disciplines both for interpreting the scriptures and for reforming manners. As in Origen, knowledge culled from these investigations sheds light on the mysterious portions of Scripture and enriches the life of the scholar.

Clement explores these disciplines at length in *str.* 6.11, providing memorable instances of how these enquiries illumine the text's pedagogy. Following the Epistle of Barnabas, he pays close attention to Abraham's conscription of 318 men to defend Lot in Genesis. The Greek

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[54]*in Matt. Comm. ser.* 124. There is some conflict with a fragment preserved in a later Greek catena, which suggests that this practice was prevalent among the Romans as well as among the Jews.
[55]Clement, *str.* 1.28.179.4.
[56]Clement, *str.* 6.10.80.1ff.

numeral to express this number, ΤΙΗ, suffuses this narrative with Christological significance. The Τ foreshadows the cross, while the ΙΗ represents the initial letters of Jesus in Greek. Clement elaborates even further on various symmetries and properties of 318.[57] He notes its symmetry with the cosmic order, its connections with Levites, and with various stages of human development. Despite the baroque character of this exposition, it impresses the meaning of the text upon the reader with surprising clarity.

> It indicated that those who had fled to the sign and the name [that is, to the cross and to Christ, as signified by ΤΙΗ or 318] belonged to Abraham with respect to salvation, and that they became the masters over the captives and over the numerous unbelieving nations that followed them.[58]

He also enlists the study of music to elucidate the descriptions of David playing the lyre and prophesying as he praised God. He ventures that the lyre adumbrates Christ and Christ's followers. By heeding the direction of their choirmaster, they live in harmony with God, one another, and themselves:

> If the people who are being saved are designated "a lyre," they are understood [to be] glorifying [God] musically, by being strummed in harmony with the inspiration of the Word and the knowledge of God to produce faith.[59]

Even the disparate parts of Scripture - the law, the prophets, and the apostolic writings - join in this harmony, orchestrated carefully by the Word. If this imagery seems far-fetched, it

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[57]This technique of numerological interpretation is known as *gematria,* and was common in early Jewish and Christian circles. E.g., *Genesis Rabbah* 95.3, *Deuteronomy Rabbah* 1.25, *ep. Barn.* 9.7-9. On the development of numerological symbolism in early Christian literature, see J. Kalvesmaki, "Formation of Early Christian Theology of Arithmetic: Number Symbolism in the Late Second and Early Third Century," Diss. Catholic University of America, 2006.
[58]*str.* 6.11.84.4.
[59]*str.* 6.11.88.4.

nonetheless functions as a dominant metaphor in Clement's *Exhortation to the Greeks* (*prot.*).

There, Clement depicts the unfolding drama of salvation as the Word's "new song" that revives

the cosmos and its inhabitants by its harmonies.[60] Those who disregard the riches of these

preliminary studies fail to discern the symphony that it produces with Scripture. So long as

music remains ancillary to the quest of following the Word's commands, it provides a valuable

expedient for the Christian life.

Later in *str.* 6.11, Clement draws upon his understanding of agriculture to interpret the

five loaves of barley and two fish near Tiberius (Jn. 6.9-11) as an allegory of divine revelation.

He notes that farmers harvest barley before wheat, which is the grain that the law prescribes for

cultivation. This signifies for him the preparatory training (προπαιδείαν) contained in the law

and in Hellenic wisdom. The barley represents the law, and the two fish designate the

curriculum of study (ἐγκύκλιον) and philosophy, respectively.[61] As the barley and the fish

furnished sustenance to those who hungered, so this preliminary training supplies needs. But

they remain provisional, the harbinger of a greater gift. Once the Lord blesses the loaves, they

"inhale the resurrection of the Godhead through the power of the Word."[62] Here again,

Clement's use of background knowledge to illuminate a text provides the scaffolding for a

figural interpretation meant to edify the reader.

Not all Clement's encyclopedic forays produce such exegetical filigree. At the

beginning of the *Stromateis,* Clement makes extensive use of the historical books of the Old

Testament to demonstrate the priority of the "barbarian philosophy" to Greek wisdom. Although

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[60]*prot.* 1.4-8.
[61]*str.* 6.11.94.5. The latter connection suggests to Clement the parable retailed in Mt. 13.47-48,
that compares the kingdom of heaven to a fisherman's selection of fish from his catch. So,
presumably, the true gnostic ought to exercise discretion in the disciplines he studies.
[62]*str.* 6.11.94.2-5.

it may appear a tedious exercise today, the construction of such chronologies played a prominent role in the repertoire of the apologists. It allowed them to dislodge accusations that Christianity was a novelty by establishing its ancient pedigree. Clement mentions that both Tatian and a spectral figure named Cassian had anticipated his own labors in this regard.[63] To carry out this operation, he painstakingly constructs a parallel chronology between Hebrew and Greek histories.[64] This display of erudition confirms John's statement that those before the Lord's coming are "robbers and bandits" (John 10.8).[65] More broadly, however, it serves the purpose of inverting the argument of Christianity's cultured despisers: the Greeks, not the Hebrews, are the later interlopers and thieves of tradition. Yet divine providence permitted this pilfering as part of the course of education.

LITERARY ANALYSIS (τὸ γλωσσηματικὸν καὶ τὸ τεχνικόν)

An important element of ancient philology was literary investigation, which consisted of both lexical research (τὸ γλωσσηματικόν) and analysis (τὸ τεχνικόν). These pursuits helped to clarify interpretive problems by scrutinizing the individual words and the syntactical fabric that held them together. It also highlighted the presence of rhetorical devices from hendiadys to hyperbaton. Taken together, the composite of techniques that comprises literary analysis devotes careful attention to how words convey meaning in their different contexts.

Clement regards sensitivity to the meanings of words and names imperative to the interpretive enterprise. In a passage that merits citation in full, he describes how enquiry into the meaning of words helps the expositor penetrate the veil of mystery that surrounds the scriptures:

So we must examine the scriptures thoroughly, because they are agreed to be expressed

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[63]*str.* 1.21.101.2.
[64]*str.* 1.21.101.1ff.
[65]*str.* 1.17.81.1.

in parables. From the names we can seek the opinions that the Holy Spirit maintains about the things themselves. The Holy Spirit teaches by pressing his meaning into the sayings themselves (εἰς τὰς λέξεις ὡς εἰπεῖν τὴν διάνοιαν ἐκτυπωσάμενον διδάσκει), so to speak, so that the names used with diverse meanings (πολυσήμως) might be revealed to us in the course of investigation, and so that what is hidden beneath many coverings may come to light and shine by being grasped after and learned.[66]

Clement sees lexical analysis as a resource to understand the Spirit's educational intentions. Because these expressions are deliberately obscure, the interpreter must pursue his quarry with diligence. He sees this research as the fulfillment of the Spirit's intentions in at least two acute instances. When the names contain various meanings, and when terms conceal a higher wisdom, only investigation can reveal the Spirit's purposes.

Names applied to the persons and places narrated in Scripture provide the point of departure for much of Clement's linguistic research. He takes the Savior's plaintive cry, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have I longed to gather your children together with me as a bird with her fledglings" (Mt. 23.37) as an invitation to such enquiry. Noting that Jerusalem means "vision of peace," Clement deduces that many paths can develop this vision. "He is showing us prophetically that those who have grasped the vision of peace have had a large variety of different tutors leading to their calling."[67] Clement even takes the interrogative adverb "how often?" to indicate the diversity of wisdom with which the Spirit of the Lord fills the world. Here, a name's meaning becomes the pivot of interpretation.

He finds many other instances in which names point to a higher wisdom in the text. For example, he takes Cain's exile to Naid as emblematic of the soul's dissipation. When Cain

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[66]*ecl.* 32.
[67]*str.* 1.5.29.

migrates to Naid, opposite Eden, the significance of his relocation transcends geography. *Naid*, Clement points out, translates as "confusion," while *Eden* is "the good life."[68] Hence, the passage compares the soul's disorder because of sin to the good life. Clement exploits similar linguistic analyses to construct an elaborate allegory of the uses of philosophical studies from the activities of the patriarchs. Abraham's dalliance with Hagar ("resident in a foreign land") before siring a son by Sarah ("my sovereignty") represents the preliminary education available through foreign arts on the road to sovereign wisdom. Likewise, Jacob ("man of discipline") trains himself so that God renames him Israel ("the genuine visionary," one who beholds God). Clement concludes from this insight that diligent work in the educational disciplines can help the student see God. In both of these illustrations, Clement constructs his interpretations on the Philonic tracing of names.[69] Knowledge of what each individual name signifies becomes the basis for discovering what spiritual reality corresponds to it.

Clement draws upon etymology to clarify several passages. In *ecl.* 2.1-3, he draws upon a parallel to clarify Daniel's benediction, "Blessed are you, who survey the abysses, mounted upon the Cherubim" (Dan. 3.54). Clement interprets this verse first by pairing it with a complementary statement in 1 Enoch 40.1.12, in which Enoch reports, "I beheld all matter." By its nature, the Alexandrian notes, an abyss is boundless (ἀπεράτωτον). Here, he relies upon etymology to : *a-byss* means "without depth," or "fathomless." He cannot resist pointing out that despite this nature, in this passage, the abyss is bounded (περαιούμενον) by the power of God.[70] Clement reasons that water alone would not be signified by abyss, though he concedes that water too can be called allegorically either the abyss or matter. Not only does the subject of Daniel's

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[68]*str.* 2.11.51.4.
[69]Philo, *post.* 22; *cong.* 34-7.
[70]Note the connection of this statement with the topological theology of containment without being contained sketched out in chapter 1. Cf. *str.* 2.2.6.2.

benediction gaze upon the expanses of water; he also comprehends the abysses as "material essences" from which genera and species are produced. The result is a deepened statement about the superiority of this exalted figure over the material world.[71]

The need for clarity on definitions becomes acute in controversial situations. When Clement confronts ascetic opponents of marriage in *str.* 3, he devotes careful attention to what the terms in question mean. Hence, he shows concern to define the purpose of the law:

> to divert us from extravagance and all forms of disorderly behavior… to guide us from unrighteousness to righteousness, making us responsible in marriage, producing children, and living well. The Lord "comes to fulfill, not to destroy the law" (Mt. 5.17). Fulfillment does not mean that it was defective. The prophecies that followed the law were achieved by his presence, since the qualities of an upright way of life were announced to people of righteous behavior before the coming of the law by the Word.[72]

The law proscribes sinful behavior and directs the reader on the path to righteousness. Clement appeals to Jesus' own words to defend the continued relevance of the law. Here, the argument turns on the meaning of *fulfill*. One never fulfills what is defective. From the nature of the word, Clement corners any opponent who wishes to exploit a discrepancy between the law and Christ as a pretense for renouncing the body. Whatever Jesus' words mean, they cannot license an asceticism that stands in discontinuity with the Old Testament's affirmation of marriage and sexuality. This claim carries important ramifications for Christian life. Discipleship includes not just a refinement of the spirit at the expense of the flesh. "It is our character, our life, our body" that must be consecrated, Clement argues.[73]

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[71] *ecl.* 32.1-3. I have taken some liberties in translating the Greek, which is quite turgid.
[72] *str.* 3.6.46.1-2.
[73] *str.* 3.6.47.1.

Clement's diligence in these lexical pursuits awakens him to the constellations of figural meanings suggested by the words he studies. He shows sensitivity to rhetorical devices that intensify language or clarify his interpretation. When he encounters the anomalous clause in Psalm 118, "He has set his tabernacle in the sun," Clement argues that the psalmist has purposely inverted the word order. He interprets this phrase as a reference to the consummation of the eschaton. Therefore, he maintains that the following verses ("And he, as a bridegroom issuing from his chamber, will rejoice as a giant to run his way. For the heaven's end is his going forth, and no one will hide himself from his heat") precede the setting of the tabernacle in the sun. He finds further justification for this exegesis from his teacher, Pantaenus. Clement credits him with pointing out that prophecy utters its expressions indefinitely, and may use the present for the future or the past. Both grammar and an awareness of rhetorical figures help to sustain this elaborate reading of the text. This information allows him to continue his exposition of this passage not merely as a hymn to God's sovereign act of creation, but also as a discourse about the progressive stages of education built into the structure of the cosmos.

Clement regards such literary devices as an instrument of concealment, which only philological analysis can clarify. In attempting to reconcile the efficacy of petitionary prayer with divine foreknowledge, Clement instances 1 Sam. 1.13. God grants Hannah's fervent request for an offspring, just as ifpraising her prospectively for her behavior. This functions as a hyperbaton. Clement suggests that the writer's phrasing conceals the truth through such figures of speech.[74] Likewise, he designates as catachrestic Christ's likening of his sufferings to a cup. Such devices expose the presence of figural meanings beneath the surface of the text.[75] Clement remarks that Matthew's use of ellipsis in the statement "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is

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[74]*str.* 6.12.101.7.
[75]*paed.* 1.6.46.1ff.

perfect," obscures the qualitative difference in the orders of perfection that distinguish God from humanity.[76] All these tropes, however, serve a pedagogical purpose, as Clement frequently maintains.[77]

From his commentary on John, we have already seen that Origen considered the definition of proper names integral to proper exposition. He reminds the reader, "we shouldn't despise proper names, since things are signified by them that are useful for the interpretation [of Scripture]."[78] It is evident that he was not alone in this conviction. Many of his contemporaries engaged in speculation about the meaning of names, and it seems likely that Origen consulted existing onomastic resources in his exegetical forays.[79] These investigations paid rich dividends. Sometimes, indeed, the meaning of a name helps him discover a higher meaning in the passage. Martens cites his reflection on the statement, "the Word of God came to Hosea of Beeri" as an example of this phenomenon.[80] At a superficial level, this formula refers to a historic instance of prophetic revelation. Yet, as Origen notes, Hosea translates as "saved." This licenses a broader application: now the Word visits all who are saved, not just select prophets.[81]

Sometimes the meaning of a proper noun even unlocks the meaning of an entire book. Origen opens his *Homilies on Joshua* by noting that the name Joshua is identical with Jesus.[82] Around this linguistic datum, he constructs a detailed typology that ties Joshua's actions to those of Jesus. Their shared name enables Origen to spiritualize the conquest of Canaan narrated in

[76]*str.* 7.14.88.7.
[77]In *paed.* 1.9, Clement compiles a catalogue of different "tropes" or methods of instruction that that Educator adopts. He establishes a close relationship between literary form and pedagogical content.
[78]*in Io. comm.* 6.216.
[79]Cf. *in Ex. hom.* 5.2; *in Num. hom.* 20.3, 27.12; *in Io. comm.* 6.216.
[80]Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 55.
[81]*in Io. comm.* 2.4.
[82]*in Iosh. hom.* 1.1.

that book. The military exploits retailed in Joshua signify the victories of the souls whom Jesus

leads over diabolical adversaries and personal vices. To vanquish these foes, Origen notes, these

"soldiers of Jesus" would need to remain vigilant, and exercise martial discipline in their

devotional lives. As they triumph in these spiritual conflicts, their land [i.e., the souls of the

righteous] enjoys rest (Josh. 11.23).[83] This manner of exposition continues into his homilies on

Judges, in which Origen frequently uses the etymology of proper names of Israel's enemies and

deliverers to make observations about the proper regulation of the soul.[84] Again, this linguistic

analysis forms the foundation of a higher form of pedagogy that animates an entire book of the

Bible.

　　　　This is also the case with significant terms and concepts that populate the pages of

Scripture. Origen recognizes that the presence of nomenclature such as "law,"[85] "gospel,"[86]

"prayer,"[87] and "world"[88] requires careful lexical research. In certain cases, he delineates the

contours of a semantic field before settling on his understanding for the instance in question.[89]

An important example of this definition of a *terminus technicus* occurs at the inception of his

treatise, *On the Pascha*. Before interpreting the significance of the events associated with

Passover, Origen corrects a misunderstanding that he claims is rife in the churches.

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[83]*in Iosh. hom.* 1.7.

[84]For example, in *Iud. Hom.* 4.1 meditates on the Midianite oppression of Israel. Origen points out that Midian means "flux" (*fluxus*), and therefore signifies laxity in the soul's defenses and in the church's activities. The remedy for this dissipation is Ehud, whose name means "praise" and whose "ambidextrous" cunning makes him a representative of skilled teaching. His assassination of the Midianite tyrant Eglon takes on spiritual significance. The soul and the church elicits praise for extinguishing dissolute practices.

[85]*phil.* 9.

[86]*in Io. comm.* 1.27-88.

[87]*orat.* 3.1-4.

[88]*in Matt. comm.* 13.20.

[89]Most famously, perhaps, in his lengthy discussion of the meaning of "beginning" in the Johannine prologue.

Most of the brethren, maybe even all of them, think that the Passover (πάσχα) takes its name from the passion (πάθος) of the Savior. Among the Hebrews, however, the real name of this feast is not πάσχα but *fas*. The three letters of *fas* and the rough breathing, which is much stronger with them than it is with us, constitutes the name of the feast, which means "passage." For since it is on this feast that the people come out of Egypt, it is therefore called *fas*, that is, "passage"… in the prophets it is called *fasek*, and, when transliterated into Greek, the word becomes πάσχα.[90]

Origen's motives for developing this etymology include both apologetic and hermeneutic concerns. He seeks to avoid ridicule from Jewish interlocutors, who might deride an attempt to correlate the exodus of Jews from Egypt with Christ's passion on the basis of a naïve etymology.[91] Yet he also wishes to establish a firm foundation for his typological interpretation of this event as the true passage from Egypt to a new way of life for those who abandon darkness and come into the light (John 3.20-21).[92]

Origen also considers grammatical analysis significant for the exposition of certain texts. He maintains that the presence of the article before θεός in the Johannine prologue designates God the Father, while anarthrous construction of θεός indicates the Son's divinity and difference from the Father.[93] Later on in his commentary on John, he observes that Jesus' words in Jn. 13.12, γινώσκετε τί πεποίηκα ὑμῖν, could be taken as either a question or as an imperative. Origen leaves this question open, noting that it might either awaken them to the magnitude of Christ's service, or direct them to imitate it.[94] Where this verse admits either construction, what

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[90]*pasc.* 1.
[91]*pasc.* 2.
[92]*pasc.* 4.
[93]*in Io. comm.* 2.14-18. See the discussion in Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 56.
[94]*in Io. comm.* 32.113.

follows is all too clear. "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you speak correctly, for so I am. If, then, I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, so also you should wash each other's feet" (Jn.13.13-14). Origen condenses his interpretation of this exchange with epigrammatic precision: "Jesus washed the disciple's feet insofar as he was their teacher, and the feet of his servants insofar as he was Lord."[95] As in his practice of textual criticism, Origen preserves both renderings, emphasizing the educational value of each.

A seasoned interpreter remains attuned to figurative expressions and literary tropes as the vehicles to convey higher teachings. He identifies the use of paradox in John's claim about the Word, "What was made in him was life." This clause suggests to Origen a statement no less counterintuitive than many of the philosophical paradoxes about the sage: that no life, and no rationality is available outside participation in the divine Word."[96] He notes the presence of hyperbaton in Rom. 7.1, in which Paul interrupts his train of thought ("Or do you not know, brothers and sisters - for I am speaking to those who know the law - that the law exercises dominion over a person for as long as it lives?"). Ordered properly, the intervening phrase belongs after the statement about the law's regime.[97] This consideration becomes important to Origen's point about the spiritual purpose of the law, and the propriety of accommodating one's teaching of the law to the audience. Earlier in his Romans commentary, Origen commends Paul's preservation of a martial metaphor in Rom. 6.14: "Do not present your members to sin as weapons of wickedness… but present your members to God as weapons of righteousness." By maintaining the figure, Paul expresses the consecration of one's self to God or to sin as a

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[95]*in. Io. comm.* 32.115.
[96]*in Io. comm.* 2.112-115.
[97]*in Rom. comm.* 6.7.6.

question of allegiance.[98] This frames the imperative as a stark choice between two alternative

paths. Should one follow God, one's "members" become the instruments of righteousness, while

conscription to sin makes one's members the accessories of evil. As in Clement, these devices

often veil the wisdom of the text. To a reader steeped in literary training, however, these

obscurities yield their secrets.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION:

PROSOPOLOGY (τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ λέγον) AND CLARIFICATION BY CLEARER

INSTANCES Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν)

The scholiasts formulate two other principles of interpretation that influence Clement

and Origen's exegesis of the Scriptures: prosopology (τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ λέγον) and

clarification by appeal to analogous usage Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν). These reading

strategies provide the means for resolving textual *cruces* and theological problems in many cases.

Because these reading strategies often entail each other in Clement's and Origen's practice, I

treat them together here, though they constitute discrete procedures.

Prosopology (τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ λέγον, or λύσις ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου), or enquiry about

the speakers, the addressees, and the persons referenced, was an exercise developed by the

Alexandrian editors of Homer and practiced by students of the *grammaticus*.[99] This procedure

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[98]*in Rom. comm.* 6.1.8.

[99]On this procedure in the Homeric scholiasts, see A. Römer, *Die Homerexegese Aristarchs in ihren Grundzügen*, ed. E. Belzner (Paderborn: 1924), 253-56; H. Dachs, "Die ΛΥΣΙΣ ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΥ: Ein exegetischer und kritischer Grundsatz Aristarchs und seine Neuanwendung auf *Ilias* und *Odysee*," Diss. Erlangen, 1912; Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work,* 116-34. For prosopology in Origen, see Neuschäfer, *Origen als Philologe,* 263-76; Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 58-59. For a survey of the theological use of this exercise, see Marie-Josèphe-Rondeau, *Les Commentaires Patristiques du Psautier (IIIe - Ve siècles), v.2: Exégèse Prosopologique et Théologie* (Rome: Pontifical Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1985). I am indebted to Adam Ployd for suggesting some of these resources. His article, "Pro-Nicene Prosopology and the Church in Augustine's Preaching on John 3.13," *Scottish Journal of*

seeks to clarify the identities of the speaker and his audience in contexts where either ambiguity or propriety called these identities into question. In epic poetry, such instances populate the text. An unidentified speaker or an indecent attribution often exercised ancient readers. When it became necessary to name the participants in a conversation, these scholars addressed prosopological questions to the text.

A fascinating specimen of this exercise coalesces around a passage in *Iliad* 8 that caused consternation among the scholiasts. When Hera and Athena take up arms against Troy, they violate Zeus' wishes. Fierce anger consumes the father of the gods, and Zeus issues a condemnation of their disloyalty:

> The goddess with the flashing eyes will know it when she contends with her father.
>
> But toward Hera, I harbor neither indignation nor anger,
>
> For it is always her routine to seek to frustrate me in what I decree (*Il.* 406-8).

The presentation of conspiring goddesses and a truculent king of the gods vexed the scholiasts enough. But a more pressing question concerned the audience of this rant. From the context, it appears that Zeus disgorges these words to Iris, just before he dispatches her to confront the mutineers. The gods might be forgiven for such lapses, given their position, but for subordinate messengers to hear such talk and to deliver it to their superiors was unacceptable. Such behavior seems inappropriate to divinity, and might foster either blasphemous thoughts or disobedience among impressionable readers.

Rather than athetizing these lines, which is his solution for the portions of its delivery (which Iris improvises by labeling any rebel against Zeus a "shameless bitch"), the scholiast

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Theology, forthcoming, offers a succinct illustration of this technique at a later time.

Aristonicus turns to prosopology.[100] He maintains, "the words are fitting for the person of Zeus,

but not yet for the person of Iris."[101] Only Zeus can utter such intemperate complaints. For Iris

to confront the gods with these sharp words would usurp the prerogative of the father of the gods.

The resulting emendation allows Zeus' rant to stand, but strikes five offending lines in Iris'

speech that seem to go beyond her status. Aristonicus resolves this interpretive problem by

combining prosopology with liberal editing.

A second technique for divining what a text means involves clarifying unclear usage

with clearer instances. Porphyry articulates the most celebrated version of this exegetical

principle in his *Quaestiones Homericae*. After resolving a difficulty in *Il.* 6.201, he declares,

> But considering it right to clarify Homer from Homer (Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου
>
> σαφηνίζειν), I was showing that he interprets himself, sometimes in the immediate
>
> context, and other times in different [places]."[102]

Attention to more straightforward indications of meaning in the immediate and far-flung contexts

of an author's work helps to disentangle the more troublesome issues of exegesis. Neuschäfer

points out that though the explicit invocation of Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν only with later

Platonic traditions, the principle is present in Galen's reading of the Corpus Hippocraticum, and

among Homeric commentators.[103] To penetrate an enigmatic text, or to venture a guess at a

hapax legomenon, the critic collects relevant analogues throughout a given corpus of literature.

This allows him to premise his interpretation on more secure ground. Which texts ought to serve

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[100] schol. A at *Il.* 8.420-22. Aristonicus reasons, "She [Iris] would not have said, "shameless
bitch," and therefore excises the five questionable lines.

[101] schol. A at *Il.* 8.406-8. ὅτι τῷ τοῦ Διὸς προσώπῳ ἁρμόζουσιν οἱ λόγοι, τῷ δὲ τῆς
Ἴριδος οὐκέτι.

[102]Porphyry, *quaest. Hom.* at *Il.* 6.201. ἀξιῶν δὲ ἐγὼ Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν αὐτὸν
ἐξηγούμενον ἑαυτὸν ὑπεδείκνυον, ποτὲ μὲν παρακειμένως, ἄλλοτε δ᾽ ἐν ἄλλοις.

[103]Neuschäfer, *Origen als Philologe*, 277ff.

as comparanda, and what reading these parallel instances suggest, of course, become the nubs of controversy among interpreters.

In the third book of the *Stromateis,* Clement seems to provide evidence of Christian interpreters exploiting these reading practices. He complains about radical ascetics who pervert the meaning of Scripture by fastening on aberrations and taking verses out of context. He describes their methods with contempt: "These people also collect passages from extracts of the prophets, making an anthology and cobbling them together quite inappropriately, taking literally what was intended allegorically."[104] The principle of Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν seems to be animating their efforts. The creation of prophetic testimonia, he argues, creates a false new context that violates the immediate context of the statement and numerous clarificatory statements elsewhere. He offers an example of their practice in their reading of Mal. 3.15. The verse reads, "They opposed God and found salvation," to which some added, "the shameless God." For these readers, antagonism to the creator formed the road to salvation. An oracle like this, confirmed by an anthology of numerous parallels from other prophetic literature, must have seduced many readers.

Beyond the dubious textual criticism that allows this emendation, Clement questions the basis of such a demonizing of the Creator by suggesting an alternative identification of the speaker (τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ λέγον) and by comparing this verse with other passages (Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν). He contends that the radical's interpretation fails to distinguish a divine oracle from a popular response. Malachi is not issuing a prescription for achieving salvation, but recording the people's reaction to divine judgment. The Israelites kvetched that they had to endure discipline while other nations flouted God with impunity. Even Jeremiah was not

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[104]*str.* 3.4.38.1-5.

immune from this feeling, asking, "Why is the path of the wicked easy?" (Jer. 12.1). Yet this

punishment was remedial, and brought about their salvation. This clarifies the contested

statement in Malachi. The use of a parallel text from Jeremiah supports the prosopological

identification, for it shows that not all prophetic statements transmit divine thoughts. As a coda

to this discussion, Clement observes,

> In their oracular utterances, the prophets do not merely say that they have heard
>
> messages from God. Demonstrably, they report the popular conversations, replying to
>
> objections voiced, as if they were officially recording questions from human sources.
>
> The saying before us is an example of this.[105]

By identifying the speaker(s) in this way, Clement helps to defuse a theological crisis, and draws

quite a different lesson from the passage than his opponents.

   Perhaps even more than Clement, Origen showed sensitivity to these questions of

speaker, audience, and reference, and the principle of Scripture interpreting Scripture. In a

fragment of his shorter commentary on the Song of Songs, composed in Alexandria, Origen

reflects on the importance of establishing the identities of persons represented in the text, as well

as some of the complications to this task:

> Anyone who doesn't understand the peculiar character of persons in the Scripture, both
>
> regarding the speakers and those addressed, must be quite perplexed by what he reads.
>
> He will ask who is speaking, who is spoken to, and when the speaker ceases to speak.
>
> For it often happens that the same person is addressed, although a third person speaks to
>
> him, or the person addressed is no longer the same, and a different person takes up what
>
> is said, while the same person is speaking. And sometimes both the speaker and the

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[105]*str.* 3.4.38.5.

person addressed are unchanged, or, although both are unchanged, it is not clear that they are.[106]

Further complicating the interpretive task is the tendency of prophets to move from one discourse to another without warning. The results of these complicating factors are predictable: obscure passages and confused readers. To remedy this situation, Origen counsels the discipline of prosopological exercises.

Origen likewise endorses the strategy of illuminating unclear passages with clearer passages. He casts this principle in theological terms, finding warrants for it in the bible itself. Paul's call to "compare spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2.13), John's admonition to "search the Scriptures" (Jn. 5.39), and the legal prescription to "establish everything by two or three witnesses" (Dt. 19.15 and 2 Cor. 13.1) all provide the grounding for this procedure. The practice of interpreting Scripture by Scripture derives from the very character of Scripture as an educating text. As we have already seen in the third chapter, Origen invokes the tradition of his Hebrew master, who compared Scripture to a house with locked doors and keys scattered throughout the interior.[107] Only by collecting keys from throughout the house can one unlock each individual "door" of interpretation. If God populates the text with mysteries, God also disperses the means for resolving them throughout the text of scripture.

When confronted with questions of Christology in the prophets and the Psalms, these questions became particularly charged. As in Clement, a polemical context often informs Origen's research. Heracleon, a Valentinian exegete, serves as an interlocutor of his throughout

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[106]*phil.* 7.1.
[107]*phil.* 2.3.

his commentary on John, and in John 1.3, draws Origen into a polemical engagement.[108] Origen

records his opponent's reading of this contested verse in the following manner:

> Heracleon, who is reputed to be a disciple of Valentinus, in explaining the statement,
>
> "All things were made through him," has… understood "all things" to mean the cosmos
>
> and what is in it. At the same time… he excludes from "all things" those things that
>
> transcend the world and the things in it. For he says, "Neither the aeon nor the things in
>
> the aeon have been made through the Word." He thinks these things were made before
>
> the Word… He adds to "nothing" the words "of the things in the cosmos and in the
>
> creation"… Moreover, he also understands "all things were made through him" in a
>
> peculiar way when he says, "The one who provided the creator with the cause for making
>
> the world, that is the Word, is not the one "from whom," or "by whom," but the one
>
> "through whom"… For he says that the Word himself did not create as though under the
>
> impulse of another - [so] that the phrase "through him" should be understood in this way
>
> - but another created under his impulse.[109]

From these extracts, one can determine two features of Heracleon's exegesis of John 1.3. First,

Heracleon restricts the definition of "all things" to exclude certain supramundane entities, and in

particular, the aeons and "the things in the aeon made through the Word." Some other agency

must have fashioned these entities. To highlight this interpretation, Heracleon appends a clause

to the verse: "nothing of the things in the cosmos and creation." This emendation excepts the

aeons from the activity of creation. Second, Heracleon interprets the prepositional phrase

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[108]On Heracleon, see E. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973); M. Simonetti, "Eracleone e Origene," *VC* 3 (1966), 111-41, *VC* 4 (1967), 23-64. and A. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus: Gnostische Johannesexegese im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002). For detailed commentary on this passage in particular, see Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus*, 109-179.
[109]*in Io. Comm.* 2.100, 102-3.

"through him," not as expressing direct agency, but as indicating supervision of another. That is, creation "through" the Word means that the Word directed creation, not that he himself executed these directions. Where the restricted definition of "all things" distances the cosmos from the aeonic realm, the interpretation of the preposition "through" as supervisory distances the Logos from the Creator. In the linguistic details, Heracleon finds evidence of a graded hierarchy in creation.

To combat this interpretation, Origen draws upon the arsenal of philological techniques at his disposal. He considers the interpolation Heracleon suggests ("of the things in the cosmos and the creation") unwarranted. By introducing this reading, the Valentinian interpreter presents himself as "worthy to be believed like the prophets or apostles… beyond criticism."[110] Once Origen discards the emendation, he can renew the question: why should "all things" exclude the aeons? Heracleon furnishes no lexical grounds for reducing τὰ πάντα to those subject to corruption. "All things" most likely includes both corporeal and incorporeal realities.

Origen dismantles Heracleon's view of the Word's directive role in creation by appealing to grammar, to parallel texts, and to prosopology. He finds the rendering of "through whom" as administrative rather than agential to be "peculiar," and "contrary to the customary usage of the phrase." John would have employed a different preposition if he had wanted to express the Word's supervision of creation: "it would have been written that all things have been made *by* the Word *through* the creator, and not *through* the Word *by* the Creator."[111] Customary usage favors Origen's interpretation, that the Word carried out creation at the behest of the Father. Had Heracleon examined the Scriptures more thoroughly, Origen alleges, he might have recognized his error. The Alexandrian exegete therefore retrieves a complementary text from the

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[110]*in Io. comm*. 2.101.
[111]*in Io. comm.* 2.102.

Psalms to elucidate the matter. Ps. 148.5 reads, "God spoke and they were made; he commanded and they were created." This analogue generates a prosopological exercise. Whom does God address? For Origen, the response is obvious: "the uncreated God 'commanded' the firstborn of all creation, and they were created." This must include everything, not just perishable bodies. His proof text comes from Col. 1.15, which include "thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers" among the "all things (τὰ πάντα) that have been created through him and for him."[112] The techniques of the *grammaticus* provide the means for developing a theological pedagogy.

CONCLUSION: ALLEGORY AND PEDAGOGY IN ALEXANDRIAN EXEGESIS

Among their detractors, past and present, these Alexandrians' reputations as allegorists have been paramount in establishing their identity as exegetes.[113] A first complaint concerns the Hellenism of this procedure. Porphyry maintains that Origen compromised the riches of pagan learning by applying them to an inferior canon of writings. The "absurdity" reached its zenith in the allegorizing of the Hebrew Bible: "Educated as a Greek in Greek literature, Origen went over to the barbarian recklessness… Becoming acquainted through them [i.e., Platonist, Pythagorean, and Stoic literatures] with the figurative interpretation of the Hellenic mysteries, he applied it to the Jewish Scriptures." This promiscuous synthesis riles Porphyry, who faults Origen for "hawking about" his learning to the unworthy, for practicing Christianity while retaining "Hellenic" presuppositions, and for "mingling Grecian teachings with alien myths."[114] The

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[112]*in Io. comm.* 2.103-4.

[113]On the development of allegorical reading, see especially R. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); J. Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie: Les origens grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes* (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1976); I. Ramelli, *Allegoria: L'età classica* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2004).

[114]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 6.19.9-10. There is considerable dispute over whether the Origen mentioned here is our Origen, and whether he is the same one depicted in *vit. Pl.* 20.36-37. Although certainty is elusive, all the evidence supports the identification of Porphyry's

acquaintance and Ammonius' student with our Origen. Eusebius remains critical of Porphyry's account - he disputes Porphyry's claim that Origen converted to Christianity after being raised pagan - yet accepts without qualification that he is speaking of the Origen he knew. Such a misunderstanding on Porphyry's account would have been consistent with the criticism he levels at his erstwhile colleague: a Greek who defected to the Barbarians. Second, Porphyry mentions that he met Origen as a youth. This report tallies with the geographical (Porphyry grew up in Tyre, near Caesarea) and with the chronological evidence (Porphyry was born in 232 or 233, and Origen died in 254). Third, Porphyry depicts Origen as a student steeped in Greek literature, yet "highly honored by the teachers of these [Christian] doctrines" and "celebrated for the writings he has left." None of this information undermines the identification of Origen the Christian scholar with Origen the student of Ammonius Saccas. If anything, it puts the onus on those who distinguish the two, for it requires there to be another person by the same name who lived at roughly the same time, who trained in the traditional *paideia*, and whom Christians celebrated for his writings and teachings. Although this is possible, it requires an extravagant hypothesis that lacks corroborating evidence. The only serious quandary is Porphyry's assignment of only one philosophical treatise to the Origen of *vit. Pl.* But this can be resolved simply by saying that Origen produced only one philosophical treatise that while in Ammonius' circle, or that he generated only one work Porphyry grants philosophical standing. For orientation to these issues, see H. Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A. Worrell (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 10-12; Nautin, *Origène*, 199-202; H. Dörrie, "Ammonios der Lehrer Plotins," *Hermes* 88 (1955), 439-77; F.H. Kettler, "War Origenes Schüler des Ammonios Sakkas?" in J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser, ed., *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 327-55; H. Ziebritzki, *Heiliger Geist und Weltseele: Das Problem der dritten Hypostase bei Origenes, Plotin, und ihren Vorläufern* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 30-43; T. Böhm, "Origenes - Theologe und Neuplatoniker? Oder, Wem soll man missvertrauen - Eusebius oder Porphyrius?" *Adamantius* 8 (2002), 7-23; M. Zambon, "Porfirio e Origene: uno status quaestionis," in S. Morlet, ed. *Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 2011).

Christian heresiologist Epiphanius passes a similar verdict on Origen, who, "mentally blinded by

Greek training (Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας), disgorged venom for your acolytes."[115] Neither writer

contests Origen's familiarity with classical literature. What they find objectionable, from

different vantage points, is the fateful miscegenation of Christianity with Greek learning.

Allegorical interpretation becomes the focus of this charge.

Other critics have been unsparing with Clement and Origen for taking leave of the literal

and historical dimensions of the text. They discern in the spiritualizing interpretations of these

Alexandrians a depreciation of history, and a speculative flight from the text. Diodore of Tarsus,

who chartered what became known (somewhat misleadingly) as the Antiochene School, derides

such allegories as "a Hellenism that says one thing in the place of another and introduces

absurdities."[116] William Fairweather disparages Origen's exegesis as "fantastic interpretations"

in the course of whose fancies "the history itself, of course, disappears."[117] R.P.C. Hanson

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[115]Epiphanius, *pan.* 64.72. I am grateful to Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 38, for the reference and the translation, on which my own is based.

[116]Diodore, *in Ps. comm.* 8.154-60. A few words are in order respecting the Antiochenes. First, only a few members can be credibly identified as part of this small circle: Diodore, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyr, and John Chrysostom. Chrysostom's stature and prodigious literary output, however, has allowed the Antiochenes to exercise a disproportionate role in the discussion of biblical interpretation in late antiquity. A second reason for their prominence comes from the tendency of contemporary interpreters to see them as early harbingers of the historical critical method. This similarity dissolves upon closer inspection. Third, the opposition between Antiochene and Alexandrian schools is not so straightforward as it might seem. The polemical tone adopted by writers such as Diodore conceals deep affinities with Origen and Clement. Both approved of allegory, for instance, and both argued for the importance of the *historia* to the meaning of the text. Where they differ lies in how they configure this relationship, and the limits placed on allegory. As should become clear from what follows, I think it prudent to ground discussions of allegory in discussions of philology. For an example of this approach among the Antiochenes, see C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochischen Exegese* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1974); F. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture,* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), esp. 2ff.; P. Martens, "Origen against History? Reconsidering the Critique of Allegory," *Modern Theology* 28 (2012), 635-56.

[117]Fairweather, *Origen and Greek Patristic Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 79.

characterizes the allegorical approach to the scriptures forged in Alexandria as "unhistorical" at

its core: "Its ultimate aim is to empty the text of any particular connection with historical

events."[118] Martens gamely suggests that the *and* in the title of Hanson's study, *Allegory and*

Event is a cipher for "something like 'marginalizes' or 'destroys.'"[119]

Against these twin criticisms of cultural amalgamation and distaste for the literal and

historical dimensions of Scripture, defenders of allegory have resisted by making these vices into

virtues. The indefatigable Henri de Lubac's work in rehabilitating Origen is representative of

this trend. Lubac makes no secret of his sympathy for Origen as a titan of spirituality. While

conceding that allegorical interpretation had pagan and Jewish antecedents, he contends that

"profoundly traditional" convictions anchored Origen's practice:

> whatever the procedural similarities we might be able to enumerate, whatever the mutual
>
> participation we might even be able to observe in the same allegorizing mentality, that
>
> effort alone is enough to place an abyss between Origen, thoroughly marked by
>
> Christianity, and those Greeks to whom he is sometimes thoughtlessly compared.[120]

In sum, the formal similarities between philosophical and Christian allegory do not extend to

substantial identity. The theological motivations that guide Alexandrian exegesis make it a

qualitatively different pursuit than pagan allegory. Lubac parries the charge of disregard for the

letter and history by arguing that, far from becoming disenchanted with history, Origen sought to

show how Spirit interpenetrates history and uses it as the vehicle for transformation. Allegory is

neither the a satellite of Hellenism nor irreconcilable with the letter.

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[118]Hanson, *Allegory and Event,* 63.
[119]Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 9.
[120]Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture according to Origen,*
trans. E. Nash and J. Meriell (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 317, cited in Martens, *Origen and*
Scripture, 7n.15.

While Lubac suggests a more balanced appraisal of allegorical interpretation than those who disparage the Alexandrians, his presentation risks presenting it as merely the epiphenomenon of spirituality. This exposes them to charges of arbitrary and unsystematic interpretation. Pairing spiritual interpretation with the grammatical practices reviewed by Neuschäfer helps to correct this misunderstanding. These writers considered allegory a legitimate method of interpretation, but grounded it in a spectrum of grammatical procedures. Martens summarizes this position: "Philology, in other words, could be practiced in a literal or allegorical mode--but it was always philology."[121] He lards this insight with Origen's rejoinder to Celsus, who scorned Christian attempts to apply allegory to worthless fables. Instancing Numenius, a Middle Platonist who showed respect for the Jewish scriptures, Origen writes:

> He had a greater desire than Celsus and the other Greeks to examine even our writings in
>
> a scholarly way (φιλομαθῶς), and was led to regard them as books that are to be
>
> interpreted allegorically (περὶ τροπολογουμένων), and that are not foolish.[122]

Not the method but an opinion about which texts should be considered amenable to such interpretation distinguishes pagan from Christian allegory. Origen maintains here that the one can profitably read the scriptures using the full panoply of reading practices--including allegory.[123]

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[121]Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 63.

[122]*c.Cels.* 4.51.

[123]This datum also corrects a misperception common among studies of ancient hermeneutics that "literal" and "grammatical" modes of interpretation are incompatible with allegory. Porphyry provides an excellent example of this. The same advocate of the sober literary methods introduced by Aristarchus in the *Homeric Questions* ventures searching figural readings in *On the Cave of the Nymphs*. What warrants the latter is the presence of symbols within the text that signify a deeper meaning. Clement and Origen adopt similar views, although they seem more convinced of the existence of a spiritual substratum lurking underneath the whole text, sometimes intersecting with the text, sometimes indicated by textual contradictions and impossibilities.

What unites the philological procedures and allegorical interpretations in Clement's and Origen's practice is a conviction that the text of the scriptures functions as a conduit of instruction. Divine providence has woven together a tapestry of Scripture that, properly examined, illuminates spiritual realities. G. Stroumsa points out that Clement and Origen,

> did not seek to achieve a radical break with knowledge as it was perceived in their culture, or with the old pedagogical methods through which this knowledge had traditionally been imparted. They used various strategies which allowed them not just to avoid a radical rejection of Greek *paideia*, but actually to integrate it into the hermeneutics of the Scriptures.[124]

The grammatical principles developed as part of the *paideia* became the means of ascent. By applying philological methods to a text, then, the interpreter not only engages in a scholarly exercise, but participates in the drama of salvation.

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[124]Stroumsa, "Scripture and *Paideia* in Late Antiquity," in M. Niehoff, ed., *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters,* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 31.

CHAPTER 4: THE GRAMMAR OF GRACE: PHILOLOGY AS DIVINE PEDAGOGY

In this chapter, I intend to trace how Clement and Origen exploit philological techniques from Hellenistic scholarship to interpret the Bible. My approach mirrors that taken by Bernard Neuschäfer and Peter Martens in their studies of Origen's reading practices.[1] No comparable study of Clement's exegesis exists. Neuschäfer and Martens use principles of interpretation enumerated in Dionysius Thrax's ancient grammar to structure their studies of Origen's use of these instruments, though each takes some liberty with this model.[2] Both provide an invaluable service by cataloguing instances of these exegetical techniques. Consequently, my debt to their research should be obvious. Yet, I seek to connect the appropriation of these grammatical techniques with the larger issues of the use of pagan scholarship in Christian teaching and the pedagogical functions of scripture in Clement and in Origen.

I begin by examining three principal techniques mentioned in the Dionysian repertoire: textual criticism, scientific enquiry, and literary analysis. My investigation of textual criticism focuses exclusively on Origen, since his compilation of the Hexapla occupies such an important position in the history of biblical scholarship, and since little can be gleaned of Clement's textual criticism from his extant corpus.[3] After defining scientific enquiry and literary analysis, I

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[1]Peter Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of an Exegetical Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2012); Bernard Neuschäfer, *Origen als Philologe* 2 vols. (Basel: Reinhardt, 1987). NUNLIST!!!!!
[2]The critical edition of Dionysius Thrax is G.Uhlig, *Dionysii Thracis: Ars Grammatica* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883). Scholia are available in A. Hilgard, *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammaticam* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901). An English translation of the *Ars Grammatica* appears in A. Kemp, "The *Teckhne Grammatike* of Dionysius Thrax," in *The History of Linguistics in the Classical Period,* ed. D. Taylor (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1987). For information on the role of the *grammaticus* in late antiquity, see R. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity,* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997); B. Schouler, "Un métier: la grammaire," in Brigitte Pérez and Michel Griffe, *Grammariens et philosophes dans l'Antiquit*é *gr*é*co-romaine* (Montpellier: Presses universitaires de Méditeranée, 2008), 15-52.
[3]This is not to say that Clement did not engage in such textual criticism; he complains about those who "twist the Scriptures to suit their own appetites" and denounces ascetic opponents who

illustrate each of these techniques with examples drawn from Clement's and Origen's writing. I then examine two other principles that have significant implications for their biblical interpretation: *Homerus ex Homero*, and prosopological analysis. I conclude this survey with a brief reappraisal of the role of allegory in these Alexandrian authors. Both Clement and Origen make extensive use of allegory, but scholarly preoccupation with it has come to overshadow the philological techniques that ground it. Throughout, I argue that Clement and Origen marshal this panoply of interpretive techniques to draw out the pedagogy of the biblical text.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM (τὸ διορθωτικόν)

If the Hexapla had survived as the sole product of Origen's biblical scholarship, his legacy as an interpreter might have been less rich, but also less complicated. Without the distracting problems of his allegorical flights of fancy and his speculative metaphysics, the Origen of the Hexapla maintains the respect of modern scholars. The effort required to compile this polyglot synopsis has never failed to impress them. Even R.P.C. Hanson, an unreconstructed critic of Origen, offers grudging admiration for this achievement.[4] These scholars have responded not only to his diligence, but also to his apparent modernity. Here is an ancient interpreter who anticipated the orientations and methods of critical scholarship by centuries. Like textual critics today, Origen compared variations to repair a manuscript tradition that had become rife with corruptions. He displayed an interest in recovering the original Hebrew that distinguishes him from his contemporaries. Although his controversies with the Jews may be a source of embarrassment today, he shows a genuine interest in Jewish traditions and

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insert "shameless" before God in *str.* 3.4.38.1-5, discussed below. But he does not engage so self-consciously in a philological program of textual criticism as Origen.

[4]Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

interpretations. In short, modern scholars prefer Origen the text critic to Origen the allegorist because he shares their own aims and methods.

However appealing this portrait of Origen as the archetypal text critic might appear, it remains a chimera. It depends on an anachronistic reading of the evidence that ignores the practices of textual criticism in late antiquity. It depends upon selective reading, neglecting tensions in Origen's programmatic statements about the Hexapla and omitting contrary evidence in his practice of textual criticism. Above all, it depends upon the estrangement of his textual criticism from his interpretation. The adulation for the Origen of the Hexapla comes at the expense of Origen the expositor. Yet no evidence supports this cleavage between the two.

In the following section, I hope to reconcile these conflicting portraits by demonstrating that Origen perceives textual criticism as a dimension of interpretation. I begin by exposing the deficiencies of attempts to account for the Hexapla as an apologetic instrument or as a text-critical apparatus to recover the purity of the Hebrew original. Each explanation captures an aspect of this project, but neither reads Origen's programmatic statements clearly enough, and neither accounts for his practice of textual criticism. I offer a closer reading of these programmatic statements and an examination of a few illustrations that challenge these existing accounts. Behind Origen's remedy of the texts lie the same principles he posits for interpreters and interpretation: the interpreter participates in the saving pedagogy of divine providence through exposition of the divine Scriptures.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM AS APOLOGETIC RESOURCE

A number of scholars have suggested that Origen compiled the Hexapla as an apologetic resource.[5] In their discussions with Jews, ignorance of textual and translational variations

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[5]Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1880), 124-5. Sebastian

disadvantaged Christian controversialists. Their Jewish interlocutors could discredit certain

interpretations of their Scriptures by pointing to textual corruption, mistranslation, and

misrepresentation. Isaiah 7.14 formed the *locus classicus* of this phenomenon. Like Justin,

Irenaeus, and Tertullian before him, Origen exploited the rendering of the Hebrew *almah*

("young woman") as παρθένος ("virgin") in the LXX as a harbinger of the virgin birth of Jesus.[6]

Yet this translation conveys a specificity in the Greek that is absent in the Hebrew. Aquila,

whose Greek translation maintains fidelity to the Hebrew, recognized this defect, and translated

almah as νεᾶνις ("young woman"). A Jewish antagonist - or even an educated pagan - could

neutralize this Christian proof text by showing that it turns on a mistranslation of the Hebrew.

To reclaim this oracle for Christology, the apologist must substantiate his case with further

philological evidence. Where his antecedents had relied upon this prophecy as dispositive proof,

needing no further explanation, Origen anticipates the objection. He parries with a lexical

consideration. In at least one passage, Israelite legislation seems to treat *almah* as "virgin" (Deut.

22.23-24). The context of Isaiah 7.14, which heralds the provision of a miraculous sign to Ahaz,

also seems to require the translation "virgin" rather than "young woman". "What kind of sign,"

Origen asks, "would that have been--a young woman who was not a virgin giving birth to a

child?"[7] Whether or not one finds this line of reasoning persuasive, it would be impossible

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Brock, "Origen's Aims as a Textual Critic of the Old Testament," in F.L. Cross, *Studia Patristica* 10 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), 215-18.

[6]Justin, *dial. Tryph.* 43.8; 67.1; 83.3; Irenaeus, *haer.* 3.21.1; Tertullian, *adv. Marcion.* 3.13; Origen, *c. Cels.* 1.34. For a detailed investigation of these arguments, see Adam Kamesar, "The Virgin of Isaiah 7.14: The Philological Argument from the Second to the Fifth Century," *JTS* (1990), 51-75. An important dimension of this question concerns to what extent Jews engaged in textual criticism. The evidence suggests a spectrum of opinions in Alexandria - which may have bequeathed upon Clement, Origen, and the other members of the Alexandrian school a variety of alternatives. See M. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), esp. 19-37, 112-30.

[7]*c. Cels.* 1.35. He also maintains that Immanuel, "God with us," is more fittingly the progeny of

without sensitivity to differences of transmission. The Hexapla serves as an exhaustive reference

for such apologetic efforts.

A statement from his *Letter to Africanus* appears to confirm this intuition. In what

Timothy Law designates "the only direct quote from Origen expressing what might be called a

purpose statement" for the Hexapla, the Alexandrian proclaims that controversies with the Jews

provided the stimulus for his labors. The immediate occasion came from within the church.

Julius Africanus, an accomplished scholar in his own right, had challenged the authenticity of

two narratives that appeared in the Septuagint. Philological anomalies and the absence of the

Legend of Susannah and Bel and the Dragon in the Hebrew scriptures inclined him to disparage

them as secondary accretions. Because they appear in the Septuagint, Origen defends retaining

them. Yet his deference toward this authoritative translation does not absolve him of his

obligation to study these texts:

> I am not making these statements because I am reluctant to search the Jewish texts, to
>
> compare (συγκρίνειν) all our [texts] with theirs, and to notice the variations (διαφοράς)
>
> among them. If it isn't arrogant to say so, we have largely accomplished this
>
> (πεποιήκαμεν) to the best of our ability… We are training ourselves not to be ignorant
>
> of the texts [circulating] among them, so that (ἵνα) in our discussions with the Jews, we
>
> might not cite to them readings that do not appear in their manuscripts (ἀντιγράφοις),
>
> and so that (ἵνα) we might exploit the texts circulating among them even if they don't
>
> appear in our books. For if we have prepared ourselves in this way, they won't look
>
> down at us under questioning, nor will they ridicule Gentile believers for being ignorant

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chastity than of intercourse.

of the authentic readings (ἀναγεγραμμένα) [circulating] among them, as is their custom.[8]

From this description, one can distill the components and the purpose of this enterprise. Origen represents this research as nearing completion, suggesting that he embarked upon it while still resident in Alexandria. He remarks that the compilation of the Hexapla entailed study of Jewish texts, synoptic comparison with his own manuscripts, and observation of any discrepancies among them. He provides little indication of how he used this information, except to gesture at its apologetic benefits. In particular, he wants to avoid the fruitless tactic of marshaling readings that do not appear in Jewish texts, and so to make some use of variations that are absent from the Christian Scriptures. He vividly conveys the derision Jews direct toward those who remain ignorant of these textual variations. This condescension derives from a proprietary conviction that the "authentic readings" circulate only among them. The Hexapla eliminated this disparity by providing access to the Jewish Scriptures.

Despite its superficial appeal, this explanation remains open to criticism. An apologetic purpose explains the interest in preserving the Hebrew readings alongside the Septuagint, but does little to account for the presence of the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Unless one countenances Nautin's suggestion that Origen built the Hexapla on the foundation of an existing Jewish synopsis, the function of these versions remains difficult to ascertain.[9] This,

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[8]*ad Afr. ep.* 9.
[9]P. Nautin, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 333-42. This hypothesis remains viable, but alternative explanations seem just as likely. His case for the Jewish source of the Hexapla turns on two considerations: the placement of the Septuagint, and the transliteration of Hebrew into Greek. If Origen considered the Septuagint authoritative, Nautin reasons, he would never have relegated it to the fifth column. The first, or even third column would make more sense. Moreover, Jews, not Christians, would have the interest and capability of recording the Hebrew and transliterating it into Greek. Although it is not possible to dismiss Nautin's conclusions, they remain underdetermined by the evidence he provides. Nautin assumes that the

of course, is only a hypothesis. No evidence contemporary with Origen exists to substantiate it.

Moreover, the position the Jews staked out in these controversies remained consistent: their texts

preserved the "authentic readings" because they approximated the Hebrew original.

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placement of the translations reflects their valuation, but offers no evidence to support this conjecture. Rather, the columnar order reflects proximity to the sense of the Hebrew on the one hand and to the Septuagint on the other: Aquila's translation is the most literal rendering of the Hebrew, and the versions of Symmachus (traditionally identified as an Ebionite Christian) and Theodotion (whose version of Daniel remained authoritative for the early church) provided the most suitable comparanda for the Septuagint. It is equally presumptuous to suggest that only Jews could have contributed the first two columns. The presence of Hebrew-speaking converts in early Christianity is not as dubious as Nautin suggests, making the labor practicable. Christians might have entertained interest in the Hebrew for a variety of reasons. If there were confrontations with Jews, the ability to cite Scriptures to them in their own tongue would have silenced their derision. But other considerations, such as theories of language, might have been piqued Christian interest. As Naomi Janowitz has demonstrated, Origen shared with the later rabbis the belief that the Hebrew language possessed immanent power, but only when correctly pronounced (e.g. *c. Cels.* 1.25). Translations of Hebrew dissipated its potency. Matthew Martin has even suggested that this might explain the organization of the Hexapla, though his case lacks the corroborative evidence necessary for confirmation. Cf. Janowitz, "Theories of Divine Names in Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius," *History of Religions* 30.4 (1991), 359-65; Martin, "Origen's Theory of Language and the First Two Columns of the Hexapla," *Harvard Theological Review* 97.1 (2004), 99-106.

A more serious liability comes from the absence of polemical applications of the

Hexapla in the sprawling expanse of Origen's literary corpus. This paucity stands in tension

with Origen's "purpose statement." If apologetic concerns alone animated his labors, why does

the reader encounter so few examples of this function in his writing? This is even more striking

in light of his claim that Origen maintained contact with numerous Jews, and among them, some

rabbis.[10] Few of these encounters seem to have been controversial. More often than not, his

interest lies not in confuting Jewish opponents, but in learning from them, especially on

interpretive *cruces.[11]*

Even where disagreements with the Jews arise, the character of the discussion is rarely

polemical, and the appeal to textual differences is rarely determinative. In his *Commentary on

Romans,* Origen mentions that he pressed his Jewish interlocutors on the defensibility of

interpreting certain legal prescriptions in the Pentateuch literally.[12] They demurred, suggesting

that discrepant texts were the least pressing of the differences that divided them. These

disappointing results, coupled with the ascendant status of Christianity after Origen's death,

changed the tenor of Christian exchanges with Jewish counterparts. The *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of

the Hexapla reflects this trajectory. Tracing its use in the biblical scholarship of late antiquity,

Bammel observes that the apologetic and polemical uses of the Hexapla recede, although they

still remain.[13] This datum highlights a fundamental incongruity in the "apologetic" explanation.

In their recent study, Grafton and Williams estimated that a copy of the Hexapla must have taken

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[10]*c. Cels.* 2.31.
[11]Nautin, *Origène*, 347.
[12]*in Rom. comm.* 2.9; cf. also *Lev. hom.* 4.7.
[13]C.P. Bammel, "Die Hexapla des Origenes: Die *Hebraica Veritas* im Streit der Meinungen," *Augustinianum* 28 (1988), 133-149, esp. 149: "… so hätten wir mehr von wissenshaftlichem Interesse und weniger Polemik bermerkt. Aber auch da, wo man es am wenigsten erwarten sollte, sogar in den Einzelheiten einer Übersetzung, können polemische Tendenzen im Hintergrund stehen."

up forty volumes of 800 pages (400 leaves) each; others have suggested that it may have been even larger.[14] The staggering effort exhausted to produce this apparatus seems disproportionate to the rewards of scoring a few debating points.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM ANCIENT AND MODERN

One finds references to the Hexapla and textual criticism not in Origen's apologetic output, but in his commentaries and homilies.[15] In the very same section of his riposte to Africanus cited above, Origen suggests a complementary purpose for these endeavors: "so that we might not approve any counterfeit (τι παραχαράττειν) to the detriment of the churches under heaven, and give pretexts for those who seek opportunities to slander those in [our] midst, and to level accusations against the eminent members in our community."[16] Whatever the identity of these agitators, Origen remains concerned to preserve the integrity of the text for the benefit of the community. Similarly, he remarks that he employed diacritical signs with the intention of "making such matters known *to us*" (ἵν᾽ ἡμῖν γνώριμον ᾖ τὸ τοιοῦτον).[17] If he pursued his textual criticism as a resource for encounters with those outside his community, he also pursued it to profit those within it.

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[14]A. Grafton and M. Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book* (Cambridge: HUP Belknap, 2006), 104-5. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), xcvii, suggests fifty volumes. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint in Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 101, estimates that in a large modern critical edition, it would take up about 6,500 pages.

[15]Nautin, *Origène*, 347. He observes caustically, "Or ni ses commentaires si ses homélies n'avaient pour but de convertir les Juifs."

[16]*ad Afr. ep.* 9.

[17]*ad Afr. ep.* 7. Emphasis Timothy Law's. He remarks, "Origen gives no indication that this text [the Hexapla] was intended for use outside the church. Even though the scholars of the church might have been aided by such a tool as the Hexapla in their evangelistic mission, the mention of the apologetic use of the Hexapla should not be read as a rationale for the work of the Hexapla as a whole." Timothy Law, "Origen's Parallel Bible: Textual Criticism, Apologetics, or Exegesis?" *Journal of Theological Studies* 59 (2008), 14. Following J. Wright, he thinks the apologetic statement of purpose cited above functioned simply as a convenient defense of the project against its critics. De Lange and Nautin are more skeptical, and perceive Origen's comments as disingenuous.

But what purpose did these endeavors serve within the community? The answer turns on

his concern to "heal" the text of its corruptions. Such treatment became necessary because of

textual heterogeneity. In his *Commentary on Matthew,* Origen reflects on the pervasive variation

among the manuscripts.[18]

> But now it is clear that the variation among the manuscripts has become considerable,
>
> whether from scribal neglect or from certain others' perverse boldness, [whether from
>
> those who disregard] the emendation of the Scriptures, or even from those who add or
>
> subtract according to their own fancy as they emend.[19]

In this exposition, *varia lecta* originate as acts of omission and commission. The failure of

scribes and interpreters to discharge their duties promotes different readings. By neglecting

textual criticism, these persons allow variations to proliferate. Others carry out emendation, but

follow idiosyncratic procedures, leaving a pastiche of discordant approaches.

Origen describes his own methodology as a sanative procedure:

So, with God's help, we have discovered that we can remedy (ἰάσασθαι) the variation

among the manuscripts of the Old Testament by making use of the remaining versions as

a criterion. For, when were uncertain of the Septuagint's reading because of the variation

among the manuscripts, we settled the matter on the basis of the remaining versions. We

retained the agreement among them. We designated with an obelus each of the

[readings] that does not appear in the Hebrew (although we dared not eliminate them at

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[18]The dominical response to the rich young ruler seems to have furnished the basis for his comments: "And unless the manuscripts were discrepant with one another in many different details, with the consequence that all the manuscripts of Matthew's gospel did not agree with each other, and likewise, [did not agree with] the other gospels, then someone would consider himself irreverent for suspecting that the Savior's command to the rich man, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' had been interpolated."

[19]*in Matt. comm.* 15.14.

all), but we added with asterisks each of the other [readings], so that it might be evident

that we added readings from the other versions in agreement with the Hebrew text that

did not appear in the Septuagint. Whoever wants to can use them; but if someone takes

offence at this procedure, then he is free to accept or reject them as he wishes.

What this remedy intended has generated controversy among commentators, so it is best to begin

with the indisputable elements of this description. It is significant that discrepancy among the

texts of the Septuagint - not discrepancy among the versions, or disharmony with the Hebrew -

creates the need for healing. Although Origen does not specify how one "heals" the divergent

manuscripts, he does identify as his criterion the "remaining versions". This shorthand must

indicate the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Each of these *recentiores*

features a slightly different construal of the Septuagint, offering a range of translational and

interpretive options.[20] Harmony among the manuscripts raised no concerns; the Hexapla simply

preserved this agreement among the versions and the Septuagint. Where the readings diverged,

Origen used the diacritical markings that the Alexandrian editors of Homer had introduced a few

centuries earlier. He states that he and his assistants obelized portions of the Septuagint that did

not appear in the Hebrew. Although he acknowledges their secondary character, he remains

emphatic about retaining them in full. Asterisks designate the portions of the text that depart

from the Septuagint to follow the Hebrew. Origen concludes this description with a reminder

that he conceived the Hexapla as a critical apparatus rather than a definitive edition of the text.

Anyone with the requisite training can come to his or her own conclusions on how to remedy the

text.

Origen's description seems transparent enough, but it leaves open the question of

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[20]For a helpful overview of scholarly perspectives on the character of each of these translations,
see Law, "Origen's Parallel Bible," 4-9.

purpose. A dominant strand of scholarship construes this purpose as a refinement of the

Septuagintal text and the recovery of the "correct" version. Jellicoe pronounces, "His ultimate

object was the discovery of a 'true' text of the LXX, and to this end he brings to his aid the other

Greek versions known to him which might be of help in elucidating the Hebrew."[21] The latter

clause introduces an important provision. On this interpretation, Origen regarded the Hebrew as

superior to the Septuagint. To demonstrate this, Nautin adduces evidence from the commentaries

and homilies, identifying numerous points at which Origen appeals to the Hebrew to correct the

Septuagintal reading.[22] This was no uncritical pursuit for the Alexandrian. He distinguishes

between intentional and unintentional sources of textual corruption, and recognizes that the text

of the Hebrew itself was contested. The resemblance of this portrait to contemporary scholarship

is not coincidental. On this interpretation, Origen becomes a progenitor of modern textual

criticism, and his Hexapla an anticipation of the *apparatus criticus* that these critics deploy to

reconstruct ancient texts.[23]

This attractive narrative has sometimes blinded scholars to the tensions it creates with

the other positions Origen staked out. If his ultimate concern was to bring the Septuagint into

conformity with the Hebrew, why had he touted the apologetic potential of his undertaking?

Nautin and de Lange suggest that Origen remained disingenuous on this matter, preferring to

cloak his intentions in the more palatable explanation of an evangelistic initiative.[24] His

endorsement of the apologetic uses of this apparatus functions as a convenient subterfuge for this

pursuit of the *Hebraica vera*. The bind this stance creates does not escape Nautin: "dans une

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[21]Jellicoe, *The Septuagint,* 102.

[22] *phil.* 14 on Gen 1.16; *in Ps. comm.* praef.; Ps. 2.1.Nautin, *Origène*, 351-61.

[23]So Nautin, *Origène,*353: "Mais il veut atteindre, au delà de la Septante et au delà de l'hébreu des exemplaires juifs, le texte hébreu primitif, c'est-à-dire *le texte original de la Bible*" (emphasis his).

[24]Kahle and Hanson take this stance as well.

Église qui avait canonisé une version grecque de la Bible, Origène affirmait la prévalence de

l'hébreu."[25]

But the tension is sharper than Nautin admits. This position contradicts Origen's

repeated confessions of the authority of the Septuagint. In his *Letter to Africanus,* Origen

confronts the question of whether readings that appear in the Septuagint but are absent in the

Hebrew remain binding for the church. He enquires, "When we notice such [variations], should

we designate as spurious the copies used within our churches, and order our community to

dispense with the sacred books in circulation among them, and coax the Jews, and persuade them

to hand over copies that are pure and devoid of fabrication?" If he privileged the Hebrew rather

than the Septuagint as the "canonical" version, then his response should have been positive. But

Origen presumes a negative response. He contends that authority resides in the Septuagint, not

in the Hebrew.[26] Even where he obelized portions of the Septuagint, he nonetheless retained

them, leaving intact the "monuments of the fathers" (*Afr.* 8). This was not mere posturing, since

the form of the Hexapla reflects the Septuagint's centrality every bit as much as it reflects the

Hebrew's priority. Moreover, if Origen regarded the Hebrew as his criterion, there would be

little point in including the other versions in his account, much less in affirming these versions

(rather than the Hebrew) as his criterion for "healing" the texts. As other scholars have

observed, these *recentiores* serve as poor expedients for reconstructing the Hebrew.[27] This

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[25]Nautin, *Origène,* 361.

[26]So Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in Service of the Church* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 73-74. Cf. *ad Afr.* 3-7. Sgherri has provocatively suggested that Hebrew played a relatively minor role in Origen's textual criticism, and that he carried out his purification of the Greek version without minimal reference to the Hebrew. Although there are exceptions to this convention, it cannot be easily dismissed. Sgherri, "Sulla valutazione origeniana dei LXX," *Bib* 58 (1977), 11-13.

[27] "Aquila can hardly be considered a reliable guide with respect to the original guide with respect to the Greek text, and Symmachus does not mirror the Hebrew on a purely mechanical level, lexically or syntactically." Law, "Origen's Parallel Bible," 12.

position accounts for Origen's practical interest in the Hebrew, but contradicts his testimony at too many points to remain plausible.

Aside from these incongruities, this explanation suffers from the anachronistic understandings of textual criticism that commentators have imposed upon them. The affinities between Origen's practice and that of contemporary scholars ought not blind one to the vast differences between them. Timothy Law vividly captures the liabilities entailed by this strain of interpretation:

> Even if we grant some sort of text-critical motivation behind Origen's work, we are still without justification for seeing that text-critical work in the same way as we understand LXX textual criticism to operate today. Nowhere does Origen indicate that his intention was similar to the type of activity instigated by Lagarde and Rahlfs, and continued by the Göttingen Septuaginta-Unternehmen.[28]

An investigation of Origen's application of the Hexapla reveals considerable diversity. He used the Aristarchian signs inconsistently, making it difficult to identify his intentions. On some occasions, he designates a reading as secondary, yet still comments on it. Frequently, he catalogues variations without discriminating between the original reading and the later accretions, as contemporary scholars do. Rather than advance these distinctions, Origen simply registers the differences, leaving the judgment to the interpreter's discretion. This follows the principle he articulated in his Matthew commentary, cited above: "Whoever wants to can use them; but if someone takes offence at this procedure, then he is free to accept or reject them as he desires."[29]

HOMER THE THEOLOGIAN: EDITORIAL AND GRAMMATICAL PRACTICE IN LATE

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[28]Ibid., 11.
[29]*in Matt. comm.* 15.14.

ANTIQUITY

The brand of textual criticism Origen practiced has its roots not in the modern tradition, but in the conventions devised by the Alexandrian editors of Homer and enshrined in the culture of the *grammaticus*. Both sought to contain the pervasive variation that accompanied textual transmission. Ancient books were susceptible to the inaccuracies that manual reproduction entailed.[30] With only a modicum of hyperbole, Marrou notes that the manuscript constituted "such a fluid medium that… there were hardly ever two copies alike."[31] These discrepancies often impinged on the meaning, making it imperative to clarify the reading as a precondition for interpretation. The extent and character of this variability ensured that textual criticism did not develop as a specialized pursuit independent of exegesis, but as a component of it.

When the grammarians developed their methodology, they made emendation of the text (*diorthosis*) the initial stage of interpretation. This procedure took on particular urgency in the classroom, where the necessity of bringing the student's copies into conformity with the instructor's manuscript was acute.[32] Grammarians followed the conventional designations the Alexandrian editors had evolved to stabilize the manuscript tradition. First, these editors developed a standardized system of punctuation and accentuation to clarify the text for readers. This improved the reliability of the text by removing a significant source of ambiguity and obscurity. Second, in the margins of the manuscripts, they employed diacritical signs to indicate

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[30]Reynolds notes, "Texts copied by hand are quickly liable to corruption; to make an accurate copy of even a short text is a harder task than is generally realized by those who have not had to do it." Reynolds, *Scribes and Scholars* (Oxford: OUP, 1974), 7.

[31]H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1956), 230. The situation had only marginally improved by the third century; Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature,* (Oxford: OUP, 2000),111, avers, "Christian literature during the second and third centuries… is marked by the malleability of texts."; cf. also 105-11.

[32]I am indebted to Heine, *Origen*, 74.

points of interest and spurious additions. Finally, they produced scholia and commentaries to treat the salient features of the text and resolve the more refractory problems of interpretation.

Although these methods represented advances in literary criticism, they differ markedly from the protocols of contemporary scholars. One tendency that earned the Alexandrians notoriety was their propensity to designate lines as spurious (ἀθετεῖν) for reasons of impropriety (ἀπρέπεια).[33] L.D. Reynolds instances a revision suggested for an unflattering statement put in the mouth of Agamemnon, who refuses to accede to demands to release Chryseis (*Il.* 1.29-31). An Alexandrian scholiast disparaged these lines, commenting: "the lines are athetized because they weaken the force of the meaning and the threatening tone… it is also improper for Agamemnon to make such comments."[34] Such concerns naturally extended to theological matters.[35] Hence, Reynolds notes that Zenodotus condemned the lines in which the goddess Aphrodite carries a seat for Helen of Troy as inappropriate. Other critics athetized the affair between Ares and Aphrodite recorded in *Odyssey* 8. For Origen, too, ἀπρέπεια formed an important criterion for discriminating among readings where theological issues were at stake.

If the Alexandrians adopted a radical stance toward textual revision, they nonetheless followed a method that preserved the text intact, leaving it up to the reader to accept or reject their proposed emendations. Reynolds notes that this moderation carried significant implications for the transmission of Homer to subsequent generations: "… the Alexandrians avoided the temptation to incorporate all their proposed alterations into the text itself, and were content to note proposals in their commentaries; but for this restraint, our text of Homer would have been

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[33]Reynolds, *Scribes and Scholars,* 12. Origen adopts this *terminus technicus* on occasion.
[34]Ibid., 11-12.
[35]René Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 267-81.

seriously disfigured."[36] In fact, he observes that very few of these suggested revisions entered

into the textual tradition. Of the 413 redactions that Zenodotus prescribed, only six appeared in

the extant corpus of papyri and manuscripts of Homer. Even Aristarchus, the most influential

critic, was far from commanding universal acceptance.[37] Here again, Origen's textual criticism

mirrors the editorial practices developed at the Museion. His insistence on reserving judgment to

the reader marks him as a direct descendent of this tradition.

PROVIDENCE AND PEDAGOGY: ORIGEN AS TEXTUAL CRITIC

However, Origen also deviated from the conventions of the *grammaticus* that he had

learned early in his career. Embedded in his response to Africanus is a characterization of the

work on the Hexapla. There he describes his (and his assistants') labor as "examining

(γυμνάζοντες) the meaning (τὸν νοῦν) of the Scriptures in all their editions and variations." It

is striking that Origen extends this search for meaning to "all the editions and variations" of the

Scriptures. Not just the readings he favors, but all the variations serve as potential subjects of

interpretation.

This practice of commenting upon all the variations as well as the preferred reading in

the Septuagint demands investigation. Why did Origen bother with readings that he deemed

secondary? The most plausible explanation draws on Origen's understanding of how providence

fashions Scripture to edify the church. From his rejoinder to Julius Africanus, one can discern

his conviction that divine providence superintends the translation of the Septuagint. Origen asks

in disbelief,

> So then, even after it has furnished in the holy scriptures a source of edification
>
> (οἰκοδομήν) for all the churches of Christ, does divine providence neglect those it has

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[36]Ibid., 12.
[37]Ibid., 12.

"purchased with a price," those "for whom Christ died" - [Christ] who, although he was

his Son, God, who is love, "did not spare, but delivered him up for all of us, so that with

him he might freely give all things to us?"[38]

Providence does not abandon the church once it has furnished the inspired Scriptures. It governs

the translation and transmission as well as composition of these writings. Origen maintains this

without minimizing the corruptions that had crept into the manuscript tradition of the Septuagint.

Not every variation is equally inspired. But his reverence for the Septuagint includes the

possibility of edification through variation.

Later in his preaching ministry, Origen models this procedure. Although most copies of

Jeremiah 15.10 read, "I have not helped; no one has helped me," he favors the Hebrew rendering:

"I have not owed, no one has owed me."[39] Less attested in the manuscript tradition, comparison

to the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion confirms the authenticity of the Hebrew.

Yet Origen refuses to limit his exposition to the Hebrew, pointing out that it is necessary to

discuss the commoner reading as well. He places the received version in the context of

instruction, perceiving the "help" as the benefit auditors who progress in wisdom bestow upon

their instructor. If, on the other hand, the Lord laments, "no one has owed me," he intends that

he is willing to lend spiritual valuables, but no one has yet accepted this funding. It stands both

as a testament to divine mercy and as a reproach to those who refused this generous offer. No

one owes anything because none has accepted the Lord's offer to retire his debts (cf. Lk. 7.40-

41). Origen suspects that faulty reproduction may account for the more common reading.

Philological concerns notwithstanding, he appears to privilege the Hebrew reading because he

finds its meaning more edifying. The language of debenture expresses a more profound truth

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[38]*ad Afr. ep.* 8.
[39] *in Ier. hom.* 14.3-4; 15.5.

than the language of instruction, even if both are legitimate interpretations.

In a discussion on the scope of the "world" (κόσμος) that the Word saves in his *Commentary on John*, Origen considers a textual variation on Hebrews 2.9. Most copies read, "*apart from* (χωρίς) God he tasted death for all," but other manuscripts declare, "he tasted death *by the grace* (χάριτι) of God."[40] Here again, Origen refuses to settle the matter. His death separated him from God, but this privation brought grace and salvation upon humanity. Indeed, to restrict the scope of this salvation to humanity is to diminish its plenitude and power. Origen claims that even the stars profit from this death.[41] The magnitude of this achievement provides the foundation for an important Christological accolade. The Word claims the title of Great High Priest "since he restores all things to the kingdom of the Father, causing the things that are lacking in each of the creatures to be supplied that they may be able to receive the Father's glory."[42]

These practices illustrate that Origen's conception of remedying (ἰάσασθαι) the texts cannot be assimilated to modern or ancient methodologies. Rather, it fits in Origen's unique schema of salvation as education. To the best of my knowledge, no commentator yet has observed that nearly every instance in which he draws from the lexicon of healing describes an act of divine salvation.[43] In *princ.* 3.1.13-18, he describes the different regimens that God prescribes, noting that the diversity of souls demand a diversity of cures. The Great Physician

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[40]*in Io. comm.* 1.255. This variation continues to appear in critical editions of the New Testament.

[41]*in Io. comm.* 1.257.

[42]*in Io. comm.* 1.258.

[43]TLG lists 62 occurrences of ἰάσασθαι in Origen's writing. Nearly all describe Jesus' healings, or develop salvific metaphors. It does not appear to have been regularly used of variant manuscripts in other grammarians and literary critics, although Nünlist points out that it was sometimes used to express the effects the poet had on its audience. Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 146n45.

adapts his remedies to his patients, applying gentle or severe treatments depending upon the nature of the disease. Both the timing and the tenor of these cures contribute to the restoration of health.

Even destruction can promote healing. The oracle in Jeremiah 13.14 scandalized some readers: "I will not spare and I will not pity their destruction."[44] To them, this unsparing pronouncement seemed incompatible with divine goodness. But Origen points out that virulent diseases require strong medicines.

> Consider the healer also, how, if he spares surgery from what needs surgery, if he spares sterilization from what needs to be sterilized because of the pains that accompany such aids, how the sickness festers and worsens. But if he proceeds in a bolder way, cutting and cauterizing, he will heal by not showing mercy, by appearing not to pity him who is cauterized and given surgery. So also God's plan is not for just one person but for the entire world. He oversees what is in heaven and what is everywhere on earth. He looks then to what is fitting for the whole world and everything that exists. He looks also, as far as possible, to what is useful to the individual, yet not if it profits the individual at the expense of the world.

However well-intentioned, a gentle prescription that fails to correct the disorder is no cure at all. It cannot even claim benevolence, for it does not heal the sufferer. Origen concludes by widening the scope of this healing. Not just the individual, but the whole cosmos is being healed under the supervision of divine providence.

Similarly, the variety of cures frustrates any monolithic definition of textual criticism. Origen follows neither modern critical principles nor ancient literary conventions exclusively.

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[44]*in Ier. hom.* 12.5.

Apologetic concerns remain present, but not determinative. Rather, edifying content, superintended by divine providence, provides the criterion for his textual criticism. Just as the remedy must be adapted to the disease, so textual criticism must be adapted to the problem it seeks to resolve. This configuration demands that the critic "heal" the disorder of the texts just as the archetypal Educator heals the cosmos through his Word.

SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY (τὸ ἱστορικόν)

The rendering of τὸ ἱστορικόν as "historical analysis" can narrow the scope of the methods practiced under its rubrics. Although this dimension of criticism entertains questions of facticity, it is better understood in the original sense of ἱστορία : as a scientific enquiry into the events narrated in the text, designed to illuminate the meaning. Interpreters exploit a variety of scholarly disciplines to clarify troublesome matters in the text. They might enlist the services of astronomy to explain a passage that mentioned the stars, knowledge of ancient customs to elucidate the practices narrated in a historical narrative, zoology to elucidate references to animals, or philosophy to disentangle a speculative question. In short, the character of the literary problem determines the discipline employed to resolve it.

Nearly every page of Clement and Origen's writing glitters with these encyclopedic insights. The range of information they marshal in their expositions impresses even their critics. Yet such displays of erudition can also be distracting to modern readers. It is therefore important to bear in mind the purpose of these exercises. What can come off as tedious fact-finding or pedantic indulgence in fact attempts to expose the rich structures of meaning dwelling in these details. This analysis follows from their conviction that each detail edifies the reader and contributes to the text's pedagogical intent. It demolishes the canard that the Alexandrians disregarded the plain sense of the text to embark on allegorical flights of fancy. Nothing could be further from the truth. They quarried every detail for significance, and used all the means at

their disposal to explain how each facet of the text contributed to this meaning.

Peter Martens suggests that Origen may have had this in mind when he commended the traditional curriculum of study (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία) to his erstwhile student Gregory:

> I urge you to extract from the philosophy of the Greeks all those general lessons and instructions that can serve Christianity, and whatever from geometry and astronomy will be useful for interpreting the holy scriptures. So, whatever the children of the philosophers profess about geometry and music, grammar, rhetoric, and astronomy, as ancillaries to philosophy, we also may profess concerning philosophy itself in relation to Christianity.[45]

Far from replacing one canon with the other, Origen sees these various pursuits as expedients to exegesis. Knowledge of geometry and grammar form part of a love of wisdom that, properly channeled, helps to unearth the treasury lodged in the niceties of the text.

Origen furnishes an example of this enquiry that also impinges upon his textual criticism. Despite ample manuscript evidence to the contrary, he suspects a textual corruption respecting the activities of Jesus recorded in John 1.28.[46] The majority of texts read, "These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan where John was baptizing." However, this location fails to tally with the topography of the Holy Land, at least as Origen understands it. The Bethany Origen knows is far removed from Jerusalem and the Jordan. However, a town called Bethabara lies in the vicinity of the Jordan. Drawing on his acquaintance with Palestinian topography, Origen deduces that a careless scribe must have mistaken Bethabara for Bethany.

This geographical detail is pregnant with implications. Origen remarks that Bethabara means "house of preparation," an apposite location for Christ to prepare the way for his ministry

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[45] *ad Greg. ep.* 1. See Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 50.
[46] *in. Io. comm.* 6.205.

by submitting to baptism. Bethany, the "house of obedience," belongs to a later station in the unfolding of John's narrative. Origen sees this application of scientific enquiry as not only compatible with his spiritual exegesis, but even indispensable to it. Insight about names and locations provides an integral component in this quest for meaning: "… we must not neglect precision concerning the names if we want to understand the holy scriptures completely."[47]

Another area of Origen's interest concerned meteorology. In discussing Jeremiah 10.13 ("And he has raised up the clouds from the last of the earth, and he made lightning for the rain"), he recalls information from his studies that helps to illuminate the latter portion of the verse. He observes that "clouds" signify "holy ones" in the Old Testament. After all, Psalm 35.6 declares, "Your truth ascends to the clouds," a statement that encompasses more than just the firmament in its reference. Origen further underwrites this claim by referring to 1 Kg. 18.44, which narrates how at Elijah's invocation, a cloud appeared "like the trace of a man."[48] Once he has established this conceit, he explains that the summoning of these clouds from the end of the earth indicates the elevation of the humble. But what then does one make of the reference to lightning and rain? They might seem incongruous with this reading.

To resolve this question, Origen draws on his knowledge of metereology. He mentions contemporary speculations about the cause of lightning to explain how these holy ones might produce "lightning":

> Certain people maintain about these phenomena that the production of lightning from the
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> clouds arises from clouds that are rubbed against each other. For what happens with

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[47]*in. Io. comm.* 6.207; cf. 6.216. Origen also uses this instance to show the inaccuracy of the names recorded in the manuscripts. He elaborates on this by investigating the *varia lecta* surrounding Jesus' encounter with the Gerasene/Geradene/Gergasene demoniac, exploiting similar topographical details to exclude certain interpretations and to privilege others. Cf. 6.208 - 212.
[48]*in Ier. hom.* 8.3.1.

flintstones on earth, that when the two stones collide with each other, fire arises, they say

happens also for clouds. When the clouds are struck against each other during storms,

lightning occurs.[49]

This insight allows him to contend that from the conversation of holy persons - Moses with

Joshua, Jeremiah with Baruch, Paul with Silvanus - lightning is created, along with rain. The

lightning illumines the people of God, while the rain nourishes growth among them. What

appears to be praise of divine sovereignty over the natural world becomes a statement about the

appointment of leaders to edify God's people. An excursus on metereology permits Origen to

maintain consistency in this interpretation.

Martens points out one of Origen's responses to Celsus demonstrates his familiarity with

the competing schools of medicine.[50] Celsus had ridiculed the fragmentation of Christian

identity into numerous sects. Not to be outdone, Origen retorts that all teaching that promoted

life fostered the creation of sects. He instances the variety of schools that flourished within the

study of medicine as the linchpin of his argument.[51] Elsewhere, he shows particular attention to

medical teaching of the time. His exposition of the levitical practice of taking up the censor from

the altar and filling one's hands with "finely composed incense" (Lev. 16.12) forms a point of

departure for one such reflection. Origen takes this cultic reference in a Christological direction,

with priestly rituals foreshadowing the actions of the "Great High Priest." His hands should be

filled then, with holy works performed for the human race. Works pleasing to God, including

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[49]*in Ier. hom.* 8.4.2. The causes of thunder and lightning fascinated ancient scientists. Seneca devotes the longest book (Book II) of his *Naturales Quaestiones* to the causes and effects of thunder and lightning. He remarks that all authorities agreed that both thunder and lightning were produced simultaneously by clouds, and that the light emanating from them indicated the presence of fire. He agrees with Origen that the collisions and friction among clouds causes these phenomena. Cf. Seneca, *nat. quaest.* 2.12.2ff.

[50]Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 52.

[51]*c. Cels.* 3.12.

"explanation of the providence of God," function as fragrant offerings of incense.[52] Of particular

note to Origen are those incenses that run clear (frankincense), purify (myrrh), and protect

(galbanum, onyx). By drawing on his knowledge of these medicinal herbs, Origen can

enumerate the various offerings the church can consecrate to its God.[53]

In many historical narratives, Origen finds that discussion of customs facilitates

understanding of the text. When he comes to Matthew's account of the trial of Christ, he uses

his understanding of both Jewish and Roman conventions to heighten the drama of Pilate's

desperate attempts to avoid executing Jesus. As Pilate shrank from issuing the order to crucify

his captive, he tried to transfer responsibility to the crowd gathered in his chambers. "What

should I do about Jesus, who is called Christ?" (Mt. 27.22ff.) he asks, "What evil has he done?"

Origen contends that what appears to be vacillation on Pilate's part is actually an attempt to

intensify their guilt and shame them into abandoning their violent intentions. When this strategy

failed, he hoped to duck responsibility for putting an innocent man to death by washing his hands

of the matter. Origen recognizes that this was an unusual measure for a Roman proconsul

authority:

> Pilate, however, seeing that nothing [he was doing] was making any progress, availed
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> himself of a Jewish custom (*Iudaico usus est more*). [He did this] because he wanted to
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> appease them not only with his words concerning Christ's innocence, but also by his
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> very action, if they wanted [to listen to him]; however, if they didn't [want to listen, he
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> wanted], to condemn [them]. In doing this, he was not following any settled practice of

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[52]*in Lev. hom.* 9.8.2, 5. The second reference connects providence with scriptural interpretation.
[53]For another excellent example of medical information driving an interpretation, see *in Io.
comm.* 20.3ff., which uses embryological information to distinguish between Abraham's "seed"
and his "children" in the literal sense.

the Romans (*faciens non secundum aliquam consuetudinem Romanorum*).[54]
Pilate departs from precedent and even adopts a Jewish custom in his attempts to avoid
responsibility for crucifying a guiltless man. His strategy succeeds in magnifying the guilt of the
Jews, Origen remarks, yet fails to absolve him of responsibility. This interesting detail
intensifies the suspense of the passage, and allows for greater elaboration of Pilate's conduct.

Clement endorses a similar position that comprehension of divine pedagogy requires
attention to these preliminary disciplines. He finds the study of dialectic the most conducive to
biblical interpretation, even maintaining that those who wish to track the progress of divine
teaching (τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τῆς θείας διδασκαλίας) must approach Scripture with "a more
dialectical method."[55] So convinced was Clement of the utility of this discipline in addressing
the scriptures that he devoted the eighth book of the *Stromateis* - which immediately preceded
his exposition of the Bible - to laying out principles of logic. He shows a similar enthusiasm for
other pursuits, including music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, taking from each discipline
its contribution to the truth.[56] He illustrates the utility of these disciplines both for interpreting
the scriptures and for reforming manners. As in Origen, knowledge culled from these
investigations sheds light on the mysterious portions of Scripture and enriches the life of the
scholar.

Clement explores these disciplines at length in *str.* 6.11, providing memorable instances
of how these enquiries illumine the text's pedagogy. Following the Epistle of Barnabas, he pays
close attention to Abraham's conscription of 318 men to defend Lot in Genesis. The Greek

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[54]*in Matt. Comm. ser.* 124. There is some conflict with a fragment preserved in a later Greek
catena, which suggests that this practice was prevalent among the Romans as well as among the
Jews.
[55]Clement, *str.* 1.28.179.4.
[56]Clement, *str.* 6.10.80.1ff.

numeral to express this number, ΤΙΗ, suffuses this narrative with Christological significance. The Τ foreshadows the cross, while the ΙΗ represents the initial letters of Jesus in Greek. Clement elaborates even further on various symmetries and properties of 318.[57] He notes its symmetry with the cosmic order, its connections with Levites, and with various stages of human development. Despite the baroque character of this exposition, it impresses the meaning of the text upon the reader with surprising clarity.

> It indicated that those who had fled to the sign and the name [that is, to the cross and to Christ, as signified by ΤΙΗ or 318] belonged to Abraham with respect to salvation, and that they became the masters over the captives and over the numerous unbelieving nations that followed them.[58]

He also enlists the study of music to elucidate the descriptions of David playing the lyre and prophesying as he praised God. He ventures that the lyre adumbrates Christ and Christ's followers. By heeding the direction of their choirmaster, they live in harmony with God, one another, and themselves:

> If the people who are being saved are designated "a lyre," they are understood [to be] glorifying [God] musically, by being strummed in harmony with the inspiration of the Word and the knowledge of God to produce faith.[59]

Even the disparate parts of Scripture - the law, the prophets, and the apostolic writings - join in this harmony, orchestrated carefully by the Word. If this imagery seems far-fetched, it

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[57]This technique of numerological interpretation is known as *gematria,* and was common in early Jewish and Christian circles. E.g., *Genesis Rabbah* 95.3, *Deuteronomy Rabbah* 1.25, *ep. Barn.* 9.7-9. On the development of numerological symbolism in early Christian literature, see J. Kalvesmaki, "Formation of Early Christian Theology of Arithmetic: Number Symbolism in the Late Second and Early Third Century," Diss. Catholic University of America, 2006.
[58]*str.* 6.11.84.4.
[59]*str.* 6.11.88.4.

nonetheless functions as a dominant metaphor in Clement's *Exhortation to the Greeks* (*prot.*).

There, Clement depicts the unfolding drama of salvation as the Word's "new song" that revives

the cosmos and its inhabitants by its harmonies.[60] Those who disregard the riches of these

preliminary studies fail to discern the symphony that it produces with Scripture. So long as

music remains ancillary to the quest of following the Word's commands, it provides a valuable

expedient for the Christian life.

Later in *str.* 6.11, Clement draws upon his understanding of agriculture to interpret the

five loaves of barley and two fish near Tiberius (Jn. 6.9-11) as an allegory of divine revelation.

He notes that farmers harvest barley before wheat, which is the grain that the law prescribes for

cultivation. This signifies for him the preparatory training (προπαιδείαν) contained in the law

and in Hellenic wisdom. The barley represents the law, and the two fish designate the

curriculum of study (ἐγκύκλιον) and philosophy, respectively.[61] As the barley and the fish

furnished sustenance to those who hungered, so this preliminary training supplies needs. But

they remain provisional, the harbinger of a greater gift. Once the Lord blesses the loaves, they

"inhale the resurrection of the Godhead through the power of the Word."[62] Here again,

Clement's use of background knowledge to illuminate a text provides the scaffolding for a

figural interpretation meant to edify the reader.

Not all Clement's encyclopedic forays produce such exegetical filigree. At the

beginning of the *Stromateis,* Clement makes extensive use of the historical books of the Old

Testament to demonstrate the priority of the "barbarian philosophy" to Greek wisdom. Although

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[60]*prot.* 1.4-8.
[61]*str.* 6.11.94.5. The latter connection suggests to Clement the parable retailed in Mt. 13.47-48,
that compares the kingdom of heaven to a fisherman's selection of fish from his catch. So,
presumably, the true gnostic ought to exercise discretion in the disciplines he studies.
[62]*str.* 6.11.94.2-5.

it may appear a tedious exercise today, the construction of such chronologies played a prominent role in the repertoire of the apologists. It allowed them to dislodge accusations that Christianity was a novelty by establishing its ancient pedigree. Clement mentions that both Tatian and a spectral figure named Cassian had anticipated his own labors in this regard.[63] To carry out this operation, he painstakingly constructs a parallel chronology between Hebrew and Greek histories.[64] This display of erudition confirms John's statement that those before the Lord's coming are "robbers and bandits" (John 10.8).[65] More broadly, however, it serves the purpose of inverting the argument of Christianity's cultured despisers: the Greeks, not the Hebrews, are the later interlopers and thieves of tradition. Yet divine providence permitted this pilfering as part of the course of education.

LITERARY ANALYSIS (τὸ γλωσσηματικὸν καὶ τὸ τεχνικόν)

An important element of ancient philology was literary investigation, which consisted of both lexical research (τὸ γλωσσηματικόν) and analysis (τὸ τεχνικόν). These pursuits helped to clarify interpretive problems by scrutinizing the individual words and the syntactical fabric that held them together. It also highlighted the presence of rhetorical devices from hendiadys to hyperbaton. Taken together, the composite of techniques that comprises literary analysis devotes careful attention to how words convey meaning in their different contexts.

Clement regards sensitivity to the meanings of words and names imperative to the interpretive enterprise. In a passage that merits citation in full, he describes how enquiry into the meaning of words helps the expositor penetrate the veil of mystery that surrounds the scriptures:

So we must examine the scriptures thoroughly, because they are agreed to be expressed

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[63]*str.* 1.21.101.2.
[64]*str.* 1.21.101.1ff.
[65]*str.* 1.17.81.1.

in parables. From the names we can seek the opinions that the Holy Spirit maintains
about the things themselves. The Holy Spirit teaches by pressing his meaning into the
sayings themselves (εἰς τὰς λέξεις ὡς εἰπεῖν τὴν διάνοιαν ἐκτυπωσάμενον
διδάσκει), so to speak, so that the names used with diverse meanings (πολυσήμως)
might be revealed to us in the course of investigation, and so that what is hidden beneath
many coverings may come to light and shine by being grasped after and learned.[66]

Clement sees lexical analysis as a resource to understand the Spirit's educational intentions.
Because these expressions are deliberately obscure, the interpreter must pursue his quarry with
diligence. He sees this research as the fulfillment of the Spirit's intentions in at least two acute
instances. When the names contain various meanings, and when terms conceal a higher wisdom,
only investigation can reveal the Spirit's purposes.

Names applied to the persons and places narrated in Scripture provide the point of
departure for much of Clement's linguistic research. He takes the Savior's plaintive cry,
"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have I longed to gather your children together with me as a
bird with her fledglings" (Mt. 23.37) as an invitation to such enquiry. Noting that Jerusalem
means "vision of peace," Clement deduces that many paths can develop this vision. "He is
showing us prophetically that those who have grasped the vision of peace have had a large
variety of different tutors leading to their calling."[67] Clement even takes the interrogative adverb
"how often?" to indicate the diversity of wisdom with which the Spirit of the Lord fills the
world. Here, a name's meaning becomes the pivot of interpretation.

He finds many other instances in which names point to a higher wisdom in the text. For
example, he takes Cain's exile to Naid as emblematic of the soul's dissipation. When Cain

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[66]*ecl.* 32.
[67]*str.* 1.5.29.

migrates to Naid, opposite Eden, the significance of his relocation transcends geography. *Naid*,

Clement points out, translates as "confusion," while *Eden* is "the good life."[68] Hence, the

passage compares the soul's disorder because of sin to the good life. Clement exploits similar

linguistic analyses to construct an elaborate allegory of the uses of philosophical studies from the

activities of the patriarchs. Abraham's dalliance with Hagar ("resident in a foreign land") before

siring a son by Sarah ("my sovereignty") represents the preliminary education available through

foreign arts on the road to sovereign wisdom. Likewise, Jacob ("man of discipline") trains

himself so that God renames him Israel ("the genuine visionary," one who beholds God).

Clement concludes from this insight that diligent work in the educational disciplines can help the

student see God. In both of these illustrations, Clement constructs his interpretations on the

Philonic tracing of names.[69] Knowledge of what each individual name signifies becomes the

basis for discovering what spiritual reality corresponds to it.

Clement draws upon etymology to clarify several passages. In *ecl.* 2.1-3, he draws upon

a parallel to clarify Daniel's benediction, "Blessed are you, who survey the abysses, mounted

upon the Cherubim" (Dan. 3.54). Clement interprets this verse first by pairing it with a

complementary statement in 1 Enoch 40.1.12, in which Enoch reports, "I beheld all matter." By

its nature, the Alexandrian notes, an abyss is boundless (ἀπεράτωτον). Here, he relies upon

etymology to : *a-byss* means "without depth," or "fathomless." He cannot resist pointing out that

despite this nature, in this passage, the abyss is bounded (περαιούμενον) by the power of God.[70]

Clement reasons that water alone would not be signified by abyss, though he concedes that water

too can be called allegorically either the abyss or matter. Not only does the subject of Daniel's

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[68]*str.* 2.11.51.4.

[69]Philo, *post.* 22; *cong.* 34-7.

[70]Note the connection of this statement with the topological theology of containment without
being contained sketched out in chapter 1. Cf. *str.* 2.2.6.2.

benediction gaze upon the expanses of water; he also comprehends the abysses as "material

essences" from which genera and species are produced. The result is a deepened statement about

the superiority of this exalted figure over the material world.[71]

The need for clarity on definitions becomes acute in controversial situations. When

Clement confronts ascetic opponents of marriage in *str.* 3, he devotes careful attention to what

the terms in question mean. Hence, he shows concern to define the purpose of the law:

> to divert us from extravagance and all forms of disorderly behavior… to guide us from
>
> unrighteousness to righteousness, making us responsible in marriage, producing children,
>
> and living well. The Lord "comes to fulfill, not to destroy the law" (Mt. 5.17).
>
> Fulfillment does not mean that it was defective. The prophecies that followed the law
>
> were achieved by his presence, since the qualities of an upright way of life were
>
> announced to people of righteous behavior before the coming of the law by the Word.[72]

The law proscribes sinful behavior and directs the reader on the path to righteousness. Clement

appeals to Jesus' own words to defend the continued relevance of the law. Here, the argument

turns on the meaning of *fulfill*. One never fulfills what is defective. From the nature of the word,

Clement corners any opponent who wishes to exploit a discrepancy between the law and Christ

as a pretense for renouncing the body. Whatever Jesus' words mean, they cannot license an

asceticism that stands in discontinuity with the Old Testament's affirmation of marriage and

sexuality. This claim carries important ramifications for Christian life. Discipleship includes not

just a refinement of the spirit at the expense of the flesh. "It is our character, our life, our body"

that must be consecrated, Clement argues.[73]

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[71]*ecl.* 32.1-3. I have taken some liberties in translating the Greek, which is quite turgid.
[72]*str.* 3.6.46.1-2.
[73]*str.* 3.6.47.1.

Clement's diligence in these lexical pursuits awakens him to the constellations of figural

meanings suggested by the words he studies. He shows sensitivity to rhetorical devices that

intensify language or clarify his interpretation. When he encounters the anomalous clause in

Psalm 118, "He has set his tabernacle in the sun," Clement argues that the psalmist has purposely

inverted the word order. He interprets this phrase as a reference to the consummation of the

eschaton. Therefore, he maintains that the following verses ("And he, as a bridegroom issuing

from his chamber, will rejoice as a giant to run his way. For the heaven's end is his going forth,

and no one will hide himself from his heat") precede the setting of the tabernacle in the sun. He

finds further justification for this exegesis from his teacher, Pantaenus. Clement credits him with

pointing out that prophecy utters its expressions indefinitely, and may use the present for the

future or the past. Both grammar and an awareness of rhetorical figures help to sustain this

elaborate reading of the text. This information allows him to continue his exposition of this

passage not merely as a hymn to God's sovereign act of creation, but also as a discourse about

the progressive stages of education built into the structure of the cosmos.

Clement regards such literary devices as an instrument of concealment, which only

philological analysis can clarify. In attempting to reconcile the efficacy of petitionary prayer

with divine foreknowledge, Clement instances 1 Sam. 1.13. God grants Hannah's fervent request

for an offspring, just as ifpraising her prospectively for her behavior. This functions as a

hyperbaton. Clement suggests that the writer's phrasing conceals the truth through such figures

of speech.[74] Likewise, he designates as catachrestic Christ's likening of his sufferings to a cup.

Such devices expose the presence of figural meanings beneath the surface of the text.[75] Clement

remarks that Matthew's use of ellipsis in the statement "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is

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[74]*str.* 6.12.101.7.
[75]*paed.* 1.6.46.1ff.

perfect," obscures the qualitative difference in the orders of perfection that distinguish God from humanity.[76] All these tropes, however, serve a pedagogical purpose, as Clement frequently maintains.[77]

From his commentary on John, we have already seen that Origen considered the definition of proper names integral to proper exposition. He reminds the reader, "we shouldn't despise proper names, since things are signified by them that are useful for the interpretation [of Scripture]."[78] It is evident that he was not alone in this conviction. Many of his contemporaries engaged in speculation about the meaning of names, and it seems likely that Origen consulted existing onomastic resources in his exegetical forays.[79] These investigations paid rich dividends. Sometimes, indeed, the meaning of a name helps him discover a higher meaning in the passage. Martens cites his reflection on the statement, "the Word of God came to Hosea of Beeri" as an example of this phenomenon.[80] At a superficial level, this formula refers to a historic instance of prophetic revelation. Yet, as Origen notes, Hosea translates as "saved." This licenses a broader application: now the Word visits all who are saved, not just select prophets.[81]

Sometimes the meaning of a proper noun even unlocks the meaning of an entire book. Origen opens his *Homilies on Joshua* by noting that the name Joshua is identical with Jesus.[82] Around this linguistic datum, he constructs a detailed typology that ties Joshua's actions to those of Jesus. Their shared name enables Origen to spiritualize the conquest of Canaan narrated in

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[76]*str.* 7.14.88.7.
[77]In *paed.* 1.9, Clement compiles a catalogue of different "tropes" or methods of instruction that that Educator adopts. He establishes a close relationship between literary form and pedagogical content.
[78]*in Io. comm.* 6.216.
[79]Cf. *in Ex. hom.* 5.2; *in Num. hom.* 20.3, 27.12; *in Io. comm.* 6.216.
[80]Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 55.
[81]*in Io. comm.* 2.4.
[82]*in Iosh. hom.* 1.1.

that book. The military exploits retailed in Joshua signify the victories of the souls whom Jesus

leads over diabolical adversaries and personal vices. To vanquish these foes, Origen notes, these

"soldiers of Jesus" would need to remain vigilant, and exercise martial discipline in their

devotional lives. As they triumph in these spiritual conflicts, their land [i.e., the souls of the

righteous] enjoys rest (Josh. 11.23).[83] This manner of exposition continues into his homilies on

Judges, in which Origen frequently uses the etymology of proper names of Israel's enemies and

deliverers to make observations about the proper regulation of the soul.[84] Again, this linguistic

analysis forms the foundation of a higher form of pedagogy that animates an entire book of the

Bible.

This is also the case with significant terms and concepts that populate the pages of

Scripture. Origen recognizes that the presence of nomenclature such as "law,"[85] "gospel,"[86]

"prayer,"[87] and "world"[88] requires careful lexical research. In certain cases, he delineates the

contours of a semantic field before settling on his understanding for the instance in question.[89]

An important example of this definition of a *terminus technicus* occurs at the inception of his

treatise, *On the Pascha*. Before interpreting the significance of the events associated with

Passover, Origen corrects a misunderstanding that he claims is rife in the churches.

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[83]*in Iosh. hom.* 1.7.

[84]For example, in *Iud. Hom.* 4.1 meditates on the Midianite oppression of Israel. Origen points out that Midian means "flux" (*fluxus*), and therefore signifies laxity in the soul's defenses and in the church's activities. The remedy for this dissipation is Ehud, whose name means "praise" and whose "ambidextrous" cunning makes him a representative of skilled teaching. His assassination of the Midianite tyrant Eglon takes on spiritual significance. The soul and the church elicits praise for extinguishing dissolute practices.

[85]*phil.* 9.

[86]*in Io. comm.* 1.27-88.

[87]*orat.* 3.1-4.

[88]*in Matt. comm.* 13.20.

[89]Most famously, perhaps, in his lengthy discussion of the meaning of "beginning" in the Johannine prologue.

Most of the brethren, maybe even all of them, think that the Passover (πάσχα) takes its name from the passion (πάθος) of the Savior. Among the Hebrews, however, the real name of this feast is not πάσχα but *fas*. The three letters of *fas* and the rough breathing, which is much stronger with them than it is with us, constitutes the name of the feast, which means "passage." For since it is on this feast that the people come out of Egypt, it is therefore called *fas*, that is, "passage"… in the prophets it is called *fasek*, and, when transliterated into Greek, the word becomes πάσχα.[90]

Origen's motives for developing this etymology include both apologetic and hermeneutic concerns. He seeks to avoid ridicule from Jewish interlocutors, who might deride an attempt to correlate the exodus of Jews from Egypt with Christ's passion on the basis of a naïve etymology.[91] Yet he also wishes to establish a firm foundation for his typological interpretation of this event as the true passage from Egypt to a new way of life for those who abandon darkness and come into the light (John 3.20-21).[92]

Origen also considers grammatical analysis significant for the exposition of certain texts. He maintains that the presence of the article before θεός in the Johannine prologue designates God the Father, while anarthrous construction of θεός indicates the Son's divinity and difference from the Father.[93] Later on in his commentary on John, he observes that Jesus' words in Jn. 13.12, γινώσκετε τί πεποίηκα ὑμῖν, could be taken as either a question or as an imperative. Origen leaves this question open, noting that it might either awaken them to the magnitude of Christ's service, or direct them to imitate it.[94] Where this verse admits either construction, what

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[90]*pasc.* 1.
[91]*pasc.* 2.
[92]*pasc.* 4.
[93]*in Io. comm.* 2.14-18. See the discussion in Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 56.
[94]*in Io. comm.* 32.113.

follows is all too clear. "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you speak correctly, for so I am. If, then, I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, so also you should wash each other's feet" (Jn.13.13-14). Origen condenses his interpretation of this exchange with epigrammatic precision: "Jesus washed the disciple's feet insofar as he was their teacher, and the feet of his servants insofar as he was Lord."[95] As in his practice of textual criticism, Origen preserves both renderings, emphasizing the educational value of each.

A seasoned interpreter remains attuned to figurative expressions and literary tropes as the vehicles to convey higher teachings. He identifies the use of paradox in John's claim about the Word, "What was made in him was life." This clause suggests to Origen a statement no less counterintuitive than many of the philosophical paradoxes about the sage: that no life, and no rationality is available outside participation in the divine Word."[96] He notes the presence of hyperbaton in Rom. 7.1, in which Paul interrupts his train of thought ("Or do you not know, brothers and sisters - for I am speaking to those who know the law - that the law exercises dominion over a person for as long as it lives?"). Ordered properly, the intervening phrase belongs after the statement about the law's regime.[97] This consideration becomes important to Origen's point about the spiritual purpose of the law, and the propriety of accommodating one's teaching of the law to the audience. Earlier in his Romans commentary, Origen commends Paul's preservation of a martial metaphor in Rom. 6.14: "Do not present your members to sin as weapons of wickedness… but present your members to God as weapons of righteousness." By maintaining the figure, Paul expresses the consecration of one's self to God or to sin as a

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[95]*in. Io. comm.* 32.115.
[96]*in Io. comm.* 2.112-115.
[97]*in Rom. comm.* 6.7.6.

question of allegiance.[98] This frames the imperative as a stark choice between two alternative

paths. Should one follow God, one's "members" become the instruments of righteousness, while

conscription to sin makes one's members the accessories of evil. As in Clement, these devices

often veil the wisdom of the text. To a reader steeped in literary training, however, these

obscurities yield their secrets.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION:

PROSOPOLOGY (τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ λέγον) AND CLARIFICATION BY CLEARER

INSTANCES (Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν)

The scholiasts formulate two other principles of interpretation that influence Clement

and Origen's exegesis of the Scriptures: prosopology (τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ λέγον) and

clarification by appeal to analogous usage (Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν). These reading

strategies provide the means for resolving textual *cruces* and theological problems in many cases.

Because these reading strategies often entail each other in Clement's and Origen's practice, I

treat them together here, though they constitute discrete procedures.

Prosopology (τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ λέγον, or λύσις ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου), or enquiry about

the speakers, the addressees, and the persons referenced, was an exercise developed by the

Alexandrian editors of Homer and practiced by students of the *grammaticus*.[99] This procedure

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[98]*in Rom. comm.* 6.1.8.

[99]On this procedure in the Homeric scholiasts, see A. Römer, *Die Homerexegese Aristarchs in ihren Grundzügen*, ed. E. Belzner (Paderborn: 1924), 253-56; H. Dachs, "Die ΛΥΣΙΣ ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΥ: Ein exegetischer und kritischer Grundsatz Aristarchs und seine Neuanwendung auf *Ilias* und *Odysee*," Diss. Erlangen, 1912; Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work,* 116-34. For prosopology in Origen, see Neuschäfer, *Origen als Philologe,* 263-76; Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 58-59. For a survey of the theological use of this exercise, see Marie-Josèphe-Rondeau, *Les Commentaires Patristiques du Psautier (IIIe - Ve siècles), v.2: Exégèse Prosopologique et Théologie* (Rome: Pontifical Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1985). I am indebted to Adam Ployd for suggesting some of these resources. His article, "Pro-Nicene Prosopology and the Church in Augustine's Preaching on John 3.13," *Scottish Journal of*

seeks to clarify the identities of the speaker and his audience in contexts where either ambiguity or propriety called these identities into question. In epic poetry, such instances populate the text. An unidentified speaker or an indecent attribution often exercised ancient readers. When it became necessary to name the participants in a conversation, these scholars addressed prosopological questions to the text.

A fascinating specimen of this exercise coalesces around a passage in *Iliad* 8 that caused consternation among the scholiasts. When Hera and Athena take up arms against Troy, they violate Zeus' wishes. Fierce anger consumes the father of the gods, and Zeus issues a condemnation of their disloyalty:

The goddess with the flashing eyes will know it when she contends with her father.

But toward Hera, I harbor neither indignation nor anger,

For it is always her routine to seek to frustrate me in what I decree (*Il.* 406-8).

The presentation of conspiring goddesses and a truculent king of the gods vexed the scholiasts enough. But a more pressing question concerned the audience of this rant. From the context, it appears that Zeus disgorges these words to Iris, just before he dispatches her to confront the mutineers. The gods might be forgiven for such lapses, given their position, but for subordinate messengers to hear such talk and to deliver it to their superiors was unacceptable. Such behavior seems inappropriate to divinity, and might foster either blasphemous thoughts or disobedience among impressionable readers.

Rather than athetizing these lines, which is his solution for the portions of its delivery (which Iris improvises by labeling any rebel against Zeus a "shameless bitch"), the scholiast

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Theology, forthcoming, offers a succinct illustration of this technique at a later time.

Aristonicus turns to prosopology.[100] He maintains, "the words are fitting for the person of Zeus,

but not yet for the person of Iris."[101] Only Zeus can utter such intemperate complaints. For Iris

to confront the gods with these sharp words would usurp the prerogative of the father of the gods.

The resulting emendation allows Zeus' rant to stand, but strikes five offending lines in Iris'

speech that seem to go beyond her status. Aristonicus resolves this interpretive problem by

combining prosopology with liberal editing.

A second technique for divining what a text means involves clarifying unclear usage

with clearer instances. Porphyry articulates the most celebrated version of this exegetical

principle in his *Quaestiones Homericae*. After resolving a difficulty in *Il.* 6.201, he declares,

> But considering it right to clarify Homer from Homer (Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου
>
> σαφηνίζειν), I was showing that he interprets himself, sometimes in the immediate
>
> context, and other times in different [places]."[102]

Attention to more straightforward indications of meaning in the immediate and far-flung contexts

of an author's work helps to disentangle the more troublesome issues of exegesis. Neuschäfer

points out that though the explicit invocation of Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν only with later

Platonic traditions, the principle is present in Galen's reading of the Corpus Hippocraticum, and

among Homeric commentators.[103] To penetrate an enigmatic text, or to venture a guess at a

hapax legomenon, the critic collects relevant analogues throughout a given corpus of literature.

This allows him to premise his interpretation on more secure ground. Which texts ought to serve

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[100] schol. A at *Il.* 8.420-22. Aristonicus reasons, "She [Iris] would not have said, "shameless
bitch," and therefore excises the five questionable lines.

[101] schol. A at *Il.* 8.406-8. ὅτι τῷ τοῦ Διὸς προσώπῳ ἁρμόζουσιν οἱ λόγοι, τῷ δὲ τῆς
Ἴριδος οὐκέτι.

[102] Porphyry, *quaest. Hom.* at *Il.* 6.201. ἀξιῶν δὲ ἐγὼ Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν αὐτὸν
ἐξηγούμενον ἑαυτὸν ὑπεδείκνυον, ποτὲ μὲν παρακειμένως, ἄλλοτε δ' ἐν ἄλλοις.

[103] Neuschäfer, *Origen als Philologe*, 277ff.

as comparanda, and what reading these parallel instances suggest, of course, become the nubs of

controversy among interpreters.

In the third book of the *Stromateis,* Clement seems to provide evidence of Christian

interpreters exploiting these reading practices. He complains about radical ascetics who pervert

the meaning of Scripture by fastening on aberrations and taking verses out of context. He

describes their methods with contempt: "These people also collect passages from extracts of the

prophets, making an anthology and cobbling them together quite inappropriately, taking literally

what was intended allegorically."[104] The principle of Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν seems to

be animating their efforts. The creation of prophetic testimonia, he argues, creates a false new

context that violates the immediate context of the statement and numerous clarificatory

statements elsewhere. He offers an example of their practice in their reading of Mal. 3.15. The

verse reads, "They opposed God and found salvation," to which some added, "the shameless

God." For these readers, antagonism to the creator formed the road to salvation. An oracle like

this, confirmed by an anthology of numerous parallels from other prophetic literature, must have

seduced many readers.

Beyond the dubious textual criticism that allows this emendation, Clement questions the

basis of such a demonizing of the Creator by suggesting an alternative identification of the

speaker (τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ λέγον) and by comparing this verse with other passages (Ὅμηρον ἐξ

Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν). He contends that the radical's interpretation fails to distinguish a divine

oracle from a popular response. Malachi is not issuing a prescription for achieving salvation, but

recording the people's reaction to divine judgment. The Israelites kvetched that they had to

endure discipline while other nations flouted God with impunity. Even Jeremiah was not

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[104]*str.* 3.4.38.1-5.

immune from this feeling, asking, "Why is the path of the wicked easy?" (Jer. 12.1). Yet this punishment was remedial, and brought about their salvation. This clarifies the contested statement in Malachi. The use of a parallel text from Jeremiah supports the prosopological identification, for it shows that not all prophetic statements transmit divine thoughts. As a coda to this discussion, Clement observes,

> In their oracular utterances, the prophets do not merely say that they have heard messages from God. Demonstrably, they report the popular conversations, replying to objections voiced, as if they were officially recording questions from human sources. The saying before us is an example of this.[105]

By identifying the speaker(s) in this way, Clement helps to defuse a theological crisis, and draws quite a different lesson from the passage than his opponents.

Perhaps even more than Clement, Origen showed sensitivity to these questions of speaker, audience, and reference, and the principle of Scripture interpreting Scripture. In a fragment of his shorter commentary on the Song of Songs, composed in Alexandria, Origen reflects on the importance of establishing the identities of persons represented in the text, as well as some of the complications to this task:

> Anyone who doesn't understand the peculiar character of persons in the Scripture, both regarding the speakers and those addressed, must be quite perplexed by what he reads. He will ask who is speaking, who is spoken to, and when the speaker ceases to speak. For it often happens that the same person is addressed, although a third person speaks to him, or the person addressed is no longer the same, and a different person takes up what is said, while the same person is speaking. And sometimes both the speaker and the

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[105]*str.* 3.4.38.5.

person addressed are unchanged, or, although both are unchanged, it is not clear that they are.[106]

Further complicating the interpretive task is the tendency of prophets to move from one discourse to another without warning. The results of these complicating factors are predictable: obscure passages and confused readers. To remedy this situation, Origen counsels the discipline of prosopological exercises.

Origen likewise endorses the strategy of illuminating unclear passages with clearer passages. He casts this principle in theological terms, finding warrants for it in the bible itself. Paul's call to "compare spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2.13), John's admonition to "search the Scriptures" (Jn. 5.39), and the legal prescription to "establish everything by two or three witnesses" (Dt. 19.15 and 2 Cor. 13.1) all provide the grounding for this procedure. The practice of interpreting Scripture by Scripture derives from the very character of Scripture as an educating text. As we have already seen in the third chapter, Origen invokes the tradition of his Hebrew master, who compared Scripture to a house with locked doors and keys scattered throughout the interior.[107] Only by collecting keys from throughout the house can one unlock each individual "door" of interpretation. If God populates the text with mysteries, God also disperses the means for resolving them throughout the text of scripture.

When confronted with questions of Christology in the prophets and the Psalms, these questions became particularly charged. As in Clement, a polemical context often informs Origen's research. Heracleon, a Valentinian exegete, serves as an interlocutor of his throughout

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[106]*phil.* 7.1.
[107]*phil.* 2.3.

his commentary on John, and in John 1.3, draws Origen into a polemical engagement.[108] Origen

records his opponent's reading of this contested verse in the following manner:

> Heracleon, who is reputed to be a disciple of Valentinus, in explaining the statement,
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> "All things were made through him," has… understood "all things" to mean the cosmos
>
> and what is in it. At the same time… he excludes from "all things" those things that
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> transcend the world and the things in it. For he says, "Neither the aeon nor the things in
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> the aeon have been made through the Word." He thinks these things were made before
>
> the Word… He adds to "nothing" the words "of the things in the cosmos and in the
>
> creation"… Moreover, he also understands "all things were made through him" in a
>
> peculiar way when he says, "The one who provided the creator with the cause for making
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> the world, that is the Word, is not the one "from whom," or "by whom," but the one
>
> "through whom"… For he says that the Word himself did not create as though under the
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> impulse of another - [so] that the phrase "through him" should be understood in this way
>
> - but another created under his impulse.[109]

From these extracts, one can determine two features of Heracleon's exegesis of John 1.3. First,

Heracleon restricts the definition of "all things" to exclude certain supramundane entities, and in

particular, the aeons and "the things in the aeon made through the Word." Some other agency

must have fashioned these entities. To highlight this interpretation, Heracleon appends a clause

to the verse: "nothing of the things in the cosmos and creation." This emendation excepts the

aeons from the activity of creation. Second, Heracleon interprets the prepositional phrase

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[108]On Heracleon, see E. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973); M. Simonetti, "Eracleone e Origene," *VC* 3 (1966), 111-41, *VC* 4 (1967), 23-64. and A. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus: Gnostische Johannesexegese im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002). For detailed commentary on this passage in particular, see Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus*, 109-179.

[109]*in Io. Comm.* 2.100, 102-3.

"through him," not as expressing direct agency, but as indicating supervision of another. That is, creation "through" the Word means that the Word directed creation, not that he himself executed these directions. Where the restricted definition of "all things" distances the cosmos from the aeonic realm, the interpretation of the preposition "through" as supervisory distances the Logos from the Creator. In the linguistic details, Heracleon finds evidence of a graded hierarchy in creation.

To combat this interpretation, Origen draws upon the arsenal of philological techniques at his disposal. He considers the interpolation Heracleon suggests ("of the things in the cosmos and the creation") unwarranted. By introducing this reading, the Valentinian interpreter presents himself as "worthy to be believed like the prophets or apostles… beyond criticism."[110] Once Origen discards the emendation, he can renew the question: why should "all things" exclude the aeons? Heracleon furnishes no lexical grounds for reducing τὰ πάντα to those subject to corruption. "All things" most likely includes both corporeal and incorporeal realities.

Origen dismantles Heracleon's view of the Word's directive role in creation by appealing to grammar, to parallel texts, and to prosopology. He finds the rendering of "through whom" as administrative rather than agential to be "peculiar," and "contrary to the customary usage of the phrase." John would have employed a different preposition if he had wanted to express the Word's supervision of creation: "it would have been written that all things have been made *by* the Word *through* the creator, and not *through* the Word *by* the Creator."[111] Customary usage favors Origen's interpretation, that the Word carried out creation at the behest of the Father. Had Heracleon examined the Scriptures more thoroughly, Origen alleges, he might have recognized his error. The Alexandrian exegete therefore retrieves a complementary text from the

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[110]*in Io. comm.* 2.101.
[111]*in Io. comm.* 2.102.

Psalms to elucidate the matter. Ps. 148.5 reads, "God spoke and they were made; he commanded and they were created." This analogue generates a prosopological exercise. Whom does God address? For Origen, the response is obvious: "the uncreated God 'commanded' the firstborn of all creation, and they were created." This must include everything, not just perishable bodies. His proof text comes from Col. 1.15, which include "thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers" among the "all things (τὰ πάντα) that have been created through him and for him."[112] The techniques of the *grammaticus* provide the means for developing a theological pedagogy.

CONCLUSION: ALLEGORY AND PEDAGOGY IN ALEXANDRIAN EXEGESIS

Among their detractors, past and present, these Alexandrians' reputations as allegorists have been paramount in establishing their identity as exegetes.[113] A first complaint concerns the Hellenism of this procedure. Porphyry maintains that Origen compromised the riches of pagan learning by applying them to an inferior canon of writings. The "absurdity" reached its zenith in the allegorizing of the Hebrew Bible: "Educated as a Greek in Greek literature, Origen went over to the barbarian recklessness… Becoming acquainted through them [i.e., Platonist, Pythagorean, and Stoic literatures] with the figurative interpretation of the Hellenic mysteries, he applied it to the Jewish Scriptures." This promiscuous synthesis riles Porphyry, who faults Origen for "hawking about" his learning to the unworthy, for practicing Christianity while retaining "Hellenic" presuppositions, and for "mingling Grecian teachings with alien myths."[114] The

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[112]*in Io. comm.* 2.103-4.
[113]On the development of allegorical reading, see especially R. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); J. Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie: Les origens grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes* (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1976); I. Ramelli, *Allegoria: L'età classica* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2004).
[114]Eusebius, *hist. eccl.* 6.19.9-10. There is considerable dispute over whether the Origen mentioned here is our Origen, and whether he is the same one depicted in *vit. Pl.* 20.36-37. Although certainty is elusive, all the evidence supports the identification of Porphyry's

acquaintance and Ammonius' student with our Origen. Eusebius remains critical of Porphyry's account - he disputes Porphyry's claim that Origen converted to Christianity after being raised pagan - yet accepts without qualification that he is speaking of the Origen he knew. Such a misunderstanding on Porphyry's account would have been consistent with the criticism he levels at his erstwhile colleague: a Greek who defected to the Barbarians. Second, Porphyry mentions that he met Origen as a youth. This report tallies with the geographical (Porphyry grew up in Tyre, near Caesarea) and with the chronological evidence (Porphyry was born in 232 or 233, and Origen died in 254). Third, Porphyry depicts Origen as a student steeped in Greek literature, yet "highly honored by the teachers of these [Christian] doctrines" and "celebrated for the writings he has left." None of this information undermines the identification of Origen the Christian scholar with Origen the student of Ammonius Saccas. If anything, it puts the onus on those who distinguish the two, for it requires there to be another person by the same name who lived at roughly the same time, who trained in the traditional *paideia*, and whom Christians celebrated for his writings and teachings. Although this is possible, it requires an extravagant hypothesis that lacks corroborating evidence. The only serious quandary is Porphyry's assignment of only one philosophical treatise to the Origen of *vit. Pl.* But this can be resolved simply by saying that Origen produced only one philosophical treatise that while in Ammonius' circle, or that he generated only one work Porphyry grants philosophical standing. For orientation to these issues, see H. Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A. Worrell (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 10-12; Nautin, *Origène*, 199-202; H. Dörrie, "Ammonios der Lehrer Plotins," *Hermes* 88 (1955), 439-77; F.H. Kettler, "War Origenes Schüler des Ammonios Sakkas?" in J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser, ed., *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 327-55; H. Ziebritzki, *Heiliger Geist und Weltseele: Das Problem der dritten Hypostase bei Origenes, Plotin, und ihren Vorläufern* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 30-43; T. Böhm, "Origenes - Theologe und Neuplatoniker? Oder, Wem soll man missvertrauen - Eusebius oder Porphyrius?" *Adamantius* 8 (2002), 7-23; M. Zambon, "Porfirio e Origene: uno status quaestionis," in S. Morlet, ed. *Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 2011).

Christian heresiologist Epiphanius passes a similar verdict on Origen, who, "mentally blinded by

Greek training (Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας), disgorged venom for your acolytes."[115] Neither writer

contests Origen's familiarity with classical literature. What they find objectionable, from

different vantage points, is the fateful miscegenation of Christianity with Greek learning.

Allegorical interpretation becomes the focus of this charge.

Other critics have been unsparing with Clement and Origen for taking leave of the literal

and historical dimensions of the text. They discern in the spiritualizing interpretations of these

Alexandrians a depreciation of history, and a speculative flight from the text. Diodore of Tarsus,

who chartered what became known (somewhat misleadingly) as the Antiochene School, derides

such allegories as "a Hellenism that says one thing in the place of another and introduces

absurdities."[116] William Fairweather disparages Origen's exegesis as "fantastic interpretations"

in the course of whose fancies "the history itself, of course, disappears."[117] R.P.C. Hanson

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[115]Epiphanius, *pan.* 64.72. I am grateful to Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 38, for the reference and the translation, on which my own is based.

[116]Diodore, *in Ps. comm.* 8.154-60. A few words are in order respecting the Antiochenes. First, only a few members can be credibly identified as part of this small circle: Diodore, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyr, and John Chrysostom. Chrysostom's stature and prodigious literary output, however, has allowed the Antiochenes to exercise a disproportionate role in the discussion of biblical interpretation in late antiquity. A second reason for their prominence comes from the tendency of contemporary interpreters to see them as early harbingers of the historical critical method. This similarity dissolves upon closer inspection. Third, the opposition between Antiochene and Alexandrian schools is not so straightforward as it might seem. The polemical tone adopted by writers such as Diodore conceals deep affinities with Origen and Clement. Both approved of allegory, for instance, and both argued for the importance of the *historia* to the meaning of the text. Where they differ lies in how they configure this relationship, and the limits placed on allegory. As should become clear from what follows, I think it prudent to ground discussions of allegory in discussions of philology. For an example of this approach among the Antiochenes, see C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochischen Exegese* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1974); F. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture,* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), esp. 2ff.; P. Martens, "Origen against History? Reconsidering the Critique of Allegory," *Modern Theology* 28 (2012), 635-56.

[117]Fairweather, *Origen and Greek Patristic Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 79.

characterizes the allegorical approach to the scriptures forged in Alexandria as "unhistorical" at its core: "Its ultimate aim is to empty the text of any particular connection with historical events."[118] Martens gamely suggests that the *and* in the title of Hanson's study, *Allegory and Event* is a cipher for "something like 'marginalizes' or 'destroys.'"[119]

Against these twin criticisms of cultural amalgamation and distaste for the literal and historical dimensions of Scripture, defenders of allegory have resisted by making these vices into virtues. The indefatigable Henri de Lubac's work in rehabilitating Origen is representative of this trend. Lubac makes no secret of his sympathy for Origen as a titan of spirituality. While conceding that allegorical interpretation had pagan and Jewish antecedents, he contends that "profoundly traditional" convictions anchored Origen's practice:

> whatever the procedural similarities we might be able to enumerate, whatever the mutual participation we might even be able to observe in the same allegorizing mentality, that effort alone is enough to place an abyss between Origen, thoroughly marked by Christianity, and those Greeks to whom he is sometimes thoughtlessly compared.[120]

In sum, the formal similarities between philosophical and Christian allegory do not extend to substantial identity. The theological motivations that guide Alexandrian exegesis make it a qualitatively different pursuit than pagan allegory. Lubac parries the charge of disregard for the letter and history by arguing that, far from becoming disenchanted with history, Origen sought to show how Spirit interpenetrates history and uses it as the vehicle for transformation. Allegory is neither the a satellite of Hellenism nor irreconcilable with the letter.

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[118]Hanson, *Allegory and Event,* 63.
[119]Martens, *Origen and Scripture,* 9.
[120]Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture according to Origen,* trans. E. Nash and J. Meriell (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 317, cited in Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 7n.15.

While Lubac suggests a more balanced appraisal of allegorical interpretation than those who disparage the Alexandrians, his presentation risks presenting it as merely the epiphenomenon of spirituality. This exposes them to charges of arbitrary and unsystematic interpretation. Pairing spiritual interpretation with the grammatical practices reviewed by Neuschäfer helps to correct this misunderstanding. These writers considered allegory a legitimate method of interpretation, but grounded it in a spectrum of grammatical procedures. Martens summarizes this position: "Philology, in other words, could be practiced in a literal or allegorical mode--but it was always philology."[121] He lards this insight with Origen's rejoinder to Celsus, who scorned Christian attempts to apply allegory to worthless fables. Instancing Numenius, a Middle Platonist who showed respect for the Jewish scriptures, Origen writes:

> He had a greater desire than Celsus and the other Greeks to examine even our writings in a scholarly way (φιλομαθῶς), and was led to regard them as books that are to be interpreted allegorically (περὶ τροπολογουμένων), and that are not foolish.[122]

Not the method but an opinion about which texts should be considered amenable to such interpretation distinguishes pagan from Christian allegory. Origen maintains here that the one can profitably read the scriptures using the full panoply of reading practices--including allegory.[123]

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[121]Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 63.

[122]*c.Cels.* 4.51.

[123]This datum also corrects a misperception common among studies of ancient hermeneutics that "literal" and "grammatical" modes of interpretation are incompatible with allegory. Porphyry provides an excellent example of this. The same advocate of the sober literary methods introduced by Aristarchus in the *Homeric Questions* ventures searching figural readings in *On the Cave of the Nymphs*. What warrants the latter is the presence of symbols within the text that signify a deeper meaning. Clement and Origen adopt similar views, although they seem more convinced of the existence of a spiritual substratum lurking underneath the whole text, sometimes intersecting with the text, sometimes indicated by textual contradictions and impossibilities.

What unites the philological procedures and allegorical interpretations in Clement's and Origen's practice is a conviction that the text of the scriptures functions as a conduit of instruction. Divine providence has woven together a tapestry of Scripture that, properly examined, illuminates spiritual realities. G. Stroumsa points out that Clement and Origen,

> did not seek to achieve a radical break with knowledge as it was perceived in their culture, or with the old pedagogical methods through which this knowledge had traditionally been imparted. They used various strategies which allowed them not just to avoid a radical rejection of Greek *paideia*, but actually to integrate it into the hermeneutics of the Scriptures.[124]

The grammatical principles developed as part of the *paideia* became the means of ascent. By applying philological methods to a text, then, the interpreter not only engages in a scholarly exercise, but participates in the drama of salvation.

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[124]Stroumsa, "Scripture and *Paideia* in Late Antiquity," in M. Niehoff, ed., *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters,* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 31.

CHAPTER 5: THE DIVINE INSTRUCTOR

Clement and Origen fashion the operations of providence as a means to assimilate humanity to God. In this chapter, I wish to examine the "imagined final product" (Valantiasis) of this training, the human instructor who embodies divine attributes. I begin this chapter by investigating the oration that Gregory Thaumaturgus delivered to mark his departure from Origen. Gregory's remarkable tribute to his mentor illuminates in a personal manner how Origen sought to form his students. After providing a synopsis of this speech, I argue that the correspondence of its content with Origen's own writing suggests that its portrait of Origen's teaching is reliable.

Moreover, I maintain that the pedagogy Gregory describes mirrors the curriculum articulated not only by Origen, but also by Clement, suggesting that a continuous tradition connects them.[1] In what follows, I draw attention to three dimensions of Gregory's presentation that find close analogues in the literature of both Origen and Clement. First, I find that the curriculum Gregory describes bears a close resemblance to the curricula Clement and Origen project in their writings. It follows a conventional sequence of ethics-physics-epoptics and cultivates moral deportment alongside dialectical rigor. This much converges with pagan philosophical curricula. But both Clement and Origen model this sequence on biblical wisdom traditions. Second, I note that for both Clement and Origen, the interpretation of Scripture consummates the curriculum. Logic and ethics are mere preparations for the reception of higher wisdom. Scripture takes the form of mysteries, enigmas, and parables, ensuring that only the pure of heart can understand them. Their esoteric form requires a personal guide, and this generates a third point of similarity. Gregory, Origen, and Clement share the ideal of the teacher

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[1]As noted in P. Nautin, "La fin des *Stromates* et les *Hypotyposes* de Clément d'Alexandrie," *VC* 30 (1976), 283n.44, and in H. Osborn, "Teaching and Writing in the First Chapter of the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria," *JTS* 10.2 (1959), 341.

invested with divine attributes. The interpreter who has progressed in this curriculum guides

those below him to the heights of contemplation.

This exposition leads to an accounting with the idea of Hellenization. Clement, Origen,

and Gregory challenge the concept of Hellenization that Harnack portrays. Rather than depicting

the gospel as a transplant in Hellenic soil, they see Hellenic wisdom itself as a derivative of

Hebrew wisdom, and as a useful resource. While the apologetic strategies of an "Attic Moses"

and "Greek theft" may be historically suspect, they reveal a greater degree of nuance in the

cultural translation of Christianity than Harnack and his epigones have credited. They posit the

divine origin of wisdom, and encourage their charges to despoil Egypt of its riches. The wisdom

of the Greeks forms a propaedeutic to higher truths, insofar as it corresponds to them. Yet

because of strife among the schools, a critical eclecticism animates the orientations of both

Origen and Clement.

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS AND THE CURRICULUM OF ASCENT

After eight years of abstinence from public rhetoric, Gregory Thaumaturgus delivered an

oration in honor of his instructor, Origen of Alexandria.[2] This discourse marked the occasion of

his departure from Origen and Palestine to his ancestral home of Neocaesarea, where he was to

assume episcopal office.[3] His protracted absence from public discourse and the tension between

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[2] Although the manuscript tradition follows Jerome, *vir. ill.* 65 in titling this oration a panegyric and prosphonetic, this represents a later development, and technically incorrect. Panegyrics are speeches given at a festival, and prosphonetics are typically delivered before rulers. Cf. George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times.* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1999), 48. In a dated but useful article, August Brinkmann identifies it by function as a speech given to mark a departure (λόγος συντακτικός); Brinkmann, "Gregors des Thaumaturgen *Panegyricus* auf Origenes," *Rheinisches Museum* 56 (1901), 55-76. Gregory's own designation is "an address of thanks" (λόγος χαριστήριος); cf. *or. prosph. ac pan.* 31, 40.

[3] Robin Lane Fox speculates that contemporary imperial legislation, which mandated the return of students "from propertied families… for service to their home towns within ten years of study elsewhere," may have necessitated Gregory's homecoming, and facilitated his appointment to the bishopric. Cf. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 527; *Corpus Justinianum*

his concerns for accuracy and ornament fill him with trepidation as he prepares to speak.

But it is the subject who has just revived his desire to engage in rhetoric -- "a man who looks and seems like a human being, but, to those in a position to observe the finest flower of his disposition, has already completed most of the preparation for the re-ascent to the divine"--that now casts a pall of silence over him.[4] Words alone may fail to capture the spiritual ardor of his mentor. Moreover, he fears that this oration will falter in the ears of his audience, "into which the Divine Word himself…has made his way clearly and manifestly, and in which he now resides."[5] It is therefore a "rash" but irresistible venture that Gregory embarks upon, so filled with gratitude is he at the benefits he has received from Origen.

Although his speech exploits the rhetorical conventions of his time, Gregory suggests a different paradigm. An invocation to the "firstborn Word", addressed variously as "Craftsman and Pilot", "the Healer of our infirmity", and "Director and Cause" prefaces the narrative of his encounter with Origen. Being both "Wisdom and Power of the Father," the Word never fails to praise the Father due to incapability or lack of desire.

All others are capable of expressing our thanksgiving and our piety only if, when we

make our offering for all the good things the Father has given us, we attribute the power

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10.5.1.

[4]Gregory Thaumaturgus, *or. prosph. ac pan.* 10. With some variations, I have depended upon the translation in Gregory Thaumaturgus, *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works.* trans. Michael Slusser. Fathers of the Church 98 (Washington: CUA Press, 1998). He relies on the critical editions of Paul Koetschau, *Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes.* (Freiburg/Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr, 1894); Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Remerciement à Origène, suivi de la Lettre d'Origènes Grégoire.* ed., Henri Crouzel. Sources Chrétiennes 148. Paris: Cerf, 1969; Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Discorso a Origene: Una pagina di pedagogia Cristiana.* ed. and trans. Eugenio Marotta. (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1983); Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Oratio prosphonetica ac panegyrica in Origenem. Dankrede an Origenes.* trans. Peter Guyot. (Freiburg: Herder, 1996). Of these, I have consulted the editions of Crouzel and Guyot most extensively.

[5]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 18.

of worthy thanksgiving to him[6] alone, confessing that the only way of true piety is to

remember that the cause of all things is entirely through him."[7]

Because of the "ceaseless providence, which watches over all of us alike in the greatest and in

the smallest concerns," Gregory upholds this Word as worthy of thanksgiving and hymns.[8] He

praises also the "holy messenger of God", who guided him so benevolently to tuition under

Origen.[9]

Gregory records that, from childhood, "the manner of life in my father's house was

misguided" (τὰ πάτρια ἔθη τὰ πεπλανημένα). Little prospect for emancipation from this

error existed, for he was but an "unreasoning child" (παιδίῳ ἀλόγῳ) governed by the will of

his superstitious (δεισιδαίμονι) father.[10] Strikingly, the death of his *paterfamilias* inaugurates

his new life of knowledge and salvation: "For then I was brought over first to the word of

salvation and truth, not knowing how, by compulsion rather than by choice."[11] He ascribes to the

operations of a "holy and marvelous providence" the blessing that "this sacred Word began

somehow to visit me" at the very time when the full powers of human reason began to form in

him, and thus "the human and divine reason might begin to act in me at once and together."[12]

His widowed mother sent him to study law and rhetoric. Once again, Gregory marvels at

the guidance of providence, for at the same time he arrived in Berytus for further study in law,

Origen was relocating to the region from Alexandria. The proximate causes were

straightforward. Origen was induced by "other circumstances" (an anodyne description of his

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[6]That is, the Son, the Word.

[7] *or. prosph. ac pan.* 38.

[8] *or. prosph. ac pan.* 39. Although in this context, λόγος might plausibly designate either the reasoned speech or the Son, the following clause clarifies that Gregory intends the Son by λόγος: "since he is the most perfect and living, the animate Word of the First Mind itself."

[9] *or. prosph. ac pan.* 40.

[10]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 48.

[11]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 50.

[12]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 50-4.

contretemps with Demetrius), Gregory by a desire to accompany his sister to reunite with her

husband, whom the governor of Palestine had appointed legal counsel. But even in the most

mundane circumstances, Gregory discerns the operations of providence. "These were evident,

but the less evident and truer reasons were these: fellowship with this man, the truths concerning

the Word through that man's disciplines, and the benefit of our soul for its salvation."[13] In this

way, his guardian angel commits the dispensation (οἰκονομίαν) of Gregory "to the hand of a

man who would fully discharge the whole work of providence and care (πρόνοιαν καὶ

ἐπιμέλειαν) within his power."[14]

    It is possible to discern in the reverential tones with which he speaks of Origen an

orphan's longing for paternal affection. This helps to explain why the Alexandrian's invitations

to the philosophical way of life must have proven irresistible to his young charge. Gregory

observes that Origen "combined a certain winsome grace and persuasion with a certain constraint

(τινι ἀνάγκῃ)," leaving him and his brother Athenodorus "always drawn towards him by his

words, as by the force of some superior necessity."[15] Elsewhere, he characterizes this mentor's

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[13]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 70. The Greek is, in the words of Crouzel, "bien difficile." My translation depends upon the conjectural emendation of τὴν ἀληθῆ (which must indicate a solecism or ellipsis) to τὰ ἀληθῆ. For details, see *Remerciement,* 123n3, and *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus,* 102n31.

[14]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 72. Earlier, Gregory had employed οἰκονομία to characterize the miraculous "dispensation" by which he had come to Origen. The use of the same term to characterize both the divine guidance in bringing Gregory to Origen, and in Origen's direction of Gregory, is pregnant with implications. In a recent article, Joseph Trigg explores some of these themes, but is mostly interested in investigating how Origen participated in the divine economy rather than the status of the teacher as an image of the word, and in identifying convergences between the teaching of Origen and the themes taken up in the oration. Nonetheless, my debt to Trigg's stimulating article should be obvious both from my similar treatment of the issues arising from the *Address* and from the numerous footnotes to the article that punctuate this section. Cf. Joseph W. Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia:* Reflections of Origen's Understanding of Divine and Human Pedagogy in the *Address* Ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9.1 (2001), 27-52.

[15]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 78.

influence as "a kind of divine power."[16]

In retrospect, Gregory appreciates not only the plausibility of his instructor's arguments, but the purity of his desires:

> …his purpose was honest and benevolent and helpful, to save us, and make us participants in the good things of the philosophical life, and even more in those with which God has endowed him more than most… the saving Word, the Teacher of true piety… [which is] hidden, and not easily (or even with difficulty) known to the multitude, so that if asked about him they could not say anything clear.[17]

Indeed, this oration assumes the qualities of a conversion narrative, with the affections of Origen transforming those of his pupils. Formerly animated by enthusiasm for his legal studies and by dedication to ancestral custom, Gregory discovers new inclinations stirring within. He exploits the metaphor of fire to express this smoldering desire:

> And thus, like some spark lighting upon our inmost soul, love was kindled and burst into flame within us--a love (ἔρως) at once for the Holy Word, the most lovely object of all, who attracts all most irresistibly toward Himself by his ineffable beauty, and to this man, His friend and advocate.[18]

To describe Origen's instruction, Gregory compares his work to that of a skilled farmer. "Clearing the soil, and turning it up and irrigating it, and putting all things in movement," Origen "brought his whole skill and care (ἐπιμέλειαν) to bear on us, and began working on us."[19] As the analogy suggests, such tuition entailed discipline and rigor. Gregory records that his teacher favored a Socratic regimen, "questioning, examining, and listening to our responses."[20]

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[16]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 80.
[17]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 82-3.
[18]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 83.
[19]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 96.
[20]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 95.

Following these procedures, he eradicated the "thorns and thistles" that their minds produced "in [their] uncultured luxuriance and natural wildness."[21]   His students experienced these vigorous enquiries as a purgative: difficult to endure, but sanative in their effects. When he sensed that they were becoming restless, Origen bridled them with his speech, and reduced them once again to silence (ἡσυχίους).[22] Through this "preparation of the soil," he made them receptive to the seeds of truth--though he continued to examine their propositions with undiminished rigor.

This education in dialectic produced moral as well as mental development. Origen apparently complemented these investigations with discourses on ethics--discussions of virtue, and consolations against grief and evil.[23] Here again, Gregory remains impressed with his mentor as an exemplar as well as a preceptor. Origen did not merely "recite learned sentences", but "pointed to the exhortation by deeds even before he gave it in words," thus embodying the pattern (παράδειγμα) of the wise man.[24] By his deeds, he functioned as a mirror in which his students could contemplate their own imperfections. More than his erudition, Origen's practice of his piety impressed Gregory and his fellow students: "he exhorted us to deeds, but stimulated us more by his deeds than by what he said."[25]

Through precept and practice, Origen modeled the transformation he hoped to effect in his students. His own ardor in the pursuit of perfection awed his students. At one point, Gregory identifies Origen as "one who intensely desires to imitate the perfect pattern, and strives after it with an ardor and enthusiasm… even beyond the capacity of men…"[26] By furnishing himself as a paradigm, he emphasized both the practical and theoretical aspects of this transformation. He endeavored "to fashion (πλάττειν) us, who are so different, such that we are not masters versed

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[21]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 94-8.
[22]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 97.
[23]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 115-6.
[24]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 135.
[25]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 126.
[26]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 136.

only in the doctrines about the impulses of the soul, but masters acquainted with these impulses themselves."[27]

This practical, mimetic orientation cultivates the virtues and nourishes the desire for assimilation to God. Justice forms as the soul sets itself in proper order, "rendering its due to itself."[28] Prudence, "the only virtue common to God and to man," forms as the soul contemplates itself in the mirror, seeking to reflect the divine mind in itself, so limning "a certain inexpressible path to deification (ἀποθεώσεως)."[29] Temperance and fortitude preserve the virtues from atrophy. Though Gregory and his peers found themselves incapable of the spiritual attainments of their master--he reflects that we are not "favorably constituted for them by nature"--Origen's example inspired in them an ineradicable desire to "make [themselves] like God, to draw near to him, and to abide in him."[30]

Like those of his contemporaries, Origen's course of instruction culminated in the study of theology. His approach was, by any standard, eclectic. He deemed it proper, Gregory maintains,

> that we should read with all our ability everything that has been written, both by the
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> ancient philosophers and by the poets, neither excluding nor disdaining anything, except
>
> [the writings] of the atheists, who, because they have abandoned common conceptions
>
> (ἐννοιῶν) deny that there is either a God or a providence.[31]

Such atheistic literature might undermine rather than edify an impressionable reader. But with this single exception, Origen directed his students to investigate all other forms of writing, whether philosophical or literary, Greek or foreign. This eclecticism derives from a concern to

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[27]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 137.
[28]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 139.
[29]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 142.
[30]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 149.
[31]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 151-2.

prevent any one tradition from becoming regnant. Despite his literary enthusiasms--or perhaps because of them--Origen remains wary of the seductions of books, and the susceptibility of untrained minds. These features, Gregory insinuates, created the proliferation of "contradictory and opposing tenets" that divide the schools of the philosophers.[32] Once philosophers have become adherents of a particular school, they repudiate the doctrines of all rival traditions. Such parochialism fosters error and disorientation. To guide his charges through this labyrinth of conflicting doctrines, Origen endorses the study of diverse traditions. Here again, what features most prominently are not his precepts, but the expert manner in which he navigated them on their odyssey: "… he himself went with us, preparing a way before us, and leading us by the hand…"[33]

Rather than apprenticing under human masters, Origen recommended that his students devote themselves "to God and to his prophets."[34] This apprenticeship proved forbiddingly arcane at times, for either the prophetic literature communicates in mysteries, and human apostasy obscures their messages. Yet to this Alexandrian expositor, these mysteries lie open. He himself "interpreted and elucidated" (ὑποφητεύων καὶ σαφηνίζων) these obscurities to his auditors. Imbued with a special dispensation of the Spirit, Origen became a discerning "hearer of God": "…that he might understand the words of God, even as if God spoke them to him, and that he might recount them to men in such a way that they might hear them."[35]

Under Origen, Gregory and his fellow students experienced a vertiginous sense of freedom. No subject was devoid of interest, nothing impervious to their investigations. "But it was possible to learn every kind of discourse, both spiritual and political, divine and human…"[36] Gregory is uncertain whether to classify this system as an "ancient discipline (μάθημα) of truth"

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[32]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 158.
[33]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 170-3.
[34]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 173.
[35]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 181.
[36]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 182.

or something altogether new. From his instructor he received not merely a corpus of doctrines, but a vibrant "power" that opened up vistas for exploration. Resuming the agricultural metaphor he developed earlier in the oration, Gregory concludes,

> In a word, he was truly a paradise to us, an imitation (μιμητὴς) of God's great paradise, wherein we were… to increase the acquisitions of the mind with all gladness and enjoyment, planting, so to speak, some fair growths ourselves, or having them planted in us by the cause of all things.[37]

Departing now from his instructor, Gregory compares his lot to that of Adam, removed from paradise. Although he is returning to his ancestral soil, his recognition of a truer fatherland and the "true kinsmen of the soul" in Origen estranges him from his terrestrial home. Like the Prodigal Son, he anticipates hardship from his homecoming: "tumult and agitation instead of peace, a disordered instead of a tranquil and orderly life, an onerous slavery to marketplaces, tribunals, crowds, and pretension instead of this freedom."[38] Like the exiles of Zion in Babylon, he must refrain from his song while in this strange territory of his fatherland. He consoles himself with the assurance that "the Savior of all men…the Protector and Physician for all," who brought him thus far will never abandon him, and that the "seeds of truth," the "noble deposits of instruction" remain secure in the refined soil that has received them.[39]

 From the beginning, the most enthusiastic readers of Gregory's thanksgiving oration have been the partisans and critics of Origen and the historians of Alexandrian Christianity. Socrates records that Pamphilius larded his defense of Origen with Gregory's address.[40] Moreover, there are signs of dependence in Eusebius' account of Origen's curriculum in *hist.*

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[37]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 183.
[38]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 192.
[39]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 200-2.
[40]Socrates Scholasticus, *hist. eccl.* 4.27.

eccl. 6.18.2-4.[41]

For all its stylistic excess and penchant for hagiography, the oration contains several features that make it invaluable to modern scholars as well.[42] Crouzel maintains that it is one of only two surviving descriptions of teachers by their students from antiquity.[43] It therefore contains important evidence for historians of education and rhetoric in late antiquity. Two interlocking questions arise from these scholarly enquiries into Gregory's address. First, refracted as it is through the lens of rhetorical artifice, to what extent does the oration's content reflect the teaching of Origen? Second, if it does reflect the authentic content of Origen's teaching, what consequences follow for the character of Origen's educational aspirations?[44]

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[41]For this observation, I am indebted to Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia,*" 34n31.

[42] On the style of the oration, with attention to its lexical peculiarities, see especially Eugenio Marotta, "I neologismi nell' orazione ad Origene di Gregorio il Taumaturgo," *VetC* 8 (1971), 241-56, 309-17. Cf. also Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia,*" 29-30. In his history of classical rhetoric, Kennedy designates it "the first extant example of the use of the structure and topics of classical and epideictic oratory to create Christian panegyric." It thus marks a transition from the primordial forms of Christian rhetoric--homilies--to ostensibly Hellenistic genres; cf. *A New History of Classical Rhetoric.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 260-1. If Brinkmann is correct in his designation of this as a "farewell discourse" (λόγος συντακτικός), it represents the only surviving specimen of that genre; cf. "Gregors des Thaumaturgen *Panegyricus,*" 59-60.

[43]*Remerciement,* 11-13. The other, Crouzel alleges, is Porphyry's *vita Plotini,* written only a few decades later.

[44]An additional question concerns to what degree one can divine Origen's Alexandrian curriculum from this Caesarean witness; cf., Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia,*" 34. He instances Robert Wilken, "Alexandria: A School for Training in Virtue," in *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition,* ed. Patrick Henry (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 15-30 as an exemplar of this approach, though others (beginning with Eusebius) could doubtless be found. Wilken goes even further than this, identifying continuity not only between Origen's curriculum in Alexandria and in Caesarea, but also between the Origen's teaching in Caesarea and Clement's activity in Alexandria; cf. Wilken, "Alexandria," 19. In his recent biography of Origen, Ronald Heine emphasizes the development of Origen's thought from Alexandria to Caesarea. In particular, he finds evidence of a intensified engagement with ecclesiological issues (due to his regular preaching and lecturing to congregations) and with interpretive questions in the Old Testament (due to his interactions with a substantial population of educated Jews in Caesarea as well as evolution in his thought over time). Cf. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in Service of the Church* (Oxford: OUP, 2010). Heine's account is amply documented and compelling. However, as I hope to demonstrate in this study, the continuity in development impresses more than the changes in Origen's thought, and from the fragmentary evidence that

Scholarly attempts to reconcile Gregory's *Address* with Origen's literary corpus reveal tensions over the legacy not only of Gregory, but also of Origen and his "school". In a seminal article on the topic, Adolf Knauber bristles at the absence of distinctively Christian content in this oration.[45] The orator prefers abstract titles for God such as "the divine" and "first cause" to scriptural parlance. To enunciate the dominant themes of his address, he draws from the lexicon of a shared philosophical discourse: providence, reason, and assimilation to God. The *Address* remains devoid of references to Christ, enlightenment, and love (ἀγάπη). One searches in vain for discussions of sin and the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. Where the reader does find Christian discourse ("baptism," "fellowship," "faith," "knowledge"), Gregory has detached it from its confessional moorings and divested it of doctrinal content. From these observations, Knauber concludes that Origen's missionary "school" at Caesarea intended to educate young pagans, but that Gregory had not yet converted to Christianity when he delivered the *Address*.[46]

For those who perceive tension between the orientation of Gregory's oration and Origen's spiritual oeuvre, another way to resolve these disparities is to alienate them from each other. Walther Völker endorsed this position, claiming that the pupil had simply failed to comprehend his master.[47] When one considers the seven years' apprenticeship that Gregory spent under Origen, and the subsequent correspondence that Origen exchanged with his former

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survives it is difficult to ascertain how radically (if at all) he altered his curriculum.

[45] Adolf Knauber, "Das Anliegen der Schule des Origenes zu Cäesarea," *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 19 (1968), 182-203. For the following evidence, see especially 187-90. Trigg offers a helpful condensation of Knauber's argument in "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia*," 30-1.

[46] Knauber's emphatic conclusions are worth quoting in full: "So redet *kein junger Christ oder gar Neophyt von seiner Taufe oder gar unmittelbar nach dem Erlebnis der Taufe in einem innerkirchlichen Gesprächkreis mit ebenso getauften Mitbrüdern…* Origenes hat vershiedentlich über die seinerzeitige Praxis der Missionierung philosophisch gebildeter Kreise Außerungen getan, die geeignet sind, den wahren Charakter seiner Schule (wie überhaupt der frühen 'Alexandrinishen Schule') aufzuhellen" (emphasis mine). Ibid., "Anliegen," 198, 200.

[47] W. Völker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes*. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1931), 230-3.

student, however, this interpretation becomes unpersuasive.

In his revisionist biography of Origen, Pierre Nautin formulates a more sophisticated version of Völker's position.[48] Perceiving that "this is not the simple farewell that one would expect from Origen's disciple," Nautin posits that Gregory had grown disenchanted with the rigors of learning under Origen.[49] Arriving in Caesarea as an impressionable youth of only fourteen years, he was soon drawn into the orbit of Origen's powerful personality. Nautin focuses attention on the numerous references to hardship and the sense of compulsion (ἀνάγκη) that Gregory endured at the hand of his master during this apprenticeship. He suggests that Gregory's experiences were not representative of those of the other students, but that he was for Origen "a disciple of a most special kind," and that the student's difficulties followed from this more intensive training.[50] Fatigue and disillusionment settled in, and when granted an opportunity to leave, Gregory departed: "The poor [Gregory] was received too soon into 'paradise,' and too little by his own free choice to wish to live there all his days. When the governor of Palestine was changed, his brother-in-law left Caesarea, and [Gregory], at last emancipated (*affranchi*) from his tutor, did not hesitate to leave the master who had so imposed on him."[51]

As critics have pointed out, these conclusions rest on restrictive criteria, slender evidence, and selective reading. To define Christianity on such narrow philological grounds as Knauber does is to impose a shibboleth. By the same criteria, one must judge Athenagoras and Theophilus of Antioch pagans; large tracts of apologetic literature likewise betray an

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[48]P. Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie et son oeuvre*. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 183-97. Although Nautin believed Gregory delivered the *Address* as a convert, like Knauber he perceived a contrast between Gregory's rhetoric and the austere spirituality of his master: "Le contraste est frappant avec la manière du maître qui prononçait avec tant de simplicité et de ferveur le nom de Jésus et citait l'Écriture à chaque ligne…" Cf. Nautin, *Origène,* 185.
[49]Ibid., *Origène,* 185.
[50]Ibid., *Origène,* 186-8.
[51]Ibid., *Origène,* 197.

unconverted provenance.[52] Although Gregory avoids distinctively Christian terminology, nothing in his oration is incompatible with the *regula fidei.* No dispositive evidence of his paganism is present either. In fact, as Joseph Trigg points out, Gregory "avoided specifically pagan terminology just as carefully as he did Christian terms."[53]

Moreover, Knauber discounts the numerous allusions to Scripture that litter Gregory's address.[54] Although identifying scriptural references is a notoriously inexact science, Crouzel specifies more than fifty explicit or oblique citations in Gregory's speech. Without the allusions to the clearing of thorns and thistles, the sowing of the good seed, Jonathan and David's souls knit together, the expulsion from paradise, and the laments of Zion by the rivers in Babylon, the discourse would be deprived of its most resonant imagery.

Nor is Nautin's hypothesis of Gregory's estrangement from his master any more plausible. Gregory makes much of the sense of "compulsion" that attended such an apprenticeship, but emphasizes that this was only a provisional experience. His initial hardships pale in comparison to the rewards he enjoys at the end of this process of purification.[55] One perceives Gregory's estrangement from Origen only by regarding the praise of his master as either ironic or hyperbolic.

Allowing for stylistic variation, one finds in the *Address* an oration saturated in biblical allusion and faithful to the content of Origen, if not the form.[56] Of particular interest are the aforementioned biblical references. With their sly allusions to Scripture, the discussions of

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[52]Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia,*" 33. He mentions also Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus.*

[53]Ibid.

[54]For further details on Gregory's deployment of biblical allusion, see E. Marotta, "I riflessi biblici nell'orazione ad Origene di Gregorio il Taumaturgo," *VetC* 10 (1973), 59-77.

[55]Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia,*" 31: "Nautin… disregards Gregory's indications that it was only 'at first' (πρῶτον) that he felt constrained or confined."

[56]Cf. *inter alia*, ibid*.,* 32-52; E. Marotta, "I riflessi biblici," 59-77; Ronald Heine, "Three Allusions to Book 20 of Origen's *Commentary on John* in Gregory Thaumaturgus' *Panegyric to Origen*," *Studia Patristica* 26 (1993), 261-6.

sowing amid the "thorns and thistles" of disorderly reason transpose conventional metaphors for

education into a biblical context. Gregory's audience would have recognized many titles by

which Gregory invokes the Son as unmistakably biblical: "He is the *Truth*, and both the *Wisdom*

and the Power of the Father in the universe…"[57] These references represent a focal point of

Origen's Christology. As Trigg observes, Origen alludes to Christ as the "Wisdom and Power of

God" (1 Cor. 1.24) 145 times in his extant writings.[58] Far from an oration delivered by a

disaffected student or a pagan admirer of Origen, the *Address* is the product of a mind steeped

both in Scripture and in Hellenistic philosophy.

Moreover, Gregory's invocations of God using "impersonal" and philosophical titles are

more faithful to Scripture, the developing apologetic tradition, and Origen than Knauber and

others credit. For instance, Gregory identifies the Son as the "Director and Cause" (ἡγεμόνι καὶ

αἰτίῳ) of all things.[59] Although such Platonic language might appear alien, it is clear that

Origen did not perceive it as irreconcilable with his faith. Origen himself takes Celsus to task for

deliberately omitting this Platonic "testimony to the Son" from his polemic against Christianity.[60]

Even the title "Demiurge and Pilot of all things" has significant precedents in apostolic and

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[57]Gregory Thaumaturgus, *or. prosph. ac pan.* 36. Italics are mine. The biblical references are to
John 17.17 and 1 Corinthians 1.24, respectively. Origen elaborates at length on these
conceptions (*epinoiai*) in *comm. Io. Ev.* 1.22-42, esp. 1.22, 27, 31, 39-40, 42..

[58]Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia,*" 32.

[59] Gregory Thaumaturgus, *or. prosph. ac pan.* 32. Knauber cites this phrasing, along with
several ancillary expressions, to demonstrate that Gregory's preference for philosophoumena
such as "the divine" (τὸ θεῖον) is not restricted to *or. prosph. ac pan.* 195. "Welch merkwürdig
sprache, verfremdete Bibelzitation, welch vorchristlich unscharfe 'philosophische'
Gottesprädikation!" Knauber, "Anliegen," 187.

[60]Origen, *c. Cels.* 6.8.35; cf. Clement, *str.* 5.14.102.4. Both allege that this language comes from
Plato's *Letter to Hermias and Coriscus.* Although Gregory (and Clement and Origen) employ
different expressions than the Apostolic Fathers, the ideas they express remain consistent with
their antecedents. Hence, one finds in the Apostolic Fathers expressions such as "the Great
Craftsman (δημιουργός) and Master of all" (1 Clem. 20.11), "the Craftsman and Maker of all"
(*ep. Diogn.* 7.2), "the Master and Creator of all" (*ep. Diogn.* 8.7).

apologetic literature, where it designates the Son's function as superintendent of creation.[61]

As such, this remarkable document illuminates Origen's teaching in a very personal manner. The pedagogy he describes mirrors the curriculum articulated in Clement and in Origen, suggesting that a continuous tradition connects them. In the following sections, I draw attention to four dimensions of Gregory's presentation with affinities in the literature of Origen and Clement.

EDUCATION AND MORAL TRANSFORMATION

The sequence of education that Gregory projects in his tribute to Origen reflects a traditional ordering of the philosophical curriculum: physics-ethics-epoptics. His personal narrative dramatizes this curriculum's progress from superstition to contemplation. The *Address of Thanksgiving* therefore offers a rare vista into this course of training from the perspective of the student. Moreover, it tallies with what Origen himself says, and corresponds with the curriculum Clement develops in his writing.

After heeding Origen's exhortations to the philosophical life, Gregory observes that his master began his training with a Socratic regimen of dialectic.

> On occasion he would trip us up in speech, challenging us in a very Socratic manner…
> until by persuasion and coercion, as by the bit which was the word from our own mouth,
> he reduced us to silence before him. At first it was hard for us to take, and not without
> distress, since he was introducing us novices, who had never practiced following an

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[61]Cf. Athenagoras, *leg.* 22.12: "It is as if a man were to regard the very ship in which he sailed as performing the work of the pilot. Without the pilot, it is nothing more than a ship even though it has been equipped with everything; just so, neither are the elements of any use, no matter how beautifully ordered, without the Providence of God. For the ship will not sail of itself, and the elements will not move without the Artificer (δημιουργός)." Athenagoras, *Legatio*, William Schoedel, ed. and trans. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 52-3, as cited in *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works*. trans. Michael Slusser. Fathers of the Church 98 (Washington: CUA Press, 1998), 96n10.

argument, to his own reasoning, and purifying us at the same time.[62]

This rigorous method of training in logic both prepared the way for Origen's exposition of philosophy and purified his disciples for the reception of these truths. However demanding the method, Gregory soon found himself equipped to dismantle sophistic arguments, and investigate propositions with logical precision.

Origen's interrogations fostered humility in his students. Much of what they had held true failed to survive logical scrutiny. With their systems dismantled, a new sense of wonder at the natural world arose in them. Gregory describes being filled with admiration "at the immensity, the wonder, and the intricate, all-wise fabrication of the world… laid low by astonishment, no longer knowing what to think."[63] This disposition made them ripe for training in physics. Origen's approach parallels those of his contemporaries. He analyzed the constituent parts of the universe, yet drew them together into a delicate ecology administered by providence. His account sought to explain both the continuity of the universe and its ceaseless patterns of change. In his explanations, he tutored his charges in the rudiments of geometry and astronomy.[64] His exposition culminates in the harmonizing of these parts, the demonstration of "the sacred arrangement of the universe" that underlies the flux and disparities that appear throughout it.

Like other philosophers of antiquity, Origen held that familiarity of the harmonious operations of the cosmos deliver the disciple from anxiety. His physics links directly to his

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[62]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 97-98.
[63]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 109.
[64]Michael Slusser notes a parallel passage in Alcinous, *did.* 28.4: "The introductory ceremonies, so to speak, and preliminary purifications of our innate spirit, if one is to be initiated into the greater sciences, will be constituted by music, arithmetic, astronomy, and geometry, while at the same time we must care for our body by means of gymnastics, which will prepare the body properl for the demands of both war and peace." Alcinous, *The Handbook of Platonism*, trans. John Dillon (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 38, as cited by Slusser, *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus*, 109-10n.49.

ethics, as macrocosm is to microcosm. This therapy of the soul represented a constituent goal of the principal schools of the time. Gregory expresses this sense of repose in the way things are using standard philosophical parlance. He restored their troubled souls to a "tranquil and settled condition (ἡ ἀτάραχος καὶ εὐσταθὴς ... κατάστασις γίνεται)," rendering them "free from grief and disturbance by all evil passions (ἀπαθεῖς), disciplined and calm, and godly (θεοειδεῖς), and truly happy."[65] In brief compass, Origen's students attain the goals set forth by the exponents of Epicureanism (ἀταραξία), Stoicism (ἀταραξία, ἀπάθεια), and Platonism (ὁμοίωσις τῷ θεῷ).

What impresses Gregory is Origen's commitment to embodying the moral deportment he enjoined on his students.[66] Rather than taking refuge in learned statements about virtue, Gregory practiced it. He held himself up to his students as a paradigm of the sage. Even if he had not yet achieved this lofty distinction, he pursued it with a singular devotion that impressed young Gregory, "striving with all zeal and enthusiasm, even, if one may say so, with superhuman power."[67] By power of example, as well as by power of reason, Origen inculcated the virtues in his charges.

All this training represented a mere prolegomena to theology. As we have already seen, he counseled a generous eclecticism as a bulwark against the narrowing of vision that accompanied membership in a single school. He wanted his students to be acquainted with the opinions of all the schools, though a member of none.[68] Their true devotion, he felt, was to sacred Scripture. They were to heed only "God and his prophets" - the source of theology.[69]

In his controversies with Celsus, Origen raises many of these same concerns that appear

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[65]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 116.
[66]Gregory elaborates on this theme considerably: cf. *or. prosph. ac pan.* 118, 123, 126, 135.
[67]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 136.
[68]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 170.
[69]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 173.

in Gregory's address and in his epistle to Gregory. He parries the charge that Christians

discourage students from following their instructors by praising these studies.

> But if you were to show me teachers who provide preliminary instruction for philosophy,
> and then training in philosophy, I would not dissuade young men from listening to them.
> But after their preparatory training in general and philosophical disciplines, I would try
> to lead them to the exalted height, unknown to the multitude, of the profoundest
> doctrines of the Christians, who discourse about the greatest and most advanced truths,
> proving and demonstrating that this philosophy was taught by the prophets of God and
> the apostles of Jesus.[70]

Origen qualifies his endorsement of a traditional curriculum of study by making it a propaedeutic

to the higher wisdom revealed in the Scriptures. Training in philosophy, whatever uses it might

have, he subordinates to biblical interpretation. His description of the prophets and apostles as

conduits of philosophical doctrine is conspicuous. He sought to show not only the intellectual

respectability of Christian doctrine, but also that beneath appearances it assumed philosophical

forms.

In the organization of his curriculum, Clement, too, displays extraordinary concern for

preserving the stages of his curriculum. As I argued in the second chapter, he devises a

meticulous sequence of education for his readers that begins with a call to philosophical

conversion, then proceeds to ethics, physics, and epoptics. Preserving this order is important, he

reasons, because one must heal the diseases of the soul before cultivating knowledge.[71] Drawing

on the imagery of refinement and testing that permeates sapiential literature, he describes the

course of "gnostic" purification.

Scripture forms both the model for his course of instruction and its final consummation.

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[70]*c.Cels.* 3.58; cf. 6.13.
[71] *paed.* 1.1.3.1.

The unusual form of the *Stromateis* reflects Clement's attempt both to communicate his teaching and, at the same time, to conceal it from the unworthy. The sacred writings and the teaching of Jesus furnish literary bearings for this "enigmatic" and "parabolic" approach. He finds in the Scripture warrants for both an eclectic search for knowledge, and an esoteric communication of wisdom. Most significantly, his curriculum culminates in biblical interpretation, just as the curriculum that Gregory reports in his *Address of Thanksgiving* does.[72]

SCRIPTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPLATION

In Origen's epistle to Gregory, he exhorts him, "Devote yourself first and foremost to the interpretation of Scripture."[73] This tallies with what Gregory presents in his *Address.* Although Gregory elaborates most upon the philosophical and ethical dimensions of his education, his tuition culminates in the study of Scripture. As he turns to the prophetic books, their enigmatic character impresses Gregory the most. This gives him pause, and he considers two explanations of these "dark" sayings. Either God veils these sayings in mystery to avoid divulging higher wisdom to unworthy readers, or else "every divine saying is naturally lucid and simple, [but only] appears vague and dark to us who have forsaken God and forgotten how to listen…"[74] These explanations drive at the same point. The obscurity of these writings comes not from any literary deficiency, but from the chasm that divides the incandescent purity of God's sayings from the fallibility of human readers.

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[72]In his richly documented study of Gregory's *Address*, Clemens Scholten observes that, despite foundations in pagan philosophical curricula, Origen's course of study retains a distinctive focus: "Christlicher Unterricht is von Origenes her gesehen zunächst normaler Philosophieunterricht, christliche Nuancen und Akzentsetzungen… Die eigentliche christliche Ausrichtung in Form der biblischen Exegese erfolgt jedoch erst in einem Endstadium des Studiums…" C. Scholten, "Psychagogischer Unterricht bei Origenes," *Hairesis: Festschrift für Karl Hoheisel zum 65. Geburtstag* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002), 276.

[73]*ad Greg. ep.* 4.

[74]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 174. In his letter to Gregory, Origen favors an explanation that straddles these same two alternatives. He remarks that these mysteries are hidden to many, but yield their secrets to those who prayerfully seek God; cf. *ad Greg. ep.* 4.

Because so many of the Scriptures seemed forbiddingly arcane to Gregory, his need for an interpreter to guide him through these labyrinthine recesses became more acute. He marvels at how Origen elucidates these mysteries, drawing his auditors from letter to spirit.

> He is the only living person I know who met myself or heard others tell about who could do this… [he] who had trained himself to receive the purity and brightness of the sayings into his own soul, and to teach others, because the Leader of them all, who speaks among God's friends the prophets, and prompts every prophecy and mystical divine discourse, so honored him as a friend as to establish him as a spokesperson.[75]

Significantly, Gregory attributes this gift both to Origen's training, and to his distinctive endowment with the Holy Spirit. This "fellowship with the Spirit" made him sensitive to prophetic nuance. In fact, Gregory concludes that the authority of his expositions derived from this fellowship: "it takes the same power to listen to the prophets as it does to prophesy."[76]

Origen identifies a curriculum taking shape within the pages of Scripture itself. The preliminary remarks he makes in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* forms a *locus classicus* for this understanding. He begins by considering the sequence of Solomon's teaching as preserved in Scripture. Why, he asks, should the churches of God adopt the order of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs? This is no idle question for Origen, since he has already indicated that the subject of his exegesis - the Song of Songs - "speaks of the love with which the blessed soul is kindled and inflamed toward the Word of God" and extols the marriage of Christ to his church.[77] Wishing to communicate this love, God dispatches the Spirit to "find souls worthy and able to receive the greatness of God's charity that He desires to reveal to them."[78] The form of the Scripture must reflect this mission.

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[75]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 175-76.
[76]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 180.
[77]Origen, *in cant. cant. comm.* praef. 2.
[78]Origen, *in cant. cant. comm.* praef. 2.

To articulate this knowledge, Origen ventures, the Spirit arranged these books in a sequence that mirrors the order of the philosophical curriculum. He begins by delineating the constituent subjects of this course of study:

> The branches of learning by which people generally attain to knowledge of things are three, which the Greeks call ethics, physics, and epoptics… That study is called moral… which inculcates an upright way of life and develops habits that are conducive to virtue. The study called natural is that in which the nature of each single thing is considered so that nothing in life may be done contrary to nature, but everything is assigned to the uses for which the Creator brought it into being. The study called epoptic is that by which we transcend visible appearances and contemplate something of the divine and heavenly realities, perceiving them with the mind alone since they exceed the range of bodily vision.[79]

The continuities of this description with Gregory's account of Origen's curriculum are striking. Not only are the subjects arranged in the same order in which they appear in the *Address;* they also cover much of the same content. But rather than presenting these affinities with pagan curricula as the consequence of an imitation, Origen maintains Scripture itself as the model. If pagan courses of study cover the same topics, it is because they pilfered their ideas from Solomon, "who had learned them by the Spirit of God in an age and time long before their own" and "discovered and taught these things… before anyone." This trope reverses the direction of borrowing. Christians, not pagan philosophers, were the inheritors of the tradition that had pioneered this curriculum.

What later philosophers claimed as their own, Origen claims originated with Solomon, the archetype of the sage. His configuration of his writings standardized the curriculum:

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[79]Origen, *in cant. cant. comm.* praef. 3. Following Chrysippus, Origen maintains that logic is interspersed throughout the curriculum rather than occupying a single stage of it.

Wishing therefore to distinguish those three branches of wisdom from each other…

Solomon issued theme in three books, arranged in their proper order. First, in Proverbs

he taught the moral science, putting rules for living in the form of concise maxims, as

was fitting. Second, he covered natural science in Ecclesiastes… discussing at length

natural phenomena… and distinguishing the useless and the vain from the profitable and

essential… The epoptic science likewise he has propounded in this little book that we

have now in hand--that is, the Song of Songs. In this he… teaches us that communion

with God must be attained by the paths of charity and love.[80]

The order of these books matters just as the order of the curriculum matters. Proverbs stands at

the beginning of the curriculum, because one must cultivate discernment before any

consideration of nature or nature's God. Once habituated to make these discriminations, the

student will be capable of distinguishing the transitory, which he must forsake, from the

transcendent, which he must seek. Ecclesiastes covers this material. Once he has progressed

thus far, his gaze will naturally turn to what is lasting. This higher wisdom is found in the Song

of Songs.

Lest any cultured despisers snipe at this genealogy by pointing out that Solomon's

writing lacks the sophistication of his pagan "successors," Origen contends that the simplicity of

this literature is deceiving. Lurking beneath these plainspoken utterances are profound truths.

Here, Origen suggests that Solomon's writing features a symbolic poetics.[81] When

communicating deeper truths, the poets of antiquity cloaked these verities in commonplace

language. Solomon and the other authors followed this literary strategy. In *princ.* 3.5.1, Origen

contends that the account of creation, for example, - "enshrines certain deeper truths than the

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[80]Origen, *in cant. cant. comm.* praef. 3.
[81]I draw much of the following description from Peter Struck's invaluable guide to this ancient
school of literary poeisis and criticism, *The Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of
Their Texts,* (Princeton: PUP, 2009).

mere record of history seems to reveal and may contain a spiritual meaning in many passages, using the letter as a kind of veil for profound and mystical doctrines."[82] The task of the interpreter was to uncover the profound realities that these figures signify. Given the divinatory character of this activity, it is unsurprising to find a close linkage between spirituality and hermeneutics fostered by this approach, in both pagan and Christian literature. Only those who have passed through the refinements of attitude and behavior can discern the truths beyond the text.

For this reason, Origen suggests that the function of the curriculum is to purify readers to perceive a higher wisdom operating under a symbolic system. This is especially significant for a perennially misunderstood book like the Song of Songs. To impure readers, this tribute to eroticism may be an occasion for stumbling. Origen mentions in this connection the rabbinic custom of forbidding novices to read this controversial book. Their motivation was to discourage misinterpretation by reserving exposure for the mature. Anticipating this practice, Solomon placed this difficult poem at the end of his curriculum:

> This book comes last so that a man may come to it when his manner of life has been purified, and he has learned the difference between corruptible and incorruptible things, so that nothing in the metaphors used to describe and represent the love of the Bride for her celestial bridegroom - that is, of the perfect soul for the Word of God - may cause him to stumble. For, when the soul has completed these studies, by means of which it is cleansed in all its actions and habits and is led to discriminate between natural things, it is competent to proceed to dogmatic and mystical matters, and in this way advances to the contemplation of the Godhead with pure and spiritual love.[83]

Origen sees here a close connection between spiritual progress and interpretive proficiency.

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[82]Origen, *princ.* 3.5.1.
[83]Origen, *in cant. cant. comm.* praef. 3.

Those who have cultivated the virtues in the course of their studies have the heightened sensibilities to divine these symbols accurately.[84]

This pattern is not confined to Solomon's wisdom. Origen finds this "threefold structure" of divine philosophy present in much of Scripture. In the celebrated passage in *princ.* 4.2.4, in which Origen analogizes Scripture to "body, soul, and spirit," he maintains that Scripture "has been arranged (οἰκονομηθεῖσα) by God to be given for humanity's salvation (εἰς ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίαν)."[85] It is exemplified by individuals. He instances Abraham as a paradigm of moral philosophy for his renunciation of ancestral custom in obedience to God. Isaac practices natural philosophy when he "digs wells and searches out the roots of things." Jacob's angelic vision epitomizes the heights of contemplation fostered by training in epoptics. Indeed, the moniker of "Israel" ("one who sees God") bestowed upon him testifies to the depth of his spiritual vision. It is also signified by custom and cult: Israelites' erection of altars credits God for their progress, and their itinerancy reflects a pursuit of perfection that cannot be confined to physical location. Even the sequence that Solomon sets forth recurs throughout Scripture: "…this order… appears in just the same pattern in many other things in the divine scriptures too, but it would take too long for us to follow these up."[86] Not just Solomon's corpus, but all Scripture preserves a curriculum that directs the reader toward a vision of spiritual realities. Without it, Origen alleges, it is impossible for anyone to achieve perfection.[87]

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[84]John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 47-82, develops the fascinating category of "spiritual bodies" and senses to counter dualistic readings of Origen.

[85]*princ.* 4.2.4; cf. also 2.4.7. Indeed, it may not be too much to discern a correspondence between the two "threefold" schemes of body-soul-spirit in *princ.* and physics-ethics-epoptics in *in cant cant comm.:* physics concerns the movements of body, ethics the movements of the soul, and epoptics spiritual vision. The anthropological model of Scripture, which has assumed a disproportionate influence in studies of Origen's hermeneutics, should be complemented by an appreciation of its connection with its function as an instrument of pedagogy.

[86]Origen, *in cant. cant. comm.* praef. 3.

[87]*princ.* 4.2.7; cf. 1.3.1.

Clement seems to share this basic orientation with Origen. As those "taught by God" (1 Thess. 4.9), Christians are "educated by the Son of God, in letters that are really holy."[88] He correlates the contents of the "Mosaic philosophy" preserved in the books of the law with the same philosophical curriculum Origen lays out: the historic and legislative contains the ethics, the cultic system teaches physics, and the "mysteries" theology and epoptics.[89] Because I have already explored the topic of Clement's modeling of his curriculum on Scripture in chapter 2, here I review some of those conclusions as the context for his reflections on hermeneutics in *str.* 5. This book opens with a critique of Basilides' and Valentinus' conceptions of faith as a natural property of the elect. Clement resists these "deterministic" definitions, arguing that by depreciating free will, they not only destroy the foundations of law and morality, but they also nullify the economy of salvation. What is the point of these divine interventions, he asks, if the die is cast in the counsel of eternity? The workings of providence, like the precepts of an educator, presuppose both divine initiative and human responsibility. "We must," Clement avers, "by being formed for what is good, develop an inclination for it."[90] This is why Clement prescribes a course of education to purify his students.

Like Origen, Clement comments on the need for preliminary exercises to develop spiritual perception. He compares those who have not completed this course to the "blind" and "mute".[91] To cordon off this knowledge from those unprepared to receive it, the Word veils these mysteries in symbols. This practice was common among poets and oracles in antiquity, and Clement delights in identifying analogues to Christian practice. From these parallels, he

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[88]*str.* 1.20.98.4. Ferguson translates ἱερὰ ὄντως γράμματα as "a course which is really holy," which preserves the educational parlance at the expense of the scriptural reference.

[89]*str.* 1.28.176.1. Clement may mean that the more enigmatic and typological features of the text communicate theology, but it is unclear. He says that it is like Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but given Clement's penchant for expansive interpretation, it is difficult to know what that means!

[90]*str.* 5.1.7.2.

[91]*str.* 5.4.19.2.

both establishes the respectability of this strategy and exposes its roots in the "Barbarian"

philosophy of the Hebrews and Christians. The Christian scriptures do not simply follow the

same literary traditions as their pagan counterparts; they originate them.

An emblematic instance of this veiling, which Clement says characterizes "almost the

whole Scripture," occurs in the Pentateuch's mystic depiction of the tabernacle.[92] The seven

circuits around the Temple indicate the sequestering of mysteries by concealment, and the

priestly raiment's representation of the elements signifies the agreement of heavenly realities

with their earthly symbols. As the priest passes through the courtyard to the altar, he faces the

inner sanctum, which a veil suspended from five pillars separates from the public space.

Clement takes this to mean the separation of spiritual truths from the world accessible to the five

senses. Even more remote is the holy of holies, which lies beyond a four-columned veil. These

four columns betoken the "tetrad" of covenants and the tetragrammaton - the four-lettered name

of God.

The furniture that fills the tabernacle also functions as figures of heavenly wisdom. The

golden lamp signifies revelation, and especially the disclosure of Christ "in various and sundry

ways." As further confirmation, Clement mentions a Jewish tradition of identifying the seven

eyes of the Lord with "the seven spirits resting on the rod that springs from the root of Jesse."

The ark of the covenant contains noetic mysteries hidden from the sight of many. Clement

returns to the rich symbolism of the priestly vestments, which he interprets as emblems of the

heavenly realm that Christ brings to earth through the economy of salvation.

These signifiers are fluid and polyvalent, but converge in their application to Christ and

the believer who has undergone purification. In the breastplate alone, Clement discerns

adumbrations of the law and prophets' unified witness to Christ, the sovereign name of God over

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[92]As expounded in *str*. 5.6.32.1 - 5.6.40.4. There are close parallels to Philo, *vit. Mos*. 2.88-130 in this exegesis.

all, the Word's assumption of flesh to prophesy and judge, and the distinction of intelligible from sensible realities. Each detail of the description suggests to the interpreter a constellation of associations. Yet for all the byzantine intricacy of the figures, their referents appear stable. They prefigure both heavenly realities, and the Word who communicates these realities to the realm of flesh. In so doing, they indicate a sequence of instruction that guides readers from visible signifiers to spiritual realities.

Clement and Origen share with Gregory the conviction that Scripture makes use of enigmatic language to veil higher wisdom from those unprepared to receive it. Only those who have received the requisite training can penetrate these mysteries. Both Scripture and the pagan curricula that derive from it follow a sequence that cultivates moral excellence alongside spiritual vision. Biblical interpretation lies at the end of the prescribed course of study, for the interpreter must first pass through a regimen of moral and intellectual purification.

PROVIDENCE AND PERSONALITY: THE DIVINE TEACHER AS ANOTHER CHRIST

The Origen of Gregory's *Address* personifies divine providence. Indeed, Origen acts as the emissary and representative. Gregory passes seamlessly from the providence's administration (οἰκονομίαν) "to the hand of a man who would fully discharge the whole work of providence and care (πρόνοιαν καὶ ἐπιμέλειαν) within his power."[93] In both precept and practice, Origen functions as an exemplar and an icon of Christ.[94] So assimilated is he to Christ that Gregory imputes Christ's activities to his instructor. The student characterizes his teacher as

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[93]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 72. Earlier, Gregory had employed οἰκονομία to characterize the miraculous "dispensation" by which he had come to Origen. The use of the same term to characterize both the divine guidance in bringing Gregory to Origen, and in Origen's direction of Gregory, is pregnant with implications. In a recent article, Joseph Trigg explores some of these themes, but is mostly interested in investigating how Origen participated in the divine economy rather than the status of the teacher as an image of the word, and in identifying convergences between the teaching of Origen and the themes taken up in the oration.

[94]*or. prosph. ac pan.,* 135, 183.

engaging in the activity of creation and providence.[95]

Likewise, the curriculum of Scripture fosters the creation of "true gnostics," whom Clement invests with divinized attributes. These figures become "other Christs" who educate in conscious symmetry with their archetype.[96] Through their instruction, they "uncover the lid of the ark" by illuminating the obscurities of Scripture.[97] Although Origen offers less explicit identifications of the human instructor as the agency of divine providence, his similar understanding of assimilation to God as the purpose of the divine curriculum offer grounds for thinking that he shared this conception.

By obedience to commands, and by advancement in knowledge, the gnostic acolyte becomes a "divine image resembling God."[98] No technique, no habit, and no adherence to the conventional "curriculum of education" (ἐκ παιδείας τῆς ἐγκυκλίου) produces this "third image". Rather, through the curriculum of Scripture, the Instructor guides his disciples to the heights of contemplative insight, transforming them into his own likeness.[99] Progress toward salvation incrementally assimilates him to God. The Son "impresses on the gnostic the seal of perfect contemplation according to his image," so that there is now a third image, made as far as possible like the second - the Son himself.[100] This image remains derivative and subordinate to

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[95]*or. prosph. ac pan.,*72, 137, 181.

[96]I intend the nomenclature of "other Christs" to evoke Candida Moss's recent analysis of martyrological tradition as a site for reception history and the development of Christological traditions. The gnostic as "third image" of God has not yet received the attention it deserves as a locus for Christological reflection. Perhaps it is not entirely coincidental that Clement juxtaposes idealized portraits of the martyr with idealized portraits of the "true gnostic" in *strom.* 4. Cf. Candida Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 45-74.

[97]*str.* 5.10.64.4.

[98]*str.* 7.3.16.5.

[99]Clement allows that Hellenic wisdom can provide the preliminary training of preparing the soul to receive faith. But he points out that even the unlettered Greek who inclines directly to the true teaching" (i.e., the commandments rather than philosophy) surpasses the philosophers (*strom.* 7.2.11.3; cf. 7.3.20.2).

[100]*str.* 7.3.16.6.

the Only-begotten, but an isomorphism is present. True gnostics thereby become "other Christs," who communicate salvation by their knowledge, obedience, and teaching.

To these divine icons Clement imputes divine attributes. They fulfill what the Law intimates. Their knowledge and obedience model the precepts of their Instructor. Like the Son, they create, they order, and they mediate and model salvation. The purity and immediacy of their contemplation of divine matters anticipates the eschatological vision.[101] Most significantly, their teaching imitates the Instructor's.

This "gnostic ability" is expressed in three ways: "first, acquaintance with facts; second, performance of whatever the Word dictates; third, capability of transmitting articles concealed within the truth in a manner appropriate to God."[102] "Acquaintance with facts" consists of correctly understanding the divine character and economy. Deviation from these principles is idolatry. This expansive category includes atheism and materialism. Because these beliefs "deify" matter or the passions by replacing piety with superstition, they remain incompatible with true worship.[103] Drawing on the prophetic invective of the Septuagint, Clement denigrates

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[101]*str.* 7.3.13.1. Clement appropriates Pauline imagery from 1 Cor. 13.12 to emphasize the immediacy of this vision, maintaining that the gnostic perceives the *visio Dei* "not in mirrors or through mirrors (οὐκ ἐν κατόπτροις ἢ διὰ κατόπτρων), but in the transcendently lucid and pure, insatiable vision that is the privilege of intensely loving souls." Gnostic contemplation thus becomes a prolepsis of the eschatological vision.

[102]*str.* 7.1.4.2. γινώσκειν τὰ πράγματα, δεύτερον τὸ ἐπιτελεῖν ὅ τι ἂν ὁ λόγος ὑπαγορεύῃ, καὶ τρίτον τὸ παραδιδόναι δύνασθαι θεοπρεπῶς τὰ παρὰ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἐπικεκρυμμένα. Compare Clement's parallel statement in *str.* 2.10.46.1: "Our philosopher clings to these three things: first, contemplation; second, the performance of the commandments; and third, the training of good men. When these things come together, they complete the gnostic." This parallel both confirms the basic functions of the gnostic and offers a comparison that permits greater elaboration of these duties. Hence, the knowledge has a contemplative character, the commandments all issue from the Word, and whatever the communication of mysteries intends, it must be compatible with a training regimen. Note that this work of the gnostic corresponds closely to the activities of divine providence among different audiences in *str.* 7.2.6.1: training gnostics by mysteries, the faithful by cultivating hope, and the hard of heart by remedial discipline.

[103]*str.* 7.1.4.3. This is a central preoccupation of the *Protrepticus,* which contrasts the enervating myths of paganism with the animating instruction of the Logos.

worship of irrational objects as devoid of both sense and morality. The products of human ingenuity and manipulation can never serve as objects of reverence. Nor can idols provide moral guidance, for they merely deify the material realm and human experience.

Correct beliefs about God prescribe behavior consistent with the divine nature, the second trait of the gnostic. The Son's perfect conformity to the Father's will in ordering all things forms the paradigm for this conduct.[104] He exercises the Father's power in creation and through providential supervision, attending even to the most insubstantial particles. His commandments establish the principles that virtue should be the object of choice, and that those who follow these injunctions should advance toward perfection by stages.[105] In addition to promulgating these commandments, he modeled them. By assuming "sensitive flesh," he "came to show man what was possible through obedience to the commandments."[106] The gnostic imitates Christ by fulfilling what the law intimates (αἰνίττομαι).[107]

The achievements of the gnostic furnish a personal refutation of both exponents of the Law who practice a naïve literalism and antagonists who disparage (διαβάλλειν) it as inferior.[108] These "teachers of the law" err by assuming that ritual performance can ingratiate the God who supplies all the necessities of life for humanity. Rather, Clement considers the true sacrifice to be the attainment of virtue and the cultivation of spiritual vision. The gnostic exemplifies this true intent of the law. By insisting on this crude interpretation, these "teachers of the law" invite

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[104]*str.* 7.2.5.4. Clement's discussion of "gnostic power" concludes *strom.* 7.1 but continues into 7.2; indeed, 7.2 seems to provide an extended meditation on the second characteristic of gnostic power, the obedience of the Lord's commands, which Christ both enunciates and models.
[105]*str.* 7.2.9.4 - 10.1.
[106]*str.* 7.2.8.5-6.
[107]In *ecl.* 42.1, Clement allows for multiple levels of signification, justifying the kind of "multiple" fulfillment of the Law by Christ, the angels, and the gnostic. The primary *signifié* is Christ, but insofar as first-born angels or gnostics are assimilated to Christ, they are included in the reference.
[108]Clement correlates a spectrum of antagonists with the categories of impiety elaborated in *Laws* X: disbelief in the existence and providence of God, and a belief that God can be manipulated by ritual gestures.

criticism from antagonistic quarters. Like them are those who stigmatize providence on the basis

of their own moral weakness or the suffering inflicted by indiscriminate chance. Those who have

not perceived the "self-determination" (αὐθαίρετον) of the human soul make life a crude

pageant of necessity.   By domesticating the passions and enduring adversity, true gnostics

embody mastery over the tyrannies of pleasure and pain. They develop through instruction

(μάθησις), they embody the possibility of attaining virtue through faith and obedience, which are

"up to us" (ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν). Gnostic participation in the divine economy thereby epitomizes "a

righteousness of progress and perfection."[109] It makes him a functionary in the divine economy,

just like the Word.

The third effect of gnostic ability concerns his "capability of delivering, in a way suitable

to God, the secrets veiled in truth."[110] No other activity so enhances his stature as the "third

image."[111] Indeed, by presenting the gnostic as "a living image of the Lord," Clement intends not

"the peculiarity of form," but "the symbol of power and the similarity of preaching."[112]   The

imagery Clement uses to describe the relationship of the gnostic and the Lord is rich with

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[109]*str.* 6.12.102.5. Clement evolves a rather literal analogy to characterize this assimilation of
the gnostic to Christ. Just as idolaters beseech images of terrestrial spirits and even solemnize
contracts before them, so one's posture toward "living images" (ἔμψυχα ἀγάλματα) of the
Lord reflects one's posture toward the Lord himself.

[110]*str.* 7.1.3.4. The qualifier θεοπρεπῶς and its cognate expressions appear only seven times in
Clement's extant literature, but five of these incidences occur in 7.1 in the context of the gnostic
becoming the "likeness" and "third image" of the Word. Clement is concerned here to note that
the gnostic alone worships God in a manner befitting God, and that this appropriate worship
terminates in obedience, love, and service--expressed preeminently through teaching. Thus,
"godliness" (θεοπρέπεια) Clement defines as "the habit (ἕξις) which preserves what befits God
(τὸ πρέπον τῷ θεῷ)," cultivation of which makes such a person "the only lover of God, both in
respect of the knowledge and of the life which must be lived by him, who is destined to be divine
and is already being assimilated to God," *str.* 7.1.3.6. The other relevant use occurs in *prot.*
1.10.2, which exhorts its reader to adopt means of purification that befit God in order to see God,
a practical preparation analogous to John the Baptizer's *praeparatio evangelica* and the
"prophetic enigmas".

[111]"The one who takes up teaching others augments and enhances the dignity of the gnostic." (*str.*
7.9.52.1).

[112] *str.* 7.9.52.3.

implications. He calls attention away from considerations of individual form and focuses instead

upon symbol and mimesis. A symbol signifies the presence of a higher reality.[113] In the same

way, the true gnostic indicates the power of his archetype, without sharing its identity. His

teaching adheres closely to the pattern of the Lord's teaching in Scripture and in incarnate

ministry, an "imitation of the divine plan."[114] This mimesis lays the foundation for the divine

attributes that Clement confers upon the gnostic: it is the Lord "after whose image the one who is

truly human [i.e., the gnostic] by training (παιδεύων) creates and harmonizes, renewing unto

salvation the person who heeds."[115]

   If he denies exact correspondence between the archetype and its copy, Clement

nevertheless imputes both creative and salvific agency to the gnostic instructor. As his capacities

allow, the gnostic interpreter becomes "like the Lord" in all service (διὰ … θεραπείας) to God.

This service "extends to the salvation of humanity, by concern for our benefit, and further, by

worship, by teaching, and by beneficence through deeds."[116] Having received "by both word and

deed" the "dispensation (οἰκονομίαν) of the greatest good on earth," he mediates (ἐμμεσιτεύει)

and models communion with God.[117] So strikingly does he imitate God that Clement again

accords him creative agency, traditionally the preserve of deity. Because he has been assimilated

to God, "he also creates (κτίζει) and fashions (δημιουργεῖ) himself, and puts those who perceive

him in order (κοσμεῖ)."[118] Where the Word orders the cosmos, the gnostic forms his own soul

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[113] Peter Struck, *Birth of the Symbol,* esp. 77-110, 162 - 203.

[114]*str.* 7.3.16.3: τὴν θείαν προαίρεσιν μιμούμενος.

[115]*str.* 7.9.52.2.

[116]*str.* 7.3.13.2.

[117]*str.* 7.9.52.1. Clement applies μεσιτεύω to the Word in *prot.* 12.122.3.

[118]*str.* 7.3.13.3. On the application of κτίζω and δημιουργέω to God (which Clement does more or less synonymously), see *prot.* 1.7.3; *paed.* 3.12.99.3; *str.* 6.10.80.3, 7.11.62.1. The application of such activities to human agents is rather incongruous. On the other hand, Clement uses κοσμέω to identify both the harmonious order of the universe (*prot.* 1.5.1) and--in a report on the Valentinians, which probably informs the present use--the equanimity of the enlightened person (*exc.* 41.4).

and those of his auditors. By eradicating the corrupting influence of the passions, he produces

and re-produces nothing less than a new humanity.   Hence, the gnostic imitates and continues

the divine instruction that begins with creation.[119]

Clement conceives this pedagogy as participation in the angelic hierarchy. In the

Eclogae Propheticae, Clement comments on Psalm 19. He maintains that cosmic imagery

indicates the administration of the covenant through a hierarchy of angelic and human

intermediaries. "The heavens declare the glory of God" refers to "heavens" circumscribed by

time and space, of course. But it principally signifies the Lord's mediation, and then "the

attentive activity of the first-born angels" in relation to the covenant, followed by the holy men of

the Law, the patriarchs, Moses, and then the apostles.[120] Clement observes the conspicuous

involvement of angels in establishing the covenants of Noah, Abraham, and Moses. These

emissaries represent only the most immediate link in a co-ordinated network of heavenly

functionaries. The Lord orchestrates this network by moving the "first-born angels," who in turn

direct the angels "attached to the prophets." These first-born angels thereby promulgate the

covenants. Through this graded hierarchy of angels and saints the Son manifests the glory of

God.

Just as the communication of the covenant descends through a hierarchy of angels to

human persons, so also human participants ascend through instruction to the angelic realms. In

his exegesis of Psalm 19.6 ("In the sun he has set his tabernacle"), Clement adopts a maxim he

claims Pantaenus frequently intoned: prophecy utters its pronouncements "indefinitely"

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[119] This contrasts with the views Clement imputes to Valentinus and Basilides, who regard the abolition of death originated by the Demiurge as the destiny of the "chosen race," *str.* 4.13.89.4; cf. also 1.6.34.4 - 35.1

[120]   *ecl.* 52.1; 51.1. Clement's privileging of personal entities over cosmic bodies may reflect a concern to avoid astral fatalism. In *ecl.* 55.1-2, he asserts that the stars are "pneumatic bodies" subject to angels, and do not generate or influence events, but merely "signify" (σημαίνει) what was, is, and will be. Origen adopts a very similar position, which he elaborates at greater length in his Commentary on Genesis, preserved in *phil.* 23.

(ἀορίστως) with respect to time. Hence, "he has set" (ἔθετο) signifies both past and present

activities. It identifies the resplendent hierarchy instituted to superintend the covenants with the

present "church of the faithful". Yet it also presages the "second coming" of the Lord, in which

he will replace this arrangement, so that the faithful, "in whom he rests as in a tabernacle

(σκηνῇ), will be restored (ἀποκαταστησόμενοι) to one and the same unity."[121]

This unity of faith does not preclude gradations of knowledge. In this future economy,

the "first-created angels" will no longer exercise their former duties, but will be "devoted to the

contemplation of God alone." Those next to them in the hierarchy "will be promoted into that

position which [the first-created angels] relinquished, and so those beneath them similarly."[122]

Each one, Clement avers, possesses knowledge of God "in a way suitable to his own stage of

advancement" (κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν προκοπὴν οἰκείαν).[123]   Those whom this knowledge has

transformed ascend by stages, assuming the status of the first-created angels. For one thousand

years after they have been restored to perfection, these angelic novitiates learn from the angels.

The angels who carry out this teaching (διδάξαντες) rise to assume archangelic authority, while

the newly instructed teach those "who are changed from men into angels."[124] Through these

prescribed periods of education, they are restored "to the proper angelic state of the body."

Although Origen offers less explicit reflection on the divine attributes assumed by the

teacher, this understanding is implicit in his understanding of the charismatic interpreter as an

imitator of Christ. What Gregory describes in his mentor is therefore not coincidental, but an

idealized depiction of Origen's own aspirations. Like Clement, Origen distinguishes the teachers

as those who "train themselves to become worthy and capable of receiving wisdom" and by their

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[121]*ecl.* 56.3.
[122]*ecl.* 56.7.
[123]*ecl.* 57.2.
[124]*ecl.* 57.5.

progress "merit the higher gifts of the Spirit."[125] All Christians share in the Spirit, but the

operations of the Spirit escalate as the individual makes spiritual progress. Through this

operation, he "advances and arrives at higher degrees of perfection (*proficit et in altiores

profectum gradus venit*)."[126] "The degree and excellence of its merits" determines where each

soul resides in the celestial hierarchy.[127]

  As in Clement, this ascent reflects achievements in both moral purity and intellectual

enrichment. The soul aspires to become perfect, "just as the heavenly Father is perfect."

Because the object of imitation is peerless, this striving is inexhaustible. Yet, as souls advance,

both their ardor and their capability grows. So does their resemblance to this object. They

become "rational in a divine manner" by their participation in this economy and lose their

irrational pretenses.[128] Gradually, one becomes assimilated to God, becoming an "image in

accordance with all things of God."[129] This personal transformation makes human persons more

like the angels. The principal means of transformation is Scripture. Origen remarks that the

whole sequence (εἱρμῷ) of Scripture makes men angels in the image of God.[130]

  If Origen does not apply the same divine prerogatives to teachers as Clement, he does

identify them as discharging the same offices as Christ. In his commentary on John, he

designates those who "devote themselves to the divine word and truly exist by the service of God

alone" as "Levites and priests in accordance with the excellence of their activities in this

work."[131] Elsewhere, Origen offers messianic interpretations of these offices. This suggests an

affiliation between Christ and those dedicated to his teaching. Perhaps conscious of this

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[125]Origen, *princ.* praef. 3.
[126]Origen, *princ.* 1.3.8; cf. 1.6.2; 1.8.4; 3.6.6.
[127]Origen, *princ.* 1.6.3.
[128]*in. Io. Comm.* 1.268.
[129]cat. 73 D11.
[130]*in. Io. Comm.* 2.144.
[131]*in. Io. Comm.* 1.10.

similarity, he qualifies his statement with a distinction. Human beings function only as "priests of Aaron," while Christ operates as a "priest of the order of Melchizedek."[132] The very need for differentiation, however, points up the commonality between the divine archetype and his imitators.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the ability of these charismatic individuals to interpret and "embody" Scripture. Origen remarks that they live in both spiritual and physical manner, edifying their charges through "both the literal gospel and the heavenly wisdom of its spiritual counterpart."[133] As in Clement, they function like the symbols in the written Scriptures: material guarantors of higher spiritual realities. And no greater symbol exists than Christ, who assumes flesh to train humanity to perfection. It is no surprise, then, that Origen conceives the interpretive task in ways that draw on the language of incarnation:

> And indeed, the task before us now is to translate (μεταλαβεῖν) the gospel perceptible to
>
> the senses into the spiritual gospel. For what is the interpretation (διήγησις) of the
>
> gospel perceptible to the senses unless it is translated into the spiritual gospel?[134]

Those who "translate" the perceptible gospel into the spiritual gospel carry out the work of Christ in word and deed. Origen's careful exegesis of John's gospel, as well as his activities as an educator, might be viewed as an imitation of Christ.

PROVIDENCE AND *PAIDEIA* IN THE GARDEN OF LETTERS

Like Gregory, Clement styles his teachings as the "seeds" of contemplation.[135] He deploys this terminology to point out that progress in the faith requires a sequence of instruction, and does not follow as an inevitable outworking of election. He likens even the form of the

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[132]*in Io. comm.*1.11.
[133]*in Io. comm.*1.43.
[134]*in Io. comm.*1.45.
[135]Although my discussion has different purposes, my debt to the discussion in Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: PUP, 1999), 32-78, should be evident.

Stromateis to seed. In the introductory section of that work, he comments, "My *Stromateis* will embrace the truth which is mixed with the doctrines of philosophy--or rather which is covered and hidden within them, as the edible part of the nut is covered by the shell." He adds that "only the farmers are fit to protect the seeds of truth."[136]

He also favors horticultural analogies to characterize his manner of exposition, in *strom.* 6 limning a vision of a "promiscuously variegated" meadow, uncultivated, and "purposely scattered." To the uninitiated, it appears a fertile but tangled skein of verdure. Yet to those with proper understanding, labor brings forth fruit from this sprawling chaos. He likens this cultivation to the education of the soul. Like Christ the Sower, this distribution must not be indiscriminate, since "[the good man] will dispense (οἰκονομήσει) his word in judgment."[137] There is therefore a certain economy of expression at work here. By hinting at truth rather than specifying it, the "generative power of the seeds of the doctrines comprehended in this treatise is great in a small space."[138]

This agrarian imagery connects the providential activities that maintain this plantation to the dispersal of knowledge, and to the parabolic tradition of Christ. Origen, too, favors this georgic metaphor. Origen likens "the differing wills of men" to the "tilled and the neglected land, though as land they are both of one nature."[139] A soul may begin as soil strewn with thorns and thistles. God causes precipitation to fall on all these disparate soils, signifying the general providence that supervises creation. But this does not exhaust the metaphor. Not only does God water the soil, but as the "skillful farmer of the entire creation," he tends the soil.[140] He cultivates this "land" by training the soul in accordance with its abilities. Sometimes he even delays

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[136]*str.* 1.1.18.1.
[137]*str.*6.1.3.3.
[138]*str.* 4.2.4.1-4.2.7.4.
[139]*princ.* 3.1.10.
[140]*princ.* 3.1.14.

working this soil of the soul if a later intervention would produce greater benefit. It is no coincidence, then, that Gregory describes his mentor as extirpating the wild growths in his soil, or even as his Paradise, in his oration.

This imagery derives from Philonic and Platonic sources, providing an interesting point for examining how Clement uses these sources to negotiate Christian identity. It also happens to intersect with a Harnackian metaphor for hellenization. Defining dogma as "the work of the Greek *Geist* upon the soil of the gospel," he locates Clement and Origen on the vanguard of the fatal trajectory of *wissenschaftliche* theology. Clement and Origen thus sow the seed of alien doctrines in the soil of Christianity. Yet, Clement's position is much more nuanced than Harnack credits. Where Harnack sees a primitive gospel overgrown by the spirit of Hellenism, Clement sees the truest forms of "Hellenism" as a derivative of Mosaic law, whose "spirit" is fulfilled in the Word. Origen favors the biblical image of plundering the Egyptians, but sees the usefulness of Greek wisdom for making sense of the Word's curriculum. Both remain wary of the limitations of philosophy. Both therefore challenge the notion that they were indiscriminate in seeding the soul's ground with Greek thought. Rather, they carefully cultivate the ground of their audiences, using this wisdom where it agrees with the gospel.

From Philo, Clement had inherited the conception of philosophy as a propaedeutic to biblical wisdom. Allegorizing the triangulations of Abraham with Hagar and Sarai, Philo had endorsed the preliminary training of philosophy (of which Hagar is representative) for the pursuit of wisdom (which Sarai personifies).[141] As Kovacs notes, Clement refines this Philonic tradition

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[141]Clement invokes Philo by name and exploits his commentary on Genesis 16 to reinforce his configuration of Greek and Hebrew wisdom in *str.* 1.5.28.1-32.3. This segment of Philo's exposition of Genesis goes by the title περὶ τῆς πρὸς τὰ προπαιδεύματα συνόδου (*de congressu quarendae eruditionis gratia*), which translates as "On Mating with the Preliminary Studies". For commentary on this, see Annewies Van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the* Stromateis Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 23-26. Kovacs references further discussions of this theme in *mut. nom.* 2, 24; *agric.* 168; *congr.*

of progressive instruction.[142] Clement considers both the Old Testament and Greek philosophy

only preparatory stages in the divine *paideia*: "For this [philosophy] was to the Greek world what

the Law was to the Hebrews: a tutor escorting them to Christ. So, by preparing a way for the

person brought by Christ to his final goal (τελειούμενον), philosophy provides preliminary

training (προπαρασκευάζει)."[143] Under the Word's tuition, philosophical traditions and

prophetic oracles function equally as media of instruction. Inasmuch as they contemplate the

Word rightly, Plato and Paul both possess revelatory potential.[144] This affinity is not only

formal; it is material. However implausibly, Clement designates Platonism as a derivative of

Mosaic legislation, larding his point with a dictum from Numenius: "For who is Plato but an

Attic Moses?"[145]

Yet, like Philo, Clement and Origen also emphasize the limitations and provisionality of

pagan wisdom. Not only can Clement convict the Greeks of plagiarism; now he can question

their skepticism toward the "prodigies" of the Hebrews, which they have represented as their

own. He attempts to show how Hellenic culture "relates as prodigies the marvels found in our

records."[146] Yet in his providence, God permits this theft out of benevolence: "For the Almighty

God, because he shows concern (κηδόμενος) for all men, turns some to salvation by commands,

others by threats, some by miraculous signs, and others by gentle promises."[147] He defers to the

"prophetic" injunction of Proverbs 2.3-7 to seek Wisdom "for progress (εἰς .. προκοπήν)

106, 112; *fug.* 172, *leg. all.* 2.93; 3.140-44, 249; cf. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy," 10n.30.
[142] Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy," 10.
[143]*str.* 1.5.28.3.
[144]This said, Clement does discriminate between God's direct responsibility for Scriptural instruction and his permissive use of philosophy as a contingent mode of revelation; cf. *str.* 1.5.28.3.
[145]*str.* 1.22.150.4, *inter alia.* On the use of the "despoliation of Egypt" and "theft of the Greeks" motifs in Clement, see Daniel Ridings, *The Attic Moses: The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers,* Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia (Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1995) .
[146]*str.* 6.3.28.1.
[147]*str.* 6.3.28.3.

toward reverence for God."[148] Although the latter can serve an ancillary role in cultivating

wisdom, Clement distinguishes this revealed Wisdom "from the mouth" of the Lord from that

obtained through philosophical means. Even if it shares certain insights with true wisdom,

philosophical instruction differs from it, separated "by the grandeur of revealed knowledge, by

more authoritative demonstration, by divine power."

The Lord, after all, is the true "cultivator of the soil with human beings… the one who

from the foundation of the universe, has been sowing seeds with potential growth…"[149] Because

Greek wisdom derives from the same cultivator and Teacher, Origen, too, enshrines the prophetic

writings and the records of the Lord's teachings on earth as the organizing center of reflection.

The best of the Greek tradition reproduces the educational content of this scriptural revelation.

Clement returns to the agrarian motif, charging that the Greeks neglected or choked out the

"seeds of truth" deposited among them. Their own disobedience, not the improvidence of the

Teacher, accounts for this deviation.[150]

Origen's enthusiasm for pagan philosophy, too, saturates Gregory's discourse. He

prescribes a Socratic regimen of dialectic examination for his students, to extirpate error and to

sharpen their faculties of reason. By precept and practice, he forms the cardinal virtues in them.

He impresses them with his godlike powers of reason and character. This formed a stock

characterization in late antique philosophy. If assimilation to God was the consummate purpose

of philosophy, the masters of the schools came closest to achieving this ideal.[151] Other

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[148]*str.* 1.4.27.2.
[149]*str.* 1.7.37.1.
[150]*str.* 6.7.59.2
[151] Philodemus, *piet.* 148.12ff.; Seneca, *ep.* 95.50 and *vit. beat.* 16.1; Epictetus, *diss.* 1.20.14; 2.14.12 (SVF 1.182.46.8ff.). See H.J. Krämer, *Platonismus und hellenistische Philosophie* (Berlin: du Gruyter, 1971), 170ff.; I am indebted to Matthais Baltes, "Nachfolge Epikurs," *Literarische Konstitutierung von Identifikationsfiguren in der Antike,* Studien und Texte zum Antike Christentum 16 ed. B. Aland, J. Hahn, and Christian Ronning (Tüingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 30nn.5-6 for the references.

philosophical conventions and references litter the speech. These allusions may reflect the

diverse reading Origen enjoined on his disciples.   From his capacious reading, he compiled

"everything that was useful and true."*152*

Yet the Origen whose portrait Gregory limns hedges his endorsements with warnings.

He proscribes the reading of philosophers that deny the existence of divine providence.*153* He

counsels eclectic reading to avoid the parochialism of exclusive identification with a single

school. No sect holds a monopoly on truth. If philosophy's origin in divine Wisdom licenses its

use by Christians, its deviations from that Wisdom warrant their caution. For this reason, Origen

purged "what was false" and incompatible with true piety from his assigned reading.*154* The

prohibition on literature that repudiates providence also makes sense in this context. If

providence is withdrawn, chance and fate determine destiny, neutralizing the entire apparatus of

the divine economy. No human education, let alone divine education, is possible. Most

significantly, Origen depicts philosophy as only preliminary training to the interpretation of

Scripture. He directed his students to devote themselves "to God and to his prophets," rather

than to philosophers.[155]

A surviving letter from Origen to Gregory enlarges these views. This exchange

addresses the question of how philosophical enquiry can be useful for the interpretation of

Scripture.*156* From the inception of the letter, it is clear that Origen regards the pursuit of

understanding an ascetic endeavor (ἄσκησιν προσλαβοῦσα).*157* As Peter Martens has recently

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[152]*or. prosph. ac pan.* 172-3.
[153]My colleague, Zev Farber, informs me that *Epikurus* appears in the Mishnah as a common synonym for heretic, and remains in currency in conservative rabbinic circles.
[154] *or. prosph. ac pan.* 172-3.
[155] Ibid., *or. prosph. ac pan.* 173.
[156] Its title in Greek is πότε καὶ τίσι τὰ ἀπὸ φιλοσοφίας μαθήματα χρήσιμα εἰς τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν γραφῶν διήγησιν, μετὰ γραφικῆς μαρτυρίας - "How and to whom the philosophical disciplines are useful for the interpretation of the sacred scriptures, with scriptural testimony."
[157] *phil.* 13.1.

pointed out, this tallies with Origen's own experience: Eusebius records that he relinquished his

post as a *grammaticus* to devote himself fully to the study of Scripture.[158] Therefore, Origen

lauds Gregory's apprenticeships in law and philosophy, but ultimately directs him to dedicate his

labors to Christianity. He does not demand renunciation of his prior training. Whatever useful

insights he has gleaned from his philosophical studies, Gregory should now exploit for the study

of Scripture.[159] Greek wisdom is the handmaiden of theology.

Origen defends this understanding by appealing to the plunder of Egypt at the hands of

the liberated Israelites. He observes, "For from the goods of which they despoiled the Egyptians,

the children of Israel fashioned the contents of the Holy of Holies, the Ark with a covering, and

the Cherubim, and the mercy-seat, and the jar in which they placed manna, the bread of

angels."[160] Not only did the Israelites plunder the Egyptians, but they also incorporated these

precious materials in the design of implements for the worship of God. From this, Origen

concludes that the highest achievements of the Greeks can complement Christian pursuits.

Nonetheless, these exploits are fraught with temptation. Origen instances the case of

Hadad the Edomite, an emissary of Solomon who resisted the seductions of idolatry while in

Israel only to yield to them in Egypt (1 Kings 11.14-22). Lest anyone dismiss this cautionary tale

as an isolated case, Origen reminds the reader that Hadad "has many brethren."[161] In fact, he

contends, it is rare when one can make use of these foreign spoils for worship rather than

becoming captive to them. This scriptural image signifies a greater mystery: it is easy to fall into

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[158]Peter Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 17; *hist. eccl.* 6.3.8. He clarifies that Origen did not renounce his literary pursuits or philological approach, but that he found it impossible to sustain both a growing cadre of students of grammar with his duties as a catechist and his study of Scripture; 17n.45.

[159]On pagan learning as "useful" for the articulation of the gospel, see C. Gnilka, *ΧΡΗΣΙΣ: Die Methode der Kirchenväter im Umgang mit der Antiken Kultur: Der Begriff des "rechten Gebrauchs"* (Basil: Schwabe, 1984), 1.54-63.

[160]*phil.* 13.2.

[161]*phil.* 13.3.

heresy by fabricating idols from the materials of philosophy. Origen remains vigilant, since the

statues erected in the house of God (Beth-el) also lie in Dan, a frontier territory near the gentile

border. Where use exists, so also lies temptation.

Throughout the *Stromateis*, Clement evinces a similar enthusiasm for Greek learning

leavened by a recognition of its limitations. Of particular interest here is the discussion of the

philosophy in *str.* 6.7, which maintains that Christ restores unity to the fragmentary body of

pagan wisdom. This chapter opens with a definition of philosophy that eschews sectarian

division by pointing to its original unity. Because Wisdom itself--"the secure and irrefragable

grasp of human and divine matters, comprehending the past, present, and future, which the Lord

has taught us both by his advent and by the prophets"--is unified in the person of the Son, so

must the love of wisdom be unified.[162] This criterion permits the consolidation of philosophy

into an eclectic unity. Accordingly, philosophers are "those among us who desire Wisdom, the

Creator and Didaskalos of all things… and among the Greeks, those who undertake discourses on

virtue."[163]

The Christian philosopher devotes himself to Wisdom hypostatized; his pagan

counterpart contemplates only the abstract forms of virtue. Although both claim Wisdom as their

object, the pagan discourses remain derivative and incomplete. Even the glimpses of Wisdom

afforded by philosophical discourse depend on Barbarian revelation, this "theft" papered over by

translation into Hellenic idiom. In failing to acknowledge their dependence, the philosophers

exaggerate their achievements and lose the coherence fostered by a personal identification of

Wisdom. "They think," Clement observes, "that they have hit on the truth perfectly; but as we

understand them, only partially."[164] This pretence serves to expose an occupational hazard of the

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[162]*str.* 6.7.54.1.
[163]*str.* 6.7.55.2.
[164]*str.* 6.7.55.4.

pagan philosopher: self-regard (φιλαυτία). Without humility, the lover of wisdom can quickly become a lover of self.

To challenge the philosopher's pretensions, Clement demands his pedigree. If instruction exists, he reasons, "it is necessary to seek the teacher."[165] It is a subversive question. Although the tracing of intellectual lineage through a succession (διαδοχή) of instructors was conventional in antiquity, this genealogy features a surprising ancestry. Clement asserts that the Presocratic sages thieved their wisdom from the Egyptians, the Indians, the Babylonians, and the Magi.

But this exposure of Barbarian dependence does not yet exhaust his quest for origins. For one can trace the descent of knowledge yet farther, back to the first generation of humanity. And who taught them? One can only consider that all wisdom emanates from Wisdom itself, through whom all things come to be. "As the whole family runs back to God the Creator," Clement maintains, "so also [does] the teaching of good things, which justifies, to the Lord."[166] The "Teacher of all created beings" is the Word. Self-love induces philosophers to pride themselves in the human origins of their wisdom, when in fact a divine etiology is at work. They have none to blame but themselves for their errors. Having received the seeds of truth, these thinkers failed to nourish them by committing them to germinal soil.

Clement argues that Greek philosophy functions as a tutor, much as Paul describes the Law. In the light of Christ, the aspirations projected by philosophy find fulfillment. Belief in the Lord's advent and in the plain teaching of the Scriptures, leads even certain of the Pharisees to a true understanding of the Law. Likewise, "those devoted to philosophy, by the teaching of the Lord, are initiated into the knowledge of the true philosophy."[167] In both cases, a remarkable

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[165]*str.* 6.7.57.2.
[166]*str.* 6.7.59.1.
[167]*str.* 1.5.28.3.

transformation occurs. Just as belief in the Lord's arrival discloses the true significance of the

Law, so also acceptance of the Lord's instruction restores the fragmented witness of philosophy

to primordial unity. Philosophy can assist in developing contemplation, but remains incapable of

delivering its aspirants to reverence for God. Before Christ, it had proved indispensable for

producing righteousness among the Greeks.[168] Now, Clement considers philosophy useful, but

only insofar as it adumbrates the Word's teaching. "It is a kind of preliminary education

(προπαιδεία) for those who cultivate faith through demonstration."[169] Here Clement goes

beyond Philo. The descent of the Word not only brought the new "seeds of truth". It also

brought new soil: "Our understanding, and our spiritual paradise (παράδεισος), is the Savior

himself, into whom we are transplanted… from our old life into the good land."[170] Gregory's

depiction of Origen draws upon this same Christological image. It is revealing that historians

working from a paradigm of "Hellenistic synthesis" retail the same assessments of both Clement

and Gregory: diminution of the biblical essence by its adaptation to the norms of Hellenism.

These evaluations fail to acknowledge that Scripture functions as the origin and goal of their

curricula.

From this reflection, Clement draws three lessons. First, if Christ himself is Wisdom and

gnostic tradition draws the same conclusion from Scripture, then gnosis must be coterminous

with wisdom. This means that the philosopher's enquiry and the efforts of the gnostic interpreter

converge in Christ. Second, Clement maintains the τέλος of the wise man is contemplation

(θεωρία), but that philosophers will never ascend the heights of contemplation without recourse

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[168]*str.* 1.5.28.1. Elsewhere, Clement remarks that "philosophy justified the Greeks," though he
hedges this by emphasizing its provisionality and its function as a "contributing cause"
(συνεργός) in ascent, like an "elementary teacher to the prospective philosopher." Cf. *strom.*
1.20.99.3; 1.4.27.3.
[169]*str.* 1.5.28.1.
[170]*str.*6.1.2.4.

to prophetic utterance that encompasses past, present, and future.[171] Wisdom cannot be perceived in abstraction from the economy of divine activity chronicled in Scripture. Finally, these considerations produce an appreciation for the ultimate origin and destiny of all knowledge. If it confers a point of embarkation, Wisdom also provides a point of consummation. Clement enjoins his readers to cultivate knowledge and wisdom, "exercised up to the eternal and immutable habit of contemplation."[172]

The diverse scholarly accountings of Gregory's oration and its relationship to the teaching of Origen are illustrative of the tensions that lie at the bottom of this historiography. A cleavage has developed between those who limn the portrait of a hellenized scholar and those who depict Origen as a spiritual luminary and man of the church.[173] Nor is this tension restricted to Origeniana. It is a problem whose contours impinge upon all enquiry into early Christianity, but particularly on those who study Alexandrian Christianity. Yet the tension need not be irresolvable. Clement and Origen offer a reading of Greek philosophy that allows it to be a fertile resource for the preparation for the gospel, and an instrument for penetrating the mysteries of Scripture.

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[171]*str.* 6.7.61.2.
[172]*str.* 6.7.61.3.
[173]Several reflective accounts of this historiographical "quarrel" exist. E. Osborn, "Origen: The Twentieth Century Quarrel and Its Recovery," *Origeniana Quinta,* ed. Robert J. Daly (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 26-39; C. Kannengiesser, "A Century in Quest of Origen's Spirituality," *Origene: Maestro di vita spirituale,* SPM 22*,* ed. Luigi F. Pizzolato and Marco Rizzi (Milan: Università Cattolica, 2001), 3-20. As I have suggested, the historiographical questions that coalesce around the reconstruction of Origen's *vita* apply more generally to the understanding of the School of Alexandria. On this, see *inter alia* Alain Le Boulluec, "L'école d'Alexandrie: de quelques aventures d'un concept historiographique," in *Alexandrie Antique et Chrétienne: Clément et Origène.* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006), 13-28, which focuses on historiography of the Alexandrian school in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
Ehrman	*Apostolic Fathers.* Loeb Classical Library 24, 25. Bart Ehrman, trans. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
Layton	*Gnostic Scriptures.* Bentley Layton, trans. New York: Doubleday, 1987.
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NHC	Nag Hammadi Codices
NT Apocr.	*New Testament Apocrypha.* 2 vols. Robert McL. Wilson, ed. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958/63, 1964/5.
OTP	*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* 2 vols. James H. Charlesworth, ed. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009.
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
PTA	Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
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