

PORPHYRY AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS

BY

ROBERT M. BERCHMAN



BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2005

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISSN 1871-188X
ISBN 90 04 14811 6

© Copyright 2005 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands
Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill Academic Publishers,
Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

*Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Brill provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910
Danvers MA 01923, USA.
Fees are subject to change.*

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

For My Brother
John Joseph Berchman III
[1945–2004]

CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Abbreviations	ix
Chapter One Author, Title, Date of Composition, Sources, Geographical Provenance	1
Chapter Two Structure, Genre, and Taxonomy	7
Outline of Structure	7
Genre	8
Thematic Concerns	8
Logical Unity	10
Taxonomy	10
Problems Literature	13
Apologetic Literature	14
Chronological Literature	15
Rhetorical Literature	16
Chapter Three Religious and Philosophical Elements	17
Religious Background	17
Roman Religion	17
Judaism	23
Christianity	31
Philosophical Background	44
Neoplatonic Philosophy and Religion	45
The Bible	56
Hellenic Biblical Criticism	56
The Jewish Bible	58
The Christian Bible	60
Chapter Four Cultural Background	72
Relation to Hellenism	72
Plutarch	72
Lucian of Samosata	76
Galen	81
Celsus	85

Plotinus	93
Porphyry	113
Chapter Five Fragments, Orthography and Languages	118
Fragments	118
Languages	121
Chapter Six Sigla	122
Chapter Seven Fragments, Translation, and Exegetical	
Notes	123
Porphyry	123
Methodius	134
Eusebius of Caesarea	135
Didymus	142
Epiphanius	144
Arnobius	145
Lactantius	150
Jerome	155
Chrysostomus	171
Augustine	171
Nemesius of Emesa	191
Theodoretus	191
Severianus {Episcopus Gabalorum}	192
Macarius Magnes	192
Anastasius Sinaita	219
Arethas of Caesarea	220
Theophylactus	220
Diodorus Tarsus	221
Conclusion	222
Bibliography	227
Ancient Authors	227
Modern Authors	229
Indexes	
Index Locorum	237
General Index	240
Index of Ancient Authors	243

PREFACE

This volume has as its focus Porphyry's "Against the Christians." It opens with a series of studies that situate this text in its religious, philosophical, and cultural contexts. This is followed by a translation of the fragments and testimonia that refer to Porphyry's lost work. These materials are arranged chronologically according to author.

The starting point of this attempt to reconstruct Porphyry's *Against the Christians* are the fragments collected by Adolf von Harnack in his *Against the Christians*.¹ However, this work goes beyond this collection. Additional fragments and testimonia are derived from sources ignored by Harnack, whose goal was to reconstruct the original edition of Porphyry's "Against the Christians." Since in my view this is impossible, a more modest goal was set—to collect all data that directly or indirectly refers to Porphyry's lost work. These additional fragments and testimonia are culled from writings by Porphyry and the Church Fathers.²

There are better philologists than myself who could produce a "fresher" translation of "Against the Christians." Such a project is left to them. What I have done is examine prior translations of these fragments and followed them when appropriate. The result is a straightforward and literal translation which at times sounds idiomatically rough to modern ears. Here I thought it better to keep the

¹ A. von Harnack, *Porphyrius Gegen die Christen, 15 Buecher, Zeugnisse und Referate*, Abhandlungen der. koen. preuss. Akademie d. Wissenschaft, phil.-hist. Klasse 1 (Berlin 1916). It has been the policy of this edition, whenever possible, not to introduce text restorations different from those offered in this initial collection. When departure from this principle occurs it reflects either differences of interpretation in terms of text variance or differences in grammatical understanding.

² Some additional fragments have been added by Harnack, cf. "Neue Fragmente des Werkes des Porphyrius gegen die Christen," *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1921), 266ff. Also see P. Nautin, "Trois autres Fragments du Livre de Porphyre 'Contre les Chretiens'" *RB* 57 (1950), 409–16, F. Altheim & R. Stiehl, *Gedankenschrift fuer Georg Rhode* (Tuebingen 1961), 23ff., D. Hagedorn & R. Merkelbach, "Ein neues Fragment aus Porphyrios 'Gegen die Christen'" *VC* 20 (1966), 86–90, G. Binder, "Ein Polemik des Kelsos gegen die allegorischen Auslegung des Alten Testaments durch die Christen" *ZPE* III (1968), 81–95, P. Sellev, "Achilles or Christ? Porphyry and Didymus in Debate Over Allegorical Interpretation," *HTR* 82:1 (1989), 79–86. Here the principles of text restoration follow the same procedures as with Harnack's original collection of fragments.

original grammatical and syntactical constructions than possibly alter the meanings of the fragments and testimonia. Moreover, I have not attempted to write a commentary on *Against the Christians*; that would require a second book. Instead I have added brief notes and textual remarks, which I hope will contribute to an understanding of the fragments.

Two recent works on Porphyry's *Against the Christians* merit mentioning. R. J. Hoffman's *Porphyry's Against the Christians* stands as an important contribution to the study of this text.³ However, since Hoffman's work focuses primarily on Macarius Magnes' *Monogenes*, I have left it to stand on its own. Richard Goulet's *Macarios de Magnes: Le Monogenes* appeared as this text went to press.⁴ Thus unfortunately, I was unable to incorporate the useful discussion Goulet brings to *Against the Christians*—especially his claim that a *fonds* of Macarius Magnes' *Monogenes* is Porphyry's work "Against the Christians." My work is meant to complement Hoffman's and Goulet's volumes. It does not—indeed cannot—duplicate them.

This work is intended for use by undergraduate and graduate students. This explains the lengthy historical, religious, philosophical, and cultural introduction to "Against the Christians." This section can be skipped by those who are well-versed in these matters and wish to read *Against the Christians* alone.

Over the years I have built up a great many debts. Mine are too extensive to mention, except for the most immediate. I owe a special thanks to Eugen Kullmann for his generous attention to my research as it developed over the years. His assistance as a friend and critic is most appreciated. I extend special notice of lasting gratitude to the late Horst R. Moehring, who introduced me to the study of Ancient Mediterranean religions and philosophy. A specific debt is owed to Sara Denning-Bolle, who urged me to complete this project and pursue its publication. I also wish to express my thanks to the Mellon Foundation and to Dowling College for the research stipends that made this work possible.

Robert M. Berchman
Southold, NY
February 2005

³ R. J. Hoffmann, *Porphyry's Against the Christians* (Amherst, NY 1994).

⁴ R. Goulet, *Macarios de Magnes: Le Monogenes. Edition critique et traduction française*, 2 Tm. (Paris 2004).

ABBREVIATIONS

Biblical books, Pseudepigraphal, Rabbinic, and Gnostic literature are abbreviated as recommended in the Instructions to Contributors in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988) 579–96.

Classical and Patristic authors are cited in the manner recommended by the three Oxford Lexica:

H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1940).

P. G. W. Glare (ed.), *The Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford 1982).

G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961).

Journals, monograph series, source collections, and standard reference works are abbreviated in accordance with the recommendations listed in the Instructions to Contributors in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988) 588–96.

Below are some abbreviations used throughout the work:

<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Corpus Hermeticum</i>
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecorum</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CPJ</i>	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i>
<i>Cod. Just.</i>	<i>Codex Justinianus</i>
<i>Cod. Th.</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>DIG</i>	<i>Mommsen's Digesta</i>
<i>F. Gr. Hist.</i>	<i>Jacoby's Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i>
<i>GCS</i>	<i>Griechische Christlicher Schriftsteller</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>

<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Mnem.</i>	<i>Mnemosyne</i>
<i>NNM</i>	<i>Numismatic Notes and Monographs</i>
<i>NovTest</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OGIS</i>	<i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones</i>
<i>OR Ch</i>	<i>Oracula Chaldaica</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
<i>PT</i>	<i>Palestinian Talmud</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Pauly's Realencyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des etudes anciennes</i>
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des etudes grecques</i>
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des etudes juives</i>
<i>REL</i>	<i>Revue des etudes latines</i>
<i>Rev. Hist. Rel.</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
<i>RFIC</i>	<i>Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica</i>
<i>Rhein. Mus.</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum fuer Philologie</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>SBLDS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</i>
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
<i>SHA</i>	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TU</i>	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift fuer die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNTW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift fuer Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
<i>ZPF</i>	<i>Zeitschrift fuer philosophische Forschungen</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistle</i>
<i>fr.</i>	<i>Fragment</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>History</i>
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Oration</i>

<i>Albinus</i>	(<i>Alcinos</i>)
<i>Did.</i>	<i>Didaskalikos</i>
<i>Alexander of Aphrodisias</i>	
<i>De Anima Liber</i>	<i>On the Soul</i>
<i>De Intell</i>	<i>On the Intellect</i>
<i>In Aristotelis Metaphysica</i>	<i>On Aristotle's Metaphysics</i>
<i>In Aristotelis Catagoria</i>	<i>On Aristotle's Categories</i>
<i>Aristotle</i>	
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Categories</i>
<i>De An.</i>	<i>On the Soul</i>
<i>De Cael.</i>	<i>On the Heavens</i>
<i>De Phil.</i>	<i>On Philosophy</i>
<i>Met.</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i>
<i>Phys.</i>	<i>Physics</i>
<i>Arnobius</i>	
<i>Adv. Nat. Against the Nations</i>	
<i>Augustine</i>	
<i>Civ. Dei (CD)</i>	<i>City of God</i>
<i>C. Cres.</i>	<i>Against Crescus</i>
<i>De Con. Ev.</i>	<i>Harmony of the Gospels</i>
<i>Cassius Dio</i>	
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>History</i>
<i>Clement of Alexandria</i>	
<i>Strom. Stromateis = Miscellanies</i>	
<i>David</i>	
<i>In Isag. On Porphyry's Categories</i>	
<i>Diogenes Laertius</i>	
<i>DL</i>	<i>Lives of the Philosophers</i>
<i>Eunapius</i>	
<i>VS Vitae Sophistarum = Lives of the Sophists</i>	
<i>Eusebius</i>	
<i>DE</i>	<i>Demonstratio Evangelica = Demonstration of the Gospel</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica = Ecclesiastical History</i>
	<i>Mart. Pal. On the Palestinian Martyrs</i>
<i>PE</i>	<i>Praeparatio Evangelica = Preparation of the Gospel</i>
<i>Vit. Const. Life of Constantine</i>	
<i>Jerome</i>	
<i>Comm. in Dan.</i>	<i>Commentary on Daniel</i>
<i>Comm. in Matt.</i>	<i>Commentary on Matthew</i>

<i>T. Ps.</i>	<i>Tractate on Psalms</i>
<i>Josephus</i>	
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>Bj</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>
<i>Galen</i>	
<i>Hipp.</i>	<i>In Hippocratis Epidemiarum Libros Commentarius</i> = <i>The Commentaries of Hippocratis on Epidemics</i>
<i>De Usu De Usu Partium</i>	= <i>On the Application of the Parts</i>
<i>De Pul. De Pulsuum Differentiis</i>	= <i>On the Pulse</i>
<i>Iamblichus</i>	
<i>De An.</i>	<i>On the Soul</i>
<i>Myst.</i>	<i>On the Mysteries</i>
<i>Lactantius</i>	
<i>Div. Inst.</i>	<i>Divine Institutes</i>
<i>Mort. Pers.</i>	<i>On the Persecution of the Martyrs</i>
<i>Livy</i>	
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i>
<i>Lucian of Samosata</i>	
<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Alexander</i>
<i>In Mort. Pereg.</i>	<i>Peregrinus</i>
<i>Macarius Magnes</i>	
<i>Apoc.</i>	<i>Apocriticus</i>
<i>Nemesius of Emesa</i>	
<i>Nat. Hom. De Natura Hominis</i>	= <i>On the Nature of Man</i>
<i>Origen of Alexandria</i>	
<i>C. Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i> = <i>Against Celsus</i>
<i>De Princ.</i>	<i>De Principiis</i> = <i>On First Principles</i>
<i>Philo of Alexandria</i>	
<i>Aet.</i>	<i>De Aeternitate Mundi</i> = <i>On the Eternity of the World</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De Opificio Mundi</i> = <i>On the Creation of the World</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	<i>De praemiis et poenis</i> = <i>On Rewards and Punishments</i>
<i>V. Mos.</i>	<i>De Vita Moysis</i> = <i>The Life of Moses</i>
<i>Photius</i>	
<i>Bibl.</i>	<i>Bibliotheca</i> = <i>Library</i>
<i>Lex.</i>	<i>Lexicon</i>
<i>Plato</i>	
<i>Parm.</i>	<i>Parmenides</i>
<i>Phaed.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Republic</i>

<i>Symp.</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>
<i>Pliny the Younger</i>	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Letters</i>
<i>Plotinus</i>	
<i>Enn.</i>	<i>Enneads</i>
<i>Plutarch of Chaeronea</i>	
<i>Adv. Col.</i>	<i>Against Colotes</i>
<i>Comm. Not.</i>	<i>On the "koinai ennoiai" against the Stoics</i>
<i>De E</i>	<i>On the E at Delphi</i>
<i>De Fac.</i>	<i>On the Face in the Moon</i>
<i>De Gen.</i>	<i>On the Daemon of Socrates</i>
<i>De Is.</i>	<i>On Isis and Osiris</i>
<i>De Sera</i>	<i>On Delays in Divine Punishment</i>
<i>De Virt.</i>	<i>On Moral Virtue</i>
<i>Def. Or.</i>	<i>On the Obsolescence of Oracles</i>
<i>Lat. Viv.</i>	<i>On the Correctness of the Doctrine "Lathe Biosas"</i>
<i>Non Posse</i>	<i>That One Cannot Live Happily by Following Epicurus</i>
<i>Proc. An.</i>	<i>On the Creation of the Soul in the Timaeus</i>
<i>Quaest.</i>	<i>Problems in Plato</i>
<i>Quaest.</i>	<i>Conv. Table Talk</i>
<i>Stoic Rep.</i>	<i>On the Contradictions of the Stoics</i>
<i>Porphry</i>	
<i>Ad. An.</i>	<i>Letter to Anebo</i>
<i>Ad. Gar.</i>	<i>To Gaurus</i>
<i>Ad. Marc.</i>	<i>Letter to Marcella</i>
<i>De Abst.</i>	<i>On Abstinence from Animal Foods</i>
<i>De An.</i>	<i>On the Cave of the Nymphs</i>
<i>C. Or. Ch.</i>	<i>Commentary on the Chaldaean Oracles</i>
<i>C. Christ.</i>	<i>Against the Christians</i>
<i>De Phil.</i>	<i>Philosophy from Oracles</i>
<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Sentences</i>
<i>V. Pl.</i>	<i>Life of Plotinus</i>
<i>Vit. Pythag.</i>	<i>Life of Pythagoras</i>
<i>Scriptores</i>	<i>Historiae Augustae</i>
<i>SHA</i>	<i>History of the Caesars</i>
<i>Seutonius</i>	
<i>Vit. C. De Vitae Caesarum libri</i>	<i>= Lives of the Caesars</i>
<i>Augustus</i>	
<i>Domitian</i>	

Nero

Sextus Empiricus

Math.

PH

Stobaeus

Ecl. Eclogae = Eclogues

Tacitus

Ann. Annals

Adversus Mathematicos = Against the Teachers

Pyrrhoneae Hypotyposes = Arguments of the Sceptics

CHAPTER ONE

AUTHOR, TITLE, DATE OF COMPOSITION, SOURCES, GEOGRAPHICAL PROVENANCE

Much can be said about Porphyry. Student of Plotinus, a philosopher and defender of traditional Roman religion, he was a man of remarkable intellectual stature. He was born about 232 at Tyre and died early in the first decade of the fourth century, shortly after the appearance of his edition of the *Enneads* of Plotinus and the completion of his *contra Christianos*.

His Greek name was a translation of the Semitic *nomen* Malchus.¹ Early in his career he studied grammar and literature under Longinus at Athens. Later he spent six years as a student of Plotinus. He left Rome in 268 for Sicily and his marriage late in life to Marcella. It was to Longinus that he owed his enormous erudition and critical scholarship, which he was later to employ in his *Against the Christians*. It was to Plotinus that he was indebted for his knowledge of the philosophers. It was to Marcella that he exhibited his devotion to Platonism.

No complete work of Porphyry survives and, as a consequence, his importance has been underestimated.² Among his surviving works that had a lasting impact were the *Isagoge*, *Philosophy from Oracles*, *Cave of the Nymphs*, *On Abstinence From Animal Food*, *Life of Pythagoras*, *Letter to Marcella*, and *Letter to Anebo*. Among his lost works, only fragments from his Platonic and Aristotelian Commentaries,³ *Fall of the Soul*, the *Miscellaneous Sentences*, and *Against the Christians* survive.⁴

¹ Porphyry, *V. Pl.* 17.6ff, Eunapius, *VS* 456. Porphyry's place of birth is unknown. However, in Hellenistic times Haifa was known as Porphyria. Perhaps Porphyry, or at least his family, originally came from Porphyria.

² For a complete list of his works, cf. P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus I* (Paris 1968), 456 n. 1. On the lost works, cf. J. Bidez, *op. cit.* (Ghent 1913, repr. Hildesheim 1964), appendix 4, R. Beutler, "Porphyrius," *RE* Band xxii.1 (1953) cols. 279–301.

³ The fragments of his *Timaeus* commentary have been recently edited, and P. Hadot has ascribed fragments on the *Parmenides* to Porphyry. Cf. *Porphyre et Victorinus II* (Paris 1968).

⁴ *De Regressu Animae* = Bidez, *op. cit.* 27*–44*, *Symmikta Zetemata* = H. Doerrie, "Symmikta Zetemata" *Zetemata* 20 (Munich 1959), *Contra Christianum* = Harnack *op. cit.* 23–104.

Characterized as a popularizer of Plotinus, Porphyry nevertheless had a reputation in the Greek East and the Latin West as the master interpreter of his teacher, and as an excellent philosopher and religious critic in his own right.⁵ In the eastern tradition his translations, commentaries, and biographies exerted great influence over Iamblichus and his heirs. Porphyry's version of Neoplatonism dominated the western tradition until Eriugena's ninth-century translation of the Dionysian corpus. In the Roman world, and the worlds of Latin and Byzantine Christianity, few writers aroused more admiration and fear than Porphyry.

Three major points emerge: first, his role as a popularizer of Plotinus; second, his work as a commentator; and third, his writings as an apologist for traditional Roman religion and a historical, literary, and philosophical critic of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity.

But it is not only the range of Porphyry's work and the pre-occupations that lie behind this view from a precipice that have to concern us. It is principally his criteria of what was central to the study of the Bible that bears memory. History has given him great prominence. He was not merely among the last critics of Christianity, he was also among the first serious students of the Bible. He simply thought he could not afford not to be.

Porphyry's attacks against Christianity were a collection of several works with the title *Against the Christians*. It might be helpful to describe the stages of development in the naming of the work.

Sometime between the early fourth and early fifth centuries, the first Patristic responses to Porphyry's writings emerge.⁶ *Against the Christians* was achieving the independent status of a writing, but it is clear from a study of the *testimonia* that there is no single title for the writings. What we are encountering are different responses to a variety of Porphyry's writings with separate Greek and Latin text traditions.⁷

The earliest *Patres* who responded to Porphyry's polemic, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Eusebius, did not call it by a single title or even

⁵ Eunapius, *op. cit.* 456-57.

⁶ These include writings by Eusebius, Didymus the Blind, Jerome, Augustine, and possibly Macarius Magnes; cf. Meredith, "Porphyry and Julian *Against the Christians*," *ANRW* II.23.1 (1980), 1119-49.

⁷ T. D. Barnes, "Porphyry *Against the Christians*: Date and Attribution of Fragments," *JTS* n.s. 24 (1973) 424-42, Meredith, *art. cit.* 1119-49.

refer to it as a unitary work.⁸ Later, when Jerome, Augustine, and Macarius Magnes wrote their vigorous counterattacks against the critics of Christianity, they characterized Porphyry's writings in the same manner as their predecessors. This policy was continued by a score of *Patres* for half a millennium.⁹

Porphyry's compositions were not known as a single writing with the title *Against the Christians* until several centuries after Porphyry's death.¹⁰ The work referred to in the *Suida* is not the original *Against the Christians*, but more likely a Byzantine epitome of them.¹¹ This work probably went into circulation after the burning of the original works by the emperor Theodosius II in 448 C.E.

The exact date of the composition of *Against the Christians* remains unknown.¹² It was written sometime during the reigns of Diocletian and Maximin Daia.¹³ This is suggested because texts fitting the description of *Against the Christians* are mentioned in the early fourth century by Arnobius, Lactantius, and Eusebius of Caesarea.¹⁴ Again writings that fit the description of Porphyry's pamphlets are mentioned later by Eunapius and Augustine.¹⁵

The sources of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* remain unknown. They survive only in fragments. Since several are mentioned in the earliest Patristic descriptions of Porphyry's anti-Christian works, it is likely that they were comprised of several sources. It is suggested that *Against the Christians* constituted at least three writings. These would be the *Philosophy from Oracles*;¹⁶ the "Homeric Problems" literature;¹⁷

⁸ Arnobius, *Adv. Nat.* 2.67, Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 5.2, Eusebius, *PE*. Praef. 2.

⁹ For references, see Harnack, *op. cit.* 25-43.

¹⁰ *Suida*, *Bibl.* 11.1.

¹¹ See Harnack, *op. cit.* 26-27.

¹² For recent works on the sources of *Against the Christians*, cf. H. Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus*, Texts and studies 5 (Cambridge 1959), 66, T. D. Barnes, *art. cit.* 424-42, A. Meredith, *art. cit.* 1119-49, R. L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven 1984), 126-63, P. Sellw, *art. cit.* 79-100.

¹³ Barnes, *art. cit.* 424-42.

¹⁴ Arnobius, *op. cit.* 2.67, Lactantius, *op. cit.* 5.2, Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.

¹⁵ Eunapius, *VS* 6, Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, 10.9.

¹⁶ Fragments of Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* are edited by G. Wolff, *Porphyrii de philosophia ex oraculis haurienda* (Berlin 1856). For a discussion of the contents of the work, cf. Bidez, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ These texts are available in H. Schraeder, ed. *Porphyrii Quaestionem homericarum ad Iliadem pertinentium reliquias* Leipzig (1880-82) and *Porphyrii Quaestionem homericarum ad Odysseam pertinentium reliquias* Leipzig (1890). Also see A. R. Sodano, ed., *Porphyrii Quaestionem homericarum liber I* Napoli (1970).

and the writings against Zoroastrianism¹⁸ and Christianity.¹⁹ The first source contained Porphyry's philosophical critique of the faith, while the second and third included his literary and historical critiques of the Bible.

Since each Patristic writer mentions different texts within the *corpus Porphyricum* that refer to Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, it might be helpful to review what the *Patres* say about Porphyry's *contra Christianos*.

Lactantius mentions that during the reign of Diocletian a man living in Constantinople, "a priest of philosophy," had written a work in three books *Against the Christians*.²⁰ Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, and its outline, as it can be constructed from the fragments, conforms to the descriptions of Lactantius.²¹ Moreover, Arnobius appears to identify the figure described by Lactantius with Porphyry. Whether he referred to the same writing remains unknown.²²

Eusebius and Jerome report that Porphyry wrote fifteen books *Against the Christians*.²³ The parts of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* that deal with historical and literary problems in the Bible, as reconstructed from the fragments, fit this profile.²⁴

Much of Augustine's *City of God* and *Harmony of the Gospels* apparently constitutes responses to materials derived from the *Philosophy from Oracles*, and the "problems literature."²⁵ These fragments only partially conform to themes mentioned by Lactantius, Arnobius, Eusebius, and Jerome. We may have here other possible sources of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

It is not possible to know how much of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* underlies Macarius Magnes's *Apocritus*. In writing his work Macarius drew either from an epitome of Porphyry's work or sources other than Porphyry—such as Hierocles and Julian. What is clear is that if the *Apocriticus* contains any materials from Porphyry's *Against*

¹⁸ Porphyry, *Vit. Plot.* 16.

¹⁹ Arnobius, op. cit. 2.67, Lactantius, op. cit. 5.2, Eusebius, op. cit. Praef. 2.

²⁰ Lactantius, op. cit. 5.2.

²¹ On *Philosophy from Oracles*. Cf. R. L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans saw Them* (New Haven 1984), 148–63; cf. J. O'Meara, *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris 1959).

²² Arnobius, op. cit. 2.67. Cf. E. Fortin, "The Viri Novi of Arnobius," in *The Heritage of the Early Church, Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, no. 195 (Rome 1973), 197–226.

²³ Eusebius, *PE* Praef. 2. For the fragments from Jerome, cf. M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem 1980), I. 449, 455–76.

²⁴ Eusebius, *ibid.* 1.2.1–4. For Jerome, cf. Stern, *ibid.*

²⁵ Meredith, art. cit. 1136.

the *Christians*,²⁶ they do not conform with the data extant in Arnobius, Lactantius, Eusebius, Jerome or Augustine.²⁷ Thus, if Macarius used Porphyry, he drew his material from writings not mentioned by the early Fathers.²⁸ This *tertium quid* could be yet another source for Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.²⁹

Finally, as mentioned earlier, it is not until around 1000 c.e. that Porphyry's writings were named *Against the Christians* and the notion emerged that this constituted a single work.³⁰ This solitary work may have been an epitome of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. Although this title would gain canonical authority with the publication of critical editions of the fragments from Porphyry's works in the early twentieth century by Bidez³¹ and Harnack,³² the epitome, which

²⁶ The text of Macarius Magnes was first published in 1876 after its discovery. Cf. C. Blondel, *Makarios Magnes apokritikos e monogenes* (Paris 1876). It has been the view of most scholars that Macarius composed his work against an anonymous excerptor of Porphyry. However, in recent years arguments have suggested Hierocles as the source. Another thesis is that the *Apocriticus* contains a variety of sources. There is no agreement concerning the extent to which the Hellenic critic of Christianity in the *Apocriticus* corresponds to Porphyry. K. Wagenmann, *Jahrbuecher fuer deutsche Theologie* 23 (1878), 138ff., K. I. Neumann, *Juliani Imperatoris Librorum Contra Christianos Quae Supersunt* (Leipzig 1880), G. Schaulkhauser, *Zu den Schriften des Makarios von Magnesia* (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur) 31.4 (Leipzig 1904), and A. v. Harnack, op. cit. 1–21 argue for a correspondence theory. L. Duchesne, *De Macario Magne et Scriptis Ejus* (Paris 1877), T. W. Crafer, *JTS* 15 (1914), 360ff., 481ff., and P. Frassinetti, *Eos* 52 (1962), 87ff. argue that the work bears the marks of Porphyry and Hierocles. T. D. Barnes, art. cit. 424–42, is convinced Macarius quoted a later polemic, which drew some of its material from Porphyry. Thus Macarius preserves something of the tenor and argumentative scheme of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, but it should not be presumed that Macarius preserves either Porphyry's words or formulations. Thus, no correspondence theory is possible here. R. Waelkens, *L'Economie, theme, apologetique et principe hermeneutique dans l'Apocriticus de Macarius Magne, Recueil de travaux d'Histoire et de Philologie*, Universite de Louvain, ser 6, no. 4 (Louvain 1974) 117–34, thinks an indirect correspondence theory possible. He argues that Macarius on Porphyry is usable when his reports are confirmed by other sources. J. Geffcken, *Zwei griechische Apologeten* (Leipzig-Berlin 1907), 301ff., is another voice in this controversy. He argues that the source used by Macarius was Julian, not Porphyry.

²⁷ The *Apocriticus* accounts for more than half of Harnack's collection, cf. Harnack, op. cit. 43–44.

²⁸ T. D. Barnes has argued that the fragments cannot be used to reconstruct Porphyry's work; cf. Barnes, art. cit. 424–42. For a more positive evaluation of the evidence, cf. R. Waelkens, op. cit. 117–34.

²⁹ Following the conclusions of Barnes, art. cit. 424–42.

³⁰ Suida, op. cit. I.11.

³¹ Bidez, *Vie de Porphyry* (Ghent 1913, Hildesheim 1964), 65–79, T. Crafer, *JTS* 8 (1907), 401–423, 546–571, and *JTS* 15 (1914), 360–95, 481–512.

³² Ibid.

provides their title for their reconstructions of the work, might be yet another source of the "*contra Christianos*."

The geographical provenance of *Against the Christians* is uncertain. If the work alluded to in Arnobius³³ and mentioned by Lactantius was written by Porphyry, it came from Byzantium.³⁴ Porphyry's other works were likely written in Sicily.³⁵ Regardless of its places of composition, the collection was known to Greek-and-Latin speaking Christians of the Empire within the first decades of its appearance.³⁶

³³ Arnobius, *op. cit.* 2.67.

³⁴ Lactantius, *op. cit.* 5.2.

³⁵ Eusebius, *HE* 4.19.2. cf. Bidez, *op. cit.* (1913), 98ff.

³⁶ Harnack, *op. cit.* 25-43.

CHAPTER TWO

STRUCTURE, GENRE, AND TAXONOMY

Outline of Structure

An outline of the structure of *Against the Christians* is impossible to reconstruct.¹ In its place is offered a collection of the fragments according to author. The fragments are arranged in chronological sequence. This approach was taken for two reasons: it makes it possible to establish the earliest evidence for *Against the Christians*; and it allows for the tracing of issues and problems from the earliest fragments through the latest testimonies on *Against the Christians*. This collection of fragments does not offer a reconstruction of Porphyry's work *Against the Christians*. Rather its goal is more modest: to offer the evidence extant on Porphyry's wide-ranging attack in *Against the Christians*.

The fragments are arranged in the following order:

I. Porphyry of Tyre	1-9
II. Methodius	10-11
III. Eusebius of Caesarea	12-24
IV. Didymus the Blind	25-27
V. Epiphanius	28
VI. Arnobius	29-49
VII. Lactantius	50-63
VIII. Jerome	64-108
IX. John Chrysostom	109-110
X. Augustine of Hippo	111-61
XI. Nemesius of Emesa	162
XII. Theodoretus of Cyprus	163
XIII. Severianus	164
XIV. Macarius Magnes	165-210
XV. Anastasius Sinaita	211-12

¹ T. D. Barnes, art. cit. 424-42.

XVI. Arethas of Caesarea	213
XVII. Theophylactus	214
XVIII. Diodorus of Tarsus	215

Genre

The problem of genre may be addressed with regard to taxonomy. There are three significant genre types in *Against the Christians* that involve the use of literary criticism and historical criticism.

Literary criticism takes the interpreter to the center of the meaning and relationship between texts, in sharp and clear images. Historical criticism gives precision and location to the immensity of the Bible. In using both approaches scripture becomes a patch of clear visibility. The Bible becomes anchored in a historical and literary context.

Porphyry's literary critique of the Bible flows like a river, slipping easily past landscapes of utmost diversity—the thorny problem of the dating of texts, the difficult issue of relationships between writings, the delicate business of distinguishing aletheapigraphy from pseudopigraphy. In the problems, issues, and debates raised, he offers the student a rich road to an understanding of the consequences that historical and literary criticism wrought in the history of biblical interpretation.

Porphyry's historical position can be outlined briefly. Since he understood the Bible to consist of straightforward accounts of events that could only be approached and understood in a historical and literary sense, he thought the Bible unworthy of allegorical or symbolic interpretation. His point was that such a historically, morally, and aesthetically deficient document was not intended to be understood in such a manner.

What we need to focus upon is that beneath the overt issues of biblical criticism lie logical developments by which philosophical issues unfold out of historical and literary ones. This is the hidden agenda of critical interpretation, and few exhibited the rare intellectual flare of Porphyry in uncovering their relationship.

Thematic Concerns

The thematic concerns of *Against the Christians* as a whole find their focus in Porphyry's historical and literary critique of the Jewish and

Christian scriptures. Porphyry's critics admitted he knew the Bible well.² This is so because although he may be the first Platonist to exegete of the Bible, he, nonetheless, stands in a long tradition of scriptural exegesis.

In the early centuries of the common era there was a long and often bitter debate over the proper method of interpreting the Bible. Among Jews, Christians, and later Hellenes questions arose about the purpose and meaning of scripture. On one side, Alexandrians like Philo, Clement, Origen, and Didymus the Blind argued that scripture was divinely inspired, its true import lying deep beneath the surface; therefore, biblical exegetes were obligated to use the most advanced interpretive methods available in order to discover and elucidate that hidden significance. Arguing a contrary position were such critics of Judaism and Christianity as Galen, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. Their problem was not the allegorical method itself, but rather its appropriateness for the Bible.³

Let us focus: Porphyry wanted to understand the scriptures in their straightforward sense. Again, the man from Tyre was not upset merely because Christians used allegorical interpretation as an exegetical tool. He was disappointed that such a worthy interpretive device was used on such poor raw materials, on writings that contained historical contradictions, scientific implausibilities, and moral improprieties. His protest was twofold: first the motivation was insufficient. Christians used allegory to escape embarrassment over contradictions, impieties, and other internal textual difficulties; second, the work being interpreted was itself inappropriate because of its historical, moral, and aesthetic deficiencies. In defense of sound reason and sober methodology, Porphyry used historical and literary criticism to demolish claims of the divine origin and prophetic value of the Bible.

In the case of the Hebrew Bible this led him to reject the writings as unsuitable for religious philosophy, as a sacred and oracular

² Socrates, *HE* 3.23. Cf. P. M. Casey, "Porphyry and the Origin of the Book of Daniel," *JTS* n.s. (1976), 15-33.

³ The issues raised by Porphyry became the basis for what Georg Heinrici called a Patristic *Aporienliteratur*. Cf. "Zur patristischen Aporienliteratur," 27.24 (1910), *ASGW*, 843-60. This genre is related to the "Homeric Problems" literature on questions related to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Texts are available in H. Schraeder, ed., *Porphyrii Quaestionem homericarum ad Iliadem pertinentium reliquias*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1880-82 and *Porphyrii Quaestionem homericarum ad Odysseam pertinentium reliquias*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1890. Also see A. R. Sodano, ed., *Porphyrii Quaestionum homericarum liber I*, Naples: Giannini, 1970.

storehouse of divine knowledge. In the case of the Christian Bible this led him to reject the writings as unsuitable for religious history, as a reliable storehouse of knowledge about Jesus and his teachings.

Logical Unity

A precise definition of the logical unity of *Against the Christians* is based on conjecture. Nonetheless, the fragments as a whole suggest that the critical issues raised by Porphyry convey an understanding of the literary, historical, and philosophical deficiencies of Christianity.

Like Galen and Celsus, Porphyry argued that Christians proposed an "unreasoning faith."⁴ Clearly, its literature and historical self-definition is fraught with difficulties for Porphyry. But Christianity is primarily a problem because it is not a rational religion. Christians argued for an omnipotent god, for the bodily resurrection of the dead, for the universal efficacy of historical revelation, for the universality of a particular saviour. The irrationality and impiety of Christianity are Porphyry's primary concern. The fragments generate ontological, cosmological, epistemological, and anthropological issues. The problems these issues raise are supported by arguments from literature, history, and chronology. The problems themselves are solved by rational arguments from Platonic *a priori*.

We must not forget that ultimately ethical concerns guided Porphyry's critical agenda. As he frequently makes plain, his basic concern is the manner in which the Bible has been presented. This accounts for the recurrent theme of the *alogos* character of scripture. Historical and literary criticism offer therapy to patients afflicted by a rapacious later ancient disease, atheism. Its most extreme symptoms are manifest among Christians. The only cure is radical ectomy by means of the sober light of reasoned criticism. In this sense, *Against the Christians* is a deadly serious enterprise.

Taxonomy

With what group of writings should *Against the Christians* be classified? The fragmentary nature of the evidence leaves this question largely

⁴ Eusebius, *PE* 1.3.1.

unresolved. What can be said is that Porphyry composed his writings *Against the Christians* in a variety of works. Perhaps these texts were written over a period of time during the last decade of his life. This, however, we do not know with any certainty. What we do know is that Porphyry's *Against the Christians* was part of a defense of traditional Roman religion, and that his writings may have been aimed against active recruiting measures by Christians such as Origen among Platonists. Finally, all these works were likely composed according to standard literary and rhetorical traditions.

Porphyry's compositions may be classified as belonging to at least three genres of writing. These may be called "Problems Literature," "Apologetic Literature," and "Chronological Literature." All of these genres of writings were composed according to standard rhetorical conventions. There are several reasons for this literary classification and for the need to study *Against the Christians* in relation to them.

First, the content of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* shows a close relationship with his "Homeric Problems" literature. In both cases he drew on his knowledge of history, philosophy, religion, chronography, and literary criticism to raise issues of utmost diversity such as the thorny problem of the dating of texts, the delicate business of the authorship of works, the difficult issue of relationships between writings, and the deadly serious question of the historical, philosophical, and religious coherence of the Iliad, the Odyssey, and Bible.

Second, the concerns raised in his *Philosophy from Oracles*, the worship of gods, demons, and heroes, emerge in his critique of Christianity—that Christians do not worship the one god but a sage; that the disciples misinterpreted the teachings of Jesus and inaugurated a new form of worship; and that Christianity is an impious and unethical religion.

Third, the fragments need to be studied within the apologetic context of Hellenic philosophical interpretations of Mediterranean religions composed not only by Porphyry, but also by Plutarch, Lucian, Galen, Celsus, and Julian. This literature attempted to elaborate the interpretive patterns of sacred scriptures in terms of Hellenic philosophical and religious concepts. The central focus of many of the fragments not only concentrates on knowledge of the historical nature of the biblical writings, but also on their interpretive histories.

Fourth, the fragments require examination within the framework of the science of chronology. This method was employed by Porphyry to criticize Christian understandings of the historical and prophetic

meaning of the Book of Daniel. According to Porphyry, Ps-Daniel was written in the second century B.C.E. to encourage Jewish resistance to Antiochus Epiphanes. It has nothing to do with prophecies concerning the coming of the Christ and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.

Fifth, a few words can be said about the rhetorical nature of Porphyry's writings on Christianity. Since we only have fragments it is difficult to ascertain what his rhetorical genre and agenda were. What must be realized, however, is that he was writing in a well-defined tradition, that of the diatribe, on the basic themes [*topoi*] of which he played a series of variations. Porphyry advocates a deliberative and forensic approach to the writings of the Jews and Christians. As we shall see, both approaches accord with his philosophical stance on religion and ethics.

Since *Against the Christians* comprised many works written in a variety of genres, now entirely lost, it is impossible to define precisely the taxonomy of Porphyry's effort. Nonetheless, before deducing his views of Judaism and Christianity the literary forms of his writings possibly conform to the following genres. Whether they do or not remains unknown for the present. What cannot be done is follow up on these suggestions. The evidence does not support such an endeavor.

If it is correct to assume that the work is related to the genres of "Problems Literature,"⁵ "Apologetic Literature,"⁶ and "Chronological Literature,"⁷ then the writing likely offered: 1) an historical, textual, and literary analysis of the Bible; 2) a positive statement of the traditional religion of the Roman world within the context of a study of the religions of its various ancient peoples—Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Hebrews; and 3) a negative assessment of Christianity within the framework of traditional Roman philosophical understandings of religion and ethics.

⁵ According to G. Heinrici, "Zur patristischen Aporienliteratur," *ASGW* 27.24 (1910) 843–60, the genre of *Against the Christians* is related to the "Homeric Problems" literature.

⁶ For the history of this genre of literature in later Platonism, see Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* 68–196.

⁷ On Porphyry and ancient chronology, cf. B. Croke, art. cit. 168–85.

Problems Literature

Discussed in the "Problems Literature" were exegetical questions and literary problems such as difficulties of the text, etymologies and meaning of words, grammatical problems and historical allusions. Although there is no direct evidence that Porphyry wrote on "Biblical Problems," he did compose several treatises on "Homeric Problems."⁸ These works may well have provided Porphyry with the skills to tackle literary problems in the Christian testaments.

Porphyry was a master of allegorical interpretation and used it extensively in his exegesis of the Homeric and Platonic writings. Allegorical interpretation of myth was nothing new. The Stoics, in particular, had made abundant use of it. Plotinus employed it to illustrate particular doctrinal points as they arose. Different features of a single myth were seen by the philosopher to accord with different metaphysical principles.⁹ The method was valuable because it permitted Porphyry to extend a Neoplatonic interpretation to the whole of Plato's dialogues and the Homeric myths. Since Porphyry's Platonic commentaries are lost,¹⁰ the best illustration of his methods comes from his essay *On the Cave of the Nymphs* described in *Odyssey* 13.102-12. Porphyry argued that a single myth or symbol could simultaneously convey several allegorical meanings.

Metaphysically, the cave could symbolize the material world, matter's recalcitrance with the cave's rock, matter's flux by the waters flowing within it, matter's obscurity by its darkness.¹¹ The cave's obscurity could also symbolize the invisible powers within the material world;¹² its darkness, these powers inaccessibility to the senses; and the rock is a symbol of the indestructability of the intelligible world.¹³ Ethically, the olive tree growing above the cave is a symbol of the aspirant to wisdom.¹⁴

It is clear that Porphyry was an advocate of allegorical interpretation and employed it extensively on Homer and Plato. He knew

⁸ Schraeder, op. cit., Sodano, op. cit.

⁹ For example, Zeus is identified by Plotinus with Soul (*Enn.* 5.1.7.35-37), Intelligence (*Enn.* 5.8.4.40-42), and the One (*Enn.* 6.9.7.20-26).

¹⁰ Proclus mentions Porphyry's use of allegory on the Platonic dialogues. Cf. *In Tim.* 1.204.24-27.

¹¹ *De Antro Nympharum*, 5.

¹² *Ibid.* 7.

¹³ *Ibid.* 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 32.

its uses and also its abuses. This brings us to his *Against the Christians*. As we have already noted, the Bible's aesthetic and ethical deficiencies made it unworthy material for allegorical interpretation.¹⁵ Seen in this light, his attacks on Christians who used this method to interpret scripture—foremost among them Origen—is easier to understand.¹⁶

A master of the method, Porphyry used allegorical interpretation of the Bible as a foil for his own straightforward analysis of scripture. As a solver of "Homeric Problems," he developed a sharp eye for "Biblical Problems." Many of the arguments from *Against the Christians*, as preserved by Augustine in his *Harmony of the Gospels* and Macarius in his *Apocriticus*, were probably framed within the context of the "Problems" genre.

Apologetic Literature

"Apologetic Literature" functioned to defend the public piety of the traditional religion of the Empire. It also served in the third and fourth centuries to attack religions on grounds of atheism and impiety. Christianity represented an apostasy from the traditions of ancient Mediterranean monolatry and piety because it denied the efficacy of the one god through its worship of Jesus as the son of God.¹⁷

Although Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* was a philosophical treatise in defense of traditional Roman religion, it also provided the rationale for a criticism of Christianity. A *superstitio* devoted to the worship of Jesus, Christianity turned men and women away from worship of the one god and toward impiety.

In the "Apologetic Literature" historical questions and conceptual issues were also addressed—such as the history of the worship of god, gods, and demons, as well as the meaning of religious ritual. In the *Philosophy from Oracles* it is explained why ancient religions are similar to Neoplatonic religion and how the oracles of the traditional religions are valuable as a source for the philosophical belief in monotheism.¹⁸

¹⁵ See Sellw, art. cit. 79–100.

¹⁶ Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.

¹⁷ Wolff, op. cit.

¹⁸ For this interpretation of Porphyry's wide-ranging *Against the Christians* extant in the *Philosophy from Oracles*, cf. R. L. Wilken, "Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek Religion and Christian Faith," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*, ed. W. L. Schoedel and R. L. Wilken (Paris 1979), 117–34.

Porphyry used the "apologetic" genre to demonstrate that the pantheon of all nations consisted of gods performing like functions and that these divinities corresponded to one another. He also employed it to illustrate which gods stood outside the Roman *theokrasia*. Among these we find Jesus.¹⁹

Thus, a traditional literary genre stands behind portions of *Against the Christians*. Most likely, they are found in the *Philosophy from Oracles* and *Return of the Soul*. Before deducing Porphyry's views on Christianity from a given fragment, the apologetic form of the writing in which it is found must be considered.

Chronological Literature

"Chronological Literature" encompassed studies of history, chronology, and ethnography. Its Roman origins lay in attempts by Hellenistic historians to chronicle world and dynastic histories by *ethnos*. Porphyry knew the work of the chroniclers, specifically Callinicus, who had written a history of the Ptolemies;²⁰ Theophrastus, who composed works on the Diodochi;²¹ Josephus, author of the *Jewish War*;²² Antonius Diogenes,²³ who wrote on Pythagoras; and Numenius, who wrote on Moses and the philosophy of the Jews.²⁴ Using these sources Porphyry likely wrote his own chronicle of world history, beginning with the fall of Troy and ending with the reign of the emperor Claudius (268–70 C.E.).²⁵ He certainly employed them in his extensive critique of Ps-Daniel, and he may have used them to assist in his analysis of the gospel genealogies.²⁶

¹⁹ Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 19.23.

²⁰ B. Croke, art. cit. 168–85.

²¹ *De Abstinencia*, 4.11–14. Cf. J. Bernays, *Theophrastos' Schrift ueber Froemigkeit* (Berlin 1866), 22f.

²² Ibid. He paraphrases Josephus with slight changes and omissions in *De Abstinencia*, 4.11–14. Cf. M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem 1980), 423ff. On other uses by Porphyry of Josephus, Stern argues that the similarity between *De Abstinencia* 4.18 and Josephus *BJ* 7.352 may not derive from the dependence of Porphyry on Josephus, but on a common view of Indian philosophy that may ultimately go back to Megasthenes. Stern, op. cit. 424 n. 5.

²³ *Vit. Pyth.* 11.

²⁴ *De Antro Nympharum*, 10.

²⁵ B. Croke, art. cit. 168–85.

²⁶ These are extant exclusively in Jerome. Most of the critiques of Jesus genealogy derive from Jerome, Augustine, and Macarius Magnes. For a list of the fragments by author, cf. Harnack, op. cit. 43–44.

Hence it is clear that yet again another traditional literary genre stands behind Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. What is significant here is the extent to which Porphyry read Hellenistic and Jewish historians, chronologers, and ethnographers in an attempt to make sense of biblical history. This aspect of Porphyry's analysis of Judaism and Christianity has been sadly neglected. Before summarizing Porphyry's views on the historicity of Daniel and the genealogy of the gospels, a study of the chronological background of the fragments is in order.

Rhetorical Literature

A word should be said about the possible rhetorical nature of Porphyry's compositions. It is likely that he was writing within a well-defined tradition, probably that of the diatribe, on basic themes or *topoi*, of which he plays a series of variations.

In his criticisms of the Book of Daniel, the gospels, or the letters of Paul, Porphyry advocates historical, literary, and philosophical interpretations. He attacks those who dignify their stands on the basis of nonrational criteria of coherence such as prophecy or revelation. In his *Philosophy from Oracles*, he adopts the Roman view that the pantheons of all nations consist of gods performing like functions and that these divine persons correspond to one another. As we shall see, it is this latter position that accords with his philosophical stand on religion. In the former case he is likely following in the diatribe tradition to show that the Fathers and disciples offer positions that do not agree with his philosophical stand on historical, literary, and ethical issues.

All of Porphyry's writings have a rhetorical dimension. In order to ascertain his views on a particular position so as not to interpret his intention, we must consider the possible rhetorical genres and forms of the fragments in question.

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL ELEMENTS

Religious Background

Roman Religion

The interactions of Greek, Macedonian, and Oriental religions, and their contribution to the creation of an *oikumene* and *cosmos* ruled by the Caesars cannot be adequately examined here.¹ What we can do, however, is discuss those aspects of ancient Mediterranean religion that help clarify the background to Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.² This limits our discussion to Roman imperial religion and the attitudes displayed by the Roman intelligentsia toward the various religions within the empire.³

Apart from the domestic cult, Rome's religion was in the care of the state, controlled by permanent boards composed of citizens of the highest rank. No one other than the *nobiles* had any real function in the *religio* and *pietas* of Rome. Even later, in the massive immigration of slaves and freed men into Italy with the creation of an empire, the governing class met the situation by consulting Apollo either at Delphi or through the Sibylline Books, and by incorporating one foreign cult after another in the religion of the state under the care of the *quindecimviri*, the commission for foreign cults. The

¹ For major studies on this topic, see J. Toutain, *Les Cultes païens dans l'empire romain* (Paris 1907–20); A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and New Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford 1933); D. Kaufmann-Bühler, "Eusebeia" in *Reallexikon fuer Antike und Christentum* vol. 6 (Stuttgart 1966) 985–1052; R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven 1981); W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge 1987).

² For a discussion of Porphyry's place in the context of traditional Roman religion see P. Hadot, "Neoplatonist Spirituality," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, edited by A. H. Armstrong (New York 1986), 230–49.

³ For a study of Roman religion derived primarily from the material remains of Helleno-Roman culture see MacMullen, *op. cit.* 1–41, 49–130. Burkert's reconstruction of the ancient mysteries is dependent largely upon literary sources, *op. cit.* 1–65, 89–116. Cf. R. M. Grant, *Gods and the One God* (Philadelphia 1986).

romanization of foreign religions was a political and social necessity. These measures met the needs of the moment in a polity moving toward hegemony of the Mediterranean basin. Initially, these reforms did not transcend the limitations of the official cult. But with the urban population swelled by foreign elements, its native members soon lost the Senate's contempt for unregularized religions. By the dawn of the common era, foreign cults had many adherents among the *plebs urbana*. The ruling class threatened and interfered with some, and banished others. The pretext was fear of a rampant immorality arising out of secret rites. More likely, interference from the *nobiles* arose from a feeling that the solidity of the state was menaced by foreign peoples worshipping foreign gods.

To review the history of the state religion as an institution in the Empire stands beyond this study.⁴ But it is helpful to remember that it was governed by a *princeps* who, as *pontifex maximus*, was responsible for public morals and the well-being of the state. Precisely what both responsibilities entailed shifted from emperor to emperor. What remained constant was the inclusion by the Caesars after Augustus of foreign cults into the state religion.

The rule of Augustus and the Julio-Claudian dynasty reinforced the *mos maiorum* as traditionally defined by the Senate, and added to it a new religious sentiment toward the *princeps*. Octavius conferred on his regime the prestige of Roman religious sentiment by the taking of the *augurium salutis* in 29 B.C.E. and rebuilding eighty-two temples to the gods in Rome during his reign.⁵ At the same time a new order received religious expression in new foundations that complemented the old. The deities of the Julian house received highest honors. Temples to *divus* Julius and the Palatine Apollo were constructed.

Octavian attained the status of a divine man as well when in 27 B.C.E. he was given the title Augustus. After his death on 17 December 14 C.E. the Senate decreed that Augustus should become *divus* Augustus and accepted among the gods of the Roman state. The cult of the

⁴ The evidence for the adoption of foreign cults by emperors is largely derived from coins and medallions. Studies used for this reconstruction depend on the still valuable works of H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage* (London 1936) vol. i-iv, *idem*, *British Museum Catalogue of Coins of the Roman Empire i-iii* (London 1930-36); P. L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts ii-iii* (Stuttgart 1933); and J. Vogt, *Die alexandrinischen Muenzen: Grundlegung einer alexandrinischen Kaisergeschichte* (Stuttgart 1924).

⁵ Livy, *Hist.* 4.20.7, *Res Gestae* 19.

emperor was born. Henceforth, all Caesars would stand, however precariously, between humanity and the gods. Divinity now hedged a *princeps* around.

New currents were flowing. The later Julio-Claudian emperors also began the practice of incorporating foreign cults into the religion of Rome. The cult of Cybele was magnified by Claudius, and the cult-drama of Osiris was likely introduced to Rome under Gaius.⁶ The Flavian dynasty continued this practice. Sarapis, who confirmed Vespasian's claim to the throne, and the precinct of Isis, which he shared in Rome, was placed upon coins. Domitian, although a devotee to Minerva and Juppiter, reconstructed the temple in the Campus Martius after a fire, and was benefactor of the temple of Isis at Beneventum.

In the following period, when the emperors were drawn from the western provinces, Roman tradition was largely followed. Even though Hadrian and Antoninus Pius were conservative and traditional in religious affairs, coins minted by Hadrian show images of Attis, Isis, Sarapis, and Cybele.⁷ Cybele also assumed special importance in medallions of Antoninus, the two Faustinas, and Lucilla, while Cybele was also significant in connection with the apotheosis of the elder Faustina.⁸ Marcus Aurelius stands with the traditional deities of Rome—Juppiter, Mars, Roma, and Minerva, but even he dedicated a temple in Rome to the Egyptian Toth who attests to the "religio Augusti."⁹ It was with Commodus that we see imperial interest heightened in eastern cults, principally those around Heracles and Mithras,¹⁰ as well as Sarapis and Isis.¹¹ But Cybele is Commodus's favorite. He identifies his *genius* with the deity on many coins; the gods of his *princeps* are associated with those of the state.

The Severan dynasty brought with it drastic changes. Temples were built in Rome to new gods like the African Bacchus, Dea Syria, the Carthaginian Caelestis, Sol, and to familiar ones like Hercules

⁶ F. Cumont, *Die orientalische Religionen im roemischen Heidentum* (Stuttgart repr. 1981); 93, 250f.

⁷ J. M. C. Toynbee, *The Hadrianic School* (New York 1924), 24ff., Volume of Plates v. 128, a-i.

⁸ Mattingly and Sydenham, op. cit. iii 194-355.

⁹ M. J. Vermaseren, *Mithraica I: The Mithraeum at St. Maria capua Vetere* EPRO 16 (Leiden 1961).

¹⁰ M. Rostovtseff and H. Mattingly, *JRS* xiii (1923), 91ff.

¹¹ Toynbee, op. cit. v. 130.

and Sarapis. Here the gods of the *princeps* ranked with those of the empire. Sol, without a legend as a Republican coin-type, was revived by Trajan as *oriens* to stand for the eastern interests of the empire. But now, on the coins of Septimius and Caracalla, he has the striking legends *pacator orbis* and *rector orbis*.¹² Elsewhere Cybele appears on Julia Domnia's coins (193-96 C.E.) with *matri deum* and *matri magnae* inscribed. Isis also is evident with the legend *saeculi felicitas*. Cybele and Isis appear again on the coins of Caracalla (215 C.E.) with the legends *matri deum* and *saeculi felicitas*.

These expansive tendencies continued. Elagabalus glorified the deity of Emesa, sought to mate it with Vesta and make it the chief deity of the Roman world. This is clear from the legends on the imperial coinage.¹³ While Severus Alexander was more conservative, he continued the imperial interest in solar deities.¹⁴ This trend would be maintained by Aurelian, who elevated Sol to the crest of imperial power. Later Postumus would similarly favor Sarapis with the legend *serapi comiti avg.* on his coins.

In the wake of the disasters of the middle third century C.E., the Illyrian emperor Diocletian built an Iseum and a Serapeum at Rome. But changes in official policy toward eastern cults were in the air. More importantly, Diocletian and Maximin Daia made dedications at Aquileia to *deo soli*. The coinage of Diocletian and his regents were primarily associated with Juppiter, Mars, Sol, and Hercules. No longer seen on imperial coinage are Attis, Juppiter Dolichenus, Dea Syria, Adonis, Mithras, Osiris, or any of the Syrian Baalim. In the reign of Maximin Daia few gods survive Sol, a god of transition whom Constantine later would couple with a Greek cross. This shift represents a considerable narrowing of the gods represented on imperial coinage. It is, perhaps, the most radical act of imperial decide since the time of the Flavians.

This was the world Porphyry lived in. It was a conservative one; it was an era in which Roman emperors and intellectuals attempted a return to the ideals of an earlier imperial age. But in fact they created a new imperial age, one where an emperor as *vicar* of the *oikumene* was associated with a solar deity, the ruler of the *cosmos*.

¹² A. Alföldi, "Insignien und Tracht der roemischen Kaiser," *Roem. Mitt.* 50 (1935), 107ff.

¹³ Ibid. 107ff. *invictus sacerdos avg.*, *sacerd. dei solis elagab.*, *sanct. deo soli elagabal.*, *soli propugnatori*, *summus sacerdos avg.*

¹⁴ With legends on his coins such as *aeternitas avg.* *aeternitati avg.* Ibid. 107ff.

The cult of the emperor in the East was built on earlier hellenistic institutions; in the West it was deliberately introduced. Yet in spite of this and in spite of local and temporal variation, it remained a universal fact. Throughout the empire men and women looked to him who stood between humanity and the gods. He was included in the community of the gods; he was chosen by the gods, by the Sun in particular; he was the mediator between the terrestrial and celestial worlds. Divine adoration of the Caesar was expressed in solemn and emotive terms—

*mox crescit in illos
imperium superis.*¹⁵

Yet above the emperor stood Fate and its decrees. The masses attempted to break these decrees through ritual. The intelligentsia thought to overcome them through philosophy. Porphyry would attempt to combine religion and philosophy in a new Roman piety that fused the traditional cults and philosophical religion with the religion of the *princeps*.

Porphyry's *theokrasia* was an idea long held by the Helleno-Roman intelligentsia, who argued that the pantheons of all nations consisted of gods performing like functions and that these divinities correspond to one another.¹⁶ In such identifications, whether Isis or Dea Syria for example, was the *verum nomen*. Divine titles merely suggested dialect variations. This notion coupled nicely with popular wishes to maintain native and regional gods so as to retain ethnic identity. It also complemented Diocletian's and Maximin's imperial desires to link theoretical and practical religion together under the aegis of an imperial religion.

As Porphyry viewed it, the religions of the Mediterranean world were valuable if their oracles supported conventional political structures, promoted traditional social values, and defended accepted religious beliefs—if they upheld the *Imperium Romanum* and *Romanitas*.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid. 85.

¹⁶ For this idea in ancient Mediterranean Religion see A. H. Armstrong, "The Ancient and Continuing Pieties of the Greek World," *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality* (New York 1986), 66–101.

¹⁷ For studies on both the practical and theoretical aspects of later ancient Mediterranean religion, cf. R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven 1981), J. Geffcken, *Der Ausgang des griechisch-romischen Heidenthums* (Heidelberg 1929; Darmstadt 1972).

There lay their value. Only traditional religion could counter the *maleficus* of Fate.

Porphyry's study of the oracles of the Mediterranean world underscored the fact that there were two exceptions that proved most other religions legitimate. In his youth it was Zoroastrianism; in his later years, it was Christianity.¹⁸

Practical men, like Maximin Daia, clung to a gospel of action in the face of seditious fate.¹⁹ Porphyry was a conservative intellectual and a traditionalist in religion.²⁰ Therefore, this man of contemplation was recruited to help maintain the imperial order.²¹ A defender of cultic polytheism, an advocate of theoretical monotheism, Porphyry argued that although the different peoples of the empire worshipped a variety of visible and invisible gods, daemons and heroes, as part of their national sacrificial cults,²² they also worshipped, above these lesser divinities, a supreme god, a deity who could be worshiped through mind and heart.²³ Moreover, he proposed that a linkage exists between the popular cults and philosophical religion. In the imperial religion, commoner and philosopher worship within the same divine universe through the observance of its ancient traditions, myths, and rituals—be they Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Chaldaean, or Hebrew.²⁴

It would be helpful to suggest that Porphyry's paradigm was symptomatic of religious and political changes in the late third century rather than productive of them. It served the ends of an autocracy that exalted the *princeps* and an intelligentsia that promoted a *Romanitas*. Novelty is not lacking with Porphyry, but his program was, in the main, a matter of a change of political atmosphere where emperors attempted to strengthen the imperially sanctioned religions in the

¹⁸ Porphyry, *Vit. Pl.* 16, *De Philosophia ex oraculis haurienda*, 42–43 = Eusebius, *PE* 4.5.

¹⁹ For an analysis of the religion of Maximin Daia see R. M. Grant, "The Religion of Maximin Daia," in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults* 4 (Leiden 1975), 143–66.

²⁰ P. Hadot, "Neoplatonist Spirituality" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality* edited by A. H. Armstrong (New York 1986), 230–49.

²¹ His religious views can be culled from his *De Philosophia ex oraculis haurienda*, *De Antro Nymphaeum*, and *De Abstinencia*. Bidez, op. cit.

²² Porphyry, *De Antro Nymphaeum*, 6.

²³ *De Abstinencia*, 2.37.34.

²⁴ This argument comes out most forcefully in his *De Philosophia ex oraculis haurienda*. cf. Augustine *Civ. Dei* 19.22–23.

face of what they thought had become political and social opposition operating under the guise of religious piety.

Judaism

The history of the Jews and Judaism in the Roman Empire is a complex one. It is hardly possible to do justice to either in this forum. Nonetheless, a general but careful review of Roman religious and political attitudes toward Judaism is important if we are to better comprehend the wider context of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

That Porphyry knew the history of the Jews is without doubt. That he knew a great deal about the religion is indisputable. That he combined both in a spirited defense of Judaism is possible. That he used his knowledge of this people and their religion to attack the Christians is certain. Porphyry rarely criticized Jews or Judaism. His wrath concentrated on Christian interpretations of Jewish scripture—particularly the Book of Daniel.

Porphyry made use of the Book of Genesis.²⁵ The Jewish god is equated with the demiurge of the world, for he claims that "the theologian of the Hebrews" taught that the body of man had been formed by God, who breathed breath from himself into the body which acted as a living soul.²⁶ Later, in his *On Abstinence*, we encounter a sympathetic note concerning the tribulations and persecutions suffered by the Jews at the hands of the Seleucids and Romans,²⁷ and an attempt to rationally explain Jewish dietary laws.²⁸

In the *Life of Pythagoras* he claimed that Pythagoras was a pupil of the Jews.²⁹ In *The Philosophy from Oracles* Jews are associated with the Phoenicians, Lydians, and Chaldeans as knowing the ways of happiness and truth.³⁰ It was initially to these peoples, and not the

²⁵ *De Antro Nympharum*, 10.

²⁶ *Ad Gaurum* 11. Arguments for attributing this work, transmitted under the name of Galen, to Porphyry are presented by K. Kalbfleisch, "Die neuplatonische, — faelschlich dem Galen zugeschriebene Schrift, Pros Gauron peri tou pos empsuchoutai ta embrua," *AKAWB* (1895), 15ff. The validity has been questioned by R. Beutler, art. cit. 290. However, he does not deny we find in this work "porphyrianisches Gedankengut."

²⁷ *De Abstantia* 4.11–14.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 4.18. Cf. Josephus, *BJ* 7.352ff.

²⁹ *Vit. Pythag.* 11.

³⁰ Eusebius, *PE* 9.10.1–5.

Greeks, that the true way to God was shown³¹ through the agency of the prophet Moses.³² This is clear, he suggested, because the holy god the Hebrews honor is among the high gods.³³

In summary, Porphyry's attitude toward Judaism was based on the argument that it was an ancestral religion with a long history consisting of rational teachings. It was a traditional religion, and as such, it stood fully within the Roman *theokrasia*.

What explains Porphyry's sympathetic attitude to Judaism? Was it because they were kinsmen of his own Phoenician brethren? Was it because of imperial policy toward Jews and Judaism since the time of the early Caesars? Was it because their religion was by later Roman standards traditional and thus a tolerable *pietas*? It is difficult to pick any one answer. The solution probably lies in a combination of all of these suggestions.

Throughout the history of imperial Rome's dealings with the Jews ran the thread of toleration and protection of Judaism as the religion of an *ethnos*.³⁴ Jews had resided in Rome since the middle of the second century B.C.E. Many more Jews were deported to Rome after Pompey's sack of Jerusalem in 66 B.C.E. Many Jews also resided in conquered Syria and Egypt. Therefore, when the Romans annexed Palestine as a province they were not without knowledge of the Jews and Judaism.³⁵

In official Roman eyes the practice of Judaism by Jews was acceptable. Only the extension of the cult to non-Jews was undesirable.³⁶ This was not only because many Romans found Jewish religious rites such as circumcision barbaric, the dietary laws ridiculous, and their refusal to acknowledge other gods as impious atheism. It was also because Judaism as a foreign cult legally compromised the official

³¹ Eusebius, *PE* 9.10.1-5.

³² *De Antro Nympharum*, 10.

³³ Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 19.23.

³⁴ The only exception to this was the banishment of Jews from Rome in 139 B.C.E. for worshipping Jupiter Sabazius and corrupting Roman morals. Cf. *Val. Max.* 1.3.3.

³⁵ For the best study on Jews in the Roman Empire through the third century, see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule From Pompey to Diocletian* (Leiden 1981). Cf. I. Heinemann, "The Attitude of the Ancient World Toward Judaism" in *Review of Religion* (1940), 385-400.

³⁶ This becomes clear in imperial prescriptions against gentile proselytism in the wake of the Bar Kochba rebellion. Cf. *SHA*. Sev. 17.1.

religion of Rome.³⁷ Moreover, Judaism had political overtones that could be dangerous. Jews formed a national as well as religious unit that could be a hot-bed for real or imagined anti-Roman activity in the empire. Such fears were not unfounded. Jewish messianic revolts in 66, 115, and 130 C.E. attest to the first; the conversion of gentiles to Judaism and Christianity during the first four centuries C.E. attest to the second.

To characterize Hellenic and Roman attitudes toward Jews and Judaism is not easy.³⁸ It stretches from amusement, contempt, dislike, and active hostility to regard for its monotheism and high moral standards. For some gentiles Judaism had an appeal so strong that they converted to the *religio* precisely because of its *pietas*.³⁹

The Roman authorities were faced with two alternatives when dealing with Judaism: suppression or tolerance. At first Judaism fulfilled the criteria for survival from Roman requirements that caused religious strife because of positive legal protections afforded them by Julius Caesar,⁴⁰ who granted the Jews exemptions from imperial taxes and military service.⁴¹ Later it would fulfill such requirements because of political and religious concessions to Rome in the wake of the Trajanic and Hadrianic wars.⁴²

Augustus reiterated and extended Julius's imperial aegis for the Jews. Under his reign Judaism became a *religio licita* throughout the empire. Imperial tolerance toward Jews would continue under the reigns of Gaius Caligula, Nero, and Vespasian. The charter of Jewish religious liberty would not be revoked by Titus, Vespasian, or even Trajan despite the first Jewish War and a series of minor revolts during their reigns. The punitive policies of Hadrian after the second Jewish War were short-lived, for they made any peace between Romans

³⁷ Magistrates were charged with prohibiting foreign rites, sacrificers, soothsayers, and books of prophecy other than the Roman in the capital. Cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 39.16.8, 4.30, 25.1.

³⁸ Jews were regarded as unsociable and antisocial by Posidonius of Apamea and Hecateus of Abdera, Tacitus, and Juvenal. Cf. Diod. Sic. xxxiv, 1.1-14; xl. 3, 4, Tacitus, *Hist.*, 5.1-2, Juvenal, *Sat.* 19.1030-104; and credulous by Horace, *Sat.* 1.5.100, cf. Heinemann art. cit. 385ff.

³⁹ For a collection of the primary sources on Jews and Judaism in the Greek and Roman periods, see M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem 1976).

⁴⁰ Josephus, *Ant.* 16.160-65.

⁴¹ Smallwood, op. cit. 120-55.

⁴² Ibid. 467-538.

and Jews in the empire impossible. Rights were slowly reinstated by Antoninus Pius and Septimius Severus, and extended under Caracalla and Diocletian. Jews were never included in the sporadic anti-Christian pogroms during the reigns of the Antonines and the Severi. They were apparently excluded from the brutal persecution of Christianity by Decius and Valerian. They were explicitly excluded from them during the reign of Diocletian.

Antonine policy toward Judaism was largely determined by Hadrian and his attempt to pacify the eastern frontier. Successive Jewish revolts under unknown messiahs in Cyrenaica, Egypt, and the messiah Bar Kochba in Palestine had rendered the empire in the East precarious. The danger to the empire could not be exaggerated. A Parthian invasion accompanied the last of these Jewish revolts.

Changes in imperial policy toward the Jews were instituted by Hadrian after crushing the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E. Judea became part of the province of Syria-Palestina, and Jerusalem was converted into the Greco-Roman city of Aelia Capitolina. Moreover, Jews were forbidden entrance to the city save for 9 Ab. Jews were deported from Judea, and Palestine was repopulated by Greco-Syrians from other parts of the empire. Certain religious rites were outlawed, such as circumcision, sabbath observance, ordination of rabbis, and the study of Torah. Finally, the office of Patriarch was left empty, depriving Jews of spiritual and political leadership.⁴³

In an attempt to settle Jewish unrest in the Empire, Antoninus Pius lifted the ban on circumcision.⁴⁴ These developments were predicated upon the end of Jewish hopes to revive the cult of Yahweh in a rebuilt Temple. Since the terrible consequences of the Bar Kochba rebellion stilled Rabbinic support for messianism, a policy of toleration for peace was readily accepted. This policy of reconciliation inaugurated, Rome turned a blind eye to Jewish defiance of Hadrian's other religious prescriptions as long as no disturbances ensued.

Active pacification of the Jews under Hadrian resulted in a submissive Palestine under the Antonines. By 145 C.E. reductions in the Roman garrisons in Palestine began. Between 162 and 170 C.E. few were left in the province. The Jews had learned a bitter lesson. Not

⁴³ Ibid. 457-66.

⁴⁴ *Dig.* XLVIII viii.11.1.

even the revolt of Avidius Cassius against Marcus Aurelius in 175 C.E. stirred them against the empire.

Eventually, Judaism regained its status as a *religio licita*. This occurred after its religious leadership agreed to give up active proselytism among the gentiles. It eventually did. The Sanhedrin was reconstituted, and the office of the Patriarch was again filled. Under the restored Patriarch, Jewish political, social, and religious life returned to normal by 200 C.E. The rabbis were permitted by the Roman authorities to extend their control of Jews from Palestine to the whole of the western diaspora during this period. Lands were restored to their Jewish owners in Palestine, and an economic revival ensued under the aegis of the rabbis. Jews were even allowed to return to Aelia on feast days other than 9 Ab.

Beneath the surface, however, hatred lingers. In some rabbinic tractates, negative allusions abound. Rome is still equated with hated persecution.⁴⁵ Despite this, some Jewish literary activity express the hope for improved relations between Jews and Romans. Apocryphal anecdotes are composed about amiable meetings between rabbis and emperors.⁴⁶ Included among the latter are allusions to all the Antonine emperors.

During the Severan dynasty, amiable relations between Jews and Romans continued. Jews apparently did not join the revolts against Septimius Severus, at least not *en masse* in 193 C.E. The Jewish governing class did not permit it.⁴⁷ According to Jerome, Severus and Caracalla were very fond of the Jews.⁴⁸ This did not prevent Septimius from issuing edicts in 198–99 C.E., prohibiting Jewish proselytism throughout his reign.⁴⁹ Whether these laws were enforced against Jews remains dubious, however. They were enforced *Against the Christians*.⁵⁰ Although political changes were few—the Severi continued Antonine policies toward Aelia and a gentile repopulation of Palestine—the religious, economic, and social condition of Jews continued to improve throughout the empire. There was substantial synagogue rebuilding in the Galilee, and the Mishnah came to closure at this

⁴⁵ *Mish.* Aboth 2.2–3, *JT* Ta'an 1.1; *Sifre Deut.* 327; *Midrash Tanhuma*.

⁴⁶ These are largely extant in *BT* AZ 10a–b, *Sanh.* 91ab; *JT* Meg 1.11, *San.* 10.5, *Midr. Gen. R.* 11.4, 67.6, 125.5, 134.3, *Levit. R.* 10.4.

⁴⁷ *BT* BM 83b–84a.

⁴⁸ Jerome, *In Dan.* 9.34 = *CCL* LXXVa 923–24.

⁴⁹ *SHA* Sev. 17.1.

⁵⁰ Eusebius, *HE* 6.12.1.

time (c.200 C.E.) under the leadership of the patriarch Judah I (d.220 C.E.). In short, there was an imperial loosening of most political restrictions against the Jews, and all religious prescriptions against Judaism, by the dawn of the third century C.E.

Later in 212 C.E. Jews were not excluded from full Roman citizenship under Caracalla, despite the Hadrianic strictures in place since the time of the Bar Kochba rebellion and their inability to participate fully in the state cult.⁵¹ Imaginary stories from the reigns of Elagabalus⁵² and Severus Alexander⁵³ tell of the emperors including Judaism in the Roman pantheon of religions, suggesting imperial favor for the religion.⁵⁴

Rome could afford to be generous to Judaism in the late second and third centuries C.E. because it had ceased to be a political danger. Jews continued to repudiate the state cults of Rome, but this was tolerated because it remained a *religio licita*, which was no longer an active adversary of the tutelary gods and their emperors. Judaism was tolerated as the religion of a small and comparatively static minority without radical or subversive religious doctrines. Since it was no longer an enemy to the established order, it could be protected by the *imperium Romanum*. This is most evident in the attitude of Diocletian toward Jews and Judaism. He visited Palestine in 286, 287, and 296 C.E.⁵⁵ It was his visit to Galilee in 286 C.E. that carries with it Rabbinic stories of the emperor residing in Paneas and traveling to Tiberias. There he meets with the patriarch and an anonymous rabbi for conversation.⁵⁶ Another account has Diocletian visiting Tyre and meeting with a member of a Jewish priestly family.⁵⁷ The man incurred ritual pollution by crossing a cemetery to meet the emperor. This act was not condemned by one of the leading rabbis of the day. Johanan commented that it was almost a religious honor to see a great man like the emperor.⁵⁸

⁵¹ Caracalla's name Aurelius occurs quite frequently among diaspora Jews. Cf. *CPJ* 3.170-71, *CJ* 1 indices 606, 618, 2 nos. 760, 761, 764, 774-76, 778-80, 788, 795, 798.

⁵² *SHA* Elagab. 3.4-5.

⁵³ *Ibid.* Alex. 22.4.

⁵⁴ It appears a plausibility with Elagabalus, cf. *ibid.* Elag. 3.4-5. This did not seem to be the case with Alexander, cf. *ibid.* Alex. 28.7.

⁵⁵ The exact dates of his visit remain uncertain. Cf. Smallwood op. cit. 536 n. 40.

⁵⁶ *JT* Terum. 8.12, *Midr. Gen. R.* 63.8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Ber. 3.1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Ber. 3.1.

Diocletian is viewed in the rabbinic writings of the time as another Augustus—someone who brought peace out of war and chaos. He had reduced the core of the Roman garrison of Palestine away from Galilee. Finally, he reaffirmed Jewish religious liberty during the persecution of the Christians.

When Diocletian arrived in Palestine, he commanded all nations, with the exception of the Jews, to pour libations to idols.⁵⁹ He was peaceable and trustworthy. For this the Jews had gratitude. The Jews for Diocletian were no menace to the old gods and could be left in peace. Porphyry clearly agreed with his emperor—*vox imperatori, vox dei*.

The policies and reforms of Diocletian merely reinforced the rights and privileges of Jews within the empire. According to the *Codex Theodosianus* Jews of the Roman empire enjoyed the right to live under the *lex Judaeorum* until 398 C.E.⁶⁰ They enjoyed special privileges that exempted them from the jurisdiction of the imperial government in matters concerning the forum, the statues, and the law. Jewish courts and commerce were under their control. They were exempt from the compulsory public service of the *curiales*.⁶¹ They also enjoyed the *dignitas* of the senatorial aristocracy's highest imperial titles⁶² and the *dignitas* of the urban ruling classes.⁶³ Nor were Jews attacked in Roman legislation. Judaism was attacked publically as a superstition, a pollution, a contagion, a villany, a turpitude. The religion was sacrilegious. This was not an anomaly. Roman policy focused positively upon Jews as citizens of the empire, and negatively on Judaism as a cult tolerated by the imperium.⁶⁴ During the reigns of Julius and Augustus Caesar, Jews had nearly earned privileges within the empire. During the reigns of Titus, Vespasian, Trajan, and Hadrian they nearly lost them. They slowly regained their rites and privileges during the Antonines and Severi. Under Diocletian what was lost was regained.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Ibid. AZ 5.4.

⁶⁰ *Cth.* 2.1.10.

⁶¹ Ibid. 12.1.99.

⁶² Ibid. 16.8.8, 11.17.

⁶³ Ibid. 12.1.99, 157, 158, 165, 16.8.2.3, 4.24.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of these events see A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Blackwell 1986), 2.948–49. For a critique of Jones, cf. Bernard Bachrach "The Jewish Community of the Later Roman Empire," in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us* (Atlanta 1985), 402–8.

⁶⁵ For a full appraisal of the fate of Jews and Judaism under the Christian *princeps*, cf. *ibid.* 399–421.

Admiration and respect were also regained. This is best expressed by Porphyry. For the Neoplatonist, Jews possess a *historia* that allows them to be a people pious to an ancestral god, loyal to a cultural tradition; and a *religio* that is philosophical in thought, and ethical in behaviour.

In describing the Essene, his ideal example of the Jew who practices Judaism, he writes:

... he is made to swear great oaths: first, that he will practice piety toward god; next, that he will observe justice toward men; that he will harm no one whether on his own or under another's orders; that he will forever hate unjust ones and fight the war of the just; that he will keep faith forever with all men, especially with the powers that are, since no ruler gains his office except by divine will; that if he should become a ruler, he will never abuse his authority nor, either in dress or by other exterior marks of authority, surpass his subjects; he is to forever be a lover of truth and an exposor of liars; to keep his hands from theft and his soul pure from unholy gain; to hide nothing from the members of the group and to report none of their secrets to others, even if tortured to death. Furthermore, he swears to transmit their rules just as he has received them; to abstain from theft; and similarly to preserve the writings of the group and the names of the angels. These are the oaths. Those convicted and expelled come to a terrible end. Since they are bound by their oath and usages, they are not free to take of food from others, and thus fall to eating grass, wasting away, and death. In their compassion this led them to take many of them back in the last stage of suffering, arguing that the sufferings that have brought them to the precipice of death are a sufficient penalty for their transgressions. And they offer a mattress to those who intend to become members of the group, since they do not rest themselves in a fashion other than digging a foot deep trench and wrapping a cloak around them, so that they do not offend the rays of the deity. Such is the simplicity and scantiness of their food that on the seventh day they have no need of relieving themselves. They dedicate this day to prayers to the deity and rest. Because of this training they are capable of such fortitude that when placed on the rack to be twisted, burnt, and to undergo every other instrument of torture so they might be forced to curse their lawgiver or eat some forbidden food, they refuse to concede to either demand. They exhibited this in the war against the Romans, for they did not agree to either cringe to their persecutors or to cry. Rather they smiled in their pains and mildly rebuked their persecutors. Happily they yielded up their souls confident they would get them back. For it is a solid belief of theirs that the body is corruptible and its constituent matter impermanent but the soul is immortal and imperishable. The souls emanating from the finest aether become entangled, being dragged down by natural force. But once

released from the ties of the flesh, then, as if freed from long slavery, they celebrate, and are borne upwards. As might be expected, because of their way of life and training, which aims at truth and piety, there are many among them who foretell the future. Since they read holy books from an early age and are versed in various forms of purifications and apophthegms from prophets, seldom do they make errors in their predictions.⁶⁶

By the dawn of the fourth century Jews and Judaism had become a model people with an exemplary religion. The rebellious Essene had become for the Neoplatonist a quintessential Roman—loyal, courageous, intelligent, and pious. Whether this portrait offered by Porphyry of a people and religion is genuine or not remains unknown. It could merely be an example of Neoplatonic policy—to elevate the Jews at the expense of the Christians in service to a new imperial policy. However, it might also reflect an attempt to turn Christians from heresy to orthodoxy. Despite their difficult political and social relationship to Rome, Jews had learned something. They had cultivated a religious and philosophical tradition that ensured Judaism would survive in a difficult environment. These cultural lessons Christians might learn as well. But Porphyry clearly had his doubts. Unlike the Jews they had no tradition. His unrelenting attack on the Christians evinces he had no faith that Christianity, like Judaism, could become a religion that tolerates, let alone exemplifies *Romanitas*. It is clear why.

Christianity

It seems important to start our discussion of Roman attitudes toward Christianity with a rather general consideration of the place of religion in society and the duty of rulers in matters of religion.⁶⁷ Religious cults were all-pervasive and central to the life of society.⁶⁸ Hellenic and Roman religions were ones of cult not dogmatic belief.⁶⁹ People thought in a great many ways about the gods and could express

⁶⁶ *De Abstinencia*, 4.11–14.

⁶⁷ This is nicely reviewed by P. de Labriolle, *La Reaction paienne. Etude sur la polemique antichretienne du Ie au IVe siecle* 2d ed. (Paris 1948).

⁶⁸ See J. P. Kenney, "Monotheistic and Polytheistic Elements in Classical Mediterranean Spirituality" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 269–92.

⁶⁹ See P. Stockmeier, "Christlicher Glaube und Antike Religiositaet" in *ANRW* 23.2 (1980), 871–909.

themselves openly. The only caveat was that religious behaviour had to be pleasing to the gods and the state.⁷⁰ It was the role of the state authorities to maintain and regulate religious practices. Rulers were expected to keep state and society on the right side of the gods. Divine displeasure would bring pestilence and famine, barbarian invasion, defeat in war, and imperial overthrow. Therefore, it was a central concern for the Caesars to maintain a proper relationship with the divine.⁷¹

The rise of a form of sacred absolute monarchy in later Roman antiquity was an extension of traditional Mediterranean religious and philosophical thought.⁷² It was an intensification of the sense of religious consecration and political responsibility of the ruler. The Roman emperor was the locus of the holy. Eventually he would become a sacred person as representative of the divine on earth. This was merely a continuation of the role archaic kings, magistrates and assembles, and Hellenistic kings had performed since the beginning of recorded time.

The appearance of Christianity coincided with the emergence of the Roman form of absolute monarchy. The disciples and the Fathers agreed that the church of Christ was the church of the Empire. They claimed in the name of Christ the same divine preogatives of universal jurisdiction that emperors did in the name of the tutelary gods of Rome. From the outset there was tension between society, state, and church.⁷³ Proper religious observance was central to the maintenance of the whole fabric of culture and society. Consequently, in the first three centuries of the common era, Christians were undoubtedly unpopular among the masses because of their unsociability and self-righteousness.⁷⁴ They were looked upon as a dangerous

⁷⁰ F. M. Schroeder, "The Self in Ancient Religious Experience" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 337-59.

⁷¹ See W. R. Schoedel, "Christian Atheism and the Peace of the Roman Empire" in *Church History* 42 (1973), 309-19.

⁷² On the Platonic interpretation of divine kingship see H. Doerric, "Der Koenig: Ein platonisches Schluesselwort, von Plotin mit neuem Sinn erfullt" in *Platonica Minora* (Munich 1976), 390-405.

⁷³ On this relationship see P. Keretzes, "The Imperial Roman Government and the Christian Church. I From Nero to the Severi. II From Gallienus to the Great Persecution" in *ANRW* 23.2 (1980), 247-315, 375-86.

⁷⁴ This is nicely outlined by A. H. Armstrong, "Pagan and Christian Traditionalism in the First three Centuries A.D." *Studia Patristica* 15.1 (1984), 414-31.

movement by the state because of their *superstitio*.⁷⁵ They kept to themselves and refused to participate in the social life of the towns and cities. This led to accusations of incestual orgies, infanticide, and cannibalism.⁷⁶ It also resulted in an additional charge of atheism and impiety, which were fair enough from the Roman perspective since they rejected all the recognized gods and denounced them as evil daemons.⁷⁷ It was thought that such impiety offended the gods who visited their wrath on a society that tolerated such behaviour. Hence earthquakes, famines, and plagues led to demonstrations and isolated imperial pogroms *Against the Christians*.

Despite Nero's edicts *Against the Christians*,⁷⁸ most emperors beginning with Trajan treated them with studied sobriety.⁷⁹ When Christians were persecuted, the motive was the fear of divine displeasure and social disruption.⁸⁰ At this time the dominance of the traditional religious ways was complete. Most Romans were willing to grant the same type of contemptuous toleration that was given to Jews since the time of Julius and Augustus Caesar.⁸¹

The religious policy of the imperial government was one of tolerance for the established religious practices of communities. This attitude originated in the belief that the gods of various peoples were best pleased by their traditional cults, and that the *pax deorum* and *pax romana* were best served by toleration. Most second-century emperors in the wake of Trajan accepted these propositions and extended toleration even to Christianity by forbidding their officials to take any active steps against Christians on their own initiative.⁸² Even the Severan persecutions under Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus were tempered by Antonine policy.⁸³ We can only infer the motives that led Decius, Valerian, Diocletian, Galerius, and Maximin Daia to break with the traditional policies of the imperial government

⁷⁵ L. F. Janssen, "'Superstitio' and the Persecution of the Christians" in *VC* 33 (1979), 131-59.

⁷⁶ Livy, 39.18, Athenagoras, *Legatio* 3.1.31-32, Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 9.5-6, Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 26.4-5.

⁷⁷ Seutonius, *Domitian* 15, Dio 67.14.2.

⁷⁸ Seutonius, *Nero* 16. cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.

⁷⁹ T. D. Barnes, "Legislation *Against the Christians*" in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 58 (1968), 32-50.

⁸⁰ Keretzes, art. cit. 1.247-315.

⁸¹ Schoedel, art. cit. 309-19.

⁸² Keretzes, art. cit. 1.247-315.

⁸³ Barnes art. cit. "Legislation" 32-50.

from the time of the Antonines to the Severi.⁸⁴ The suggestion proposed is that Christianity had been seeping upward, infiltrating the higher ranks of society. These Christian *nobiles* not only offended Roman intellectuals, but also they were thought by some later emperors to support their enemies. Moreover, the unceasing series of natural and political disasters made many think the gods were angered against the empire. It was probably in this changed environment that rulers and intellectuals joined the masses in sharing the belief that Christianity was an offense to the gods and a danger to the empire.

We begin the account of imperial attitudes toward Christianity with the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Where did the Christians fit into his empire? Despite serving in the Cappadocian legion XII Fulminata, fighting and praying for the emperor in Moravia and elsewhere, Christians were not a part of his Roman cosmos.

Marcus Aurelius thought them irrational. To him the attitude of Christian martyrs was beyond understanding:

Of what kind is the soul, that is ready, if it must be released from the body, to be quenched or scattered or to abide together? Though this readiness is to proceed from one's own judgement, not in mere head-long attack, like the Christians; but with reason and dignity and so as to convince another, without tragic show.⁸⁵

He also thought that some of them were seditious. In the wake of his numerous campaigns against those assaulting the empire from without, Marcus Aurelius thought it best to secure his empire from the enemies within. He ordered public sacrifices to the tutelary gods of Rome. Many Christians complied; some desisted. In Pergamum—Carpus, Papyrus, and Thyatira refused to sacrifice and were martyred. Agathonice then martyred herself by casting her body on their funeral pyre. Elsewhere Christians died as well—the Scilli in Africa, the Proconsul Saturninus martyred those who would not sacrifice in Carthage, Pothinus and Blandina perished in Vienne and Lyons.⁸⁶

Marcus Aurelius continued the policies of his predecessors. Those who died perished because they refused loyalty to the Caesar. The emperor and his intellectuals agreed Christianity was *alogos* and *anomos*. The odor of *maleficus* would haunt the followers of the Christ for the next century and a half.

⁸⁴ On this question see Keretztes, art. cit. II.375–86.

⁸⁵ *Med.* 3.9.

⁸⁶ Eusebius, *HE* 5.1.3–3.3.

To grasp the complexities of imperial attitude toward Christians, we continue the thread with an examination of the policies of Septimius Severus. He had crushed his enemies Niger and Albinus, and was again master of the West as well as of the East.

The years are 197–99 C.E.; the places are Syria and Mesopotamia; the problems are the Parthians. Vologases had overrun Rome's eastern frontiers. After successfully raiding Mesopotamia, Septimius returned to the empire in 199 C.E. via Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt. He remained in Egypt until 201–2 C.E.

The imperial attitude toward Christianity was mixed. Early in his reign Septimius appeared indifferent to the faith. Later his attitude changed. The departure of Clement of Alexandria is associated with the visit of the emperor who took action *Against the Christians* of Egypt in accordance with constitutions that sought to put a stop to Jewish and Christian propaganda through penalties.⁸⁷ Lactantius and Eusebius notwithstanding, we never encounter evidence that these edicts made it the duty of government officials to stage Christian persecutions.⁸⁸ The principle laid down by Trajan in his rescript to Pliny governed Roman policy toward the Christians at least until Decius.⁸⁹ Christians were not to be sought out. But if accusations came before the authorities, the Christian had to offer sacrifice or die. Not to do so violated the reverence due the majesty of the Empire, the emperor, and its tutelary gods.

The edicts were severe enough to result in the deaths of some Christians, however. Among them was Leonidas, the father of Origen of Alexandria.⁹⁰ Septimius's persecutions, though widespread, were short-lived. Tertullian notes that Christians died when they refused to join in the worship of the pagan gods.⁹¹ Beyond this we know little, save that the church survived. But as with earlier pogroms *Against the Christians*, imperial policy was largely governed by political and social concerns.

⁸⁷ On the persecutions, see Eusebius, *HE* 6.1ff.

⁸⁸ Ulpian prepared a collection of such anti-Christian edicts in 215 C.E. Cf. Lactantius *Div. Inst.* 5.11.19. This work is lost, but two of the edicts are preserved by Eusebius; cf. *HE* 4.9, 13.

⁸⁹ Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96, 97.

⁹⁰ Eusebius, *HE* 6.1ff.

⁹¹ *Apol.* 42.

After 201–2 C.E. anti-Christian pogroms momentarily appear to die out.⁹² In Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and throughout the empire, Christians re-emerge. Figures like Ambrose, Hippolytus, Julius Africanus, Pope Fabian, Cyprian, Denis, and Gregory Thaumaturgos presided over a growing church from Rome to Paris and from Antioch to Egypt.

Origen, the successor of Clement as head of the Alexandrian school after his death in Palestine in 202 C.E.,⁹³ survived the persecution to become a student of Ammonius Saccas,⁹⁴ a great intellectual within the church who combatted Celsus,⁹⁵ and finally an apologist who found a vigorous opponent in Porphyry.⁹⁶ Most significantly, the Alexandrian church emerged vigorous and intact under the leadership of Demetrius. Origen reopened the school to teach there between 215 and 230 C.E. He even traveled to Rome during the reign of Pope Zephyrinus. Only ecclesiastical disputes with Alexander forced his move to Caesarea Maritima in 230 C.E., not persecutions under the Severi. There he lived peacefully.

The emergence of an imperial toleration toward the church was due to a number of factors. The most important was the inheritance of the purple by the emperors Elagabalus and Alexander Severus. Both reinstituted older more tolerant policies toward the Christians.⁹⁷ Alexander became emperor upon the death of his uncle in 222 C.E. and reigned until his murder by imperial troops on the Rhine frontier in 235 C.E.⁹⁸ His policies toward the faith were positive. Reports from the *Historia Augustae* tell of the emperor placing a statue of the Christ in his private chapel alongside Alexander the Great, Orpheus,

⁹² Eusebius, *HE* 6.4–5.

⁹³ For an excellent work on the life and thought of Origen, see J. W. Trigg, *Origen the Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church* (Atlanta 1983).

⁹⁴ Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.8.

⁹⁵ For a reconstruction of this text, see Borret, op. cit.

⁹⁶ Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.1ff.

⁹⁷ Cf. N. Santos Yanguas, "La dinastía de los Severos y los cristianos," *Euphrosyne* 11 (1981), 149–71.

⁹⁸ The sources that cover his reign are Herodian, *Hist.* 6, Dio Cassius, *Hist.* 79–80, Eusebius, *HE* 6.21–28, and the *Historia Augusta*, cf. Alexander. For modern studies on Alexander's reign, see A. Jarde, *Etudes critiques sur la vie et le regne de Severe Alexandre* (Paris 1925); R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta* (Oxford 1971), 146–62; R. Soraci, *L'opera legislativa e amministrativa dell' Imperatore Severo Alessandro* (Catania 1974).

and Abraham.⁹⁹ Despite problems with the historical accuracy of the story, it is clear that a number of Christians were members of the imperial court. Origen was active, and Julius Africanus dedicated his *Cesti* to the emperor.¹⁰⁰

The death of Alexander heralded the end of imperial *gratias* toward Christianity. Maximinus Thrax repudiated Alexander's policies and launched a period of brutal persecution. With the Western empire in disarray and the external threat largely confined to the European provinces, the persecution weighed most heavily upon the Latin church. Events went well for the church in the eastern provinces, save for a few bad moments.¹⁰¹

These new persecutions of Christians arose from political considerations. Maximinus Thrax murdered his Christian wife Caecilia Paulina on the pretext of subversion to cover his own decimation of high senatorial officials.¹⁰² Again Eusebius notes that the motive for the pogrom was a reaction against the reign of the previous emperor who had been friendly to the Christians, i.e., e.g., Alexander.¹⁰³ Maximinus feared hostility on the part of the Christians, and to prevent this began to enforce existing regulations against the clergy alone. This was a measure of domestic security, not a systematic persecution for ideological purposes, as occurred later under Decius. In these cases his proceedings were taken against the clergy, not the *simpliciores*. Origen's *Exhortation to Martyrdom* addressed to Ambrosius and Proctetus reflects the events of this time. It is clear why. Origen had cause for worry. The emperor was interested in the Christian clergy, perhaps those in Palestinian Caesarea.¹⁰⁴ After all, in 235 c.e. Pontianus, bishop of Rome, and Hippolytus were exiled to Sardinia. Elsewhere, in Cappadocia and Pontus, a local persecution of Christians supported by the governor Serenianus took place on the premise they were the cause of an earthquake. Yet, the danger passed quickly

⁹⁹ On these reports, see S. A. Stertz, "Christianity in the *Historia Augusta*," *Latomus* 36 (1977), 694-715.

¹⁰⁰ Eusebius, *HE* 6.21-28.

¹⁰¹ The church in the western provinces we know less about. Cf. Eusebius on Fabian, *HE* 6.29; on Africanus *HE* 6.31.

¹⁰² Herodian, *Hist.* 8.3.

¹⁰³ Eusebius, *HE* 6.28.1.

¹⁰⁴ Maximinus does not figure in the list of persecutors given by Lactantius, only in those offered by Eusebius.

due to the insecure tenure of Roman emperors in the mid-third century.

Maximinus was removed in a senatorial revolt in favor of the aged M. Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus on 19 March 238 C.E.¹⁰⁵ Civil war would continue until 10 May. Afterward German mercenaries would decide who was emperor of Rome. On 9 July 240 C.E. the rebels proclaimed Caesar Gordianus as Augustus. Under such circumstances Christians were the least of the empire's troubles. They were left alone at least until the ascension to the throne of Philip the Arabian in late February or early March 244 C.E. In an attempt to reconcile differences in the empire, he took on the role of a benevolent prince, and declared a general amnesty for those suffering exile or relegation.¹⁰⁶ Included among these were the Christians. He may have been in communication with Origen, presumably on these and other matters.¹⁰⁷

However, there were those who sought to reinstitute the old order. The Danubian legions, especially the Pannonians, proclaimed a new emperor Tiberius Claudius Marinus Pacatianus. This resulted in the rupture of the Roman frontier by the Goths. A second and third usurper, Jotapianus and Julius Aurelius Sulpicius Uranius Antoninus, emerged in Mesopotamia and Syria. The results were chaotic.

Philip offered to abdicate. Decius, the prefect of Rome, persuaded him not to, and then took command of his legions to fight the usurpers and invaders in Moesia and Pannonia.¹⁰⁸ Shortly thereafter, in June 249 C.E., he was asked to assume the purple. Decius desisted. Philip attacked. Civil war eventually ensued. The two forces of the emperors met in September near Verona. Decius triumphed over Philip.

Nothing could have been worse for the Christians. The fact that Philip fell at the hands of Decius brought him the place of honor as the first Christian emperor. For this there was no official responsibility. He merely exhibited a benevolent tolerance toward Christians in Alexandria after an anti-Christian riot. He also allowed the bishop of Rome, Fabianus, to transfer to the capital the bones of Pontianus,

¹⁰⁵ Herodian *op. cit.* 7.3.6.

¹⁰⁶ *Cod. Just.* 9.51.7.

¹⁰⁷ He corresponded with Origen; cf. Eusebius *HE* 6.36–39.

¹⁰⁸ Johannes Antioch, *FHG* 4.598.

who had died in exile in Sardinia.¹⁰⁹ In the wake of the Decian persecutions these acts of imperial kindness were greatly appreciated.

The short reign of Decius marked a new era in state-church relations. Christianity had been a banned religion probably from the reign of Nero. The *nomen* without any aggravating offenses was legally punishable by death. Trajan modified this policy, and the result was that persecutions were local and sporadic. Christianity had always posed a special problem to the state, however. Its teachings challenged traditional piety, particularly the imperial religion that bonded empire and emperor together. The *pax deorum* and *pax romana* might be disturbed by such activity. There can be little doubt that Decius and Valerian made deliberate attempts to stamp out Christianity.

Decius's persecutions were brutal. Organized for the whole empire under imperial command, all the inhabitants of the empire had to sacrifice on pain of death. Moreover, they had to obtain certificates [*libelli*] that they had actually done so. Decius's motives were both unfamiliar and familiar. Decius persecuted the Christians because of Philip's policies toward him. The emperor also wished to unite all his peoples under his divine aegis. This was done through a general sacrifice of homage before the tutelary gods of the empire. In all its cities, villages, and hamlets sacrificial commissions were set up. In this way the propitiation of the angry gods and the eradication of the hated Christians would be accomplished.

Throughout the Empire many Christians agreed, but some refused to sacrifice.¹¹⁰ These *traditores* were treated as enemies of the *princeps*. They were assailed as enemies of the imperium. Those who refused numbered among the martyrs. Included were the bishops Fabian of Rome, Babylas of Antioch, and Alexander of Jerusalem.¹¹¹ Many Christians went into exile including Cyprian, Denis of Paris,¹¹² or prison, including Origen.¹¹³

By the summer of 251 C.E. the worst was over. The emperor tempered his attitude toward the Christians. Decius had eliminated from the clergy his most dangerous opponents. It was clear that the great

¹⁰⁹ Eusebius, *HE* 6.36-39.

¹¹⁰ Cyprian, *Ep.* 30.3, 55.14. Cf. *De Lapsis* 27.

¹¹¹ Eusebius, *HE* 6.39.5ff.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 6.39.5ff.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 6.39.5ff.

majority of Christians could not be exterminated by bloodshed. Shortly afterward, he died on the Gothic front.

Decius's edicts of sacrifice and libation to the gods and proof that Christians had done so achieved considerable success. Vast numbers of Christians, especially from the upper classes and the clergy, crowded to sacrifice. Those who did not, including many from humbler origins, were martyred. If Decius had lived, the effects of his program would have been considerable.

Valerian's approach was different but equally destructive of the church. Persons of high degree, senators, knights, and freedmen, were ordered to abjure under penalties of confiscation and death. The clergy were deported, all religious meetings were banned, churches were destroyed or confiscated. Only the common Christian was left undisturbed. The Valerian persecution persisted until his capture by the Persians and his succession by Gallienus. On the whole his policies were less successful than those pursued by Decius.

It was in the summer of 257 C.E. that the Emperor Valerian assaulted the church so displeasing to the gods. Again it was directed against the leaders of the community. Cyprian of Carthage died; Xystus of Rome and his deacon Laurence suffered torture.¹¹⁴ But two years later Valerian was taken prisoner by the Persians, and to the dishonor of Rome he perished. His son and successor Gallienus put an end to the persecution by issuing an edict of toleration. Christians could worship in their churches and use their cemeteries. They were to be molested no more.¹¹⁵ So ended the state action that began with Decius. A forty-year toleration would follow, only to be broken by Diocletian, Gallarius, and Maximian Daia.¹¹⁶

The situation for Christians in the empire improved from Gallienus until Diocletian. The former emperor reinstituted the Antonine-Severan toleration toward the church. Initially, the latter emperor continued the policy of Gallienus concerning the Christians. But in the last years of his reign, he reversed his position and reinstituted the policies of Decius and Valerian. Again the reasons for this shift are complex, but they were largely political, social, and ideological. Like earlier emperors, Diocletian had two options in regard to

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 7.10–11.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 7.13.

¹¹⁶ For an assessment of this period, see Grant "The Religion of Maximian Daia" 143–66.

Christianity. One was proactive, following the leads of Decius and Valerian. The other was reactive, following the policies of Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Philip the Arabian, Gallienus, and Aurelian.

Imperial toleration of Christianity persisted until the end of the third century. For the first fourteen years of his reign Diocletian continued the tacit toleration of Christianity inaugurated by Gallienus. During this period fine churches were built and many Christians served in the army and civil service. A Christian named Adauctus¹¹⁷ became a provincial governor, and there was a growing number of upper class conversions to the faith.¹¹⁸

Then in the last years of his reign the policies of Diocletian shifted. They began to resemble those of Decius and Valerian. A forty-year toleration was coming to a close. This change would be enthusiastically supported by Galerius and Maximin Daia.

By 298 C.E. the official policy toward Christianity began to change. At a sacrifice attended by Diocletian and Galerius, the *haruspices* did not obtain the desired omens.¹¹⁹ The failure was attributed to Christian soldiers in the audience who made the sign of the cross to avert the power of daemons. Diocletian, who had adopted the old Roman god Juppiter Optimus Maximus as his patron, became infuriated by this insolent interruption of traditional rites and issued an order that all soldiers must sacrifice to the gods of the state or be discharged. The order created little stir. A calm descended that lasted until 23 February 303 C.E. On that day an edict was published in Nicomedia, ordering all copies of the scriptures to be surrendered and burnt,¹²⁰ all churches to be destroyed, and all meetings for Christian worship to be banned.¹²¹ The next day a second edict was posted, depriving those in imperial service who resisted these orders to be deprived of legal rights. This made them liable to torture and summary execution. In addition, freedmen who remained Christian were reduced to slavery. As Christian opposition emerged in Syria and Asia Minor, another edict went out from Galerius for the arrest of all bishops and clergy in the East. In time, with prisons overflowing, the clergy

¹¹⁷ Eusebius, *HE* 8.11.

¹¹⁸ *C. lib. can.* 2, 3, 55, 56.

¹¹⁹ Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* x. Cf. *Div. Inst.* 4.27.4-5.

¹²⁰ For the edicts, cf. Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* 14, 15.2, Eusebius, *HE* 8.2.

¹²¹ *Acta Saturnini* (Studi e Testi, 15 [1935], 49ff.).

were released. The pretext offered was the occasion of Diocletian's *vicennalia*. But first they had to make sacrifice.¹²² These edicts were enforced harshly in the East by Galerius and in the West by Maximin. Constantius followed a less brutal application of the edicts in Gaul and Britain.¹²³

About a year later, on 1 May 305 C.E., Diocletian and Maximin abdicated and were succeeded by Galerius and Constantius. The pogrom slackened. Initially in the East Maxentius made peace with the Christians. But Galerius and Maximin renewed the persecutions, which continued in the European provinces until Galerius' death in 311 C.E., and in Pontica, Asiana, and Oriens until Maximin's fall in 313.¹²⁴ In the West Constantine continued the more tolerant policy of his father.¹²⁵

The motives for this renewal of persecution are plainly stated by Galerius and Maximin in several edicts. It was political-religious. As *pontifex maximus* each wished to restore the traditional worship of the gods in accordance with "the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans." Although more subtle, these latter pogroms had little public support. Christians, during forty years of toleration, had become less peculiar and very Roman.

Nonetheless, petitions were sent to Maximin, which he accepted, asking that no Christians be allowed to live in the cities of Nicomedia, Antioch, and Tyre, as well as the provinces of Lycia and Pamphylia.¹²⁶ Yet the severity of the persecutions varied throughout the Empire.

In the West there was no persecution in Gaul and only persecution of the clergy in Italy, Africa, and Spain. In Carthage scriptures were officially but not actually burnt; in Tigisis in Numidia the bishop Secundus was permitted to burn any books he wanted. He did not burn the Bible; rather, he immolated heretical works.¹²⁷ In the East the persecution was an uneven one except in Egypt.¹²⁸ But outside

¹²² The second, third, and fourth edicts are mentioned in Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* 12, 13, Eusebius, *HE* 8.6, *Mart. Pal. Praef.*, 1, 4, 3.1.

¹²³ Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* 15.7. Cf. Eusebius, *HE* 8.13, *Vit. Const.* 1.16.

¹²⁴ For Maxentius, cf. Eusebius, *HE* 8.14. For Maximinus, cf. Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 4.8, 9.2.

¹²⁵ Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 1.16.

¹²⁶ Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* 36, Eusebius, *HE* 9.2ff. For Lycia-Pamphylia, see *OGI* 569.

¹²⁷ Augustine, *Brev. Coll.* 3.25.

¹²⁸ Eusebius, *HE* 8.9. For convicts sent to Palestine and elsewhere, see Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 8.1, 13, 11.6.

Egypt officials arranged false tortures for clerics who sacrificed once.¹²⁹ As with the Decian and Valerianic persecutions, the tendency of many Christians was to comply with the letter of the edicts, and to lie low.¹³⁰ Exceptions occurred when officials had no choice but to act when publically provoked, as in Palestine with the cases of Procopius and the "six" who requested execution.¹³¹

A paper war was also part of these persecutions. Porphyry's *Against the Christians* likely appeared between 298 and 303 c.e., Hierocles's *Against the Christians* between 305 and 313, and the Roman *Acts of Pilate* was posted in 311. All these works were taught in the schools until the deaths of Galerius and Maximim.¹³² Afterward the *apologia* of the *Patres* and their apocrypha, such as the Christian *Acts of Pilate*, would dominate the stage—for centuries.

Porphyry's efforts emerged out of his own deeply religious philosophy. The need for rational revelation, redemption, asceticism, and immortality inspired his works.¹³³ Like Plotinus, he was convinced that the only true religion was philosophical religion. The masses were adequately served by the traditional religion because it was an indirect expression of this higher truth.

Porphyry's attack, as far as the fragments show, did not primarily turn on political pogroms or even philosophical teachings, but rather on traditional religious doctrine. Faced by what he thought was Christian atheism and impiety, Porphyry undertook the justification of all the observances of the established cults to illustrate the apostasy of Christianity. He endeavored to expose what he held to be weaknesses in the arguments used to prove the divine origin of Christianity. What he found most disturbing there was the attempt by Christians to break with their ancestral inheritance and to disturb the established order of things.

¹²⁹ Peter of Alexandria, *Can.* 12 = PG 13.500, *C. Anc. can.* 1.

¹³⁰ There were exceptions. One Christian was martyred in Sicily; many more died in Africa. Cf. Optimus, *App.* 1. 17b–19a, Augustine, *Brev. Coll.* 3.28, *C. Cresc.* 3.30. In Egypt some 227 Christians were condemned to the mines and quarries. Cf. Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 8.1, 13, 11.6.

¹³¹ Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 1, 3.3, 4.8.

¹³² Arnobius, *Adv. Nat.* 2.67, Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 5.2, Eusebius, *PE Praef.* 2, *HE* 9.2ff.

¹³³ *De Regressu Animae*, fr. 12 = Bidez, *op. cit.* App. 2, 42*ff.

In his earliest writings, such as the *Philosophy from Oracles*, although he bows down to the sanctity of Christ, Porphyry looks upon the reverence shown to him to be excessive.¹³⁴ He felt a measure of sympathy for the person of Jesus and some parts of his teaching.¹³⁵ But in his later works he vents his wrath against the disciples of Jesus for composing "myths" about their Christ.¹³⁶ With zeal he set about to reveal the inventions, improbabilities, and contradictions in the narratives and letters of the disciples.¹³⁷ Perhaps in his earlier years, in spite of the outbreak of hostilities between Hellenism and Christianity, he thought reconciliation possible. In later life, this hope proved illusory. Porphyry wrote *Against the Christians* with fiery hostility. Why he did so might become clear from a study of his religious and philosophical criticisms of Christianity.

Philosophical Background

The conflict between Hellenism and Christianity had begun in earnest in the second century C.E. with the publication of *Aletheia Logos* of the Platonist Celsus.¹³⁸ Anti-Christian polemics would continue in writings of Porphyry and the emperor Julian.¹³⁹ To grasp the wide-ranging dimensions of this critique, and Porphyry's place within it, we shall examine the religious and philosophical milieu that generated it.¹⁴⁰

Porphyry's critique of Christianity reflected his own tendencies toward politico-social conservatism and religious traditionalism.¹⁴¹ For the man from Tyre, Christians were not simply impious atheists. Their faith was intellectually vacuous and politically dangerous.

¹³⁴ Eusebius, *DE* 3.6.39–3.7.1.

¹³⁵ Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 19.23.

¹³⁶ Eusebius, *DE* 3.5.

¹³⁷ As an example of this sentiment in Porphyry, see Jerome, *Comm. in Matt.* 37.45.

¹³⁸ Citations of Celsus's *True Doctrine* from Origen's *Contra Celsum* are available in M. Borret, ed. Origene. *Contre Celse, Sources Chrétiennes* (Paris 1967–). For the analysis of this work, cf. C. Andresen, *Logos und Nomos: Die Polemik des Kelsus wider das Christentum* (Berlin 1955).

¹³⁹ For an overview of this critique, see R. L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 94–196.

¹⁴⁰ For a study of this environment, see F. M. Schroeder, "The Self in Ancient Religious experience" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 337–59.

¹⁴¹ Eusebius, *PE* 1.2.1–4.

Their faith *superstitio* challenged the structures of both the divine and human worlds; their religious and political ideas advocated the overthrow of the beneficent gods, ancestral customs, and traditional piety.¹⁴² Their *philosophia* stood *in vacuo* because it demanded belief in propositions for which they were unable to furnish rational proof.¹⁴³ These included their elevation of faith over reason, their belief in the incarnation, resurrection, and miracles, and their refusal to accept the eternity of the world and the pre-existence of the soul. That both the world order and its designer follow perfectly rational principles was fundamental Hellenic doctrine followed by Porphyry.¹⁴⁴ It was the *alogos* character of Christianity that most repelled him.

Neoplatonic Philosophy and Religion

Little is known of Porphyry's metaphysics. His teachings can only be reconstructed with great difficulty from his extant writings,¹⁴⁵ and, perhaps, the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary.¹⁴⁶ The resulting picture of his views is therefore a confusing one. Since metaphysical doctrines are muted in regard to theoretics or first principles in Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, we shall concentrate our study on what philosophical teachings emerge from his critique of Christianity. These are largely limited to cosmological, psychological, anthropological, ethical, and theurgical issues.¹⁴⁷

That Christians demanded belief in propositions for which they were unable to prove was a commonplace of Hellenic Platonic criticisms of Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism since the time of Galen, Celsus,¹⁴⁸ and Plotinus.¹⁴⁹ To this objection Porphyry added others on the basis of the eternity of the world and the pre-existence of the soul, to which he adhered; and the resurrection of the body, divine incarnation, suffering and miracles, which he rejected. These

¹⁴² Ibid. 4.1.3, *HE* 9.7.3-15.

¹⁴³ Eusebius, *PE* 1.2.1, *DE* 1.1.12.

¹⁴⁴ Porphyry *ap.* Macarius Magnes, *Apoc.* 4.2, 24.

¹⁴⁵ See A. Smith, *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition* (The Hague 1974). On the *Sentences*, cf. R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* (London 1972), 114-18.

¹⁴⁶ P. Hadot, *op. cit.* vol. 1.

¹⁴⁷ Porphyry's position is analyzed by P. Hadot in his "Neoplatonist Spirituality, Plotinus and Porphyry" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 230-49.

¹⁴⁸ Galen quoted in R. Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London 1949), 15, Origen, *C. Cels.* 1.9, 3.75, 6.11.

¹⁴⁹ Plotinus, *Enneads*, 2.9.6.43-52.

philosophical principles were based on three Platonic maxims: that the universe was a spontaneous production of intelligible principles, not the product of an anthropomorphic creator; that the world-order and its designer follow perfectly rational principles, not merely voluntaristic ones; and what god does cannot be contrary to nature or morally shameful.¹⁵⁰

Christians seemed to deny these principles and maxims because they denied the world's eternity. For Porphyry the eternity of the world was self-evident from a reading of the *Timaeus*.¹⁵¹ Following Plotinus, Porphyry thought that to regard the world as subject to temporal generation and destruction was to impute deficiency to the world and its creator. The primary attribute of divinity was immortality. Immortality means that god and its creation cannot change.¹⁵² What upset Porphyry was not only that Christians imputed change to deity, but arbitrary change. Things are either better off after the world's creation or worse. But it is blasphemous to suppose that divine activity alters for the worse, or that it was initially imperfect and needed to change for the better.¹⁵³

Porphyry's reservations about Christian theories on the pre-existence of the soul and the resurrection of the body go together. It is irrational to suppose that the soul survives death and to deny its existence before birth. Immortality belongs to the soul alone. It is not reasonable to assume, with the Christians, that god resurrects soul and body together.¹⁵⁴

The doctrine of divine incarnation was unacceptable to Porphyry, even though he thought Jesus a righteous man admitted to heaven after death on account of his virtue.¹⁵⁵ The Christian notion of a suffering god is a direct refutation of the fact of divine impassibility—for Porphyry an irrational impossibility.¹⁵⁶ Apart from the assumption that gods do not submit to the shame of crucifixion, all suffering for the sage is a matter of indifference.¹⁵⁷ The highest gods did not unite

¹⁵⁰ Macarius Magnes, op. cit. 4.2, 4.24.

¹⁵¹ Plato, *Tim.* 28bc.

¹⁵² The Neoplatonic proof-texts were: Plato, *Rep.* 2.380–81, Aristotle, *Met.* 12 1074b 25–27, *De Phil.* fr. 16 Ross = Simplicius, *De C.* 288.28ff.

¹⁵³ Porphyry, *ap.* Macarius Magnes, op. cit. 4.24.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Augustine, *Civ. Dei.* 19.23.

¹⁵⁶ Methodius, *Con. P.* 345f.

¹⁵⁷ Macarius Magnes, op. cit. 3.1–2.

with an unclean body.¹⁵⁸ They did not reveal themselves directly but through the multiplicity of the lower gods produced by them.¹⁵⁹ Finally, to accept this metaphysical teaching involves arbitrary action by god at a particular time, which raises the ethical difficulty of divine nonconcern for pre-Christian generations.¹⁶⁰

There was also for Porphyry the issue of Jesus' miracles. His miracles reflect little more than an ability many had to manipulate cosmic forces.¹⁶¹ Unlike Celsus, Porphyry denied that Jesus was a magician.¹⁶² Jesus should be equated with those of a practicing theurgist, not a god. It might be that Porphyry's sympathy toward Jesus emerged from his study of the *Chaldaean Oracles* as expressed in early writings like the *Philosophy from Oracles*. It may be that a part of his hostility to Christianity arose from his ambivalence toward theurgy as articulated in later works such as the *Ascent of the Soul* and the *Letter to Anebo*.¹⁶³ In any case, the oracles and theurgy were considered important to Porphyry.

An invaluable advantage to Christians was their possession of a sacred book and a sacramental system. To fill these *lacunae*, Roman Platonists turned to the *Chaldaean Oracles*, composed or collected during the reign of Marcus Aurelius by Julian the Chaldaean and Julian the Theurgist, and its ritual teachings.¹⁶⁴ Like all sacred writing the oracles required considerable interpretation. With the appearance of the *Chaldaean Oracles* later Platonists could finally compete with Christians on both literary and soteriological terms.

Ignored by Plotinus,¹⁶⁵ theurgy was introduced into later Platonism by the man from Tyre.¹⁶⁶ Porphyry was the first Platonic philosopher known to have quoted from them.¹⁶⁷ His appropriation of the *Chaldaean Oracles* was theoretically and practically conservative.¹⁶⁸ He

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 4.22.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. 4.20, 21, 22, 23.

¹⁶⁰ Jerome, *Ep.* 133.9. Augustine, *Ep.* 102.8.

¹⁶¹ Origen, *C. Cels.* 1.1.

¹⁶² Jerome, *Trac. in Ps.* 81.

¹⁶³ Following the chronology of Porphyry's writings in Bidez, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁴ On the *Oracles*, see H. Lewy, *The Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire* (Paris 1978); E. des Places, *Oracles Chaldaïques*, (Paris 1971); R. Majercik, *The Chaldaean Oracles* (Santa Barbara 1982).

¹⁶⁵ E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951), 283–311.

¹⁶⁶ *art. cit.* "Arcana Mundi" 147–51.

¹⁶⁷ A. Smith, *op. cit.* 100–110, R. M. Berchman, "Rationality and Ritual in Plotinus and Porphyry," *Incognita* 2.2 (1991), 184–216.

¹⁶⁸ Porphyry restricted the role of divination far more than Plato but far less than

harmonized the oracles with the teachings of Platonism through the method of allegorical interpretation.¹⁶⁹ What he affirmed was that the oracles taught a limited way of salvation through the practice of theurgy or the "divine work of making gods."¹⁷⁰ What he denied was that the effect of theurgical practices extended to the intelligible world and to the One.¹⁷¹ This was because theurgy was the art of employing forces built into the natural world-order. It was not dependent on supernatural intervention over and above that order.¹⁷²

Since Porphyry's writings attach importance to ritual and the symbols it uses as a part of Neoplatonic religion, and the oracles appear to stand behind Porphyry's interpretation of Jesus and attack against Christianity, it might be helpful to conclude this study of Porphyry's Platonism with an examination of his views of theurgy.

Porphyry's writings exhibit a decided simplification of Plotinus's metaphysics. Differences between them again rear their head in respect to theurgy.¹⁷³ Plotinus ignores theurgy while Porphyry does not.¹⁷⁴ A comparison of Plotinus's *Enneads* and Porphyry's writings reveals this.¹⁷⁵

To begin with, a sharp distinction must be drawn between Plotinian and Porphyrian theories of the soul. Plotinus's theory that a part of the soul remains eternally in the intelligible realm is sadly dismissed by Porphyry.¹⁷⁶ Although some souls are capable of operating in the intelligible world while embodied, most cannot.¹⁷⁷ The human soul

Plotinus. Cf. J. Carlier "Science divin et raison humaine." *Divination et Rationalité* (Paris 1974), 255–56.

¹⁶⁹ For recent studies on Neoplatonic uses of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, cf. R. M. Berchman, art. cit. "Incognita" 2.2. (1991), 184–216; "Rationality and Ritual in Iamblichus and Proclus" in *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought* (Albany 2002), 326–72.

¹⁷⁰ The etymology of this word is vague. Probably a neologism, it likely means "making gods" or "making gods of men." Cf. *CH Asclepius* 23–24, Psellus, *PG* 122.721d.

¹⁷¹ Porphyry, *De Regressu Animae* = Bidez, op. cit. fr. 4 32*21. cf. frs. 7, 11.

¹⁷² *Ep. ad An.* 2.5d.

¹⁷³ Cf. further A. H. Armstrong, "Was Plotinus a Magician?" *Phronesis* I 1 (1955), 73–79, opposing P. Merlan, "Plotinus and Magic," *Isis* 44 (1953), 341–48.

¹⁷⁴ Porphyry, nonetheless, is critical of the claims some make about the power of theurgy. Cf. *Ep. ad An.* 1.2a–b, 1.2c–3c.

¹⁷⁵ R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* (London 1972), 110ff.

¹⁷⁶ Plot. *Enn.*, 4.1.12; 4.8.8, 1–3; Porph., *De Abs.*, 1.113–118.

¹⁷⁷ *Sent.*, 32.21.12. Such a rare soul was Plotinus; cf. *Vit. Plot.*, 23. On Porphyry's psychology, see A. Smith, op. cit. 40–45. Smith's view that Porphyry held a theory of the undescended soul has been corrected by Carlos G. Steel, *The Changing Self: A Study on the Soul in Later Platonism* (Brussels 1978), 38 n. 1.

had deviated (*parekbas*) from the intellect and, therefore, does not enjoy perpetual intellection and passivity.¹⁷⁸

This judgement has its consequences. Few have the ability to know the intelligibles directly.¹⁷⁹ Those who do are higher, divine souls.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, even these intellects and souls are not homogenous (*homoiomeres*).¹⁸¹ For the soul exists as a separate entity from intellect. Even for the few souls capable of ascending to intellect (*nous*), only a consubstantiality (*fieri*) with intellect is achieved.¹⁸² For Porphyry, the bleak fact of the soul's fall and the misfortune of her embodiment fosters the rich humus from which he builds his aesthetic theory.

Taking as his starting point the radical disassociation between the potential and active intellects, he recognizes that, in almost every case, the soul's ability to imagine and to know the forms, as well as to unite itself with *nous*, depends on outside assistance. Thus the notion of divine giving (*doron theou*) takes on new meaning with Porphyry.¹⁸³ Deity is viewed as a helper. Divine causality is evident throughout the universe. Moreover it has a personal dimension. It can be particularized.¹⁸⁴ This permits Porphyry to argue for a personal, supra-human involvement by higher powers in the world, and to propose a theory of how divine giving is made accessible to humanity.

Porphyry writes that sympathy (*sympatheia*) exists, as those can attest who

... call the gods, carry stones and herbs, tie sacred ties, open what is closed, and produce valid apparitions of the gods.¹⁸⁵

Porphyry confirms the doctrine of cosmic sympathy and accepts the divinization of the world. In a bold stroke he distances himself from Philo, Clement, and Origen by affirming not only the *logos* but also the *soter* character of *physis* itself. Divine giving, voluntary and evoked, is inclusive of the appearance of the gods in temples, statuary, and physical objects. Their presence energizes the imagination (*phantasia*)

¹⁷⁸ *De Abs.*, 1.115, 9ff.

¹⁷⁹ *Sent.*, 32.20.13.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 32.21.11; 32.22.12ff.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* 41.40.4; cf. ap. Nemesius, *Sym. Zet.*, 135.7.

¹⁸² *De Reg. An.*, Bidez, fr. 10 p. 37*21.

¹⁸³ This term is a combination of imagery from Plato's *Rep.*, 2.364b3f., 366cd; 10.617c. On this term in Porphyry, see A. Smith, op. cit. 100–110.

¹⁸⁴ *Ep. ad Marc.*, 283.3.

¹⁸⁵ *Ep. ad An.*, fr. 24 (Parthey).

and transmits divine images to the soul. Sense-perception (*aisthesis*), then, provides a way for the soul to imaginatively know the forms and view the gods.

Not surprisingly, Porphyry's conception of the fall of the soul, which plays so large a part in his epistemology and ontology, profoundly colors his aesthetic theory. The philosopher was interested in theurgy, studied it, and even experimented with it.¹⁸⁶ Since the gods became manifest in natural objects, he wanted to know more about their appearance.

Porphyry witnessed a theurgical ritual in which a statue of Apollo is bound, surrounded by lights, and assaulted by prayers and chants to compel the god to descend and reveal the truth to his worshippers.¹⁸⁷ He analyzed a vivication of Hecate's statue performed by Maximus in a subterranean temple at Ephesus. This resulted in the immortal oracle from the goddesses' thighs.¹⁸⁸

Clearly, Porphyry does not deny that the gods appear in statuary and other natural objects. He merely criticizes the excesses such facts carry with them. They lead some to deify daemons, worshipping them in mysteries and rituals (*teletai kai thysiai*),¹⁸⁹ others to interfere with the practices of rivals or to specialize in love charms, false promises of wealth, success, and prestige and "wanting to be gods."¹⁹⁰ Nonetheless, appearance of the gods and the ability to contact them is important for Porphyry. The angels come down to teach knowledge of these divine things.¹⁹¹ There are certain things theurgy can do. It does achieve a purification of the soul.¹⁹² Although this does not result in a return to deity or even the purification of the spiritual part of the soul, it does allow communion with the aetherial gods and for the lower soul to escape its ontological locus.¹⁹³

Central to this theme is Porphyry's theory of the vehicle of the soul.¹⁹⁴ Theurgy, however, has power only over the vehicle itself. It

¹⁸⁶ *Phil. Orac.*, 154ff. (Parthey).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 162ff.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 130-137.

¹⁸⁹ *Ap. Theod.*, *Cur.*, 3.59-70.

¹⁹⁰ *De Reg. An.*, fr. 2 (Bidez).

¹⁹¹ Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, 10.26-28 = fr. 6, 7 Bidez.

¹⁹² *De Reg. An.*, fr. 2.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, fr. 2.

¹⁹⁴ On this theory in Porphyry's writings, see Wilhelm Deuse, *Untersuchungen zur mittel und neuplatonischen Sellenlehre* (Wiesbaden 1983), 213-30; J. Bidez, *op. cit.* 88-97. For the doctrine in later Neoplatonism, see J. F. Finamore, *Iamblichus and the Theory*

has no power over the higher soul that separates itself from the irrational soul, its vehicle, and materiality by philosophy alone.¹⁹⁵ For the majority the higher soul cannot uncouple herself from the lower soul because of the constitution of her vehicle. Moreover the vehicle itself is not immortal and cannot be noetically purified. Thus created from portions of the bodies of the visible gods, it can only rise to their level or perish when its portions are sloughed off.

For the few, the higher soul can uncouple herself from the lower soul and the vehicle through contemplation. Since the intellect is immortal it continues to live on after its separation from the soul, while its vehicle with the lower parts of the soul return to the cosmos.¹⁹⁶ Perhaps she even acquires the possibility for an eventual ascent to the Father.¹⁹⁷

The view of Olympiodorus appears efficacious. Porphyry did place philosophy above theurgy.¹⁹⁸ For the sage, theurgy has both therapeutic and soteriological significance. There are, however, higher contemplative approaches to union with the divine that should be utilized.¹⁹⁹ For once purified through theurgy the vehicle of the soul (*pneuma-ochema*) only ascends to the highest regions of the sensible world.²⁰⁰

Thus Porphyry's theory of the vehicle of the soul contains inherent limitations regarding the possibility of the ascent of the lower soul to the Father.²⁰¹ He holds that the vehicle was made of mixtures from the celestial gods and was, therefore, capable of being dissolved back into its component parts.²⁰² For Porphyry, the vehicle and the

of the Vehicle of the Soul (Chico CA 1985), 1-7; R. C. Kissling, "The *ochema-pneuma* of the Neoplatonists and the *De Somniis* of Synesius of Cyrene," *AJPh* 43 (1922), 322-25; G. Verbeke, *L'Evolution de la doctrine du Pneuma du stoicisme a S. Augustine* (Paris-Louvain 1945) 363-73; E. R. Dodds, Proclus, *Elements of Theology* (Oxford 1953) 318-19; A. Smith, op. cit. 155-58; Otto Geudmer, *Die Sellenlehre der chaldaischen Orakel* (Meisenheim 1971), 18ff.

¹⁹⁵ *De Reg. An.*, fr. 2 28*2-29*1; fr. 3 31*24-32; fr. 4 32*5-25; fr. 7 34*38-36.

¹⁹⁶ Ap. Proclus, *In Tim.*, 3.234, 18-26.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, fr. 4 32*21. However, ascent to the Father is limited to only a small portion of the human race.

¹⁹⁸ *In Plat. Phaed.*, 123.3-5 (Norvin).

¹⁹⁹ *De Reg. An.*, fr. 7, 11.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, fr. 6 34*24.

²⁰¹ Although the evidence suggests Porphyry equivocated on the issue of the relation of soul to intellect, cf. Iambli. *De An.*, 1.365, 17-19, it appears he thinks them separate. However, see A. Smith, op. cit. 47-48; also John Dillon, *Iamblichus Chalcidensis In Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta* (Leiden 1973), 41-44.

²⁰² Ap. Iambli., *De An.*, 1.385.1-10. Iamblichus recounts Porphyry's theory here. Cf. Finamore, op. cit. 15.

irrational soul are made up of bits of the heavenly spheres and are mortal.²⁰³ Their ultimate fate, therefore, is to return to the cosmos.²⁰⁴

Unlike Plotinus, who believed the soul is the same as intellect and other higher entities, Porphyry is in doubt about this. The operations of the universal soul are entirely separated from the particular soul because the *energemata* of universal and particular souls differ.²⁰⁵ Thus the embodied soul does not act in accordance with intellect. This makes it unlikely that she can shed her lower activities and powers and enter the noetic realm.

Thus, through theurgy the lower soul escapes the misfortune of embodiment, thereby achieving angelic status.²⁰⁶ This is not without significance. For the lower soul gains a respite from terrestrial fate, the travails of rebirth, and gains the protection of the etherial gods. Not surprisingly, therefore, Porphyry's view of theurgy shares some striking parallels with Roman popular religion and the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Theurgy saves the soul;²⁰⁷ it helps the soul leave the flock of ordinary humanity which is subject to fate;²⁰⁸ and it washes the soul from terrestrial pollution.²⁰⁹

For the masses theurgy is indispensable. Most souls have no "inherited" divine status, nor the capacity to achieve it. Consequently, the fall of the soul carries with it the need to establish the therapeutic and soteriological aspects of the arts more firmly than before. As a result, Porphyry was thrown back on the value of aesthetics more firmly than Plotinus had ever been. So Porphyry and his successors began to approach and treat sense perception and imagination as legitimate and authoritative mental faculties to an extent scarcely contemplated by Platonists in earlier centuries. This new aestheticism treated the arts as one of the supreme mediums of daemons and gods. From now on, sense perception would be regarded as one of the most powerful agents of divine apperception.

²⁰³ Ap. Proclus, *In Tim.*, 3.234, 18–26. Dillon holds Proclus reports Porphyry's theory. Cf. *Iamblichus Chalcidensis In Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta* (Leiden 1973), 372–73.

²⁰⁴ See A. Smith, *op. cit.* 64.

²⁰⁵ Ap. Iambl. *De Anima*, 1.365, 17–19; 1.372, 12–14.

²⁰⁶ Bidez, *op. cit.* fr. 2 29*6.

²⁰⁷ Fr. 128 (des Places).

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, fr. 102.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

By the end of the third century the early Platonic claim that only ideas could be intelligible are proved groundless. In later Platonic terms, through the aid of perception we understand reality not less, but more completely. Neoplatonists find permanence in perception. They even assume the presence of a fixed symbolic framework within matter as a necessary mark of its rationality.

Most Neoplatonists assumed that symbolic visions (*autophaneia*) of the gods occurred and that deities took on a visible shape (*autoptoi*; *autoptikon theama*; *phasma*; *phantasma*) for the chosen few.²¹⁰ For these later Platonists symbols (*symbola*) and tokens (*synthemata*) animated the statues of the gods.²¹¹ For through symbols and tokens everything in the material world was linked with its spiritual principles. Concealed in statues these animates provided contact between humanity and divinity.²¹²

The acceptance of theurgy is purchased at the price of a certain detachment from the world of intellection.²¹³ Once such a theory was established, most Neoplatonists were justified in asking just how widely this symbolic and synthematic pattern was relevant and to what kinds of phenomena. They framed their answers metaphysically. Symbols and tokens were due to the grace (*charis*) of the gods;²¹⁴ the principle of divine power (*dynamis*);²¹⁵ the assumption that a cosmic sympathy (*sympatheia*) existed between the upper world beneath the moon and the lower world, thereby uniting the seemingly disparate degrees of reality;²¹⁶ the principle of sameness (*homoioiotes*);²¹⁷ and the notion of the vehicle of the soul (*ochema*).²¹⁸

²¹⁰ *Chal. Orac.*, fr. 101 (des Places). Iambl. *Myst.*, 5.23.

²¹¹ *Proc. In Tim.*, 1.273d.

²¹² See E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* 292 n. 34, Pierre Boyance, "Theurgie et téléstique néoplatonicienne," *RSR* 47 (1955), 196 n. 2.

²¹³ This is well presented by A. Smith, *op. cit.* 100–110.

²¹⁴ *Chal. Orac.*, fr. 142.

²¹⁵ Plotinus, *Enn.*, 4.4 (28) 32.13 and Porphyry *Ad. An.*, fr. 24 (Parthey) describe the universe as a living organism held together by divine power. This notion is commonplace in later Platonism, probably derived from Stoicism; cf. K. Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie* (Munich 1926), 401.

²¹⁶ There is an association between divine power (*dynamis*) and cosmic sympathy (*sympatheia*), cf. G. Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore-London 1985), 147ff.

²¹⁷ Iambl. *Myst.*, 3.14. cf.

²¹⁸ This is an astral body that humans and gods possess. The human soul-vehicle is illuminated by a divine light that activates our imagining perception (*phantastike dynamis*). This leads to the grasping of divine apparitions (*phantasiai*). Cf. e.g., Iambl. *Myst.*, 3.14. On this theory, see Finamore, *op. cit.* 125–64.

The consequence of such questioning left no contrast between the neat self-contained world of ideas and the flux of the natural world; between the logic of intellection and the imagination of perception. This explains why the single-minded Plotinus found theurgy an intrinsically messy subject.²¹⁹ Natural science is bad enough: there the very multiplicity of factors frustrates the theorists' preference for elegant and rounded solutions.²²⁰ But in most Neoplatonists one faces the eternal unpredictability of an imagination tied to sense perception.²²¹ To this extent, later Platonism retains the power to spring surprises. If Plotinus and Porphyry were not immune from the eternal unpredictability of aesthetic novelty, Iamblichus, accordingly, was even less so.

Having studied his teacher Syrianus and:

... the many works of Porphyry . . . and the writings of the Chaldaeans which belong to the same order of ideas and thus, nourished by divine oracles, he rose to the highest level of the . . . theurgical virtues.²²²

For the philosopher the last initiation, vision, is a liberation of the soul effected by the gods that brings things together. It is to this image we turn.

What does this vision (*epopteia*) bring with it? This question brings us back to the symbolics of this essay. We return to the immortal symbol of Hecate's thighs:

About the cavity of the right hip poured forth an abundance of plenteous liquid of the first generated soul, who entirely ensouls the light, the fire, the aether, and the worlds. In Hecate's left hip exists the source of virtue, which remains wholly within and does not give away its virginity.²²³

Since the goddess ensouls the sublunary world, her hips symbolize the cosmic orders dominated by her. The right flank represents the potency of this cosmic soul. She is a power who ensouls the totality of the physical cosmos—its elements of light, fire, ether, and worlds. These correlate to *Aion*, the Father begotten light; *Byr*, the Empyrian

²¹⁹ See, E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 283–311.

²²⁰ For Plotinus on *physis*, see J. M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (Cambridge), 223–31.

²²¹ *Enn.*, 2.9.14; 4.4.40–44. On Plotinus and magic (*goeteia*), see A. H. Armstrong, "Was Plotinus a Magician," *Phronesis* 1 (1955) 73ff.; P. Merlan, "Plotinus and Magic," *Isis* 44 (1953), 341ff.

²²² *Ibid.* 26.

²²³ *Remph.*, 2.201.10.

realm; *Aether*, the region of the fixed stars; and *Kosmoi*, the zone of the planets and the terrestrial world.

The orifice on Hecate's left hip does not discharge any water for it symbolizes the source of virtue. The goddess is unwilling to imperil its purity by contact with the sublunary world. Accordingly, her virtue remains within Hecate and is accessible to those souls capable of rising to the intramundane realm where the goddess resides.

To acquire these powers and the virginal virtue associated with them, the soul must approach her left thigh. Although Hecate is unwilling to reveal them on a terrestrial level, she will willingly reveal her charms to those souls who ascend to the ethereal realm. This, however, requires an ascent of the soul to the moon, to Hecate.

For Porphyry, art functions as an instrument of the divine intellect. It triggers and actuates the rational soul and her vehicle. Indeed, when Hecate self-manifests in her statue, in an apparition perceptible to the imagination, human and divine souls and vehicles move in consort together. When the human elements grasp the activity of the divine elements, they turn outward to receive the deity and discover their eternal link with the divine. *Aisthesis* is an *antilepsis*, a coming to consciousness of a higher self, and a divine source. For Porphyry this is only possible through aesthetics and the symbolics of the hieratic arts.

These methods were more helpful than philosophy in aiding help to the common man. Hence, his amity toward Jesus and his ambiguity toward theurgy in its ability to assist the higher man.²²⁴ Jesus and theurgy could, in virtue of the interconnection of the body with the lower soul, purify the soul's pneumatic envelope acquired through her descent through the heavens. But neither Jesus nor theurgy could confer immortality on the irrational soul or on her "vehicle." Finally, both can be misused and are always dangerous—for not all daemonic forces are morally wholesome. Indeed, some can be deceptive and worthless.²²⁵

This skeptical note underscores Porphyry's aversion to Christianity and theurgy, and the consequent value assigned to them. To suppose otherwise entails the blasphemous conclusion that the gods appear as men and can be constrained by pressure from men.²²⁶

²²⁴ Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 10.9, 27–28.

²²⁵ Porphyry, *Ep. ad An.* 2.7.

²²⁶ Ibid. 1.2c, 2.3a–b, 8a–c = Eusebius, *PE* 5. 10.1–10, *Myst.* 1.12, 3.17, 4.1, 6.5ff., 8.8.

Christianity and theurgy cannot bring salvation, only consolation. Neither confers ultimate happiness. For that there exists only the beatitude of philosophy.²²⁷

The Bible

It is typical in Ancient Mediterranean studies that like the inhabitants of a placid provincial town, scholars pay more attention to the extraordinary basilica in their midst than to the exquisite chapel. The result is sad. We are given a thin-blooded portrait of one of the more important artifices of antiquity—Hellenic Biblical criticism.

Hellenic Biblical Criticism

To remedy this *lacuna* we continue our journey with a brief discussion of the Hellenic interpreter of the Bible. There is a risk that this type may be taken for granted as not part of the scene of biblical studies. Indeed, most explanations of Galen, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian have been deceptively easy—they were primarily opponents of Judaism and Christianity and not interpreters of the Bible.²²⁸ But this verdict of distance cannot, of itself, explain, why, at precise times—in the later ancient and modern periods—a large number of men and women were prepared to see quite the opposite. This argument stands *in vacuo*.

Nonetheless, the reason for this judgement is that the historian of biblical interpretation is too often the unwitting heir of a monotonous perspective. Like an andeluvian-sea bed placed by some convulsion at the crest of a mountain range, the Hellenic interpreter of the Bible is often treated as representing the intrusion into the realm of divine ideas of notions whose rightful place is among hylic *varia*. To view Hellenic “paradigms” of biblical scholarship from this angle is to miss an opportunity. It is up to the student of Ancient Mediterranean religions to analyze religious texts and their various interpreters together, like a mirror, to catch, from perhaps a surprising angle, another glimpse of the dynamic relationship between Hellenism,

²²⁷ Porphyry, *Ep. ad An.* 2.5b, 18d = *Myst.* 3.24, 10.4.

²²⁸ The best example of a scholar who avoids this approach to Porphyry is R. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 126–63.

Judaism, and Christianity in late antiquity. Such a view allows us to discern the purposes shared by all interpreters of the Bible. It was through the hard business of textual criticism that the *persona* of Hellene, Jew, and Christian merged, allowing the occasional *coup de théâtre*, where Hellenic exegeses of biblical texts were long remembered by subsequent readers as either divine or daemonic interpretations of reality. And perhaps more importantly, Hellenic critical methodology came to be accepted by Jews and Christians as their own—tools to be used in substantiating the biblical view of reality as divine and not daemonic; as fact and not sophistry.

It is important to remember that the methodological issues introduced, and the historical and literary *aporia* raised by Porphyry and his heirs, leave a trail of writings that cover several centuries. After all, their works criticized Jewish and Christian claims about the joining of Heaven and Earth, and the role the Bible played in this joining. This is why the *Patres* wrote commentaries, histories, and harmonies in attempts to refute the stinging and embarrassing charges raised by their primary critic. First reactive, then proactive, the Church Fathers become philologists, text-critics, historians, ethnographers, even chronologers in accord with the best standards of their times. Christians eventually offered a sophisticated interpretation and defense of their Bible based on the same criteria used by Greeks and Romans on Homer and Virgil, Polybius and Tacitus.

The key point here is that, as a rationalist, Porphyry was driven not away from, but into comparative historical and literary inquiry by its implicit literalism. In answering Porphyry, the *Patres* were compelled to adopt his assumptions. This was necessary if they wished to maintain the authority and integrity of the Bible.

The transition from a simple biblical faith based on the communities' own memory and self-understanding to a mature faith based on universally accepted historical and literary criteria of coherence was a step of immense proportions for the positivist "paradigm" of biblical scholarship. This in itself entitles Porphyry to a seat of honor in the history of a discipline, whatever anyone thinks of his motives. Indeed, when Porphyry and even Augustine are compared with their contemporaries, we cannot be but struck by how astute they appear and admire their methods which, however rudimentary, reveal genuine, indeed lasting methodological insights.

This brings us finally to "paradigms." In order to survive, they must find institutional placement—without which they fail. That, in

brief, begins to explain why this remarkable later ancient enterprise failed to be incorporated into critical studies of the Bible in the Middle Ages. Porphyry's "paradigm" would remain forgotten until modern times—except in broken fragments.²²⁹

Thus, with Porphyry we encounter a man who spoke the critical language ancients understood. Moreover, he spoke it with unnerving confidence and with a sharp, learned skill. We should come to appreciate him as an ancient thinker who created one of the last artifices of a *Romanitas* that demanded: *Sapere aude!* Porphyry's *Against the Christians* stands as an important and independent contribution to the history of religions and biblical criticism. Once we recognize this, the "old man from Tyre" becomes an unexpected wellspring of delight in the scholarly autumn of Ancient Mediterranean life.

The Jewish Bible

On the basis of the remaining fragments of *Against the Christians*, we know that Porphyry devoted a major part of his work to the Jewish scriptures. What angered Porphyry was the way in which Christians used allegory to explain away, as he saw it, the difficulties in the Jewish Bible.²³⁰ Apart from two fragments that deal with the historical problem of the date of Moses, and those on the story of Jonah and the whale,²³¹ and the marriage of Hosea to a whore,²³² all the remaining fragments from Porphyry's criticism of the Jewish Bible deal with the Book of Daniel.

This work caught the attention of Porphyry because he saw that it played a central role in attempts by Christians to articulate a Christian view of history. Responding to Patristic interpretations of Daniel, Porphyry argued that the writing could not be read as a

²²⁹ Exceptions are the 16th- and 17th-century works by E. Levita, *Massoreth ha Massoreth* (Venice 1538), (Basel 1539); J. Scaliger, *De Emendatione temporum*, 1583; L. Cappel, *Arcanum punctationis revelatum*, 1624, *Critica Sacra*, 1650; T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651; I. La Peyrere, *Præadamitæ*, 1655; B. Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, 1670; R. Simon, *Histoire Critique de Vieux Testament*, 1682/85. The scholarship of the Tuebingen school follows in the 19th century. There is no evidence that any of these scholars knew of the writings of Porphyry.

²³⁰ Eusebius, *HE* 6.19.2.

²³¹ Augustine, *Ep. 102 ad Deogratiam*.

²³² Jerome, *Comm. in Osee* 1.2.

prophetic text, but had to be read for what it was—a historical work that reflected the events of the author's own time.

When he trained his skills on the book of Daniel, Porphyry demonstrated that the book was written in the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid ruler of Syria 175–163 B.C.E., nearly four centuries after its pseudepigraphic date under Cyrus the Persian. Instead of being an ancient seer foretelling the coming of the messiah and the end of time, Ps-Daniel was describing prior history and the events of his own day. Porphyry concluded that the Jewish writings were about historical processes in the age of the Maccabees, and could not be used to demonstrate Christian theological premises.

Porphyry's critique of the Book of Daniel caused much consternation among Christian thinkers. It is easy to see why. The work was a fertile source for prophecies about the coming of Christ and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple—themes that assumed major roles in early Christian views of history. The appeal to prophecy from Ps-Daniel functioned to substantiate Christian claims that Jesus was the awaited messiah, and that the destruction of the Temple heralded the time of fulfillment. Moreover, the chronology in Daniel showed that Christianity was the legitimate continuation of Judaism. Finally, it was on the basis of the Book of Daniel that *Patres* like Julius Africanus, Hippolytus, and Eusebius wrote chronicles of world history from Adam to the present.

But Porphyry knew the science of chronology well. He was a master of the work of Callinicus on the Ptolemies and Romans. He probably wrote his chronicle of world history from the fall of Troy to the reign of emperor Claudius (268–70 C.E.).²³³ Armed and ready, he eventually turned his skills on the Book of *Daniel*. The results were devastating. His thesis undermined the whole structure of Christian historical interpretation of the work. The writer of Daniel described contemporary, not future events; he could not be used to prophesize the coming of the Christ or to interpret the relationship of Christianity to Judaism.²³⁴

²³³ On Porphyry's chronological studies, cf. B. Croke, "Porphyry's Anti-Christian Chronology," *JTS* 34 (1983), 168–85.

²³⁴ Christian commentators often used Daniel 9, which was thought to prophesize the permanent destruction of the Temple, with Matthew 24, to argue that Judaism had lost its legitimacy.

The Christian Bible

A major part of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* included sections on the Christian scriptures. He constructed a gospel parallels, and he submitted the writings to precise textual and literary criticism. Porphyry was suspicious of the accuracy with which the apostles transmitted the true message of Jesus. He concluded that Christians had turned an important and admirable sage into a god, and had falsified his teachings.

He perfected his skills by examining the various and conflicting views of Jesus in the New Testament. His approach led to the discovery of contradictions, implausibilities, and what Porphyry thought to be moral improprieties in the Christian writings. Not a divinely inspired text, the New Testament was the product of human sophistry. He concluded that the "evangelists were inventors and not historians of the events concerning Jesus."

In nuce, the themes addressed and the issues raised by Porphyry were wide-ranging. Among these were the efficacy of the evangelists' accounts of Jesus' life and teachings. Porphyry argued that Jesus's followers misquoted sources, gave conflicting interpretations of doctrine, and exhibited a pitiful lack of comprehension concerning what Jesus was about—a fact apparently understood by the master. Add to this the Christian misinterpretation of the various categories of being that mediate between the divine and human realms, and their penchant for divinizing daemons and daemonizing gods, and what one encounters is an excellent, but frightening example of how a mishandling of texts leads not only to crude and exaggerated claims of Christians about Jesus but also to misinterpretations by Christians of reality.

Right down to his soberness and his deadly concern, Porphyry did not think like a typical later Roman man of letters. As a critic of the Bible, he was among the few traditionalists truly feared by Christians. In this sense, as all historical figures are, Porphyry is tragic for us. We know what subsequent years brought: his works would be applauded, debated, and then burned.

As one of their most formidable intellectual opponents, Porphyry's searing historical, literary, and conceptual critique of the Bible led Christians to a defense of scripture on historical and literary grounds. They became higher critics of scripture themselves.

Porphyry's method of biblical criticism reveals a deeply imbedded mechanism. One might call it a focusing mechanism. He thought it

possible to gaze on the Bible from a positivist perspective; he thought that once scientifically appraised, the meanings Christians read into their scriptures would finally be scattered and lost on the distant vault of heaven—which he thought would be for the betterment of humankind.

In response, Greek and Latin *Patres* would propose theories of literary relationships between biblical texts to argue for the historical coherence of scripture. Porphyry would have scoffed at such attempts, but he would have been pleased with this turn of events. Since his work was generated by early Christian tendencies to allegorize the Bible in order to escape embarrassment over contradictions and impieties inherent in their scripture, their abandonment of such an approach would have been understood by Porphyry as a victory over a *superstitio*. Once Christians moved away from allegorical toward “positivist” (historical/literary critical) criteria of coherence for interpreting the Bible, then their eccentric claims would dissolve before the hammer blows of historical and literary criticism.

These observations led to the conclusion that Porphyry represented something radically new in late antiquity—a Hellenic interpreter of the Christian Bible.

Let us examine Porphyry’s premises. First, he apparently understood that Jesus himself discerned a pitiable lack of comprehension among his followers. This is preserved in a fragment by Macarius that summarizes his comments on Mt. 11:15.

...Jesus said: “I thank you, Father, lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from wise and understanding people and revealed them to babes.” Therefore the things that are written for babes and the ignorant ought to be clearer and not wrapped in riddles; for if the histories have been hidden from the wise, and unreasonably poured out to babes and those who give suck, it is better to be desirous of senselessness and ignorance.²³⁵

Porphyry, therefore, is suspicious of the authenticity of the parables ascribed to Jesus in the gospels, since they seem too obscure to have been intended for his childlike followers. Thus:

When someone has a message to give concerning great and divine matters, he is obliged to make use of common things that pertain to human beings, in order to make his meaning clear, but not such

²³⁵ Macarius Magnes, *Apoc.* 4.9.

degraded and unintelligible things as these. . . . These sayings, besides being base and unsuitable to such matters, have in themselves no intelligent meaning or clarity. And yet it was fitting that they should have been very clear indeed, because they were not written for the wise and understanding, but for babes.²³⁶

Porphyry has in fact singled out a major problem in early Christianity having to do with the true character of Jesus' teaching: were the intended meanings "simple" and "clear" or were they "mysterious" and "dark?" For the man from Tyre Christians were mistaken in assuming there were deeper, spiritual meanings in Jesus's sayings and stories.

Secondly, Porphyry thought he could prove this observation because he laboriously listed and carefully noted the inconsistencies between what the various gospel accounts reported about what Jesus said and did. He did this by focusing on those passages in Matthew that have parallels in Mark, Luke, and John. Then he drew attention to pericopae in Mark, Luke, and John that have no parallels in Matthew. This final step prompted Porphyry to conclude that the disciples invented the portrait of Jesus.

For centuries his accomplishments earned the admiration of Roman traditionalists and Christian revisionists. Recognized by the early church as one of their most feared and formidable intellectual opponents, his work caused great embarrassment to the early church. Porphyry's searing historical and literary critique of the Bible forced an emerging Christian intelligentsia to defend their scriptures on historical and literary grounds, thus opening the way toward a straightforward, if not at times "positivist" interpretation and defense of scripture by Christians themselves.

Porphyry's hostility to Christianity was well known to the Church Fathers. We can see in a fragment preserved by Eusebius what Porphyry thought of the gospel writers.

As friends of truth did they present clear and evident documentation? Those who believe in these who have invented and lied and mistakenly blasphemed how could they not become silly friends of envy and the evil eye, and be convicted as the enemies of truth itself. . . . Didn't they set themselves as criminals and terrible sophists? So they falsely produce that which is not, and ascribe to their own teacher that which was not done by him to live up to their own satisfaction. And now

²³⁶ Ibid. 4.8.

what shall we say? Those who lied about their teacher and produced in writing things that did not happen, did they also not lie about his sufferings? When their aim was to produce fictions and to adorn their teacher with false stories.²³⁷

Jerome states that Porphyry thought the disciples:

... were inexperienced people, not only in regard to the mundane, but also in regard to the divine scriptures; that they ascribed testimony written somewhere else to another prophet.²³⁸

These are serious charges. But how did Porphyry substantiate them? He did so initially on the basis of textual criticism. For example, he noted that in Mark a verse is cited from Malachai and then assigned to Isaiah (Mk 1:2). Jerome reports:

Porphyry takes up that passage in the gospel of Mark: "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ ... directing straight his foot path." Since one testimony comes from the context of Malachai and another from Isaiah, he asks how can we believe that this passage is taken from Isaiah to which men of the church have often times responded?²³⁹

Elsewhere, Porphyry points out that at Mt. 13:35 the evangelist attributes a passage to Isaiah that in fact comes from Ps. 77:

In a parable I shall open my mouth: Isaiah does not say this but Asaph. Finally, that impious Porphyry also brings this up against us. He says: Your evangelist Matthew was ignorant, thus he said (Mt. 13.35) what was written in the prophet Isaiah: "I shall open my mouth in parables ..."²⁴⁰

Then Porphyry ups the ante. He moves on to literary and historical criticism. He constructs a gospels parallel. Then, playing the role of exasperated teacher to indolent students, he notes the discrepancies between the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke, prefacing his attack with a criticism of the genealogy in Matthew. He says:

And it is for this reason, then, in the gospel of Matthew (1:11-12), there appears to be a generation missing, because the second group of fourteen, reaching to the period of Jehoikim, ends with the son of

²³⁷ Eusebius, *DE* 3.5.95ff.

²³⁸ Jerome, *De Principio Marci. Anecd. Maredsol.* 3.2, 320. Cf. Morin, *Etudes, Textes, Decouvertes* (1913), 245, Harnack, op. cit. 48.

²³⁹ Jerome, *Com. in Matt.* 37.45.

²⁴⁰ Jerome, *Trac. in Ps.* 77.

Josiah, and the third group begins with Jehoiachin who is the son of Jehoiachim.²⁴¹

Jerome adds his assessment:

And thereby Porphyry showed his ignorance. He slanders against the church which only shows his own ignorance since he attempted to demonstrate the evangelist guilty of falsehood.²⁴²

We can imagine Porphyry's response: Ignorance and falsehood indeed! But not at my hands, rather from those of the evangelist himself. Matthew was a criminal and adroit sophist, not a seeker after truth. In general, the gospels were "of what did not happen, written by those who were not there." This judgement allows Porphyry to introduce a finaletical argument. These apostles, he continues, were a quarrelsome and distemperate lot. Just look at the strife between Peter and Paul over circumcision, Porphyry adds. How could anyone interpret such behaviour as seeking after truth? Jerome preserves Porphyry's biting criticism:

The completely ignorant and criminal Porphyry, in the first volume of his work against us, says that Peter was reprimanded by Paul.²⁴³

... the blaspheming Porphyry ... reproached Paul for his impertinence because he had dared to reproach Peter, the prince of the apostles ... Porphyry claimed that Paul and Peter waged a childish contest. He maintains that Paul envied the virtues of Peter, and wrote this passage in *Galatians* against him, pugnaciously. So Porphyry impudently maintains either he did not do it, or if he did it, he impertinently reproached in someone else, what he did himself.²⁴⁴

According to Porphyry, Paul's impudence was that he claimed that he received a special revelation from God, and that he did not have to be "instructed from flesh and blood" to learn what he should teach. Even if a falsifier of evidence, Peter knew Jesus. Paul did not. The man from Tarsus is criminal in his invention of new doctrines.²⁴⁵

Jerome attempts a refutation of Porphyry on two grounds. First, he attacks his character. Second, and more importantly, he leaps to the defense of the apostles through arguments from the literary and

²⁴¹ Jerome, *Comm. in Dan.* 1:1.

²⁴² *Ibid.* 1:1.

²⁴³ Jerome, *Comm. in Gal. Pr.*

²⁴⁴ Jerome, *Ep.* 112.

²⁴⁵ Jerome, *Comm. in Gal.* 1.15.

not allegorical relationship between New Testament texts. Jerome claims that one tests the historical veracity of accounts described in the Pauline letters through an examination of the gospel of Luke, the writer of sacred history.

Mostly, since Luke, the writer of the sacred history never mentioned dissent, and never says that Peter had been in Antioch with Paul . . . the contention that Peter made a mistake, or that Paul had impertinently refuted the prince of the apostles is false. If we have to invent because of this blasphemy that Cephas is different from Peter, so that Peter cannot be alleged to have made a mistake, then an infinite number of scriptural passages incriminated by someone who does not understand [them] needs to be erased.²⁴⁶

According to Jerome this approach to scripture cannot be undertaken. The results for the legitimacy of scripture and the maintenance of church doctrine would be calamitous.

The battle lines were drawn for the final conflict between Hellenism and Christianity. After Porphyry the principle issue becomes the historical reliability of scripture. Christians were forced to appeal to the same criteria of coherence to defend the Bible as their opponents did to attack it. Simple appeals to faith, or the church's self-understandings of scripture were not sufficient to carry the field against the likes of Porphyry, who claimed that Christianity was an "unreasoning faith."²⁴⁷ We know in no uncertain terms what the Christians thought of Porphyry. When the broken remnants of Patristic armies trailed past the walls of Tyre, his figure cast such a chill shadow that from Constantine and Eusebius onward, emperors, bishops, and scholars never let Porphyry out of their sight for a moment. Chief among these bishops and scholars was Augustine of Hippo.

Porphyry's arguments are preserved by Augustine in his *De Consensu Evangelistarum* (1.10).²⁴⁸ In nuce, Porphyry's claim was that there was little in the gospels that could possibly yield a coherent portrait of Jesus, because the evangelists "were not in harmony with each other."²⁴⁹ This was so because their accounts about Jesus were bald inventions.

²⁴⁶ Jerome, *Comm. in Gal.* 2.11ff.

²⁴⁷ Eusebius, *PE* 1.3.1.

²⁴⁸ On Augustine's defense of the gospels, see R. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 144ff.

²⁴⁹ Augustine, *De Con. Ev.*, 1.10.

Since this was the starting point of the "deconstructionist" movement, the fulcrum upon which Porphyry's criticism hinged, Augustine attempted to show that the writers of the gospels based their views of Jesus "on the most reliable information and most trustworthy testimonies" (1.1). Significantly, Augustine's argument for the harmony of the gospels rests not on the basis of allegorical interpretation at all! According to the man from Hippo, the gospels are valid histories written by credible historians. We now have to see how he demonstrated this. Once we get a sense for Augustine's response to Porphyry's critique, we will be able to appreciate what Tyre has to do with Hippo.

If Porphyry's criticisms were correct, then the portraits of Jesus, the teachings of the church, and the entirety of Christian biblical interpretation were invalid. Augustine stated the challenge succinctly:

I refer to the question why the Lord has written nothing himself, and why he has thus left us to the necessity of accepting testimony of other persons who have prepared records of his history. . . . In making that assertion they simultaneously claimed more for their master than he really was.²⁵⁰

Augustine clearly understood how devastating Porphyry's challenge could be. The fundamental issue to be resolved is whether or not the New Testament provided a reliable historical account of the life and teachings of Jesus, and whether or not the writers of the Christian scriptures were as Porphyry described—deceivers and sophists.

To answer the man from Tyre, the man from Hippo offered a gospel chronology:

Now those four evangelists . . . are believed to have written in the following order: first Matthew, then Mark, thirdly Luke, and then John.²⁵¹

Next, he proposed a two-source theory from which he could explain the literary relationship between the gospels, and resolve the apparent discrepancies among the gospel accounts of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles:

. . . it would appear they had one order determined among them with regard to their personal knowledge and their preaching [of the gospel], but a different order in reference to the task of giving the written narrative . . . those unquestionably came first in order who were actually

²⁵⁰ Augustine, *De Con. Ev.* 1.11.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.* 1.3.

followers of the Lord when he was present in the flesh, and who heard him speak; and [with a commission] received from his lips, they were sent out to preach the gospel. But in regard to the task of composing that record of the gospel . . . there were only two, belonging to the number of those whom the Lord chose before Passover. . . . For the first place in order was held by Matthew and the last by John. And thus the remaining two, who did not belong to the number referred to, but who at the same time became followers of the Christ who spoke in these others, were supported on either side by the same.²⁵²

This claim is supported by an outline of the thematic principles upon which the evangelists worked. Matthew wrote on the incarnation and the royal lineage of Christ, and his words and deeds must be understood as Matthew understood them—they have reference to the present life of men. Mark was Matthew's epitomizer. Luke occupied himself with the priestly lineage and character of Jesus, largely framed within the context of a Davidic genealogy. John concluded the gospel account is not:

... with those things Christ did through the vehicle of the flesh of man. . . . But John . . . had in view the true divinity of the Lord . . . and directed his efforts above all to presenting the divine nature of the gospel.²⁵³

Following Jerome, Augustine develops a literary-critical apparatus to defend the historical and ideological efficacy of the scriptures. He postulates a historical and literary relationship among the gospels in order to argue that there are differences in thematic tendencies between the gospels. Whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke focus upon the different active virtues of Jesus, John focuses upon his contemplative ones. Thus yes, there exist different accounts of Jesus, but this does not mean that difference equals contradiction between the accounts. With this established, Augustine commences his exegetical task—demonstrating the historical and literary, not allegorical, harmony of the gospels.

Confirmation of this emerges from Augustine's defense of the diverse genealogies extant in the gospels. In an apparent response to the type of criticism raised by Porphyry concerning the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, Augustine says:²⁵⁴

²⁵² Ibid. 1.3.

²⁵³ Ibid. 1.7.

²⁵⁴ Jerome, *Comm. in Dan.* 1:1.

Furthermore as to those critics who find a difficulty in the circumstance that Matthew enumerates one series of ancestors, beginning with David and traveling downwards to Joseph (Mt. 1:1-16), while Luke specifies a different succession, traveling it from Joseph upwards as far as David (Lk. 3:23-38), they might easily perceive that Joseph had two fathers—namely one by whom he was begotten, and a second by whom he may have been adopted. For it was an ancient custom . . . to adopt children with the view of making sons for themselves of those whom they had not begotten.²⁵⁵

After explaining the cultural grounds for such an interpretation, and hence harmonization of the two accounts, he scolds his critics:²⁵⁶

But surely it might suggest itself, as I have said, to a man of piety decided enough to make him consider it correct to seek some worthier explanation than that of simply crediting the evangelist with stating what is false; it might, I repeat, readily suggest itself to such a person to examine what reasons there might be for one man being capable of having two fathers. This, indeed, might have suggested itself even to those detractors, were it not that they preferred contention to consideration.²⁵⁷

Augustine's "worthier explanation" is based on critical norms shared by his opponents. Although he omits the more serious difficulty arising from the omissions in the genealogy given by Matthew, his defense of the gospel account and its fundamental harmony with the account in Luke is based on appeals to historical criteria. On such a basis Augustine can argue for an acceptance of both evangelists' accounts of the genealogy of Jesus.

However, Porphyry's notations of the gospel writers' misquotations of scripture were criticisms that even Augustine could not deflect. His only defense is silence.²⁵⁸ This is surprising, especially in light of the observations of Eusebius and Jerome that this constituted one of the pillars of Porphyry's attack. It is possible that the man from Hippo deliberately ignored the man from Tyre on this point? It

²⁵⁵ Augustine, *De Con. Ev.* 2.5.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 2.5-6.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 2.7.

²⁵⁸ When Augustine comments on biblical passages pointed out by Porphyry as falsely quoted, no mention is made of Porphyry's criticism. For example, where Porphyry notes a misquotation from Isaiah at Mt. 13:35 (cf. fr. 10 H), Augustine makes no attempt to deflect Porphyry's charges. Cf. *De Con. Ev.* 2.41.

would be quite understandable given the difficulties of challenging such textual inconsistencies on the basis of either Augustine's historical or literary criteria of coherence. Even Augustine had to admit that no gospel harmony could salvage for Christians the fact that there were shortcomings in the disciples' misquotations of scripture.

Since this warfare between Porphyry and the Christians was one of documents, Augustine discreetly withdrew from the field on these issues to concentrate on those where he thought he could carry the day. In doing this, Augustine answered Porphyry out of Porphyry, employing his methods against himself whenever appropriate. To Porphyry's charge that incorrect quotation is the point at issue, that any sober person could not recognize the sanctity and infallibility of writings exhibiting such lamentable *lacunae*, Augustine employed the only defense he had—silence. Few early Christians would concede that their scriptures were written documents of a tradition that passed through many hands. On this basis Origen admitted that errors occur in the transmitted text, but these were the fault of copyists not their authors. This argument did not impress Augustine. He never used it.

Porphyry's charge that the apostles Peter and Paul held conflicting views on important issues had a powerful impact upon Christian defense of scripture before Augustine.

Again Paul condemned Peter when he said: "For before certain persons came before James he ate before gentiles; but when they came he separated himself fearing the circumcised; and many Jews joined him." Similarly in this there is abundant and important indictment, that a man who had become interpreter of the divine mouth should live in hypocrisy and devise a policy to please men. Moreover the same is true of taking a wife, for this is what Paul says: "For these are false apostles, the deceitful workers." (2 Cor. 2:13). If then Peter is said to have been involved in so many bad things, is it not enough to make one shudder to imagine that he holds the keys to heaven, opening and closing it, although he bound it tightly, so to speak in innumerable strange happenings?²⁵⁹

Here again Augustine is silent. This is even the case when Porphyry, for the sake of his critical argument, grants Galatians to be historical

²⁵⁹ Macarius Magnes, *Apoc.* 3.22. Although apparently Augustine did not know of Macarius's work, he did know the writings of Jerome. This charge is often mentioned by Jerome: fr. 9, 10, 20, 21a, 21b H.

in character—a point dearly held by apologists like Augustine.²⁶⁰ His indefatigable defense that the gospels and epistles of the church yield factual history written by able historians is wanting. Perhaps Augustine knew that in this case no appeal from historical or literary criteria could deflect Porphyry's insights. The North African knew when to leave well enough alone.

Macarius Magnes did not. His defense of Christianity against the attacks of its opponents is desultory. Historical, literary, and philosophical issues raised by his opponents are cast aside in a manner that only a provincial bishop supported by a Christian *imperium* could possibly get away with.²⁶¹ The arguments against Christianity extant in Macarius's work fit the rigorous tenor of criticisms raised by the man from Tyre from Eusebius to Augustine. Unfortunately, we do not precisely know whether or not Porphyry's *Against the Christians* underlies Macarius's *Apocriticus*.²⁶² To detail them, then, would be premature.

Nonetheless, if the *Apocriticus* reveals anything, it is that the critical approach to the Bible employed by late fourth-century Roman critics of Christianity was dependent upon Porphyry. Macarius is stung by the same tenacious use of a gospel parallels²⁶³ and a "positivist" reading of the scriptures as earlier *Patres* were.²⁶⁴

Themes encountered by the bishop similar to those of the other fathers. All are reminiscent of Porphyry. These include the problem with teachings on the resurrection,²⁶⁵ on the sacraments,²⁶⁶ on miracles,²⁶⁷ on teachings,²⁶⁸ on metaphysical assumptions,²⁶⁹ on ethics,²⁷⁰ and on impiety evinced to the gods of Rome.²⁷¹

²⁶⁰ In the twenty-seven references to Galatians in the *Harmony*, Augustine ignores the issue of a controversy between Peter and Paul. No comment appears at all on Gal. 1:15.

²⁶¹ On the content of the *Apocriticus* see Crafer, art. cit. 360ff., 481ff.

²⁶² It is impossible to quarrel with T. D. Barnes's assessment that the relationship of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* and Macarius's *Apocriticus* is tangential. Cf. Barnes art. cit. 424–42.

²⁶³ *Apoc.* 2.12, 13, 3.19.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 3.3, 4.24.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 2.14.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 3.15.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 3.18.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 3.30–33.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 4.7, 4.24.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 4.10.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.* 4.23.

What is unlike Porphyry in the work is the attack on Jesus. Here Macarius relied not on Porphyry but more likely upon Hierocles and Julian. But what is constant is the unrelenting argument that Christianity is *alogos* and *anomos*—a terrible threat to the security of an empire. On this Roman critics of Christianity from Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles to Julian agree.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

As already noted, *Against the Christians* shows affinities with Roman religion and later Platonic thought. The following sections will attempt to clarify more precisely the relationship of these writings to Hellenism and the Hellenic critique of Christianity.¹

Relation to Hellenism

Against the Christians not only functioned as a critique of Christianity, it also served as an *apologia* for the worship of the traditional gods. To this extent Porphyry's works are related to a group of texts that include the writings of Plutarch, Lucian, Galen, Celsus, and Julian. These compositions show an astonishing range of diversity. Within this collection, however, some grouping is possible. This specific set of texts listed above are grouped under the designation "Hellenism." This is based on the ideological affinities and literary similarities shared by these works.

Plutarch

It should be mentioned at the outset that this review of Plutarch is a limited one. The concern here is with Plutarch as a representative of religious Hellenism,² not with his life³ or with his role as a philosopher.⁴

¹ On this general topic, see J. Pepin, "Cosmic Piety" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, edited by A. H. Armstrong (New York 1986), 408-35; J. P. Kenney, art. cit. "Monotheistic and Polytheistic Elements" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*; F. M. Schroeder, art. cit. "The Self in Ancient Religious Experience" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 337-59. On Porphyry, see P. Hadot, art. cit. "Neoplatonist Spirituality," 230-49.

² For a complete study of this aspect of his thought. Cf. F. E. Brenk, *In Mist Appareled: Religious Themes in Plutarch's "Moralia" and "Lives"* (Leiden 1977).

³ For a study of the career of Plutarch see D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London 1972).

⁴ For a study of Plutarch as philosopher, see Ch. Froidefond, "Plutarque et le platonisme," *ANRW* II 36.1, 184-233; J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca 1974),

Born in 45 C.E., Plutarch came from a prominent family of Chaeronea. As a student he went to Athens around 66–67 C.E. and became a follower of Ammonius, the head of the Academy, who gave him a thorough training in philosophy.⁵ Sent on a political mission to Rome, he eventually returned there to teach and to learn. Later he settled in Chaeronea where a circle grew up around him. This was a period of astonishing literary activity. He died around 125 C.E.

The salient part of the profile of Plutarch that is of interest for our study was his great loyalty to the temple of Apollo at Delphi and his assumption that the pantheon of all nations consisted of gods performing like functions and that they correspond to one another.

The most important text for our purposes goes under the title *Moralia*. Included in these writings were works on literary criticism, an attack on Herodotus's *bona fides*; philosophical treatises, interpretations of Plato, essays and dialogues on the soul and on God, controversies with Stoics and Epicureans; archaeological notes and queries; discussions on points of political science and rhetoric; collections of anecdotes; and medical advice.

Among these works, the most significant in relation to our collection of texts are his philosophical treatises *On Isis and Osiris*, *On the E at Delphi*, *On the Oracles at Delphi*, *On the Obsolescence of Oracles*, *On Divine Vengeance*, *On Superstition*, and his polemical works *On Moral Virtue*, *On the Contradictions of the Stoics*, *On "koinai ennoiai" against the Stoics*, *That One Cannot Live Happily by Following the Stoics*, *Against Colotes*, and *On the Correction of the Doctrine "Lathe biosas."*

Throughout Plutarch's philosophical writings we encounter firm beliefs in the community of the species and the unity of the divine. All humans seek the divine, using symbols of various kinds. This reveals itself in his work *On Isis and Osiris*, dedicated to a friend Clea who had been initiated into the mysteries of Dionysus as well as Isis and Osiris. Here Plutarch studies the names, myths, and rituals of the Egyptian gods, finding in them the same meanings and functions as in the Greek cults. He speaks of believers as searching out through reason the truths inherent in the mysteries. For Plutarch

185–230, *idem*; "Plutarch and Second Century Platonism," *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 214–29. Also see R. M. Jones, *The Platonism of Plutarch*, ed. L. Taran (New York 1980).

⁵ *De E.* 387f.

most Mediterranean myths and rites were good, created by wise men whose insights included all the best that posterity later came to learn in philosophy.

In his essay *On Moral Virtue* Plutarch defines virtue and then proves his twofold definition of theoretical and practical ethics in the form of an attack against the position of the Stoic Chrysippus: that since the soul is unitary there can only be a monistic ethic.⁶ It is important to note that these themes are generally set out in polemical treatises.

Although he knew nothing about Christianity, he was aware of Judaism.⁷ His interest was largely limited to Jewish dietary norms, particularly the prohibition from eating pork. Because of these habits Plutarch singled out Judaism as a superstitious religion.⁸ This was a common Greco-Roman attitude regarding the Jews.⁹

Religion is legitimate only if it is rational and assists one in leading a good life. In this sense the supreme object of human life is likeness to god, not conformity with nature.¹⁰ This doctrine allows Plutarch to define the virtues and propose an ethical theory. Porphyry argued in similar fashion in his apology for Roman religion and in his attack *Against the Christians*. In the *Philosophy from Oracles* and the *Cave of the Nymphs*, allegory serves as the handmaiden of philosophy, religion, and literature. In *Against the Christians*, rhetoric functions to provide *topoi* for his arguments on basic historical, literary, and philosophical themes.

An attempt to outline the metaphysics of these two thinkers would be tendentious. Nonetheless, it would be helpful if some of the points of philosophical contact they share are noted. This would assist in illustrating their common demimonde.¹¹

In his discussion of Apollo, Plutarch argued that the traditional gods were aspects of the one god.¹² Porphyry argued in a similar

⁶ *De Virt.* 440e–442a.

⁷ The most elaborate treatment of Judaism is in the *Quaestiones Conviviales*, 4.4.4–6. For a complete collection of Plutarch's references to Jews and Judaism, see Stern, *op. cit.* 545–62.

⁸ *De Superst.* 166a, 169c.

⁹ Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.205–11; Horatius, *Sermones* 1.5, 100; and Apuleius, *Florida* 6.

¹⁰ *De Sera.* 550dff.

¹¹ For detailed studies on their philosophical positions: for Plutarch, see Froidefond "Plutarque," *art. cit.* 184–233; Dillon "Plutarch," *art. cit.* 214–29, *idem. The Middle Platonists* 199–225; for Porphyry, see A. Smith, *op. cit.*

¹² *De F.* 392eff., *De Is.* 351d, 382b, *De Fac.* 944c.

fashion.¹³ God established, it must be shown how he relates to the world through lower gods and demons. For Plutarch the Logos is the principal intermediary between the intelligible and sensible worlds. He shows this through an allegorization of the two aspects of Osiris.¹⁴ Porphyry thought along similar lines. *Nous* is his principle mediator.¹⁵ Below the primal God and Intelligence Plutarch and Porphyry posited a World Soul,¹⁶ and demons.¹⁷

The demonic level of reality figures prominently in their writings on religion. Demons are the medium for divine communication to humans.¹⁸ Such communication takes a variety of oracular forms; hence, the tremendous importance Plutarch and Porphyry attach to demons and oracles.¹⁹ It is through the demonic that the immaterial and material worlds, mind and matter touch in divine inspiration. It is in the demonic that both explain ancient myths and justify traditional piety.

The gap is filled. Following a hint in the *Symposium*, it is through the *daimones* that God acts. Of compact intelligence and passionate soul, the good ones care for men, give oracles, and appear in visions.²⁰ Among these are the gods of native religions.²¹ Of malevolence and passionate soul, there are also bad or imperfect demons.²² These higher powers are responsible for evil in the world; for Plutarch, at least, they are clients of an evil world soul.²³ They are responsible for superstition. *Deisidaimonia* is fear of the gods and demons brought on by obsession and ignorance. It manifests itself in rites and taboos, consultations with sorcerers, charms and spells, and unintelligible language in prayers addressed to the gods. The only antidote to such thought and activity is rational inquiry and teaching. Thus, Plutarch and Porphyry provide a series of rational interpretations of religion.

¹³ *De Abstinentia*. 2.37, 34, 42, Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 19.22–23.

¹⁴ *De Is.* 373ab.

¹⁵ *Sent.* fr. 5.

¹⁶ Plutarch, *De Is.* 373c; Porphyry, *Sent.* fr. 5.

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Def. Or.* 416c ff.; Porphyry, *Ep. ad An.* 1a–3c.

¹⁸ Plutarch, *Def. Or.* 416c–417b; Porphyry, *De Abstinentia* 2.42.

¹⁹ Each wrote separate works on demons and oracles and included these topics in many of their works.

²⁰ *Co. Apol.* 109ad.

²¹ *De Is.* 361ae.

²² Plutarch, *Def. Or.* 944cd, cf. 415c; Porphyry, *Ep. ad An.* 1.2c–3b.

²³ *De Fac.* 945b, *De Is.* 360dff., 361b, *Def. Or.* 417b. For the evil world soul, cf. *De Is.* 369e, 372c, 373c, *Proc. An.* 1026ef, 1027a. For demonology in Plutarch, see Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 202–24.

The point is a simple one. In addition to literary and rhetorical, philosophical and religious parallels, culture and education linked Plutarch and Porphyry. They fit a social type, and here, perhaps, we find their essential bond. Born in marginal areas of the empire, each moved from the cultural periphery of Roman life to its intellectual centers at Athens and Rome. Schooled in Hellenic *paideia* by the masters, Ammonius, Longinus, and Plotinus, both returned to the geographical peripheries of Chaeroneia and Sicily to serve Hellenism as teachers and propagandists.

Plutarch knew nothing of Christianity, but he loathed impious atheists. The problems raised by the rise of atheism and impiety in the case of Christianity affected Porphyry deeply, and similarly. We see here another link between these men from Tyre and Chaeroneia. Interpreting, reviving, and supporting Mediterranean religions in service to Roman attitudes to the gods was a later Platonic devotion they shared.

It was a pleasure for Plutarch and Porphyry to write on gods, daemons, and oracles; to refute false teachings in an articulate and polemical manner. For these men of later Roman antiquity, Hellenism—and especially its many gods, who hung so close to them in the planets, in the heavenly clusters of the Milky Way, in the majesty of their temples, and in the pomp of their cavalcades and banquets stretching from Egypt and Syria through Greece into Rome—was part of the air they breathed. They taught about such things through punctilious interpretations of the myths of Homer and Plato, as well as the writings of the Egyptians, Zoroastrians, Lydians, Chaldaeans, and Hebrews. They did so in confidence and with a discreet solemnity in the exercise of learned power.

Lucian of Samosata

To Plutarch and Porphyry most Greek, Roman, and Oriental rites were beneficial once interpreted philosophically. For Lucian they were worthless survivals, maintained in an age that had forsaken reason. Except for a few ironical passages, where he presents the gods as complaining of the new barbarian invaders of Olympus, he does not argue that a particular credulity was connected with the cult of certain gods.²⁴ For Lucian belief in any of the gods is depravity,

²⁴ *Deorum concilium* 9, *Juppiter trag.* 8 where the alien gods are described as having much richer statues than the Greek gods.

sans tout. A change of mood was taking place. Lucian anticipated the negative attitudes of Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian toward certain religions—principally Christianity. He was simply more radically sceptical about religion than Plutarch.

Like Plutarch and Porphyry, Lucian was born *in extremis*—around 120 C.E. in the province of Syria at Commagene, in the old imperial city of Samosata.²⁵ The city was far from Rome, but not from Cilicia and Cappadocia, nor from Mesopotamia, Persia, and India. Classically educated, he earned his living by giving lectures in Asia Minor, Athens, Macedonia, Gaul, and the valley of the Po. Trained as a sophist, his specialty was the satirical dialogue on the simple religious believer, not religious myth, the history of religion, or the philosophy of religion.²⁶ After serving as an imperial bureaucrat in Egypt around 170 C.E. he returned to lecturing. He died sometime after the death of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, around 180 C.E.

The works of Lucian were many and varied, composed according to the rhetorical conventions of the day.²⁷ What characterizes them best, perhaps, is their pastiche of verbal dexterity and humor. What results is irony and comedy, especially in his portraits of the gods and the credulous who follow them.

Lucian was an enemy of all belief in the supernatural.²⁸ In the *Dialogues of the Gods*, the *Sea Gods*, and *Zeus Rantes*, he parodies scenes from Homer, the Homeric Hymns, and Alexandrian poetry to humanize the gods. In works like the *Syrian Goddess*, he draws from Herodotus to describe temple, cult, and devotee in hilarious profile. In *Lexiphanes*, the satirist pokes fun at Plato's *Symposium*, for nothing serious is said at all, and in *A True Story*²⁹ he parodies conventional views of the "Isles of the Blessed." In short, institutions, values, and individuals are the butt for humor in Lucian, either as an aspect of reality or fantasy.

²⁵ For an excellent reconstruction of his life and work, see J. Schwartz, *Biographie de Lucien de Samosate* (Brussels 1965); C. Robinson, *Lucian* (London 1979).

²⁶ On the sophists of the period, see G. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1969).

²⁷ For an excellent synopsis of his writings, cf. Robinson, *op. cit.* 4–63.

²⁸ For a short summary of Lucian's attitude toward religion, see M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (2) II (Munich 1961), 559ff.; M. Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse son temps* (Paris 1937), 346ff.; cf. J. Bernays, *Lucian und die Kyniker* (Berlin 1879), 55ff.

²⁹ A lost work described by Photius.

It was to the realm of the foolish that Lucian consigned philosophy. In the *Hermotimus* the climax of the dialectic is the "proof" that philosophy is unnecessary to sensible living; in the *Banquet* and the *Lover of Lies* the propositions of Platonists, Stoics, Aristotelians, and Pythagoreans are lampooned for their vacuity while the philosophers are portrayed as greedy, sexually depraved, quarrelsome, and ego-centric; and in *Philosophers for Sale* he makes fun of philosophy in the abstract with its jumble of contradictory theories.

If Lucian thought much of philosophy foolish, he knew that all of religion was fantastic. Combining sarcasm with burlesque in the mock treatises *On Funerals*, the *Downward Journey*, *Dialogues of the Dead*, the *Dead Come to Life Menippus*, *Charon*, *Icaromenippus*, the *Parliament of the Gods*, *Zeus Rants*, and *On Sacrifices*, Lucian ridiculed the common views of death, immortality, and the meaning of sacrificial rituals by reducing the gods to human status, humans to divine status, and stripping the myths to their least credible details. In his *Peregrinus*, he focused on the vices of a single religious figure to cast cynical aspersions on religion in general.

He knew little about Judaism and only a bit more about Christianity.³⁰ He portrays the Christians as simple-minded folk, fair play for enterprising charlatans like Alexander and Peregrinus.

The review of the gods in the *Parliament of the Gods* satirizes the importance of cults and the cult dramas associated with their divinities. Lucian has Momus attack the Greek deities Dionysus, Pan, Silenus, and then the Egyptian gods Anubis and Apis. The Scythians are said "to deify and elect anyone they fancy as gods."³¹ The example provided is Zalmoxis.³² In *Alexander* minor cults offering methods of personal revelation through initiation ceremonies are criticized,³³ while in *Nigrinus* the ideal-philosopher as oracle-monger and wonder-worker is parodied.³⁴ In *Peregrinus* and *The Runaways* the immolated savant Peregrinus Proteus is held up to ridicule as the classic villain.³⁵

Invective and irony were tools Lucian employed to satirize philosophy and religion. Yet something serious lies behind his deadly

³⁰ For Lucian's appraisal of Judaism, see Stern, op. cit. 221-23; for Christianity, see H. D. Betz, *Lucian von Samasota und das Neue Testament* (Berlin 1961), 5ff.

³¹ *Deorum Concilium* 11.

³² Taken from Herodotus, *Hist.* 4.95.

³³ *Alex.* 38-40.

³⁴ *Nigrinus* 10, 12, 35.

³⁵ *Fugativi* 1-12, 7.

humor. There is a sustained critique of irrational beliefs and practices. It is this that links his critical agenda to Porphyry's own. Both were rationalists.

Lucian criticized philosophy at the level where it was most vulnerable in later antiquity—its inability to offer a straightforward explanation of the universe, explain the place of the species in the order of things, and propose a clear-cut program of ethical behavior. Philosophy was in danger of becoming a sub-form of rhetoric where the validity of its propositions could not be proven either by coherence or correspondence theories of truth. Porphyry was sensitive to this problem. Like Lucian, he had little patience for sects that could not demonstrate the coherence of their propositions. Following Plotinus, he attempted to fix the Platonic philosophy on firm foundations by linking its maxims to a coherent metaphysical system that corresponded to reality. His goal was to establish a philosophical view of reality based on reason alone.

The reaction against rationalism was pervasive among the intelligentsia of the second and third centuries. Its broader consequences were social. The Olympian cult illustrates this. By the imperial era it continued to have an official and symbolic significance, but it was no more metaphysically persuasive than the Roman imperial cult or other Hellenistic cults. Lucian saw this and attempted to undermine the traditional religions by parodying them through reason. Porphyry also saw the problem, but his approach was decidedly different. He attempted a remedy rehabilitating religion, arguing that most cults were compatible with reason because they retained pure notions of the divine.

The criticisms of Lucian and Porphyry of religion not only mirror an age, they also present rational antidotes to major trends of the age. What Lucian says about all religions, Porphyry says largely about only one. But the point is, their critiques are identically rational. They belong to the stock in trade of Cynic invectives against religion.

An examination of Lucian's comments on Christianity bear this out.³⁶ More amused than angry, he highlights their style of life. The Christians are characterized as communalists famous for their credulity and gullibility. We are told that the charlatan Peregrinus became a member of the church for no other reason than to exploit their simple-mindedness.

³⁶ *De Morte Peregrini*, 11–13, 16.

The poor wretches have convinced themselves . . . that they are going to be immortal and live for all time . . . They despise all things indiscriminately and consider them common property, receiving such doctrines traditionally without any definite evidence. So if any trickster, able to profit by occasions, comes among them, he quickly acquires sudden wealth by imposing on simple folk.³⁷

Christian doctrines and rituals were so commonplace they do not warrant satirization by Lucian. Unlike the simple-minded Paphlagonians in his *Alexander*, they had no literary pedigree as symbols of their gullibility. Hence, he did not satirize these aspects of the Christian cult.

It is in Lucian's *Alexander* that we encounter a philosophical critique of a cult that closely resembles Celsus's rebuke of Christianity in *True Word* and Porphyry's criticism of Christianity in *Philosophy from Oracles*. As such it bears examination.

Commissioned by an Epicurean after the deaths of Marcus Aurelius and Alexander Severus (c.180 C.E.),³⁸ *Alexander* is an attack on a historical figure and his founding of the cult and oracle of Glycon at Abonuteichus in Paphlagonia.³⁹ Written to denigrate the memory of the man who founded a religious center, and to undermine the credibility of a relatively new and flourishing religion, Lucian portrays Alexander's cult as the worst example of the new type of revelatory religion emerging in his day. It assimilates its god Glycon to Asclepius by the process of divine reincarnation in the figure of Alexander. The *deus revivendus* is called king and lord,⁴⁰ an inspired prophet and god;⁴¹ one who heals,⁴² presents oracles,⁴³ and who has mysteries complete with a cult-drama.⁴⁴ The choice of Glycon, Asclepius, and Alexander as well as the hysterical superstition that conflated them into an intolerant, absolutist *theokrasia* angered Lucian.⁴⁵ This was an

³⁷ Ibid. 13.

³⁸ *Alexander* 1, 61. This could be Celsus, whom Origen identified as an Epicurean living during the reign of Antoninus Pius. Cf. M. Caster, *Etudes sur Alexandre* (Paris 1938).

³⁹ If Alexander Severus's persecution of many Epicureans, including the proconsul P. Mummius Sisenna Rutilianus (172 C.E.) is accurate. Cf. *Alexander* 38, 43–46.

⁴⁰ *Alexander* 40, 43.

⁴¹ Ibid. 12, 13f.

⁴² Ibid. 22.

⁴³ Ibid. 26ff.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 38–40.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 38, 43–46.

extreme example of the *alogos* character of Roman religion, criticisms that would be voiced by Celsus⁴⁶ and Porphyry.⁴⁷

For Lucian, Alexander is the late Roman *parvenue*. From the outset he is compared to Pythagoras. According to the story, Alexander is the friend of Pythagoras;⁴⁸ he presents his eschatology in astral terminology;⁴⁹ he explains his divine powers in a Pythagorean way—he flashes a golden thigh while conducting the mysteries, and he claims in part to be Pythagoras incarnate.⁵⁰

Like Peregrinus, Alexander, is a new social type. Both are figures that Lucian enjoyed denigrating, but not for mere literary play. Lucian was in sympathy with later Epicureans, and Cynics; Celsus and Porphyry with later Platonists who were advocates of *Romanitas*. Hence, Lucian attacked all religions, while Celsus and Porphyry principally critiqued Christianity. Each spoke from the vantage point of a defender of a Helleno-Roman cultural tradition that valued rationality as the criterion for a legitimate philosophy and religion.⁵¹ *Lucian's Alexander* and *Peregrinus* mirrors Galen's writings on Jews and Christians, and anticipate compositions such as Celsus's *Aletheia Logos*, Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, and Julian's *Against the Galilaeans*.

Lucian's writings were appropriate for second-century audiences from Syria to Gaul who had their reservations about Roman religion and philosophy. Their value is not only their apparent immediacy to local events and figures, but also their critical appraisal of religious cults. This fact about Lucian anticipates Galen, Celsus, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Julian, who placed themselves within the context of a broad cultural critique of Greco-Roman philosophy and religion—particularly Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism.

Galen

Galen was born in Pergamum, located in the Chalcis valley in western Asia Minor in 130 C.E. He began his study of philosophy and

⁴⁶ The phenomenon was widespread. Origen quotes the claim of Celsus that many Greeks and non-Greeks were followers of such cult figures and their mediated visions. Cf. *C. Cels.* 3.24.

⁴⁷ Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 19.23.

⁴⁸ *Alexander* 25.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 40. Alexander espouses the moon as the symbolic image of himself.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 40.

⁵¹ See A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford 1933), 15.

medicine in 146 C.E., and two years later went to Smyrna to attend the lectures of Pelops, a celebrated physician. In search of knowledge he traveled through Greece, Cilicia, Phoenicia, Palestine, Crete, Cyprus, and Alexandria. He later left for Alexandria in 152 C.E. and Pergamum in 158 C.E. to study medicine. He settled in Rome in 161–62 C.E. and became friends of the consul Boethus, and the future emperor Severus who was the uncle of Lucius. He met Marcus Aurelius and was asked to serve in the Germanic wars. This he avoided by attending to the health of the future emperor Commodus. Little is known of his later life. A witness to the fire of 191 C.E., he remained in Rome until the end of the century, for he was still lecturing during the reign of Pertinax. He probably died in Pergamum or Sicily in 200 C.E.

Galen was the author of some five hundred works on philosophy, religion, medicine, and comedy. His legacy, however, is that of the physician who wrote extensive works in anatomy and physiology.⁵² He is also known as an early commentator on Judaism⁵³ and Christianity.⁵⁴

Like Plutarch, Lucian, and Porphyry, Galen was a *provincialis* who later became an *urbanus*; a man born at the periphery of the empire before he settled at its centers—Alexandria, Rome, and Pergamum. In this milieu he mastered the arts of medicine, philosophy, and religion. Like Pliny and Lucian, he is one of the earliest Roman witnesses to Judaism and Christianity. None of them wrote separate treatises on Jews and Christians, however. Christians were mentioned in the course of discussing political and religious concerns.⁵⁵

Galen offers something new. His criticisms of Jewish and Christian teachings appear in his works *On the Usefulness of Parts of the Body* and *On the Pulse*.⁵⁶ His comments on Jews and Christians are framed

⁵² For Galen the physician, see L. Edelstein, *Ancient Medicine* (Baltimore 1987). For Galen the physician and philosopher, see M. Frede, *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Minneapolis 1987), 279–300.

⁵³ For an assessment of Galen's critique of Judaism, see Stern, op. cit. 306–28.

⁵⁴ For a study of Galen's references to Judaism and Christianity, see R. Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London 1949).

⁵⁵ For an analysis of Galen on Jews and Christians, see R. Wilken *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 68–93.

⁵⁶ There are also two Arabic passages. The first reference is from Galen's lost work on Hippocrates's *Anatomy*. The second quotation is from Galen's work against the theology of Aristotle. Both mention that Jews do not offer proofs for their teachings. The *De usu partium* only mentions Moses, not Christ. However, since Jews and Christians are mentioned together elsewhere, it is likely that his philosophical crit-

within the context of his studies on medical topics in a treatise on physiology in connection with the physician Archigenes, who had a theory of the pulse.⁵⁷ He refers to Judaism and Christianity with the term "school" and characterizes both as philosophies that appealed to faith and the authority of their teachers to demonstrate their propositions.⁵⁸ Although Galen finds Jewish and Christian teachings incompatible with reason, nowhere does he make carping remarks about either religion.

Galen argued that Archigenes's theory was devoid of careful investigation and sound reasoning. He claimed that these traits in Archigenes link the physician with Jews and Christians.⁵⁹ Each lacks the capacity to provide a cogent demonstration for what they propose. Thus, hearing Archigenes is like listening to those in:

the school [*diatribe*] of Moses and Christ and hearing talk of undemonstrated laws.⁶⁰

There are physicians:

who practice medicine without scientific knowledge . . . who framed laws for the tribe of Israel, since it is his method in his books to write without offering proofs, saying "God commanded, God spoke."⁶¹

A familiar rationalist critique emerges. Galen notices these two religions not because they are intellectually novel or socially revolutionary, but because they offer explanations of reality on the basis of undemonstrated arguments. The followers of Moses and Christ are rationally moribund. Their sages do not meet the minimal criteria appropriate to philosophers, let alone physicians.

We have seen this critique before—in Lucian's parody of philosophers and the maxims of philosophical schools.⁶² There is this tendency to appeal to oracular tradition and personalities, and not to reasoned investigation.⁶³

icism of Judaism applies to Christianity as well. Cf. Walzer, op. cit. 24–37. All the texts can be found in Walzer, op. cit. 10–16. The Arabic passages are in Walzer, op. cit. 11, 15.

⁵⁷ *De pulsuum differentiis*, 2.4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 3.3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 3.3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 2.4.

⁶¹ *Anat. Hipp.* 3.4.

⁶² *Vitarum auctio* 2.449–511.

⁶³ *Hermotimus* 16, 27.

People admire this or that particular physician or philosopher without proper study of their subject and without a training in scientific demonstration, with the help of which they would be able to distinguish between false and true arguments; some do this because of the fathers, others because of their teachers, others because they were impressed by an exemplary life, because someone in their family belonged to a particular school, because of ties of marriage or friendship, or similar reasons. Joining a philosophical school, different people have for different reasons become Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics, or Epicureans.⁶⁴

As a promoter of a god who is the creator of the universe, Galen thought there existed a relationship between the demiurge and the created universe in all its parts. His god mirrors the Hellenic principle that *physis* is determined by divine design.⁶⁵ His studies on anatomy, physiology, and physics pointed to this proposition. The value of medicine and philosophy was that it provided rational demonstrations to support this fact.⁶⁶

In his medical and philosophical investigations he noted that some view creation differently. Among these is the Mosaic account of creation.⁶⁷ According to Galen, the deficiencies of the Genesis account lie in the assumptions that creation was an act of divine will and that God created a universe out of what did not already exist. Both teachings contradict Greek cosmological doctrine: that creation is an act of a divine intellect shaping preexisting matter into a cosmos.⁶⁸

Viewed from the perspective of Galen's demiurgic theology and cosmology, the Mosaic theology and cosmogony are very primitive indeed. For Galen the opinion of Moses is in error because it does not follow the right method in assessing nature or its creator. Jews and Christians assume that an omnipotent god willed the arrangement of matter.⁶⁹

If the Genesis account is read carefully, deity is a willful principle who created a world that defies the laws of nature:

⁶⁴ *Libr. ord.* = Walzer, op. cit. 19–20.

⁶⁵ Cf., e.g., Plutarch, *De An. Proc.* 1014b, Celsus, *C. Cels.* 5.14.

⁶⁶ *De usu partium* 11.2.3, 11.5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 11.4.

⁶⁸ Galen accepted the middle Platonic views of a demiurgic creation. Cf. *Tim.* 28a–32c. For an excellent account of this theory in the time of Galen, see J. P. Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism*, 1–90, esp. 1–57.

⁶⁹ According to Walzer, "It is appreciated that Moses retained the *causa movens* by introducing the demiurge as a principle of becoming, but he is censured for having omitted the *causa materialis*..." op. cit. 16.

It is precisely this point [i.e., that God could have made a man out of a stone if he had wished to do so] in which our own opinion and that of Plato and the other Greeks who follow the correct method in natural science differ from the position taken up by Moses. For the latter it seems enough to say that God simply willed the arrangement of matter and it was presently arranged in due order; for he believes everything to be possible with God, even should he wish to make a bull or a horse out of ashes. We, however, do not hold this; we say that certain things are impossible by nature and that God does not even attempt such things at all but that he chooses the best out of the possibilities of becoming. . . . We say thus that God is the cause both of the choice of the best in the products of creation themselves and of the selection of the matter.⁷⁰

Galen's criticisms of Genesis would be echoed later by Celsus⁷¹ and Porphyry.⁷² That the world-order and its designer follow perfectly rational principles according to nature, and that the demiurge is non-anthropomorphic were fundamental Hellenic doctrine. That the universe and its creator are beyond the laws of nature, and that God created the world at will are contrary to reason. Moreover, such propositions are beyond demonstration.

It was the *alogos* character of the biblical religions that struck them. Christians in particular were viewed as dogmatic and uncritical in their thinking, unwilling to submit their teacher and teachings to critical examination.

Nonetheless, by the mid-second century Judaism and Christianity had begun to make an impact on Roman intellectuals. Galen was the first Hellenic author who defined these religions as schools and who approached their teachings as a philosophy. His curiosity helped prepare the way for both to be taken seriously in intellectual circles. Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian could do no less than recognize what Galen wrought.

Celsus

Around 170 C.E., during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a work against Christianity called *True Doctrine* appeared.⁷³ Its author was Celsus, an

⁷⁰ *De usu partium* 11.14.

⁷¹ *C. Cels.* 5.14.

⁷² Macarius Magnes, *Apoc.* 4.2, 4.24.

⁷³ For the dating of the work during the last years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius c. 176-80 C.E., see T. Keim, *Celsus' "Wahres Wort"* (Zuerich 1873), 261ff.; Andresen,

unknown middle Platonic philosopher of the period.⁷⁴ The writing did not survive the war of pamphlets between Hellenes and Christians in late antiquity. It exists only in fragments as preserved by the Christian Origen in his *Contra Celsum*.⁷⁵

Celsus's philosophical and religious thought reflects that of the educated Roman of his time. He is an adherent of philosophical monotheism who was committed to the traditional cultic polytheism of Roman religion.⁷⁶

Celsus knew his Judaism and Christianity well. His assessment of the first was largely determined by his hostility toward the second. This is clear from his arguments against Judaism.⁷⁷ These include its historical messianism, religious anthropocentrism, philosophical creationism, and the low social status of its adherents.

The *True Doctrine* pullulates with a critique of Christianity on three broad fronts: political, social, and philosophical.⁷⁸ Its author viewed Christianity as a marginal political and social movement devoid of any rational principles for articulating a coherent ideological agenda. This is clear from Celsus's comparison of Christians with the followers of Cybele, Mithras, Sabazius, and Bacchus;⁷⁹ as a gullible and credulous people who espouse a naive fideism and an uncompromising ability to refuse to subject their teachings to reasoned analysis and lucid argumentation.⁸⁰

Celsus knew the writings of the evangelists and the early Church fathers. Anticipating Porphyry, he noted the propositions Christians used to argue they were the heirs to Judaism and the embarrassing

op. cit. 309; H. Chadwick, *Contra Celsum* (Oxford 1963), XXXVff.; and J. M. Vermander, *Revue des études augustinienes* 18 (1972), 27 n. 2. Others date it from the reign of Antoninus Pius, cf. J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* II (London 1889), 350f.; from the 160s c.e., cf. J. Schwartz, *Revue d'histoire et le philosophie religieuse* 60 (1960) 126ff.; H. U. Rosenbaum, *VC* 26 (1972), 102ff.

⁷⁴ The personality of Celsus remains unknown. Origen thought him an Epicurean, cf. *C. Cels.* 1.10, 2.60, 3.80; then he wavered, *ibid.* 4.4, 54, 75, 5.3. It has been suggested that Celsus was a Roman official; see O. Glueckner, *Philologus* 82 (1927), 351.

⁷⁵ *C. Cels.* Praef. 4. For an edition of the work, see Borret, op. cit. For an analysis of the writing, see Andresen, op. cit.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of his beliefs, see Andresen, op. cit. 108ff.

⁷⁷ For an excellent assessment of the Jewish dimensions of the work, cf. Stern, op. cit. 224–31, 293–305.

⁷⁸ Andresen proposes that Celsus's work was a response to the writings of Justin Martyr. Andresen, op. cit. 308ff. Cf. H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford 1966), 133.

⁷⁹ *C. Cels.* 3.17, 4.10.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 1.9, 3.55, 5.61–62.

fact that Jews rejected their claim.⁸¹ He knew the gospel accounts of Jesus' career, certain aspects of Christian worship and practice, and the role resurrection played in Christian belief.⁸² Celsus also knew that Christian intellectuals were sensitive to philosophically grounded attacks on the faith.⁸³

Again his criticism was a familiar one—the *alogos* character of Christianity. This fact makes it impossible for any sensible man to place its teachings within the boundaries of rational religion. But to this Celsus added another one—the *anomos* character of Christianity. This is stated plainly in the following arguments.

First, Christians are not philosophical monotheists or even cultic polytheists. They stand against the philosophical view that there is only a single deity⁸⁴ by worshiping Jesus as a god.⁸⁵ They also refuse to accept the popular notion that the one high god stands at the top and manifests his divinity through a pantheon of lesser gods, demons, and heroes.⁸⁶ These *lacunae* not only raised serious theoretical problems about Christianity but also political ones. By worshiping Jesus as a second god, Christians denied a single ruler and source for all things.⁸⁷ We will discuss the political and social dimensions of Celsus's critique more fully below.

Second, Christians think all things possible of god who stands beyond the laws of reason and nature. This becomes clear in Genesis, where a deity haphazardly creates a universe over a six-day span.⁸⁸ Add to this the belief that god can reverse natural processes, such as the decay or resurrection of the body,⁸⁹ and what one encounters is an outrageous religion presided over by god who is contrary to reason.⁹⁰ Such a deity, Celsus argued, was unworthy of devotion.

⁸¹ *C. Cels.* 2.1, 2.4, 2.11, 2.28, 7.18.

⁸² Particularly his birth, baptism, teachings and miracles, death, and resurrection. Cf. *C. Cels.* 1.28, 1.32, 1.41, 2.55.

⁸³ Celsus's polemic is nicely summarized by Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 94–125.

⁸⁴ *C. Cels.* 5.41.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 8.14. Celsus thought divine adoration not applicable to Jesus. He was a magician, not a divine man or hero. Cf. *ibid.* 7.53. For an excellent study on these issues, see E. V. Gallagher, *Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus* Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series, no. 64 (Chico CA 1982).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 8.66.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 8.68.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 6.60.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 8.49.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 5.14.

Third, Christians improbably assume that god came down from the heavens to live among men.⁹¹ This is not rationally possible because Hellenic philosophical teaching on the relation of mind to matter makes this an unreasonable proposition.⁹² Moreover, it contradicts Christian teaching that god the father is an omnipotent, omniscient, spiritual being.⁹³

Fourth, even where one agrees with its doctrines, such as the notion of the highest good and notions about the origin of the world and immortality,⁹⁴ these are better expressed by the Greeks than the Christians.⁹⁵ The Christian injunction to turn the other cheek and not to harm others was originally expressed by Plato, not Jesus.⁹⁶

Fifth, Celsus was the first critic of Christianity to give careful attention to the New Testament accounts of Jesus. This was the power of his critique. It not only concerned itself with theoretical issues, it also focused on historical and literary problems concerning the credibility of Christian claims about Jesus. Here his critique stands close to Porphyry's own.

Celsus's reflections on Jesus' life and death are chiefly literary and historical. His critique focuses on: the virgin birth, his baptism by John, his miracles and teachings, and his death and resurrection. He attempted to show that there was insufficient evidence from the sources to support that any of these things historically occurred. This permitted Celsus to pursue his central thesis—that Jesus' life and death show that he was a magician, not a sage or a god. Here his critique parts from Porphyry's.

Anticipating Hierocles and Julian, Celsus argued that Jesus was a magician,⁹⁷ that his followers practiced magic, and that the Christian writings contained magical formula.⁹⁸ Charges of magic functioned to define Christianity as an illegal social movement and to undermine Christian religious claims about the divinity of Jesus.⁹⁹

The remaining fragments suggest that Celsus crafted his arguments carefully. To demonstrate the efficacy of his proposal that Jesus was

⁹¹ Ibid. 4.2.

⁹² Ibid. 4.14.

⁹³ Ibid. 4.2.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 6.4–5, 6.49–50.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 6.1.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 7.58.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 1.6, 1.38, 1.68.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 6.40.

⁹⁹ Gallagher, *op. cit.*

a magician, he claimed that Jesus fabricated the story of his miraculous birth because he was born of a soldier named Panthera.¹⁰⁰ Convicted of adultery, Mary was driven out of her village by her husband. Secretly, she gave birth to Jesus.¹⁰¹ Later in life, Jesus immigrated to Egypt where he learned magic. After acquiring these powers, he called himself by the title Son of God.¹⁰²

The source of Celsus's information remains unknown.¹⁰³ What is clear, however, is that Celsus presented his story as a Jewish criticism, claiming that the gospel evidence about Jesus was only rumor, that it was historically unreliable, and that readers would be better served by evidence from sources written by those other than Christians. Their stories were composed by biased interpreters of Jesus. The remarkable events concerning the baptism of Jesus illustrated this for Celsus:

When you were bathing near John, you say you saw what appeared to be a bird fly toward you out of the air. . . . What trustworthy witness saw this apparition, or who heard a voice from heaven adopting you as Son of God? There is no proof except your word and the evidence which you may produce of one of the men punished with you.¹⁰⁴

Celsus's critique and Origen's reply circle around the delicate issue of the reliability and verifiability of sources. Christians cannot produce reliable witnesses to the events they claim took place. Celsus's point is that since the story of Jesus' baptism and resurrection come only from Christian sources, suspicion should be the hermeneutical criterion for accepting their efficacy or not.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, what the Christians say about Jesus, others have said about their gods and heroes.

The paper war had been escalated by Celsus beyond anything suggested by Lucian and Galen. His concern about historical verification from literary sources will be encountered in all its severity later with Porphyry. These conservative intellectuals employed radical critical methods to discredit an unreasoning, untraditional faith. The operable criteria of coherence for any religion was that it had to be rational

¹⁰⁰ *C. Cels.* 1.28.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 1.32.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 1.28.

¹⁰³ H. Chadwick, *Contra Celsum* (Cambridge 1953), 31.

¹⁰⁴ *C. Cels.* 1.41.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 2.55.

and traditional. Christianity met none of these criteria, while many others did, including for Celsus that peculiar religion, Judaism.¹⁰⁶

That Christianity was not part of the political and social landscape of Roman religion was the most serious charge Celsus could hurl *Against the Christians*. To serve the emperor as soldiers was their duty.¹⁰⁷ To serve the empire as officials was their piety.¹⁰⁸ Christians neglected this *fides* and *pietas* for what they thought were higher ones.¹⁰⁹ They were, in the words of Celsus, a seditious and revolutionary people.¹¹⁰ They had revolted against the ancestral customs of the Greco-Roman world.¹¹¹ Christianity was an impious religion. It had abandoned customs that have existed for all peoples from the beginning of time; traditions that supported the *divus* of the emperor.¹¹² Strong words. Christianity was not only characterized by Celsus in the language of Lucian and Galen—*alogos*. But a new word appears with Celsus—*anomos*—a term later favored by Porphyry.

The arguments of Celsus and Porphyry are simple ones: all other religions, those of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Indians, Persians, Odrysians, Samothracians, Eleusinians, and even the Jews, preserve and promote ancient custom and tradition.¹¹³ Christian custom goes back only a mere century. Christian tradition only reflects an irrational faith. Its beliefs are based on the transgression of the *nomoi* of Judaism and Hellenism.¹¹⁴ They do not represent what Christians think—a divinely sanctioned faith.

These accusations carried with them a great and present danger. If followed, Celsus argued, the teachings of the Christians would lead to the abandonment of the emperor, and the loss of an empire to "lawless and savage barbarians"¹¹⁵—to peoples whom the Emperor and Celsus were tenaciously fighting. In a time when a Roman emperor and his legions were fighting wars from Gaul and Dacia to Syria and Parthia to preserve the *imperium Romanum*, Celsus's attack against the enemy within to preserve *Romanitas* could not have been

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 3.5, 5.25.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 8.73.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 8.75.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 8.17.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 8.2.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 8.2, 7.62, 7.68, 8.63.

¹¹² Ibid. 5.26.

¹¹³ Ibid. 5.35.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Andresen, op. cit. 223–24; Wilken, op. cit. 117–25.

¹¹⁵ *C. Cels.* 8.68.

more serious or deadly than those of Marcus Aurelius against the enemies without—at least if one were a Christian.

We need to remember the public life of Rome and the Empire when Celsus wrote. Standing in the shadow of Marcus Aurelius, he was convinced that Fate had vouchsafed the state from civil strife and foreign wars. Wars, victories, triumphs, the subjugation of dreaded tribes, the saving of Italy, and the safety of its people—all this is reflected in the title of Celsus's work, *True Doctrine*. Political loyalty (*fides*) was inclusive of Roman piety (*religio*).

Restitutio in integrum meant that all peoples and traditions within the empire be loyal to Rome, its traditional gods, and its divine emperor. Standing outside these boundaries Christians were seditious and traitorous, argued Celsus. They were no different than the Germans, Sarmatians, Marcomanni, or the Quadi; its leaders not distinct from Avidius Cassius.

But what did Marcus Aurelius, the emperor, think? As with the flourish of trumpets the coins of the realm tell us of the "providence of the gods" and the "felicity of the age." Be it coins or pamphlets, the proclamation centers on the fame and status of the Emperor, the tradition and integrity of the Empire.¹¹⁶ Thus, when the reign of Marcus ended its first decade in 171 C.E., the divinities of Rome, Juppiter, Mars, Roma, Minerva, the patron goddess of his joint rule with Antoninus, appear again on the coins. Salus had guarded him, a Hercules crowned by Victory had been at his side bringing peace.

What Augustus and Claudius planned, and what Vespasian, Trajan, and Hadrian inaugurated, Marcus Aurelius instituted. The harmony of the world was conceived in political and intellectual terms, for it rested on a culture that was international. Rome was a universal empire under an absolute emperor. The emperor is the ruler of a great state of reason, the providentially guided controller of "a universal constitution in which the whole race of men have a share."¹¹⁷

In his final years Marcus Aurelius wrote that Romans should not hope for Plato's *Republic*.

¹¹⁶ The numismatic tradition for the reign of Marcus Aurelius is found in Mattingly-Sydenham, op. cit. vol. 3 194-355; Strack, op. cit. iii; and Vogt, op. cit. 2 64ff., 1 122ff. Also see Volume of Plates v 130. For the literary history, see *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*—Marcus Antoninus, Verus, Avidius Cassius, Commodus Antoninus, and Dio lxx-xxi.

¹¹⁷ *Med.* 3.11. cf. 1.14, 6.44, 4.4.

Be content if the least thing goes forward and consider the issue even of this as no small thing.¹¹⁸

In the case of religion, several things went forward that were no small thing. To the claim that all men could be citizens of a unified empire was added the claim that their gods could be Roman deities as well. Even the gods of the remote regions of the *imperium Romanum* were made equal with Jupiter Optimus Maximus. Shortly after his father's death, Commodus united the gods of the Roman pantheon under a single lord. His *Jupiter summus exsuperantissimus* transcended the idea of a god of the state and became the center of a universal system of divinities. To this system belonged the alien gods whose rites Commodus practiced. Worshipped were not only the venerable Palatine Apollo, Minerva, and Augusta, but also Sarapis, Magna Mater, Isis, and Sol invictus. Even Commodus is worshipped as Hercules. After all, the emperor was the devout mediator between the divine and human worlds.

The religious policies of the Severi were continued by Septimius. He married Julia Domna, daughter of a Syrian high priest, and introduced Syrian cults at court, especially the cult of Sol invictus. Emperors from Septimius to Diocletian extended the policy of Commodus concerning the divinity of the emperor.

The Christian attitude toward these developments remains unknown. Past precedents suggest they could hardly have concurred with them. After Septimius the empire was wracked by internal strife and external wars. As we have seen, in such an environment Christians suffered for their *impietas*. The persecutions of Decius (250–251 C.E.), Valerian (257–260), and the Diocletian, Galerius, and Maximin Daia (298–313 C.E.) illustrated this.

Marcus Aurelius had told his fellow citizens they could not hope to live in Plato's *Republic*.¹¹⁹ Some Roman intellectuals thought it possible in a manner unacceptable to the Stoic emperor. Among the first Platonists to propose a utopian rather than a locative definition of the *politeia* was Plotinus,¹²⁰ the teacher of Porphyry.¹²¹ Their attempts

¹¹⁸ *Med.* 9.29.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ This was probably due to his journey in Gordian's unfortunate expedition to Persia. Barely escaping with his life, Plotinus left the *politeia* of the Caesars for the *politeia* of the Academy. Cf. Porphyry, *V. Pl.* 3.15–22.

¹²¹ Porphyry, *V. Pl.* 4.1–3.

to attain such heights differed. Plotinus was a philosopher. Porphyry, a historical and literary critic, became a philosopher. Porphyry's *politeia* was both locative and utopian, encompassing all of reality including the political. This difference in political scope should not suggest a vast discrepancy in the philosophical thrust of teacher and student. As mentor, Plotinus had a lasting impact on Porphyry.

Plotinus

Plotinus was born in 204 or 205 C.E., during the last years of the reign of the aged Septimius Severus, and died in 270 C.E., during the second year of the brief *imperator* of Claudius.¹²² The profile is a familiar one.¹²³ It mirrors those of Plutarch, Lucian, and Galen and foreshadows that of Porphyry.

Born in the periphery of the empire at Lycopolis in Upper Egypt,¹²⁴ he would die near its center as the head of Rome's most influential philosophical school.¹²⁵ Until 243 C.E. he studied philosophy at Alexandria under Ammonius Saccas.¹²⁶ Then he joined the ill-fated Persian expedition of Gordian to meet the sages of the east.¹²⁷ After the emperor's assassination in Mesopotamia, Plotinus fled to Antioch and proceeded to Rome where he remained until his death on a visit to Campania.¹²⁸

While in Rome Plotinus was not only a teacher of students but a patron of the emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina (260–268 C.E.). Clearly one with aristocratic and ascetic leanings,¹²⁹ Plotinus was intent on establishing a community of philosophers in Campania

¹²² Ibid. 2.29–31. For the chronology of Plotinus's life, see T. D. Barnes, "The Chronology of Plotinus' Life," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 17 (1976), 65–70.

¹²³ For studies on Plotinus's life and thought. Cf. H. R. Schwyzler, "Plotinos" *RE* 21.1 (Stuttgart 1951), col. 471–592; A. H. Armstrong, "Plotinus" in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, edited by A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge 1967), 195–263; P. Hadot, "Etre, vic, pensee chez Plotin et avant Plotin" in *Les sources de Plotin Entretiens sur l'Antiquite Classique* (Fondation Hardt; Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1960), 5:107–41.

¹²⁴ Eunapius, *VS* 455; David *In. Isag.* 91.23ff., cf. Proclus, *PT* 1.1.6.19–20. There is some question as to the reliability of these sources concerning Plotinus's birthplace.

¹²⁵ *V. Pl.* 2.29–31.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 3.6–21.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 3.15–22.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 3.22–35, 4.9–11.

¹²⁹ *Emm.*, 2.9.9.6–11, 7.31–36, cf. *Emm.* 1.5.10.15–18, 6.9.7.26–28.

to be called Platonopolis and governed according to Plato's *Laws*.¹³⁰ His plans were upset with the assassination of Gallienus and the further devolution of the empire into political anarchy.

His inner circle of students included Amelius,¹³¹ Eustochius, and Porphyry, and he had a wider circle of admirers made up of senators and even some women.¹³² He lived and taught while in Rome, at the house of the widow Gemina. He even found time to look after senatorial orphans entrusted to his care.¹³³

Plotinus left none of his own writings to posterity. What we know of his teachings are preserved by Porphyry in the *Enneads*.¹³⁴ These are compendia of oral teachings and lecture notes. Their contents circle around three points: individual philosophical problems; passages from Plato and Aristotle and their history of interpretation from the commentators; and oral discussions in the form of a dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor.¹³⁵

The writings themselves lack stylistic and grammatical polish, and they often digress episodically.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, the *Enneads* present themselves as a thematic whole even if they are written in a kind of philosophical shorthand.¹³⁷ Moreover, they present a coherent picture of Plotinus's thought because Porphyry edited them in systematic order according to subject matter, progressing from the easier to the more difficult questions.¹³⁸

What can be culled from the *Life of Plotinus* is Porphyry's admiration for Plotinus—principally his social pedigree, psychological attitude, and philosophical decorum. As a visitor to Rome and Plotinus from Athens and Longinus, Porphyry must have been deeply impressed.¹³⁹

¹³⁰ *V. Pl.* 12.

¹³¹ See Armstrong's discussion of Aemilius in A. H. Armstrong, "Iamblichus and Egypt," *Les études philosophiques* 2-3 (Paris 1987), 188. For Aemilius's prestige in Plotinus's circle, see G. Fowden, "The pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society," *JHS* 102 (1982), 33-59.

¹³² *Ibid.* 7.29ff., 9.1-5.

¹³³ *Ibid.* 9.5-15.

¹³⁴ These were edited thirty years after Plotinus's death and just before Porphyry's own demise. Cf. P. Henry, *Etudes Plotiniennes: 1 Les états du texte de Plotin* Museum Lessianum Section Philol (Paris-Brussels 1938), 20.

¹³⁵ For a discussion of the content of the *Enneads*, see H. R. Schwyzler, "Plotinos," *RE* 21.1 (1951), cols. 471-592, esp. 512-30.

¹³⁶ Note the criticisms of Longinus, cf. *V. Pl.* 19.19ff., 20.5-9.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* 13.1-2, 14.17.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 24.11-16.

¹³⁹ On Plotinus as portrayed by Porphyry, see L. Brisson, M. O. Goulet-Caze, R. Goulet, and D. O'Brien, *Porphyry: La Vie de Plotin* (Paris 1982).

Stunned by the bustle of the great city, in a brilliant setting of public buildings, he came upon a quiet circle of philosophers led by Plotinus. In Plotinian fashion he was soon converted.¹⁴⁰

It was not only Plotinus's ethical attitude and intellectual brilliance that captivated Porphyry. His political and social training must have impressed him as well. Traditional Roman piety pullulates beneath the surface of the *Enneads*. Plotinus advocated service to god and cosmos, to *logos* and *nomos*.

Born an Egyptian outsider, Plotinus became a Roman insider through his quiet and attractive manner, his serious and simple nature, his distaste for fashionable and cheap success, the loftiness of his ideas, the strictness with which he followed his philosophic principles, the force and passion of his words, and his genuine enthusiasm for knowledge and disinterest in ignorance. He cast a halo around himself by earning the admiration of senators and even an emperor. He was also a man who through the exercise of intellect was able to reach ecstasy, to gain communion and identification with the One.

The question arises now: what kind of *religio* and *pietas* did Plotinus offer to humanity?¹⁴¹ It is fair to say it was a rarified one. The only true religion for Plotinus was philosophical religion. The nonphilosophical ideas of the masses were no more than pale expressions of a higher truth.¹⁴²

Neoplatonic religion is a complex phenomenon inclusive of ontological, epistemological, and psychological theories. To enter this demimonde it might be helpful to begin from the sensible realm through the medium of Plotinian aesthetics. Porphyry drew deeply from this well to articulate his views of religion and theurgy.¹⁴³

Plotinus stolidly maintained the priority and superiority of intellection over perception as laying the foundations for physics, and subsequently for psychology and epistemology.¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, his

¹⁴⁰ C. Corrigan, "Body and Soul in Ancient Religious Experience" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 360-83.

¹⁴¹ For a recent account of Plotinus's philosophic religion, see Kenney, *op. cit.* 91-149.

¹⁴² P. Hadot, *art. cit.* "Neoplatonist Spirituality" 230-49.

¹⁴³ R. M. Berchman, "Rationality and Ritual in Plotinus and Porphyry," *Incognita* 2.2 (1991).

¹⁴⁴ On Plotinus's psychology and epistemology there are many works. For recent studies, see H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology* (The Hague 1971), 8-66; 67-133; cf. J. M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (Cambridge 1967), 410-22.

view of the plastic arts is decidedly novel.¹⁴⁵ First, he claims that art is a visible expression of ideal beauty.¹⁴⁶ Second, he asserts that the ideas of beauty exist in the human soul.¹⁴⁷ Third, he claims that the imagination is the mental faculty through which the soul gains initial awareness of ideal beauty.¹⁴⁸ Fourth, this aesthetic awareness leads, eventually, to knowledge of the ideas of beauty, if not the beautiful itself.¹⁴⁹ Fifth, and perhaps most important, he claims that the arts are a means for the soul to reverse a situation of misfortune—her descent into corporeality. For through the arts and the aesthetic imagination the soul regains her awareness of her intelligible origins and, consequently, begins her ascent from sensibility to intelligibility.¹⁵⁰

Plotinus's powerful defense of aesthetics is, accordingly, based on something far more profound than a reappraisal of the value of the plastic arts themselves. For the origin of all symbolic activity, including artistic activity, emerges from the fact of the soul's descent and its ignorance of its authentic undescended state.¹⁵¹ Even though the higher soul remains in the intelligible world, the lower soul is unconscious of this fact.¹⁵²

The metaphysical setting of this theory is familiar.¹⁵³ The soul has two aspects.¹⁵⁴ Its native world is the unchanging, intelligible, eternal.¹⁵⁵ Its hypostatic world is the changing, sensible, transient.¹⁵⁶ While transcendent, the soul revels in the realm of the forms and, hence, contemplates reality directly. While embodied, the soul is consigned to the realm of the senses and, hence a symbolic, indeed imaginative,

¹⁴⁵ *Enn.* 5.8.1; cf. 1.6.2, 3, 5.

¹⁴⁶ *Enn.* 5.8.1.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 1.6.2.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 1.6.3.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 1.6.5.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 4.8.4, 28–31; cf. 1.6.3, 5.

¹⁵¹ On the theory of the undescended soul in Plotinus, cf. J. M. Rist, *op. cit.* 410–22; C. G. Steel, *op. cit.* 34–38; H. J. Blumenthal, "John Philoponus: Alexandrian Platonist," *Hermes* 114.3 3q. (1986), 315–35. The important passages from Plotinus on this subject are *Enn.* 4.3.12; 5.1.2; 6.4.14.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 5.1.12.

¹⁵³ On this aspect of Plotinus's psychology, see H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology* (The Hague 1971), 8–19; G. J. P. O'Daly, *Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self* (Shannon 1973), 20–51.

¹⁵⁴ *Enn.* 5.1.10, 12.

¹⁵⁵ The undescended soul is one of the *theia*, cf. *Enn.* 5.1.7, 49, is *nous*, 4.7.1.

¹⁵⁶ The embodied soul is individual, called by Plotinus an *eidolon*. Cf. e.g., *Enn.* 4.3.27, 8ff.

interpretation of reality.¹⁵⁷ Philoponus explains Plotinus's version of this theory by noting that he employed the Aristotelian doctrine of the active intellect.¹⁵⁸ The commentator contends that Plotinus not only placed the potential intellect, which sometimes thinks in the soul, but also the active intellect. Therefore, the soul, always in movement and activity, is constantly engaged in thought. The soul is not always perceptive of this because of the tumult of the body.

Philoponus is not far off the mark in seeing a connection in Plotinus between the superior part of the soul always engaged in intellection and the active intellect. Plotinus maintains that:

... even our soul has not sunk entirely but there is always something of it in the intelligible realm [*kosmos noetos*].¹⁵⁹

For:

The soul has never entirely withdrawn but there is something of it that has not come down.¹⁶⁰

Therefore:

The souls of men have entered the visible realm in a leap downward from the supreme; yet even they are not cut off from their origin, from the divine intellect. It is not that they have come bringing the intellectual principle down in their fall; it is that though they have descended even to earth, yet their higher part holds forever above the heavens.¹⁶¹

The higher soul is undescended and in continual contact with the divine:

... let a man purify himself and observe: he will not doubt his immortality when he sees himself thus entered into the pure, the intellectual. For what he sees [looking on himself] is an intellectual principle looking on nothing of sense, nothing of this mortality, but by its own eternity having intellection [*noesis*] of the eternal. He will see all things in this. Intellectual substance [*ousia*] himself having become an intellectual cosmos [*kosmos noetos*] and full of light, illuminated by the light

¹⁵⁷ In both cases the soul is called *nous*, cf. 1.1.8, 1; 5.1.10, 12; 3.2, 14.

¹⁵⁸ For Philoponus's interpretation of Plotinus's doctrine, see *De Intel.* 45.39; 47.96; *Ps-De Intel.* 535.8-13; 19-21; 528.25-31. His criticism is presented in 536.15-537.7; 538.33-539.1. See C. G. Steel, op. cit. 36-37; H. J. Blumenthal, "John Philoponus: Alexandrian Platonist," *Hermes* 114.3 3q. (1986), 315-35.

¹⁵⁹ *Enn.* 4.8.8.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 4.1.12.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* 5.3.9.

streaming from the Good which radiates truth upon all that stands within the realm of the divine. Thus he will always feel the beauty of that word: "farewell I am to you an immortal God," for he has ascended to the supreme and is all one strain to enter into likeness [*homiotes*] with it.¹⁶²

Plotinus inherits his understanding of the motive for the soul's descent from Plato.¹⁶³ He assumes Plato blamed the soul for its descent and thought the master saw descent as necessary for the completion of the universe.¹⁶⁴ Plotinus's later synthesis is to argue that the soul enters matter spontaneously. Thus her descent is instinctive or biological,¹⁶⁵ and a part of the soul is culpable for the descent. Here the notion of audacity (*tolma*) comes to dominate Plotinus's exegesis.¹⁶⁶

In an essay written near the end of his life, he attempts to reconcile voluntary and involuntary descent.¹⁶⁷ The soul's descent is merely an illumination of what is below it. What does the illuminating is the highest phase of the soul, the intuitive phase. The irrational phase of the soul or the image is the illuminated. If more than illumination occurs in this discursive phase of the soul, if the soul associates itself with the image, then descent into matter results.¹⁶⁸

Yet even in this case the higher soul does not descend. This part of the soul remains in the intelligible realm united to the divine intellect. At this stage Plotinus turns us to his theory of the active intellect, a doctrine central to his notion of the ascent of the part of the soul embedded in matter. Plotinus says that the One is the cause and giver of love by which souls approach him.¹⁶⁹ Divine causality is universal, not particular, is defined as emanation (*aporrē*), and is associated with light (*phos*).¹⁷⁰ Although this emanation of light is linked to psychological illumination,¹⁷¹ Plotinus does not think it capable of particularization. The One does not personally look down

¹⁶² Ibid. 4.7.10.

¹⁶³ Plat., *Phaedrus*, 248a–249d.; *Tim.*, 42ab.

¹⁶⁴ *Enn.* 4.8.1. Later Plotinus shifts his position. In his middle treatises he sees descent as both voluntary and involuntary and views a double sin in the descent; cf. *Enn.* 4.8.5.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 4.3.13.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. 4.3.12.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 1.1.12.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. 2.9.2.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 6.7.22, 6ff.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 6.7.23, 3ff.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. 4.5.7, 39f.

upon humanity. Divine activity emanates throughout the cosmos. For Plotinus the human soul contains within herself the ability to acquire divine love. It is not directed toward her.

Whereas for Aristotle and Alexander the active intellect is always in the soul for Plotinus, it comes from above as an aspect of divine giving (*didomi*).¹⁷² This giving of intellect to the soul is an autonotic, perhaps even an autovolitional act¹⁷³ that stands apart from natural sympathy (*sympatheia*), which is a necessary natural law (*physikai ananke*).¹⁷⁴

The descent and ascent of the soul have a voluntary aspect. Just as souls were seduced by their own images reflected in the sensible world and rushed into them from above, through contemplation they can rediscover their higher selves and reascend to the intelligible world. Despite embodiment:

... even then they are not cut off from their own principle and intellect; though they have reached to the earth, their heads remain firmly fixed above the heavens.¹⁷⁵

Emanation, therefore, is an informing process by which intellect and soul become what they are. Moreover, it is a means of recreating them after their initial creation and, then, lifting them above their acquired, material status. God's love and light provide directional markers for the soul to turn toward its source, and then, through the use of its mental faculties, begin an ascent to the noetic realm. For Plotinus, deity does not save the soul. She saves herself.

Nonetheless, through this act of divine giving (*didomi*) the lower soul comes to perception (*aisthesis*) of what the higher soul beholds. Becoming perceptively aware (*antilepsis*) of the forms occurs when the active intellect transmits and communicates to the imagination (*phantasia*) images of the forms.¹⁷⁶ Goodness and beauty are known to the higher soul but not the lower soul. For only souls motivated by intellect and illuminated by beauty know goodness.¹⁷⁷ These souls are exceptional and conscious of their undescended selves.

The higher soul always remains united with intelligible being; the lower soul is unconscious of this link. Enveloped in the sensible world,

¹⁷² Arist. *De An.*, 3.5; Alex. *De Anima Liber*, 88–89; *De Intel.* (Bruns) 106.

¹⁷³ *Enn.* 4.4.32, 4–9; 4.5.2, 29; 4.5.1, 35–38.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 4.4.33, 42–45; 2.3.9, 34–39.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 4.3.12. Cf. Hom. *Iliad*, 4.443; Plat. *Phaedrus*, 248a.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 4.8.4.28–31.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 4.7.10.

in the tumult of the body, she is unconscious of what the upper part beholds.¹⁷⁸ Busied with carnal desires, she knows nothing of her divine link.

What of these souls, unconscious of their undescended selves, and ignorant of the eternal verities? For

living under a crust of evil . . . filled with injustice and desires, torn by internal strife, full of the fears of its own cowardice and the jealousy of its meanness, busied in its thoughts about the perishable and the low, the friend of vile pleasure, it lives a life of submission to bodily desires.¹⁷⁹

There is a way out of this situation of misfortune. Through apprehension of aesthetic symbols the soul becomes aware of the forms and begins her tenuous ascent from unconsciousness to consciousness.¹⁸⁰

Visible beauty points the soul to intelligible beauty.¹⁸¹ In this sense art functions to make the soul aware of her divine source. Once conscious, this soul becomes aware of her eternal, intelligible link to the divine. For through the aesthetic imagination the soul unites her disparate self and begins her ascent to the eternal verities and, perhaps, eventual union with the divine.¹⁸² Consequently, art is therapeutic. It assists in the transfiguration of the soul from unconsciousness to consciousness, from an awareness of its sensibility to a knowledge of its intelligibility.

For Plotinus, then, the psychological shift from unconsciousness to consciousness, from misfortune to fortune, involves the use of the imagination, the active intellect, and at times, the plastic arts. Art, thus, commits the soul to an upward passage, to an ascent from the lower to the highest divine beauty. Consequently, the various *artes* are accorded a valued place in Plotinus's system. Logic, observation, and piety all reinforced this position. For Plotinus there was something grotesquely impious in the idea that the sense-world was devoid of the forms, or that physical objects, even objects of art, could not awaken in the soul images of the eternal verities.

Plotinus's judgement is understandable only when it is coupled to his psychology and epistemology. He rejected Plato's tripartition of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. 5.1.2; 4.1.8.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 1.6.5.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 5.8.1.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 1.6.3.

¹⁸² Ibid. 1.6.5.

the soul. Moreover, he accepted Aristotle's view that knowledge is a function of a series of psychological faculties.¹⁸³ Although Plotinus does not settle on a definite scheme of faculties, his acceptance of Aristotle's view of the imagination plays a decisive role in his aesthetics.¹⁸⁴ With these concessions, Platonism finally comes to terms with the insights of Aristotelianism.

Among the most important of the Aristotelian elements in Plotinus's system is the notion that an actively thinking mind is identical with its objects.¹⁸⁵ He also accepted Aristotle's view that sense-perception involved the reception of the forms of sense-objects without their matter.¹⁸⁶ As Alexander also insisted, the absolute certainty of knowledge springs from the fact that it has its origins in perception.¹⁸⁷ This is the complement of Plotinus's observation that the physical world is a self-contained, cogent, and certain instantiation of the noetic world.¹⁸⁸

This is possible because the soul is self-moving. Always in movement, she is in contact with those intelligible faculties active within her, even though she is unconscious of them. The lower soul becomes conscious of her higher self when the active intellect transmits to the imagination an image of the forms. This occurs when the soul views an art form. This triggers memory of the intelligibles, for the soul sees the form of beauty in the work of art.

There are two faculties of imagination.¹⁸⁹ One arises in regions of the soul concerned with the body. Another emerges from the part of the soul concerned with the intellect.¹⁹⁰

Plotinus says that the secondary act of imagination, which is opinion in the soul, is caused by disturbance and shock. Thus it is the

¹⁸³ This is not to say that Plotinus merely adopts the Aristotelian psychology. As Blumenthal notes, Plotinus goes to great lengths to preserve the soul's autonomy, which he thought Peripateticism radically compromised; cf. H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology* 8-44.

¹⁸⁴ On the two faculties of the imagination, cf. Arist., *De An.*, 433b29; 434a5-7.

¹⁸⁵ See A. Hilary Armstrong, *Plotinus* (London 1957), 393-413; P. Merlan, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, Metaconsciousness: Problems of the Soul in the Neoplatonist and Neoplatonic Traditions* (The Hague 1963), 8ff.

¹⁸⁶ See H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology*, 137ff.

¹⁸⁷ *De An.* 85; cf. 89.21-22; 90.19-20; (Wallis). *De In.* 112.2-4 (Bruns).

¹⁸⁸ *Enn.* 1.6.2-3.

¹⁸⁹ On the imagination in Plotinus, see E. W. Warren, "Imagination in Plotinus," *CQ* n.s. 16 (1966), 277-85.

¹⁹⁰ On the dual imagination in Plotinus, see H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology*, 92ff.

product of the lower part of the organism. Its images are a faint opinion and unexamined mental picture.¹⁹¹ However, it is not secondary but primary imagination that is important in Plotinian aesthetics. The primary imagination has images of the forms passed on to it by the active intellect and the higher soul.¹⁹² The *logos* deploys the thought and shows it to the imaginative faculty as though in a mirror. This presentation of thought to the imagination makes us aware of the intellection (*noesis*), which is always in progress. The imagination apprehends it and the persistence of the image is memory.

The imagination (*phantasia*) receives the products of thought (*logoi*) and perception (*aisthesis*).¹⁹³ These products are then passed on to the reasoning faculty for processing.¹⁹⁴ Imagination is, accordingly, based on something far more profound than an awareness of physical conditions. It carries a meaning close to the idea of consciousness.¹⁹⁵ This means that the imagination is a power of perceptive awareness that transcends sensation. Significantly, it refers to that mental faculty which provides knowledge of the intelligibles above and within the soul.¹⁹⁶

This assures for Plotinus the possibility of memory (*anamnese*)—the lower soul becoming receptive of what the higher soul eternally beholds,¹⁹⁷ for image collecting is the basis of memory.¹⁹⁸ Memory, in turn, plays an important role in Plotinian eschatology and psychology.¹⁹⁹ Plotinus believed in reincarnation, and assumed that the form in which the soul is reincarnated depends on its previous life and conforms to the characteristics of that life. For example, the way the soul preserves its character between reincarnations is through memory. Memory makes the soul what it is and controls its descent.²⁰⁰

¹⁹¹ *Enn.* 3.6.4, 14–23.

¹⁹² *Ibid.* 4.3.30, 1–5.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* 4.3.30, 5ff.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 5.3.2, 7–9.

¹⁹⁵ On this, see H. J. Schwyzer, “‘Bewusst und Unbewusst’ bei Plotin” in *Les sources Plotin, Entretiens sur l’Antiquité Classique* (Fondation Hardt; Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1961), 343–90.

¹⁹⁶ *Enn.* 1.4.9, 25ff.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 4.8.4, 28–31.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 4.3.29, 22–24.

¹⁹⁹ On the role of memory in Plotinus’s thought, see E. W. Warren, “Memory in Plotinus” *CQ* n.s. 15 (1965), 252–60.

²⁰⁰ *Enn.* 4.3.8, 5–9; cf. 3.4.2.11.

As noted, Plotinus assumed that souls move from an unconscious to a conscious understanding of the intelligibles²⁰¹ and the way the transition is made is through memory.²⁰² For example, the imagination fired by its perception of a statue of a god remembers the form of the god and moves from an unconscious to a conscious awareness of the divine.²⁰³ Thus art plays an important role in the way consciousness of the higher soul and the intelligibles is achieved by the lower soul.²⁰⁴

Images of the forms are transmitted to the imagination through sense objects. Accepting the Aristotelian postulate that sense-perception involves the reception of the forms of sense-objects without their matter, Plotinus says:

On what principle does the architect when he finds the house standing before him correspond with his inner ideal of a house and pronounce it beautiful? Is it not that the house before him, the stones apart, is the inner idea stamped on the mass of exterior matter, the indivisible exhibited in diversity? We call something beautiful when we see something imprinted on it that we recognize as our own, by virtue of our continuity with the Ideal world, and the immanence of that world in the object where we recognize beauty.²⁰⁵

Art objects also move the soul to imagine the form of beauty. This notion is forcefully presented in his work *On the Intelligible Beauty*.²⁰⁶ Plotinus describes an intelligible world in unity with the sensible world. The capacity to grasp this synthesis leads the mind to an understanding of beauty. Next, he examines the imagination and shows how it aids the soul in its ascent from sensible to intelligible knowledge. Finally, he illustrates how the craftsman and his *artes* concretely instantiate in visible form the intelligible world's truth and beauty.

Plotinus describes an intelligible world whereby each member remains itself, distinct from all others, yet simultaenously all members

²⁰¹ On the unconscious and conscious intellect in Plotinus, see P. Merlan, *op. cit.* 72ff.

²⁰² This is illustrated by H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology*, 94–99.

²⁰³ *Enn.* 1.6.3.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 5.8.1.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 1.6.3.

²⁰⁶ On this treatise, see E. Brehier, *La Philosophie du Plotin* 3 (Paris 1961), 17–23; H. C. Puech, "Plotin et les Gnostiques" in *Les Sources de Plotin, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* (Fondation Hardt; Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1960), 161–74.

form a single unity. He asks us to imagine a transparent globe or sphere containing all the things of the universe. Then he asks us to correct it by imagining another sphere stripped of all magnitude and spatial differences. Next we are urged to make a synthesis wherein each is all, one undivided divine power of many facets, each sharing one existence and remaining distinct from all others.²⁰⁷ This is the beautiful.

Plotinus strains to lead our minds to the higher world of the forms and argues that sensual images lead us on our ascent. To correct the conclusions we might draw from the first-level image, he asks us not to abandon imagery entirely but to imagine another sphere, one whose properties run counter to the first. The deficiencies of image-thinking are eventually corrected by bringing the sense-image to a second stage and then urging our metaphysical imaginations to leap beyond this stage as well, to the desired insight into the intelligible realm. Central to this process of ascent is not abandoning or turning away from the sensible world but using imagery and the faculty of imagination to the point of strain and shatter. At the moment of shatter, intelligible insight occurs.²⁰⁸

The ingredients of the higher in the lower world suggests the fecundity of Plotinian aesthetics. He illustrates this in his comparison of hieroglyphics and art. Both suggest nondiscursive images of the intelligible world—the ideas are not propositional truths but reified beings (*onta*).²⁰⁹ Moreover, the ideas are envisaged as *agalmata*, each bodying forth in a species of translucence the inner wealth of the intelligible world's truth and beauty. Thus the individual who has seen this world of beauty will become his true self, even in this sensible, corporeal world—a concrete embodiment—in and through which others catch the glimmerings of the transcendent splendor of the forms.²¹⁰

For Plotinus one such *agalma* is the artist, another the artist's creation. Thus the craftsman's task is, first, to imagine the ideal specification to which reality conforms, and then—so far as the nature of matter permits—to arrange it in conformity with its ideal specification. A sculpture, for example, represents the creative ideas contained in

²⁰⁷ *Enn.* 5.8.9.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 6.4.5.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 6.4.5.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.* 5.8.11, 17–19; cf. 4.4–6, 42–44.

the soul of the artist. With the assistance of the imagination the artist in an inward vision grasps the forms intuitively. Next the craftsman projects the intelligible beauty of the forms outward, giving them visible form.

This understanding emerges from his interpretation of Phidias's statue of Zeus. Plotinus states that:

... it goes back to the ideas from which nature itself derives and adds where nature is lacking.²¹¹

The craftsman's work instantiates the form of beauty. It reflects the *he kallone*—the beauty of deity itself. The sculpture, then, functions to awaken in other souls an imaginative awareness of the ideas from which all else derives.

Plotinus suggests that such awareness leads to psychological enlightenment, for the soul is the immovable place or subject for the immutable truth of the higher world.

What do you feel in the beauty of souls? When you see that you yourself are beautiful within, what do you feel? What is this Dionysiac exaltation that thrills through your being, this straining upwards of all your soul, this longing to break away from the body and live sunken within the true self? These are no other than the emotion of souls under the spell of love. . . . All these noble qualities are to be revered and loved but what entitles them to be called beautiful? . . . Anyone that sees them must admit that they have reality of being, and is not real being, really beautiful?²¹²

Note carefully that Plotinus' understanding of intellectual beauty confirms a new Roman rhythm. His terminology—imagination (*phantasia*), exaltation (*ekstasis*), love (*eros*), and emotion (*pathe*)—affirms that the intelligible world and its divine source can be grasped not only noetically, but also aesthetically. In a remarkable reversal of an older aesthetic pattern, divine apperception involves *patheia* not *apatheia*. Another *via sacra* opens up, one that involves nondiscursive, indeed imaginative and erotic ascent to the divine. Plotinus is toying with a sweeping hypothesis.²¹³

²¹¹ Ibid. 5.8.1.

²¹² Ibid. 1.6.5.

²¹³ This interpretation might represent a conscious development of the insight of the *Phaedrus* 250d, where Plato suggests that of all the forms, beauty alone makes itself manifest to the sensuous perceiver.

Although the theme is strongly reminiscent of the Platonic Socrates—that Silenus figure which, once opened, was seen to contain the images of the gods within him—the Plotinian Phidias and that Zeus figure are strikingly distinct.²¹⁴ Plato often returned to that mysterious, youthful experience, to that encounter with the beloved, which is simultaneously an encounter with a transcendent world of value that stretches beyond the concrete person involved in the encounter.²¹⁵ Plotinus reflects and expands upon this encounter and includes within the *algalmata* that permits encounter with the intelligible world factors that Plato never countenanced—the imagination, the active intellect, and the plastic arts. The forms are communicated to the soul by the active intellect, through the image-making faculty of the soul in reflection on the work of art.

The consequence of these assumptions propels Plotinus to propose, at least for Platonism, an unprecedented aesthetic axiology. Psychological and ontological schizophrenia are overcome aesthetically. The soul's unawareness of her higher self is reversed, and her situation of misfortune overturned through imaginative, indeed, artistic perception.

Aesthetics, then, is not only therapeutic, it is also a path to salvation.²¹⁶ Art assists the soul to leave the sensible world and terrestrial pollution and gain the intelligible world and celestial bliss.

The soul's descent into matter results in the unconscious splitting of the self. Her fall from the intelligible world also signals her separation from true reality and her embodiment in symbolic reality. This leap into matter is a function of a situation of misfortune. The imagination, the active intellect, and the arts are intimately linked to the reversal of psychological and ontological misfortune. Indeed, for Plotinus the arts present to the soul one of the greatest blessings a later Roman could obtain—full possession of the self, awareness of the forms, and ascent to the divine.

²¹⁴ See R. J. O'Connell, *Art and the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine* (Cambridge 1978), 46–47.

²¹⁵ Plato develops this theme in the *Laos*, where household shrines, the aged, and the stars are proposed as concrete examples of the divine; cf. 930e–931a; 899b; 966c–968a.

²¹⁶ Porphyry reports that after encountering a god at the temple in Isis at Rome, Plotinus wrote a treatise *On the Spirit That Allotted Itself to Us*; cf. *Vit. Plot.*, 10. Presumably this work served to explain how to differentiate between higher and lower gods and demons upon their visible manifestation. Such knowledge certainly had therapeutic and soteriological dimensions for Plotinus and his followers.

Although no clear doctrine of the vehicle of the soul (*pneuma-ochema*) emerges from Plotinus's writings, the philosopher was probably aware of it.²¹⁷ He appears to subscribe to belief in such a vehicle based on his theory of *pneuma*.²¹⁸ In discussing the descent of the soul, Plotinus says that when the soul leaves the noetic realm it goes:

... first into heaven and receives there a body through which it continues into more earthly bodies.²¹⁹

As the soul descends, gradations of envelopes of matter attach themselves to a primary body. Consequently, Plotinus proposes that the soul must be purified from these envelopes to rise to its higher self.²²⁰ Then she lives peacefully with her purified *pneuma*.

For Plotinus, probably following his reading of Aristotle, the vehicle is important for its imaginative function.²²¹ Since the vehicle is an intermediary between bodily sensations and intellection, sense impressions are stamped upon the vehicle and then processed by the soul.²²²

Thus, in turning to a statue or temple, the imagination sees not merely a physical object but perceives an image of the forms. This, eventually, leads to an awareness of the eternal value of nature, the human soul, and the divine-like nature of both. An awareness of beauty is nothing less than a recognition of the value of the physical world and of self. Through art the ontological distance between being and becoming is overcome in an epistemological and psychological act of imaginative identification.

For Plotinus the human soul contains within herself the ability to gain salvation. She has the ability to willingly save herself through contemplation (*theoria*).²²³ Art and the imaginative perception of its

²¹⁷ Dillon shows that the doctrine was known by the second century C.E. Cf. J. Dillon, *Iamblichus Chalcidensis In Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta* (Leiden 1971), 371-72. Thus, it is probable Plotinus knew of it.

²¹⁸ On Plotinus's view of *pneuma*, see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951); G. Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du Pneuma du stoïcisme à S. Augustine* (Paris-Louvain 1945), 352-63; A. Smith, *op. cit.* 152-55.

²¹⁹ *Enn.* 4.3.15.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* 3.6.5, 22-29.

²²¹ *Arist., De Gen. An.* 744a1-5.

²²² *Enn.* 4.3.15. From his use of the term *ocheisthai* we can, with caution, suggest that Plotinus was familiar with the term *ochema*. Cf. A. Smith, *op. cit.* 153. However, a comprehensive elaboration of this doctrine comes after Plotinus. Cf. E. R. Dodds, *Proclus. The Elements of Theology* (Oxford 1963), 313-21.

²²³ *Enn.* 4.4.44.

inner beauty is a mode of contemplation that leads the soul on her ascent to the intelligible world.

Plotinus has an acute sense of the multiplicity of reality and self and a chain of intermediaries that reached, further still, from self to God. Art functions to erase the distinctions between the layers of the soul, to bring the ontologically distant epistemologically present.

Perception (*aisthesis*) is nothing more than the lower soul becoming conscious of what the higher soul eternally beholds. Imagination (*phantasia*) is nothing more than the presentation to the lower soul of an apprehension (*antilepsis*), which permits her to identify her empirical self with her pure, true self that transcends the sensible. Art serves to heal the disparate self. It brings that which is so noetically distant, sensibly present. It is about the joining of heaven and earth in the human soul. Thus, the dangerously long distance between being and becoming consciousness and unconsciousness is overcome through an aesthetic that stresses the possibility of unanimity between subject and object. Such identification makes the soul conscious of her intelligible beauty. Such consciousness leads the soul upward to divine beauty itself.

Ascent is an important component in Plotinus's philosophical system. Ecstasy (*ekstasis*), understood as "expansion," is a central aspect in accounts of the ascent of the soul.²²⁴ Plotinus calls ecstasy an awakening of the soul from its physical nature.²²⁵ Thus aesthetics is closely tied to the awakening of the soul from its physical nature, expansion of the soul to the divine ideas, and consequently, the ascent of the soul to god.

The gift of ecstasy is a divine one for Plotinus. Porphyry assumed his teacher possessed it from birth.²²⁶ There is no evidence that Plotinus thought it could be transmitted from teacher to disciple by the laying on of hands. But an individual may become ecstatic or expansive upon entering a holy place or viewing a statue of a god.²²⁷ This is only possible, in turn, because the philosopher has accredited

²²⁴ Ibid. 6.4f. *Ekstasis* involves *ektasis*, cf. Proc. *In Platon. Alc.*, 1.92.3ff.: "The soul expands in order to get closer to god while god expands to meet the soul, without ever stepping outside, for he always remains inside himself." Although a false etymology (*ekstasis* is derived from *existasthai* and *ektasis* from *ekteinein*), it illustrates well the Neoplatonic understanding of this state.

²²⁵ *Enn.* 4.8.1.1.

²²⁶ Porph. *Vit. Plot.*, 10.

²²⁷ On this belief in general in late antiquity, see Heliodorus, *Aeth.* 2.11.

sense-perception and the imagination with the capacity to grasp the forms with the aid of the active intellect.

In the second half of the third century, we find ourselves caught up in an aesthetic transformation that is still incomplete. Plotinus fractures the foundations of earlier Platonic aesthetic theory. Bit by bit, the static framework of the noetic world, on which Platonic metaphysics rested, is dismantled. By now, the ineffaceable character of forms and gods, which earlier Platonists saw as the ultimate justification of a *mimesis* between the intelligible and sensible worlds, between intelligibility and sensibility, has been dissolved aesthetically. Art and religion—as Plotinus hints all along—no longer belong to the sensible world alone. They are an image, an echo, a symbol of the intelligible realm.

This later Platonic truth united a teacher with his students. In the charged atmosphere of the third and fourth centuries, Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity shared characteristics that were perceived as threatening to this Platonic synthesis. Moreover, their teachings were a danger to a precarious *pax deorum* and a dissolving *pax romana*.

It was shortly after the arrival of Porphyry that Plotinus wrote against the Gnostics in a treatise in four parts.²²⁸ He encouraged his pupils Aemilius and Porphyry to write against the Gnostic and Zoroastrian apocrypha.²²⁹ Later in life Porphyry would compose his writings against the Christian apocrypha with these writings in mind.²³⁰

It might be helpful to first outline the metaphysical elements within Plotinus's critique of the Gnostics and then explain the correlation of these elements with certain political and social ones.²³¹ This combination would surface again in Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

²²⁸ Ibid. 3.8, 5.8, 5.5, 2.9.

²²⁹ *V. Pl.* 16.

²³⁰ For a general discussion of this work, cf. Meredith, art. cit. 1119–49.

²³¹ An extensive literature on Plotinus and the Gnostics has emerged in the last decades. The pioneering study was by H. C. Puech, "Plotin et les Gnostiques" in *Les sources Plotin, Entretiens sur l'antiquité Classique* (Fondation Hardt, Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1960), 161–74; H. Jonas, "The Soul in Gnosticism and Plotinus" in *Le Neoplatonisme Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (Paris 1971), 45–53. For more recent studies, see C. Elsas, *Neuplatonische und gnostische Weltabhebung in der Schule Plotins* (Berlin-New York 1975); B. Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism, March 28–31 1978*; D. J. O'Meara, "Gnosticism and the Making of the World in Plotinus" in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* (Leiden 1981), 365–78; P. Hadot, "Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus in Plotinus' Treatise Against the Gnostics," in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian*

Plotinus's critique of the Gnostics can be arranged under the following headings:²³² 1) the unnecessary multiplication of first principles;²³³ 2) the tendency to hypostasize the various stages of production deriving from the first principle;²³⁴ 3) a misunderstanding of the demiurge and the creation and nature of the universe;²³⁵ 4) a disregard for the role intellectual virtue plays in the purification of the soul and its assimilation to God;²³⁶ and 5) an inability to rationally demonstrate the efficacy of their metaphysical propositions.²³⁷

The philosophical foundation of the Plotinian critique of Gnosticism rests on the following principles. First, as an advocate of monotheism, Plotinus argued that there could only be one necessary and sufficient source for all subsequent beings.²³⁸ Second, as a supporter of onto-

Thought: Essays in Honor of A. H. Armstrong, ed. H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Marcus (London 1981), 124–37; D. O'Brien, "Plotinus and the Gnostics on the Generation of Matter" in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought*, 108–123; J. Igal, "The Gnostics and the 'Ancient Philosophy' in Plotinus" in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought* (London 1981), 138–49; A. H. Armstrong, "Dualism Platonic, Gnostic, and Christian" in *Plotinus amid Gnostics and Christians*, ed. D. T. Runia (Amsterdam 1984), 37–41; A. P. Bos, "World Views in Collision: Plotinus, Gnostics, and Christians" in *Plotinus amid Gnostics and Christians*, 11–28.

²³² Plotinus does not engage in either a historical or literary critique of Sethian Gnosticism. He relies solely on a philosophical critique. This approach to religion by Plotinus is explained by T. G. Sinnige, "Metaphysical and Personal Religion in Plotinus" in *Kephalaion*, ed. J. Mansfeld and L. M. de Rijk (Assen 1975), 147–54.

²³³ Armstrong, *art. cit.* "Dualism," 37–41.

²³⁴ Bos, *art. cit.* "World Views in Collision," 11–28.

²³⁵ P. Hadot, *art. cit.* "Ouranos," 124–37; D. O'Brien, *art. cit.* "Plotinus and the Gnostics" 108–23; D. J. O'Meara, *art. cit.* "Gnosticism," 365–78. Cf. A. H. Armstrong, "The Divine Enhancement of Earthly Beauties: The Hellenic and Platonic Tradition" in *Eranos Jahrbuch* (1984), 49–81; W. Beierwaltes, "The Love of Beauty and the Love of God" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 293–313.

²³⁶ This aspect of Plotinus's thought is presented by A. H. Armstrong, "Beauty and the Discovery of Divinity in the Thought of Plotinus" in *Kephalaion*, ed. J. Mansfeld and L. M. de Rijk (Assen 1975), 155–63; *idem.* "The Apprehension of Divinity in the Self and Cosmos in Plotinus" in *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, ed. R. Baine Harris (New York 1976), 187–98.

²³⁷ On later Platonic rationalism, see R. Hathaway, "The Anatomy of a Neoplatonist Metaphysical Proof" in *The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonist Approach*, ed. R. Baine Harris (New York 1982), 122–37. On Plotinus's rationalism, see R. M. Martin, "On Logical Structure and the Plotinic Cosmos" in *The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonist Approach* (New York 1982), 11–23; A. H. Armstrong, "Tradition, Reason, and Experience in the Thought of Plotinus" in *Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema* (Ottobre 1970) and *Problemi attuali di scienza e di cultura* 198 (Rome 1974), 171–94; J. Trouillard, "Raison et mystique chez Plotin" *Revue des études augustinennes* 20 (1974), 3–14.

²³⁸ See J. P. Kenney, "Theism and Divine Production in Ancient Realist Theology" in *God and Creation*, ed. D. Burrell and B. McGinn (Notre Dame 1990).

logical monism, he claimed that all reality derives from a unitary principle.²³⁹ Third, as an advocate of cosmological theism, Plotinus viewed the creator and its product as divine and good.²⁴⁰ Fourth, the philosopher's training is intellectual and moral. Philosophy, he argued, is a discipline that purifies the soul for contemplation and eventual union with the One.²⁴¹ Fifth, as a philosopher, Plotinus demanded that all theories be supported by reason and argumentation.²⁴²

It is perhaps through the metaphors of image, symbol, echo, and harmony, that we should come to define Plotinus's critique.²⁴³ His teaching and vocation underscored intellectual detachment from this world and all activity in it for the sake of a higher one.²⁴⁴ Simultaneously, this renunciation did not imply condemnation, horror, dislike, or even denial of the cosmos. Plotinus argued that the world was beautiful, but an image, a symbol, and echo of the higher harmony which is immanent in it.²⁴⁵

Gnosticism for Plotinus not merely challenged these metaphysical maxims—it rejected them.²⁴⁶ So in a distant action, which as a Platonist Plotinus assumed would resonate as an intelligible vibration, he wrote against those who proposed that gods, cosmos, polity, and society were daemonic; that the gods and cosmos, polity and society were images, symbols, and echos of a lower irrational principle.²⁴⁷

The Gnostic error for Plotinus is that their theology, ontology, cosmology, psychology, ethics, and methodology do not fit the maxims of traditional philosophical thought. He assailed those who argued that divine intelligence, cosmological beauty, political justice, and social harmony were products of a cruel fate that could only be

²³⁹ A. H. Armstrong, "Eternity, Life, and Movement in Plotinus' Accounts of Nous" in *Le Neoplatonisme* (Paris 1971), 67–76.

²⁴⁰ O'Meara, art. cit. "Gnosticism," 365–78.

²⁴¹ A. H. Armstrong, "The Apprehension of Divinity in the Self and in the Cosmos in Plotinus" in *The Significance of Neoplatonism* ed. R. B. Harris (New York 1976), 187–98.

²⁴² P. Hadot, art. cit. "Neoplatonist Spirituality," 230–49.

²⁴³ This aspect of Plotinus's thought is nicely presented by W. Beierwaltes, "Plotinus Metaphysik des Lichtes" in *Die Philosophie des Neuplatonismus*, ed. C. Zintzen (Darmstadt 1977), 75–115.

²⁴⁴ Armstrong, art. cit. "The Apprehension of Divinity," 155–63.

²⁴⁵ O'Brien, art. cit. "Plotinus and the Gnostics," 108–23; O'Meara, art. cit. "Gnosticism," 365–78.

²⁴⁶ Bos, art. cit. 11–28.

²⁴⁷ Armstrong, art. cit. "Dualism," 37–41.

escaped in gnostic revelation, and could only be overcome through an intellectual apocalypse, a gnostic conflagration.²⁴⁸

Moreover, their thinking for Plotinus was revelatory and revolutionary, not rational and traditional. For whoever separates god from reality, thereby robbing the one god of his proper place and devotion, throws into fundamental question the established metaphysical order, and the political and social order as well.²⁴⁹

These are familiar criticisms. Plotinus's attack on the Gnostics echoes those that Lucian, Galen, and Celsus made concerning the *alogos* and *anomos* character of Judaism and Christianity. But there is something different here as well. This third-century critique carried with it far more potency than its second-century predecessor. To attack creation and its creator was to challenge an empire and its emperor as well.²⁵⁰

The lonely satirists and critics of second-century Christianity—like Lucian, Galen, and Celsus, who had no imperial support for their humor and concern—would be replaced by a crowded field of apologists and scholars of third- and fourth-century Christianity and Gnosticism like Plotinus, Aemilius, Porphyry, and Hierocles, who had imperial support.

Philosophers were now spokesmen for emperors. Gallienus wanted a new *politeia*.²⁵¹ Plotinus, Amelius, and Porphyry provided him with an ideology that reflected imperial reality. Under the patronage of Plotinus, Neoplatonism succeeded in framing a philosophy suited to an empire. Its metaphysical principles symbolized the structure of later Roman monotheism, cultic polytheism, and the imperial religion.

Plotinian monotheism is based on the principle of ontological derivation.²⁵² The transcendent divine principle is the preeminent constituent within the inventory of reality. As the necessary and sufficient condition for all subsequent beings, the One is the unitary source of the universe.²⁵³ From the One are derived the lower

²⁴⁸ The gnostics defied all the precepts of traditional cosmic piety. Cf. J. Pepin, "Cosmic Piety" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 408–35.

²⁴⁹ This aspect of the Platonic religion is discussed by H. Doerrie, "Der Koenig: Ein platonisches Schlüsselschloß, von Plotin mit neuem Sinn erfüllt" in *Platonica Minora* (Munich 1976), 390–405.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *V. Pl.* 12.

²⁵² On this aspect of Plotinian thought, see J. P. Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism* (Hanover-London 1991), xxii–xxix, 93–111.

²⁵³ See M. F. Wagner, "Vertical Causation in Plotinus" in *The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonic Approach*, ed. R. Baine Harris (New York 1982).

hypostases—Intellect and Soul—the universe and all its constituents. Included among these are gods, demons, heroes and sages.²⁵⁴

A variation of this core formula places the emperor as the pre-eminent constituent within the inventory of political and social reality. As the necessary and sufficient condition for the existence and maintenance of the empire, the emperor functions like the One. The emperor is the divine unity behind the empire, just as the One is the divine unity behind the gods and their cosmos.

Plotinus provided the imperial religion with a metaphysical foundation. The old theocratic notion that the pantheons of all nations consist of gods performing like functions and that these deities correspond to one another²⁵⁵ is complemented by a new Platonic one.²⁵⁶

Gnosticism did not have the resources to fight a war against this *theokrasia*, but it did have the capacity to promote its own gods and patterns of behaviour. Certain upperclass Romans were captivated by it, and they had begun to look like a separate group no longer bound either to legitimate intellectual or traditional social customs. Loyalties were shifting, energies were draining away from the larger society. Such developments worried and angered Plotinus.

In conclusion, Plotinus's standard for judging the Gnostics was knowledge, tradition, and custom—the *logos* and *nomos* that had been handed down from antiquity and from the gods. Gnostics held profane what the Platonists thought sacred. They were turning men and women away from true devotion to the one high god. Plotinus was convinced that if an association of this sort attracted too many adherents, it could disrupt the cohesion and stability of the *politeia*. Porphyry's attack against Christianity would be identical.

Porphyry

Porphyry lived for over seventy years (c. 232–310 C.E.). Frequently on the move, often despondent, he fitted the image of the late Roman gentleman of letters. Philosophical treatises, religious critiques, and letters to wife and colleagues poured forth from him. First a student of the grammarian Longinus at Athens and later a "hearer" of the

²⁵⁴ In this sense, Plotinus is both an advocate of philosophical monotheism and cultic polytheism. Cf. J. P. Kenney, "Monotheistic and Polytheistic Elements in Classical Mediterranean Spirituality" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, 269–92.

²⁵⁵ Pepin, art. cit. 408–35.

²⁵⁶ Doerric, art. cit. 390–405.

philosopher Plotinus in Rome, Porphyry was among the last defenders of a *Romanitas* that disappeared with the triumph of Christianity.

In the last decades of the third century he wrote continuously. He wrote letters to his wife Marcella on the virtues of Platonism, and to a friend Anebo on the vices of theurgy. He completed an edition of the *Enneads* in memory of his teacher Plotinus. In his last moments he finished a project that had occupied him much of his life. This was the study of the religions of the Roman Empire. Among those examined by Porphyry were Judaism and Christianity. Early in his life he was sympathetically disposed to the new movements and their teachers Moses and Jesus. At the end of his years he became sharply critical of Christianity. For Porphyry its inventors from the disciples through later priests and bishops were dangerous charlatans.

The majority of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* was written in the last moments of an ancient Mediterranean life. In these works the old man from Tyre succeeded in bringing to closure one of the most determined assaults ever seen against the Christian despisers of Hellenism. He was triumphant because he meticulously studied the Bible.

The *Patres* bear witness. What Scipio Africanus was to Carthage and Hadrian to Jerusalem Porphyry was to the church—blood, plow, and salt. Until the end of Mediterranean antiquity, *Against the Christians* was not merely feared by Christian bishops, it was burned fearfully by Christian emperors. As a result, Christian Rome gave Porphyry a prominence he could never have imagined possible. Apart from emperors remembered for their cruelty toward the faith, Porphyry was disliked by Christians as much as the “spine-chilling” Julian. Julian was known as the apostate; Porphyry was simply blasphemous.

Whatever Porphyry may have thought about the Christians, we know in no uncertain terms what the Christians thought of him. As the battered remnants of Patristic armies trailed past the walls of Tyre, while Christian emperors burned books in Constantinople, the figure of Porphyry cast such a chill shadow that for seven centuries Christian bishops and emperors did not let Porphyry out of their sight for a moment. Nor could they not afford to do otherwise.

Porphyry knew the Bible well. The man from Tyre endeavored to expose weaknesses in the arguments used to prove the divine origin of Christianity. His goal was to scatter on the vault of heaven the authority of the evidence Christians appealed to, to demonstrate the truth of their faith. In a deadly pursuit Porphyry arrayed arguments against the Christian scriptures—in a manner similar to the

Roman Caesars when they placed legions against barbarian incursion. His assaults ranged from the Book of Daniel to the New Testament.

Trained by Longinus in literary scholarship and by Plotinus in philosophy, he set about revealing what he thought were the inventions, improbabilities, and contradictions in the Bible. The methods employed for his attack on the Christian interpretation of the Bible were based on evidence provided by historical, literary, and philosophical scholarship in late antiquity. For Porphyry rational criteria would exhibit to all the irrationality of Christian teaching. He assessed the biblical writings in a straightforward manner. His combination of historical and literary criticisms of the Bible were not short of revolutionary. His philosophical criticisms of Christianity were less novel. They were based on the philosophical maxims of his age.

Because of his wide-ranging critique, Christian intellectuals were compelled to enter the world of Roman history, literature, philosophy, and the sciences. Porphyry forced Christians to rationally defend their interpretations of scripture and reality. In an occasional *coup de theatre*, charmed circles of bishops and priests actually answered Porphyry out of Porphyry. Clearly, they had no other choice if they were to maintain the theological integrity of their Bible. But perhaps more importantly, with the dawn of a Christian Empire in a second Rome on the Bosphorus centered around the house of Constantine, this was not only a ideological convenience; it was a political necessity.

In a series of brilliant literary forays, Porphyry attacked the historical credibility of the Bible. He claimed the Book of Daniel was a pseudepigraphal work. He based his arguments upon detailed historical proofs culled from Greco-Roman chronology. Ps-Daniel was a not a prophecy about the coming of the Christian messiah. It was a history about the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Finding a measure of sympathy for Jesus and some of his teachings, Porphyry vented his wrath on the disciples. He castigated them for the distortions they invented about their Christ. He demonstrated this on the basis of nuanced literary and historical criticisms drawn from a gospel parallels. He compared the different gospel testimonies with each other and each of these to accounts reported in the Pauline writings, and perhaps the Book of Acts. Porphyry demonstrated contradictions in the gospel accounts of the genealogy, birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He also detailed inconsistencies in the teachings of Peter and Paul.

The New Testament, Porphyry argued, was not a seamless revelation. It was a theological interpretation that offered no historical basis for the life of Jesus. For cultured Christians the results of Porphyry's critique were devastating. Called into question was the integrity of their Bible and the legitimacy of their Saviour.

In a less revolutionary manner, Porphyry also assaulted the metaphysical and ethical premises of Christianity. He was shocked to see that Christians broke with all ancestral tradition and the established metaphysical order of things in their pursuit of messianic fantasies.

For centuries Porphyry's accomplishments earned the admiration of Roman traditionalists and Christian intellectuals alike. He was recognized by the early church as one of their most feared and formidable intellectual opponents, and his work clearly caused great embarrassment to the early Church. But Porphyry's searing critique of the Bible forced Christian biblical scholars to defend their scriptures on historical and literary grounds, thus opening the way toward a straightforward, "positivist" interpretation of scripture by Christians themselves.

Porphyry's critique of scripture not only stimulated a series of conceptual mechanisms for the reconsideration of the meaning of the Bible for educated Christians. His attack also stimulated means for reconciling those contradictory elements of textual multiplicity that earlier Patristic tradition countenanced. That is to say, Porphyry's reading of scripture conditioned a style of biblical reflection among the Fathers that resisted both allegorical interpretation and rigid literalism. This was probably the result of a historical and literary framing of the meaning of scripture by Porphyry rather than a style of reflection common to Patristic approaches to the Bible *sans* Porphyry.

In nuce, Porphyry's historical and literary theories were surely influential in the history of Patristic biblical scholarship. In *Against the Christians* the *Patres* encountered a thinker that encompassed the plurality of critical principles sanctioned by Neoplatonic and Christian scholarship. Significantly, the Patristic response was not to reject later Platonic scholarly practice but to adapt it to their own exegetical ends.

It is important to note two essential facts. First, the critical apparatus used by Porphyry, with its multiple aspects, was deeply grounded in the very broad, inclusive approach to Homer, Hesiod, Plato, and the tragedians—all of whom were endemic to classical religious thought. Second, the easy coordination of historical-critical and literary-critical

elements in Neoplatonic textual criticism of the Bible worked because there was little Patristic demand—before Porphyry—for a “positivist” reading of scripture.

In brief, a “positivist” approach to scripture, which requires a “correspondence” theory of truth, would enjoin a choice between two options: 1) a firmer “allegorism,” such that explorative interpretations of scripture would be more sharply delineated and subordinated to a “coherence” theory of truth; or 2) a stronger “literalism,” such that all reports in scripture would be tied to a “pistic” theory of truth.²⁵⁷

I would like to suggest that Porphyry’s critique of scripture compelled later Fathers like Augustine to opt for a “correspondence” approach rather than a “coherence” approach to scripture. The reason for this is clear. A correspondence approach to scripture could not be sustained either by coherence methods of allegorical interpretation advocated by Origen, or pistic methods of literal interpretation promoted by the *simpliciores*.²⁵⁸ It could only be supported by the positivist approach to texts and correspondence theory of truth advocated by Neoplatonists like Porphyry when they did historical exegesis of texts.

The modern historian has to unravel much from the *Truimmerfeld* of Porphyry’s writings. To reconstruct the content of *Against the Christians* is perhaps one of the more difficult tasks to undertake in Ancient Mediterranean studies. This is especially the case with his writings on Christianity. It is to these we now turn.

²⁵⁷ Any “pistic” theory of truth is closely tied to pragmatism, which is a theory that ties truth to utility. In brief, pragmatists maintain that knowledge is dominated throughout by personal and emotional factors. This attitude expresses itself in the view that personal considerations affect all knowing and that logic and metaphysics are, therefore, dependent upon psychology. As such, allowances must always be made for the personal factor in any account of knowledge. The source for pragmatic truth theory in antiquity begins with Protagoras. Cf. *DK* B Fr. 1. For a general discussion of pragmatism, cf. C. E. M. Joad, *Guide to Philosophy* (Dover 1957), 452–55.

²⁵⁸ It is suggested that literalists appear to fit the “pragmatic” approach to truth propositions. *Simpliciores* read literature and accept its propositions as true on the basis of psychological principles and motives. On the psychological foundations of pragmatism see C. West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy* (Wisconsin: 1989).

CHAPTER FIVE

FRAGMENTS, ORTHOGRAPHY, AND LANGUAGES

Fragments

Porphyry composed his writings *Against the Christians* during the reign of Diocletian. They are a collection of writings, largely lost and fragmentary, composed in Greek. The extant fragments are scattered through the corpus *Porphyricum* and the *Patres* with no sure indication which of his writings they derive from, or even that they even derive from Porphyry himself. In short, we are uncertain about what he actually wrote against Christianity, how many books the collection contained when he wrote it, or what literary and rhetorical forms the writings actually took.

These are some of the issues and problems raised by Porphyry's writings. It is hoped they can be unraveled. What they likely represent, however, are the limits beyond which scholarship on Porphyry can presently go. Nonetheless, if we can break through these limits at some points, then we may well find the Porphyry that Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine and others feared and admired. Porphyry spoke the language of his side of a complex age, and he spoke it with unnerving confidence and a strange complex skill.

Against the Christians is partially preserved in the corpus *Porphyricum* and in fragments culled from the *Patres*. The present work represents an attempt to establish as complete a collection as possible of the fragments of *Against the Christians*. It is not a continuation of earlier attempts to collect those fragments that constitute *Against the Christians*. In this sense it differs significantly from the project proposed by Harnack.¹ Following Barnes no attempt has been made to reconstruct Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.² Rather, this work has a minimalist goal of collecting all the fragments that relate directly or indirectly to *Against the Christians*. It does not tackle the maximalist

¹ Harnack, op. cit. *Gegen die Christen* 1-22.

² T. D. Barnes, art. cit. "Porphyry" 1119-1149.

goal of reconstructing the form and structure of *Against the Christians*. The present state of the materials makes this task impossible.

The remains of *Against the Christians* were originally collected in 1916.³ Since then, new fragments have been discovered and added to the collection.⁴ This collection represents a considerable expansion upon earlier editions of the fragments. It contains two hundred and fifteen fragments from eighteen sources. The fragments are arranged according to author, in chronological order.

A chronological arrangement of the fragments by author was preferable to a thematic reconstruction of the text for three reasons. First, *Against the Christians* comprised several works with distinct themes. Second, the fragmentary state of *Against the Christians* precludes a thematic reconstruction of the writings. Third, a chronological arrangement of the data permits an "Ueberlieferungsgeschichtliche" view of *Against the Christians*.

As a result of this arrangement of the fragments it is possible to view the relationship of Porphyry's critique of Christianity to earlier ones and trace the impact his *Against the Christians* had on later Hellenic criticisms of the Bible. Moreover, it might be possible to differentiate the authentic from the inauthentic fragments more precisely.

Fragment selection was determined with some difficulty, due to the rather lamentable shape of most of the quotes and references in *Against the Christians*. The selection of fragments was arrived at according to the following guidelines: 1) direct quotations from Porphyry; 2) direct references to quotes from Porphyry; 3) indirect references to quotes from Porphyry; and 4) testimonies that may be derived from the writings of Porphyry.

³ A. von Harnack, *Porphyrius Gegen die Christen, 15 Buecher, Zeugnisse und Referate, Abhandlungen der. koen. preuss. Akademie d. Wissenschaft, phil-hist. Klasse I* (Berlin 1916).

⁴ Some additional fragments have been added by Harnack; cf. "Neue Fragmente des Werkes des Porphyrius gegen die Christen," *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1921) 266ff. For additions to Harnack's collection of fragments, see P. Nautin, "Trois autres Fragments du Livre de Porphyre 'Contre les Chretiens,'" *RB* 57 (1950) 409-16; F. Althelm & R. Stüchl, *Gedankenschrift fuer Georg Rhode* (Tuebingen 1961) 23ff.; D. Hagedorn & R. "Ein neues Fragment aus Porphyrios Gegen die Christen" R. Merkelbach, *VC* 20 (1966) 86-90; G. Binder, "Eine Polemik des Porphyrios gegen die Auslegung die allegorischen Auslegung des Alten Testaments durch die Christen," *ZPE* III (1968), 81-95; P. Sellew, "Achilles or Christ? Porphyry and Didymus in Debate Over Allegorical Interpretation," *HTR* 82:1 (1989) 79-86.

Fragments in the first group are limited to the writings of Porphyry, principally the *Philosophy from Oracles*, the *Life of Pythagoras*, *Abstinence from Animal Foods*, and *Cave of the Nymphs*. The *Chronicles* and the *Letter to Gaurus* are included in this list.⁵ Those in the second category include direct quotations from Porphyry's writings culled from Eusebius, Didymus, Jerome, Augustine, Theodoretus, Severanus, and Theophylactus. The third group contains anonymous testimonies derived from Epiphanius, Augustine, and Nemesius. These references do not contain direct quotations from Porphyry. Porphyrian themes emerge from these quotations, however. Those in the fourth category include anonymous comments made by Arnobius, Lactantius, Chrysostom, Methodius, Macarius Magnes, Anastasius Sinaita, Arethas, and Diodorus Tarsus. These fragments may contain materials from Porphyry, but it is impossible to determine which refer to him or to others such as Hierocles and Julian.

It is possible to determine with some accuracy the authenticity of the fragments. Those in categories one and two are authentic. The fragments in category three are possibly authentic, but it is impossible to determine this with any precision. These references probably came from a variety of sources, including Porphyry and Hierocles.⁶ Those in category four are likely spurious, which leads us to a brief discussion of the infamous and intractable "Macarius Problem."

All scholars agree that the *Apocriticus* contains no direct quotes from Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. What they disagree on is whether Macarius indirectly drew his materials from Porphyry or if he was in dialogue with someone else all together. The debate is three-sided: 1) these references may be derived from an anonymous excerptor of Porphyry who introduced stylistic changes in the text;⁷ 2) they may come from a later polemic that drew some of its material from Porphyry;⁸ or 3) they may be derived from Hierocles or Julian.⁹

The most likely solution to this problem is that Macarius drew his material from three sources: a later polemic that contained some materials from Porphyry; Hierocles's *Philaethes*; and Julian's *Against*

⁵ The authenticity of the *Chronicles* has been challenged by Croke, art. cit. 168-85, and the authenticity of the *Letter to Gaurus* has been raised by Beutler, art. cit. 290.

⁶ Fortin, art. cit. "Viri Novi" 197-226.

⁷ Harnack, op. cit. *Gegen die Christen* 21f.

⁸ Geffcken, op. cit. *Zwei Apologeten* 301ff., Barnes, art. cit. "Porphyry" 424ff.

⁹ Crafer thought Hierocles art. cit. 360ff, 481ff. Advocates for Julian are Frassinetti, art. cit. 41ff., and Pezella, art. cit. 87ff.

the Galileans. This is probable because most later Christian apologists use materials from these *fontes* as well. Since the goal of this work is to collect as complete a list as possible of the fragments that constitute *Against the Christians*, the Macarius materials are a valuable part of the edition.

The condition of the fragments is good. Those from the corpus *Porphyricum* are derived from critical editions produced in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰ Those from the Greek and Latin *Patres* are culled from critical editions produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹¹ Those from Armenian sources are taken from critical editions produced in the twentieth century.¹² In summary, a sufficient portion of the fragments exist in good condition to allow the content and the themes of *Against the Christians* to be determined, but the fragmentary nature of the work requires caution in many matters of exact description of the form and structure of the work.

Languages

Against the Christians was originally written in Greek. If its remains culled from the corpus *Porphyricum* are any indication, the treatises were written in the Greek employed by academics of the later imperial period. Most of the surviving fragments are in Patristic Greek and Latin, and are astonishingly pure. The few fragments in Armenian were translated into a standard Latin idiom.¹³

¹⁰ See the bibliography under ancient authors.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Hagedorn & Merkelbach, art. cit. 86ff., Binder art. cit. 81ff., Gronewald, art. cit. 96ff. Cf. Barnes, art. cit. 424ff.

¹³ The Latin translation of the Armenian is by Schoene = *Die Chronik aus dem armenischen*, ed. J. Karst (Leipzig 1911) 76ff. = *Fr. Gr. Hist.* II, B260, F2 (9).

CHAPTER SIX

SIGLA

- [] Square brackets indicate a lacuna in the manuscript.
- < > Pointed brackets indicate an editorial emendation of a scribal omission or error.
- [[]] Double square brackets indicate a scribal deletion.
- { } Braces indicate letters of a word considered by the editor to have been erroneously added by a scribe.
- () Parentheses in the translation indicate materials supplied by the translator for the sake of clarity and fluidity of the English style.
- + Text is corrupt; see note.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FRAGMENTS, TRANSLATION, AND EXEGETICAL NOTES

Porphyry

1 *Vita Pythagorae*, 11 <Nauck = fr. 83R = Stern fr. 456a. cf. Antonius Diogenes = Stern fr. 250>¹

He states (scil. Diogenes) that Pythagoras also came to the Egyptians, the Arabs, the Chaldaeans, and the Hebrews; learning from them the exact knowledge of dreams.

2 *Commentarii in Oracula Chaldaica* <ap. Lydus, *De Mensibus* 4.53 p. 110 Wuensch = fr. 452 Stern>²

Now in his *Commentary on Oracles* Porphyry says the god worshipped by the Jews is the second god, i.e., the demiurge of all things, whom the Chaldaean in his discourse on the gods counts second from the first god. This is the Good.

¹ The *Life of Pythagoras* constitutes the first part of Porphyry's lost *Philosophical History*. His information about the visit of Pythagoras to the Hebrews, Arabs, and Chaldaeans comes from Antonius Diogenes, as mentioned by the author. Antonius Diogenes is the author of a romance about Thule that was quoted by Porphyry in his work on the life of Pythagoras. He repeats the tradition that Pythagoras was a student of oriental sages, and he lists the Hebrews among them. On Porphyry's use of Diogenes in the *Vita Pythagorae*, see E. Röhde, *Kleine Schriften II* (Tübingen-Leipzig 1901), 125ff. On Porphyry's use of sources, cf. H. Jaeger, *Die Quellen des Porphyrios in seiner Pythagoras Biographie* (Zürich 1919). On the use of Antonius Diogenes, see Beutler art. cit. (1953) 287f.

² Following the chronology of Porphyry's writings suggested by Bidez, Lydus probably drew his information from Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*. Cf. H. Lewy, op. cit. 77 n. 43. Hadot argues that Lydus has drawn in this passage from a commentary written by Porphyry on the Chaldaean oracles after his years with Plotinus. Cf. P. Hadot, "Revue des études augustiniennes 6 (1960) 205-44, *idem*, "Porphyre," *Foundation Hardt pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique, Entretiens XII* (Geneva 1965) 133. For the generally accepted chronology of Porphyry's writings, see Bidez, op. cit. 98ff. Scholars rely heavily on the testimony of Eunapius, VS 457. J. O'Meara's challenge to Bidez's thesis in his *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris 1959) has been largely rejected. The *Philosophy from Oracles* stands closer in time to Porphyry's other works than O'Meara thought. Cf. Eusebius, *PE* 4.7.3, Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 19.23.

3 De Philosophia ex Oraculis Haurienda <ap. Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelica*, 9.10.1-5.—*Mras* = Porphyrii de Philosophia ex Oraculis Haurienda, ed. G. Wolff. Berlin, 1856, pp. 139ff. = fr. 450 *Stern*>³

[1] But Porphyry, in the first book of his *Philosophy from Oracles*, introduces his first god as himself, which carries testimony to the wisdom of the Hebrew race, as well as to other nations famous for their wisdom. [2] It goes as follows. It is his Apollo who speaks in an oracle he utters. And while still explaining the theme of sacrifices he adds words, which are valuable to note, as full of all divine wisdom:

The road that leads to heaven is steep and rough,
Entered initially through doors bound with brass
Within are found innumerable paths,
Which for the endless good of all the human race
They first revealed who Nile's sweet water's drink.
From them the heavenward paths Phoenicia learned,
Assyria, Lydia, and the Hebrew race.

And it continues, in which the author remarks further:

[3] For the road to the gods is bound with brass, and it is both steep and rough; the barbarians uncovered many paths thereof; but the Greeks went astray and those who already possessed it even perverted it. The discovery was ascribed by the god to Egyptians, Phoenicians, Chaldaeans (for these are the Assyrians), Lydians, and Hebrews.

[4] In addition to this Apollo says in another oracle:

Only Chaldees and Hebrews found wisdom
In the pure worship of a self-generated god.

[5] And being asked again, for what reason do men speak to many heavens, he gave the following answer:

One circle girds the world on all sides,
In seven zones rising to starlit paths:
These in their seven-fold orbits as they roll,
Chaldees and widely-famed Hebrews heavens named.

³ For a lucid discussion of Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, see R. L. Wilken, "Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek Religion and Christian Faith," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition* (Paris 1979) 117-34.

4 De Philosophia ex Oraculis Haurienda <ap. Augustine,
De Civitate Dei, 19.23 = fr. 451 Stern>¹

For in the book entitled *Philosophy from Oracles*, in which he (scil. Porphyry) collects and comments on allegedly divine responses, which concern matters relating to philosophy, he says <to quote his very words translated from Greek into Latin>:

To one who enquired what god's favor he should seek in order to convert his wife from Christianity, Apollo answered in the following verses:

Then these words follow as those of Apollo:

Perhaps you may more easily write in lasting letters on water, or spread light wings and fly like a bird through the air, than recall an impious wife who has once polluted herself. Let her go on as she pleases, continuing in her empty opinions, and in song crying like a god, about one who died for delusions, who was condemned by judges whose verdict was just, and by the worst iron-bound death publically executed.

Then, after these verses of Apollo (presented here in Latin prose), Porphyry states:

In these verses Apollo made clear the incurable weakness of Christian belief saying that it is the Jews who better uphold god than the Christians.

See how he denigrates Christ, and prefers the Jews to the Christians, when he expresses his belief that they are upholders of god. For this is his exposition of Apollo's verses—in the course of which he says Christ was killed by judges whose verdict was correct—as if he had been deservedly condemned to punishment by his judges. What the lying seer of Apollo said and Porphyry believed, or what Porphyry possibly invented as the seer's words are their responsibility. Later I shall deal with the consistency of Porphyry with himself. That is, how consistent he makes his very oracles with one another.

In this passage, however, he says that the Jews, as God's champions, judged correctly in decreeing that Christ was to be tortured by the worst type of death. He should have also given notice to

¹ Augustine quoted extensively from the *Philosophy from Oracles* in the *City of God*. Since 19.23 contains one of the better assessments of Porphyry by a Christian apologist, the chapter is quoted in full. On Augustine's extensive use of Porphyry, cf. O'Meara art. cit., Hadot art. cit. (1960) 205–44, Wilken op. cit. 148–56.

those words of the God of the Jews. "He who sacrifices to any other gods except alone the Lord shall be uprooted" (Ex. 32.20). But let us come to clearer matters, and hear how great a god Porphyry says the God of the Jews is. For example, Apollo, when asked which is the better word (that is reason) or law, he (scil. Porphyry) says, answered in these verses; which he adds (and I pick as sufficient only the following from them):

In the true God, the creator, the king before all things, before whom heaven and earth tremble and the sea and the hidden places below, and the very divine things shudder; their law is the Father, whom the holy Hebrews intensely honor.

In this oracle of his own God Apollo, Porphyry has said the God of the Hebrews is so great that the very divine beings shudder before him. Since then God said:

He who sacrifices to other gods shall be uprooted

I am surprised that Porphyry did not himself shudder and fear that he would be uprooted by sacrificing to other gods.

However the philosopher also had some good to say about Christ, as if he had forgotten that hateful jab of his of which we have now spoken, or as if his gods had spoken evils against Christ in their sleep, and in their waking hours saw that he was good, and gave him dignified tribute. For he says, as if he were about to proclaim something wonderful and incredible:

What we are about to say must appear certainly incredible to some. For the gods have declared Christ was quite pious, and has become immortal, and they refer to him with good predictions. However they say the Christians are polluted, contaminated, and mixed up in error, and they speak many blasphemies against them.

Then he adds examples, as he claims, of divine oracles that blaspheme the Christians—and continues:

But to those who ask whether Christ was God, Hecate answered:

You know that the immortal soul advances after leaving the body; but when it is cut-off from wisdom it wanders forever. The soul in question is of a man preeminent in piety. They worship it because they are alienated from the truth.

Then following the works of this so-called oracle he presents his own context.

So Hecate said that this was a most pious man, and his soul, as other pious men, was imbued with immortality after his death, as it deserved, and that in their ignorance the Christians worship it.

And for those who ask—why then was he condemned, the goddess replied in an oracle:

The body is certainly always open to debilitating torments, but the souls of the pious have their home in heaven. Now the soul in question gave to other souls the fatal gift of being mixed up in error. These were souls to whom the fates had not permitted divine gifts, or to gain knowledge of divine Jupiter. Therefore they were disliked by the gods because although they were not destined to know god nor to receive divine gifts, this man gave them the fatal gift of being involved in error. However, he himself was pious, and like other pious men found his way to heaven. Thus you ought not to blaspheme him. Rather you ought to pity the dementia of men—from him comes to them a quick and sudden danger.

Who is so muddled as not to understand that these oracles were either invented by a clever man, and one most inimical to Christians, or they were responses of a similar design by impure demons. Certainly by praising Christ they hope to convince men that their vituperation of Christians is credible, and so, if possible, to close the way to eternal salvation through which one becomes a Christian. Certainly they assume there is no loss to their malevolent and varied opinions if they are believable when praising Christ, provided that their vituperation of Christ is also credible. They hope that one whom they have convinced on both points will be made to praise Christ, but will not want to become a Christian; and thus he is not liberated by the Christ whom he has praised from the dominion of demons. Specifically, their praise of Christ is not that of a true Christian, as one who believes in him, but is that of a Plotinian heretic—insofar as he views Christ only as a man and not also as a God, and he cannot be saved by him—and he is not able to avoid or untie the nets of those mendacious demons.

We neither approve Apollo's vituperation of Christ, nor Hecate's praise. First, he states Christ was put to death by judges whose verdict was correct, he would have us believe Christ was unrighteous. Second, he states that he was a most pious man, but a man only. The purpose of both is the same—to prevent men from becoming Christians. For if they are not Christians they cannot be delivered from their (scil. demons) power. Now the genuine philosopher rather

than those who believe such so-called oracles against the Christians first must reconcile, if possible, Hecate and Apollo in respect to Christ himself, so both either may condemn or praise him. But even if they had been able to do this, we would, nevertheless, shun such fallacious demons—whether they condemn or praise Christ. Indeed with their god and goddess in contradiction, he vituperating and she praising Christ, and certainly when they blaspheme Christians, if their own judgement is correct, men do not believe when Porphyry or Hecate praise Christ. That he gave himself as a fatal gift to Christians in order to implicate them in error, he supposes he clearly puts the reasons for this error. Now before I quote from his works, I ask first whether it was willingly or unwillingly that Christ gave to Christians the fatal gift of involvement in error? If willingly—how could he be just? If unwillingly—how could he be blessed? But now let us hear the causes of this error. He states:

There are in a certain region small terrestrial spirits subject to the power of evil demons. From the wise men of the Hebrews (also among them was this Jesus as you heard from the oracles mentioned above about Jesus) religious men were blocked from these very demons and lesser spirits. And they prevented them to offer to them any notice. They were to worship the gods of heaven—above all God the Father. And he says this itself, the gods also teach, and we have shown above how they admonish men to turn their soul to God, and command them to honor him everywhere. Truly untaught and impious natures, to whom fate has not conceded divine gifts and a notion of immortal Jupiter, closing their ears to the gods and to divine men, have rejected all the gods. Rather in their place they have revered forbidden demons. Pretending to honor God himself they do not do the things by which God alone is adored. For God, who is the God of all, needs nothing; but for us it is good we adore him through justice, chastity, and the other virtues—making our life itself a votive to him through imitating and seeking him. He states seeking him purifies: imitation deifies by effecting an assimilation to him.

He praises God the Father quite well, and he speaks of the conduct by which he should be respected. The prophetic books of the Hebrews are full of these precepts—when the life of the saints is made the subject of command or praise. But in regard to the Christians he errs so much that his calumnies are as great as the demons he wants to opine as gods. As if it were difficult for anyone to remember

the foul and undecorous acts performed in honor of the gods in theaters and temples; and to note what is read, spoken, and heard in churches, and what is offered to the true God. And this is to comprehend where there is edification, and where there is the ruin of mortals. Who has told or suggested this to him this vain and clear lie that Christians revered rather than hated the demons whose reverence was forbidden by the Hebrews—some diabolical spirit? But that God whom the Hebrew wise men revered forbid sacrifices to be given even to the holy angels and powers of heaven, whom we venerate and love in this our mortal pilgrimage as our most blessed citizens. He speaks the law with a thunderous voice, which he gave to his Hebrew people; and he puts it in menacing words: He who sacrifices to any other gods will be uprooted (Ex. 32.20). And should one suppose this command only forbids sacrifice to the most evil demons and terrestrial spirits, which he (scil. Porphyry) says are least or lesser (for these are called gods in the sacred scriptures of the gentiles, but not the Hebrews—as the seventy translators put it clearly in the psalm, when they state: For all the gods of the nations are demons). I say, therefore, let no one propose that sacrifice was forbidden to these demons, but that sacrifice was permitted to some or all of the heavenly beings—the words are added: Save to the Lord alone. If anyone believes *domino soli* in this context means “to our Lord the Sun” to whom sacrifices should be offered—a look into the Greek scriptures will illustrate that this is not the meaning.

Therefore, the God of the Hebrews—to whom this most distinguished philosopher bears this great testimony—gave to his Hebrew people the law composed in the Hebrew language. And it is not obscure and unknown, but it is now dispersed among all nations in which it is written: He who sacrifices to gods except to the Lord alone shall be uprooted. What need is there to engage in many inquiries into his law and prophet concerning these things? Indeed the need is not for inquiry for the passages are neither obscure or rare. Rather it is to collect and offer in my argument clear and manifold passages in which it appears clearer than daylight that the true and most-high God wanted to have sacrifice to no being save himself alone. Here is one little statement, or rather a great one—as truthful as it is dangerous—of the God whom the most intelligent of the gentiles excellently praises. Allow it to be heard, feared, and encountered—unless the disobedient consequently be uprooted. He states: He who sacrifices to other gods, save to the Lord alone, will

be uprooted. Not because God needs something, but because it is to our advantage to be something of his. To him is sung in the sacred writings of the Hebrews: I have said to the Lord: you are my God for you do not need my goods.

Now we who are his city are his most splendid and best sacrifice. Such is the mystery we celebrate in our offerings which are well known to the faithful. As stated in the preceding books we have argued that the sacrificial victims which the Jews offered should end as a shadow of what was to come. And people from sunrise to sunset should offer one sacrifice as we see it happening now, declared by the divine oracles through the prophets in thunderous sounds. And from these oracles we have taken as many as seemed adequate—already scattering them throughout this work . . .

5 De Abstinencia, 1.14 <Nauck = fr. 116, & 1R = fr. 453 Stern>⁵

Although we wage war on justified grounds against wild beasts, we still abstain from many animals who live in association with men. This is the reason why the Greeks do not eat dogs or horses or asses, but eat pigs—the tame ones being of the same species as the wild—and this also holds true for birds. For the pig is of no utility except for food. But the Phoenicians and Jews abstained from it because in their places pigs were not to be found at all. For it is said that even now this animal is not to be seen in Aethiopia.

6 De Abstinencia, 2.61 <Nauck = fr. 116, & 2R = fr. 454 Stern>

For it would be a terrible thing, that while the Syrians do not taste fish and the Hebrews pigs and many of the Phoenicians and Egyptians cows, and even when many kings attempted to change them they preferred to suffer death than to transgress the law. We choose to transgress the laws of nature and the divine orders because of fear of men or some malevolent speech coming from them.

⁵ Porphyry's arguments to explain the dietary habits of Phoenicians and Jews probably goes back to Theophrastus, who wrote an early work *De Pietate*, on the religious habits associated with sacrifice. Cf. W. Poetscher, *Theophrastos, Peri Eusebias* (Leiden 1964), 125. For the remarks of Theophrastus on the Jews, see Poetscher, *op. cit.* fr. 2.

7 De Abstinencia, 4.11-14 <Nauck = fr. 116, & 3R = fr. 455 Stern>⁶

[11]: Among those known to us are the Jews, before they suffered irremediably, first at the hands of Antiochus concerning their laws, and then later at the hands of the Romans, when also their temple was captured and it became accessible to all to whom it had previously been prohibited, and the city itself was destroyed. (This people) continued to abstain from many animals, and particularly, even now, from pigs.

[12]: Their piety toward god takes an odd form. Before the sun rises they say no word on earthly matters, but offer certain prayers to him which have been handed down from their ancestors as if asking him to rise. Then their superiors discharge them to various crafts of which they are proficient in several and they work hard until the fifth hour, when they gather again in one place, and after girding their loins with linen cloths, they wash their bodies in cold water. After this purification, they gather in a private room, which none of the initiated are allowed to enter. Now pure they go to the refectory as to some sacred shrine. When they have taken their seats in silence, the baker serves them loaves of bread in order, and the cook places before each person a single course on one plate. When breakfast ends, he says another prayer; thus at the opening and the end they honor god. Then laying their garments aside as holy vestments they take themselves back to work until evening. Upon returning they eat dinner in the same manner and any guests that arrive sit down with them. No noise or disturbance ever pollutes their abode; they speak in orderly fashion, each pausing for his neighbor. To outsiders the silence of the insiders seems like some terrible mystery. For one year, during which he stays outside the order, they prescribe for him their own rule of life, giving him a small hatchet, a loin-cloth, and a white cloak. During this period of probation, having demonstrated his temperance, he is brought into closer contact with the rule and is permitted to share the more pure kind of holy water. But he is not allowed to enter into the meetings of the community. After this display of endurance, his character is tested for

⁶ Porphyry drew from a rich chronological tradition to trace the history of the Jews. His description of the Essenes likely comes from Josephus, *Ant.* 18.18ff., his knowledge of the Jewish War from *BJ* 2.119-161, and his knowledge of the religious observances of the Jews from the *Contra Apionem* of Josephus. Cf. Stern, op. cit. II.442-43, Bernays, op. cit. 22f., 154.

two more years, and only then, if found worthy, is he brought into the society.

[13]: Before he can touch the common food, he is made to swear great oaths: first, that he will practice piety toward god; next, that he will observe justice toward men; that he will harm no one whether on his own or under another's orders; that he will forever hate unjust ones and fight the war of the just; that he will keep faith forever with all men, especially with the powers that are, since no ruler gains his office except by divine will; that if he should become a ruler, he will never abuse his authority nor, either in dress or by other exterior marks of authority, surpass his subjects; he is to forever be a lover of truth and an exposor of liars; to keep his hands from theft and his soul pure from unholy gain; to hide nothing from the members of the group and to report none of their secrets to others, even if tortured to death. Furthermore, he swears to transmit their rules just as he has received them; to abstain from theft; and similarly to preserve the writings of the group and the names of the angels. These are the oaths. Those convicted and expelled come to a terrible end. Since they are bound by their oath and usages, they are not free to take of food from others, and thus fall to eating grass, wasting away, and death. In their compassion this led them to take many of them back in the last stage of suffering, arguing that the sufferings that have brought them to the precipice of death are a sufficient penalty for their transgressions. And they offer a mattress to those who intend to become members of the group, since they do not rest themselves in a fashion other than digging a foot deep trench and wrapping a cloak around them, so that they do not offend the rays of the deity. Such is the simplicity and scantiness of their food that on the seventh day they have no need of relieving themselves. They dedicate this day to prayers to the deity and rest. Because of this training they are capable of such fortitude that when placed on the rack to be twisted, burnt, and to undergo every other instrument of torture so they might be forced to curse their lawgiver or eat some forbidden food, they refuse to concede to either demand. They exhibited this in the war against the Romans, for they did not agree to either cringe to their persecutors or to cry. Rather they smiled in their pains and mildly rebuked their persecutors. Happily they yielded up their souls confident they would get them back. For it is a solid belief of theirs that the body is corruptible and its constituent matter impermanent but the soul is immortal and imper-

ishable. The souls emanating from the finest aether become entangled, being dragged down by natural force. But once released from the ties of the flesh, then, as if freed from long slavery, they celebrate, and are borne upwards. As might be expected, because of their way of life and training, which aims at truth and piety, there are many among them who foretell the future. Since they read holy books from an early age and are versed in various forms of purifications and apophthegms from prophets, seldom do they make errors in their predictions. Such is the order of the Essanoi among the Jews.

[14]: To all Jews it was forbidden to eat pork or unscaled fish, which the Greeks call cartilaginous, and in addition any of the uncloven animals. Furthermore, it was forbidden for them to kill animals which took refuge in their homes like supplicants—not to speak of eating them. Nor did the law-giver permit the removal of parents together with the nestlings, and he said that animals which assist in work should be spared, even in hostile territory, and not to slaughter them. And he was not frightened if the race of animals not permitted for sacrifice would multiply and cause hunger for men. For first he knew that the prolific animals live briefly, and that many would die if they did not receive human attention, and that there are other animals that assault those that multiply.

8 De Antro Nympharum, 10 <Nauck; cf. *Numenius* (No. 368) = fr. 456b Stern>⁷

For they claimed as Numenius said that souls rest on water divinely animated. On account of this the prophet said the spirit of god is carried over the water.

9 Ad Gaurum, 11 <Kalbfleisch; Abhandlungen Berlin Akademie, 1895, p. 48 = fr. 466 Stern>⁸

Uncoerced the pilot enters when the power of the seed advances into light with its fruit. I certainly saw those who play Prometheus in the theater, who are forced to make the soul enter the body of

⁷ Numenius was read in the school of Plotinus. Cf. *V. Pl.* 17, Wallis op. cit. 32–36.

⁸ There is controversy whether the work transmitted under the name of Galen should be attributed to Porphyry. Kalbfleisch art. cit. 15ff., 46, II.25f. Beutler

the new-formed man on the ground. Possibly, however, the ancients did not want by the myth to prove the entry of the soul is mandatory, but only to illustrate animation occurs after the conception and formation of the body. The theologian of the Hebrews also appears to mean this, when he says that when the human body was formed, and had received all its bodily workmanship, god breathed spirit into it to make it behave like a living soul.

*Methodius*⁹

10 Contra Julianos <Bonwetsch, Methodius, {1891}

p. 345 = fr. 84 Harnack¹⁰

What use is the Son of God for us who have become flesh on earth? And why was he placed on the cross, and had to suffer, and was punished with another penalty? And what is the didactic purpose of the cross?

Why did the Son of God, Christ, leave the body after a brief time? And since he is not capable of suffering, how did he come under suffering?

11 Contra Julianos <Bonwetsch, Methodius, {1891}

p. 347 = fr. 83 Harnack

Some believe that God, by making his measure in accordance with their own disposition, considered evil the same just as that which is praiseworthy and blameworthy is the same. As a measuring rod they

art. cit. 290 argues negatively. Even Beutler argues there is enough internal evidence to suggest a good deal of Porphyry's thought in the work, however. The fragment [l.3-4] suggests Porphyry knew LXX 2:7. In calling Moses the theologian of the Hebrews [l.6], Porphyry used terminology identical to Philo's view of Moses. Cf. *VM* 2.115, *Praem.* 53.

⁹ The works of Methodius are mostly lost. This is tragic because they contained one of the earliest responses to Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

¹⁰ Methodius knew Porphyry's *Against the Christians* well. He wrote a work "Against Porphyry." The few fragments that remain were collected by Bonwetsch, *Methodius von Olympus I* (Berlin 1891) 345ff., and Holl, *Texten und Untersuchungen* 20.2 208f. Whether Eusebius knew of his "Against Porphyry" remains unknown. It is probable that the work reflected the fragments cited by Jerome in his *Commentary on Daniel*. Cf. Harnack, op. cit. 29-30, 96.

use human opinions, and they do not understand because of their inherent ignorance, that this world is totally deficient in divine beauty.

*Eusebius of Caesarea*¹¹

12 Praeparatio Evangelica, 1.2.1–5 <Mras = fr. 1 Harnack = fr. 458 Stern>¹²

[1]<For in the first place anyone might naturally want to know who we are that has come forward to write: are we Greeks or are we barbarians?: Or are we what is intermediate between them? (sic. Greeks and barbarians?)> And what do we claim to be, but not in respect to the name, for this is clear to everyone, but in respect to the manner and purpose of our life? For they would see that we agree neither with the opinions of the Greeks, nor with the customs of the barbarians. [2] Therefore what is the strangeness in us and in our innovative lifestyle? And how can men not be in every way impious and atheistic who have become estranged from ancestral customs through which every nation and state is nurtured? What good can they reasonably hope for from those who have set themselves in strife and war against their protectors, who have rejected their benefactors? For what else are they doing than opposing the gods? [3] (And what) dispensation will they be thought to deserve who have turned away from those, who from earliest times, among all Greeks and barbarians, both in cities and the countryside, are recognized as gods by all, with all kinds of sacrifices, and initiations,

¹¹ Eusebius is our earliest extant source on Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. He wrote his apologetic works against Porphyry and Hierocles. Porphyry's writings are cited in almost one hundred places in his massive apology for Christianity, the *Preparation of the Gospel*. In his *Preparation of the Gospel* he compared scripture to Greek literature to show its superiority, while in his *Demonstration of the Gospel* he continued his apology by showing that Christ fulfilled Jewish prophecy and that Christianity was the legitimate heir to Judaism. Cf. Harnack, op. cit. 30–31.

¹² Eusebius wrote against Porphyry at the beginning of the fourth century, probably in the reign of Diocletian. The view that Eusebius, *PE* 1.2.1ff., derives from the introduction to Porphyry's *Against the Christians* was argued by U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Ein Bruchstueck aus der Schrift des Porphyrius gegen die Christen", *ZNTW* 1 (1900), 101ff. Eusebius's purpose is to prove to critics that the revolt of Christianity is reasonable. Cf. P. Stockmeier, "Christlicher Glaube und Antike religiositaet," *ANRW* 23.2 (Berlin 1980), 871–909. For Eusebius on Porphyry, see Wilken, op. cit. 155–56.

and mysteries, so that kings, law-givers, and philosophers have chosen all that is impious and atheistic among men? And to what kinds of punishment would they not be justly subjected to, who deserting their ancestral customs have become zealous for the alien mythologies of the Jews, who are in ill-repute among all men? [4] And would it not be proof of extreme evil and light-heartedness to put aside the customs of their own peoples, and choose with unreasoning and unquestioning belief the doctrines of the impious adversaries of all nations? No, not even to adhere to the God, who is honored among the Jews in accordance with their customary rules, but to carve out for themselves a new way in a pathless desert, that adheres neither to the ways of the Greeks nor the Jews? [5] Consequently, these are questions which any Greek might naturally place before us, having no true grasp either of his religion or ours. But the sons of the Hebrews would also find fault with us, that being strangers and aliens we abuse their books, which do not belong to us at all. And because, as they would say, in an arrogant and shameless manner we force ourselves into, and violently attempt to remove the true family and kindred from their own ancestral rights.

13 Praeparatio Evangelica, 1.9.20–21 <Mras = *Fr. Gr. Hist.*, 2, B260 fr. 34 = fr. 41 Harnack = fr. 462 Stern>¹³

[20] The writer in our day of the attack against us mentions these things in the fourth book of his treatise *Against the Christians*, where he offers the following word for word testimony concerning Sanchuniathon (No. 323) [21]:

Of the accounts of the Jews, the most true history because it is the most accurate with their places and names is the one by Sanchuniathon of Berytus . . .

14 Praeparatio Evangelica, 3.11.12 <Mras = *Augustine Civ. Dei*>¹⁴

Because the aspect of the earth in spring is more beautiful than in other seasons, Porphyry, the famous philosopher, stated that Attis

¹³ Sanchuniathon of Berytus may have been one of the chroniclers Porphyry depended upon to reconstruct his history of the Jews for his analysis of the Book of Daniel. Cf. Croke, art. cit. 168–85.

¹⁴ This explanation of the mutilation of Attis and the Galli is an example of

symbolized the flowers, and was mutilated because the flower falls before the fruit.

15 Praeparatio Evangelica, 5.1.9 <Mras = *fr. 80 Harnack*>¹⁵

...it is again the same author, who in our time is the advocate of demons, who in his work, which he wrote against us, bears witness as follows: That these bad demons are no longer powerful after the arrival of our saviour to mankind. And now today they wonder why this sickness has overtaken the city. While Asclepius and the other gods were worshipped there was no sickness. But since Jesus alone is worshipped, who is aware of any public utility coming from these gods? These then are the words of Porphyry.

16 Demonstratio Evangelica, 1.1.12 <PG, 22, = *fr. 73 Harnack*>¹⁶

The sycophants maintain that we cannot give a logical demonstration, that we turn to faith alone, and that we demand those who come to us give attention to faith alone. And they say that we only teach our followers like irrational animals, that they should shut their eyes and without any examination at all boldly follow whatever we say. On account of this they call them the faithful. And the faithful transact their commerce along these lines because of an illogical faith.

17 Demonstratio Evangelica, 3.5.95 <PG, 22, = *fr. 7 Harnack*>

They maintain that with which they agree brings good reputation and they write down their perversions for a time never to be forgotten. . . . How could they rightly admit that all their self-love and mendacity has come forward? As friends of truth did they present clear and evident documentation? Those who believe in these who have invented and lied and mistakenly blasphemed, how could they not but become ridiculous friends of envy and the evil eye, and be convicted as enemies of truth itself? Did they as friends, who wanted

Porphyry's allegorical interpretation of oracles. The explanation offered by Porphyry probably comes from a long-standing Platonic interpretation of the myth. Cf. Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 7.25.

¹⁵ Eusebius uses the same description for Porphyry elsewhere. See *PE* 5.5.4, 5.35.5. Cf. Theodoretus, *Graec. affect. cur.* 12.96.

¹⁶ This appears to be an authentic critique likely raised by Porphyry. It appears throughout the *Apocriticus* of Macarius as well. Cf. 3.17, 3.22, 4.9, 4.10.

to show a simple, true, and unalloyed ethos, do so through their arguments? Rather did they not establish themselves as criminals and terrible sophists? Did they not falsely produce that which is not, and ascribe to their own teacher that which was not done by him, in order <for him> to live up to their satisfaction? And now what shall we say? Those who lied about their teacher and produced in writing things that did not happen, did they not also lie about his sufferings? When their goal was to produce fictions and to adorn their teacher with false stories, should they not have also written down the depressing sufferings?

18 *Demonstratio Evangelica*, 5., Proem. 3–5 <PG, 22>

Greeks and barbarians alike testify to the existence of oracles and oracular responses in all parts of the earth and they state they were revealed by the creator's providence for the use and benefit of men. Thus there is no need for an essential difference between Hebrew prophecy and the other nation's oracles since the supreme God gave oracles to the Hebrews through their prophets, and suggested that which was to their advantage. So also he gave them to other nations through their local oracles. For he was not only the god of the Jews, but also of the rest of humanity. He cared no more for these than those, but his providence was over all similarly just as he has given the sun ungrudgingly to everyone, and not for the Hebrews only, and the supply of needs according to the seasons, and a similar bodily make-up for everyone, and one mode of birth, and one type of rational soul. And thus, they say, he provided to all men the science of foretelling the future ungrudgingly, to some by prophets, to some by oracles, to some by the flight of birds, or by examining entrails, or by dreams, or by omens contained in word or sound, or by some other sound. For these they say were given to all men by God's providence, so that the Hebrew prophets should not seem to have an advantage over the rest of the world.

19 *Demonstratio Evangelica*, 6.18.11 <PG, 22, = *fr.* 47 *Harnack*>

Now if anyone says that this was done in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes—let him ask if the remainder of the prophecy can be referred to the time of Antiochus? I mean the captivity undergone by the people. The standing of the Lord's feet on the Mount of

Olives . . . and whether or not the Lord encircled the whole earth and the desert when Antiochus ruled over Syria.

20 *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.19.2–9 <*Schwartz* = *fr.* 39
Hamack = *fr.* 465b *Stem*>¹⁷

[2] But why does one need to say this, when even Porphyry, who settled in our time in Sicily, wrote treatises against us, attempting in them to slander the sacred scriptures and to mention those who had given their interpretations of them? And since he could not by any means bring any vile charge against our teachings, for lack of an argument turned to deprecate and slander their interpreters as well—among these especially Origen. [3] He states that in his adolescence he had known him; and he attempts to slander the man, but unknown to himself he actually praises him—in some cases telling the truth where he could not testify otherwise, and in other cases telling lies where he thought he could escape scrutiny. And once he accused him as a Christian, and another time he described his devotion to philosophical teachings.

[4] But listen to the words that he (scil. Porphyry) uses:

Some in their eagerness to find an explanation for the evilness of the Jewish writings without abandoning them had access to interpretations that are inconsistent and incongruent with what has been written, presenting not so much a defense of what was ridiculous as acclamation and praise for their own work. For they boast that things said clearly by Moses are riddles, treating them as divine oracles full of hidden mysteries. And confusing mental judgement by their own pretentious obscurity, they offered their interpretations.

[5] Then after other statements, he says:

But this type of obscuration must be traced back to a man I met while I was still a youth—who had a great reputation and still maintains it because of the writings he left behind. I mean Origen whose fame among teachers of this kind of learning has been widespread. [6] For this man was a hearer of Ammonius, who had the greatest proficiency in philosophy in our day. And so far as a grasp of knowledge is concerned he owed much to his teacher; but in regard to

¹⁷ Sicily was the probable locus for the writing of some of the treatises against the Christians. Cf. Bidez, *op. cit.* 98ff.

the right choice in life he took the opposite path to him. [7] For Ammonius was a Christian brought up in a Christian education by his parents. Then, when he began to think and study philosophy, he immediately changed his way of life in accordance with the laws. But Origen, a Greek educated in Greek learning, went forward into barbarian foolishness; and grasping this he marketed himself and his skill in literature about. And while his way of life was Christian and contrary to law, in his opinions concerning physics and the gods he played the Greek, and introduced Greek notions into foreign myths. [8] For he was always in companionship with Plato, and he was conversant with the writings of Numenius and Cronius, Apollophanes and Longinus, and Moderatus, Nicomachus, and the well-known men among the Pythagoreans. And he also used the writings of the Stoic Chaeremon, and Cornutus from whom he learned the metaphysical interpretation as employed in the Greek mysteries, now applying it to the Jewish writings.

[9] These statements were made by Porphyry in the third book of his writings against the Christians.

21 *Chronica*, Praefatio <ap. *Hieronymus*, *Chronica*, pp. 7f.—*Helm* (2) = fr. 40 *Harnack* = F. Gr. Hist., 2 B 260, fr. 33 = fr. 461 *Stern*>¹⁸

That impious Porphyry, basing himself on sources concerning peoples, claims in the fourth book of his work, which he fashioned in worthless labor against us, that Semiramis, who ruled among the Assyrians 150 years before Ianchus, lived after Moses. Thus it follows according to him that Moses came almost 850 years before the Trojan War.

22 *Chronica*, 1.165 <*Schoene* = *Die Chronik aus dem Armenischen*, ed. J. Karst, *Leipzig* 1911, pp. 76f. = F. Gr. Hist., 2 B 260, fr. 2 (9) = fr. 457a *Stern*>¹⁹

And after he (scil. Ptolemy Alexander) had fled, the Alexandrians sent ambassadors to the older brother, Ptolemy Soter, and presented

¹⁸ The *Chronicle* of Porphyry appears to have begun with the Trojan War. Cf. *Fr. Gr. Hist.* II D 878. Cf. J. Pepin, "Porphyre," *Foundation Hardt pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique Entretiens XII* (Geneva 1965), 231ff. That is, if Porphyry wrote a chronicle at all. Cf. Croke art. cit. 168-85.

¹⁹ This is the Latin translation of the Armenian version of Eusebius's *Chronicle* by

him the kingship again after he sailed there from Cyprus. In addition, since seven years and six months had passed—for he lived this long after his return there—the total time from the death of the common father was ascribed to him, thus keeping the total number of thirty-five years and six months. However according to the true count, seventeen years and six months fell to Ptolemy Soter at different times, while to the second (brother) Alexander there fell eighteen intermediate years between those of his brother's reign. Since the Alexandrians could not erase them from the book, they expunged them as far as it lay in their power, because with some Jewish help he had resisted them. Therefore they did not ascribe those times to him, but count all of the thirty-six years as those of his older brother.

23 *Chronica*, 1.255 <*Schoene* = *fr.* 117R = *ed.* J. Karst, *op. cit.*, p. 120 = *Fr. Gr. Hist.*, 2 B 260, *fr.* 32 (18), p. 1217 = *fr.* 457b Stern>²⁰

And he (scil. Antiochus Sidetes) also had ruled for nine years, and he defeated the Jews, and as a consequence of the siege he razed the walls of the city [scil. Jerusalem], and he butchered the most elect among them. This was in the third year of the one hundred and sixty second Olympiad.

24 *Codex Lawr.*, <(Athos) 184 B 64 *saccr.* x = Goltz, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Bd. 17.4, p. 41f. fol. 17, *Schol. Acts* 15:20 = *fr.* 8 Harnack>²¹

By ordering them to abstain from pollutions, from the shedding of blood, from prostitution, and those things which they do not want done to them—they should not afflict someone else.

Schoene. There is extant the Greek text of the Excerpta Eusebii as printed by J. A. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca e. Codd. Manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis II* (Oxford 1839) 122 = Eusebius, *Chronica* (ed. Schoene) I.166. The sources that lay behind this account are varied, and only with difficulty is it possible to reconstruct them. Among them may be Strabo, *Historica Hypomnemata*, ap. Josephus *Ant.* 13.284–87, Pausanias, *Graeciae Descriptio* 1.9.3; cf. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12.73.550, *Iordanis, Romana* 81 (ed. T. Mommsen [Berlin 1892], 9.). For an excellent assessment of the evidence, cf. Stern *op. cit.* 445–46.

²⁰ For these events, see Diodorus Siculus, 34–35.1. On the sources employed, cf. Stern *op. cit.* 1.181–85, 1.563–64.

²¹ Eusebius, *HE* 6.10.2ff.

So states Irenaeus in his three books *Against the Heresies*. In the arguments which follow, he employs useful prophecies directly from the apostles. And the son of Pamphilius, the great Eusebius, in the sixth and seventh books *Against Porphyry* demonstrates similarly that Porphyry had made perverse mention of this prophecy.

*Didymus*²²

25 *Commentarii ad Hieob.*, <*U. Hagedorn-D. Hagedorn-L. Koenen*, iii. *Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen*, 3 (1968), p. 150>²³

Some people, among them Porphyry and his ilk, sophistically argue that: "if everything were possible for God, then God would lie. And if everything were possible for the believer, then he could make both a bed and a man."

26 *Commentarii ad Eccles.*, 9:8-10:20. <*Binder*, iii. *Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen*, 3 (1968), p. 281, 16ff>²⁴

Porphyry, who intends to make charges against us, says we proceed violently, when we fabricate spiritual explanations and allegories from the literal sense (of a text). He (scil. Porphyry) interprets the lines of Homer, where Achilles and Hector are mentioned, allegorically (as if they are) about Christ and the Devil. And what we tend to say about the Devil, he said about Hector, and what we tend to say about Christ, he said about Achilles. He (scil. Porphyry) presents the

²² A follower of Origen and Eusebius, Didymus is one of our earliest sources for Porphyry's critique of the Christian scriptures. On Didymus and Porphyry, cf. Sellw, art. cit. 79-100.

²³ Porphyry raises the issue of the *alogos* character of Christian understandings of the creator. From the perspective of Platonic philosophy, deity is subject to the laws of nature. Here Porphyry echoes earlier critiques of Christian theology and cosmology. Cf. Galen, *De usu partium*, 11.4, 14, Celsus, *C. Cels.* 4.2, 6.4-5, 6.49-50, 6.60, 8.49, 5.14.

²⁴ Didymus, like Origen, was a defender of the allegorical interpretation of scripture. His response to Porphyry rested on his claim of the legitimacy of this approach to the Bible and the fact that the Platonist used the method to interpret Homer. He dismisses Porphyry's argument that scripture is unworthy of such a lofty exegesis because of its ethical and aesthetical deficiencies. On allegorical interpretation in Porphyry and Didymus, see Sellw, art. cit. 79-100.

following words: "Before the victory of Achilles, Hector dominated over everything and one held him to be more powerful than all others." He did this for purposes of diabolical confusion. The method is to interpret a text in the highest sense in the end.

However, we (scil. Christians) often powerfully don the historical-literary sense of interpretation, not in order to show something historical-literal, but rather to lead the hearer to understanding; for example—with the sentence: "Thorns grow in the hands of the intoxicated" (Prov. 26:9).

Commentarii ad Eccles., 9:8–10:20 <Gronewald, v. Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 24 (1979), p. 38>²⁵

Now then Porphyry, who wants [to reproach us for doing violence to the literal] meanings by making figurative references and allegorical meanings, has [himself] allegorized [somewhere in Homer] where Achilles and Hector are mentioned, when he spoke in reference to Christ and the Devil. And the things we are used to saying about the Devil, he says about Hector and what we say about Christ, he says about Achilles, and he uses this kind of expression: "Before the victory of Achilles, Hector used to strut before all his enemies, and thought himself more powerful than everyone. But he did this in order to deceive." Here then he finishes up with an anagogic interpretation. We often in fact do violence to the historical letter, not to explain the narrative, but rather to lead our hearer to comprehension, as "Thorns grow in the hands of a drunkard."

27 Commentarii ad Psalmen, <Gronewald, v. Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen, 12 (1970), p. 104>²⁶

For not everyone can say this, but only a few, who have received from God an additional ear. The saviour had this ear, when he said

²⁵ This translation is based on Gronewald's text of Didymus's commentary that appeared in 1979, eleven years after Binder's publication of the fragment. Cf. M. Gronewald, *Didymos der Blinde: Kommentar zum Ecclesiastes (Tura papyrus)*, vol. 5: *zu Ecl. 9:8–10:20* (Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 24 Bonn 1979), 38; G. Binder, "Eine Polemik des Porphyrios gegen die allegorische Auslegung des Alten Testaments," *ZPE* 3 (1968), 81–95. Sellew's emendations to Gronewald's text are used for purposes of translation. Cf. Sellew, art. cit., 81–82.

²⁶ This fragment reflects Didymus's adherence to an allegorical reading of scripture.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Mt. 11:15). However not everyone possessed ears, which perceived the veiled words of Jesus, which were words announced in parables. Therein, therefore, Porphyry represents a mistaken viewpoint.

*Epiphanius*²⁷

28 Panarion Haeresium, 51.8 <PG, 41 = GCS, 31.2, *Holl*, pp. 258-259 [*Aloger*] = fr. 12 *Harnack*>²⁸

[8.1] Therefore certain others of the pagan philosophers as well, namely Porphyry, Celsus, and Philosabbatius,²⁹ a terrible, dreadful snake of Jewish pedigree, accuse the holy evangelists in their efforts to refute the gospel . . . [8] . . . saying: how can the date of the birth in Bethlehem also be the same as that of the circumcision which came eight days later, and that of the journey to Jerusalem which came forty days after, and of what Simeon and Anna did on his behalf, [9] when on the night he was born there appeared an angel to him, it says, after the departure of the magi who came to worship him, opened their purses and made offerings, saying: "Arise, take your wife and child, and go to Egypt, for Herod wants the child's life [Mt. 2:13]. [10] If on the same night he was born he was taken to Egypt and remained there until Herod died, how can he stay eight days and be circumcised? Or how will Luke <not?> turn out to be lying <when he says that?> forty <days?> later <he was brought to Jerusalem?> . . . when he says: "On the fortieth day they brought him to Jerusalem and from there they returned to Nazareth?" [Lk. 2:21, 39].

²⁷ A contemporary of Jerome and John Chrysostom, Epiphanius wrote his massive work *Panarion* or *Haereses* against every heretical group known to him. It is unclear if the great heresy hunter knew of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, however. See the comments by Harnack op. cit. 41.

²⁸ It appears from this fragment that Epiphanius's criticism is not derived directly from Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. Cf. Harnack, op. cit. 49.

²⁹ Philosabbatius remains an unknown figure. The name may be a *nomen locale*.

*Arnobius*³⁰29 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.1 <Reifferscheid, CSEL, 4, pp. 1-2>

Now I have learned some have made the charge, who deeply believe in their own wisdom and speak in oracular fashion, as if they were the mouthpiece of some god, that after the Christian race began to exist on earth, the world went into ruin, mankind was afflicted with many ills, and even the heaven dwellers themselves were exiled from the earthly regions as a result of the abandonment of ceremonial sacrifices, the means through which they were induced to care after our affairs.

These people must not maintain the phantasy they spoke to be something important, when they merely spread rumors. Or think if we, on our side, stop from engaging in disputations, they have won, because our view is inherently defective, when really it is only because of the defender's silence.

I would never deny this is a most serious charge, and that we would totally deserve the odium of being public enemies, if it could be demonstrated we are the reason why the world has wandered away from the path of natural law and why the gods have been far removed from us, or why so great a swarm of mortal evils have afflicted mankind.

³⁰ Arnobius does not mention Porphyry by name but his *Adversus Nationes* certainly had Porphyry in view and the views he attacks are precisely the same as those outlined by Augustine. Cf. Wilken op. cit. 154, n. 15. Even so, to use Arnobius as a possible source for Porphyry's *Against the Christians* is a tenuous proposition. Nonetheless, on the basis of the *Philosophy from Oracles* Porphyry's discussion of Christianity included: 1) praise of Jesus as a divine man; 2) criticism of the disciples; 3) defense of monotheism; and 4) praise of the Jews for their monotheism. Arnobius and Lactantius are among the few *Patres* who thematically answer criticisms of Christianity in a manner that presages the comments of Augustine, cf. Fortin, art. cit. 197-226. Moreover, Arnobius mentions Porphyry by name; cf. *Adv. Nat.* 2.67. On the basis of this tentative parallel selections have been taken from the *Adversus Nationes* that exhibit *loci paralleli* found in writings of Porphyry, Eusebius, and Augustine. No claim is made that these fragments have a direct correspondence to Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

30 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.36 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 24>

But, they say, the gods are not hostile to you because you worship the omnipotent god, but because you claim a natural man was god, and one who suffered the penalty of crucifixion, which even for the lowliest of men is a disgraceful punishment. And you believe he still exists, and daily you worship him in prayers.

Then do these hear with damaged ears that Christ is worshipped and accepted by us, and is accepted as a divine being? And forgetting what place they had before, and what condition they were in then, they want no one else to partake in what was given to them? Is this the justice of heaven, this the holy judgement of the gods? Is it not a type of envy and avarice, a sordid type of ridicule to want only their own fortunes to prosper, and those of others to dwindle and to be trampled upon in humiliating contempt?

31 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.38 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 25-26>

But let us concede for a moment and yield to you that Christ was one of us in mind, spirit, body, weakness, and in life's condition. Is he not deserving to be called god, and to be felt a god by us because of the favor of so many blessings?

32 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.42 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 28>

"You worship a born man?"

Thus some ranting, angry, and excited men will say: "Is that Christ a god?"

33 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.56 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 38>

But you say our writers have presented these sayings mendaciously; that they have claimed too much of insignificant actions, and with boastful pretence they have exaggerated greatly minor events.

In any case they will never be satisfied that the question of who Christ was can be decided on the grounds of written testimony, and the only reason his cause has been put in writing is, if what we say is accepted as true, it is shown he was a god by the admission of everyone.

34 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.58 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 39>

"But they were written by uneducated and ordinary men, and thus they should not be believed without question as soon as they are heard."

35 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.60 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 41>

But they say if Christ was god why did he appear in human form?
And why was he killed in a human way?

36 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.61 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 42>

Our adversary says: "Well now, was the most high God incapable of accomplishing all those things he had decreed should be accomplished in the world without pretending to be a man?"

37 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.62 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 42–43>

"But he was killed after the manner of men."

"Who then was seen hanging on the cross? Who was dead?"

"This statement is unbelievable and clouded in blind obscurity."

38 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.63 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 43>

"What," you will say, "are these hidden and shadowy mysteries, which neither men nor even those called gods of the world can uncover at all through imagination or thought, except those he thought fitting to give the blessings of such great understanding, and to lead into the hidden recesses of an inner treasury?"

39 *Adversus Nationes*, 1.64 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 44–45>

Therefore what compels you, what urges you to curse, to shout at him, to display implacable hatred to him—whom no man can accuse or indict as guilty of any crime?

Christ alone you want to attack, to tear into pieces. If you can do this to a god . . . on what grounds, I ask you, do you say this, because of what fault? What did he do to bend the course of justice and to arouse you to hatred made vicious by the furies' lashings?

Because he told you he was sent by him who alone is king, as a guardian for your souls? Because he brought you immortality which you are certain you now have, persuaded by the words of the few?

But even if you were certain he spoke falsely, that he promised even the most unsupportable hopes—even so I see no reason why you would have to hate him, to condemn him with bitter revulsion.

40 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.2 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 47–49>

“But certainly he deserves to be hated because he drove religions from the earth, and has prevented access to worship of the gods.”

41 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.3 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 48>

“But he forbids men to pray to the lower gods.”

42 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.4 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 49–50>

You say, “We do not believe that what he says is true. But he himself does not demonstrate what he promises.”

43 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.6 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 51–52>

But maybe now those throughout the world are acting in unison, and unifying in an agreement of faith. This appears to you stupid and foolish.

44 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.8 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 53–54>

And since you are in the habit of laughing at our faith, and jab at this, our faith, with clever jokes, tell us happy wise men, soaked and saturated with the unmixed draught of wisdom, in life is there any type of undertaking that demands one be quite busy and active in which the doers do not accept, take up, and begin, without an initial act of faith in it?

45 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.9 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, p. 54>

And again have you seen with your own eyes and held in your own hands the things about which you yourselves write, which are your

daily reading—are they events that escape human understanding? Does not one of you believe this authority or that? What someone has persuaded himself another truly has said, does he not defend it as if by an agreement of faith?

46 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.63 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 98–99>

They say, “But if Christ was sent by god for this reason that he might free unhappy souls from the destruction of extinction, what were previous centuries guilty of before his coming, which were destroyed by mortality’s lot?”

Well now, are you in a condition to know what happened to mortal souls who belong to the most distant past, whether they have not also received some kind of assistance, care, and providence? I say you know what could have been learned if Christ taught it, if the ages which have turned since the start of the human race are unlimited or limited, when souls were first united with bodies, who was the creator of that union—yes indeed, who was the maker of man. And where former souls have departed, into which sections of the world they were, whether they were corruptible or not, whether they could have approached the dangers of death had not Christ, the preserver, appeared at the proper time.

Put aside those cares, and stop inquiries into things you do not understand. To them also the King’s mercy has been given, and the divine benefits have gone to all men similarly. Their souls have been preserved, their souls have been liberated, and they have put aside mortality’s lot and condition.

“How is that? What? When?”

If arrogance, if pride, if conceit were alien to you, long ago you would have been capable of knowing these things from Christ as your authority.

47 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.67 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 102–3>

And so when you argue against us about the abandonment and deviation from previous centuries, you should examine the reason and not the fact, and not place before us what we have abandoned, but examine, in particular what we have followed. Is it any fault or crime at all to change an opinion, and to leave ancient institutions behind for other things and turnings that are new? Such an indict-

ment also involves you who have many times changed your manner of living and acting, who in condemnation of the past have changed to other customs and ceremonies.

48 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.76 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 109–10>

Therefore he says: "Why if you serve the almighty god and trust he has care for your health and safety. Why does he suffer to have you suffer through so many persecutions and to experience every type of penalty and punishment?"

49 *Adversus Nationes*, 2.77 <*Reifferscheid*, CSEL, 4, pp. 110–11>

And thus this bitterness of persecution you speak of is our deliverance, not persecution. Nor will our harrassment bring us punishment, but it will bring us out into the light of freedom.

*Lactantius*³¹

50 *Divinae Institutiones*, 1.4 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, pp. 11–12>

The prophets, who in former times were many . . .

Still those who do not partake of truth do not think they should be believed. They say those voices were not divine, but human. . . . Were they deceitful then who spoke such things?

51 *Divinae Institutiones*, 1.5 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, p. 17>

Plato, judged the wisest of them all, plainly and clearly defends a monarchy, and he does not call it aether or reason or nature, but he calls it for what it is—god.

³¹ To employ Lactantius as a source for Porphyry's *Against the Christians* is fraught with difficulties. It is possible that Lactantius had the *Philosophy from Oracles* in mind when he wrote his defense of Christianity. He cited part of the same oracle quoted by Augustine in the *City of God*. Jesus is portrayed as a wise man. Criticism is directed toward his followers for worshipping him as a God. Cf. *Div. Inst.* 4.13, 4.16 = *Civ. Dei* 19.23, Wilken op. cit. 155. On the basis of this possible parallel, selections have been taken from Lactantius's apologetica that exhibit *loci paralleli* found in the writings of Porphyry, Eusebius, Arnobius, and Augustine.

52 *Divinae Institutiones*, 3.1 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, p. 179>

Since truth is still taught to be lying in obscurity, either through the error or the inexperience of vulgar men in slavery bound to varied and foolish superstitions.

53 *Divinae Institutiones*, 4.13 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, pp. 319–20>

For this reason when the Milesian Apollo was consulted on whether or not he (sic. Jesus) were a god or a man, the answer was this: "Mortal according to the flesh, wise in portent-bearing works, but convicted by Chaldaean judges—he was doomed to suffer a bitter end."

What do you answer to this Apollo? If he (sic. Jesus) is wise, then his instructional system is wise, and they are wise who follow it. Why then are we considered foolish, visionary, and senseless, who follow a wise master even by the confession of the gods themselves? For he said that this one had done wonderful works that especially merited the faith of divinity. Now he appears to agree with us since he says the same things in which we rejoice. Then he reverses himself and returns to demonic falsehoods.

54 *Divinae Institutiones*, 4.16 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, p. 337>

Now I come to the passion itself usually presented to us as an opprobrium because we also worship him as a man, and a man afflicted with extreme punishment, and tortured by men . . .

55 *Divinae Institutiones*, 4.17 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, p. 343>

Of the anger and ill-will they carried, enclosed in their hearts, they proposed other causes: that he broke the law of God given through Moses . . . that he made circumcision worthless.

56 *Divinae Institutiones*, 4.18 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, p. 360>

What shall we say about the indignity of the cross upon which God was hanged by the worshippers of God?

Similarly of his silence, which he tenaciously maintained even up to his death . . . ?

57 *Divinae Institutiones*, 4.22 <*Brandt, CSEL, 19, p. 369*>

They say, "Why then did he not come as God to instruct men? Why did he make himself so lowly and weak that he could be condemned by men, and afflicted with punishment? Why did he suffer violence at the hands of weak mortal men? Why did he not destroy these human forces with his power or avoid them with his divinity? Why did he not show his majesty at least at the brink of his death? And why was he led to judgement by someone weak, condemned as guilty, and killed as if a mortal?"

58 *Divinae Institutiones*, 4.24 <*Brandt, CSEL, 19, p. 371*>

Now let us examine if a teacher sent from heaven is incapable of perfection.

59 *Divinae Institutiones*, 4.25 <*Brandt, CSEL, 19, p. 375*>

Therefore, let men learn and understand why almighty God, when he sent his ambassador and messenger to instruct mankind in the precepts of his justice, wanted him to be clothed with mortal flesh, and to be afflicted with torture, and condemned to death.

60 *Divinae Institutiones*, 4.26 <*Brandt, CSEL, 19, p. 377*>

I have spoken about lowliness, weakness, and passion, and why God preferred to experience these. Now an explanation of the cross itself must be given, and we must explain its power. . . . For whatever things he suffered were not senseless, but they had meaning and great significance, as were those divine works he performed as well. The force and power of these had value, at the time of their happening, indeed they also had significance for future reference.

This is the reason the almighty Father chose that extreme type of death with which he permitted him to be afflicted. Someone might say, "Why if he were God and desired to die, was he not minimally visited with some honorable kind of death? Why the extremity of the cross? Why this infamous kind of punishment that appears unworthy even of a free man if he is dangerous?"

61 *Divinae Institutiones*, 5.2 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, pp. 403-6>

Therefore because there has been wanting among us suitable trained and skilled teachers, who would strongly and keenly refute public errors, who would defend to whole cause of truth, fluently and in a dignified manner—this want has called forward certain people to dare to write against the truth not known to them. I do not mean those in previous times who spoke against us without success. . . . One of these (scil. Porphyry?), claimed to be a leading figure in philosophy. But he was so full of vice that as a master of continence he burned, nonetheless, with avarice and lustful desires. He was so extravagant with food, this claimer of virtue in school, praiser of parsimony and poverty, he dined worse in the palace than at home. He covered his vices by hair and pallium, however, and that which is the most effective covering, by wealth. And to augment these he gained access to the friendship of judges through an odd manner of lobbying, and he indebted them quickly to himself through the influence of a false name—not only to sell and to betray their judgments, but also to prevent through their power their relatives from trying to get them back. But this man, who destroyed the value of his arguments by his custom of life, or who censured his morals through his conversations, was himself a heavy censor, and a severe censor against himself. And at the exact time a just couple was persecuted, he spewed forth three books against the Christian religion and name.

He argued that: "Before all things the duty of a philosopher was to undermine the errors of men, and to call them back to the true path. That is, to the worship of the gods through whose power and majesty the world is ruled, and not to allow unskilled men to be caught by the deceit of others—lest their simple-mindedness be a prize and grist for the mill of clever men. Thus he undertook this duty worthy of philosophy—to maintain the light of wisdom to those who cannot see it—not only that they may become again sound by undertaking the worship of the gods, but also to avoid with great strength the body's constant tortures and not to want to hopelessly endure their member's severe lacerations." But to make it clear he offered this work for this reason, he was spent on the praises of rulers whose piety and providence, as indeed he used to say himself: "Has shown forth brightly both in other respects and specifically in defending the religions of the gods. And finally it was good for

human interests that all men, putting aside and curbing impious and womanlike superstitions, should be liberated for legitimate actions, and should experience the favor of the gods to them."

However, when he wanted to undermine the reasonableness of that religion against which he made a charge, he appeared foolish, empty, and ridiculous because that serious advisor of the utility of another's practice did not know not only what he opposed, but even what he said. For if any of us were present, although they were tired because of the hour, mocked him in spirit. Naturally, however, when they saw the man claiming he could enlighten others, although he was himself blind, that he could lead others back from error, although he himself did not know where he placed his own feet, that he would teach others the truth, although he had never seen even a spark of it even though as a professor of wisdom he attempted to conquer wisdom. Now everyone was complaining of that because at that time especially he was moving to the part of the work where hateful cruelty was raging. What a flatterer of philosophy and a servant of time! Truly this one was hated for his own emptiness. He was one who hoped for the glory he gained. And the glory he gained was transformed into blame and reprehension.

62 *Divinae Institutiones*, 5.3 <*Brandt, CSEL, 19, pp. 407-8*>

(He claimed, "Christ himself, put to flight by the Jews, performed robberies by assembling a force of nine hundred men.") Who would dare refute such a great authority? Let us believe this with certainty, perhaps, that his dreams were announced by some Apollo.

"Who among them after his death was called, I shall not say a god but a man?" . . . When that same writer was destroying his marvelous acts, but not denying them, he wanted to show that: "Apollonius has done similar, or even greater acts" . . . Why then, madman, does no one revere Apollonius as a god? . . . Apollonius, who as you say . . ." when Domitian wished to punish him did not suddenly appear at the trial" . . . was more skilled than he who was arrested and fastened to a cross. But, perhaps, from this very event he wanted to make a charge concerning the insolence of Christ—the fact he established himself as a god, and that one appears more reverent, who although he did greater things, as this one thinks, nonetheless, did not appropriate that dignity to himself. It is foolish to think Apollonius did not want that which he was certainly desiring, it being possible, since

there is no one who refuses immortality, especially when you say: "He was adorned by certain people as a god, and his shrine under the name of Hercules Alexicacus was established by the Ephesians, and is honored even now. . . ." He says, "I do not say this on this account Apollonius is not regarded a god because he did not want it, but that it might appear that we, who immediately did not link to wondrous acts the faith of divinity, are wiser than you who have believed in a god on the strength of minimal evidence."

63 *Divinae Institutiones*, 5.7 <*Brandt*, CSEL, 19, pp. 420–21>

Perhaps someone might ask why, if this is justice, it has not been given to the whole human race, and why all people do not agree with it. This is an issue under great discussion—why separate selection was kept by God when he gave the earth justice.

*Jerome*³²

64 *Quaestiones in Genes.*, 1:10 <=*fr. 55b Harnack*>

It is to be noted that any accumulation of salt on fresh water is called sea in the Hebrew language. Therefore Porphyry calumniates in vain that the gospel writers proposed a miracle for ignorant people, namely, when the Lord walked on Lake Genezareth, calling it a sea, because any lake and accumulation of water is called a sea.

65 *Commentarii in Osee*, 1:2, 8f. <*Adriaen*, CCSL, 76, p. 9, 14 = PL, 25, *Cols.* 823, 827 = *fr. 45 H* = *fr. 464w Stern*>

[1:2] Now if some contentious individual, and above all one of the gentiles, dismisses the interpretation that has been stated figuratively, and laughs at the prophet in sexual union with a prostitute—we reply to him: [1:8f.] If some contentious interpreter rejects that which

³² Jerome is an important source for Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. Cf. Meredith art. cit. 1119–49. Apart from a few references to Genesis and the earlier prophetic writings, Porphyry focused his attention on the Book of Daniel because of Christian abuse of the prophetic writings. Jerome attempted to counter this assault by composing a commentary on the work; cf. Casey, art. cit. 15–33.

we have said, but has understood it to mean a prostitute named Gomer, the daughter of Debelaim, bore three children, (of which) the first and third were male, and the second intermediate one was female, wanting the scripture to have its literal meaning—he should respond . . .

66 *Commentarii in Jcsaj.*, 3:2 <= *fr. 97 Harnack*>

Lest we be collectors among the people, lest matrons and women be our senate, those women who rule in the churches, as the impious Porphyry has said, let the favor of women judge over promotions in the priesthood.

67 *Commentarii in Joel*, 2:28ff. <*Adriaen*, CCSL, 76, *A* = *fr. 5 Harnack*>

The apostles corroborate from testimonies taken from another time for that which they thought would be useful for their audience, and repugnant for those present. It is not because of the simple-mindedness of the audience and their lack of knowledge—as the impious Porphyry charges.

68 *Commentarii in Josua*, 15:54 <= *fr. 21d Harnack*>

Those who really say there was a contest between Peter and Paul satisfy the blaspheming Porphyry.

69 *Commentarri in Esaiam*, 30:1ff. <*Adriaen*, CCSL, 73, *p. 385*, *Col. 339* = *fr. 43x Harnack* = *fr. 464v Stern*>³³

That we noted in order that we should understand what we read in Daniel's final vision, namely the God Maozim, (is) not the God of the village of Modim, as Porphyry dreams, but (is) a strong and brave God.

³³ The comment in this work exhibits a correspondence to the commentary of Jerome on Porphyry's remarks concerning the Book of Daniel; cf. 9.37ff. cf. Stern op. cit. 475.

70 *Commentarii in Daniele*, Prologus <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 771 = PL 25, Col. 491 = fr. 43a *Hamack* = fr. 464a *Stern*>

Porphyry wrote his twelfth book against Daniel's prophecy, denying that it was written by the person to whom it is referred in its title, but rather by some person residing in Judea at the time of that Antiochus, who was surnamed Epiphanes. Furthermore he alleged that "Daniel" did not foretell the future as much as he narrated the past, and finally whatever he said until the time of Antiochus contained true history, while anything he may have opined beyond that point was false, inasmuch as he could not have foreknown the future.

71 *Commentarii in Daniele*, Prologus <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 773 = PL 25, Col. 492 = fr. 43b *Hamack* = fr. 464b *Stern*>

But we should recognize among other things that Porphyry raises this objection to us about the Book of Daniel, that it is an obvious forgery, not to be thought of as belonging to the Hebrew Scriptures, but is an invention composed in Greek. He deduces this from the fact that in the story of Susanna, where Daniel speaks to the elders, we discover the expressions "to split from the mastic tree," and "to cut from the evergreen oak"—a play on words convenient to Greek rather than Hebrew.

72 *Commentarii in Daniele*, Prologus <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 775 = PL 25, Col. 494 = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2 B260, fr. 36 = fr. 43 *Hamack* = fr. 464c *Stern*>

And now to understand the last parts of Daniel a many-faceted study of Greek history is necessary. Such authorities as Sutorius, Callinicus, Diodorus, Hieronymus, Polybius, Posidonius, Claudius Theon, and Andronicus, surnamed Alipius, whom Porphyry says he himself followed.

73 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 1 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 777 = PL, 25, Col. 495 = fr. 11 *Hamack* = fr. 459c *Stern*>

And it is for this reason in the Gospel according to Matthew (1:11-12) there appears to be a generation missing, because the second group

of fourteen, reaching up to the period of Jehoiakim, ends with the son of Josiah, and the third group begins with Jehoiachin, who is the son of Jehoiakim. And thereby Porphyry showed his ignorance since he tried to prove the evangelist Matthew guilty of falsehood.

74 *Comentarii in Daniele*, 2:40 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 795 = PL, 25, Col. 504 = fr. 43d Harnack = fr. 464d Stern>

He became a great mountain and filled the whole earth: This (is) the Jews, and the impious Porphyry incorrectly applies (it) to the people of Israel, who they insist will be the greatest power at the end of the ages, and will crush all realms, and will rule for eternity.

75 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 2:46 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 795 = PL, 25, Col. 504 = fr. 43e Harnack = fr. 464e Stern>

Porphyry falsely deprecates this passage on the basis that a most proud king would never worship a mere captive.

76 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 2:48 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 796 = PL, 25, Col. 505 = fr. 43f Harnack = fr. 464f Stern>

And in this case also, the deprecating critic of the church (scil. Porphyry) has attempted to castigate the prophet because he did not reject the gifts, and because he willingly received the honor of the Babylonians.

77 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 3:98ff. <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 809 = PL, 25, Col. 512 = fr. 43g Harnack = fr. 464g Stern>

Nabuchodonosor's letter was placed in the prophet's volume so that afterwards the book might not be thought to have been made by some other writer, as the sycophant (scil. Porphyry) incorrectly claims, but is the creation of Daniel himself.

78 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 5:10 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 824 = PL, 25, Col. 520 = fr. 43j Harnack = fr. 464h Stern>

Queen: Josephus writes that she was Belshazzar's grandmother. Origen writes that she was his mother. Therefore she knew the earlier events of which the king was ignorant. Thus let Porphyry stay awake nights,

who imagines that she was the king's wife, and ridicules the fact that she knows more than her husband.

79 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 7:7 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 843 = PL, 25, Col. 530 = *fr. 43l Harnack* = *fr. 464i Stern*>

Porphry placed the last two beasts, the Macedonian and the Roman, in the realm of the Macedonians, and divided them up in the following manner. He claimed that the leopard was Alexander himself, and the beast, which was unlike the other ones, represented Alexander's four successors. And then he counts ten kings up until the time of Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, and who were quite cruel. He did not associate the kings themselves with separate kingdoms, for example—Macedon, Syria, Asia, or Egypt. Rather he ordered the diverse kingdoms into a single kingdom making up a series. He did this clearly in order that the words which were written: "a mouth speaking boasts" would be thought of as spoken about Antiochus rather than the Antichrist.

80 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 7: 8, 14 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, pp. 843, 848 = PL, 25, Col. 531, 533 = *fr. 43m Harnack* = *fr. 464j Stern*>

(7:8): Porphyry vainly surmises the little horn that rose after ten horns is Antiochus Epiphanes, and that the three uprooted horns from the ten are Ptolemy VI, surnamed Philometer, Ptolemy VII, surnamed Euergetes, and the Armenian king Artarxias. The first of these kings died long before Antiochus was born . . . (7:14). Let Porphyry answer the question from all mankind to whom this language refers to, or who this person might be who was so strong as to break and crush to pieces the little horn, whom he contrives to be Antiochus? If he answers the princes of Antiochus were defeated by Judas Maccabaeus, then he must explain how Judas could be said to arrive with the heavenly clouds as the Son of Man.

81 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 9:1 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 860 = PL, 25, Col. 539 = *fr. 43n Harnack* = *fr. 464k Stern*>

This is Darius who with Cyrus conquered the Chaldaeans and the Babylonians. We ought not to think of that other Darius in whose second year of rule the temple was constructed (as Porphyry suspects

in extending the dating of Daniel)—nor of the Darius who was defeated by Alexander, the excellent king of the Macedonians.

82 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 11:13–19 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, pp. 909ff. = PL, 25, Col. 563f. = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2, B260, fr. 45–47 = fr. 464l Stern>³⁴

And when Antiochus (scil. the third) held Judea, a leader of the Ptolemaic party named Scopas the Aetolian was sent against Antiochus. And following a bold campaign he captured Judea, and abducted the leaders of Ptolemy's party, returning to Egypt with them . . . Antiochus engaged Ptolemy's general Scopas, wanting to recapture Judea and the many cities of Syria. Where the city presently called Paneas was founded, he routed him, and besieged him along with ten thousand soldiers in Sidon. In order to free him Ptolemy sent the famous generals Acnopus, Menocles (Menecles), and Damoxenus. He was not able to lift the siege, however, and finally overcome by famine, Scopas surrendered. And he was despoiled of all he had, and he was dispatched with his comrades. And for his statement: "he shall throw up a hillock", this illustrates that Antiochus is to give a lengthy siege to Scopas' garrison in the Jerusalem Acra, while the Jews add their efforts as well. And he is going to capture other cities, which previously had belonged to the Ptolemaic factions in Syria, Cilicia, and Lydia—and the other provinces that belonged to Ptolemy's party, but in addition to extend his empire into Egypt as well. Therefore he employed the good services of Eucles of Rhodes to marry his daughter, Cleopatra, to young Ptolemy in the seventh year of his reign. And in his thirteenth year she was given in marriage to him, purportedly endowed with all of Coele-Syria as her dowry.

83 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 11:20 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 913 = PL, 25, Col. 565 = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2, B260, fr. 48 = fr. 430 Hamack = fr. 464m Stern>

Porphyry, however, asserts that it was not this Seleucus who is alluded to, but Ptolemy Epiphanes, who plotted a conspiracy against Seleucus

³⁴ Jerome probably derived his information on the Fifth Syrian War from Porphyry. Porphyry likely drew his data from the commentary to Polybius = Josephus, *Ant.* 12.135–36, 154, Appianus, *Liber Syriacus* 5.18, and Livy, *Hist.*, 35.13:4. Cf. M. Holleaux, *Études d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques III* (Paris 1942), 355 n. 2, Stern, *op. cit.* 2.462, I.113–15.

with the consequence that Seleucus was poisoned by his own generals. They did this because when somebody asked Seleucus where he was to get the funds for the great undertakings he was planning, he replied that his monetary resources were his friends. When this statement was publicly revealed, the generals became worried that he might take their resources from them, and on that basis by malicious means they put him to death.

84 Commentarii in Daniele, 11:21f. <Glorie, CCSL, 75A, pp. 914ff. = PL, 25, Cols. 565f. = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2, B260, fr. 49a = fr. 43p; 43q = fr. 464n Stern>

Until this point the historical order has been followed, and there has been no point of contention between Porphyry and us. But the remainder of the document, from here to the end of the volume, he interprets as referring to the person of Antiochus, who was surnamed Epiphanes, brother of Seleucus, and Antiochus the Great's son. He ruled Syria for eleven years after Seleucus, and he seized Judea. God's law was persecuted under him, and the Maccabean War occurred.

Our adversaries say that the one who was to "stand up in the place" of Seleucus was his brother Antiochus Epiphanes. At first the faction in Syria that favored Ptolemy would not give him the regal honor. But later he gained control of Syria through the pretence of clemency . . . and not only does the document state he defeated Ptolemy by cheating, but that he overcame through treachery the prince of the covenant, that is Judas Maccabaeus. Or else this is what is referred to: That after he (Judas) had offered peace with Ptolemy, and became prince of the covenant, later he (Seleucus) set up a plot against him (Judas). Now Ptolemy understood here was not Epiphanes, the fifth Ptolemy to reign in Egypt, but it was Ptolemy Philometer, the son of Antiochus' sister Cleopatra. Thus Antiochus was his maternal uncle. And after Cleopatra's death Egypt was ruled by Eulaeus—Philometer's eunuch teacher, and by Leneus. And they strove to retake Syria, which Antiochus took wrongly. War erupted between the young boy Ptolemy and his uncle. And they fought a battle between Pelusium and Mount Casium. Ptolemy's generals were defeated. Antiochus exhibited leniency to the young boy, and making a pretence of friendship, he went up to Memphis, and according to the Egyptian custom he received the crown there. Stating that he was looking out for the boy's interests, he conquered all Egypt for

himself (with only a tiny force). And he entered into rich and prosperous cities; and thus he accomplished things his father had never done, nor even his father's fathers. For none of the Syrian kings had ever desolated Egypt in this manner, and scattered all its wealth. Furthermore he was so clever that by deceit he vanquished the well-formulated plans of those who were the generals of the boy-king. This is the line of interpretation Porphyry followed, pursuing with much repetition the sequence of Suctorius, speaking of events, which we related in a brief compendium.

85 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 11:25ff. <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 918 = PL, 25, Col. 567 = fr. 43r *Harnack* = fr. 464o *Stern*>

Porphyry interprets this as referring to Antiochus, who with a large army went out on a campaign against his sister's son. But the king of the south, that is Ptolemy's generals, also will be roused to war with many and rather powerful auxiliary forces; but they will not be able to resist Antiochus' false schemes. For he will feign peace with his sister's son, and will eat bread with him, and afterwards he will conquer Egypt.

86 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 11:27ff. <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 918f = PL, 25, Col. 567 = fr. 43s *Harnack* = fr. 464p *Stern*>

There is no doubt that Antiochus made peace with Ptolemy, and ate at the same table with him, and devised intrigues against him, and yet without attaining any advantage thereby, because he did not gain his kingdom but was repulsed by Ptolemy's soldiers.

87 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 11:29ff. <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, p. 919 = PL, 25, pp. 567f. = *Harnack*, fr. 43 = Fr. Gr. Hist. II, B260, F50.>³⁵

Both the Greek and Roman historians state that after Antiochus had been driven out of Egypt and had returned again, he came to Judea, that is, against the holy covenant, and that he desecrated the Temple,

³⁵ These events are described in 1 Macc. 1:20ff., 2 Macc. 5:11, Josephus, *Ant.* 12:246ff. Cf. V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York 1977), 186ff.

and removed a great quantity of gold; and then established a Macedonian garrison in the fortress, he returned to his own country. Then two years later he gathered his army against Ptolemy and went south.

88 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 11:31V. <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, pp. 921, 923, 925f., 927f. = PL, *Cols.* 569ff. = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2, B260, *fr.* 51–55 = *fr.* 43u *Harnack* = *fr.* 464r *Stern*>³⁶

Those of another perspective claim that the persons spoken about are those who were sent by Antiochus two years after he had looted the temple to exact tribute from the Jews—and also to erase reverence for God, he set up an image of Jupiter Olympius in the Temple at Jerusalem, and also statues of Antiochus. Now this is called the abomination of desolation, having been set up when the holocaust and continual sacrifice were abolished . . . (11:34ff.). Porphyry thinks that the little auxiliary was Mattathias from the village of Modin because he rebelled against Antiochus' generals, and tried to preserve the worship of the true God. He says he was called "little auxiliary" because Mattathias was killed in battle, and later his son Judas, who was called Maccabaeus, also fell in combat.³⁷ And in similar fashion the remainder of his brothers were deceived by the falseness of their enemies. . . . Porphyry, and others who follow him, certify the reference to be Antiochus Epiphanes, noting that he rose against the reverence of God. And his arrogance reached so far as to demand that his own statue be set up in the Jerusalem Temple. And concerning the subsequent saying: "and he shall successfully maintain until the anger be consummated for the consummation shall be within him"—they understand it to mean that his power will continue until such time as God becomes angry with him, and orders him to be killed. Now indeed, Polybius and Diodorus, who wrote the histories of the *Bibliothecae*, tell that Antiochus acted not only against the God of Judea, but was compelled as well by a consuming greed to plunder Diana's temple in Elymias because it was exceedingly rich. But he was resisted powerfully by the temple guard and by the neighboring people, and was afflicted by terrible phantasies, became insane, and eventually died of illness. And they

³⁶ For an account of Antiochus's religious policies, see J. C. Dancy, *A Commentary on 1 Maccabees* (Oxford 1954), 78ff.

³⁷ According to 1 Macc. 2 Mattathias died of natural causes.

say that this happened to him because he tried to plunder Diana's Temple . . . (11:37ff.). Porphyry has a ridiculous interpretation for the God Moazim, claiming that Antiochus' generals placed a statue of Jupiter in the town of Modin from which came Mattathias and his sons. Furthermore they compelled the Jews to offer blood-sacrifices to it, that is to the God of Modin . . . "Garrisons ect." Porphyry explains this as meaning the man is to fortify the Acra at Jerusalem and will station garrisons in the remaining cities, and will compel the Jews to worship an alien God, which without doubt refers to Juppiter. And showing the God to them, he will persuade them that they shall worship it. Then to those deceived he will give both honor and great glory; and he will make them rule over the remainder in Judea, and for their falsehood parcel out states to them, and will distribute gifts . . . (11:40f.). This is also ascribed to Antiochus by Porphyry on the grounds that in the eleventh year of his reign he battled for a second time against his nephew—Ptolemy Philometer. For when the latter heard Antiochus had arrived, he gathered many thousands of people together. But as a tempest with his chariots, calvary, and large navy Antiochus invaded many lands. And as he proceeded he laid everything to waste; and he came to the wondrous land Judea . . . and Antiochus used the city's ruined walls to strengthen the Acra, and then he continued to Egypt. . . . They say that in his haste to battle Ptolemy, the king of the south, Antiochus ignored the Idumaeans, Moabites, and Ammonites, who lived on the periphery of Judea, least he make Ptolemy stronger by engaging in some other campaign.

89 Commentarii in Daniele, 11:44ff. <Glorie, CCSL, 75A, pp. 931ff. = PL, 25, pp. 573ff. = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2, B260, fr. 56 = fr. 43v Harnack = fr. 464s Stern>

And even in this passage, Porphyry has some muddled application to Antiochus, claiming that in his battle with Egyptians, Lybians, and Aethiopians, passing through them, he heard of rebellions in the north and east raised against him. Thus, returning, he overcame the Arcadian resistance, and annihilated the whole province along the Phoenician coast. And then he proceeded against the Armenian king Artaxias without hesitation, who was moving down from the regions of the east. And having killed a large number of his soldiers, he set up his tent in the region of Apendo, which is situated between the

two widest rivers—the Tigris and the Euphrates. But it is impossible to state on which renowned mountain he took his seat, after he had gone to that place . . . and it would be foolish to interpret the two seas as the two Mesopotamian rivers. But Porphyry circles around this famous mountain by following the interpretation of Theodotion who stated: "On the sacred mountain Saba between two seas." And even though he thinks that Saba is the name of a mountain in Armenia or Mesopotamia, he cannot say why it is holy. Certainly, if we claim the right of fabrication, we can add the detail which Porphyry fails to mention, that the "mountain" was called "holy" because it was consecrated to idols in conformity with the errors of the Armenians. And it says: "and he shall come even to the crest of the mountain," in the province of Elymias, which is the most eastern of the Persian regions. And there when he wanted to plunder Diana's Temple, which possessed innumerable riches, he was routed by barbarians, for they honored that shrine with extraordinary veneration. And overcome by suffering, Antiochus died in Tabes—a small town in Persia. Porphyry, by use of a most artificial mode of reasoning, has invented these details as an affront to us, but although he was able to prove that these statements refer to Antiochus rather than the Antichrist, what is it to us? For on the basis of all the passages of scripture we do not prove the coming of the Christ and the mendaciousness of the Antichrist? . . . Porphyry dismisses things which are manifest, and asserts that the prophecy refers to the Jews, although we know well that they are in chains up to this day. And he claims that the person who wrote the Book of Daniel made it up in his mind to renew the hopes of his landsmen—not that he was capable of fore-knowledge of the whole of future history. Rather he remembers facts that had already occurred. Thus Porphyry limits himself to false claims in respect to the final vision, replacing rivers for the sea, and positing a famous and sacred mountain, Apendo, although he is not able to give any historical source in which he has read about it.

90 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 12:1ff. <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, pp. 936ff. = PL, 25, *Cols.* 575ff. = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2, B260, fr. 57 = fr. 43w *Harnack* = fr. 464t *Stern*>

Up to this point, somehow, Porphyry managed to maintain his position and impose upon the credulity of the naive among our followers

and the poorly informed among his own. But what can he say of this chapter in which is described the resurrection of the dead? . . . But what will not stubborn obduracy not resort to? . . . This also, he declares, was written in reference to Antiochus, for after he had invaded Persia, he left his army with Lysias, who was in command of Antioch and Phoenicia, for the purpose of warring against the Jews and destroying their city of Jerusalem. All these details are narrated by Josephus, the author of the Jewish Histories. Porphyry claims that the difficulty was such as never occurred previously, and that a time occurred that had never been, from the time that races began to exist even to that time. But when victory was given to them, and Antiochus' generals were killed, and Antiochus himself had died in Persia, the people of Israel experienced salvation, even all those written down in the book of God, namely, those who defended the law with utmost bravery. In contrast to them were those who proved to be transgressors of the law and allied with the party of Antiochus. It was then, he claims, that these guardians of the law, who had been, sleeping in the dust of the earth and were burdened with a load of afflictions, and hidden away, as it were, in the tombs of wretchedness, rose up again from the dust of the earth to a triumph un hoped for, and lifted up their heads, rising up to eternal life, just as the transgressors rose to eternal disgrace. But those masters and teachers who had a knowledge of the law shall shine as the heaven, and those who have exhorted the simple people to observe the rites of God shall blaze forth like stars for all eternity. Also he adduces the historical account concerning the Maccabees, in which it is said many Jews under the leadership of Mattathias and Judas Maccabaeus fled to the desert and hid away in caves and holes in the rocks, and re-emerged after the victory. These things, thus, were foretold in metaphorical speech as if it concerned a resurrection of the dead.

91 *Commentarii in Daniele*, 12:7, 11, 12 <*Glorie*, CCSL, 75A, pp. 940ff. = PL, 25, cols. 577ff. = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2, B260, fr. 58 = fr. 43w *Hamack* = fr. 464u *Stern*>

(12:7) Porphyry interprets "a time and times and half a time" to mean three and a half years; and we do not deny on our part that this agrees with the idiom of sacred scripture. . . . If therefore the previous references about the Antichrist, which were clearly written, are given by Porphyry to Antiochus and to the three and a half

years duration, which he claims the Temple was deserted, then he is under an obligation to prove the next statement: "His kingdom is eternal, and all kings shall serve and obey him" also refers to Antiochus, or else (as he himself proposes) to the Jewish people. But it is abundantly clear that such an argument will never stand. . . . When it is said that "God's people shall have been scattered," under Antiochus' persecution, as Porphyry claims . . . "at that time shall all things be fulfilled" . . . (12:11). Porphyry asserts that these one thousand two hundred and ninety days to have been completed in Antiochus' time and in the desolation of the Temple (12:12). Porphyry explains this passage in this manner—that the forty-five days after the one thousand two hundred and ninety-five signifies the interval of victory over Antiochus' generals, of the period when Judas Maccabaeus fought with courage, and cleaned the Temple, and shattered the idol into pieces, offering blood-sacrifices in the Temple of God.

92 Tractatus de Psalmo 77 <*Anecdota Maredsolana*, 3.2 p. 60 = *fr. 10 Harnack* = CCSL, 78, p. 66 = *fr. 459b Stern*>

I shall open my mouth in a parable, etc: Isaiah does not say this, but Asaph. Finally, that impious Porphyry also raises this very thing against us. He says: Your evangelist Matthew was ignorant, thus he said (Mt. 13:35), what was written in the prophet Isaiah: I shall open my mouth in parables, etc.

93 Tractatus de Psalmo 81 <*Anecdota Maredsolana*, 3.2. p. 80 = *Harnack fr. 4* = CCSL, 78, p. 89 = *Stern fr. 459a*>

The whole world has been subjugated by Paul from the ocean up to the Red Sea. Someone might say: All this they [i.e., the Christians] did for love of advantage. This is what is said according to Porphyry. Rustic and poor people performed miracles by magical arts since they possessed nothing whatsoever. However, it is not much to perform miracles for the Magi in Egypt worked miracles against Moses, and it (magic) was done by Apollonius, and it (magic) was done by Apuleius, who worked an innumerable number of signs. I admit this, Porphyry—they worked signs with magical devices—but to accept riches from rich little women, whom they introduced to their faith?—this you said. But why did they die? Why were they crucified as (if one works for some gain?)

94 *Commentarii in Matth., 3:3 <= fr. 9 Harnack>*

Porphry takes up that passage in the gospel of Mark: "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ . . . directing straight his foot-path." Since one testimony comes from a passage in Malachi and another from Isaiah, he asks how can we believe that this passage is taken from Isaiah, which many times the men of the church have answered?

95 *Commentarii in Matth., 9:9 <= fr. 6 Harnack>*

So here Porphyry and the Emperor Julian argue that it is the lack of an historian's knowledge that they rely on the stupidity of those who followed immediately upon the saviour. They followed anyone in an irrational manner who immediately called him something other than a man.

96 *Commentarii in Matth., 15:17f. <= fr. 56 Harnack>*

According to the heretics and perverts all gospel passages are replete with scandals; and even from this minor passage they slander the Lord, saying that he experienced physiological processes. They are of the opinion that all nutrients go into the stomach and are excreted.

97 *Commentarii in Matth., 21:21 <= fr. 3 Harnack>*

The gentile dogs, they bark against us in their books, which they have left in memory of their impiety, by asserting that the apostles had no faith because they could not move mountains.

98 *Commentarii in Matth., 24:16f. <= fr. 44 Harnack>*

Concerning that place that is the abomination of desolation, mentioned by the prophet Daniel, that it stood in the holy place—Porphyry, in the thirteenth volume of his work against us, could not have blasphemed against us without it. Eusebius of Caesarea has already answered it in three volumes (18, 19, 20), and Apollinarius has abundantly written upon it. Since this little verse has been discussed so plentifully, the disputation may be considered superfluous.

99 Commentarii in Matth., 27:45 <= *fr. 14 Harnack*>

Those who have written against the gospels suspect the disappearance of the sun, which occurs at certain established times. Because of their lack of knowledge the disciples of Christ have interpreted this as the resurrection of the Lord.

100 Commentarii in Galat., Prologus <= *fr. 21a Harnack*>

Porphry, completely ignorant and criminal, in the first volume of his work against us, says that Peter was reprimanded by Paul, that he did not go out immediately to evangelize. And thus he wanted to brand him with the blemish of error, the lie of impertinence, and of publicly fictitious teaching because between these princes of the church there were difficulties.

101 Commentarii in Galat., 1:1 <= *fr. 19 Harnack*>

"Not from men": this could refer to Peter and others, indirectly. He maintains it was not handed over to him from men because it was not given to him from the apostles or from the gospel.

102 Commentarii in Galat., 1:16 <= *fr. 20 Harnack*>

Some are of the opinion that Galatians (1:16) refers to the apostles. And now Porphyry objects because after Christ was revealed to them, Paul was not permitted to go to men and bring his message to them—so that he would not be instructed from flesh and blood.

103 Commentarii in Galat., 2:11ff. <= *fr. 21c Harnack*>

Mostly since Luke, the writer of sacred history never mentioned dissent, and never says that Peter had been in Antioch with Paul. Because of this an opportunity was given to the blaspheming Porphyry for the contention that either one should not believe that Peter made a mistake, or that Paul had impertinently refuted the prince of the apostles. If we have to invent because of this blasphemy that Cephas is different from Peter, so that Peter cannot be alleged to have made a mistake, then an infinite number of scriptural passages, incriminated by someone who does not understand, need to be erased.

104 *Commentarii in Galat., 5:10* <=*fr. 22 Harnack*>

They say that he damages Peter when he writes he had challenged him publicly for not announcing immediately the truth of the gospel. But Paul would speak neither with such malevolent impertinence to the prince of the church, nor could Peter be accused of correctly being charged of having caused a disturbance against the church.

105 *Epistulae, 130 {Ad Demet.}* <=*fr. 25 Harnack*>

The apostle Peter never prayed for the death of Ananias and Sapphira—as the stupid Porphyry calumniates.

106 *Epistulae, 133 {Ad Ctesiph. 9}* <=*fr. 82 Harnack*>

Your companion likes to object: "How can a compassionate and merciful God allow that from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to the appearance of Christ, all nations perish out of ignorance of the law and the community of God? Neither fertile Britain, the province of tyrants, the peep-holes of Scotland and all those up to the ocean, all these alien nations had not known Moses and the prophets. Was it necessary that he come at the end of days and not earlier so that an innumerable multitude of peoples would perish?"

107 *Contra Vigilant., 10* <=*fr. 49 Harnack*>

If you do not see these as vestiges of demons and not really as demons that cry out, but they simulate their own torments in the manner of the impious gentiles Porphyry and Eunomius.

108 *Adversus Pelag., 2:17* <=*fr. 70 Harnack*>

He says to his brethren that he would not go up to the feast of Tabernacles. And yet afterwards it is written: "But when his brethren had gone up, then he also went up to the feast, not openly, but as if it were in secret" (Jn 7:10). He said he would not go, and yet he went; here Porphyry barks, charging him with fickleness and inconsistency.

Jesus denies that he would go to the Samaritan woman, then he did what he denied. Porphyry barks and accuses Christ of inconsistency and change of heart, and thereby ignores that all these irritations refer to the flesh.

*Chrysostomus*³⁸

109 Homil., in Joannem, 98 <PG 59 Migne>

How did he go up after saying, I am not going up? How then also did he not go up? For if he did not go up because the time had not yet come, he should not have gone up at all (Jn 7:8-10).

110 Homil., in Joannem, 133 <PG 59 Migne>

And how does he (scil. Peter), told not to have a scrip, not to have two coats, own a sword; how does he, who was forbidden to even strike a blow with the hand, become a killer of men?

*Augustine*³⁹

111 Epistulae, 102. 2 <Goldbacher, CSEL, 34, 2, p. 551f. = PL, 33 = fr. 92 Harnack>

They refer to two types of resurrection. What should occur at such a promised resurrection? Should that be the resurrection of Christ or Lazarus? When this refers to Christ, how could this same resurrection happen to those born from human seed as it happened to him born without any biological cause? If one assumes this refers to one born without the condition of seed, how could this apply to one born in seed, Lazarus, since the resurrection of Lazarus occurred when his body was not decomposed? But our resurrection will be

³⁸ There are surprisingly few references to Porphyry's *Against the Christians* in the writings of John Chrysostom; cf. *Hom. 6.3 in 1 Cor.*, *Sermo in b. Babylon et contra Julianum et ad Graecos* 2. The fragments cited are taken from the work of P. Nautin, "Trois autres fragments de livre du Porphyre 'Contre les Chrétiens'" *Revue Biblique* 57 (1950), 409-16.

³⁹ Augustine's *City of God* and *Harmony of the Gospels* function as major sources for Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. References to Porphyry emerge from Augustine's other writings and letters as well. The first work preserves elements of the *Philosophy from Oracles*; the second raises issues of gospel relationships that likely came from Porphyry's lost essays on "Gospel Problems." On the relationship of Augustine to Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, see J. O'Meara *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris 1959). For Augustine's use of Porphyry in the *Harmony of the Gospels*, see Wilken, op. cit., 144-48.

achieved many centuries later from a sacttered body. Furthermore, if after the resurrection the situation will be a blissful one, or without injuries suffered by the body, and without the necessity of being hungry, then what should this mean, that Christ dined after the resurrection and revealed his wounds? If he did this it is not believable, or he pretended to do so, or if he really showed his wounds, then we must assume that wounds will remain after the resurrection.

112 Epistulae, 102. 8 <Goldbacher, CSEL, 34, 2, p. 551f. = PL, 33, Col. 373 = Fr. Gr. Hist., 2, B260, fr. 60 = fr. 81 Harnack = fr. 465h Stern>

Those who maintain Porphyry's *Against the Christians* gives more valid issues: If Christ said he is away and the grace and the truth is put exclusively in himself, that the souls who believe him return—what have humans done in the many centuries before Christ . . . ? Did not religion and temple-worship flourish in Alba without the Christian law quite some centuries before Rome? What happened then, he says, with these innumerable gods? Should these souls not be without sin, if this one, who could be believed had accomodated humans before he had come? The world continued in the Roman temple-cult. Why has the so-called saviour made himself unavailable in all these centuries; what then should happen to Latin souls, who are deprived of Christ's grace, who had not appeared yet up to the time of Augustus?

But they should not say, that mankind has been cared for by the old Jewish law: the law of the Jews appeared a long time afterwards, and flourished in a tiny area of Syria only; later, truly, it extended gradually into the Italian regions, but this happened after Gaius Caesar, and certainly not before his reign.

113 Epistulae, 102. 16 <Goldbacher, CSEL, 34, 2, p. 558 = PL, 33, Col. 376 = fr. 79 Harnack = fr. 465i Stern>

He (scil. Porphyry) says, "censure the rites of sacrifices, the victims, the incense, and other things exercised in the cults of the temples, whether the same cult began with themselves, or with the God whom they worship."

114 Epistulae, 102. 22 <Goldbacher, CSEL, 34, 2, p. 558 = PL, 33 = fr. 91 Harnack>

We see that the issue might be regarding this statement—with the measure of sin and punishment: Now the one caluminiously explaining it in the gospel says: Christ threatens those who do not believe in him with eternal punishment. With the measure you have measured, you! He says this is patently ridiculous and preposterous, because if he will turn the punishment to measurement, and all measurement is circumscribed, what should those threats of infinite punishment mean?

115 Epistulae, 102. 28 <Goldbacher, CSEL, 34, 2, = PL, 33 Col. 382 = fr. 85 Harnack>

After this question the author who took this from Porphyry adds the following: "Perhaps you might instruct me whether Solomon really said, God has no son" (Eccles. Salom. 4:8).

116 Epistulae, 102. 30 <Goldbacher, CSEL, 34, 2 = PL, 33, Col. 382 = fr. 46 Harnack = fr. 465a Stern>

The last question has been posed concerning Jonah, not as if this comes from Porphyry, but from the ridicule of the pagans. Thus it has been posited: "Then what should we think," he states, "about Jonah who is said to have been in the stomach of a sea-monster for three days? This is quite unlikely and incredible that a man eaten with clothing should be in a fish's heart; and if this is said figuratively, you should assess it worthy to explain. For what is the purpose of the gourd that sprang forth above the regurgitated Jonah? What was the reason for this thing's appearance?" I have noticed this type of question is gratefully ridiculed with boisterous laughter by pagans.

117 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.15.23. <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 22>⁴⁰

[23] But what should be said to this, if those vain praisers of Christ and those oblique slanderers of the Christian religion, dare not to

⁴⁰ It appears that Augustine worked from a number of Porphyry's writings in

blaspheme Christ; for this precise reason some of their philosophers, like Porphyry of Sicily has given us to comprehend in his books, consulted their gods about their response to Christ's claims, and by their own oracles they were prevented from praising Christ? Not that this is remarkable for we read also in the gospel that demons confessed him (Lk 4:41), and in our prophets it is written in this manner: For the gods of the nations are demons (Ps 96:5). Thus it happens, then, to avoid attempting to be in opposition to their own gods' responses, they turn their blasphemies away from Christ and spew them against his disciples. However, it appears to me that these gods of the gentiles, whom the pagan philosophers may have consulted, if they were asked to give their judgements on Christ's disciples as well as on Christ himself, would be constrained to praise them in similar fashion.

118 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.1.1 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 1-2>

[1] The first preachers of this gospel were the apostles, who saw our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in person when he was still here in the flesh. And not only did these men remember the words from his lips, and the acts he did before their eyes, but they were also careful, when the duty of preaching the gospel was given to them, to make humanity aware of those divine and memorable happenings that occurred before the formation of their own association with him through discipleship. This refers to the period of his nativity, his infancy, and his childhood. They were able to undertake an exact inquiry and to obtain information, either from his own hand or at the hands of his parents or other groups, on the basis of the most reliable inferences and the most trustworthy testimonies. Also certain ones among them, namely Matthew and John, gave to the world in their respective books, a written account of all those matters which appeared necessary to put in writing concerning him.

composing the *Harmony of the Gospels*. It is not uncommon for him to combine statements from the *Philosophy from Oracles* with those from Porphyry's writings on "Gospel Problems." Wilken, op. cit. 144-56.

119 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.2.2 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 2-3>

[2] And to exclude the notion that, in what concerns the apprehension and proclamation of the gospel, it is a consequential matter whether the statement comes from men who were actual followers of this same Lord when he presented himself here in the flesh, and had the company of his disciples around him, or by people who credibly received facts which they became aware of in a trustworthy manner through the medium of his followers. Divine providence, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, has taken care that certain of those who were not much more than the first apostle's followers, to not only preach the gospel, but also to narrate an account of it in writing. I refer to Mark and Luke.

120 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.2.3 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 3-4>

[3] Now, those four evangelists . . . are believed to have written in the following order: first Matthew, then Mark, third Luke, and finally John. Consequently, it would appear that they had one order determined among them in respect to issues about their personal knowledge and preaching of the gospel, but a different order in regard to the task of presenting the written narrative. Indeed in so far as the acquisition of their own knowledge and the charge of preaching, without question those came first in order, who were the actual followers of the Lord when he was present in the flesh, who heard him speak and saw him act. And with a charge received from his lips they were sent out to preach the gospel. But in respect to the task of composing that gospel record which is to be accepted as ordained by divine authority, there were only two who achieved places and were a part of the number of those whom the Lord chose before Passover, namely the first and last places. In order, the first place was held by Matthew, and the last by John. Consequently, the remaining two, who did not belong to the number referred to, but who simultaneously spoke in these others, were supported on either side by the same (sic. Matthew and John) like sons embraced, and in this manner they were placed between these two.

121 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.2.4 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 4>

[4] And although each of them may appear to have maintained a certain narrative order specific to himself, certainly this is not to be taken as if each writer chose to write in ignorance of what his predecessor had done, or omitted matters concerning which there was no information—things which one of the others now is discovered to have recorded. But the fact is, just as each of them received the gift of inspiration, they abstained from adding to their various works any additional materials.

122 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.7.10 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 10–11>

[10] However, those sacred chariots of the Lord . . . are attacked by certain people with calumnious charges, who in impious vanity or in ignorant temerity, think to rob of their credibility as true historians, those teachers by whose means the Christian religion has been spread all over the world, and through whose efforts it has yielded such plentiful fruits that non-believers hardly dare so much as to murmur their slanders among themselves in private. They are kept under control by the gentile's faith and by the devotion of all peoples. Nonetheless, in so far as they still strive through their calumnious disputations to keep some from becoming themselves acquainted with the faith, and consequently prevent them from becoming believers, and while also they attempt with the most of their power to excite agitations among others, who have already attained belief, thereby giving them trouble; and further, since their are some brothers, without detriment to their own faith, have a desire to certify what answers can be given to such questions, either for the advantage of their own knowledge or for the purpose of refuting their vain enemies' utterances with our Lord God's inspiration and assistance (and would it prove beneficial for the salvation of such men), we have undertaken in this work to demonstrate the errors or rashness of those who think themselves capable of raising charges—the subtlety of which is at least sufficiently observable—against the four different books of the gospel composed by these four evangelists. And to carry out this plan to a successful end, we must prove that the writers in question do not stand in opposition to each other. For those enemies

are in the habit of adducing this as the palmary allegation among all their vain objections, namely, that the evangelists are not in harmony with one another.

123 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.7.11 <*Wehrich*, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 11–12>

[11] But initially we must discuss a matter that is capable of offering a difficulty for some minds. I refer to the question of why the Lord has written nothing himself, and why he has left us with the necessity of accepting the testimony of other persons who have prepared records of his history. For this is what those factions, principally the pagans, allege when they lack enough boldness to impeach or blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and when they permit him, only as a man however, to have been possessed by a most distinguished wisdom. In making that admission, at the same time they assert the disciples claimed more for their master than he really was. Indeed so much more they even called him the Son of God, and the Word of God by whom all things were made, and affirmed that God and he are one. And in similar fashion they throw out all other kindred passages in the apostles' letters where we have been instructed that he is to be worshipped as one God with the Father. For they are of the opinion that certainly he is to be honored as the wisest among men, but they deny he is to be worshipped as God.

124 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.7.12 <*Wehrich*, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 12–13>

[12] Therefore, when they pose the question why he has not written in his own person, it appears as if they were prepared to believe about him whatever he might have written about himself, but not what others have given the world to know about his life according to the measure of their own judgement.

What reasonable ground, therefore, do they have for believing, in respect to those sages (scil. Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato), all that their disciples have committed to record in regard to their histories? While simultaneously in the case of Christ they refuse to credit what his disciples have written on the subject of his life? And all the more may we argue then, when we see how they admit all other men have been overtaken by him in wisdom although they refuse to

acknowledge him to be a God. Indeed it is the case that those whom they do not hesitate to permit to have been by far his superiors, have had the ability to make disciples who can be trusted in all matters that concern the narrative of their careers—and he failed in that capacity? But if that is a most absurd idea to think about, then everything that belongs to the history of that person to whom they give wisdom's honor, they should not believe what merely suits their own notions, but also what they read in those narratives learned from this sage himself—those numerous facts they have left on record about the subject of his life.

125 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.8.13 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 13–14>

[13] Furthermore, this testimony, that carries with it a heavy weight and currency, that in fear of it they can only mutter their anxious and weak snatches of minor objections within their own breasts, as if they were more frightened to be heard now than desiring to receive credit, assert Christ as the only-begotten Son of God, and himself God through whom all things were made. If, therefore, they want a report as their testimony, why does not their report focus on this special report, which is foremost in its definitiveness? And if they want evidence as writings, why do they not take those evangelical writings which surpass all others in their authority?

It remains for us to examine those who are credible witnesses for the Christ, who speak about what they do not know, thereby divesting themselves of credit of knowing what they speak about. . . . However they acknowledge Christ to be the wisest of men, and consequently, Christ could not have written anything like this.

126 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.11.3 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, p. >

[3] The disciples claimed more for their master than he really was; indeed so much more that they even called him the son of God, and the word of God, by whom all things were made, and affirmed that he and god are one. And in the same way they [among them Porphyry?] do away with all other kindred passages in the letters of the apostles, in the light of which we have been taught that he is to be worshipped as one God with the Father. For they are of the

opinion that he is to be honored as the wisest of men, but they deny he is to be worshipped as God.

127 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.16.24 <Weirich, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 22>

[24] Nonetheless these people still argue to this effect that this destruction of temples, and this condemnation of sacrifices, and this shattering of all images, are caused not in virtue of Christ's teachings, but only by the hand of his apostles, who, as they argue, taught something different from what he taught. Through this approach they think, while honoring and praising Christ, to tear the Christian faith to pieces.

128 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.31.47 <Weirich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 47–48>

[47] Therefore, let those mendacious praisers of the Christ, who refuse to become Christians, stop from making the charge that Christ did not teach that their gods were to be abandoned, and their images broken into pieces.

129 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.31.48 <Weirich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 51–52>

[48] What can be said in opposition to this evidence, and this expression of things both foretold and fulfilled? If they assume his disciples have given false testimony on the subject of Christ's divinity, will they also doubt Christ's passion? No: they are not used to believing he rose from the dead, but simultaneously, they are quick to believe he suffered all that men are capable of suffering because they wish that he be a man and nothing more.

130 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.32.50 <Weirich, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 54>

[50] Let these perverse applauders of Christ and destroyers of the Christian religion understand that Christ's disciples have learned and taught, in opposition to their gods, exactly what Christ's teachings contain.

131 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.33.52 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 57-58>⁴¹

[52] Indeed, when I undertook to solve those gospel problems, as it appears to certain critics, which meet us where the four evangelists fail to harmonize with one another . . . I was first met by the necessity of discussing a question, which some are of the habit of raising before us, the question namely, as the reason why we cannot produce any writings written by Christ himself. . . . And their desire is to have it believed his disciples not only gave a false account of him when they declared him the God by whom all things are made, when he was nothing more than a man—though certainly a man of the highest wisdom. . . . And from all this they should understand that Christ could neither have known nor taught anything else in respect to their gods than what was raised and foretold by the God of Israel; (that) through the agency of those prophets, through whom he promised and finally sent this very Christ in whose name, according to the promise given to the fathers when all nations were called blessed; it has occurred that this same God of Israel should be called the God of the entire earth. From this, then, they should see that his disciples did not stray from the teachings of their master when they forbade the worship of the gentile gods—with the view of preventing us from giving our supplications to inanimate images, or having fellowship with demons, or serving the created rather than the creator—with this honor of religious worship.

132 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 1.35.54 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 60-61>

[54] Therefore, when those disciples have written about matters he declared and spoke to them, by no means should it be said that he wrote nothing himself since the truth is his members have done only what they became acquainted with by the repeated sayings of the head. For all he intended to give for our study was the issue of his own actions and sayings. He commanded (these things) to be written by those disciples, who he used as if they were his own hands.

⁴¹ This fragment, and the ones that follow on inconsistencies in accounts from the New Testament gospels and letters, have a close relationship to those noted by Jerome in his *Commentary on Matthew*. It is possible that Augustine followed Jerome's arguments closely in his refutation of Porphyry and other critics.

Whoever understands this . . . will receive the account he gets in the gospel through the narratives made by the disciples, in the same spirit in which he might look upon the actual hand of the Lord himself . . . were he to see it active in writing. Now for this reason let us continue to examine the true character of those passages in which these critics suppose the evangelists gave contradictory accounts . . .

133 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 2.1, Prologus <*Wehrich*, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 81>

We have refuted the foolishness of those who think the disciples, who have given us these gospel histories, deserve to be handled calumniously only for the specific reason that no writings are produced by us with the claim of being writings that have immediately come from the hand of that Christ whom they absolutely refuse to worship as God, but whom, nevertheless, they do not hesitate to pronounce as worthy of being honored as a man far surpassing other men in wisdom. And further we have rejected those who attempt to present him as having written in a manner concordant with their perverse inclinations, but not in ways measured by their perusal and acceptance to set men right, or to turn them from their perverse ways.

They think a study of the evangelical books, not undertaken in the manner of a cursory approach, but in the manner of a more than ordinary careful investigation, has revealed to them certain matters of an inappropriate and contradictory nature. And in so far as their notion is these are to be hoisted as objections in the spirit of contention rather than to be reflected on in the spirit of consideration.

134 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 2.17.34 <*Wehrich*, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 135>

[34] Neither is anything contradictory here in reference to that other passage where Matthew tells us how the Lord said to Peter: "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church" (Mt 16:18). But we are not to understand this was the time when he initially received this name. Rather we are to suppose that this occurred on the occasion when it was said to him, as John says: "You shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone" (Jn 1:42). Thus the Lord could call him at that later time by this very name, when he said: "You are Peter" for he does not say then: "You should be

called Peter" because on an earlier occasion he already had been spoken to in this manner: "You shall be called."

135 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 3.2.8 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 278>

[8] However, if the demand is to get at the very words, literally and totally, the Lord addressed to Peter, we answer it is impossible to discover these. And furthermore it is simply superfluous to ask for them, inasmuch as the speaker's meaning—to intimate the object he had in view in uttering the words—admits of being understood with the most plainness, even under the manifold terms used by the evangelists.

136 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 3.7.29 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 304–5>

[29] Now if anyone finds difficulty in this passage's circumstance (Mt 27:3–10) that this passage is not found in the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, and thinks the evangelist is damaged in terms of his truthfulness, let him note the fact that this reference of the passage to Jeremiah is not contained in all the gospel codices, and that some of them simply say it was spoken "by the prophets."

I also examined this further consideration, namely, that there is no reason why this name should have been added to the true text and a corruption created.

137 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 3.7.30 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 305>

[30] For it may have been the case when Matthew was engaged in writing his gospel, the word Jeremiah occurred to his mind in accordance with familiar experience, instead of Zechariah.

138 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 3.11.38 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, p. 322>

[38] Next the same Matthew adds: "And they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, and when he had tasted it, he would not drink" (Mt 27:34). This is presented by Mark as follows: "And they

gave him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, and he took it not" (Mk 15:23). We may understand here that Matthew conveyed the same meaning as Mark when he says the wine was "mingled with gall." For gall is mentioned to convey the potion's bitterness. And wine mingled with gall is renowned for its bitterness. Again, when Mark says: "He received it not," we understand the phrase to mean he did not receive it so as to actually drink it. However, he tasted it, as Matthew verifies. Consequently Mark's words "He received it not" yield the same meaning as Matthew's version "He would not drink." However, Mark said nothing about his tasting the potion.

139 De Consensu Evangelistarum, 3.17.54 <Wehrich, CSEL, 43, 3, pp. 341–42>

[54] And again Matthew continues: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!* That is to say, "My god, my god, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46–47). And some of them standing there upon hearing that, said, this man calls for Elias.

Matthew makes this statement next: "And immediately one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink" (Mt 27:48). Mark presents it in a similar manner: "And one ran, and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, let alone, let us see if Elias will come to take him down" (Mk 15:36).

Again Luke has introduced this fact of the vinegar before his report of the robber's insolence. He gives it in this manner: "And the soldiers mocked him, coming to him and offering vinegar, and saying, if you are the king of the Jews, save yourself" (Lk 23:36–37). It was Luke's purpose to cover in one statement what was done and said by the soldiers. And we ought to feel no difficulty in the circumstance that he did not say explicitly that it was "one" of them who offered the vinegar. For following a methodological approach mentioned above, he simply put the plural number for the singular. Furthermore, John has also given us an account of the vinegar, where he says: "After this, Jesus knowing all things were now accomplished, that scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst." Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it on a sponge, and put it to his mouth" (Jn 19:28–29). Although John says informs us Jesus said: "I thirst," and also mentions the

vessel of vinegar there, while the other evangelists leave these things unspecified, is there nothing to wonder about this?

140 *De Civitate Dei*, 3.15

[15] For an eclipse of the sun had also happened. And this was attributed to the divine power of Romulus by the ignorant multitude, who did not know that it was brought about by the fixed laws of the sun's course. Although this grief of the sun might have been considered proof that Romulus had been killed, and the crime was indicated by this deprivation of the sun's light, as in truth was the case when the Lord was crucified through the cruelty and impiety of the Jews. For it is sufficiently demonstrated that this latter obscuration of the sun did not happen by the natural laws of the heavenly bodies, because then it was the Jewish Passover, which is held only at the full moon, whereas natural eclipses of the sun happen only at the last quarter of the moon.

141 *De Civitate Dei* 7.25 < = *Eusebius*, PE, 3.11.12>

[25] Because the aspect of the earth in spring is more beautiful than in other seasons, Porphyry, the famous philosopher, declared that Attis symbolized the flowers, and was mutilated because the flower falls before the fruit.

142 *De Civitate Dei* 8.12

[12] The best known of them [i.e., Platonists] are Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Porphyry who were Greeks.

143 *De Civitate Dei* 10.24

[24] But Porphyry, being under the dominion of these envious powers, whose influence he was at once ashamed of and afraid to cast off, refused to recognize that Christ is the principle by whose incarnation we are purified. Indeed he despised him because of the flesh itself which he assumed that he might offer a sacrifice for our purification—a great mystery unintelligible to Porphyry's pride which that true and noble redeemer brought low by his humility, manifesting himself to mortals by the mortality he assumed, and which

the deceitful and malignant mediators are proud of wanting, promising, as a gift of immortals, a deceptive assistance to wretched men.

144 *De Civitate Dei*, 10.28

[28] Therefore you (scil. Porphyry) drive men into the most palpable error. And yet you are not ashamed of doing so much harm although you call yourself a lover of virtue and wisdom. Had you been true and faithful in this profession you would have recognized Christ, the virtue of God and the wisdom of God, and would not, in the pride of vain science, have rebelled from his wholesome humility.

Still you admit that even the spiritual soul can without the assistance of theurgic arts and rites which you have wasted so much effort to learn can be purified by virtue of continence. On occasion you also state that rites do not raise the soul after death, so that it is clear now that they receive no benefit after the ending of this life even for that identical part of the soul you call spiritual. And yet you treat these matters in a great many ways and keep returning to them for no other reason as far as I can judge than also to give yourself the air of the expert in these things and to win the favor of those who look into forbidden arts, or else for yourself to win new ones curious of such things. But you did well to point out that this art is dangerous for either of two reasons, either the danger of its illegality or the danger involved in the working of this art. And it would be beneficial that your unhappy audience might give an ear to these words of yours at least and depart from the hole that would swallow them, or never approach near it at all.

Indeed you say that ignorance and the innumerable vices resulting from it cannot be removed by any mysteries, but only by the *patrikos nous*, that is the Father's mind or intellect conscious of the Father's will. But you do not believe that Christ is this mind for you despise him because of the body he took from a woman and the shame of the cross. We are to comprehend evidently that you are one who may correctly spurn and reject lowly things and gain a higher wisdom from more exalted regions.

145 *De Civitate Dei*, 11.8

[8] When it is said that God rested on the seventh day from all his works and hallowed it, we are not to think of this in a childish

manner, as if work were a toil to God, who "spoke and it was done"—spoken by the eternal and spiritual, not the auditory and transitory word.

146 *De Civitate Dei*, 19.22

[22] Finally, he is the same God whom Porphyry, the most intelligent of philosophers, although the most bitter opponent of the Christians, confesses to be a great god, even in accordance with the oracles of those whom he takes to be gods.

147 *De Civitate Dei*, 20.18

[18] Someone will perhaps put the question, if after judgement is pronounced the world itself is to burn, where shall the saints be during the conflagration, and before it is replaced by a heaven and a new earth, since they must be somewhere, since they have material bodies?

148 *De Civitate Dei*, 20.22

[22] But in what way shall the good go out to see the punishment of the wicked? Are they to leave their happy homes by a bodily movement, and proceed to the punishment places, so to witness the torments of the wicked in their bodily presence?

149 *De Civitate Dei*, 21.2, 3, 5, 6, 7

(2) What, then, can I adduce to convince those who refuse to believe that animated and living human bodies not only can survive death, but also last in the torments of everlasting fires. They will not allow us to refer this simply to the power of the almighty, but demand we persuade them by some example.

(3) But they say there is no body that can suffer and also cannot die. . . . Our opponents also make much of this that in this world there is no flesh which can suffer pain and which cannot die, while they make nothing of the fact there is something that is greater than the body.

(5) Nevertheless, when we declare the miracles God has made, or yet will work, and which we cannot bring under the eyes of men,

skeptics keep demanding that we explain these miracles according to reason. And because we are unable to do so, insofar as they are above human reason, they suppose we speak falsely.

But let those skeptics who refuse to credit the divine writings give me, if they can, a rational account of them. For their only ground of unbelief in the scriptures is that they contain incredible things. . . . For they say reason cannot admit that flesh burns and remains unconsumed, that it suffers without dying.

If we were to say that these things would be found in the world to come, and our skeptics were to reply, "If you wish us to believe these things, satisfy our reason about each of them," we would confess that we cannot because the weak comprehension of man cannot master these and similar wonders of God's working.

(6) Perhaps at this point they will reply, "These things have no existence. We do not believe one of them. They are traveler's tales and fictitious romances. And they may add what has the appearance of argument, and say, "If you believe such things as these, believe what is recorded in the same books, that there was or is a temple of Venus in which a candelabrum set in the open air holds a lamp which burns so powerfully that no storm or rain extinguishes it, and which therefore is called, like the stone mentioned above, the asbestos or inextinguishable lamp." They say this with the intention of putting us in a dilemma: for if we say this is incredible, then we shall impugn the truth of other recorded marvels. If on the other hand we admit this is credible, we shall recognize the pagan deities.

(7) Why, then, cannot God effect that both the bodies of the dead shall rise, and that the bodies of the damned shall be tormented in everlasting fire?

(8) But if they reply that their reason for not believing us when we say human bodies will always burn and yet never die, is that the nature of human bodies is known to be constituted otherwise. If they say that for this miracle we cannot give the reason which was valid in the case of those natural miracles, viz. that this is the natural property, the nature of the thing—for we know this is not the nature of human flesh—we find our answer in the sacred writings . . .

150 *De Civitate Dei*, 21.11

(11) Some, however, against whom we are defending the city of God think it unjust that any man be doomed to an eternal punishment

for sins, which no matter how great they were, were done in a brief period of time.

151 *De Civitate Dei*, 22.5

[5] That the one miracle of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ may be believed, we accumulate countless testimonies of incredible miracles. But even so we do not bend the frightful obstinacy of these skeptics. But if they do not believe that these miracles were done by Christ's apostles to give credibility to their preaching of his resurrection and ascension, this one great miracle suffices for us, that the whole world has believed without any miracles.

152 *De Civitate Dei*, 22.11

[11] These reasoners . . . bring arguments from the weights of the elements for they have been taught by their master Plato that the two greatest elements of the world, and the furthest removed from one another, are coupled and united by the two intermediate, air and water. And consequently, they say, since the earth is the first of the elements beginning from the bottom of the series, the second the water above the earth, the third the air above the water, and the fourth the heaven above the air, it follows that an earthly body cannot live in heaven. For each element is made in its own right to keep its own place and rank.

153 *De Civitate Dei*, 22.12

[12] But their way is to feign a scrupulous anxiety in investigating this question, and to ridicule our faith in the resurrection of the body. . . . For the sake, then of ridiculing the resurrection they ask, shall this return to the man whose flesh it first was, or to him whose flesh it afterwards became? And thus they seek also to give promise to the human soul of alterations of true misery and false happiness, in accordance with Plato's theory, or in accordance with Porphyry's, that after many transmigrations into different bodies, it ends its miseries, and never returns to them, not however, by obtaining an immortal body, but by escaping from every kind of body.

154 *De Civitate Dei*, 22.25

[25] The foremost of the philosophers agree with us about the spiritual happiness enjoyed by the blessed in the life to come. It is only the resurrection of the flesh they question, and they deny it with all their power.

He who has predicted these things, as I have already said, and am not ashamed to repeat, is the God before whom all other gods tremble, as Porphyry himself says, and seeks to prove by testimonies from the oracles of these gods, and goes so far as to call him God the Father and King.

155 *De Civitate Dei*, 22.26

[26] But they say that Porphyry tells us that the soul, in order to be blessed, must escape connection with every kind of body. It does not suffice, therefore, to say the future body shall be incorruptible, if the soul cannot be blessed until it is delivered from every kind of body.

156 *De Civitate Dei*, 22.27

[27] Plato and Porphyry many times made certain statements, and if they could have shared these with one another, perhaps they would have become Christians. . . . But Porphyry said that a soul fully cleansed when it has returned to the father will never return to the evils of the world. And thus if Plato had given Porphyry the truth which he saw, that is, that the souls of the just and wise when fully cleansed will return to human bodies, and if Porphyry had given to Plato the truth he saw that holy souls would never return to the terrible state of a corruptible body, so that one man no longer held just one view, but both men held the two views together, I think they would have seen the logical conclusion that souls return to bodies and that they receive bodies in which they can live happily and immortally . . . according to Porphyry holy souls will not return to the evils of the world. So let Porphyry say with Plato, "They will return to bodies," and let Plato say with Porphyry, "They will not return to evils," and they will agree that they return to bodies in which they can suffer no evils.

157 *De Civitate Dei*, 22.29

[29] For if that reasoning of the philosophers, by which they try to prove that intelligible or mental objects are so seen by the mind, and sensible or bodily objects so seen by the body, that the former cannot be known by the mind through the body, not the latter by the mind itself without the body—if this reasoning were trustworthy, it would certainly follow that God could not be seen by the eye even of a spiritual body.

158 *De Sermone Domini*, 133 <Zyack, CSEL, 41, p. >

[133] He said he would not go up on the feast day, and he went up. Can you then say of his Christ that he was incapable of fulfilling what he would, or that he did not know the things to come? (Jn 7:8–10).

159 *De Quaestiones Verteris et Novi Testamenti CXXXVII*, 74
<ps. Augustine, Souter, CSEL, 50, pp. 9; 126–27>

[74] The saviour says, you ascend to this feast day, I do not ascend to this feast day. And how is it written afterwards about him: but as his brothers went up, then he also went up to the feast day? (Jn 7:8–10).

160 *Quaestiones Verteris et Novi Testamenti CXXXVII*, 78
<ps. Augustine, Souter, CSEL, 50, pp. 9; 126–27>

[78] It is said in the gospel of John that the saviour denied he would go up to the feast day. Yet he went up. This appears to be an inconsistency (Jn 7:8–10).

161 *De Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti CXXXVII*, 15;
22; 32; 34; 39 <ps. Augustine, Souter, CSEL, 50, pp. 4–6>

(15): How can Solomon say (7:16), Be not overly righteous?

(22): Solomon says, justify your life before your death. And in Psalm (143:2), In your sight no living man is justified.

(32): He says (Proverbs 22:2), The Lord makes the rich and the poor. Does not that refer to people?

{cf. p. 60}

(34): He says (Wisdom 1:3), God did not make death. And elsewhere (Deut 30:15), Good and evil, life and death, are from God.

(39): How can Solomon say (9:4), A living dog is better than a dead lion?

*Nemesius of Emesa*⁴²

162 De Natura Hom., 38 <LCC 4 Tefter = fr. 90b Hamack>

Some say the resurrection of Christ is an *apokatastasis*. Therefore some say some Christians phantasize the resurrection and thereby make a bad error because the words ascribed to Christ, that this is an *apokatastasis*, occur only once and not periodically.

Theodoretus

163 Graecarum Affectionum Curatio, 7. 36–37 <Raeder = fr. 38 Hamack = fr. 460 Stern>⁴³

(36) Porphyry, who read the prophets with precision, for he devoted much time to them, when he put together his writing against us, also states his view that sacrifices are contrary to piety. Thus he acts and is affected like monkeys. (37) For in the same way that these imitate the customs of men, but to not transform their nature into that of men and remain monkeys, he, although he stole the divine words and inserted their knowledge into his own writings, did not want to learn truth, but remained a monkey.

⁴² Nemesius, in his work *On the Nature of Man*, has references to two writings of Porphyry. One is the *Sentences*; the other is anonymous, but it is likely *Against the Christians*. Cf. Harnack, op. cit. 40, 100.

⁴³ It is unclear if Theodoretus had first-hand knowledge of the writings of Porphyry. He may have received his impressions of Porphyry by way of Eusebius. Cf. *De cur. Graec. aff.* II 705, III 777.

Severianus {Episcopus Gabalorum}

164 De Mundi Creatione, Oratio 6 <PG, 56, Col. 487 = fr. 42 Harnack = fr. 463 Stern>

Many say, and most of these are those followers of Porphyry, hated by God, who composed *Against the Christians*, and caused many to apostatize from the divine teachings. Now then, they say: why did God forbade the knowledge of good and evil? Well, he forbid evil, why also the good? For by saying: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you should not eat of it," he says, he stops him from knowing evil, but why also from knowing the Good?

*Macarius Magnes*⁴⁴

165 Apokritikos, 2.2 [8] <Blondel = fr. 53 Harnack>

If he was not in any way a plain man who did those things, why do you not stop saying he was the only Son of God, and why do you repeat continuously this plain man had brothers?

⁴⁴ To employ the *Apocriticus* as a source for *Against the Christians* is beset with difficulties. The text of Macarius Magnes was first published in 1876 after its discovery. Cf. C. Blondel, *Makarios Magnes apokritikos e monogenes* (Paris 1876). It has been the view of most scholars that Macarius composed his work against an anonymous excerptor of Porphyry. However, in recent years arguments have suggested Hierocles as the source. Another thesis is that the *Apocriticus* contains a variety of sources. There is no agreement on the extent to which the Hellenic critic of Christianity in the *Apocriticus* corresponds to Porphyry. K. Wagenmann, *Jahrbuecher fuer deutsche Theologie* 23 (1878), 138ff.; K. I. Neumann, *Juliani Imperatoris Librorum Contra Christianos Quae Supersunt* (Leipzig 1880); G. Schaulkhauser, *Zu den Schriften des Makarios von Magnesia* [Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur] 31.4 (Leipzig 1904); and A. v. Harnack, op. cit. 1–21 argue for a correspondence theory. L. Duchesne, *De Macario Magne et Scriptis Ejus* (Paris 1877); T. W. Crafer, *JTS* 15 (1914) 360ff., 481ff.; and P. Frassinetti, *Eos* 52 (1962), 87ff. argue that the work bears the marks of Porphyry and Hierocles. T. D. Barnes, art. cit. 424–42, is convinced Macarius quoted a later polemic, which drew some of its material from Porphyry. Macarius preserves something of the tenor and argumentative scheme of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, but it should not be presumed Macarius preserves either Porphyry's words or formulations. Thus, here, no correspondence theory is possible. R. Waelkens, *L'Economie, theme, apologetique et principe hermeneutique dans l'Apocriticus de Macarius Magne* *Recueil de travaux d'Histoire et de Philologie*, Université de Louvain, ser 6, no. 4 (Louvain 1974), 117–34, thinks an indirect correspondence theory possible. He argues that Macarius on Porphyry is usable when his reports

If scripture forbids to neglect one's parents, and one who follows that which has been forbidden is called a sinner, how then can the Christ, who in various passages rebuked his parents, be called sinless? In the wedding he rebuked his mother by saying, what have I to do with you, woman? Then his mother wanted to see him, and he called those who do the will of God his mothers and brothers. . . . Now since these sentences are contradictory, why does he not accept the feebleness of this argument?

166 Apokritikos, 2, 3.4 [9] <Blondel = fr. 59 Harnack>

Answer to the objection based on (Mk 10:18): Now also let us clarify the question of these two sayings: "No one is good but God alone," and "The good man from his good treasure brings forth good."

See here how clearly Jesus also disassociates himself from man when he says: "No one is good but God alone" (Lk 6:45). And without doubt Christ himself is God, as even John says: "And the word was God." Also the saviour himself, revealing the essence of his own divinity states: "I and the Father are one" (Jn 1:1f.), which means without doubt he who spoke the words was God. Why then, if he is God, did he deny he was God by stating: "No one is good but God alone. Why do you call me 'good?'"

167 Apokritikos, 2.5 [10] <Blondel = fr. 57 Harnack>

Why had the multitude to hear such an exclamation (when they heard a voice saying: "Unfaithful generation how long will I be with you?" (Mt 17:15)—when one person had a request and was confused in regard to this request? It was not the moon but a demon who troubled him, so why did the Father fall to his knees pitifully for his Son, and he, for him, in a berating manner reproach the multitude by this saying? Thus should he not have welcomed warmly the meeting that occurred because he was known for his compassion? But on the contrary he cursed the supplicant's request. For it appears that Christ publicly mocked the people in a senseless manner.

are confirmed by other sources. J. Geffcken, *Zwei griechische Apologeten* (Leipzig-Berlin 1907), 301ff., is another voice in the controversy. He argues that the source was Julian who used Porphyry, not Porphyry. It is impossible to quarrel with T. D. Barnes's assessment that the relationship of Porphyry's *Against the Christians* and Macarius's *Apocriticus* is tangential. Cf. Barnes art. cit. 424–42.

168 Apokritikos, 2.6 [11] <Blondel = fr. 67>

In a permanent way this is spoken to us, and more clearly so that it may have a conclusion, and he may enforce another approach: If something appears to be rather inconclusive through the gospels, then bring this forward.

169 Apokritikos, 2.12 <Blondel = fr. 15>

The evangelists were inventors not historians of the events concerning Jesus. For each of them wrote an account, especially of the passion, which was not in harmony with other respective accounts. For one records, someone offered to the crucified a sponge with vinegar (Mk 15:36). But in a different way another says: "When they had come to the place of Golgotha, they gave him wine mixed with gall to drink, and when he tasted it, he would not drink" (Mt 27:33). And a little further on: "And around the ninth hour Jesus cried loudly, *Elohim, Elohim, lamas abachthani?* That is my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46). And another says: "Now there was a vessel full of vinegar with a reed they offered to his mouth. When he had taken the vinegar he said, it is finished, and leaning his head he gave up his spirit" (Jn 19:29). But another says: "And he cried out with a loud voice and said, Father into your hands I will commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46). From this archaic and contradictory record one accepts it as the statement of the suffering—not of one man but of many. For if one says: "Into your hands I will commend my spirit," and another: "It is finished," and another: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," and another: "My God, my God, why did you scold me," it is clear this is *mythopoia*, and either it represents many who had been crucified, or one who died such a dismal death and did not give a clear view of his suffering to those who were present. But if these men were unable in a truthful way to report the manner of his death, and rhapsodized it in every respect, then in regard to other issues they also have not stated anything clearly.

170 Apokritikos, 2.13 <Blondel = fr. 16 Harnack>

John writes: "But when they came to Jesus, when they saw he was already dead, they had not broken his legs, but with a spear one

soldier pierced his side, and immediately there flowed out blood and water" (Jn 19: 33, 34). For only John has said this and not the others. Therefore he wants to offer a testimony in his own behalf when he says: "And he who has seen it has given testimony, and his testimony is true." (Jn 19:35). It appears to me to be the statement of a feather-brained person. For how is the testimony true when its object has no existence? For a man gives testimony to a fact, but how can testimony be spoken of about a thing which is not a fact?

171 Apokritikos, 2.14 <Blondel = fr. 64 Harnack>

And there is another argument that can be shown to be unsound teaching. Namely, the common talk everywhere about his resurrection. Why, after he had suffered and resurrected, did Jesus not appear before Pilate and claim he did nothing worthy of death; or to King Herod of the Jews; or to the high priest of the Jewish race; or to many credible men; and particularly to the Senate and people of Rome? The reason would be by their amazement about that things that concern him, they might not condemn those obedient to him to death for impiety. Rather, he appeared to an ordinary woman, Mary Magdalen, who came from some wretched little village, who once was possessed by seven demons; and with her another totally obscure Mary, who was herself a peasant woman, along with several others who were not very intelligent. And although he said this: "Henceforth you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with clouds" (Mt 28:9, 11f.), if he had revealed himself to men of understanding because of them all would have believed in him, and no judges would have punished him for inventing monstrous stories. Certainly it is neither pleasing to God or any intelligent man that many should be subjected to the gravest types of punishment because of him.

172 Apokritikos, 2.15 <Blondel = fr. 72 Harnack>

Anyone will feel quite certain that the records are merely meticulous, insignificant, and hairsplitting, if he reads another piece of gossip written in the gospels, where Christ says: "Now is the judgement of the world, now the ruler of this world will be thrown out" (Jn 12:31). For tell me in the name of God what is this judgement which then

takes place, and who is ruler of the world thrown out? Indeed if you say that is the one ruler, I answer there is no sole ruler (for many rule the world), nor was he cast down. But if this is something intelligible and incorporeal, then it cannot be thrown out—for where should he be thrown, if he is ruler of the cosmos? If you reply there exists another world somewhere into which this ruler will be thrown, tell us from a trustworthy history that can convince us. But if there is not another (and there cannot be two universes), where should the ruler be thrown except into the one in which he happens to be ruler. And how is a man thrown down in that world into which he is? Unless it is like the example of the clay pot which if its contents are broken, and thereby is caused to be thrown out, not into the void but into another body of air or earth or into something else. Similarly, if the world is broken (which is impossible), he who is in it will be thrown outside, and what sort of place is there outside into which he will be thrown? And what is there odd in that place in respect to quantity and quality, height and depth, length and breadth? For if it is possible to have these things, then it follows it is a world. And what is the cause of the world's ruler to be thrown out, as if he were a stranger to the world? If he is a stranger, how did he rule it? And how is he thrown out? By his own will or against it? Clearly against it. This is clear from the language—for that which is thrown out is unwillingly thrown out. For the wrongdoer is not the one who is forced, but he who employs it (force).

All this insipidity in the gospel is fair to ascribe to women. For if we were prepared to investigate such things more closely, we would discover innumerable obscure stories that do not contain anything.

173 Apokritikos, 2.16 <Blondel = fr. 71 Harnack>

And now let us hear this theatrical story against the Jews that reads: "You cannot hear my words because you are of your Father who is the devil and you want to do his will, the will of your Father who is now the devil" (Jn 8:43, 44). Father of the Jews make it clear to us: those who want to do the Father's will in a fitting manner do this by yielding to the Father's insight—and thus they honor him. Now when the Father is evil, one is not to attach this evil blemish onto the children. Who, now, is this Father whose will they do and do not listen to Christ? Now the Jews say we have one father who is God. That is cancelled out by the words you are from the Father,

who is the Devil. Who then is that Devil, and where does he happen to be? Whom has he deceived, and thereby received this name? For he does not appear to have this name as an original one but as a consequence of something that happened. When we study this, as one must, then we will know. For it is from *diabole* that the Devil is called. Among whom did he appear and perform this forbidden deed? Even in this it is the frivolous who accepts *diabole*, who will appear unscrupulous; while the one deceived is injured the most. And it will be seen it is not the Devil who caused any injury, but he who exhibited the pretext of deception. It is the man who places a stake on the road at night who is responsible, not the one who walks on the road and stumbles. It is the man who placed it there who receives the blame. Similarly it is he who causes a slanderous insult in the road who is more culpable than he who takes hold of it or receives it.

And tell me another thing. Is the Devil subject to human affections or not? If he is not, then he cannot slander? However if he is susceptible to human affections he must obtain forgiveness for no one who is troubled by bodily ailments is judged as a wrong-doer, but receives pity as one who is in affliction.

174 Apokritikos, 3.1 <Blondel = fr. 63 Harnack>

Why did not Christ say anything worthy of one who was worthy and divine, when brought before the high-priest or before the governor? He might have educated his judge and onlookers and made them better men. But he tolerated to be beaten with a reed, and spit upon, and crowned with thorns—unlike Apollonius, who after speaking with frankness to the emperor Domitian disappeared from court. And not many hours afterwards he was clearly seen in the city called Dicaiareceia, now called Puteoli. But even if Christ had to suffer according to God's orders, and was compelled to endure penalties, at least he should have tolerated his suffering with frankness, and spoken words of power and wisdom to his judge Pilate, in place of being mocked as an ordinary person.

175 Apokritikos, 3.2 <Blondel = fr. 62 Harnack>

Now there is another saying spoken by Jesus to his disciples full of obscurity and stupidity: "Do not fear those who kill the body"

(Mt 10:28). And yet he, being in torment and anticipating the expectation of horrible things, asked in prayer that his passion pass from him. And he said to his close friends: "Watch and pray that the temptation pass away" (Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38; Lk 22:46). Now these sayings are not worthy of God's Son, not even of a wise man who despises death.

176 Apokritikos, 3.3 <Blondel = fr. 68 Harnack = fr. 465e Stern>

And what is said appears to me to be replete with stupidity: "If you would believe Moses you would also believe me for he has written concerning me" (Jn 5:46). He said it but nothing Moses wrote has been preserved for all his writings are said to have been burnt with the temple. All all those written under his name afterwards were composed inaccurately one thousand one hundred and eighty years after Moses' death by Ezra and his followers. And even if one were to allow that the work is by Moses, it is impossible to show that Christ was said to be a God, or a divine Logos, or a demiurge. After all, who had even spoken of Christ as crucified?

177 Apokritikos, 3.4 <Blondel = fr. 49 Harnack = fr. 465c Stern>

And if we speak of this record, it will also appear as a piece of unscrupulous nonsense since Matthew says that two demons from the tombs met with Christ, and then in fear of him they changed into swine, and many were killed (Mt 8:28ff.). But Mark did not hesitate to fabricate a countless number of swine for he says: "For he said to him, 'come out of the man, you unclean spirit!' And Jesus asked him, 'what is your name?' He replied, 'my name is legion; for we are many.' And earnestly he begged him not to send him out of the land. Now a great swineherd was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him, 'send us to the swine, let us enter them'. So he let them go. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and drowned in the sea" (Mk 5:8f.).

What a myth! What empty talk! What a clumsy, ridiculous story! A herd of two thousand swine ran into the sea, were choked and perished.

And when one hears how demons pleaded with him that they might not be sent into the abyss, and how Christ was convinced,

and did not do so, but sent them into swine, will not someone state: Really, how uncivil; what comical error that he should identify murderous spirits, making great harm in the world, and that he should give them what they want. What the demons wanted was to dance through life, and make the world an eternal toy. They wanted to stir up the sea, and fill the world's theater with sorrow. They wanted to shake the elements by their disturbances and through their disturbance crush all of creation. Thus, considering everything, it was correct, instead of throwing these originators of evil, who had abused mankind, into that area of the abyss which they asked to be delivered from, he should not be softened by their pleading and push them into another calamity.

Now if this is true and not just fiction (as we claim), Christ's saying indicts him of much wickedness, namely by casting demons out of one man he sends them into dumb swine and frightens swine-herders, hastily making them flee in their confusion, and consequently to agitate the city with the disturbance. It is not correct to heal merely one man's damage, or two, or three, or thirteen, or everyman's—especially since it was for this reason he came into this life to give evidence. But to merely release one man from invisible bondage and to place similar ties on others. To free some specific men from their fears is proper, but what is improper is to push fear into other men thereby. This is unreasonable. Correctly, this should not be called right action—but it is a crime.

And again, taking enemies into account, and allowing them to take up house in another place and to live there, he acts like a king who pollutes the region subject to him. Concerning the latter, unable to drive the barbarians from the whole country, he sends them from place to place. He cleared one place from evil, but also gave the gift of evil to another place. Thus in a similar manner, if Christ cannot drive demons from his borders, sending them into a swine herd, he works marvelously indeed—this catches the ear. But it is also full of malevolent presuppositions. For when a lucid man hears this, immediately he gives judgement, forms his opinion on the story, and renders his vote in accordance with the matter. This is the way he will speak: "If he does not free everything under the sun from pain, but only chases after those into diverse regions who harm, and if he cares for some and neglects others, it is not secure for him to flee and be saved." Now the one who is saved has pain for the unsaved, and the unsaved turns out to be the accuser of the saved.

According to my judgement, therefore, the testimony contained in this narrative is fiction.

Again if you do not regard it as fiction, but that it holds some relation to truth, for the ones who open their mouth there is much to laugh at. Now then this is the point we must examine carefully: How could there be so large a swineherd grazing in Judea, animals most unclean and from the beginning hated by the Jews. And how all those swine came to be drowned, although it was a lake and not a great sea? Concerning all this it may be left to the simpletons to make a decision.

178 Apokritikos, 3.5 <Blondel = fr. 58 Hamack>

And now, let us consider a passage even more unclear than the previous ones: "It is easier for a camel to walk through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:24).

If it is indeed the case that anyone rich and who has abstained from life's absurdities, such as murder, theft, adultery, poisoning, unholy oaths, grave desecrations, and the evils of sacrilege, is not brought into the kingdom of heaven—why should the rich act justly if they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven under any circumstances? And what harm would it be for the poor to do any crime? For it is not virtue that brings man into heaven, but poverty and the lack of possessions. For if it his wealth that keeps the rich man from heaven—by way of contrast a poor man's poverty brings him into it. And so it becomes lawful when a man has learned this lesson to pay no regard to virtue but to cling only to poverty without inhibitions because it is poverty that saves the poor, and it is wealth that shuts out the rich man from the undefiled home.

Consequently, it appears to me these cannot be Christ's words if indeed he handed down the rule of truth. Rather it arises from some indigent men who desired as a result of such vain talk that the wealthy are deprived of their substance. In any case, not longer than yesterday, reading to women of high-birth these words: "Sell what you have and give to the poor, and you shall have a treasure in heaven," they persuaded them to give the poor the substance and possessions they had. And they entered into a state of poverty, faded away from a state of freedom into begging—from prosperity into a pitiful situation. And in the end they were forced to go to the house of the rich (which is the first or rather the final thing in disgrace

and misfortune) and to covet under the necessity of want those possessions of others. From this it is clear to me these are words of an indigent woman—tired of life.

179 Apokritikos, 3.6 <Blondel = fr. 55 Harnack>

Now let us unfold that story from the gospel written in a comical and unconvincing manner, and which contains an even more comical description. It was when Jesus had sent his disciples away after the meal, and they had navigated the sea, and he encountered them at the fourth night watch (when they were quite worried about the storm's surging) for they were murmuring since they were in difficulties under the storm all night under the force of the waves (Mt 14:22–33; Mk 6:45–52).

Now the fourth vigil is the tenth hour in the night after which remains three more hours. But those who point out the truth about that place note no sea is there but a small lake formed from a river under the mountain in Galilee near the city of Tiberias. It is easy for small boats to cross it in no more than two hours. Considering it is a lake, a storm could not occur there. So Mark goes quite wide of the truth when he describes in a silly manner the little story. When nine hours of night had passed, Jesus proceeded at the tenth hour, namely the fourth night watch, and discovered disciples sailing on the pond. Then, he, Mark, calls it sea, and not only a stormy sea and a terribly angry one, but the sea's stirring caused fear in them. He does this so he may introduce Christ as performing a great miracle by arresting the heavy and fearful storm. And in a short time he saved the disciples in their danger from the deep and from the sea. From such childish stories we understand the gospel to be a kind of cleverly woven net—a spectacle, a theater. Thus we examine even more closely each point.

180 Apokritikos, 3.7 <Blondel = fr. 61 Harnack>

Moreover since we have discovered another inconsequent little saying by Christ to his disciples, we have not decided to remain silent about this either. It is where he says: "The poor you have always, but me you do not have always" (Mt 26:11; Mk 14:7; Jn 12:8). The reason for this statement is as follows. A woman brought an alabaster vase with myrrh and poured it on his head. And when they saw

this they talked about it, and said this did not occur at the correct time. Why do you make difficulties with this woman? She has done good work for me. The poor you always have, but me you do not have. For they raised no small mummering that the myrrh was not sold for a large amount of money and the money given to the hungry and the poor. Because of this inappropriate talk he gave testimony to this nonsense, declaring he was not always with them, and then he said again: "I shall be with you to the end of time" (Mt 28:20). But when he was upset about the myrrh, he denied he would always be with them.

181 Apokritikos, 3.15 <Blondel = fr. 69 Harnack>

That saying of the teacher is well known and spoken about that says: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you" (Jn 6:53). But truly this saying is not merely bestial and absurd—but it is more absurd than any absurdity, and more bestial than any beast's art—that a man should taste human flesh and drink the blood of the same tribe's members and race—and by doing so he should partake of eternal life. I do not say that rumor does not note this action, but to even mention the strange and novelty impious action. The phantoms of the furies never revealed this to those who lived in strange ways, nor would the Potidaeans have accepted it unless hungar had not overcome them. Once Thyestes' banquet was wrought from pain inflicted on his brother, and unknowingly the Thracian took his fill of such food. Harpagus was tricked by Astyages when he ate the flesh of his most beloved, and it was against their will that they had to accept such pollution. But no one prepared such a table in his life, living in a peaceful condition. If you look up Scythia in the records, and go through the Macrobian description of the Aethiopians, and if you travel all around through the ocean you find men who eat cadavers and devour roots. You will hear of men who eat reptiles and mice, but they abstain entirely from eating human flesh.

What does this saying mean? Even if it is meant allegorically, what could be more mystical and utilitarian? But when it enters inward the fragrance of this story demoralizes the soul by upsetting it with unpleasant things. And if someone preparing these stories from apocryphal sources fabricated the whole thing in order to lead them into obscurity, he harms them thereby. It seems to me it is not even in

a irrational being's nature, when it sees an inevitable hunger, an unquenchable hunger, ever endures this. They never eat human flesh, nor a dog dog-flesh, and none from the same species will taste the flesh of their own. No one who brings a tragedy up to be performed has discovered something more recent than that. Not historians, nor philosophers, not those who are not Greek, nor those from distant times. What did you experience to encourage like-minded people to be senselessly convinced of this? This has not happened to those in rural areas, not even for those in towns. It seems that neither Mark, nor Luke, nor even Matthew recorded this because they regarded the saying as indecent, rather odd, and discordant and far removed from civil life. Even you could hardly be pleased at reading it.

182 Apokritikos, 3.16 <Blondel = fr. 96>

Consider again in detail the summary of the argument where he says: "Such signs follow them that believe: They lay hands on sick people and they will recover, and if they drink a lethal drug, it shall harm them in no way" (Mk 16:17f.). So the correct thing would be those chosen for the priesthood, especially those nominated for the episcopacy, to use this type of test. The lethal drug could be given to them in order that the man who received no harm from drinking it would be chosen over the rest. And if they are not courageous enough to accept this type of test they ought to confess they do not believe in the things Jesus said. For it is faith's peculiarity to conquer poison's evil, and to remove a sick man's pain. The believer who does not do these things has either not become a true believer, or if he truly believes, then the object he believes in is weak.

183 Apokritikos, 3.17 <Blondel = fr. 95 Harnack>

Look at a similar saying that resembles the previous one, and is inconsequent: "If you have faith as a small mustard seed, truly I say to you, you shall say to this mountain, you shall be removed and thrown into the sea, and nothing shall be impossible for you" (Mt 17:20). It is obvious, therefore, that anyone unable to remove a mountain in accordance with this kind of law is not thought worthy to be numbered as part of the family of the faithful. But not even any of your bishops and priests is worthy of this dictum.

184 Apokritikos, 3.18 <Blondel = fr. 48 Harnack>

Now let us mention another saying to you here. Why is it that when the tempter tells Jesus: "Cast yourself down from the temple," he does not do it, but says to him: "You should not tempt the Lord your God" (Mt 4:6). It seems to me, however, he spoke in fear of the danger from the fall. For if, as you state, he not only performed various other miracles, even resurrected dead men through his word alone, he ought to have shown immediately he was capable of delivering others from danger by throwing himself down from the heights, not receiving any physical harm thereby. And more so because there is a passage from scripture, somewhere, that says in regard to him: "In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you smash your foot against a stone" (Ps 91). Thus it would have been correct to demonstrate to those present in the Temple that he is God's Son, and they were capable of rescuing him, and any who were with him from any danger.

185 Apokritikos, 3.19 <fr. 23 Harnack>

Thus it is only natural there is so much that is unsavory in all this long-winded talk spewed out. One might say the words initiate a battle of contradictions—one against another. How would some common man in the street be inclined to explain the gospel saying addressed to Peter that states: "You get behind me Satan, you are offensive to me, for you do not mind divine things, rather things human" (Mt 16:23). And then in another place: "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and I shall give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 16: 18; 19). For if he condemned Peter as to call him Satan, as an offense throwing him backwards; and if he cursed him as he had behaved in an unpardonable fashion, that he was not prepared to have him in his sight anymore, but cast him behind him into the mass of the outcast and the defeated—how is it correct to cull from this sentence proof for an outstanding prince of the apostles? In any case if anyone is in sobriety and ruminates over this, and hears Christ say (as if he had forgotten the words he had uttered against Peter): "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church," and "To you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven," will he not laugh out loud until he almost breaks his mouth? Will he not open it as wide as he could

from his theater seat? Will he not speak with a sneer and hiss loudly? Will he not shout out loud to those near him? Either, when he called Peter Satan he was intoxicated and overcome with wine and spoke as if in frenzy; or else when he made him the ruler over the keys of the kingdom, he painted dreams in the phantasy of his sleep. How was Peter able to support the foundation of the church, seeing that he was thousands of times easily shaken from the flippancy of his views? What kind of stalwart reasoning can be seen in him, that, although he heard what Jesus said to him (he was frightened terribly) on account of the wretched maid—and he cursed three times although there was no urgent need for that? We conclude then, if he was weak in his piety, he called him Satan correctly. And then ignoring what he had done, he gave him the authority over the very acme of leadership.

186 Apokritikos, 3.20 <Blondel = fr. 24 Harnack>

Having failed in many cases, it is also clear that Peter stands accused—from that statement and in that passage where Jesus said to him: “I deny you seven times, but until seventy-seven times you shall forgive the sin of him who does wrong” (Mt 18:22). But he did not take this commandment and law to heart, when cutting off the ear of the high-priest’s servant, who had done nothing wrong, and treating him cruelly although he had done no wrong. For how did he sin, if he went at the command of his master to the place for the seizure of Christ?

187 Apokritikos, 3.21 <Blondel = fr. 25 Harnack>

Peter is charged with wrong-doing in other cases as well. A man called Ananias and his wife because of their own modest personal needs, and because they did not contribute the full price of their land, although they had done no wrong, Peter caused their death. For how did they do wrong if they did not wish to give all their belongings to charity? But even if this act is considered wrong, then he should have been cognizant of Jesus’ commandments, who taught him to tolerate as many as four hundred and ninety sins against him. Then, at least, he could have pardoned one, if indeed in any case this was a trespass. And there is another thing he could have kept in mind in dealing with others, namely, how he himself, by

swearing he did not know Jesus, not only lied, but had sworn falsely in contempt of the judgement and resurrection to come.

188 Apokritikos, 3.30 <Blondel = fr. 27 Harnack = fr. 465d Stern>

Tell how it was that Paul said: "Although I have made myself a slave for all that I could gain" (1 Cor 9:19), and how he called circumcision mutilation, and then circumcised a certain Timothy as taught in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 16:3). The absolute stupidity of it all! Is it as a means of provoking laughter that such a stage, such theater scenes are portrayed? Indeed this is the show jugglers give. For how could he be free if he has made himself a slave of all? And how can a man gain the all who is serving all? For he is without law for those without law, as he says. And he was a Jew to the Jews, and spoke with the all in similar fashion. He was truly the slave of manifold evil, and totally a stranger to freedom. Truly, he is a servant and minister of other evil people, and an unseemingly zealot to unworthy causes if he offers diatribes against the wickedness of those without the law, nevertheless making their activities his own.

This is not the presentation of a free mind, or the basis of rational discourse. Rather the words suggest someone who is, somehow, crippled in mind and weak in reasoning. For if he lives with those without the law, as he himself says, (1 Cor 9:20-21) and also happily accepts in his writings the religion of the Jews, partaking of both, he is confused with each—mixing himself with the falterings of those who are low, he presents himself as their companion, having received the impression of the faults of the uncivilized. . . In regard to the circumcision issue, he curses those who want to enter into circumcision, but, nonetheless, he undertook a circumcision. And thus he becomes his own gravest accuser when he says: "That which I dissolve I build again. I establish myself as a transgressor if again I start building up a system which I have torn down."

189 Apokritikos, 3.31 <Blondel = fr. 28 Harnack = fr. 465d Stern>

This same Paul, when he speaks, often forgets his own words. He says to the captain he is not a Jew but a Roman. And then, previously, he had said: "I am a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia, educated at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the exact teaching of the ancestral law" (Acts 22:3f.). But he who said; "I am a Jew" and

"I am a Roman" is neither this or that, although he attaches himself to both. For he plays the hypocrite and speaks of what he is not. He lays the foundations of his deeds fraudantly by placing around himself a mask of deceit. He cheats the plain issue and steals the truth—laying siege in different ways to the soul's understanding, and enslaving those easily influenced through the juggler's art. The man who welcomes such a principle as this into his life does not differ at all from a truculent and bitter foe who enslaves those minds beyond his own frontiers by his hypocrisy, taking himself prisoner in an inhuman manner.

So if Paul pretends at one time to be a Jew and at another time a Roman, partly he is without law and partly a Greek and whenever he wants he is a stranger and an enemy to each in either case. By stealing into each, he has made each useless, robbing each of its scope by this. We conclude, then, that he is a liar and clearly the companion of lies. And it is not necessary for him to say: "I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie" (Rom 9:1). For the man who yesterday conforms to the law and today to the gospel, correctly is regarded as a criminal, festering under the surface both in private and public life.

190 Apokritikos, 3.32 <Blondel = fr. 29 Harnack = fr. 465d Stern>

And that he parcels out the gospel for the sake of vanity and the law for the sake of gain is clear from these words: "Does anyone go to war with his own salary? Who tends the flock without using its milk?" (1 Cor 9:7). And in his desire to strengthen his argument he calls in the law as a supporter of his gain, saying: "Or does not the law say these things. For in the law of Moses it is written, you should not muzzle an ox that is thrashing corn" (Deut 25:4). Then he adds a statement that is obscure and filled with nonsense—by cutting away divine providence from unreasoning animals, stating: "Does God take care of oxen, or does he say it is for us that it is written?" It seems to me he mocks the creator's wisdom as if it contained no providence for things brought into being long ago. For if God does not care for oxen, why is it written: "He subjected all things—sheep and oxen and beasts and gods and fish" (Ps 8:7f.). Since he even mentions fish, how much more does he watch over oxen who plough and toil? Thus I am amazed at such an imposter who pays such deep respect to the law because of his insatiableness

and in order to obtain a large gift from his subjects. For he was able to take the precious things, those subject to him, haughtily treating the law.

191 Apokritikos, 3.33 <Blondel = fr. 30 Harnack = fr. 465d Stern>

Then he suddenly turns like a man roused from sleep, frightened by a dream, with the cry: "I, Paul, bear witness that if any man does one thing of the law, he is a debtor bound to the whole law" (Gal 5:3). This is in place of simply stating it is not correct to pay attention to those things spoken by the law. This fine fellow, sound in mind and understanding, was taught in accordance with the accuracy of the ancestral law of Moses. He who had frequently and cleverly called Moses to mind appears to be drenched with wine and drunkenness. For in stating his opinion he abolishes the order of the law by a dogmatic postulation, saying to the Galatians: "Who bewitched you that you should not obey the truth that is the gospel?" (Gal 3:1). Then exaggerating in terrifying language and thinking it terrible for a man to obey the law, he says: "As many as are under the law are under a curse" (Gal 3:10). This is the man who writes to the Romans: "The law is spiritual" (Rom 7:14). And again the law is holy, and the commandment be holy and just puts those who obey the law under a curse. By totally confusing the nature of the question, he confuses the whole matter, and makes it unclear, so that one who listens to him almost grows dizzy and runs into two things, as if he is in the darkness of night, falling over the law and bumping against the gospel in confusion. This is because of the ignorance of the man who leads by the hand.

192 Apokritikos, 3.34 <Blondel = fr. 31 Hamack>

Take a look at this clever fellow's record: After countless statements which he took from the law in order to be supported by it, he made empty the final judgement of his own words, stating: "For the law entered that the offense might be increased" (Rom 5:20), and before those words: "The goad of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor 15:56). He almost sharpens his tongue like a sword, and without mercy mutilates from limb to limb. And this is the man who tends to obey the law, and says it is praiseworthy to live in accordance with it. And by grasping this ignorant opinion, which he

does habitually, he has overturned his own judgements on all other occasions.

193 Apokritikos, 3.35 <Blondel = fr. 32 Harnack>

Again when he speaks of forbidding the eating of things sacrificed to idols, he simply teaches that these things are indifferent, telling them not to make a fuss and not to examine it, but to eat things even if they are sacrificed to idols, provided only that no one speaks to them in warning. He is represented as saying: "The things which they sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, but I would not that you would have fellowship with demons" (1 Cor 10:20). Thus he speaks and writes.

And again with indifference he writes about eating: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world and there is no other God but one" (1 Cor 8:4). And a little bit after this: "Meat will not commend us to God, neither if we eat are we better, or if we do not eat we are worse" (1 Cor 8:8). Then after all this display of insignificant astuteness, he ruminated like a man in bed, and said: "Eat all that is sold in the butcher-shop, asking no questions for the sake of your conscience, for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (1 Cor 10:25f.). Oh what a strange farce received from a nobody! Oh the absurdity of his utterance! A statement which self-destructs with its own sword. Oh what a new type of archery that turns against the archer and falls!

194 Apokritikos, 3.36 <Blondel = fr. 33 Harnack>

We encounter in his letters another statement like this, where he praises virginity, and then reverses and writes: "In recent times some shall leave the faith because they listen to the spirits of error, which forbid them from marriage and prevent them from taking food" (1 Tim 4:1, 3). And in the letter to the Corinthians he states: "But concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor 7:25). First, the one who remains single does not fare well. Then the one who keeps away from marriage is obedient to evil counsel since he does not have an ordinance on celibacy from Jesus. Nevertheless, when some stay single they boast, as if it were a great thing. And they say they are filled with the Holy Spirit—similarly to the virgin who was the mother of Jesus.

195 Apokritikos, 4.1 <Blondel = fr. 34 Harnack>

What does Paul mean by saying that the manner of this world passes away? And how is it possible that there are those who have, and those who have not, and those who rejoice, and those who despair? How can similar old-wives tales be convincing? How can the one who has be like the one who has not; how can it be that the one who rejoices is like the one who despairs? Or how can the manner of this world pass away? Who will make it pass away and for what? For if the creator were to make it pass away, he would admit change of movement and change of that founded securely. Even if he were to change the manner (of this world) into something better, in this case also he would be accused as not knowing at the time of creation a suitable and fitting manner for the world—rather creating it incomplete and lacking a better arrangement. In any case how does one know that it is (arranged) into what is good, that the world would change if at the end of time it came to an end? And what benefit is there in the order of phenomena being changed? And if the condition of the visible world is gloomy and cause for affliction, the creator hears the flute playing and the playing of the lyre and is reduced to silence by the sound of the remarkable charges brought against him. Namely, that he made the parts of the earth in a harmful manner in regard to its logical structure. And that he regrets that, and he has to change the universe.

Perhaps, through this saying, Paul teaches him that has to be reminded as if he had not been—in the sense that the creator having the world makes the manner of it pass away—as if he had it not. And he says the one rejoicing is not rejoicing when the creator views the pleasant and beautiful things he created. But being greatly grieved about it, he makes a plan of transferring and altering it. Thus let us pass over this trite saying with light laughter.

196 Apokritikos, 4.2 <Blondel = fr. 35 Harnack>

Let us consider another sagacious remark of his, remarkable and perverted, where he says: "We who are left alive until the Lord comes shall not forestall those who have died because at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and God's trumpet call, the Lord himself will descend from heaven" (1 Thess 4:17). First, the Christian dead shall rise, then we who are left shall join

them, caught up in a cloud to meet the Lord in the air: 'Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Here is something indeed that rises into the air and shoots up to heaven as a great and heavy-weighted lie. This, when told to animals without understanding causes even them to bellow and cry out their resounding noise in reply, when they hear of men in the flesh flying like birds in the air or carried on clouds. For this boast is an immense piece of loquaciousness. That living things pressed down by the weight of physical bulk should assume the nature of winged birds, and cross the wide air like some sea using a cloud as a chariot. Even if such a thing were possible, it is monstrous and removed from all that is sensible. For Nature, which created all things from the beginning, appointed places befitting things brought into being, and said each should have its proper sphere: the sea for the water animals, the land for those of the dry earth, and the air for winged creatures, and the higher aether for heavenly bodies. If one of these were moved from its proper place, it would disappear on arrival in a strange condition and home. For example, if you wanted to take a water creature and make it live on dry land, it is destroyed and immediately dies. Again if you cast a land animal of the dry species into water, it will drown. And if you removed a bird from the air it will not survive. And if you remove a heavenly body from the upper aether, it will not survive. Neither has the divine and active Logos done this, nor will he ever do it—although he can alter the condition of things that come into being. For he does not do and will what he is able to do according to his own ability. Rather according to its suitability he preserves things, watching over things according to the law of order. So even if he could do so, he does not make the earth to be sailed over, or make the sea to be plowed or tilled. Nor does he use his power to make virtue into wickedness or wickedness into virtue. Nor does he change a man into a winged creature. Nor does he place the stars below and the earth above.

We reasonably declare, therefore, that it is preposterous to say that men will ever be brought up into the air. And Paul's lie becomes quite clear when he says: "We who are alive." For it is three hundred years since he said this and no one anywhere has been snatched away from their bodies—either Paul or anyone else. May the confused rambling of Paul remain silent for it agitates in confusion.

197 Apokritikos, 4.3 <Blondel = fr. 13 Harnack>

We must also mention the saying which Matthew gave us about the slave locked in a mill-house, when he said: "And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, and then the end shall come" (Mt 24:14). Every street of the inhabited world has experienced the gospel, and all the limits and ends of the earth possess it entirely. But the end is nowhere [in sight] and it will never come.

198 Apokritikos, 4.4 <Blondel = fr. 36 Harnack>

Let us examine what was said to Paul: "The Lord appeared in the night by vision and spoke to Paul, 'Don't be afraid but speak for I am with you, and no man will lay a hand on you to harm you'" (Acts 18:9ff.). And yet no sooner was he captured in Rome, this fine fellow, who said that we would judge angels, that he had his head cut off. And again Peter, who received the authority to feed lambs, was nailed to a cross and crucified. And many others, who held opinions similar to theirs, were either burnt or put to death by receiving some kind of punishment or mistreatment. This is not worthy of God's will, nor even of a divine man, that a multitude of men should be punished cruelly because of him, and his faith, and his grace—while the anticipated coming and resurrection remains unknown.

199 Apokritikos, 4.5 <Blondel = fr. 60 Harnack>

And there is another dubious little saying, when Christ says: "Lest anyone leads you astray, for many will come and speak in my name, saying I am Christ. And they shall lead men astray" (Mt 24:4). And behold no one of this type has appeared anywhere. Indeed, unless you maintain that this is Apollonius of Tyana you might not find another one. Yet it is not concerning one, but many, that he says such will be assembled.

200 Apokritikos, 4.6 <Blondel = fr. 89 Harnack>

Although it is not even necessary, let me quote this saying in the Apocalypse of Peter. He introduces the saying that heaven will be judged with the earth: "The earth shall present all men to God in the day of judgement. Earth will also be judged with heaven which

contains her." No one is so uneducated or so stupid as not to know that the things which pertain to the earth had been subject to disturbance, and he could not preserve the order. But it (the earth) is uneven, whereas things in heaven have an order which never changes and always continues in the same way because it is God's most precise work. Thus it is impossible that things valued higher and are worthy of a better fate are undone since they are fixed by a divine ordinance which cannot be touched.

And why should heaven be judged? Does it appear to have sinned, the heaven who has kept the order which was approved by God from the beginning, always being identical. Indeed unless someone addresses creation perversely, asserting that heaven deserves judgement, as permitting the judge to speak anything against it (scil. the heavens)—as wondrous and great as they are.

201 Apokritikos, 4.7 <Blondel = fr. 90a Harnack>

And it speaks again, which is full of impiety, saying: "And all the power of heaven will melt, and the heavens will be rolled like a book, and all the stars will fall like leaves from a vine, and as leaves fall from the fig-tree." And in haughty falsehood and great subterfuge another boast is made: "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away" (Mt 24:35). For how could somebody say the words of Jesus would stand even if heaven and earth no longer existed? And moreover if Christ were to do this (break heaven), he would be imitating the most impious of men even those who destroy their own property. For it is acknowledged by the Son that God is Father of heaven and earth when he says: "Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Mt 11:25). And John the Baptist magnifies heaven, and declares the divine gifts of grace are sent from it, saying: "A man can do nothing unless it is given to him from heaven" (Jn 3:27). And the prophets say that heaven is the holy place of God in the words: "Look down from the holy place and bless your people Israel" (Deut 26:15).

If heaven, which appears so great and important in the testimonies passes away, what will be the footstool of him who rules over it? And if the earthly element passes away, what shall be the footstool of the one who sits there? For he says: "The heaven is my throne and the earth is the footstool of my feet" (Jes 66:1). And so much about the heaven and earth passing away.

202 Apokritikos, 4.8 <Blondel = fr. 54 Harnack>

And the objections based on the teaching on the grain of mustard seed (Mt 13:31–33; 45–46).

Another one which is even more fictitious than the previous one. And as it were, we are groping for a doctrine in the night. The kingdom of heaven is compared to a mustard seed; and again the kingdom of heaven is like leaven; and again it is like a merchant who looked for beautiful pearls. These little imaginative stories do not befit men, nor even women who sell dreams. For when anyone has a message about great and divine matters, he must use examples common among men for the sake of clarity, but not such uncommon and unintelligible things as these. These sayings are on a low level of discourse. They have in themselves no comprehensible meaning or clarity. And yet it was fitting they should be clear since they were not given to the wise and the understanding but to the intellectually immature. Consequently, they should all the more be clear.

203 Apokritikos, 4.9 <Blondel = fr. 52 Harnack = fr. 465d Stern>

If indeed it is necessary to ruminate on the question that Jesus says: "I thank you, Father Lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to children" (Mt 11:25). And it is written in Deuteronomy (29:28) "The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong to us (and our children forever that we may do all the words of the law)." Certainly, those things written for children and fools should be clearer, not enigmatic, and not couched in riddles. For if the mysteries have been hidden from the wise, and have been incomprehensively poured on children and sucklings, then it is better to pursue nonsense and ignorance. And this is the great accomplishment of his wisdom, of the one who came to earth, to hide the rays of knowledge from the wise, and to reveal them to ignorant children.

204 Apokritikos, 4.10 <Blondel = fr. 87 Harnack>

It is correct to examine another matter of a much more reasonable kind (I say this by way of contrast). The healthy do not call a physician but those who are sick do. Christ unravels these things concerning his own coming to earth to the many. If then it was because

of the weak, as he says, that he faced sins—were not our ancestors weak and were not our ancestors diseased with sin? And they do not need a physician? And he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance? So Paul also says: “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the first” (1 Tim 1:15). If this is so, then he who has erred is called, and he who is sick is called, and the unrighteous is called and the righteous is not. It follows that one who is neither called or in need of physical help from Christians would be a righteous man, one who had not gone astray. For he who has no need of healing is the man who rebukes the word among the faithful. And the more he turns away from it, the more righteous and whole he is, and the less he goes astray.

205 Apokritikos, 4.19 <Blondel = fr. 88 Harnack>

As they had been trained, Homer correctly ordered the manly Greeks to be silent. He wrote about the wavering sentiments of Hector, addressing the Greeks in verse: “Hold you Argives, do not throw the young ones of Achea because the helmet-shaking Hector stands to speak a word” (Illiad 3.83). Even so, we sit quietly now—for the interpreter of Christian doctrines tells us he will unravel the perpetually dark passages of scripture. Tell us, therefore, who follows what you say, tell us what the apostle means when he says: “But such were some of you (clearly something low), but you were washed, you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11). Now we are surprised and really perplexed at such things, if a man, when once washed from such defilements and pollutions, will be pure. If by wiping off stains from fornication, adultery, drunkenness, theft, unnatural vice, poisoning, and innumerable disgusting things means you will be freed from them quite easily only by being baptized and calling Christ’s name. This is like peeling off his whole guilt just as a snake pulls off his own slough. Who is there who would not on the strength of these ventures into evil deeds do such things, some mentionable and others unmentionable, deeds that are not to be spoken of either in word or in deed, knowing that he will receive absolution from so many criminal actions only if he believes and is baptized in the hope that afterwards he will receive a pardon from the future judgement of the living and the dead? These things encourage the man who hears them to sin. And in each one he is taught

to practice what is unlawful. These things have the power to place aside the training of the law and cause righteousness itself to be impotent against the unrighteous. They introduce a kind of lawless society into the world. And he teaches one should have no fear at all when a man places aside a pile of innumerable injustices, simply by being baptized. Such is the refined plasma of the word.

206 Apokritikos, 4.20 <Blondel = fr. 75 Harnack>

But let us make a specific inquiry about the single rule of the only God, and the multifaceted rule of those worshipped as gods. You do not know how to articulate the concept of monarchy. For a monarch is not one who is alone, but is someone who rules alone. Clearly he rules over those who are like him just as emperor Hadrian was a monarch. Not because he existed alone, nor because he ruled over cattle and sheep (over which cow-herders and shepherds rule), but because he ruled over men who had the same nature. Likewise, God correctly would not be called a monarch unless he ruled over other gods for this would befit his divine greatness and his great heavenly dignity.

207 Apokritikos, 4.21 <Blondel = fr. 76 Harnack = fr. 465f Stern>

For if you say that angels, who are not subject to human conditions and are incorruptible by nature, stand before God, we call them gods because they are close to deity. Why then do we argue about a name? Are we to take it as a difference about semantics? For the goddess the Greeks call Athene, the Romans call Minerva, and the Egyptians Cypris, and the Thracians call her by some other name. Thus, by these different names nothing is annulled concerning the significance of the gods. The difference is not vast whether one calls them gods or angels. This is because their nature signifies divinity—as when Matthew writes: “And Jesus answered and said: ‘You do not err not knowing the scripture or the power of God for in the resurrection they neither marry or are engaged, but you are as angels in heaven’” (Mt 22:29f.). He admits, thereby, that angels partake of divine nature.

Those who make a suitable object for divine worship do not think the god is in the wood or the stone or bronze from which the object is made. Nor do they think if any part of the statue is cut off that

it detracts from the god's power. For images of living creatures and temples were built for the sake of remembrance in order that those who frequent those places meditate when they arrive there. And for divine comprehension they approach employing prayers and supplications, asking what each one is in need of. For if a man makes an image of a friend, he does not assume he is in it, nor that the body's limbs are included in the many parts of the image. But honor is given through this image. But in the case of sacrifices brought to the gods, these are not to give honor to them. Rather they are a sign of the worshipper's intentions, and to show they are not ungratefully disposed. It is reasonable that the statue's forms are in the manner of a man because man, which is the finest of creatures, is thought also to be the image of God. It is possible to confirm this doctrine from another passage which asserts by that which is written in it that God has fingers: "And he gave to Moses the two tablets which were written by the fingers of God" (Ex 31:18). Moreover the Christians also imitate the building of temples by building the greatest houses in which they gather for prayer, although nothing prevents them from doing this in their own houses, since God clearly hears from everywhere.

208 Apokritikos, 4.22 <Blondel = fr. 77 Harnack>

But if anyone among the Greeks were so frivolous that he would assume the gods live in these statues, his idea would be a much purer one than those who believe that deity came down into the womb of the Virgin Mary and became an embryo. And then when he was born he was placed in swaddling clothes. For this is a place full of blood and gall and things even more disgusting than these.

209 Apokritikos, 4.23 <Blondel = fr. 78 Harnack = fr. 465g Stern>

It is possible for me to show you that the much revered name of the gods is revered from the law itself since it cries out and admonishes the hearer with much reverence: "You should not slander the gods, nor curse the ruler of your people" (Ex 22:28). For he does not mean by this any other gods than those considered within our own minds already, as we learn from such passages as: "Do not walk after gods" (Jer 7:6), or again: "If you go after and serve other gods" (Deut 13:3). Not only Moses but Jesus speaks not about men

but gods and moreover about those who are held in honor by us. For he says to the people: "And now fear and serve him alone and put away the gods whom your fathers served" (Jos 24:14). And it is not concerning man but immaterial things that Paul says: "For there are those called gods whether on earth or in heaven, but we have one God and one Father of all things" (1 Cor 8:5). Thus you make a great mistake when you assume this God becomes angry when someone else is called a god, gaining the same title as himself. For even rulers in regard to their subjects, and lords in regard to their slaves, do not envy the same title. And it is not correct that God is more petty than man. Now enough about the fact that gods ought to be worshipped and exist.

210 Apokritikos, 4.24 <Blondel = fr. 94 Harnack>

Let us speak again about the question of the resurrection of the dead. For what is the reason that God should act thus, and disturb that which has occurred up until now, whereby he determined that races should be preserved and not abandoned? Why does he dissolve the legislation he had arranged from the beginning? And that which pleases God is fitting that it exist forever; and that it not be condemned by the creator nor destroyed, as if it had been made by some mere man, as something fashioned by a mortal being. Therefore it is not plausible that if the resurrection should follow, the whole is destroyed. If he should raise someone who has died three years before the resurrection, and this should also occur to Priam and Nestor who died thousands of years before, and even to others before them from the times of the creation of man—and if one might consider this, one will find the question of the resurrection riddled with foolishness. For often many have perished in the sea and their bodies have been consumed by fish, and many have been eaten by wild birds and animals. How then is it possible that those bodies should return? Now then let us examine this statement carefully, the way someone has depicted it. A man was ship wrecked, mullets devoured his body. Next these were caught, and after they were eaten, those who ate them were killed and eaten by dogs. When the dogs died they were eaten by ravens and vultures who devoured them entirely. Now how could the bodies of the ship wrecked men, spent by these creatures, be brought together? Again another was consumed by fire,

and another comes to an end in worms. How is it possible for it (sic. the body) to return to its former substance?

You inform me this is possible with God, but this is not true. Not everything is possible for him. He cannot simply pull it off that Homer, the poet did not exist, or that Troy was not captured. Nor, indeed, can he make two times two which equals the number four become five whenever he sees it fit. Nor is God evil even when he so desires. Nor could he become that except if he is not good by nature. If God cannot sin or become evil this is not because of divine deficiency. And with those who have a disposition and the abilities for something and then are prevented from doing it because of an obvious deficiency, it is clear they are prevented by their weakness. But God is by nature good and is not prevented from being evil. Nevertheless although he is not prevented, he cannot become evil.

And now consider a further point: How illogical it is if the creator stands by and observes the heavens melting (although no one has thought of anything more wonderful in respect to its beauty), and the stars falling, and the earth perishing—and yet he will resurrect the rotten and corrupt bodies of men? Some of them, it is true, belong to good men, but before their death other bodies were deformed and asymetric, thereby offering the most unpleasant picture. Again, even if he could raise them easily so that they have a beautiful form, it would be impossible for earth to contain all those who died from the time of creation onwards—if they should rise again.

Anastasius Sinaita

211 Hodegos, 13 <PG, 89, Col. 233 = fr. 65 Harnack>⁴⁵

Or rather, as Porphyry now says: "If Jesus wanted to be believed as a man beyond men, why did he not call together all from the nations to Zion—as he did on Pentecost with the Jews and Greeks? And in view of all the assembled this man would come down from heaven—as he will descend at his second coming (*parousia*)?"

⁴⁵ This fragment is indirectly related to Porphyry's writings. Anastasius's source was probably the Monophysite churchman Julian of Halicarnassus known to his Catholic opponents as the "new Porphyry." Cf. Harnack, op. cit. 86.

212 De Eccles., 2:24 <PG, 89, Q. 43>

Is it true there is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink, to make his soul happily enjoy its labor?

Arethas of Caesarea

213 Contra Julianus <*Bidez-Cumont*, ARB., p. 135ff. *Neumann*, Theolog. Lit. Ztg., 24, {1899} 10 Col. 298-304 = fr. 66 *Harnack*>⁴⁶

First, although God's Logos carries away sin, nevertheless he is guilty of many patricides and infanticides because people were forced either to assist their families or give priority to a piety transmitted from the ages for the opening of new minds. Is not Moses equal to our saviour, but not close to the greater promise, not coming as a destroyer of sin, but a someone who must be considered as increasing it?

Theophylactus

214 Enarr. in Evan. Joannis, <PG, 123, Col. 1141 = fr. 86 *Harnack*>

The following sophistry comes from the Greek, Porphyry: namely he wanted to entrap the gospel, and he used the following argument: If the Son of God is the Logos, he is either an outward Logos [*prophorikos*] or an inward Logos [*endiathetos*]. But he is neither the former or the latter. Therefore he is not the Logos at all.

⁴⁶ This fragment is taken from Julian's *Against the Galileans*. It clearly was taken by Julian from the writings of Porphyry. Cf. Harnack, op. cit. 86.

Diodorus Tarsus

215 Quaestiones Gentilium ad Christianos, 14–15

<Otto, Corp. Apol., {1850} p. 320 = fr. 93 Harnack>⁴⁷

(14) Either that which comes from God punishes through some evil of the one who created, or the one who is created, or someone who is outside and contrast between the creator and the created. Now if we consider this evil coming from the creator or the created, then obviously evil comes from the creator because either the created perishes owing to its inherent evil, or the creation is the cause (of evil) because he himself has created it, so that in him there is some evil. Now either this evil is outside and in opposition to the creator and thereby through the evil of the one who has created it, evil arises because it was not kept under control. (15) Now then if evil comes from the creator, then it is by necessity that he is responsible for evil. Now when he says the dead rise whole, how then, when somebody dies in the sea and is devoured by fish, and these fish are in turn eaten by men, he comes through fish? How can he then gather flesh together which has been devoured by other humans? Will he then resurrect in the flesh someone other humans have eaten through the fish as it has so often been said? Then do these have to ask for the return of their arms? And do they not have to become complete so that they can fill out what has remained of those who have been unjustly eaten?

⁴⁷ This fragment has an indirect relationship to Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. It probably was derived from the *Pseudostini* by Diodorus. Cf. Harnack, op. cit. 101.

CONCLUSION

Although a conclusion is called for at this point, I am all too aware that the task this work has commenced remains incomplete. There is much more that could be said about Porphyry's Platonism and the considerable role his writings had in the history of Neoplatonism and Patristic philosophy. There is also more that could be said about his view of Neoplatonic religion and how it influenced Iamblichus, Julian, and Proclus.

In nuce, the influence of Porphyry, if my arguments have any credibility, was immense. It falls into five main areas: 1) Neoplatonism; 2) Neoplatonic religion; 3) Patristic Christianity; 4) influences upon Patristic approaches to scripture which continues down to our own times by; 5) a historical and literary approach to the Bible.

Here I should like to close with a final observation of Porphyry as biblical exegete—for this is the lasting contribution of his *Against the Christians*. In the history of biblical interpretation at the close of antiquity, the approaches of Porphyry and Augustine eclipsed those of Origen and the Origenist tradition, especially in the Latin West. I also think in light of this it important to note one crucial fact: the critical apparatus of Porphyry, with its multiple historical and literary aspects, was deeply grounded in an approach to texts common to Plotinian Platonism. The easy coordination of these elements worked conceptually because there was a demand for a strict correspondence reading of philosophical texts by the followers of Plotinus.

Although Neoplatonists revered Homer, Hesiod, and the writings of the Greek tragedians, and interpreted these writings allegorically, they took most seriously the writings of Plato, which in the school of Plotinus at least, were generally interpreted in a straightforward manner.¹ The allegorical method was valuable because it permitted

¹ This approach to Platonic sources was common to the school of Plotinus. Plato's dialogues were interpreted to correspond to Plotinian metaphysical principles. Cf. K. Corrigan, "Amelius, Plotinus, and Porphyry on Being, Intellect, and the One: A Reappraisal," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 36.2 (Berlin 1987). Also note how Plato's *Parmenides* was interpreted in the school of Plotinus. Cf. P. Hadot,

philosophers to extend a Neoplatonic allegorical interpretation to Homer and Hesiod, while "positivist" methods of interpretation allowed Neoplatonists to connect the teachings of Plato with Plotinian theory.

Porphry, for example, interpreted Homer allegorically and Plato straightforwardly. As mentioned earlier, the best illustration of his use of allegory comes from his essay *On the Caves of the Nymphs* described in *Odyssey* 13.102–12.² Although Porphyry's Platonic commentaries are lost sound examples of his direct approach to Platonic texts can be illustrated from fragments of his *Parmenides* commentary.³ For example, Porphyry linked Platonic and Plotinian theories of the One from a straightforward reading of the *Parmenides*. He proposed a triadic system of divine principles related by a system of derivation and corresponding to a scale of degrees of reality.⁴ As noted previously, he also argued that a single myth could convey several metaphysical meanings once interpreted allegorically. The cave symbolized the material world, matter's recalcitrance with the cave rock, and the flux of matter with the water running through the cave.⁵ The cave's obscurity symbolizes the invisible powers within the material world,⁶ while the olive tree growing above the cave is a symbol of the aspirant to wisdom.⁷ The use of both methods was valuable because it permitted him to extend a Plotinian interpretation to the whole of the Neoplatonic philosophical and religious canon.

If these points are correct, they may throw into relief problems later Fathers faced when they attempted to develop and express aspects of biblical interpretation. This interplay of method and meaning may also serve as a useful backdrop to Augustine's treatment of scripture.

"Fragments d'un commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide de Platon," *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 74 (1961), 410–38, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (Paris 1968).

² In K. Raine, G. M. Harper eds., *T. Taylor, The Platonist: Selected Writings* (London 1979).

³ It is not certain that Porphyry wrote this commentary. Even if he did not, the work represents the manner in which Neoplatonists interpreted Platonic texts. On the *Parmenides* commentary, see P. Hadot, art. cit., op. cit. *passim*.

⁴ On the principles of Plotinian metaphysics, see J. P. Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism* (Hanover-London 1991), 91–149, esp. 93–127.

⁵ Porphyry, *De Anth.*, 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

Augustine approached the New Testament—at least in *The Harmony of the Gospels*—in a manner similar to Porphyry's approach to the Platonic dialogues: straightforwardly. He did this for three reasons: 1) to refute Porphyry's critique of scripture; 2) to propose a more textually sound interpretation of the Bible than that offered by allegorists such as Origen; and 3) to offer a more historically solid interpretation of scripture than offered by literalists.

Could it be that the New Testament and Old Testament were approached by Augustine just as Plato and Homer were approached by Porphyry? The resources of Porphyry's position would have impressed Augustine, especially the notion of different types of literature open to a variety of meanings through different methods of textual interpretation grounded in distinct theories of truth. Thus, could it be that an initial hostility toward Neoplatonic text-critical theory was gradually replaced by an acceptance of many of its features by some later Patristic interpreters of the Bible—principle among them Augustine? If so, the reasons for this are not obscure.

There existed a fundamental tension that obtained between the correspondence features of historical and literary criticism, which were proposed in the late fourth and early fifth centuries by Jerome and Augustine, and the predominantly coherence force of traditional Alexandrian approaches to scripture, promoted in the second and third centuries by Origen, Didymus and by Origenists in the centuries that followed.

As such, later Fathers like Jerome and Augustine proposed a highly articulated system of biblical interpretation that occasioned the gradual recognition of the incompatibility of allegorical (coherence) theories of scriptural interpretation with straightforward (correspondence) modes of scriptural interpretation. This resulted in an episodic decision by the Latin Fathers to use historical-critical and literary-critical approaches to interpret the Bible.

It also appears that once biblical exegetes like Augustine began to interpret the New Testament straightforwardly, some problems concerning the efficacy of truth claims derived from the Bible seemed to lessen. That is to say, many of the historical-critical and literary-critical problems endemic to scripture could be superseded once Christians, like Augustine, approached the Old and New Testaments in ways similar to those utilized by Neoplatonists, such as Porphyry, in their interpretations of Homer, Hesiod, the tragedians, and Plato. That is to say, Augustine defended the difficulties inherent in the

acceptance of literary accounts of any "historical revelation." By employing the very critical approaches Porphyry used to ridicule the truth claims of the Bible, Augustine turned Porphyry on his head. He defended the truth claims of scripture by demonstrating them efficacious—in reference to correspondence theories of truth.⁸

In conclusion, it might be appropriate to reflect at this point on a figure—the Neoplatonic interpreter of the Bible. As stated at the beginning of this study there remains a danger that Porphyry may not be regarded as a part of the scene of the history of biblical criticism. I would like to suggest the contrary—that it was through the hard business of textual criticism that the text-critical assumptions of Hellene and Christian eventually merged, allowing the carrying off of the occasional *coup de théâtre* where central aspects of Neoplatonic critical methodology came to be accepted by Christians, like Augustine, as their own. This meant that in late antiquity the Biblical view of reality could be conceived as divine and not demonic—based on fact and not on sophistry.

It is in this sense that we should recognize the debt later Patristic interpretations of the Bible owe later Platonists like Porphyry. *Against the Christians* stands as an important and independent contribution to the origins of Patristic biblical criticism. By willfully reviving this faction, we may help to amend the constitution of silence that has obtained for so much of Porphyry's contribution to Patristic biblical scholarship.

⁸ Augustine's defense of scripture necessitated an abandonment of Origen's coherence interpretation of the Bible, which was based on allegorical and symbolic interpretations of scripture. Clearly, both the theological and philosophical motivations for this type of coherence abandonment require further study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is little more than a collection of works referred to in the text. The disparate nature of materials treated in this book makes a full bibliography difficult to justify. Much useful material can be found in *ANRW* 2.36.1-4, where there is coverage of philosophy in the Roman Empire; *ANRW* 2.32.1-6, where there are articles on Greco-Roman religions; and in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, where there is abundant material on the political and social world of Roman antiquity. I have only listed a few articles from Pauly-Wissowa, *RE*. These are often a useful starting point for the topics covered in this work.

Ancient Authors

- Alexander of Aphrodisias. *De Anima Liber*. (CAG Supplementum Aristotelicum 2.2) Edited by M. Wallis. Berlin 1891.
 — *De Intellectu*. (CAG Supplementum Aristotelicum 2.2) Edited by I. Bruns. Berlin 1892.
 Anastasius Sinaita. *Hodegos*. (PG 89) Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-66.
 — *De Ecclesiastica*. (PG 89) Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-66.
 Aretheas of Caesarea. *Commentaria*. (PG 106) Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-66.
 Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*. (CSEL 4) Edited by K. Reifferscheid. Berlin 1898.
 Augustine of Hippo. *De Civitate Dei*. (Loeb Classical Library, vols. 1-7) Edited by G. E. McCracken, W. M. Green, D. Wiesen, P. Levine, W. C. Greene, E. M. Sanford. Cambridge, Mass. 1953-81.
 — *De Consensu Evangelistarum*. (CSEL 43) Edited by O. Wehrich. Berlin 1888.
 — *Epistulae*. Edited by C. Goldbacher. (CSEL 34.2) Berlin 1889.
 — *Quaestiones*. Edited by E. Souter. (CSEL 50) Berlin 1890.
 — *Sermones*. Edited by A. Zyack. (CSEL 41) Berlin 1891.
 Cassius Dio. *Historia Romana*. Edited by U. P. Boissvain. Berlin 1895-1901.
 Celsus. *True Word*. in Origen, *Contra Celse*. Edited by E. M. Borret. Paris 1967.
 Chaldaean Oracles. *Oracles chaldaïques*. Edited by E. des Places. Paris 1971.
 Chrysostom, John. *Homiliae in Joannem*. (PG 59) Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-66.
 Clement of Alexandria. *Stromata*. (GCS) Edited by O. Staehlin. Leipzig 1906-9.
 Didymus the Blind. *Opera*. (PG 2) Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-66.
 Diodorus Tarsus. *Quaestiones*. (PG 33) Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-66.
 Epiphanius. *Panarion*. (PG 41) Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-66. (GCS 31) Edited by K. Holl. Leipzig 1933.
 Eusebius of Caesarea. *Werke*. (GCS vols. 7, 9, 11, 14, 20, 23, 43, 47) Edited by E. Schwartz, Theodor Mommsen et al. Leipzig 1903-83.
 — *Demonstration of the Gospel*. 2 vols. (SPCK) Edited by W. J. Ferrar. Oxford 1920.
 — *La Préparation Evangelique*. (Sources Chrétiennes. vols. 206, 215, 228, 262, 266, 292, 307) Edited by E. des Places, J. Sirinelli, O. Zink Paris. 1974-.
 — *Ecclesiastical History*. (Loeb Classical Library, vols. 1 & 2) Edited by K. Lake, J. E. L. Oulton. Cambridge, Mass. 1980.
 Galen, Claudii Galeni. *Opera Omnia*. Edited by G. C. Kuehn. Leipzig 1821-33.
 — *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Edited by I. Mueller. Leipzig 1874.
 — *Galen on Jews and Christians*. By R. Walzer. London 1949.
 Herodian. *Historia Romana*. Edited by K. Stavenhagen. Leipzig 1922.

- Hierocles. *Philogelos*. in *Philostratus: The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. (Loeb Classical Library vol. 2) Text and Translation by F. C. Cornybeare. Cambridge, Mass. 1969: 484-605.
- Iamblichus. "Abamon, Pseudonyme de Jamblique," *Philomathes. Studies and Essays in the Humanities in Memory of Philip Merlan*. By H. D. Saffrey. The Hague 1971.
- Jerome. *Opera*. (CCSL vols. 54-56, 72-80) Edited by Adriaen, Hibern, Glorie. Vienna 1958-.
- Julius Africanus, Sextus. *Fragments*. In *Les "Cestes" de Julius Africanus: etude sur l'ensemble des fragments*. Edited by J. R. Vieillefond. Florence-Paris 1970.
- Lactantius. *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. Edited by J. L. Creed Oxford 1984.
- . *Institutiones Divinae II*. Edited by P. Monat (SC 337) Paris 1987.
- Lucian of Samosata. *Lucian*. (Loeb Classical Library vols. 1-8) Edited by A. D. Harmon, K. Kilburn, M. D. MacLeod. Cambridge, Mass. 1957.
- Macarius Magnes. *Apocriticus*. Edited by C. Blondel. Paris 1876.
- Methodius. *Methodius von Olympus*. Edited by G. N. Bonwetsch. Berlin 1891.
- Nemesius of Emesa. *De Natura Hominis*. (LCC 4) Edited by W. Telfer. Philadelphia 1955: 203-455.
- Origen of Alexandria. *Contra Celsum*. (GCS vols. 2 & 3) Edited by P. Koetschau. Berlin 1913.
- Philo of Alexandria. *Opera*. (Loeb Classical Library vols. 1-10. 2 Supplemental Volumes) Edited by F. L. Colson, G. H. Whittaker, and R. Marcus. Cambridge, Mass. 1981-87.
- Plotinus. *Enneads*. (Loeb Classical Library vols. 1-7) Edited by A. H. Armstrong. Cambridge, Mass. 1966-88.
- Plutarch. *Moralia*. (Loeb Classical Library vols. 1-15) Edited by F. C. Babbitt, P. De Lacy, B. Einarson, H. Cherniss, W. Helmbold, et al. Cambridge, Mass. 1936-66.
- Porphyry. *Porphyrii de philosophia ex oraculis haurienda*. Edited by G. Wolff. Berlin 1856.
- *Porphyrii Quaestionem homericarum ad Odysseam pertinentium reliquias*. Edited by H. Schraeder. Leipzig 1880-82.
- *Porphyrii Quaestionem homericarum ad Iliadem pertinentium reliquias*. Edited by H. Schraeder. Leipzig 1880-82.
- *De Regressu Animae in Vie de Porphyre*. Edited by J. Bidez. Ghent 1913; repr. Hildesheim 1964.
- *Contra Christianos in Porphyrius Gegen die Christen*, 15 Buecher, Zeugnisse und Referat. Edited by A. v. Harnack. Berlin 1916.
- *Epistula ad Anebum*. Edited by A. R. Sodano. Naples 1958.
- *Symmikta Zetemata in Zetemata 20*. Edited by H. Doerrie. Munich 1959.
- *Vita Plotini*. (Loeb Classical Library vol. 1) Edited by A. H. Armstrong. Cambridge, Mass. 1966.
- *Epistula ad Marcellam*. Edited by W. Poetscher. Leiden 1969.
- *Porphyrii Quaestionem homericarum Liber I*. Edited by A. D. Sodano. Naples 1970.
- *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*. Edited by E. Lamprez. Leipzig 1974.
- *De Abstinencia in Porphyre. De l'abstinence*. Text and Translation by Bouffartigue and Patillon. Paris 1977.
- *De Abstinencia in Thomas Taylor, the Platonist: Selected Writings*. Edited by K. Raine, G. M. Harper. London 1979.
- *De Antro Nympharum in Thomas Taylor, the Platonist: Selected Writings*. Edited by K. Raine, G. M. Harper. London 1979.
- Ps. Porphyry. *Ad Garum*. Edited by K. Kalbfleisch in "Die neuplatonische, faelschlich dem Galen zugeschriebene Schrift, PROS GAURON..." *AKAWB* (1895): 15ff.
- *Anonymous Parmenides Commentary in Porphyre et Victorinus II*. Edited by P. Hadot. Paris 1968.
- Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. Edited by E. Hohl. Leipzig 1927.
- Severianus. *De Mundi*. (PG 56) Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-1866.

- Suida, *Bibliotheca*. Edited by I. Bekker. Berlin 1854.
 — *Lexicon*. Edited by A. Adler. Leipzig 1928.
 Theodoretus of Cyrrus. *Graecum Affectionum Curatio*. (PG 80-84) Edited by P. G. Migne. Paris 1857-66.
 Theophylactus, *Fragments*. (PG 123) Edited J. P. Migne. Paris 1857-1866.

Modern Authors

- Alfoeldi, A. "Insignien und Tracht der roemischen Kaiser." *Roemischen Mitt.* 50 (1935): 107ff.
 Altheim, F. and Stiehl, R. *Gedankenschrift fuer Georg Rhode*. Tuebingen 1961: 23ff.
 Andresen, Carl. "Justin und der mittlere Platonismus." *ZTNW* 44 (1952/53): 157-95.
 — *Logos und Nomos. Die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum*. Berlin 1955.
 Armstrong, A. Hilary. "Was Plotinus a Magician?" *Phronesis* 1 (1955/56): 73-79.
 — "Salvation Plotinian and Christian." *Downside Review* 75 (1957): 126-39.
 — "Plotinus" in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*. Cambridge 1967: 195-263.
 — "Neoplatonic Valuations of Nature, Body, and Intellect." *Augustinian Studies* 3 (1972): 35-59.
 — "Man in the Cosmos: A Study of Some Differences Between Pagan Neoplatonism and Christianity" in *Romanitas and Christianitas*. Amsterdam 1973.
 — "Beauty and the Discovery of Divinity in the Thought of Plotinus." in *Kephalaion* Assen 1975: 155-63.
 — "The Apprehension of Divinity in the Self and Cosmos in Plotinus." in *The Significance of Neo-platonism*. New York 1976: 187-98.
 — "Negative Theology, Myth and Incarnation" in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*. New York 1982: 213-22.
 — "The Divine Enhancement of Earthly Beauties: The Hellenic and Platonic Tradition" in *Eranos Jahrbuch* 53 (1984): 49-81.
 — "Dualism Platonic, Gnostic, and Christian" in *Plotinus amid Gnostics and Christians*. Amsterdam 1984: 37-41.
 — "Pagan and Christian Traditionalism in the First Three Centuries A.D." *Studia Patristica* 15.1 (1984): 49-81.
 — "The Way and the Ways: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in the Fourth Century A.D." in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity*. Atlanta 1985: 357-72.
 — "The Ancient and Continuing Pieties of the Greek World" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York 1986: 66-101.
 — (ed.) *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York 1986.
 — "Iamblichus and Egypt." *Les Etudes philosophiques* 2-3. Paris 1987.
 Bachrach, Bernard. "The Jewish Community of the Later Roman Empire as Seen in the Codex Theodosianus" in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us*. Atlanta 1985: 399-422.
 Barnes, Timothy D. "Legislation Against The Christians." *JRS* 58 (1968): 32-50.
 — "Porphyry Against the Christians: Date and Attribution of Fragments." *JTS* 24 (1973): 424-42.
 Bauer, Walter. *Das Leben Jesu im Zeitalter der neutestamentlichen Apocryphen*. Tuebingen 1909.
 Beierwaltes, Walter. "Die Metaphysik des Lichtes in der Philosophie Plotins." *ZPF* 15 (1961): 334-62.
 — "Plotins Metaphysik des Lichtes." in *Die Philosophie des Neuplatonismus*. Darmstadt 1977.
 Benko, Stephen. "Pagan Criticism of Christianity During the First Two Centuries A.D." in *ANRW II* 23.2 (1980): 1054-118.

- Berchman, Robert M. *From Philo to Origen: Middle Platonism in Transition*. Chico 1984.
- "Rationality and Ritual in Plotinus and Porphyry" in *Incognita* II.2 (1991): 184–216.
- "Origen on the Categories: A Study in Later Platonic First Principles" in *Origeniana Quinta*. Leuven 1992: 231–52.
- "The Categories of Being in Middle Platonism: Philo, Clement, and Origen of Alexandria" in *The School of Moses Studies in Philo and Hellenistic Religion*. Atlanta 1995.
- "Porphyry and the Patristic Origins of New Testament Criticism" in *Origeniana Sexta*. Louvain 1996.
- "Rationality and Ritual in Iamblichus and Proclus" in *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought*. Albany 1996.
- Bernays, J. *Lucian und die Kyniker*. Berlin 1879.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. *Lukian von Samosata und das Christentum*. Berlin 1961.
- Beutler, R. "Porphyrius" in *RE* 22.1 (1953): col. 279–301.
- Bidez, Joseph. *Vie de Porphyre*. Ghent 1913, repr. Hildesheim 1964.
- Bidez, Joseph and F. Cumont. *Les mages Hellénisés*. 2 vols. Paris 1938.
- Binder, Georg. "Eine Polemik des Porphyrios gegen die allegorischen Auslegung des Alten Testaments durch die Christen" *ZPE* 3 (1968): 81ff.
- Blumenthal, H. J. *Plotinus' Psychology*. The Hague 1971.
- "John Philoponus: Alexandrian Platonist." *Hermes* 114.3 3q (1986): 315–35.
- Blumenthal, H. J. and Marcus R. (eds.). *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought*. London 1981.
- Boer, V. den. "A Pagan Historian and His Enemies: Porphyry against the Christians." *CP* 69 (1974): 18–208.
- Bos, A. P. "World Views in Collision: Plotinus, Gnostics, and Christians" in *Plotinus, Gnostics, and Christians*. Amsterdam 1984: 11–28.
- Bowersock, G. *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*. Oxford 1969.
- Boyance, P. "Theurgie et téléstique néoplatonicienne." *RSR* 47 (1955): 189ff.
- Brehier, Emile. *La philosophie du Plotin*. Paris 1961.
- Brenk, F. E. *In Mist Appareled: Religious Themes in Plutarch's Moralia and Lives*. Leiden 1977.
- Brisson, L., Goulet-Gaze, M.-O., Goulet, R., O'Brien, D. *Porphyre: La Vie de Plotin*. Paris 1982.
- Buhler-Kaufmann, D. "Eusebeia" in *RE* 6 (1966): 985–1052.
- Burkert, W. *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge, Mass. 1987.
- Burrell, D. and McGinn, B. *God and Creation*. Notre Dame 1990.
- Casey, P. M. "Porphyry and the Origin of the Book of Daniel." *JTS* 27 (1976): 15–33.
- Caster, M. *Lucien et la pensée religieuse son temps*. Paris 1937.
- Chadwick, Henry. *Origen: Contra Celsum*. Cambridge 1953.
- *The Sentences of Sextus*. Texts and Studies 5 Cambridge 1959.
- Corrigan, K. "Body and Soul in Ancient Religious Experience" in *Ancient Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York 1986: 360–83.
- Crafer, Thomas W. "The Reconstruction of the Works of Porphyry's Against the Christians." *JTS* 15 (1914): 360ff. and 481ff.
- "The Macarius Fragments and Hierocles." *JTS* 8 (1914): 401ff.
- Cramer, F. H. "The Expulsion of the Astrologers from Ancient Rome" in *C@M* 12 (1951): 9–50.
- Croke, Brian. "Porphyry's Anti-Christian Chronology." *JTS* 34 (1983): 168–85.
- Cumont, Franz. *Die orientalischen Religionen in römischem Heidentum*. Stuttgart 1981.
- Des Places, E. *La religion grecque*. Paris 1969.
- *Etudes Platoniciennes 1929–1979*. Leiden 1981.
- Dillon, John. "Image, Symbol, and Analogy: Three Basic Concepts of Neoplatonic Allegorical Exegesis" in *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. New York 1976: 247–62.

- *The Middle Platonists*. Ithaca 1977.
- "Plutarch and Second Century Platonism" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York 1986: 214–29.
- Dodds, E. R. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley 1951.
- *Proclus, The Elements of Theology*. Oxford 1963.
- Doerrie, Heinrich. "Ammonius der Lehrer Plotins." *Hermes* 83 (1955): 439–78.
- "Symmikka Zetemata." *Zetemata* 20. Munich 1959.
- "Die hauptsächlichen Aspekte des kaiserzeitlichen Platonismus" in *Kephalion*. Assen 1975: 1–34.
- "Der Koenig: Ein platonisches Schlüsselwort, von Plotin mit neuem Sinn Erfüllt" in *Platonica Minora* Munich 1976: 390–405.
- *Platonica Minora*. Munich 1976.
- Duchesne, L. *De Macario Magne et Scriptis Ejus*. Paris 1877.
- Elsas, C. *Neuplatonische und gnostische Weltanschauung in der Schule Plotins*. New York 1975.
- Festugiere, A.-J. *La revelation d'Hermès Trismégiste*. 4 vols. Paris 1944–54.
- Fortin, Ernest. "The Viri Novi of Arnobius" in *The Heritage of the Early Church*. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 195 Rome 1973: 197–226.
- Fowden, G. "The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society." *JHS* 102 (1982): 33–59.
- Frassinetti, P. *Nuovo Didaskaleion III* (1949): 41ff.
- Frede, Michael. "On Galen's Epistemology." in *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*. Minneapolis: 279–300.
- Froidefond, Ch. "Plutarque et le platonisme." *ANRW* II 36.1: 184–233.
- Gallagher, Eugene V. "Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus." *SBLDS* 64 Chico 1982.
- *Expectation and Experience. Explaining Religious Conversion*. Atlanta 1991.
- Geffcken, Johannes. *Zwei griechische Apologeten*. Leipzig-Berlin 1907.
- *Der Ausgang der griechisch-römischen Heidentums*. Darmstadt 1972 {2}.
- Goulet, Richard. *Macarios de Magnésie: Le Monogenes. Edition critique et traduction française*. Tome I Introduction generale. Tome II Edition critique, traduction et commentaire. Paris 2004.
- Grant, Robert M. *Miracle and Natural Law in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Thought*. Amsterdam 1952.
- "Porphyry Among the Early Christians" in *Romanitas and Christianitas*. Amsterdam 1973.
- "The Religion of the Emperor Maximin Daia" in *Judaism, Christianity, and Other Greco-Roman Cults*. Vol. 4. Leiden 1974: 143–66.
- *Gods and the One God*. Philadelphia 1986.
- Green, William Scott. *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*. Vol. 5. Atlanta 1985.
- Gundel, W. and Gundel, H. J., *Astrologoumena: Die astrologische Literatur in der Antike und ihre Geschichte*. Wiesbaden 1966.
- Hadot, Pierre. "Etre, vie, pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin" in *Les sources de Plotin. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* 5 (Fondation Hardt) Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1961: 107–41.
- "Fragments d'un commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide de Platon." *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 74 (1961): 410–438.
- "Porphyre" in *Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique Entretiens* 12. Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1965: 133–59.
- *Porphyre et Victorinus*. 2 vols. Paris 1968.
- "L'harmonie des philosophies de Plotin et d'Aristote selon Porphyre" in *Atti del Convegno internazionale sul tema (Ottobre 1970) Problemi attuali di scienza e di cultura*. 198 Rome 1974: 31–47.
- "Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus in Plotinus' Treatise Against the Gnostics" in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought*. London 1981: 124–37.

- "Neoplatonist Spirituality, Plotinus and Porphyry" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York 1986: 230–49.
- "L'union de l'âme avec l'intellect divin dans l'expérience mystique plotinienne" in *Proclus et son influence*. 17 Zurich 1987.
- Hagedorn D. and Merkelbach R. "Ein neues Fragment aus Porphyrios 'Gegen die Christen'" *VC* 20 (1966): 86–90.
- Hager, F. D. "Die Materie und das Boese im antiken Platonismus" *Museum Helveticum* 19 (1962): 73–103.
- Harnack, Adolf v. "Neue Fragmente des Werkes des Porphyrius gegen die Christen." *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Berlin* (1921): 266ff.
- Harris, R. Baine (ed.) *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. New York 1976.
- (ed.) *The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonic Approach*. New York 1982.
- (ed.) *Gnosticism and Neoplatonism*. New York 1992.
- Hathaway, R. "The Anatomy of a Neoplatonist Metaphysical Proof" in *The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonic Approach*. New York 1982: 122–37.
- Heinemann, F. "Ammonius Saccas und der Ursprung des Neuplatonismus." *Hermes* 61 (1926): 1–27.
- Heinemann, I. "The Attitude of the Ancient World Toward Judaism." *Review of Religion* (1940): 385–400.
- Heinrici, Georg. "Zur patristischen Aporienliteratur." *ASGW* 27.24 (1910): 843–60.
- Henry, P. *Etudes Plotiniennes: I Les états du texte de Plotin*. Museum Lessianum, Section Philol. 20, Paris-Brussels 1938.
- Hoffmann, R. J., *Porphyry's Against the Christians*. Amherst, N.Y. 1994.
- Hulen, A. B. *Porphyry's Work Against the Christians. An Interpretation*. New Haven 1933.
- Igal, J. "The Gnostics and the 'Ancient Philosophy' of Plotinus" in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought*. London: 1981: 138–49.
- Jaeger, W. *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*. Oxford 1977.
- Janssen, L. F. "'Superstitio' and the Persecution of the Christians." *VC* 33 (1979): 131–59.
- Jonas, H. "The Soul in Gnosticism and Plotinus." *Le Neoplatonisme*. Paris 1971: 45–53.
- Jones, A. H. M. *The Later Roman Empire*. 2 vols. Oxford 1986 {4}.
- Jones, R. M. *The Platonism of Plutarch*. Edited by L. Taran. repr. London-New York 1980. [1916].
- Kennedy, John P. "Monotheistic and Polytheistic Elements in Classical Mediterranean Spirituality" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York 1986: 269–92.
- "Theism and Divine Production in Ancient Realist Theology" in *God and Creation*. Notre Dame 1990.
- *Mystical Monotheism*. Hanover-London 1991.
- Keresztes, P. "The Imperial Government and the Christian Church. I From Nero to the Severi." *ANRW* II 23.2: 247–315.
- "The Imperial Government and the Christian Church. II From Gallienus to the Great Persecution." *ANRW* II 23.2: 375–86.
- Kraemer, H.-J. *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Platonismus zwischen Platon und Philon*. Amsterdam 1964.
- Labriolle, Pierre de. *La réaction païenne. Etude sur la polémique antichrétienne du I^{er} au VI^e siècle*. Paris 1948 {2}.
- Layton, B. (ed.) *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*. 2 vols. Leiden 1981.
- Lewy, Hans. *The Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy. Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*. Edited by M. Tardieu. Paris 1978.
- Liebesschultz, J. H. W. G. *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion*. Oxford 1979.
- Lloyd, A. C. *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism*. Oxford 1990.
- MacMullen, Ramsey. *Enemies of the Roman Order: Unrest and Alienation in the Empire*. Cambridge 1966.
- *Paganism in the Roman Empire*. New Haven 1981.

- *Corruption and the Decline of Rome*. New Haven 1988.
- Majercik, Ruth. *The Chaldaean Oracles*. Text, Translation, Commentary. Leiden 1989.
- Mansfeld J. and de Rik L. M., (eds.). *Kephalaion*. Assen 1975.
- Mattingly, H. and Sydenham, E. A. *British Museum Catalogue of the Coins of the Roman Empire*. 3 vols. London 1930–36.
- *Roman Imperial Coinage*. 4 vols. London 1936.
- Meredith, Anthony. "Porphyry and Julian against the Christians." *ANRW* II 23.2: 1119–49.
- Merlan, Philip. "Plotinus and Magic." *Isis* 44 (1953): 341ff.
- *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*. The Hague 1960.
- *Monopsychism, Mysticism, and Metacosciousness*. The Hague 1963.
- "Greek Philosophy from Plato to Plotinus" in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*. Cambridge 1967: 11–132.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo (ed.). *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*. Oxford 1963.
- *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization*. Cambridge 1975.
- "Religion in Athens. Rome and Jerusalem in the First Century B.C." in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*. 5 Atlanta 1985: 1–18.
- Nautin, P. "Trois autres fragments de livre du Porphyre "Contra les Chrétiens" in *RB* 57 (1950): 409–16.
- Neusner, Jacob (ed.). *Judaism, Christianity, and Other Greco-Roman Cults*. 4 vols. Leiden 1975.
- Neusner, Jacob and Frerichs, Ernest S. (eds.). "To See Ourselves as Others See Us" *Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity*. Atlanta 1985.
- Nock, A. D. *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*. Oxford 1933.
- O'Brien, D. "Plotinus on Evil: A Study of Matter and Soul in Plotinus' Conception of Human Evil." *Dowds Review* 87 (1969): 68–110.
- "Plotinus and the Gnostics on the Generation of Matter" in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought*. London 1981: 108–23.
- O'Connell, R. J. *Art and the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine*. Cambridge 1978.
- O'Daly G. J. P. *Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self*. Shannon 1973.
- O'Meara, D. J. *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine*. Paris 1959.
- "Gnosticism and the Making of the World in Plotinus" in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*. Leiden 1981: 2.365–78.
- "Le problème du discours sur l'Indicible chez Plotin." *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*. 122 (1990) 145ff.
- *Pythagoras Revived*. Oxford 1987.
- Osborn, E. F. *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy*. Cambridge 1981.
- Osborne, C. *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy. Hippolytus of Rome and the Presocratics*. London 1987.
- Pépin, J. "Porphyre" in *Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique Entretiens 12* Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1965: 231ff.
- "Cosmic Piety" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York 1986: 408–35.
- Poetscher, W. *Theophrastos, PERI EUSEBIAS*. Leiden 1974.
- Puech, H.-C. "Plotin et les Gnostiques" in *Les sources de Plotin. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* (Fondation Hardt) Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1960: 161–74.
- Rist, John. "Plotinus on Matter and Evil." *Phronesis* 6 (1961): 154–66.
- *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*. Cambridge 1967.
- Romano, F. *Porfirio di Tiro. Filosofia e cultura nell II secolo di Cristo*. Catania 1979.
- Runia, David (ed.). *Plotinus amid Gnostics and Christians*. Papers Presented at the Plotinus Symposium held at the Free University. Amsterdam 1984.
- Schoedel, William R. "Christian Atheism and the Peace of the Roman Empire." *Church History* 42 (1973): 309–19.

- Schoedel, William R. and Wilken, Robert L. (eds.). *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Tradition*. Paris 1979.
- Schroeder, F. M. "The Self in Ancient Religious Experience" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York: 337-359.
- Schwyzler, H.-R. "Die pseudoaristotelische Theologie und die Plotin Ausgabe des Porphyrios." *Rheinisches Museum* 90 (1941): 216-36.
- "Plotinos" in *RE* 21.1 (1951): cols. 471-592.
- "Bewusst und Unbewusst bei Plotin" in *Les sources de Plotin. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* (Fondation Hardt) Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1961: 343-90.
- "Plotinisches und unplotinisches in den Aphormai des Porphyrios" in *Plotino e il Neoplatismo in Oriente e in Occidente. Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Roma 5-9 Ottobre. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei Quaderno 198*. Rome 1974: 221-52.
- *Ammonius Saccas, der Lehrer Plotins*. Opladen 1983.
- Sellew, Philip. "Achilles or Christ? Porphyry and Didymus in Debate Over Allegorical Interpretation." *HTR* 82.1 (1989): 79-100.
- Sinnige, T. G. "Metaphysical and Personal Religion in Plotinus" in *Kephalaion*. Assen 1975: 147-54.
- Smallwood, E. Mary. *The Jews Under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian*. Leiden 1981.
- Smith, A. *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition: A Study in Post-Plotinian Platonism*. The Hague 1974.
- Stange, A. M. "Celsus und Origenes. Das Gemeinsame ihrer Weltanschauung nach den acht Buechern des Origenes gegen Celsus" in *ZAW* 8 (1926).
- Steel, Carlos G. *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Platonism*. Brussels 1978.
- Stern, Menahem. *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. 3 vols. Jerusalem 1976.
- Stockmeier, Peter. "Christlicher Glaube und Antike Religiositaet." *ANRW* II 32.2: 871-909.
- Strack, P.L. *Untersuchungen zur roemische Reichspraegung des zweiten Jahrhunderts*. 3 Bd. Stuttgart 1933.
- Syme, R. *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta*. Oxford 1971.
- Theiler, W. *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus*. Berlin 1930.
- Toutain, J. *Les cultes païens dans l'empire romain*. Paris 1907-20.
- Toynbee, J. M. C. *The Hadrianic School*. New York 1924.
- Trigg, Joseph W. *Origen, the Bible, and Philosophy in the Third Century Church*. Atlanta 1983.
- Tripolitis, Antonia. *The Doctrine of the Soul in the Thought of Plotinus and Origen*. Athens 1978.
- Trouillard, J. "La Presence de Dieu selon Plotin." *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale* 59 (1954): 38-45.
- *La Procession plotinienne*. Paris 1955.
- *La Purification plotinienne*. Paris 1955.
- "Raison et mystique chez Plotin." *Revue des etudes augustinienes* 20 (1974): 3-14.
- Turner, John D. "Gnosticism and Platonism: The Platonizing Texts from Nag Hammadi in their Relation to Later Platonic Literature" in *Gnosticism and Neoplatonism*. New York 1992.
- Vermaseren, M. J. *Mithraica I: The Mithraeum at St. Maria di Capua Vetere*. EPRO 16 Leiden 1961.
- Verrycken, K. "Porphyry, In Timaeum Fr. XXXVII (Philoponus De Aeternitate Mundi contra Proclum 148, 9-23)" in *L'Antiquité classique* 57 (1988): 282-89.
- Vogt, J. *Die alexandrischen Muenzen: Grundlegung einer alexandrischen Kaiser Geschichte*. Stuttgart 1924.
- Waelkens, Robert. *L'Economie, theme, apologetique et principe hermeneutique dans l'Apocriticos de Macarios Magnes*. Louvain 1974.

- Wagner, Michael F. "Vertical Causation in Plotinus" in *The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonic Approach*. New York 1982: 51-72.
- Wallis, R. T. *Neoplatonism*. London 1972.
- "The Spiritual Importance of Not Knowing" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*. New York 1986: 460-80.
- Walzer, Richard. *Galen on Jews and Christians*. London 1949.
- Warren, E. W. "Consciousness in Plotinus." *Phronesis* 9 (1964): 83-97.
- "Imagination in Plotinus." *CQ* 15 (1965): 252-260.
- Whittaker, J. "Self-Generating Principles in Second Century Gnostic Systems" in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*. Leiden 1981. 1: 176-93.
- Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Ulrich v. "Ein Bruchstueck aus dem Schrift des Porphyrius Gegen die Christen." *ZNTW* 1 (1900): 101ff.
- Wilken, Robert L. "Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek Religion and Christian Faith" in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*. Paris 1979: 117-34.
- *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. New Haven 1984.

INDEX LOCORUM

I. Bible

<i>A. Old Testament</i>		11:21f.	161-62
		11:25ff.	162
<i>Genesis</i>		11:27ff.	162
2:4	85	11:29ff.	162-63
		11:31	163-64
<i>Exodus</i>		11:44ff.	164-165
31:18	217	12:1f.	165-66
		12:7	166-167
<i>Deuteronomy</i>			
13:3	217	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>	
26:15	213	1:3	191
30:15	191	9:4	191
<i>Psalms</i>		<i>1 Maccabees</i>	
7:16	190	1:20ff.	162
9:4	191		
77	167	<i>2 Maccabees</i>	
81	167	5:11	162
91	204		
143:2	190		
<i>Proverbs</i>		<i>B. New Testament</i>	
22:2	191	<i>Gospel of Matthew</i>	
<i>Jeremiah</i>		1:11-12	157
7:6	217	3:3	168
		4:6	204
<i>Joshua</i>		8:28	198
24:14	218	9:9	168
		10:18	193
<i>Daniel</i>		10:28	198
Prologue	157	11:25	213
1	157		214
2:40	158	13:31-33	214
2:46	158	13:45-46	214
2:48	158	13:35	68
3:98ff.	158	14:22-33	201
5:10	158	15:17	168
7:7	159	15:36	183
7:8	159	16	204
7:14	159	16:18	181
9:1	159	17:15	193
9:37	156	18	204
11:13-19	160	18:22	205
11:20	160	19	204
		19:24	200

21:21	168
24	59
22:29f.	216
24:14	212
24:16	168
26:11	201
26:41	198
27:24	182
27:33	194
27:45	169
27:46	194
27:48	183
28:9, 11f.	195
28:20	202

Gospel of Mark

6:45-52	201
10:18	193
14:7	201
14:38	198
15:23	183
15:36	194
16:17f.	203

Gospel of Luke

6:45	193
22:46	198
23:46	194

Gospel of John

1:1f.	193
1:42	181
5:46	198
6:53	202
7:8-10	190
8:43, 44	196
12:8	201
12:31	195
19:29	194
19:33, 34, 35	195

<i>Acts</i>	
16:3	206
18:9f.	212

Romans

7:14	208
9:1f.	207

1 Corinthians

6:11	215
7:25	209
8:4	209
8:5	218
8:8	209
10:20	209
10:25f.	209
9:7	207
9:19	206
15:56	208

Galatians

Prologue	169
1:1	169
1:15	70
1:16	169
3:1	208
3:10	208
2:11f.	169
5:3	208
5:10	170

1 Thessalonians

4:17	210
------	-----

1 Timothy

1:15	215
4:1, 3	209

II. *Porphyry**Ad Gaurum*

11	133
----	-----

De Antro Nympharum

5	13
6	22
7	13
9	13
10	15, 23, 24, 133
32	13

De Abstentia

1:13-18	48
1:14	130
2:61	130
4:11-14	15, 31, 131-32

De Regressu Animae

fr. 2	50
fr. 4	48
fr. 10	49
fr. 12	43

Epistula ad Aenebum

1.2	48
1.3	48
2.5b	56
2.7	55
fr. 24	49

Epistula ad Marcellum

283.3	49
-------	----

Porphyri de philosophia ex oraculis haurienda

1-34	125-130
42-43	22
139ff.	124
154ff.	50

Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes

32.2013	49
32.21.12	48

Vita Plotini

2.29.31	93
3.6-21	93
3.15-35	93
4.1-3	92
4.9-11	92

10 106, 108

12 94, 112

16 22

17 133

Vita Pythagorae

11	23, 123
----	---------

GENERAL INDEX

- Adonis, 19-21
 aesthetics, 93-112
 Alfoeldi, A., 20
 allegory, allegorical interpretation, 113-117, 222-225
 Alexander Severus, 28, 36-37
 Altheim, F., vii, 119
 Andresen, C., 44, 85-86, 90
 Antoninus Pius, 19-20, 26
 Anubis, 78
 Apis, 78
 Apollo, 17-22
 apologetic literature, 14-15
 Armstrong, A. H., 17, 21, 22, 32, 48, 54, 93, 94, 101, 110, 111
 Aesclepius, 80-81
 Attis, 17-22
 Augustus Caesar [Octavian], 18-19, 29
 Aurelian, 20

 Barnes, T. D., 2, 3, 5, 33, 70, 93, 118, 121, 192, 193
 beauty, 102-108
 Beierwaltes, W., 110, 111
 Being, 74-75, 93-117, 222-225
 Berchman, R. M., 47, 48, 95, 224-225
 Bernays, J., 15, 77
 Betz, H. D., 78
 Beutler, R., 23, 123, 133
 Bible, 56-71
 Biblical criticism, 65-79, 222-225
 Bidez, J., 1, 5, 50, 123, 139
 Binder, G., vii, 119, 121, 143
 Blondel, C., 5, 192
 Bloos, L. 110
 Blumenthal, H., 95, 96, 101, 103, 110
 Bonwetsch, G. N., 134
 Borret, M., 44, 86
 Bos, A. P., 110, 111
 Bowersock, G., 77
 Boyance, P., 53
 Brehier, E., 103
 Brenk, F. E., 72
 Brisson, L., 94
 Burkert, W., 17

 Caracalla, 20, 26-28
 Carlier, J., 48
 Casey, P. M., 9, 155
 Caster, M., 77, 80
 causation, causality, 45-56, 74-75, 93-117
 Chadwick, H., 3, 86, 89
Chaldaean Oracles, 47, 113-117, 222-225
 Christians, Christianity, 31-43, 56-60, 78-93, 113-117, 123-225
 chronological literature, 15-16
 Claudius, 18-19
 Constantine, 42
 Corrigan, K., 95, 122
 Crafer, T. W., 5, 70
 Cramer, F. H., 120, 141
 Croke, B., 12, 15, 59, 120, 136, 140
 cultural background, 80-126
 Cumont, F., 19
 Cybele, 17-22
 Cynics, cynicism, 76-81

 Dancy, J. C., 163
 Dea Syria, 18-20, 77-83
 Decius, 33, 38-41
 Deuse, W., 50
 Dillon, J. M., 51, 52, 72, 74-75, 107
 daemons, 50-56, 73-76, 93-117
 demiurge, 84-85
 Diocletian, 20-21, 26, 28-29, 33, 40-42
 Dionysus, 78
 divination, 48-56, 73-76, 113-117
 divine giving, 49-50, 99-101
 Dodds, E. R., 47, 51, 53, 54, 107
 Doerrie, H., 1, 32, 112, 113
 Duchesne, L., 5, 192

 Edelstein, L. 82
 Elagabalus, 21, 28, 36
 Elsas, C., 109
 emanation, 45-56, 93-117

 faith [*pistis*], 45-47, 76-93, 113-117, 123-225
 Finamore, J. F., 50, 51
 Frassinetti, P., 5, 120, 192
 Frede, M., 82
 Froidefond, C., 72

- Fortin, E., 120, 145
 Fowden, G., 94
- Gaius Caligula, 25
 Galerius, 33, 42
 Gallagher, E.V., 87, 88.
 Geffcken, J., 5, 21, 120, 193
 genre, 8
 Geudtner, O., 51
 Glueckner, O., 86
 Glykon, 80-81
 gnostics, gnosticism, 109-113
 gods [pagan], 17-23, 46-56, 72-117,
 123-133
 Gordianus, 38
 gospels, 60-71, 85-89, 113-117,
 123-225
 Goulet, R., viii
 Grant, R. M., 17, 22, 40
 Gronewaldt, M., 143
- Hadot, P., 17, 22, 45, 72, 93, 94, 95,
 109, 110, 111, 123, 125, 223
 Hadrian, 19-20, 26-27, 29
 Hagedorn, D., 119
 Hagedorn, R., vii, 119, 121
 Harnack von, A., vii, 5, 6, 15, 118,
 119, 120, 134, 135, 144, 191, 192,
 219, 220, 221
 Hathaway, R., 110
 Heinemann, I., 24, 25
 Heinrich, G., 9, 12
 Hellenism, 80-126
 Henry, P., 94
 Heracles, 19
 Hobbes, T., 58
 Hoffmann, R. J., viii
 Holl, K., 134
 Holleaux, M., 160
- Ideas [Forms], 93-117
 imagination, 102-108
 Intellect [*Nous*], 75, 93-117
 intellection, 74-75, 93-117
 Isis, 19-21
- Jaeger, W., 123
 Janssen, L. F., 33
 Jarde, A., 36
 Jews, Judaism, 23-31, 56-60, 123-225
 Joad, C. E. M., 117
 Jonas, H., 109
 Jones, A. H. M., 29
 Jones, R. M., 73
- Juppiter 19-21
 Julius Caesar, 29
- Kalbfleisch, K., 23, 133
 Karst, J., 121
 Kaufmann-Bühler, D., 17
 Keim, T., 85
 Kenney, J. P., 31, 72, 84, 95, 110,
 112, 113, 223
 Kerestesz, P., 32, 33, 34
 Kissling, R.C., 51
- Labriolle, P. de., 31
 languages, 121
 Layton, B., 109
 Levita, E., 58
 Lewy, H., 47, 123
 Lightfoot, J. B., 86
 logical unity, 10
 Luck, G., 53
- MacMullen, R., 17, 21
 magic, magician, 88-90
 Majercik, R., 47
 Mansfeld, J., 110
 Marcus Aurelius, 33-34, 47, 84-85
 Marcus, R. A., 110
 Mars, 19-21
 Martin, R. M., 110
 Mattingly, H., 18, 19, 91
 Maximin Daia, 22, 33, 42
 Maximinus Thrax, 37-38
 Meredith, A., 2, 4, 109
 Merkelbach, R., vii, 119, 121
 Merlan, P., 48, 54, 101
 Middleplatonism, 72-76, 81-93
 Minerva, 19-21
 Mithras, 19-20
- Nautin, P., vii, 119, 171
 Neoplatonism, 44-56, 93-117, 222-225
 Nero, 25, 3
 Neumann, K. I., 5, 192
 Nilsson, M. P., 77
 Nock, A. D., 17, 81
- O'Brien, D., 110, 111
 O'Connell, R. J., 106
 O'Daly, G. J. P., 96
 O'Meara, D. J., 109, 110, 111, 123,
 125, 171
- Pan, 78
 Pepin, J., 72, 112, 113, 140

- des Places, E., 47
 Plezia, M., 120
 problems literature, 13-14
 Pucch, H.-C., 103, 109

 rhetorical literature, 16
 Rijk, R. M., 110
 Rist, J. M., 54, 95, 96
 Robinson, C., 77
 Rohde, E., 123
 Roma, 19
 Roman religion, 17-23
 Rosenbaum, H. U., 86
 Rostovtseff, H., 19
 Runia, D. T., 110
 Russell, D. A., 72

 Scaliger, J., 58
 Schalhauser, G., 5, 192
 Schoedel, W. R., 14, 32, 33
 Schraeder, H., 3, 9, 13
 Schroeder, F., 32, 44, 72
 Schwartz, J., 77, 86
 Schwyzer, H.-R., 93, 97, 102
 Sellw, P., vii, 14, 119, 142, 143
 Septimius Severus, 26-27, 33, 35
 Serapis, 19-21
 Severus Alexander, 28, 36-37
 Silenus, 78
 Simon, R., 58
 Sinnige, T. G., 110
 Smallwood, E. M., 24, 25
 Smith, A., 45, 47, 48, 51, 107
 Sodano, A. R., 9, 13
 Sol, 19
 Soraci, R., 36
 soul, 48-56, 75, 97-117
 Spinoza, B., 58
 Steel, C., 48, 94, 96
 Stern, M., 15, 25, 78, 92, 86, 160
 Stertz, S. A., 37
 Stiehl, R., vii, 119

 Stockmeier, P., 31, 135
 Strack, P. L., 18, 91
 Sydenham, E. A., 18, 19, 91
 Syme, R., 36
 sympathy [cosmic], 49-53, 99-109,
 113-117

 taxonomy, 10-12
 Tcherikover, V., 162
 thematic concerns, 8-10
 theurgy, 47-56, 113-117, 222-225
 Titus, 25, 29
 Toth, 19
 Toutain, J., 17
 Toynbee, J. M. C., 19
 Trajan, 20-21, 25, 29
 Trigg, J. W., 36

 Valerian, 33, 40
 Verbeke, G., 51, 107
 Vermaseren, M. J., 19
 Vespasian, 25, 29
 Vogt, H. J., 18, 91

 Waelkens, R., 5, 192
 Wagenmann, K., 5, 192
 Wagner, M. F., 112
 Wallis, R. T., 48, 133
 Walter, N.,
 Walzer, R., 45, 82
 Warren, E. W., 101, 102
 West, C., 117
 Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, U. v., 135
 Wilken, R., 3, 4, 12, 14, 44, 56, 65,
 82-83, 90, 124, 125, 145, 150, 171,
 174
 Wolff, G., 3, 14

 Yanguas, N. S., 36

 Zalmoxus, 78

INDEX OF ANCIENT AUTHORS

- Amelius 94, 222
 Anastasius Sinaita 219–220
 Aretheus of Caesarea 220
 Aristotle 46, 99, 101, 102
 Arnobius 3, 4, 6, 43, 46, 145–150
 Asclepius 48
 Athenagoras 33
 Augustine 15, 24, 40, 44, 50, 55, 58, 65, 66, 67, 68, 81, 123, 137, 171–191, 221–225
 Aurelius, Marcus 34, 91, 92

 Cassius Dio 36
 Celsus 85–93, 142
 Chrysostum, John 171

 Didymus the Blind 142–144
 Diodorus Siculus 25, 141, 221
 Diodorus Tarsus 221

 Epiphanius 33, 144
 Eunapius 2, 93
 Eusebius 3, 4, 6, 10, 22, 23, 24, 27, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 55, 58, 65, 123, 135–142, 191

 Galen 81–85, 142

 Heliodorus 108–109
 Herodian 36, 37, 38

 Iamblichus 51, 52, 53, 55

 Jerome 27, 44, 47, 58, 63, 64, 65, 67, 69, 151–171, 180
 Josephus 23, 25, 141, 160, 162
 Julian, the Apostate 220

 Julian of Halicarnassus 219
 Juvenal 25

 Lactantius 3, 4, 6, 35, 41, 42, 150–155
 Lucian of Samosata 76–81

 Macarius Magnes 5, 15, 45, 46, 47, 48, 61, 69, 70, 85, 137
 Methodius 46, 124, 125
 Minuscus Felix 33

 Nemesis of Emesa 49, 191

 Origen of Alexandria 47, 84, 85–93

 Philo of Alexandria 134
 Plato 46, 49, 98, 99, 105, 106, 188–189
 Pliny, the Younger 25, 35
 Plotinus 13, 45, 48, 53, 93–113, 222–225
 Plutarch of Charonea 72–76, 84
 Polybius 160
 Porphyry vii–viii, 1–7, 44–55, 58–71, 113–117, 123–134, 160, 221–225
 Proclus 13, 52, 53, 93, 108
 Psellus 48

 Severianus 192
 Socrates, Christian historian 8
 Strabo 141
 Suida 3

 Tacitus 25
 Tertullian 35
 Theodorus, the Christian 137, 191
 Theophylactus 221