

*The Value of Rhetoric in the
Ancient Christian Context*

	<i>Preface</i>	5
NINA E. LIVESEY	<i>Learning from Rhetoric in the Study of Paul: Gal 1:10–20</i>	7
DAVID E. WILHITE	<i>Is Jesus YHWH? Two De-Judaizing Trajectories of Marcion and Justin</i>	29
ROBERT J. MILLER	<i>Prophecy, Christology, and Anti-Judaism in Justin Martyr</i>	57
LILLIAN I. LARSEN	<i>Re-defining “Solitude”: Monastic Registers of Fictive (and Factual) Family</i>	77

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Preface

This issue of the *Forum* offers four related essays devoted to the role of rhetoric and language in the early Christian situation, particularly as these are reflected in a broadly scattered assortment of literary sources. In this respect our authors move from the insights of Paul in his missionary activities of the first century, to interpretative positions of Justin Martyr and Marcion of Sinope in the second, and finally, to monastic witnesses in the later institutional church of future years.

Here one may detect something of a connection between the outer essays of Livesey and Larsen in distinction from the inner essays of Wilhite and Miller. Livesey and Larsen each focus on the different ways in which rhetoric and language create conceptual spaces. Paul, for instance, posits a confrontation with opponents who threaten his audience in Galatia as a way to formulate gentile life without circumcision and other aspects of Torah regulation. Through rhetoric he is able to speculate and indeed carve out new relationships with the divine. As Nina Livesey notes: "Christianity began, not with small groups of people looking up to heaven asking where Christ had gone and when he would return, as the book of Acts would have it, but instead among literate groups, among ancient religious thinkers who indulged in creative speculations."

Similarly, Lillian Larsen offers a complex analysis of family life and imagery as found throughout ecclesiastical writers of the late third through fourth centuries. Offering a survey of authors from Egypt, Cappadocia, and Syria, Larsen concludes that imagery of "sons/daughters" ultimately incorporated household relationships anticipated among monastic disciples and other faithful. As she observes, in the final analysis: "Whether fictively or factually construed, in the fourth century, as in the first, household roles remain a persistent locus of negotiation." In this respect, early Christian images of family that were inherent in institutional affiliations formed a rhetorical bond between people of faith who otherwise often had little to share in common.

With Wilhite and Miller the settings are slightly altered. David Wilhite shines clear light on how the image of Jesus was understood from polar extremes within the second-century church. On the one hand, Marcion of Sinope offered a Jesus that was an alien figure "descended without warning . . . to rescue tormented souls from this imperfect world. . . . All this [Marcion] concludes without any reference to or need for the Jewish scriptures." In contrast, Justin stood in direct opposition to assumptions of the "Jewish-less" Jesus. In his *Dialogue*

with Trypho, he sought to indicate exactly how the confessed savior is the fulfillment of what Jewish tradition had long misunderstood. In essence then, these figures appear as “mirror opposites,” yet both contribute to what Wilhite defines as YHWH christology in the rise of early Christian theology.

Finally, Robert Miller explains how it is that Justin’s Jesus was the fulfillment of Jewish scriptures. According to Miller, Justin’s Jesus was prophesized, but not from passages derived from traditional Jewish sources. Justin’s Jesus is developed instead from a *testamonia* source, which otherwise could not have adequately withstood exegetical scrutiny. While this source was similarly deployed by other Christian writers of his day, the christology it evoked was particularly anti-Judaic. Justin was effective in his efforts and today remains as a primary exemplar of anti-Judaic rhetoric of his times.

In a word, much of what is now recognized as the foundations and evolutionary heritage of the early Christian setting relies largely on rhetoric and the use of rhetorical imagery and tropes. From Paul to Marcion, from Justin to the monastic authors, rhetorical language served a solitary function in the development of faith as it struggled through the battles of orthodoxy and correct confessions. These four essays seek to demonstrate that very movement.

Learning from Rhetoric in the Study of Paul: Gal 1:10–20¹

Nina E. Livesey

In his letter to the Galatians (1:10–20), Paul remarks,

For am I now persuading humans or God?
Or am I seeking to please humans?
If I were still pleasing humans, I would not be the Anointed's slave.

For I am making known to you, brothers, [that] the good news proclaimed by me is not according to a human.

For I did not receive it from a human;
nor was I taught it but [I received it] through it a revelation of Jesus, the Anointed.

For you heard of my former behavior in Judaism (Ἰουδαϊσμῶ),²
that I persecuted to the superlative degree the assembly of God and tried to destroy it.

And [how] I advanced in Judaism (Ἰουδαϊσμῶ) beyond many of my people of the same age.

I was extremely zealous for the traditions of the ancestors.

But when it pleased [God], who separated me from my mother's womb; and called [me] through his grace to reveal his son in me, so that I might proclaim him among the non-Jews,

immediately, I did not consult with flesh and blood,
nor did I go into Jerusalem, to those who were apostles before me,
but I went into Arabia and again I returned to Damascus.

Then after three years I did go up into Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days;

but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother.

In these things I write to you, before God, I do not lie! (Trans. my own.)

1. This is a modified version of a paper delivered at the Westar Spring 2018 Conference under the title "Does Paul Speak from the Heart?"

2. According to Steve Mason, with Paul this Greek term does not mean a comprehensive system and way of life and should therefore not be translated as "Judaism," but is instead an ethnic designator and best translated as "Judaean." While I am sympathetic to Mason's arguments, "Judaean" does not fit within this context. While Paul employs the term, there is no reason to think that Judaism exists as a religion, as it does in the modern sense. For Mason's views, see Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism," 457–512.

This passage is traditionally read as Paul's heartfelt and genuine remarks concerning his own personal religious experience. Indeed, the passage in many ways lends itself to such an interpretation: it is autobiographical and thus by genre alone seemingly trustworthy. Paul too seemingly becomes confessional, admitting to his harsh treatment of communities who recognize Jesus (Gal 1:13). And Paul provides information about his whereabouts (1:16–18) and even claims not to lie (1:20).

For Pauline scholars, the trustworthiness of this passage is of critical importance, for the passage is routinely mined for its "facts" about Paul himself, his itinerary,³ and even his religious status. After his revelation and obedience to god's call, Paul claims to travel first to Arabia, then to Damascus, and only after three years to Jerusalem. These temporal and spatial indicators are among the primary building blocks by which scholars formulate Pauline chronologies, which in turn serve to situate Paul in the mid-first century CE.

Christian theology follows on the seeming trustworthiness and historical reliability of the passage. For here, Paul claims to be god's recipient of the good news or the gospel (Gal 1:15). God's gesture towards Paul is taken as his authorization to proclaim the message, the "good news" (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) and authorization of the message itself. And when Paul self-describes as an outstanding Jew (exceeding his peers in Jewish training), yet open to receiving god's call to be an apostle of Jesus to the gentiles (Gal 1:14–18), Paul often becomes a model of faithful conversion from Judaism to Christianity. Christian supersessionism can be said to begin here. Christian superiority over Judaism is evoked, and thus Christian doctrine is often resistant to readings other than a heartfelt and honest one.

Yet is a face-value and trusting reading of this passage sustainable? By this I mean, is it consistent with ancient compositional practices? In what follows I argue that it is not. And while Christian history and doctrine continue to exert considerable force to maintain a face-value and trusting reading of the passage, recent advances in literary and rhetorical studies make such a reading no longer sustainable. Indeed, when decades ago some NT scholars assessed that Paul is inconsistent in what he relates about himself,⁴ face-value readings themselves began to break down. Other important scholarship on the overall status of Paul's letters, on rhetoric and the NT, and on the limits and goals of ancient autobiography significantly challenge the understanding that Paul here (and elsewhere) can be taken at face-value. Before providing a rhetorical analysis of Gal 1:10–20, I provide a brief sketch of earlier scholarship on which the

3. For chronologies that depend upon this passage in Galatians, see Campbell, "An Anchor for Pauline Chronology," 279, 301; Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life*, 100; Knox, *Chapters in the Life of Paul*, 51; Luedemann, *Paul Apostle to the Gentiles*, 64; Tatum, *New Chapters in the Life of Paul*, 8, *passim*; Dewey et al., *Authentic Letters of Paul*, 11–12.

4. See esp. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*; Sanders, "Paul's 'Autobiographical' Statements," 335–43.

face-value interpretation relies, review pertinent scholarship that succeeds and challenges that earlier scholarship, and conclude with remarks on why rhetorical analysis matters.

Status of Paul's Letters

The early twentieth-century German theologian Adolf Deissmann⁵ has had a broad and long-lasting influence on the modern question of the status of Paul's letters.⁶ According to him, Paul's NT letters compared favorably with the then newly discovered papyri found in the rubbish mounds of ancient cities and market towns in Egypt.⁷ These papyri consisted of legal documents, such as leases, bills and receipts, bills of divorce, tax lists, but also letters and notes, and school exercises.⁸ Despite the contrast in document type and content, Deissmann argued that the everyday quality and naturalness of the writing style found in the Egyptian papyri letters well reflected the *genuineness* and *authenticity* of Paul's NT letters. His assessment of the Pauline letters also extended to an evaluation of Paul's social location. Like Jesus, Paul was of the lower or middle class (a tentmaker; Acts 18:3),⁹ and he addressed himself to the lower classes.¹⁰

Deissmann's analysis of the ancient Egyptian papyri also led him to formulate a distinction between non-literary letters and creative epistles. According to Deissmann, a letter is a private and straightforward "means of communication between persons who are separated from each other."¹¹ A letter is natural, "confidential and personal," and essentially no different from an oral conversation, though only one half of it.¹² By contrast, an epistle is conventional, a literary form, artistic, and ultimately destined for a wider public. Epistles are "species

5. See Deissmann's 1908 *Licht vom Osten* (ET: *Light from the Ancient East*, 1910).

6. Robertson remarks that critiques of Deissmann's book appeared soon after its publication but that Deissmann's influence is wider than scholars acknowledge. On this, see Robertson, *Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 31 n. 50. See also White, *Apostle of God*, 73, who notes that Deissmann influenced Bultmann's reading of Paul.

7. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 10–50. See too the brief overviews of Deissmann's work in Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 17; White, *Apostle of God*, 73; Robertson, *Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 31.

8. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 36.

9. Paul's characterization as a tentmaker (σκηνοποιός) comes from Acts 18:3. While this characterization cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed, Pervo notes that the "literal 'tent-maker' is open to challenge as too concrete" (*Acts: A Commentary*, 452).

10. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 8; Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 7.

11. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 228; Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 194.

12. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 228; Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 194. Interestingly, writing at about the same time as Deissmann, Misch makes a similar comment with regard to Cicero's letters. He comments, "we have before us a sort of intimate diary in which a famous man, a historic personality of the highest order, gives us a direct revelation of himself, free from all artificiality—an unusual thing in any man of antiquity" (*History of Autobiography*, 2.360). Yet we know that Cicero aimed to publish his letters, so that Misch's observation of a lack of artificiality simply does not hold.

of literature” and have nothing in common with letters apart from their external form.¹³ Again, according to Deissmann, all of Paul’s NT compositions were letters.¹⁴ He remarks that Paul’s letters were “real”; each one is as “a piece of life.”¹⁵ Deissmann’s comments reveal the implications of his view:

the non-literary characteristics as letters are a guarantee of their [Paul’s letters’] reliability, their positive documentary value for the history of the apostolic period of our religion, particularly the history of St. Paul himself and his great vision.¹⁶

In developing his view, Deissmann was countering an even earlier understanding of Paul’s compositions, which compared them favorably to classical literature, to works such as those of Plato and Demosthenes. These earlier scholars assessed that such a comparison lent a sense of respect and dignity to the letters and to the religion it represented. For Deissmann, however, Christianity began in a primitive and pristine state (*Urchristentum*), as a lower-class movement, and was fundamentally in opposition to high culture.¹⁷ That the earlier comparison of Paul’s letters to the elite and highly educated class did not conform to Deissmann’s understanding of Christian origins is confirmed by his remark that Paul’s “greatness lay precisely in the spontaneity of his religion, apart from system (*systemlos Religiösen*).”¹⁸

13. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 229.

14. This includes all of the so-called authentic letters of Paul. There is broad scholarly consensus that only seven NT letters are authentically Pauline, see esp. Dewey et al., *Authentic Letters of Paul*; Roetzel, *Letters of Paul*; Sanders, *Paul*; Marchal, *Studying Paul’s Letters*, and the various contributors to this latter volume, all of whom make the same assumption.

According to Deissmann, NT compositions such as James, Peter, Jude, and Hebrews are epistles. He classifies them as epistles because they lack designated addressees and because the author recedes into the background (*Light from the Ancient East*, 242–43; *Licht vom Osten*, 206–7).

15. “Der Brief ist ein Stück Leben” (Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 195).

16. “Die unliterarische Brieflichkeit garantiert uns ihre volle Zuverlässigkeit, ja ihren geradezu urkundlichen Charakter für die Geschichte des apostolischen Zeitalters unserer Religion, insbesondere für die Geschichte des Apostels Paulus selbst und seiner großen Mission” (Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 205).

17. Robertson provides a succinct overview of these two opposing approaches to the status of Paul’s letters. As he remarks, those who have worked on the characterization of Paul’s letters generally fall into one of two camps: those who follow Deissmann and argue that Paul’s language is of the common or lower classes and that what Paul composed reflects oral culture and little formal education, or those who see in Paul’s language a reflection of the aristocratic class and understand that Paul employed techniques of advanced Greco-Roman rhetoric, suggestive of formal rhetorical training. Robertson finds that both positions are too extreme and instead takes a middle position between these two opposing camps. According to him, Paul’s language was neither that of the common spoken form nor highly sophisticated. Paul did, however, incorporate features of advanced rhetorical practices in his compositions. See Robertson, *Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 27–31. That Paul’s letters occupy a middle ground is confirmed by Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 25; Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 44.

18. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 241. On this, see also White, *Apostle of God*, 73. According to Doty, Deissmann was suspicious of theology (*Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 24).

While Deissmann's perspective continues to influence the general understanding of the status of Paul's compositions as genuine letters, his views regarding authorship and ancient epistolography are no longer deemed reliable and accurate by modern standards of analysis. His rigid antithesis between personal, natural, spontaneous, with no artistry, on the one hand, and conventional, literary, on the other, is inaccurate by the standards of modern behavioral science and literary theory. These modern theorists hold all intelligible human behavior as having some conventional aspect to it.¹⁹ Moreover, his distinction between private letters and public epistles does not accurately reflect ancient Greco-Roman society and its practices, which used friendship and family models to theorize about public functions, such as politics. Such a distinction is more a product of modern than ancient society. Finally, his distinction between public and private letters collapses when one considers that some ancient authors of so-called private and friendly letters, such as those of Cicero, composed letters with an eye toward later publication.²⁰

The notion that Paul's letters were spontaneous outpourings and similar to one-sided oral conversations is further undermined when one considers that ancient letter-writing, and indeed all ancient writings, were anything but spontaneous exercises. Ancient compositions required forethought both in terms of their content and execution. Authors needed the necessary supplies, such as paper (papyrus or parchment sheets). Ink had to be prepared in advance. Papyrus (plant material) was not inexpensive, and parchment, from animal skins,²¹ likely even more costly. Authors also often required access to a scribe,²² as Paul's own letters evince (Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 16:21; Phlm 19; cf. Gal 6:11). As is now known, only a small fraction of the population could engage in this type of activity.²³

More importantly, authorship required knowledge—education in the compositional process. Although Paul's level of education cannot be known with

19. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 19; Robertson, *Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 31.

20. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 19; Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 30. Richard Pervo comments that Romans draws on earlier materials, on Galatians and 1 Corinthians, and that Paul "almost certainly" made copies of his letters. See Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 26.

21. The earliest extant copies of Paul's letters are on papyrus.

22. For a brief description of the types of equipment and personnel needed in the composition process, see Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 1–8; Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping*, 15–32.

23. According to Stowers, in the ancient world only a "tiny fraction" of the population was at all literate, and a smaller fraction still was able to compose and interpret literature. See Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community,'" 150. Hopkins notes that between ten and twenty percent of the male population in early Roman society was literate ("Christian Number," 209). The vast majority of people in the ancient world were illiterate. Yet the modern distinction between literacy and illiteracy does not coincide strictly with class designations. For example, aristocratic authors, such as Cicero, often depended upon the reading and writing skills of others, some of whom were trained slaves. On this, see Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping*, 12.

absolute certainty, his letters provide abundant evidence of training through the secondary level of education, with likely additional instruction in ancient rhetoric.²⁴ That Paul composed letters also speaks to his social location. In contrast to Deissmann's assessment of Paul as a lower-class tradesman, he is better understood as having been a member of what was likely a relatively small group of literates, those who had the means and access to author compositions. NT scholar Paul Robertson remarks,

[V]ery few in the ancient Mediterranean had sufficient means and education to compose a text of the sophistication and length that we find in something like Paul's letters, and this narrow group of people and their literary compositions interacted directly or indirectly through loose literary networks comprising such activities as dinner parties, literary salons, correspondences, bookselling, public orations, and literary patronage.²⁵

Since Deissmann, scholars have investigated ancient epistolary theory²⁶ and have recognized the ways in which Paul's letters employ various aspects of this ancient theory.²⁷ Hans Dieter Betz, for example, comments that the whole of

24. That Paul knew the conventions of letter writing, see Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," 20. Based on his research into Paul's use of rhetorical figures, such as speech-in-character, Stowers remarks that Paul's education is nearly equivalent to someone with a primary education with a *grammaticus*, or with a teacher of letters, who then went on to study letter writing along with some rhetorical exercises. See Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 17; Stowers, "Apostrophe, Προσωποποιια," 368–69. As Robertson notes, Paul's education was roughly equivalent to the *progymnasmata* curriculum (education in the alphabet, words, reading, types of composition and the practice of these types through examples). See Robertson, *Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 177 n. 20. Robertson critiques older scholarship on ancient education that only addresses formal or school settings of the aristocratic elites. According to Robertson, ancient education was likely more varied and more complex than authors such as Marrou indicate. Some education was individualized and took place in the home (*ibid.*, 194–97). See also Porter and Pitts, "Paul's Bible," 15–16. According to Robertson, Paul likely did not receive advanced rhetorical training but instead an "epistolary-specific" education similar to the bureaucratic segment of society. Paul can be classified as a "trained letter-writer." See Robertson, *Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 49, 193.

25. Robertson, *Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 14. Robertson follows on the work of Harris (*Ancient Literacy*, 1989); Porter and Pitts ("Paul's Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel," 2008), and other scholarship.

26. Earliest investigators include Ferdinandus Ziemann, *De Epistularum Graecarum Formulæ Sollemnibus Quaestiones Selectae* (1912) and Francis Xavier Exler, *The Form of the Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (1923). In his 1956 work, Heikki Koskeniemi studied the phraseology used in ancient Greek letters (*Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefs bis 400 n. Chr.*). In the last quarter of the twentieth century other influential studies appeared, including John L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle*, 1972; Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter-Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, and Abraham J. Malherbe's, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, 1988.

27. See e.g. the series of eleven articles in Porter and Adams, *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form*.

Galatians is an example of an “apologetic letter genre.”²⁸ John L. White notes similarities in Paul’s letters to conventional epistolary form, including formulaic openings, closings and a distinct letter body.²⁹ According to White, in addition to the conventional letter openings and closing,³⁰ Paul also employs ring composition tying the opening and closing formulae together,³¹ and his letter closings incorporate a five-part conventional formula: 1) an autobiographical element that appeals to his authority; 2) the identification and recommendation of his letter carriers; 3) his hoped-for imminent visit; 4) a parenetic (hortatory) section that reminds of his instruction to the community; and, 5) a wish for peace.³²

According to Stowers, ancient letter-writing theory adopted a “holistic and functional approach.”³³ While ancient epistolography was never fully integrated into the rhetorical handbooks—with no fixed rules for ancient letter-writing established³⁴—there was nevertheless a relationship between it and rhetorical theory, literary tradition and even moral philosophy.³⁵ One could identify letters by types and classify them according to their function;³⁶ letters responded to societal needs and values.³⁷ Stowers identifies various ancient letter types, including friendly, family, praise and blame, exhortation and advice, consolation and accusatory. He argues convincingly that Paul’s letters employ “commonplaces and the language” from nearly all of these ancient types.³⁸

What we know of Paul—and know with the greatest degree of certainty—is that he composed letters. Indeed, I argue that purposeful letter-writing was Paul’s stock-in-trade. Authorship was the primary way in which Paul staked out his authority, and authorship functioned to locate Paul socially among other

28. Betz, *Galatians*, 14.

29. For a review of the history of the scholarship on the Pauline letter body, see Martin, “Investigating the Pauline Letter Body,” 185–212.

30. Early studies focused on the opening and closing formulae. For a review and bibliography on this scholarship, see Robertson, *Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 190 n. 79. Betz employs rhetorical categories and indicates Paul’s “epistolary prescript” (Gal 1:1–5) and “epistolary postscript” (Gal 6:11–18). See Betz, *Galatians*, 16–23.

31. White, *Apostle of God*, 71.

32. White, *Apostle of God*, 64.

33. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 22.

34. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 34.

35. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 49.

36. For the relevancy of considering letters according to their types, see Robertson, *Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 191. Ancients thought in terms of “compositional context, content, and the purpose the author was trying to achieve” (*ibid.*).

37. Robertson studies Paul’s letters alongside other ancient authors within comparable social networks (*Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 45, 70). Following literary theory, Robertson argues for a “fundamental interrelation between form, content, and social purpose of a given text” (*ibid.*, 12).

38. Commonplaces of friendship are found in 2 Cor 5:3; 10:1–2; 1 Thess 2:17; 3:6–10; Phil 1:7–8; 2:17–18; 2 Cor 1:16; Phlm 22. See Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 60. Paul used praise in Rom 1:8; 1 Thess 1:3; Phlm 1–4 (*ibid.*, 80), exhortation and advice in 1 Corinthians and Galatians (*ibid.*, 108), and consolatory rhetoric in 1 Thess 4:13–18 (*ibid.*, 145).

“literary specialists” of his time.³⁹ Robertson maintains Paul wished “to attain the cachet of specialists in abstract thought, education/instruction, and religion.”⁴⁰ On this “macro level” understanding of Paul, the specific goals of his individual letters are subordinate to his larger goal of staking out a place among his peer group of literary specialists.⁴¹ It was this particular expression—the rhetoric of his letters—that lent social prestige and authority to Paul in his social milieu.⁴² Indeed, Christianity itself likely began among such literate groups.⁴³

Paul and Rhetoric

Many post-Deissmann Pauline scholars, indeed entirely too many to name,⁴⁴ interpret Paul’s letters rhetorically. Among the studies that prove to be the most convincing are those that focus on Paul’s use of rhetorical tropes, figures, and techniques, rather than those that evaluate his letters as a whole according to one of the Greco-Roman rhetorical categories.⁴⁵ Influential and noteworthy scholarship are the studies by Stanley K. Stowers on Paul’s use of *prosōpopoia* (“speech-in-character”),⁴⁶ and his earlier study on Paul’s use of diatribe,⁴⁷ Mark Nanos’s work on Paul’s use of ironic rebuke in Galatians,⁴⁸ and Antoinette Wire’s analysis of Paul’s arguments in 1 Corinthians.⁴⁹ The latter two studies fall into the category of social-rhetorical theory. This scholarship, along with countless more, indicates beyond a doubt that Paul knew of and employed the art and tools of rhetoric.

39. See Robertson, who posits that text-production was “fundamental to [Paul’s] broader social activity and agenda” (*Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 117). Robertson compares Paul to Greco-Roman authors Philodemus (110–40 or 35 BCE) and Epictetus (55–135 CE). While Heidi Wendt understands Paul more as a doer/active agent than do I, she nevertheless finds that Paul self-located among other “writer-intellectuals.” See Wendt, *At the Temple Gates*, 148.

40. Robertson, *Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 118.

41. Robertson, *Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 118. Robertson follows on the work of modern literary theorists Elizabeth Povinelli, Michael Silverstein, and Greg Urban. These specialists employ a theory called “metapragmatics,” which refers to the specific function of speech or texts (*ibid.*, 117).

42. Robertson, *Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 118. Robertson does not use the word “rhetoric” but instead the term “actual expression.”

43. Rather than the more nebulous notion of “community,” Stowers comments that the social formation of early Christianity is better understood as “fields or networks of literate and specialized cultural producers” (“The Concept of ‘Community,’” 250).

44. The bibliography on Paul and rhetoric is enormous. A representative list of scholars includes, H. D. Betz, G. A. Kennedy, Burton Mack, P. J. Sampley, P. Lampe, R. D. Anderson, S. Stowers, R. G. Hall, C. J. Classen, A. Malherbe, A. C. Wire, M. Mitchell, A. Dewey, M. D. Nanos, V. Robbins, and W. Wuellner.

45. For confirmation of this view, see Robertson, *Paul’s Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature*, 46–47.

46. See Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 16–21, *passim*.

47. Stowers, *Diatribes*.

48. See Nanos, *Irony of Galatians*, 32–61.

49. Wire analyzes Paul’s arguments to determine the social and theological position of the female prophets alluded to in 1 Corinthians. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*.

Discussions of rhetoric likely began with Plato. Although critical of rhetoric because it did not deal with truth or reality, it was with Plato in his *Gorgias* that we first encounter the term “rhetoric” (ῥητορικὴ).⁵⁰ In his *Gorgias* (453a2), Plato defined the rhetor as a *πειθοῦς δημιουργός* (“worker of persuasion”).⁵¹ Aristotle defined rhetoric as “the ability in each [particular] case to see the available means of persuasion” (*Rhet.* 1.2.2).⁵² Later, Quintilian (*Inst.* 2.15.34) defined rhetoric as *bene dicendi scientia*, “the science of speaking well.” By “well,” Quintilian meant making persuasive arguments using artistic style while not neglecting moral purpose.⁵³

Aristotle also determined that rhetoric was the correlative (ἀντίστροφος) of dialectic (*Rhet.* 1.1.1).⁵⁴ As the modern scholar of rhetoric George Kennedy explains, dialectic dealt with general questions and was usually in dialogue form, while rhetoric dealt with particular issues and was generally in the form of continuous prose.⁵⁵ The realm of dialectic is common opinions (*endoxa*); and common opinions make no claims on absolute truth.⁵⁶ While ancient theorists offered various definitions of rhetoric—with some stressing the goal of persuasion and others the notion of speaking well—rhetoric from ancient to modern times is generally considered as a “system of effective and artistic communication, whether in speech or writing, originally concerned with public address in civic and religious life, but then adapted to literary composition.”⁵⁷ It held a primary role in education from the fourth century BCE until the early modern period.⁵⁸

While the nineteenth century saw a decline in the teaching of classical rhetoric, the twentieth century exhibits a revitalization of it. Following on the theory that rhetoric pertained to dialectic or common opinions, the modern theorists Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca⁵⁹ (and while they called it “New

50. Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 3.

51. Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 3.

52. As cited in Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 4.

53. Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 4. David Cunningham explains that the focus on being a good or moral person was a reaction against a later rhetorical tradition that judged the sophists as having little concern with morality. Isocrates was another rhetorician, who in response to this critique of rhetoric, emphasized that an orator must also be of good character (“Rhetoric,” 220–21).

54. See also John Freese’s analysis in *Aristotle, The ‘Art’ of Rhetoric*, xxxv, who remarks that both rhetoric and dialectic deal with matters of common knowledge.

55. Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 4.

56. Cunningham explains that Aristotle divided knowledge into two broad categories, analytic and dialectic. Analytic began with agreed-upon first principles and could claim finality with regard to its results. Dialectic, however, begins not with first principles but with opinions, with “whatever most people consider to be the case.” Because opinions are often wrong, dialectic could not claim finality as its result (“Rhetoric,” 221).

57. Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 5.

58. Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 5.

59. See Perelman, *Traité de L’Argumentation* (ET: *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, 1969).

Rhetoric”) returned rhetoric to its ancient understanding. For these modern theorists, rhetoric pertained to everyday discourse; it was simply “argumentation.”⁶⁰ Their analysis along with the work of other modern theorists allowed rhetoric to return to its place as an aspect of a wide range of discourse including literary and religious compositions.⁶¹ Burton Mack comments, “Rhetoric is to a society and its discourse what grammar is to a culture and its language.”⁶² This same impulse can be seen in the remarks of Todd Penner and Davina Lopez, who with regard to Paul’s letters comment, “There is no place outside of rhetoric in Paul’s letters. Every word links with other words, forming series of statements that play a role in making arguments that Paul, presumably, finds important to share with his recipients.”⁶³

Furthermore, ancient rhetorical theory and its modern incarnations, as seen especially in the New Rhetoric, understand that argumentation is *not* a conveyor of pre-existing truth.⁶⁴ Instead, truth is worked out in language, in discourse.⁶⁵ Rhetoric is the vehicle by which persons actively participate in the creation of “truths.”⁶⁶ In this regard, NT scholar Wilhem Wuellner remarks, “The rhetorical

60. Perelman, *The New Rhetoric*, 1–11. These theorists describe rhetorical analysis of a composition as “the study of the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind’s adherence to the theses presented for its assent” (ibid., 4; italic original).

61. Burton Mack explains, “By emphasizing argumentation, Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca . . . described a logic of communication that could be applied to widely ranging modes of human discourse, and immersed the study of speech events in social situations” (*Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 15). See also Wilhelm Wuellner, who remarks that the new rhetoric “approaches all literature, including inspired or canonical biblical literature, as social discourse” (“Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?” 462). As Kennedy notes, even religious texts are rhetorical (*New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 158).

62. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 16.

63. Penner, “Rhetorical Approaches,” 37.

64. Penner and Lopez helpfully remark, “[T]he character of ‘facts’ and ‘truth’ is always inherently rhetorical, and, while they are useful within various social-historical contexts to differing persuasive ends, ‘facts’ and ‘truth’ are ultimately tropes that have to be contextualized within wider systems of meaning-making in order to be more fully understood” (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 40).

65. “The very nature of deliberation and argumentation is opposed to necessity and self-evidence, since no one deliberates where the solution is necessary or argues against what is self-evident. The domain of argumentation is that of the credible, the plausible, the probable, to the degree that the latter eludes the certainty of calculations” (Perelman, *The New Rhetoric*, 1). Robert L. Scott comments, “There is no possibility in matters relevant to human interaction to determine truth in any *a priori* way, that truth can arise only from cooperative critical inquiry” (“On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic,” 14; italics original).

This understanding of rhetoric is consistent with Aristotle and also reflects the problem Plato had with rhetoric. Unlike Aristotle, Plato was most interested in the truth, with certainty, a subject with which rhetoric does not concern itself. For more on this debate, see Cunningham, “Rhetoric,” 220–21.

66. Botha, “Introduction,” 18–19. Scott argues that rhetoric is epistemic, a way of discovering truth. See his “On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic,” 9–17. Kennedy remarks, “All religious systems are rhetorical: they are attempts to communicate perceived religious truth, just a political discourse is an attempt to communicate perceived political doctrine and is necessarily rhetorical” (*New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 158).

view of religious literature takes us beyond viewing language as a reflection of reality, even ‘ultimate reality’ as understood in terms of traditional metaphysical and idealist philosophy, and takes us to the social aspect of language which is an instrument of communication and influence on others.”⁶⁷

As one might imagine, this expansive understanding of rhetoric, along with the notion that rhetoric is not a conveyor of pre-existent truths, has not been universally embraced by NT scholars. For instance, the prominent Pauline scholar J. Louis Martyn remarks, “Rhetoric can serve the gospel but the gospel itself is not fundamentally a matter of rhetorical persuasion (1:10–12).”⁶⁸ What Martyn implies by this is that the Gospel (whatever he may mean by that word) is of first-order importance. It is, according to him, not only Paul’s starting point, but also truth itself. In this view, Paul is simply a conveyor or mouthpiece of truth.

Autobiographical Rhetoric

Galatians 1:10–20 can be understood as rhetorical autobiography.⁶⁹ While a literary form, it aligns closely with the ancient rhetorical category of persuasion by *êthos* (ἠθος), classified by Aristotle as the most powerful among three primary means of persuasion (κυριωτάτην ἔχει πίστιν) (*Rhet.* 1.2.4).⁷⁰ Persuasion by *êthos* requires orators or authors to elicit audience confidence (1.2.4). While the moral worthiness of the author is important in this type of argumentation, it is nonetheless *secondary* to the goal of persuasion itself. Indeed, the ultimate goal was that of gaining audience trust, and thus this form of argumentation allowed authors to magnify their own trustworthiness, to self-aggrandize when and where necessary in order to persuade.⁷¹ Because persuasion was the ultimate goal, authors who adopted autobiographical rhetoric often dissembled.⁷² George Lyons aptly states, “The major interest of most ancient biographers and autobiographers was not historical reality but human potentiality and idealization.”⁷³ As George Misch notes, even if authors desired to recount actual events of their lives, they had little ability of doing so. In his comprehensive and influ-

67. Wuellner, “Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?” 449. Wuellner is citing Perleman’s *New Rhetoric*.

68. Martyn, *Galatians*, 22.

69. The word “autobiography” does not derive from a Greek word but is a modern notion that first appears in 1809. On this, see Momigliano, *Development*, 14.

70. The two other primary types of persuasion are *pathos*, which necessitates putting hearers into a desired emotional state, and *logos*, argumentation through the speech itself, through the cogency of the arguments (*Aristotle, Rhet.* 1.2.5–6).

71. As George Yoos remarks, Aristotle’s “emphasis is on the potency of *êthos* to persuade in and of itself” (“A Revision of the Concept of Ethical Appeal,” 45).

72. Yoos, “A Revision of the Concept of Ethical Appeal,” 45. For further discussion of this, see Jasinski, “Ethos,” 230–31. This, of course, returns us to the ancient critique against sophist rhetoric discussed above. Rhetoricians such as Quintilian and Isocrates (and even Aristotle to a degree) insisted that the orator also be a person of moral worth.

73. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 30.

ential study on the history of autobiography, Misch comments that the actual events of life become distorted by self-deception. For this reason, “remembrance does not proceed as mechanical reproduction but tends to creation.”⁷⁴ According to him, autobiographies are constructed and are not to be considered “objective narratives.”⁷⁵

Again, for ancient biographers and autobiographers, truth was secondary to the author’s primary goal of persuasion. Authors adopted certain set *topoi* (motifs or rhetorical conventions) to advance their goal. Among these are the treatment of the author’s ancestry (immediate or remote), a discussion of their upbringing, education, and profession, a presentation of their actions to illustrate moral character and purpose, and a self-comparison to other exemplary persons often for the purpose of imitation.⁷⁶ As is indicated below, several of these *topoi* are present in Gal 1:10–20.

Ancient autobiography can also be compared to the rhetorical figure *prosōpopoiia* (“speech-in-character”), a Greek word, whose root (*prosōpon*) means “face.” *Prosōpopoiia*⁷⁷ entails the attribution of speech and personality to a character and can imply the invention of the character as well.⁷⁸ It is recognized that Paul employs speech-in-character in his extant writings (Rom 2:1–16, 17–4:22; 7:7–25).⁷⁹

As an ancient author versed in techniques necessary to develop a convincing self-persona, Paul in Gal 1:10–20 constructed a limited autobiography, exaggerating certain aspects of himself and eliminating others. At the same time, however, Paul did not have limited self-awareness. The assumption that the ancient self is a product of a collective self has been more recently criticized for not comporting both with ancient understandings of the self⁸⁰ and with the ba-

74. Misch, *History of Autobiography*, 1.11. See also Robert Seesengood, who comments that for Misch, “Autobiography is self-narration that is concerned with the presentation/construction of the identity of the author” (*Competing Identities*, 4).

75. Misch, *History of Autobiography*, 1.11.

76. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 28, 61.

77. *Prosōpopoiia* is also called *éthopoiia* by later writers of *Progymnasmata*, such as Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius. On this, see Theon, *Progymnasmata*, xxxv; Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 17.

78. Homer e.g. speaks either from his own character or from another character. On this, see Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 19. Indeed, *prosōpopoiia* often adopts the first-person singular form, as does Paul in Romans 7.

79. Stowers remarks, “Paul’s ability to read and to write letters, even if not in the tradition of high literary culture, makes it all but certain that he had been instructed in *προσωποποιία*” (*Rereading of Romans*, 17; cf. 19, 21).

80. According to David Sorabji, ancients did have a sense of self, which began early with Plato. There was not one conception of the self, but instead a variety of them. Socrates is said to remark that he is not a body but a rational soul (*Phaedo* 115C). For Plato, the true self was intellect (also true for Philo). Seneca speculates on the nature of the self (*Letters* 58.22–23; 24.19–21), as does Plutarch (*On the E at Delphi* 392C–E). See Sorabji, *Self*, 32–42. Sorabji remarks that there is an “explosion of new ideas about the Self” in the first centuries BCE and CE (ibid., 43). Sorabji is critical of modern views of ancient Israelites, such as those of H. Wheeler Robinson, Bruce Malina, and Jerome Neyrey, who understand that ancients

sic assumptions required of authors as seen in the ancient rhetorical handbooks. Such a view implies a diminished understanding of authorship and its effectiveness. Rather, Paul was a rhetorical strategist⁸¹ who worked to not only persuade but to impress of his authority. As an ancient author, he brought to bear on his compositions the extent of his skills and learning in order to persuade and to attain, as Robertson argues, *caché* among his social-literary peers. Authorship, the deployment of rhetoric and its various tropes, required self-awareness, especially an awareness of the belief in the effectiveness of one's own arguments.

Autobiographical Rhetoric of Gal 1:10–20

Turning to a rhetorical analysis of Gal 1:10–20 we can see Paul as a savvy strategist and not a spontaneous speaker. Typical of ancient autobiographers, Paul is highly selective with regard to what he divulges about himself,⁸² thereby maintaining full control of his discourse.⁸³ According to the rhetorical situation⁸⁴ he establishes, rival religious authorities are leading the Galatians astray. Thus, to regain the Galatians' allegiance, Paul self-characterizes as far worthier

"saw themselves in terms of 'corporate personality'" and never as individuals apart from a larger group (*ibid.*, 49). The idea that "social behavior is determined by group goals" does not, according to Sorabji, apply to the ancient Mediterranean person" (*ibid.*, 50).

Moreover, Kennedy notes that in the fourth century BCE there was a turn toward the individual and the portrayal of character. E.g., Greek law required that litigants conduct their case personally. Logographers (trained speech-writers) would be hired to write up the defense. These speeches, such as those by Lysias, included the portrayal of character. See Kennedy, "Historical Survey of Rhetoric," 16. Lyons remarks that by the eighth century BCE there was a turn to individual consciousness and cites figures such as Confucius, Lao-tse, Gautama Buddha, Zoroaster, and Pythagoras (*Pauline Autobiography*, 22–23).

See too Nicolet-Anderson, who, following on the work of Gary Burnett (*Paul and the Salvation of the Individual*), is also critical of the ancient sense of self as determined by the collective. Citing Burnett (p. 86), Nicolet-Anderson notes, "anthropological and sociological research with respect to the nature of the individual self suggests that there is good reason to be skeptical of sociological approaches which subjugate the self to the determining power of the social, and that a fully reflexively-aware and creative self should be found in all societies, including those that might be considered to be less developed than our own" (*Constructing the Self*, 11–12 n. 57).

Indeed, Lyons remarks that it was the development of a sense of individual consciousness that made autobiography possible (*Pauline Autobiography*, 53).

81. On this, see also Livesey, *Galatians and the Rhetoric of Crisis*.

82. According to Lyons, Paul is "fully at home in antiquity to the extent that they [his autobiographical statements] are not purely informative personal histories but serve other motives" (*Pauline Autobiography*, 66).

83. On this point, see Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 30. With regard to Gal 1:15, Betz writes, "It is extremely difficult—if not altogether impossible—to extract from Paul's words the facts as they really happened" (*Galatians*, 69). According to J. T. Sanders, "Paul forces certain events in his own past to support a particular theological point" ("Paul's 'Autobiographical' Statements," 342).

84. Many NT scholars follow Bitzer's definition of rhetorical situation, yet there are problems with it. According to Bitzer, the rhetorical situation is "a complex of persons, events, and objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so

than these others.⁸⁵ Using a divine-human contrasting motif as an organizing principle, along with a host of other rhetorical techniques, Paul self-fashions loftily and creatively. Neither the good news to which he refers (1:11), nor his revelation (ἀποκαλύψεως; 1:12), nor the incidents pertaining to his former life in *Judaism* (ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ; 1:13–14) are themselves end points—essential in and of themselves—but instead serve supporting roles in the service of his larger authority-establishing purpose.⁸⁶ That the details are less significant is in part confirmed by the fact that Paul relates different particulars surrounding similar events elsewhere.⁸⁷ The passage is reproduced here with verse numbers.

- 1:10a For am I now persuading **humans** [ἀνθρώπους] or God?
 1:10b Or am I seeking to please [ἀρέσκειν] **humans** [ἀνθρώπους]?
 1:10c If I were still pleasing [ἤρεσκον] **humans** [ἀνθρώπους], I would not be the *Anointed's* [Χριστός] slave [δούλος].
 1:11 For I am making known to you, brothers, the good news [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον] proclaimed by me is not according to a **human** [ἄνθρωπον].
 1:12a For I did not receive it from a **human** [ἀνθρώπου]
 1:12b nor was I taught it but [I received it] *through a revelation* [δι' ἀποκαλύψεως] of *Jesus, the Anointed*.
 1:13a For you heard of my former behavior in *Judaism* [(Ἰουδαϊσμῷ),⁸⁸
 1:13b that I persecuted to the superlative degree [καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον] the assembly of God and tried to destroy [ἐπόρθουν] it.

constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" ("Rhetorical Situation," 6). Alan Brinton, however, makes a necessary correction to Bitzer's understanding of the rhetorical situation. According to him, Bitzer's assumption of the objective nature of exigence diminishes the creative role of the rhetor in "defining the situation for his audience" ("Situation in the Theory of Rhetoric," 242). In other words, we know of the exigence through the author's description of it. The exigence is not objective but subjective. Similarly, Penner and Lopez remark that constructing a rhetorical situation is circular in that we use Paul's own rhetoric to construct the situation to which Paul then responds. See Penner, "Rhetorical Approaches," 40. I too find that Paul is the one establishing the rhetorical situation, it is not a given. Exegetes must be cautious in attributing too much credence to rhetorical situations. There is also the distinct possibility that Paul creates rivals in order to speak in the affirmative about himself and his own agenda.

85. Sanders remarks that in this autobiographical section Paul is not narrating facts but instead "proving his apostolic rank and independence" ("Paul's 'Autobiographical' Statements," 343). Paul chooses which "facts" best suit his overall purpose (*ibid.*).

86. On this view, see Sanders, "Paul's 'Autobiographical' Statements," 342, *passim*. See also Scott, who writes that Paul's telling of his own story is not a neutral. "He tells his story to prove a point to win a debate" (*The Real Paul*, 20).

87. For instance, in 1 Cor 15:8 Paul remarks not that God set him aside at birth, as though his birth had divine significance, but instead that he had an "abnormal birth" (ἐκτρώματι). The Greek word can be translated as "abortion." In Gal 1:12 Paul indicates that he alone had a revelation (ἀποκαλύψεως), but in 1 Cor 15:6–8, he mentions that Χριστός "appeared" (ὠφθη) not only to him but to many others as well. In Gal 1:11 Paul insists that his Gospel is through a revelation, whereas in 1 Cor 15:1–3 he claims that he received it from a former (human) tradition. On this, see Sanders, "Paul's 'Autobiographical' Statements," 338.

88. On the uniqueness of this term, see Betz, *Galatians*, 67 n. 105. Outside the NT the term is next found in the letters of Ignatius (*Magn.* 8.1; 10.3; *Phil.* 6.1).

- 1:14a and [how] I advanced in *Judaism* [Ἰουδαϊσμῶ], beyond many of my people of the same age.
- 1:14b I was extremely zealous [περισσοτέρως ζηλωτής] for the traditions of the ancestors.
- 1:15a But when [Ὅτε δὲ] it pleased [God], *who separated me from my mother's womb*
- 1:15b and called [me] through his grace *to reveal his son in me*, so that I might proclaim *him* among the non-Jews,
- 1:16 immediately, I did not consult with **flesh and blood** [σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι]
- 1:17a nor did I go into Jerusalem, to those who were apostles before me,
- 1:17b but I went into Arabia and again I returned to Damascus.
- 1:18 Then after three years I did go up into Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days;
- 1:19 but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother.
- 1:20 **In these things I write to you, before God, I do not lie!**⁸⁹

In the constructed divine-human dichotomy,⁹⁰ Paul self-locates in a hierarchically superior position to that of his opponents, on the side of god.⁹¹ (The word “human” [ἄνθρωπος] and words that refer to humans are in bold, and words pertaining to god or to divine figures are in italics). The words Paul speaks are not his own but instead god's (1:11). God supplies the content of the good news Paul proclaims (1:12b); and god charged him to proclaim it (1:15b). Paul claims to be a slave or servant (δούλος) of the risen “Anointed One” (Χριστός; 1:10c). Moreover, god is the active agent in his life even before his birth (1:15a).

The passage begins with rhetorical questions. A rhetorical question functions to put the receiver/hearer on the defensive, as it assumes the correct answer is known but somehow forgotten or ignored. The receiver/hearer is presumed to be lacking in common knowledge. At the same time, with his questions Paul admonishes his hearers for assuming that he is in the business of persuasion or that he is persuading god. Whether his hearers assume these things is not at issue. It is the rhetorical questions themselves that function to place Paul authoritatively above his audience. The first part of his question is hyperbolic and self-contradictory: Paul claims to be out of the business of persuasion—that his words somehow supersede rhetoric—while he simultaneously participates in the use of a rhetorical trope (1:10a).⁹²

89. The translation is my own.

90. Koptak notes that in Gal 1:1–12 Paul repeats the Greek word for human (ἄνθρωπος) seven times. Paul structures the entire unit from Gal 1:1–24 around the human-divine contrast. See Koptak, “Rhetorical Identification,” 162. See also Sanders, “Paul's ‘Autobiographical’ Statements,” 338.

91. See Koptak, “Rhetorical Identification,” 162, who remarks that in this autobiographical section, “every action and motive” is “measured against” Paul's basic notion of being from God.

92. On this point, see Betz, *Galatians*, 54.

With his second rhetorical question (1:10b), Paul engages in a common form of ancient polemics: the denial of being a people pleaser.⁹³ To emphasize this point, he repeats the Greek verb that denotes to please in successive phrases (ἀρέσκειν, 1:10b; ἠρέσκειν, 1:10c), an instance of *polyptoton* (the repetition of the same root word, ῥέσκω, under a different form). Similarly, at the end of the passage Paul employs another trope common in ancient polemics,⁹⁴ namely, claiming to tell the truth (1:20).

Antitheses—verbal constructions formulated in the negative—are also evident in Gal 1:11–12. Antithesis is also a form of amplification, which involves pleonasm (the use of more words than are necessary), correction, and the balancing of negative and positive clauses.⁹⁵ Antithesis serves to strengthen and clarify the author’s claims.⁹⁶

With antithesis, Paul contrasts his past life, construed as his human-driven self, with his positively constructed present life as an agent of god (Gal 1:15–16). Indeed, he magnifies the contrast between his former and current selves. Formerly, Paul persecuted⁹⁷ Jesus followers (“the assembly of God”; 1:13b). Accentuating those negative actions, he argues that he strongly persecuted Jesus followers (καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον), even attempting to “destroy” (ἐπόρθουν) them (1:13b).⁹⁸ The verb ἐπόρθουν is an imperfect (implying continual past action) of the verb πορθέω, which means “to destroy, ravage, waste, or plunder.”⁹⁹ Moreover, the Greek ὑπερβολὴν means “exceedingly,” or “to the superlative degree” (1:13b). As a standalone, the adverb ὑπέρ denotes “over-much, above measure,”¹⁰⁰ just as today the English word “hyper” is a transliteration of the Greek meaning “excessive” (1:14b). Why paint his past action in such strongly negative terms when he could have just as easily self-characterized more favorably?¹⁰¹

93. Betz writes, “Persuading men by pleasing them is of course one of the notorious strategies of political rhetoric and demagoguery” (*Galatians*, 55). See Demosthenes, *Phil.* 1.51; 2.32; 3.1–2.

94. Sanders notes that scholars mistakenly look to Paul’s oath in 1:20 as a confirmation of the autobiography’s authenticity. See Sanders, “Paul’s ‘Autobiographical’ Statements,” 335. See too 2 Cor 11:31, in which Paul also claims not to lie (*ibid.*, 341).

95. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 107.

96. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 64.

97. The subject of why Paul persecuted groups of Jesus followers has been discussed from an historical perspective. See e.g. Scott, *The Real Paul*, 23; Fredriksen, “Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope,” 248–55.

98. In his recent book on Paul, Scott provides five different translations of this verse. The SV translation as cited in Scott is “how aggressively I harassed God’s new community, trying to wipe it out” (*The Real Paul*, 22).

99. ΛΟΓΕΙΟΝ, “πορθέω,” accessed January 1, 2018, <http://logeion.uchicago.edu/index.html#πορθέω>.

100. ΛΟΓΕΙΟΝ, “ὑπέρ,” accessed January 1, 2018, <http://logeion.uchicago.edu/index.html#ὑπέρ>.

101. Making a similar observation but with regard to Gal 1:17–19, Sanders notes, “Had the situation been such that Paul could better have proved his apostleship by showing how many times he had been in Jerusalem, he would no doubt have been able to argue equally well in that vein” (“Paul’s ‘Autobiographical’ Statements,” 343).

Next, when Paul discusses his early education (1:14a, 14b), he also self-portrays at the extreme, as someone not just interested in the traditions of the fathers but very zealous (*περισσοτέρως ζηλωτής*) for them.¹⁰² According to Scott, when Paul claims to be zealous, he is claiming to be “a standout example of what it means to be a Jew.”¹⁰³ Taken together, his purported zeal for his ancestral traditions and his strong persecution of Jesus’ followers are mutually reinforcing details¹⁰⁴ that serve to create a particular characterization of his past as a fiery zealot.

The passage takes a turn in a new direction at Gal 1:15. The “but when” (*Ὅτε δὲ*, marked in bold) is how Paul signals his transition from a human- to divine-driven agent (1:15a). He shifts his persona from a fiery zealot human self to a slave of god. The adversative conjunction “but” (*δὲ*) indicates a changed situation, while the adverb “when” (*Ὅτε*) denotes a change in time. On the situational plane, Paul credits god as the responsible “agent” of his new and changed life (1:15a, 15b).¹⁰⁵ On the temporal plane, he relegates his excessive and damaging actions to his past life.¹⁰⁶

In the remaining verses of the unit, Paul continues to self-present as someone who now operates under divine direction (1:16–17). He twice notes that he does not consult with others (1:16, 1:17a) but instead goes alone to Arabia and Damascus. By implication, Paul is untarnished by the influence of others and thus remains solely under the guidance of god.¹⁰⁷

In sum, this autobiographical passage in Galatians suggests the work of an author fully at home in ancient composition and rhetoric, challenging in turn the view that Paul was a spontaneous writer who faithfully advanced his vision.¹⁰⁸ As an ancient author, Paul would not have been interested in relaying

102. This too is a common trope in ancient autobiography. Citing George Misch, Lyons comments, “most Hellenistic autobiographers praised their own precocity” (*Pauline Autobiography*, 48 n. 117). Josephus e.g. similarly reports on the great progress he made in his education (*Vita* 8).

103. Scott, *The Real Paul*, 20. Similarly, according to Betz, Paul was self-identifying as “an ardent observer of Torah” (*Galatians*, 68).

104. E.g., according to Betz, Paul’s “anti-Christian” activity is explained by his “deep devotion and commitment to the Jewish religion” (*Galatians*, 67–68). See also Scott, *The Real Paul*, 26. Betz’s articulation of the situation is outmoded by the standards of the more recent scholarship that finds that Paul would not have been addressing “anti-Christian” activity, as there was no Christianity at the time of Paul. Scholars too doubt that there was one or even any Jewish “religion” at the time of Paul.

105. On this, see Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 147.

106. According to D. F. Tolmie, Paul’s hyperbolic remarks regarding his past activities serve to confirm that he could not have changed were it not for God. See Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 56. For Lyons, the former-now temporal contrast structures the entire autobiographical section (Gal 1:10–2:21) and is a recurring theme throughout Galatians (*Pauline Autobiography*, 136, 146, 150–51).

107. On this, see Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 55. See too Koptak, who notes, “His move away from the apostles to Arabia . . . signified his break from a bondage to human tradition and authority” (“Rhetorical Identification,” 162). That Paul is proving his independence, see Sanders, “Paul’s ‘Autobiographical’ Statements,” 343.

108. On this, see Stowers, “Apostrophe, Προσωποποιία,” 366.

facts or the truth about himself,¹⁰⁹ but instead in persuading hearers using the best compositional and rhetorical tools known to him.

As the letter's composer, Paul controlled its contents and style. Through various rhetorical techniques, he self-fashioned as superior to others. In contrast to readings that are fact-seeking, this analysis understands Paul's revelation (1:12, 16), his travels (1:17–18), and his former life as a superlative Jew (1:13–14) with skepticism.¹¹⁰

Conclusions

The view that Paul wrote honestly, openly, and spontaneously is based on a hermeneutic of faith in which trust finds trustworthiness. Such a view, however, does not comport well or even at all with ancient composers and their compositions. Rhetoric informed and played an enormously large role in the development of ancient compositions, with ancient autobiography forming one important means of written expression. Ancient authors did not concern themselves with facts but instead with persuasion.¹¹¹ For them, "truth" and "facts" were contingent upon their argumentative goals.¹¹² Their compositions dealt with the realm of the probable. This evidence suggests that with Paul we are dealing with an ancient educated and savvy author¹¹³ and not an in-the-moment confessional writer.

This analysis unsettles the ground supporting the historical Paul, both with regard to his activities and his revelation. It confounds the innocence inherent in

109. See Elmer, "Setting the Record Straight," 32, who notes that "Paul's autobiographical material is press-ganged into the service of his rhetoric."

110. "[T]he proper way to understand such seemingly 'autobiographical' statements made by Paul—including his statements regarding the origin of 'his gospel'—is not to inquire into the historicity of the events alluded to in such statements, but rather to ascertain what point is being scored by Paul in his argumentation, and then to see how he makes 'autobiographical' events underscore that point. Thus, the task of an objective study of a text should be to uncover that basic point" ("Paul's 'Autobiographical' Statements," 343).

111. "[V]eracity was a subsidiary issue in ancient autobiographies" (Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography*, 67).

112. A leading twentieth-century literary theorist, Wayne Booth, notes that "there is no such thing as complete neutrality of the author. All authors take sides" (*The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 78). Stowers too comments, "All letters are literature in the very broadest sense" (*Letter Writing*, 19).

113. In this regard, it is interesting that the book of Acts—which offers a "biography" of Paul—does not mention that he wrote letters. Acts locates Paul in the sphere of a leather-worker or tentmaker (Acts 18:3), not as a literary specialist. Acts creates an idealized character, conforming Paul's biography to that of Jesus. Like Jesus, Paul's religious life begins with a baptism (Acts 9:17–18; Luke 3:20–21). Prophecies surround both characters (Acts 9:15–16; Luke 1:30–33). Both preached an initial contentious sermon in a synagogue (Acts 13:14–50; Luke 4:16–30). Both went on journeys, and Paul in Acts has a "Passion" similar to that of Jesus. On this, see Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 153–54. As Pervo comments, "The major difficulties with accepting Acts as a historical record are, in fact, literary . . . a proclivity toward symmetry, most notably in the various 'parallels' among characters" (*ibid.*, 150).

Christian origin theories like those of Adolf Deissmann, theories that continue to reside in the Christian imagination. Human agency and events of various sorts (social, political, even environmental) account for these origins, not the miraculous. Christianity began, not with small groups of people looking up to heaven asking where Christ had gone and when he would return, as the book of Acts would have it, but instead among literate groups, among ancient religious thinkers who indulged in creative speculations. To speculate through argumentation is different from narrating facts. The former allows for debate—the essence of rhetoric—the latter leads to notions of certainty and in the worst of instances (in the wrong hands) force and violence. As the long and highly disturbing history of anti-Judaism attests, fact-seeking face-value readings cause harm. Educated analyses coupled with our best moral instincts are preferred options to advance human understanding.

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Is Jesus YHWH? Two De-Judaizing Trajectories of Marcion and Justin

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Introduction

The opposing views of Jesus found in Marcion and Justin have long been known. Even in light of recent critical re-thinking of Marcion, wherein the older paradigm of orthodoxy versus heresy is replaced with Walter Bauer's view of diversity among early Christianity (or even "Christianities"), we are left with a picture of Marcion and Justin as diametrically opposed trajectories. While this is true in many ways, there is one commonality they share in their depiction of Jesus: they both understand Jesus in such a way that results in Jesus' followers needing to distance themselves from second-century Jews.¹

In what follows I will begin with Marcion and present his depiction of Jesus as known from the primary sources. But to do so I will first have to correct some misunderstandings about Marcion. Only then can one see Marcion's primary teachings about Jesus, which has to do with distancing Jesus from the God of Israel. Next, I will discuss Justin's Jesus. But to do so I will first need to correct the undue weight given to Justin's Logos christology by most modern scholars. Only then can one see Justin's primary understanding of Jesus, which results in distancing Jesus' followers from the descendants of Israel. In other words, while both Marcion and Justin have diametrically opposed beliefs about Jesus, they come to common ground in that they each attempt to distance Jesus' followers from their contemporary Jewish community.

Marcion's Jesus

Like most second-century "heretics," all that is known about Marcion's life comes from his opponents, the "orthodox" or "proto-orthodox" (categories we will henceforth avoid).² The picture painted by these opponents is not pleasant.

1. The definition of *Iudaioi* in early Christian studies is problematic to be sure but, since both Marcion and Justin use this term to mean descendants of the tribe of Judah whose ancestral homeland is Judaea and yet who do not accept Jesus as the messiah, I will follow their usage in this paper.

2. For further discussion and study of the categories of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" in early Christian history, see Wilhite, *Gospel According to Heretics*.

Fortunately, Marcionism was enough of a threat that a number of his anti-Marcionite writings survive, which allows us to triangulate the sources and separate some fact from fiction, or at least what is plausible to what is clearly libel. For example, Tertullian mocks Marcion's homeland, Pontus, for its barbarism, but then later claims that Marcion was from the specific town of Sinope, where his own father, the bishop who excommunicated him for raping a virgin, is almost certainly data fabricated by his enemies to further discredit him.³

Some of Marcion's specific teachings have now been called into question because a critical reading of the sources shows them to be either mistaken misunderstandings or intentional misrepresentations. In what follows we will treat the three major accusations: (1) the charge of docetism, which can be addressed briefly; (2) the charge of editing the scriptures, which will require more lengthy discussion; and, (3) the charge of theological dualism, which—it is claimed here—is the primary concern of Marcion's opponents during Marcion's own lifetime.

Marcion's Alleged Docetism

One of the major accusations about Marcion, and one pertinent for this seminar on the various "Jesuses" of the second century, has to do with Marcion's alleged docetism. Because I have recently argued this point in detail,⁴ I will briefly summarize this point here. Whereas most of the later heresiologists assume that Marcion's Christ was a phantasm or mere apparition, the second century sources are unanimous in their silence on the issue. Even Tertullian in his early works says nothing about Marcion's docetism. In his later tactics, Tertullian aims to show that Marcion is the archetypal heretic, claiming him to be a model for Valentinus and other "Gnostics" in christological terms (even though Tertullian knows that Valentinus precedes Marcion in chronological terms). This is because Marcion pits Christ against the Demiurge, and all Gnostics (who are said to add convoluted theogonies and cosmogonies) make this same Marcionite mistake.

Marcion, in this depiction, can be assumed to think of flesh as an evil substance created by the Demiurge. Since Marcion's *Euangelion*, or Gospel (see more below), had no birth narratives (Marcion's text begins with Luke 4:31 where Jesus "comes down" to Capernaum), Tertullian can think of Marcion's

3. Moll ("Three Against Tertullian," 169–80) demonstrates the unreliability of this tradition and offers reasons why Epiphanius would invent Sinope. Pseudo-Tertullian, *Against All Heresies* 6.2; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 42.1.3–2.8; Philastrius 45. This information was not known to Tertullian himself, who certainly would have capitalized on it (see where Tertullian makes similar claims against Apelles in *On the Prescription of Heretics* 30.6: he abandoned the "Encratism" of Marcion and joined himself to a certain Philumene, who seduced him and later became a prostitute). The same can certainly be said of Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, if not also Justin.

4. Wilhite "Was Marcion a Docetist?" 1–36.

Jesus as descending from heaven without a “true” (as defined by Tertullian and later “orthodox” writers) incarnation. However, Tertullian caricatures Marcion’s Jesus as such even though he knows that Marcion’s gospel retains descriptions of Jesus’ flesh undergoing suffering and death. Marcion’s Christ even has “bones” after the resurrection (but not “flesh,” which makes Tertullian apoplectic).⁵ Therefore, it is also possible that Marcion’s Christ has only a spiritual body in the resurrection (see 1 Cor 15:44), as Irenaeus claims.⁶ From this depiction of Christ’s unborn body descended from heaven and from his spiritual body in the resurrection, Tertullian deduces that Marcion’s Christ had a phantasmal body all along. I think it is more plausible that Marcion thought of his Christ like many people from around the Mediterranean thought of their gods: deities metamorphosize as needed, and their bodies are as tangible and material as mortals’ bodies for the time they remain in that form.

It is worth mentioning here that this kind of polymorphism is often identified by scholars as “Hellenistic” when found in early Christian sources, in contrast to a Jewish understanding of human bodies.⁷ To be sure, this is a tenuous claim because of the interaction of Greco-Roman and Jewish thought for the previous centuries before Marcion and because many would think of the God of the Hebrew scriptures in metamorphic terms.⁸ Even so, there is at least a tendency in the Hebraic tradition that is aniconic and seeks to emphasize God’s transcendence, or at least God’s otherness. There is no indication that Marcion would think in terms of transcendence in relation to the God known in Jesus, for which Tertullian mocks him mercilessly.⁹ This non-Jewish aspect of his thought can be seen more clearly in the next accusation made against him regarding his treatment of the scriptures.

Marcion’s Alleged Editing of the Canon

Another of the major accusations leveled against Marcion is that he made drastic changes to the Christian canon: he rejected the entire OT and only retained Luke and a selection of Paul’s letters. Then, it is said that even these texts were heavily edited, with all references to the OT removed. Marcion, in Tertullian’s telling, edited “with a sword instead of a stylus.”¹⁰ Of course, no scholar today would put it so sharply. For one thing, there is no set canon for Christians at this

5. *Marc.* 4.43.6; cf. Luke 24:29.

6. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.27.2; Hippolytus, *Refutation of Heretics* 10.15. Even this is a problematic view given the fact that Marcion’s Christ does have “bones” (see previous note) and the fact that Codex Bezae has the same reading of Luke 24:29 so that Jesus says “bones” but not “flesh” (see Carter, “Marcion’s Christology,” 550–82).

7. See the argument that metamorphic theophanies from Graeco-Roman literature help explain passages in Johannine literature made by Kinlaw, *The Christ Is Jesus*.

8. Wagner, *God’s Body*.

9. Esp. throughout *Marc.* 1–2.

10. *Praescr.* 38.9: *machaera, non stilo*.

time. For the “Old Testament,”¹¹ rather than reject it outright, Marcion may not have known of Jewish scriptures at all, as is the case with other Christian groups from around this time.¹² This is especially the case for sources that are, like Marcion of Pontus, from Asia Minor.¹³ As for the claim that Marcion rejected the catholic epistles and Revelation, we can easily recognize many Christian sources from Marcion’s time that do not reference them at all, and so likely do not accept them or even know them.

When it comes to the gospels and Acts, it is now widely accepted that few if any Christians in the first half of the second century knew of a four-fold gospel collection.¹⁴ Rather than rejecting other gospels,¹⁵ Marcion likely only knew (some version of) Luke. Even if one accepts Luke-Acts as a literary whole, the texts did not circulate together, and so Marcion could have a copy of one without the other.¹⁶ To focus on Luke, the traditional claim is that Marcion removed all references to the OT to fit his theological view. However, the numerous instances of OT material that remains in Marcion’s text requires that this claim be reconsidered. There is no consistent editorial rationale that fits any Marcionite theology, which has caused many scholars to conclude that Marcion did not edit Luke; instead, Marcion’s *Euangelion* is prior to canonical Luke.¹⁷ For one

11. Kinzig (“Καὶνὴ διαθήκη,” 519–44) thinks Marcion coined the usage of “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” Based on Van Der Geest (*Le Christ et l’Ancien Testament chez Tertullien*, 30–32), who notes Tertullian’s shift from using *testamentum* to mean “ordinance” until his *Marc.*, at which point he begins using it to mean a collection of books (see esp. *Marc.* 4.1.1, the first instance, as well as instances where he quotes Marcion’s wording: *Marc.* 4.6.1; 5.11.4; *Praescr.* 30.9). It is worth noting, however, that Kinzig’s argument is not without problems: he thinks Tertullian is citing the *Antitheses* in 30.8–10 (which is likely) and that Tertullian can verify the material in debate with the many Marcionites who have spread into North Africa (p. 541). But this is not the case since there is no evidence of Marcionism in North Africa (see Wilhite, “Marcionites in Africa,” 437–52). Nevertheless, I think Kinzig is ultimately correct and that Marcion (or Marcionites) likely did influence this concept, a point I will elaborate below. For earlier Christians, “Old Covenant” did not refer to texts (e.g. 2 Cor 3:12–6).

12. E.g. the Scillitan martyrs, who c. 180 only have “books and letters of Paul” (*Acta Scillitanorum* 12: *libri et epistulae Pauli*). While some have concluded that they were Marcionites (e.g. Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 1), there are too many indications otherwise (see Wilhite, “Marcionites in North Africa,” 440–41).

13. Ignatius of Antioch travelled through Asia Minor on his way to Rome. When in Marcion’s region, Ignatius knows but does not use the Jewish scriptures in his seven letters. Perhaps he placed little value himself on what would become known as “the Old Testament,” or perhaps he simply did not feel inclined to use these texts due to the occasional nature of his letters, or perhaps he knew that these Jewish texts were unfamiliar to gentile Christians in this area. Similarly, Polycarp’s only known letter—also in Asia Minor—makes no use of Jewish scriptures.

14. Justin only knows three, but his student, Tatian, as well as late second-century writers like Irenaeus, Clement, and Tertullian, know the fourfold collection.

15. Cf. Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.2.4.

16. See discussion and bibliography in Rowe, “Literary Unity and Reception History,” 449–57; Gregory, “The Reception of Luke and Acts,” 459–72.

17. Recent advocates of this view include Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, and Klinghardt, “Markion vs. Lukas,” 213–32; Klinghardt, “‘Gesetz’ bei Markion und Lukas,” 102–103;

thing, Marcion's Gospel does not even have the name "Luke" attached to it, and there is no clear reason why Marcion would want to disassociate from a known associate of Paul.¹⁸ Furthermore, of the 500 variants from Luke in Marcion's text, over three-fourths of them can be found in other manuscripts.¹⁹ Therefore, the many times when his enemies accuse him of editing Luke, it is now clear that many (if not all) belong to the textual tradition that pre-dates Marcion. However, while I think it is correct to say that Marcion's *Euangelion* predates Marcion, I am not convinced that this text is proto-Luke or an original text on which the Synoptics and John were based, as has recently been argued by Matthias Klinghardt.²⁰ The widespread reception of Luke by the end of the second century would be difficult to explain if Marcion's Gospel were already known and accepted.²¹

I find the most compelling explanation for Marcion's *Euangelion* to be found in light of its relationship to the Jewish scriptures. Whereas the traditional view claimed that Marcion intentionally excised references to them from his texts (except for the exceptions), there is another explanation that can better account for what is and what is not in his *Euangelion*. In a 1987 study of the Lord's prayer in Luke and in Marcion's Gospel, Christian-Bernard Amphoux claims that Marcion's version of the Lord's prayer (Luke 11:2–4) is a de-Judaizing text in that the vocabulary is changed to better suit gentile petitioners.²² In her 2011 essay entitled, "Marcion and the Synoptic Problem," Judith Lieu follows Amphoux on this point and asserts that his conclusion has wider ramifications for understanding Marcion's *Euangelion*.²³ Acknowledging the growing number of scholars who find the variants in Marcion's text to match other known variants, she does not assert Marcion's text to be Proto-Luke, but rather she finds that it provides "further evidence of the fluidity of the textual tradition."²⁴

Klinghardt, "The Marcionite Gospel and the Synoptic Problem," 1–27; Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic. Vinzent (Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels)* takes this further and argues that Marcion himself wrote the first gospel, on which the others were based. Klinghardt (*Das älteste Evangelium* [cited above]) does not agree that Marcion wrote the gospel, but he does argue for its priority over the Synoptics. For bibliography of early modern proponents of this view, see Roth, "Marion's Gospel and Luke," 513–27; Roth, "Matthean Texts and Tertullian's Accusations," 580–81; Hoffman, *Marcion*, xi–xiii. And for a more in depth view of the history of research, see Roth, *The Texts of Marcion's Gospel*, 7–45.

18. Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.2.3.

19. Klinghardt, *Das älteste Evangelium*, 1.72–113; 2.1209–79.

20. Klinghardt, *Das älteste Evangelium*, 1.72–113; 2.1209–79.

21. Hayes, "M. vs. the 'Plädoyer' of Matthias Klinghardt," 213–32.

22. "La revision du 'Notre Père' de Luc," 105–21 (cited in Lieu—see next note).

23. Lieu, "Marcion and the Synoptic Problem," 738.

24. Lieu, "Marcion and the Synoptic Problem," 738. Later, in a short discussion of the scholarship (in dialogue with Klinghardt and BeDuhn), Lieu further addresses how the revised picture of Marcion's Gospel only further illustrates the chaotic and fluid nature early Christian texts, and then she adds, "On this model, the hypothesis that Marcion received, and probably edited, a predecessor of canonical Luke seems most likely"; so Lieu, "Marcion's Gospel and the New Testament," 332.

Similarly, Jason BeDuhn is convinced by Klinghardt and others that Marcion's Gospel predated Marcion, and yet he does not think there is sufficient evidence to see Luke as an anti-Marcionite redaction. BeDuhn thinks Marcion's Luke is earlier and likely belongs to the synoptic tradition the same way Luke has been understood by modern scholars. Nevertheless, he thinks the theology or "ideology" is the same in both texts, the only difference is that Marcion's Gospel "was suitable for use in Gentile-dominated communities."²⁵ BeDuhn uses the Hellenistic context to explain much in Marcion, such as the specific terms and function of charter documents that become fixed or canonized, as one would find in Greco-Roman cultic associations.²⁶ This de-Judaizing tendency in Marcion's text shows the most promise for explaining the evidence. It is indicative of a larger pattern with Marcion.

On the one hand, Marcion's version of Luke was not edited by Marcion, since no editorial rationale based on Marcion's theology can explain what remains in it. On the other hand, Marcion's version of Luke is likely not proto-Luke, since the canonical form of Luke is widely known by the second half of the second century.²⁷ I propose that Marcion's version is a redaction of Luke, but one made by someone taking Christianity into a non-Jewish context, such as Pontus. The early material in Luke, such as Jesus' genealogy, would make little sense to gentiles who had little to no contact with the synagogue.²⁸ This explanation also helps us understand Marcion's version of Paul's letters.

With Paul's letters the questions are manifold. Irenaeus and virtually all later heresiologists claimed that Marcion edited Paul's letters to suite his theological agenda.²⁹ Marcion's *Apostolikon* consisted of Galatians, 1–2 Corinthians,

25. Klinghardt, BeDuhn, and Lieu, "Marcion's Gospel and the New Testament," 326. See further discussion and bibliography in BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 78–92, esp. 91–92, where he concludes, "... the two gospels [Luke and Marcion's version] could be alternative versions adapted for primarily Jewish and primarily Gentile readers, respectively. In other words, the differences served practical, mission-related purposes rather than ideological, sectarian ones."

26. Klinghardt, BeDuhn, and Lieu. "Marcion's Gospel and the New Testament," 328.

27. E.g. by Justin, Tatian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian.

28. BeDuhn (*The First New Testament*, 6) suggest, "It is quite possible that he came from a community where Christianity had reached a non-Jewish audience and from the beginning caught on in a form only tenuously connected to its Jewish heritage." As far as the specific region of Pontus, there must have been a Jewish community there, but the evidence is slim (see Aquila of Acts 18:2; 1 Pet 1:1; and the convert to Judaism, Aquila the Sinope; discussed in Heikki Räisänen, "Marcion," 102). The wider region of Asia Minor with a lower percentage of its population consisting of Jews (than say Alexandria, Antioch, and even Rome; cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.7.2) birthed forms of Christianity less familiar with and certain of the Jewish scriptures. BeDuhn (*The First New Testament*, 20) correctly stipulates, "We have no way of knowing whether Marcion was raised in a Christian community already disconnected from its Jewish roots, or later joined such a community, or whether he was himself an innovator in that direction." Given the inability to prove any option, in what follows I suggest the first option as a hypothesis that best fits the context and explains the evidence.

29. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.27.2; cf., Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.2.4. It is worth noting that Justin Martyr makes no mention of Marcion's editorial work.

Romans, 1–2 Thessalonians, Laodiceans, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians. Marcion's opponents claimed that Marcion rejected the Pastoral Epistles, but it is equally plausible that these were later and/or Marcion simply did not know them.³⁰ The claim made by some that these are written in response to Marcion is to my mind unconvincing because there is very little that one would expect if the Pastorals were in any way responding to Marcionites.³¹ It can be generally agreed that Paul's letters must have circulated in various forms (see Col 4:16), and so there is no certainty as to the dating of these texts based on Marcion's knowledge of them. The letter to the Laodiceans is admitted by Tertullian to be canonical Ephesians, only with a different title.³² In terms of the order of the *Apostolikon*, this arrangement may appear odd when compared with the later canon, but it turns out that scholars have in fact found evidence of pre-Marcion collections of Paul's letters that match the same order and number of letters that Marcion had.³³ This could indicate that Marcion received a common corpus of Pauline letters; he did not select them out of a pre-existing canon.

As for the claim that Marcion edited his version of these epistles, a large amount of the instances where Marcion is said to have edited Paul's letters are shown upon closer comparison to align with the variants known to circulate in Rome.³⁴ Also, as with his *Euangelion*, there are numerous instances where Marcion did not edit out references in Paul's letters to the OT, which calls into question the notion that he intentionally excised any references to the OT because of a theological agenda.³⁵ As was claimed above to be the case with his *Euangelion*, Marcion's *Apostolikon* is better explained as a de-Judaized version of Paul's letters received by Marcion and his community rather than Marcion's

30. Against Pauline authorship, classically, see Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*, who does allow for "fragments of Paul." For full discussion, see Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, who concludes them to be pseudonymous or "allonymous." The pseudonymity of the Pastorals have gained a large consensus among NT scholars (see Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 396–402). However, the alleged consensus faces a growing number of detractors: see arguments in favor of Pauline authorship in Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*; Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates*; Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*; Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*. See discussion of general trends in Marshall, "Some Recent Commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles," 140–43; Porter, ed., *The Pauline Canon*.

31. The one viable datum is 1 Tim 6:20, which warns against ἀντιθέσεις. However, even if this were late, the ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως would not normally apply to Marcion but to other "gnostic" groups who think of their theology as in "opposition" of the Demiurge.

32. *Marc.* 5.17.1; cf. Eph 1:1 in variant manuscripts and Col 4:16.

33. See Still ("Shadow and Light," 101 n. 59) for the bibliography of this growing consensus.

34. See Quispel, "Marcion and the Text of the New Testament," 349–60, following the study by Clabeaux, "The Lost Edition of the Letters of Paul," and Ulrid Schmid, *Marcion und sein Apostolos*; also, see the numerous uses of Marcionite material in Houghton, *The Latin New Testament*, *passim*.

35. Examples include those discussed in Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.4.8, ref. Gal 4:22–24; and 5.14.10, ref. Rom 11:34 and Isa 40:13.

own attempt to expunge the OT from these letters because of theological objections. The OT material that does remain in the *Apostolikon* simply did not need to be removed, because it still makes sense within Paul's letters, even if the now thoroughly gentile audience does not know that the material comes from the OT itself. In other words, Marcion's so-called "editing" of Paul's letters is better understood as a de-Judaized version handed to him.

As for Marcion's canon overall, many scholars still assume Marcion to have edited some parts of Luke and Paul. But at this point the question arises: how do we know? Perhaps later Marcionites further edited Paul's letters. One could easily imagine the following scenario: Marcion arrives in Rome with the only draft of the only gospel he knows as well as the only version of the only letters of Paul he knows. When questioned about his teachings, he points to his texts. His opponents point to their texts, which are longer and peppered with references to Jewish scriptures. When that party sees the different versions, they accuse Marcion of "circumcising" the original text.³⁶ When Marcion sees the different versions, he accuses them of including "Jewish interpolations."³⁷

In other words, Marcion may have encountered the Jewish scriptures for the first time in Rome and, at his discovery of Christians who embrace them, he insists that the two *corpora* are incompatible. It seems likely that this is the point at which he writes his *Antitheses*, which consists of examples of their incompatibility. Tertullian's citations of this work only allow scholars to reconstruct stark contrasting quotes between OT and NT verses with little else that can be learned about this text or Marcion's teaching therein.³⁸ One other piece of the evidence to consider is how later anti-Marcionite writers find even more deletions from the Marcionite scriptures than Tertullian.³⁹ I posit that later Marcionites, when prompted by polemic to closer inspection and finding more indebtedness to the

36. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.27.2.

37. Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament*, 17.

38. See Löhr, "Markion," 24.152–55; and further discussion in Scherbenske, "Marcion's Antitheses and the Isagogic Genre," 255–79. Although statements like that found in *Marc.* 3.3.3 ("... the same miracles which are the only evidence you lay claim to for belief in your Christ" [*quas solas ad fidem Christo tuo vindicas*]; Evans, 174–75) may imply that Tertullian has firsthand knowledge of Marcion's teachings from his *Antitheses*. The numerous conditional clauses of the paragraph leave the matter ambiguous at best. Moreover, when Tertullian reports what the *Antitheses* consisted of (*Marc.* 1.19), he nowhere explicitly claims that he has a copy of Marcion's work. The one possible instance where Tertullian makes such a claim (*Adv. Marc.* 4.9.7) would indicate that the *Antitheses* is a commentary. Harnack (*Marcion*, 54) uses this passage as the basis of his understanding of Marcion's original document. Harnack's understanding, however, has been questioned (see Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion*, 107–11). See the recent discussion of Lieu, *Marcion*, 272–88.

39. A specific example is likely found in Gal 1:1. According to Tertullian, Paul speaks of himself as an apostle "by Jesus Christ and through God the Father," but Jerome claims that "through God the Father" was deleted by Marcion (*Commentary on Galatians*). Why would Tertullian miss this opportunity to correct Marcion? It is more plausible that Marcion's text retained the phrase, and later Marcionites saw the need to delete for theological reasons. Jerome then found, not Marcion's *Apostolikon*, but a later Marcionite revision of it. Further examples of this sort of discrepancy in the heresiologists are legion and too numerous to list. At the same time, we should admit that the evidence is complex: there are signs that

“Old Testament” in Paul’s letters and Luke’s gospel (even in Marcion’s version of them), cut out more material (a process that apparently went on for generations).

I call this phenomenon “de-Judaizing” rather than anti-Semitism, because it looks to be the product of distance from Jewish Christianity and not the intentional distancing thereof from Judaism *per se*. Marcion, I contend, likely did not know anything that later Christians would call Judaism (however defined). John G. Gager and Heikki Räisänen have both written about the fact that Marcion blames the God of the Jews, and not the Jews themselves, for the theological mistakes in the OT scriptures, and therefore there is no ground left on which to accuse him of anti-Semitism.⁴⁰ His is more *a*-Semitism than *anti*-Semitism. Additionally, it helps my case to note that in the immediate aftermath of the Jewish revolts (CE 66–140) where Jews were finally expelled from Jerusalem and Judea (renamed at this time Palestine), there would be many Christians who further proselytize gentiles, and in so doing it would be expedient to provide an abridged (i.e., a de-Judaized) set of scriptures.⁴¹ Marcion’s scriptures emerge in the historical record at exactly this time.

By absolving Marcion from the charge of editing the scriptures to suite his theological agenda (which cannot be substantiated by the evidence), his view of Jesus comes into sharper relief. The oldest and most consistent concern that his opponents raise against him is Marcion’s theological dualism. That is, he understands Jesus to be an “alien God,” entirely unassociated with the God found in the Jewish scriptures.

Marcion’s Theological Dualism

Marcion’s primary mistake, according to the earliest sources,⁴² like Justin Martyr, is to “deny God the Maker of this universe and confess some other

Marcion’s gospel is not simply a redacted Luke, because it shows signs of agreements with Matthew and Mark; furthermore, there are instances where later writers like Epiphanius know of passages that were added when compared to passages Tertullian claims were missing. In short, a complete explanation of all of the micro-data is still needed in the scholarship; see Roth, *The Text of Marcion’s Gospel*, 437–40.

40. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, 171–72; Räisänen, “Marcion and the Origins of Christian Anti-Judaism,” 121–35. Cf. the scene recorded in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.27.3; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 42.4.4.

41. As was argued by Grant (*Heresy and Criticism*, 33–47). Lieu (*Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 321) agrees, only stipulating that the subject belongs to the wider discussion of “other demiurgical (or ‘gnostic’) movements.”

42. There is debate as to whether Polycarp knew and opposed Marcion. Some scholars believe that he did based on his anti-docetic remarks; e.g. Meinhold, “Polykarpos (1),” 1685–87 (Markschies in the latest edition also suggests Marcion is in view); Aono, *Die Entwicklung des paulinischen Gerichtsgedankens bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, 384–97. However, most studies have found this to be incorrect; e.g. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2.2.918; Barnard, “The Problem of St Polycarp’s Epistle to the Philippians,” 33–35; Schoedel, *Polycarp*, 23–26; Dehandschutter, “The Epistle of Polycarp,” 121; Paulsen, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Brief des Polykarp von Smyrna*, 120–21; Berding, *Polycarp and*, 18–25; Oakes, “Leadership and Suffering in the Letters of Polycarp and Paul to the Philippians,” 358; Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 276; Hartog, *Polycarp’s Epistle to the Philippians and the Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

who is greater, beyond him."⁴³ Eusebius says that Justin wrote a work against Marcion,⁴⁴ but all that survives are fragments of Justin; even so, in said fragments Marcion is merely said to view Christ as another god.⁴⁵ Eusebius records other anti-Marcionite sources from the second century, but in each instance the only accusation is that of theological dualism: Marcion's Christ is other than and opposed to the Creator/Demiurge.⁴⁶

Irenaeus also only knows Marcion's heresy to be that of separating the God of the Law and the Prophets from Christ.⁴⁷ Marcion claims the demiurge is evil, while Jesus' father is a higher god—a charge Irenaeus will repeat at least fourteen other times throughout his work, twice citing Justin as witness.⁴⁸ Third-century sources continue to make this accusation of theological dualism against Marcion as the primary error.⁴⁹ Two authors comment on Marcion at great length and so cannot be treated in full here. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that both Tertullian and Epiphanius speak of Marcion's primary error as that of theological dualism, and they only add other charges, like docetism and editing the scriptures, when exegeting Marcion's texts wherein these additional charges

43. *1 Apol.* 26.5 (trans. D. Minns and P. Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 151). See Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 323–66.

44. *Hist. eccl.* 4.11.8; however, he then only cites *1 Apol.* 26 (in 4.11.9).

45. *Hist. eccl.* 4.18.9 (NPNF 2–1:197): "And the discourses of the man were thought so worthy of study even by the ancients, that Irenaeus quotes his words: for instance, in the fourth book of his work *Against Heresies*, where he writes as follows: "And Justin well says in his work against Marcion, that he would not have believed the Lord himself if he had preached another God besides the Creator"; and again in the fifth book of the same work he says: "And Justin well said that before the coming of the Lord Satan never dared to blaspheme God, because he did not yet know his condemnation"; reference. *Adv. haer.* 4.6.2; 5.26.2.

46. Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.13.3, on Rhodo [ca.180–190]) claims that Marcion teaches two first principles. *Hist. eccl.* 5.14.2, on an anonymous anti-Montanist writer (cf. Jerome, *De vir. ill.* 37, who claims it was Rhodo) who simply claimed that Marcionites did not "confess Christ himself in truth." Minns and Parvis (*Justin*, 151) interpret the statement to be an opposition of Christ to the Creator, based on Eusebius' other information about Marcion.

47. *Adv. haer.* 1.27.2.

48. *Adv. haer.* 2.1.2; 2.1.4; 2.3.1; 2.28.6; 2.30.9; 2.31.1; 3.11.2; 3.11.7; 3.12.12; 3.25.3; 4.2.2; 4.4.2 (citing Justin); 4.4.4; 5.26.2 (citing Justin). He also accuses Marcion of editing the scriptures and denying the bodily resurrection (both were discussed above). For two instances in which Irenaeus may possibly refer to Marcion's docetism, see Wilhite, "Was Marcion a Docetist?" 11–14, where I argue that this is a generalization of all "gnostics" and not a claim about Marcion specifically.

49. Pseudo-Hippolytus, *Haer.* 7.29 repeats the claim that Marcion believed in two first-principles (δύο ἀρχαί); only later he claims there were three first-principles in Marcion's thought, goodness, evil, and matter (10.19). Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 3.3.12; 3.3.18; 3.3.22) repeats the common knowledge about Marcion's theological dualism and his denial of a materially resurrected body, and also (3.17.102) reports that Marcion denied Christ's birth (which Clement likens unto other docetic teachers). Origen (*Princ.* 2.7.1; 2.9.5; *Cels.* 5.54; 6.74) likewise faults Marcion for denying the oneness of God and rejecting the OT God. Cyprian (*Ep.* 73.5.2) claims Marcion does not worship the same Creator God as other Christians.

serve as rhetorical devices, inventions of what Marcion had in mind when editing/reading any given passage.⁵⁰

The other accusations need not be denied entirely here for my argument to stand. My primary observation at this point is that the opposition of Christ as an “alien God” to the Creator/Demiurge of the OT is the primary concern of Marcion’s opponents.⁵¹ Marcion cannot reconcile the Jesus seen in his scriptures with the God who says (in Isa 45:7) “I create evil.”⁵² I suggest that this polemic arises for Marcion and the Marcionites only in the encounter (probably in Rome) with Christian groups who do use the Jewish scriptures and who identify Jesus with this God. There is to my mind no credible evidence that Marcion concerns himself with (never mind *believing* in) the God of the OT.⁵³ Instead, Marcion has accepted Jesus as the God of the de-Judaized *Euangelion* and *Apostolikon*, and when other Christians insist on linking Jesus with the God of the Jewish scriptures, Marcion finds that the latter—if he exists and is the Demiurge of this cosmos—to be antithetical to the former. This leads him and/or his followers to additional de-Judaizing tactics whenever polemic emerges. Otherwise, it appears that Marcionite churches carried on with routine gentile Christian practices so that they looked like any other gentile church.⁵⁴

In sum, Marcion’s Jesus is an alien God who descended without warning to this world in order to rescue tormented souls from this imperfect world. He was crucified and killed, but he rose in a spiritual body. Any who believe in him can be saved. All this he concludes without any reference to or need for the Jewish scriptures. When he encounters those who do insist on linking Jesus with the God of Israel, Marcion rejects the link to what appears to him as a judgmental deity who is antithetical to the Gospel of Christ.⁵⁵

50. See full discussion in Wilhite, “Was Marcion a Docetist,” 18–30; Wilhite, “Marcionites in Africa,” 437–52.

51. Even Tertullian, who is eager to accuse Marcion of numerous errors, declares this to be most substantial one and the basis for the other heretical teachings (e.g. *Marc.* 1.2; 2.27).

52. Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.2.2.

53. To my mind an unproven assumption of many scholars is the notion that Marcion actually believed in the God of Israel and its history; e.g. Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion*; Moll, “Justin and the Pontic Wolf,” 145–51; Hayes, *Justin Against Marcion*, who states, “The relationship of Marcion to the canon is not a topic Justin discusses, and neither will I do so. Justin is my primary concern, and so, I assume, the portrayal of Marcion as told by Justin and Irenaeus, the other witnesses in close proximity to him, is relatively accurate, although always in need of careful critical analysis” (p. xii). I find this concession to an uncritical reading of Marcion’s opponents—despite acknowledging the “need” for a critical reading—to be an untenable premise.

54. Which is why Cyril of Jerusalem has to warn Christians that Marcionites look like “orthodox” Christians (*Catech.* 4.4).

55. On recent attempts to retrieve Marcionism for contemporary Christianity, see Schwienhorst-Schonberger, “Marcion on the Bible,” 21–26. For further theological ramifications of Marcion’s christology, see Wilhite, *The Gospel According to Heretics*, 21–39.

One teacher who opposed Marcion was Justin Martyr. Even though these two did not agree in their evaluation of the Creator/Demiurge, Justin understands Jesus' identification with the Creator in such a way that he too embarks on a systemic de-Judaizing theology.

Justin Martyr

In looking to Justin's⁵⁶ Jesus, there are two common tenets to which the standard reference works point.⁵⁷ The first is Justin's Logos Christology, found especially in his *Apology* (ca. 153).⁵⁸ Secondly, it is well known that Justin Martyr believed Jesus to be the one prophesied throughout the Jewish scriptures so that any who do not recognize him there must belong to a false faith, stated especially starkly in his *Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew* (ca.165).⁵⁹ The former, it is widely assumed, represents Justin's primary christology, which places him in the Platonic (and/or Stoic) tradition. This in turn leads Justin to follow Plato's allegorizing of Homer and Philo's allegorizing of Moses so that Justin likewise allegorizes the Jewish scriptures in such a way that they are Christo-centric; that is, he reads them so that they contain foreshadowing and figurative images of Jesus throughout.⁶⁰ In so doing, Justin famously (or infamously) sets up an inevitable supersessionist posture⁶¹ for Christians in his community: the church replaces Israel; the new covenant replaces the old; the Gospel replaces the Law; the Eucharist replaces the sacrifice; baptism replaces circumcision; and so on and so forth.⁶²

While I do not outright dispute any of the particular items in the prior paragraph, I do wish to supplement and nuance this portrait of Justin by returning to his understanding of Jesus. Let me first identify one oddity about this portrait of Justin's theology that is problematic. Justin in no way follows Marcion in rejecting the Jewish scriptures/OT nor claims they were replaced with the NT/Christian scriptures.⁶³ He insists, "... there never will be, nor has there ever

56. Although now dated, for helpful introductions to Justin, see Barnard, *Justin Martyr*; Osborn, *Justin Martyr*. For more recent bibliography, see Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*. In what follows, I have consulted Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis*.

57. Beyond the reference works, see the following studies: Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr*; and, *Justin Martyr*; Osborn, *Justin Martyr*.

58. One example will suffice: Quasten (*Patrology*, 1.209) avers, "The doctrine of the Logos is the most important doctrine for Justin. . . ."

59. As for the historicity and context of this work, see discussion in Mach, "Justin Martyr's *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo* and the Development of Christian Anti-Judaism," 35; Lieu, *Image and Reality*, esp. 104–109.

60. Shotwell, *The Biblical Exegesis of Justin Martyr*.

61. Rokéah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews*.

62. Examples of his supersessionist/replacement motif is found throughout the *Dial.*, but in most instances the explicit claim is that Christians have in fact *not* replaced the old, but rightly interpreted it in its spiritual sense (cf. *Dial.* 14.2; 29.2). Instances of explicit replacement include a new Law (*Dial.* 11.2; 38.1) and a new circumcision (*Dial.* 16.2, but cf. 15.7, with ref. to Jer 4:4; and cf. the rationale stated in *Dial.* 23.4–5).

63. See Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 23–25.

been from eternity, any other God except him who created and formed this universe. . . .⁶⁴ This could have been spoken to Marcion!⁶⁵ But unlike Marcion, Justin identifies Jesus with the God of Israel. This identification in contrast to Marcion is an important point of comparison for the current study, since most scholars now agree that Justin wrote this treatise in Rome approximately one decade after Marcion left that city.⁶⁶ In light of this, this strict replacement theology is not consistent in his thinking, because even though some practices have been replaced (sabbath, sacrifices, etc.), the God who commanded those practices is in no way replaced or even supplemented (as is often assumed—more on this will be said below). In fact, the replacement maneuver is probably not the best, or at least not the primary explanation Justin would give, even though there is a de-Judaizing *telos* that results from his logic (and often an anti-Semitic stance displayed in his rhetoric).⁶⁷ This tension between what appears to be on the one hand a linking of Jesus' followers with Israel and on the other hand a distancing of his community from the synagogue⁶⁸ can be understood in light of one often overlooked aspect of his christology.

Jesus, for Justin, is understood in terms of Logos Christology, and yet I contend that we should not think of this as Justin's only or primary way of describing Jesus. The philosophical use of Logos to explain Christ may in fact be a diplomatic tactic employed when speaking to gentiles (which is not to say that the notion is not fully embraced by Justin). Alternatively, there is another motif employed most explicitly in Justin's *Dialogue* and, while not entirely incompatible with Logos Christology, it is one that has received little attention from scholars (probably because it is eclipsed by discussions of his Logos Christology, which

64. *Dial.* 11.1. On the need for the spiritual interpretation of the Law, Justin contends, "If we do not accept these conclusions, then we shall fall into absurd ideas, as the nonsense either that our God is not the same God who existed in the days of Enoch and all others . . . or that God does not wish each succeeding generation of humanity always to perform the same acts of righteousness" (*Dial.* 23.1). Trypho hears Justin as teaching "another God besides the Creator of the world" (*Dial.* 50.1; repeated at *Dial.* 55.1).

65. den Dulk (*Between Jews and Heretics*, 52–68) argues that the entire text is written against "demiurgical forms of Christianity" (i.e. those who believe in a lower deity, the Demiurge, who created the world, like the Marcionites and the "gnostics"). Likewise, Hayes (*Justin Against Marcion*, 89–162) argues that Marcion in particular is the main target of attack.

66. Halton, "Introduction," xi–xii.

67. Justin repeatedly generalizes and stereotypes all Jews: e.g. "you" murdered Christ (*Dial.* 16.4); "you" sacrificed children to idols (*Dial.* 19.6); "you" are stupid, blind, and faithless (*Dial.* 27.4); "your" hearts are hardened (*Dial.* 18.2; 44.2; 46.5). Alternatively, it should also be acknowledged that at times (when pressed) Justin does differentiate between the Jews who remain righteous and do not persecute Christians (*Dial.* 26.1; cf. 16.4 and 17.1), and it is possible for them to be saved (*Dial.* 44.4). He also knows there is a spectrum of Jews and Jewish Christians (e.g. *Dial.* 47.1–4; cf. 48.4).

68. See further discussion of this tension in Boyarin, "Justin Martyr Invents Judaism," 427–61; Boyarin, *Border Lines*; Livesey, "Theological Identity Making," 51–79. It should be noted that my argument above about Marcion's encounter with Christians in Rome who continue using the Jewish scriptures would require some alterations to the arguments being made Boyarin and Livesey.

is assumed to be his primary category for understanding Jesus).⁶⁹ In what follows I will show that Justin's christology is one that first identifies Jesus as the YHWH of Israel.⁷⁰

Whereas most contemporary Christians (both scholars and practitioners) assume that the God found in Israel's scriptures is primarily the Father, with Jesus being present in the OT in a figurative way, Justin Martyr made the opposite assumption. For Justin, the primary *persona* encountered in the OT God is the pre-incarnate Christ. In other words, Jesus is the "Lord" found in Justin's Septuagint, with the Greek title *κύριος* given as a known substitute for the divine name, the Tetragrammaton.⁷¹ In short, Jesus is the YHWH of Israel incarnate, something I am here calling YHWH Christology (as distinct from but not necessarily contrary to Logos Christology). Therefore, when Justin and his community read their OT, they understand the "Lord" of Israel to be the pre-incarnate Christ.

To illustrate, I will carefully exegete Justin's argument with Trypho in the following paragraphs, but first it is worth acknowledging the discrepancy in methodology between the treatment of Marcion above and the treatment of Justin in what follows. The former's writings survive only in fragmentary form, and so most of the work in the first half of this paper has had to be devoted to the way in which scholars interpret the primary sources written in opposition to Marcion and then address the need to configure the best scholarly paradigm that can account for the surviving evidence. However, with Justin two (or three⁷²) of his significant works survive,⁷³ and so our most fruitful avenue to understanding Justin is to analyze his argument in full. Since Justin's Logos Christology is well known and well researched,⁷⁴ I will first set it aside and focus on the Jesus described in his *Dialogue* and then return for a brief comparison of my findings with the standard reading of his *Apology* for further insights.

69. Following Martín, *El Espíritu Santo en los orígenes del Cristianismo*, 303–304, Bucer, "The Angelic Spirit in Early Christianity," 190–208 (esp. 192) contends that the notion of "Justin's all-encompassing theory of the seminal Logos" is too simplistic, because he in fact utilizes several "conceptual schemes" or "systems." I suspect that Justin himself is to blame for setting up the assumption that the philosophical category of Logos was primary for him, since even in his *Dial.* he begins by telling how he first discovered true philosophy, viz. Christ's teachings (*Dial.* 2–8). On the identity of this old man as Christ, see Hofer, "The Old Man as Christ in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*," 1–21.

70. Cf. recent scholarship on "Early High Christology," which finds where some NT authors identify Jesus "with"—but not "as"—the God of Israel. Important studies include Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*; Hays, *Reading Backwards*.

71. Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton*, 136–38.

72. For the debate over the number and order of Justin's apologies, see Thorsteinsson, "The Literary Genre and Purpose of Justin's Second Apology," 91–114; Hayes, *Justin Against Marcion*, xvci–xcii n. 4.

73. Justin refers to a book he wrote "against all heresies" (*1 Apol.* 1.26); Eusebius mentions several other works (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.18.3–5).

74. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 89–94 is still a helpful study for this focus.

Jesus in Justin's Dialogue

To see how Justin understands Jesus, let us follow his logic in the debate with Trypho.⁷⁵ After first telling of his own discovery of Christ's truth as a philosopher (*Dial.* 1–8), Justin debates Trypho about the spiritual as opposed to the carnal interpretation of the Law (*Dial.* 9–30). Then, Justin proves to Trypho that the scriptures prophesied that the messiah would first have to suffer, only later to appear in glory (*Dial.* 31–36). Trypho accepts Justin's interpretations about the messiah in principle but asks for proof that said prophecies were about Jesus in particular.⁷⁶ Justin, somewhat surprisingly, refuses to do so, or rather, he refuses to do so immediately.

Justin insists that he must first explain how the scriptures do more than speak of Jesus prophetically. They speak of Jesus in various ways, especially by speaking of him as God, that is as "the Lord (*Κύριος* [i.e. YHWH as translated in the LXX])."⁷⁷ He states, "I will supply the proofs you wish, but for the present permit me to quote the following prophecies to show that the Holy Spirit by parable called Christ *God*, and *Lord of hosts* and (*Lord*) of *Jacob*."⁷⁸ In order to prove his case, Justin first turns to Psalm 24 (23 LXX), which speaks of ascending the hill of the "Lord (*Κύριος*)" (24:3/23:3). According to Justin, this "Lord (*Κύριος*) of hosts" (24:10/23:10) is not Solomon—as Trypho and his party claimed—but Christ.⁷⁹ Justin then offers similar readings of the "Lord" found in Psalms 47 (46 LXX) and 99 (98 LXX).

Trypho responds with astonishment at the apparent blasphemy, of which he says he had heard rumor. For Christians allegedly claim the "crucified man was with Moses and Aaron, and spoke with them in the pillar of the cloud; that he became man, was crucified, and ascended into heaven. . . ."⁸⁰ In other words,

75. For discussion and bibliography about Justin's audience, see den Dulk, *Between Jews and Heretics*, 38–51, who concludes that the texts are aimed toward Justin's own community intended to educate his people against heretical (not Jewish) views. I do not think that my analysis is affected by the historicity of Trypho or the intended audience of the dialogue. My argument pertains to Justin's description of Jesus; then, further study will be required for the implication of his view of Jesus for his immediate context.

76. *Dial.* 36.1, "But prove to us that Jesus Christ is the one about whom these prophecies were spoken" (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 56; Bobichon, *Justin*, 272: εἰ οὗτος δέ ἐστι περὶ οὗ ταῦτα προεφητεύθη, ἀπόδειξον).

77. For Justin's commitment to the LXX, see *Dial.* 68.7.

78. *Dial.* 36.2 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 56, original italics, indicating citation of scripture; Bobichon, *Justin*, 272: ἐλεύσομαι πρὸς ἃς βούλει ταύτας ἀποδείξεις ἐν τῷ ἀρμόζοντι τόπῳ ἔφη. τὰ νῦν δὲ συγχωρήσεις μοι πρῶτον ἐπιμνησθῆναι ὧν περ βούλομαι προφητειῶν, εἰς ἐπίδειξιν ὅτι καὶ Θεὸς καὶ κύριος τῶν δυνάμενων ὁ Κριστός καὶ Ἰακώβ καλεῖται ἐν παραβολῇ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγίου πνεύματος).

79. *Dial.* 36.5.

80. *Dial.* 38.1 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 58; Bobichon, *Justin*, 276: τὸν σταυρωθέντα τοῦτον ἀξιῶν πείθειν ἡμᾶς γεγενῆσθαι μετὰ Μωϋέως καὶ Ααρῶν καὶ λελαληκέναι αὐτοῖς ἐν στύλῳ νεφέλης, εἶτα ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον σταυρωθῆναι, καὶ ἀναβεβηκέναι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν).

Trypho knows Christians often hold to a YHWH Christology. Justin admits to believing in those “teachings, which to you seem paradoxical.”⁸¹

Much later, after returning to his promise to demonstrate that the Hebrew prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled by Jesus, Justin again takes up our theme. Trypho again asks how Christians can defend the claim “that this Christ existed as God before all ages, and then that he consented to be born and become a man.”⁸² Once again Justin acknowledges the teaching as “paradoxical (παράδοξος).”⁸³ He next distances his view from some who accept that Jesus is the messiah but deny his divine status.⁸⁴ That view, Justin insists, is a minority one, because it does not align with the scriptures.⁸⁵ Here it is important to note how Justin admits to various Christian views about this issue. Nevertheless, Justin’s position, he thinks, represents a significant majority of Christians.

In response, Trypho does not hear Justin say that Christians worship Jesus alone (and thereby adhere to some sort of modalistic monarchianism). He instead believes that Christians must think in terms of “another God besides the Creator of the world.”⁸⁶ This, of course, would be an ironic mirror image of Marcion’s belief. If Trypho (or Justin’s audience) knew of Marcion, this would be an opportunity to explain that Marcionites make this mistake, but Justin’s community does not. Justin, however, does not make any explicit reference to Marcion at this point. Nor does he address Trypho’s claim. Instead, Justin defers his answer once more until after reviewing more scriptures,⁸⁷ but then Trypho again asks about how he can justify belief in “another God, besides the Creator of all things. . . .”⁸⁸ Justin this time answers the objection by pointing to scenes from Genesis 18 and 19 where the “Lord” appeared to Abraham.⁸⁹ This turns out to be the Angel of the Lord who is also called the “Lord.” At this point in the debate, one of Trypho’s Jewish companions is convinced and concedes, “We have to admit that the one of the two angels who went down to Sodom, and whom Moses in the scripture named *Lord* is one, other than God himself, who appeared to Abraham.”⁹⁰

Following this concession from Trypho’s party, Justin next offers additional evidence. Justin turns to Ps 110:1 (109:1 LXX) where “The Lord said to my Lord:

81. *Dial.* 38.2 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 58; Bobichon, *Justin*, 278: ὅπως τὰ παράδοξα ἡμῶν ταῦτα νοήσητε).

82. *Dial.* 48.1 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 73; Bobichon, *Justin*, 302: προὔπαρχειν Θεὸν ὄντα πρὸ αἰώνων τούτου τὸν Χριστὸν εἶτα καὶ γεννηθῆναι ἀνθρώπου γενόμενον ὑπομείναι).

83. *Dial.* 48.2 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 73; Bobichon, *Justin*, 304).

84. *Dial.* 48.4.

85. *Dial.* 49.

86. *Dial.* 50.1 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 76; Bobichon, *Justin*, 310: ἄλλος Θεὸς παρὰ τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν ὄλων).

87. *Dial.* 50.2.

88. *Dial.* 55.1 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 82; Bobichon, *Justin*, 320: ἕτερος Θεὸς παρὰ τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν ὄλων).

89. *Dial.* 56.

90. *Dial.* 56.13 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 86; Bobichon, *Justin*, 331: Ὁν οὖν ὁ Λόγος διὰ Μωσέως τῶν δύο ἀγγέλων κατελθόντων εἰς Σόδομα καὶ κύριον ἕνα

Sit at my right hand. . . .”⁹¹ In the Septuagint, *κύριος* is used twice in this verse (*ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου*). Therefore, for Justin and his fellow Greek-speaking Christians (as well as Jewish readers of the LXX), both the Father and the Messiah can be named “Lord.”

Justin reassures Trypho that Christians do not worship two divine beings, and he explains the nuances of his position.⁹² Trypho concedes to Justin’s arguments, and then Justin returns to the prior request and shows that the scriptures did speak of the messiah in such a way that they clearly apply to Jesus.⁹³ This is followed by a treatment of the shared eschatological hope in Jerusalem’s restoration,⁹⁴ followed by further discussions of scriptures, which Justin understands to be speaking about Jesus.⁹⁵ The discussion next turns to the shame of the crucifixion, which Justin shows was also foretold by the prophets,⁹⁶ and Justin then shifts to show how the prophets even foretold of the gentiles being brought into relationship with God through Jesus.⁹⁷ The concluding sections address the final *miscellanea* before the two parties depart on good terms.⁹⁸

Justin’s Jesus in Context

At this point we can assess Justin’s YHWH Christology found in this text in light of the larger context of his argument. To be sure, whenever a scripture passage speaks of “the Lord” and any other immanent expression of God, Justin and his community identified the Father with the former and the Son with the latter. Examples would include “the Glory of the Lord . . . the Son, or Wisdom, or Angel, or God, or Lord, or Word.”⁹⁹ In these instances, Justin could insert a Logos Christology (explaining that the Logos is the Angel, Spirit, Wisdom, etc.), a view that would not be entirely unique at this time given the rabbinic concerns with the “two powers in heaven” heresy.¹⁰⁰ In other words, the Logos is one prominent name for the second Power in Heaven, but for Justin both the heavenly Powers are most properly called YHWH/*Κύριος*, making Logos Christology a subset of YHWH Christology. This can be seen by the fact that in passages that simply speak of the *Κύριος* (that is, with no other immanent expression or qualifications), Justin simply assumes that this was the pre-incarnate Christ. This is an especially important claim for Justin to make in dialogue

ὠνόμασε, παρὰ τοῦτον καὶ τὸν Θεὸν αὐτὸν τὸν ὀφθέντα τῷ Ἀβραάμ λέγειν ἀνάξκη). I have altered the translation (from “the Word through Moses”) to fit the context and better illustrate the point being made in this paragraph; see the secondary literature to support this reading in Bobichon, *Justin*, 736–38.

91. *Dial.* 56.14 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 86).

92. *Dial.* 50–62.

93. *Dial.* 63–79.

94. *Dial.* 80–81.

95. *Dial.* 82–88.

96. *Dial.* 89–107.

97. *Dial.* 108–35.

98. *Dial.* 136–42.

99. *Dial.* 61.1 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 94; Bobichon, *Justin*, 346: δόξα κυρίου . . . υἱός, ποτὲ δὲ σοφία, ποτὲ δὲ ἄξιξιλος, ποτὲ δὲ Θεός, ποτὲ δὲ κύριος καὶ λόγος).

100. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*.

with Jews: “For we Christians, who have gained knowledge of the true worship of God from the Law and from the Word which went forth from Jerusalem by way of the apostles of Jesus, have run for protection to the God of Jacob and the God of Israel.”¹⁰¹ In other words, for Justin and his community, Jesus is the Lord of Israel.

Another important facet of Justin’s view of Jesus in the *Dialogue* is how it can already be found in his earlier work. Justin’s YHWH Christology is not simply an anomaly found in his polemic against “Trypho the Jew.” In his *1 Apology*, written earlier around 153, Justin provides his audience with a noteworthy distinction between his community and the Jewish community when it comes to reading the Law and the Prophets.¹⁰² One difference is how each group interprets the divine person encountered by the ancients: the Jews believe this is the “unnamable God (τὸν ἀνώνυμαστον Θεόν),”¹⁰³ that is, “the Father of all (τὸν πατέρα τῶν ὄλων),”¹⁰⁴ but the Christians believe that it is “our Christ (ὁ ἡμέτερος Χριστός)”¹⁰⁵ who appeared in various forms such as fire and a burning bush. Justin’s explanation is worth quoting in full:

The Jews, therefore, having always supposed that the Father of all spoke to Moses when really it was the Son of God, who is called angel and apostle, who spoke to him, are rightly refuted, both through the prophetic Spirit and through Christ himself, as knowing neither the Father nor the Son. For those who say the Son is the Father are refuted as not having known the Father nor knowing that the Father of all has a Son who also, being the first-born Logos of God, is also God. And previously he appeared through the form of fire and an incorporeal image to Moses and to the other prophets, but now, in the time of your empire, he has become a human being through a virgin, as we said before, according to the will of the Father for the salvation of those who believe in him.¹⁰⁶

In sum, when Justin reads the “Old Testament” passages about the Lord who appeared to Moses and the other prophets, he and his Christian community

101. *Dial.* 110.2 [FC 3:164]. *Dial.* 110.2 (Falls, Halton, and Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr*, 164; Bobichon, *Justin*, 478: οἵτινες, ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ ἐπελθόντος ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ διὰ τῶν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀποστόλων τὴν θεοσεβείαν ἐπιγνόντες, ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν Ἰακώβ καὶ Θεὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατεξύγομεν).

102. Here we have used the text and translation from Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*; cf. Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis*.

103. *1 Apol.* 63.1 (Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 244–45).

104. *1 Apol.* 63.14 (Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 248–49).

105. *1 Apol.* 62.3 (Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 244–45).

106. *1 Apol.* 63.14–16 (Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 248–49): Ἰουδαῖοι οὖν, ἡγήσάμενοι αἰεὶ τὸν πατέρα τῶν ὄλων λελαληκέναι τῷ Μωυσεῖ, τοῦ λαλήσαντος αὐτῷ ὄντος υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἄγγελος καὶ ἀπόστολος κέκληται, δικαίως ἐλέγχονται καὶ διὰ τοῦ προφητικοῦ πνεύματος καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὡς οὔτε τὸν πατέρα οὔτε τὸν υἱὸν ἔγνωσαν. οἱ γὰρ τὸν υἱὸν πατέρα φάσκοντες εἶναι ἐλέγχονται, μὴτε τὸν πατέρα ἐπιστάμενοι, μὴθ’ ὅτι ἐστὶν υἱὸς τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὄλων γινώσκοντες, ὃς, καὶ λόγος πρωτότοκος ὢν τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ Θεὸς ὑπάρκει. καὶ πρότερον διὰ τῆς τοῦ πυρὸς μορφῆς καὶ εἰκόνος ἀσωμάτου τῷ Μωυσεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἑτέροις προφήταις ἐφάνη, νῦν δ’ ἐν χρόνοις τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρχῆς, ὡς προεῖπομεν, διὰ παρθένου ἀνθρώπου γενόμενος κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς βουλήν ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τῶν πιστευόντων αὐτῷ).

interprets them as describing Jesus pre-incarnate. This passage demonstrates three important points about Justin's view of Jesus. First, his YHWH Christology is not a late addition to this thinking but present from his earliest known writing. Second, Justin explicitly situates Logos Christology as a sub-set of YHWH Christology; only when understanding Jesus as the God of Israel, the primary *persona* encountered in the Jewish scriptures, can one then understand his relationship to the Father God as one who is the Word spoken forth to act immanently in the cosmos. Third, this passage, as it is ostensibly used to explain to a non-Christian audience of persecutors what Christians believe, serves as an indication that one important tactic for Justin is to distance his community from his Jewish contemporaries. We need to say more about this third point.

Another important observation to make from Justin's context has to do with the recent history of Jerusalem and Judaea, which by Justin's time was renamed Palestine. What did Justin's YHWH Christology imply about the relationship between Justin's community and his Jewish contemporaries? With Marcion, we noted the context of his time period in that, after the Bar Kokhba revolt and in regions far removed from Palestine, there was likely an impetus to de-Judaize the Christian message for a gentile audience with no connection to ancient Israel.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, Justin places his *Dialogue* in the immediate aftermath of Bar Kokhba: in the first chapter, Trypho introduces himself as a "Hebrew" refugee from this war. Therefore, the significance of this text for Justin's community and its relationship with their Jewish contemporaries is something that must be considered.

Justin's "Old Testament" and "the Jews"

In order to assess Justin's own project of de-Judaizing Christianity, I will offer preliminary answers here as hypotheses that need further study, but then I will offer a proposal that explains Justin's maneuver in light of his use of the OT. First, because Justin can claim to understand the God of Israel correctly, more correctly than Trypho's party, Justin can then claim to understand his Lord's intentions about the works of the Law. These were always meant to be understood spiritually, not carnally. Secondly, Justin deduces that a carnal interpretation and application of the Law indicates a "hardness of heart" on the part of the interpreter (both in the times before Christ and by Justin's Jewish contemporaries). This anti-Semitic generalization about all Jews prompts Justin to a posture of de-Judaizing, that is, a justification of further distancing his community from the Jews. To Justin, the members of the synagogue represent the heirs to the ancient carnal Israelites, while the gentile church consists of the heirs to the true Israel, the elect. In other words, Justin's view of Jesus not only

107. See Hayes (*Justin Against Marcion*, 16–22, 83–87) for the importance of Bar Kokhba for Justin's text. Also, see Dulk, *Between Jews and Heretics*, 81–83 (= his section entitled, "The shadow of Bar Kochba") for further discussion and n. 55 for the secondary literature on the matter).

severs ties between the growing gentile church and their contemporary Jews (as does Marcion), Justin's YHWH Christology even severs (in Justin's mind) Jews from Israel.

Why did Justin insist that Jews in his day were not the true heir to Israel? One answer may be the precedent set by Paul, who spoke of gentiles being grafted into Israel, which still includes Jews (or at least "believing" Jews).¹⁰⁸ While this explanation is promising, there is a need for caution here: Justin, unlike Paul, who grafts gentiles into Israel, prunes Jews out of Israel, and furthermore, Justin never cites Paul explicitly, and so any attempt to locate his thought as "Pauline" requires a certain amount of conjecture.¹⁰⁹ Instead of looking to Paul on this matter, whom Justin does not cite, one can look to the specific texts he does cite: the OT.

Before looking to these citations, it is worth noting that Justin's specific conclusions about the implications of YHWH Christology may be a unique development, but his YHWH Christology itself is not unique to Justin. Because of his debate with Trypho (fictive or otherwise) and the Jewish community, Justin had to articulate this pattern of reading the OT explicitly, whereas this same pattern can be found in other Christian writers implicitly. In short, Justin would not understand his position as innovative.

Justin's position represents a school of thought that can be found in a variety of sources, such as the *Epistle of Barnabas*,¹¹⁰ second- and third-century Christian manuscripts,¹¹¹ and even material images from Dura-Europos.¹¹² The background and prior development of this tradition is a matter for further study

108. Rom 11:17–24; cf. Eph 2:11–13, 19; 3:6.

109. For bibliography and discussion, see Foster, "Justin and Paul," 108–25.

110. While Justin made his YHWH Christology explicit in order to convince Trypho's party, Ps.-Barnabas used the same YHWH-Christology when reading the Jewish scriptures, only his is an implicit assumption. Key passages include *Barn.* 5.3–5; 7.1–7; 12.10–11; 14.3–4; 21.3. Also, the trajectory from Paul's statements in 1 Cor 9:9–10 to *Barnabas* to Justin is an interesting pattern, especially since 1 Cor 9:6 mentions Barnabas, and since 1 Cor 9:11 differentiates the material from the spiritual.

111. In particular I have in mind the way that the name Jesus (and other references to him) became one of the *nomina sacra*. While there is some debate as to whether Hellenistic Jews invented this practice, the general consensus among scholars is that the Christian practice reflected the same kind of reverence for divine names that can be found in Second Temple Judaism for the Tetragrammaton; see Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries AD*, 124; Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt*, 28–29. Gamble (*Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 75) surveys the diverse views in the secondary literature, but still concludes, "... there is broad agreement that it has something to do with Jewish reverence for the Tetragram, the name of God, but it has proved difficult to say exactly what." One exception to this consensus is Tuckett ("Nomina Sacra: Yes and No?" 431–58), who claims the practice originated simply as a helpful tool for reading texts. For a rebuttal, see Heath, "Nomina Sacra and Sacra Memoria Before the Monastic Age," 516–49. I would also point to the indiscriminate use of Κϋριος in Christian letters from Oxyrhynchus; see Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, esp. 60–61.

112. The "Good Shepherd" image from this house church, which has numerous parallels in other material remains from Early Christianity, draws from OT imagery about the Lord God to depict Jesus; see Peppard, *The World's Oldest Church*, 87, and 102–4.

elsewhere.¹¹³ The important point to note presently is that Justin's YHWH-Christology does not in and of itself prompt him to denounce Jews with the vehemence that he does, since YHWH Christology can be found in other early Christian sources without the same anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Furthermore, Justin's explicit reasoning for denouncing all (unbelieving)¹¹⁴ Jews as stubborn and rebellious is not because they did not hold to a YHWH Christology, but he instead says they did not rightly interpret the prophecies about Jesus as messiah.¹¹⁵ This point, it must be admitted, is a curiosity in Justin's thought, because elsewhere he claims that one can only interpret the prophecies rightly via divine intervention.¹¹⁶ Why then does he simultaneously fault the Jews for their stubbornness in not seeing the prophets as pointing to Jesus? I contend that the answer is two-fold.¹¹⁷

First, Justin's claim that divine revelation is required to understand these scriptures is spoken in reference to Trypho's "teachers," which points to the entire tradition of rabbis going back to the time before Christ. In other words, in the past, divine assistance was needed to understand these prophecies because they had not yet been fulfilled. The revelation of which Justin now speaks stems from Christ himself. After Jesus fulfills all of the scriptures, then their meaning should be apparent to all who look back through the lens of Christ's revelatory work.

Second, Justin's confidence in the clarity of the prophecies in his time stems from the specific version of the "Old Testament" he cites. Oskar Skarsaune has studied Justin's citations of scriptures to show that he in fact is not using the Septuagint, at least not consistently.¹¹⁸ Instead, Justin often cites from a *testimonia* collection of some sort that has selected the various prophecies and arranged them in such a way as to make the case that Jesus is their fulfillment. These likely included brief scribal remarks and clarifications. Therefore, in these "scriptures" Jesus is the obvious referent, and so—to Justin—these Jewish interlocutors' lack of understanding must come from their willful sinfulness and rejection of God. It is this "Jewish" state that Justin rebukes, and in so doing he sets his community of Christians on a de-Judaizing trajectory—much like Marcion did in response to his limited scriptures, only for different reasons and from a different editorial agenda.

113. In another project, Adam Winn (University of Mary-Hardin Baylor) and I are pursuing this line of research to see what precedents for YHWH Christology can be found in the literature from the Second Temple period, including the use of the NT. Examples include the use of Isa 45:23 in Phil 2:6–11; the use of Exod 33:19, 22; 34:6; Job 9:8; 38:16; Sir 24:4–5 in Mark 6:45–52; and also the use of the phrase *χριστὸς κύριος* in *Ps.Sol.* 17:32; Luke 2:11; 2 *Clem.* 9.5.

114. See *Dial.* 25.6–26.1; 39.2.

115. E.g. *Dial.* 12; 31; 43; 82–87; 97; 104–7; 111; 113; 138.

116. *Dial.* 38; 52; 76; 90; 92; 112; 119; 123; 130.

117. I am indebted to Robert J. Miller for the following two points which came to light in his paper, "Prophecy, Christology, and Anti-Judaism in Justin Martyr," presented at the Christianity Seminar of the Westar Institute on March 23, 2019.

118. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy*, see especially the conclusions on 43–45.

In other words, even though Marcion and Justin have opposite views of Christ in relation to the God of Israel, they come to the same conclusion about the need to distance their respective Christian communities from contemporary Jews. In both cases, they do so based on a set of scriptures some prior Christian had edited for evangelistic purposes. Marcion's *Euangelion* and *Apostolikon* were de-Judaized forms of Luke and Paul's letters made to offer a concise presentation of the Christian message to a gentile audience unfamiliar with Israel's scriptures. Justin's *testimonia* of prophecies from scriptures was arranged in order to show those familiar with the Jewish scriptures how clearly Jesus fulfilled their expectations. Even so, in both cases, these later Christian teachers concluded from these adapted versions of the scriptures that Christianity needed to take a de-Judaized and de-Judaizing trajectory.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Marcion's Jesus and Justin's Jesus are in a sense mirror images. This image in Marcion is of a God who descends into the world as a stranger to save those trapped in the cosmos. The same image in Justin is of the God who created this world and then descends into it to redeem its inhabitants. Both Marcion and Justin respond to groups who use the Jewish scriptures in such a way as to prompt their own communities to further de-Judaize Jesus. Marcion did so because his *Euangelion* and *Apostolikon* had already been de-Judaized for him, and so he could not reconcile Jesus with the God of Israel, because the two appeared to be antithetical. Justin did so because his community embraced Israel's scriptures, especially as arranged and edited to make the case that Jesus fulfilled them. But even then his community did not keep the Law when it came to sabbath, circumcision, and dietary restrictions, and so he claimed to do so in a spiritual way so that Jesus is the God of both ancient Israel and the spiritual heirs to Israel.

At this point it is worth adding a comment about the contemporary context of the present author and audience, since the long and ugly tradition of anti-Semitism in Christianity has not ever gone away. In the modern era, a growing number of Christian voices have arisen to lament the anti-Semitism and triumphalist supersessionism that crept into Christianity early in its history. For example, Black liberation theologians from Howard Thurman to James Cone to J. Kameron Carter have identified the severing of Jesus from Israel as one of the original and ongoing sins that has fostered racism within the church.¹¹⁹ In light of Marcion and Justin's de-Judaizing tactics, we can assert that such a trajectory was not inherent to Christianity itself. Instead, their common de-Judaizing trajectory, which emerged despite opposing views about Jesus himself, resulted

119. See Colon-Berezin and Heltzel, "Jesus/Christ the Hybrid," esp. 158–60.

from their reading of the scriptures, only they were not reading the scriptures *per se*, but a pre-edited version of them that produced unforeseen and unfortunate consequences.

Both Marcion and Justin de-Judaized Jesus and their respective communities, only they did so in differing directions. Marcion believed Jesus and his followers had no connection to ancient Israel and so eschewed any attempt to identify Jesus with the God of Israel. Justin believed that Jesus and his true followers were connected to ancient Israel and so eschewed any contact with contemporary Jews who—he believed—had forfeited their connection to ancient Israel. The two tactics differ based on how each answered the question, “Is Jesus YHWH?”

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Prophecy, Christology, and Anti-Judaism in Justin Martyr¹

Robert J. Miller

Justin Martyr was a second-century apologist, and all of his extant writing is tightly focused on the apologetic task. His christological speculations are limited and entirely at the service of his apologetics. Justin's central concern is the interpretation of Jewish scripture, all of which he regards as prophecy. His overarching apologetic strategy is to establish the unique truth of Christianity by demonstrating that scriptural prophecy is fulfilled by Jesus (and to a lesser extent by the church). At the heart of this strategy is his argument that Jews who fail to embrace Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy thereby willfully forfeit their status as the people of God. For Justin, therefore, christology, the fulfillment of prophecy, and anti-Judaism are organically intertwined. There is no way to disentangle his christology from his anti-Judaism.

The work of Justin is foundational for understanding the traditional Christian perspective on OT prophecy. Demonstrating and drawing out the implications of the fulfillment of the scriptures is at the heart of his theological program. He holds up that fulfillment as a compelling proof for the unique truth of Christianity. He devises a rationale for how the Jewish scriptures could be understood as predicting Jesus, and he provides hundreds of concrete examples. At a time when Christians' relationship to those scriptures was up for grabs and when some were challenging the assumption that Christianity should have anything to do with them, Justin's work amounted to a forceful argument that the Jewish scriptures were not only essential to Christianity, but that Christians were the *only* ones with a rightful claim to those sacred writings. Justin links the argument from prophecy directly to Christian supersessionism, arguing that, because Christians had superseded Jews, the Jewish scriptures now belonged to Christians and not to Jews. Justin thus takes Christian tradition a giant step forward in deploying biblical prophecy as a theological weapon against Jews.

Justin's thinking on prophecy was immensely influential, for it is the earliest comprehensive articulation of what became the standard rationalization of Christianity's appropriation of Hebrew prophecy. Three of Justin's writings, all

1. This article is excerpted and adapted from *Helping Jesus Fulfill Prophecy* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016). © Robert J. Miller. Used with permission.

mid second-century, are extant: the *First Apology*, the *Second Apology*, and the *Dialogue with Trypho*. This paper is concerned with the *Dialogue*.

I begin by situating Justin's argument from prophecy within its context of an intra-Christian controversy. Turning to the *Dialogue with Trypho*, I will look at representative samples of Justin's christological exegesis, examine his argument that the prophets foretold the virgin birth, explain his spurious accusation that Jews had tampered with certain passages from the scriptures, and look into the sources of Justin's curious scriptural "quotations." The paper concludes with a summary of Justin's contribution to Christian anti-Judaism.

The *Dialogue with Trypho* and the Argument with Marcion

The *Dialogue with Trypho* is not really a dialogue. Justin does ninety-nine percent of the talking. Trypho is cast as a learned Jew, but he functions as Justin's straight man. Once in a while he voices objections to Justin's interpretations, but usually only gets to say something like "I see; please continue." While there might have been a historical Trypho with whom Justin had once debated, "Trypho," the character in the dialogue, is clearly a literary fiction. No self-respecting Jew would listen in tacit approval to Justin's long-winded and gratuitous "arguments" or tolerate his insulting and disgusting abuse of Jews. The dialogue seems to represent Justin's fantasy of what he would say if he had a docile and captive Jewish audience.²

The dialogue is very long (almost as long as all four gospels combined), repetitious, poorly organized, and padded with numerous extended scriptural "quotations."³ Reading this tome will tax the attention of even the nerdiest scholar. One gets the impression that Justin wanted to include everything he could throw at the issue, so as to bury his fictive opponent in an avalanche of alleged evidence. The scope and depth of the argument shows Justin's huge commitment of intellectual labor to the interpretation of the Jewish scriptures. In several places the details of the argument indicate that Justin is wrestling with actual Jewish objections to some Christian interpretations. Although the Trypho character is Justin's own creation, it seems likely that Justin has argued with real Jews—perhaps among them there was one named Trypho.

The *Dialogue* ends in a failure of sorts: Trypho and his companions are not persuaded. Hypothetically, Justin could have used the ending of his story as the basis for admitting that his own interpretation of scripture is dependent on Christian faith rather than its basis, thereby implicitly acknowledging that the

2. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?* 267.

3. Many of Justin's "quotations" neither match the LXX nor are derived from the Hebrew text. Some verses appear to be Christian "targumizations" (see below). And yes, I am aware of the weird irony of putting scare quotes around the word "quotation."

argument from prophecy is not objectively compelling. After all, if an intelligent and fair-minded Jew like Trypho is not persuaded, even after Justin's tidal wave of an argument has washed over him, then it must take more than unaided human reason to see its truth. But Justin does not take this path. Instead he resorts to insult and character assassination, accusing Trypho (and through him, all Jews) of willful blindness, hardness of heart, etc. In doing so Justin took his cue from the NT.

Let us reflect for a moment on what might have been. Trypho remains a Jew as the *Dialogue* ends, but the parting is cordial. Trypho's final quoted words to Justin are, "do not hesitate to remember us as friends when you depart." As they leave Trypho wishes Justin "a safe voyage and deliverance from every disaster." The last words in the dialogue—Justin's, naturally—express his hope that Trypho and his friends "may someday come to believe entirely as we do that Jesus is the Christ of God."⁴

So, after all the argument, the Jews are still Jewish, but they are not enemies. Justin could have used his *Dialogue* to help his readers accept a situation in which Jews and Christians share a body of scriptures that they both venerate but interpret in very different ways. Justin could even insist that Christians understand the scriptures better than Jews do, not because Jews are completely wrong, but because Christians can see deeper (and thus "truer") truths in them than Jews can. Such a scenario would let Christians maintain the superiority of their faith but without denying the legitimacy of the "partial" truth by which Jews live. Such a scenario is not a modern pipe dream anachronistically retrojected to the second century. It is the stance Justin himself takes toward Greek philosophy (see 2 *Apology* 13), whose teachings about God had far less in common with Christian beliefs than did Judaism's.

But that was not to be. Justin's argument throughout the *Dialogue* adds up an uncompromising assertion that Jews are utterly in error and that, as a result, the Jewish scriptures belong to Christians and to them alone. That claim takes us to the heart of Justin's project, and to understand it we need to situate it in its own historical and theological context. Justin confronts a problem in the mid-second century that did not exist in the late first century when the gospels were written. What had shifted between then and Justin's time was the Christian relationship to the Jewish scriptures. The evangelists took it for granted that those writings belonged to both Jews and Christians and that arguing over their meaning was fair game—that was how all Jews of the time worked out their thinking about religion. By the early second century the Christian movement was largely if not overwhelmingly gentile, and its differentiation from Judaism

4. I paraphrase that farewell exchange thus:
 Trypho: "I hope you have a safe trip."
 Justin: "I hope you don't end up in hell."

was evident in most regions.⁵ A creative Christian thinker, Marcion, son of the bishop of Pontus, studied the writings of Paul and pondered his contrasts between themes such as law and faith, old and new covenant, Adam and Jesus.⁶ Marcion thought through those contrasts in his own second-century context and drew a conclusion that would have shocked Paul. Marcion's fundamental insight was that Christianity and Judaism were incompatible. His teaching was elegant, logical, and radical: the god of Israel was a different deity than the God who had sent Jesus. The god of Israel was a god of law and wrathful justice; the Father of Jesus was a God of grace and mercy—does that sound familiar?—a God unknown to humanity until Jesus revealed him. Therefore, Marcion argued, the Jewish scriptures were not sacred to Christians, who should repudiate them along with the god they proclaim.

Mainstream Christian thinkers wanted nothing to do with Marcion's theory, for two main reasons. First, it would make Christianity something brand new, which was not a good thing in a world that was suspicious of innovation and that valued antiquity, tradition, and stability. Second, it would mean that the God who created the world was inferior and his creation deeply flawed. There was more to all this, of course, but what is important to our agenda is that Christians who rejected Marcion's answer were now compelled to confront the sticky problem of how to relate to the Jewish scriptures. Those writings were obviously about Israel and Israel's God, and they made it clear that the God of Israel's overarching design for its history was "the establishment of a Jewish theocracy in Jerusalem."⁷ God would dwell in his temple, and his people would be ruled by his laws and interact with him primarily through the temple cult. The controversy stirred up by Marcion forced a perplexing, and now unavoidable, question: if Christians were not part of Judaism—they did not observe Torah and had nothing to do with the synagogue—then what should they do with the scriptures of Israel?⁸ Non-Marcionite Christians needed to find a way to read those scriptures as a story about the God they knew, a story that led up to Jesus (and thus to themselves). In short, Christians had to co-opt a story that did not belong to them, to transform the Jewish scriptures into Christian ones.⁹

Of course Justin did not put it that way. He gives no clue that he thought that he was transforming the scriptures at all. He presents his task as discovering their true meaning, which had been there all along, but was hidden until the coming of Christ allowed it to be seen for what it was.

Justin is clear that the true meanings of the prophecies were hidden. He admits that no one can truly understand prophecy without "a special grace" from

5. See the cautions urged by Knust that in Justin's time one could "not readily identify who was a 'Christian' let alone who was a 'Jew'" (Knust, "Roasting the Lamb," 101, and the literature cited in n. 7).

6. As in, e.g., Galatians 3, 2 Cor 3:6–11, and Rom 5:12–21, respectively.

7. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?* 268.

8. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?* 267.

9. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?* 268.

God;¹⁰ Jews therefore are “incapable of understanding the truths spoken by God.”¹¹ Justin also asserts that God hid the truth of the scriptures from them in punishment for their sins.¹² The prophecies were so opaque that even demons did not understand them.¹³ He explains that the prophets “often expressed themselves in parables and types [prefigurements], thus hiding the truth they held.”¹⁴ That the prophecies were actually about Jesus was a complete secret.

If through the prophets it was obscurely declared that the Christ would suffer and afterwards become Lord of all, it was impossible for anyone to understand this until Christ himself convinced his apostles that such statements were explicitly proclaimed in the scriptures.¹⁵

Justin’s emphasis on the hidden truth of the scriptures pays off for his program because it guarantees that only Christians can possibly understand them. But this benefit comes at a steep price: Justin’s position entails that the prophecies do not really predict anything,¹⁶ since their meaning can be discovered only in retrospect. Justin seems unaware that this theory of prophecy neutralizes what he elsewhere calls the “work of God.” “It is the work of God to announce something before it happens and then to demonstrate that it happened as it was predicted.”¹⁷ Justin’s understanding of prophecy also effectively undermines the program implicit in the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the gospels, especially Matthew and John. Those two gospels insist that the “Jews” (especially their leaders) should have believed in Jesus after witnessing him fulfill prophecy after prophecy. But that raises the question: if the Jews of Jesus’ day could not know what the prophecies were predicting, how were they supposed to realize that Jesus was fulfilling them?

Justin’s understanding of prophecy confirms a thesis that can be deduced from an analysis of how the fulfillment of prophecy is presented in the gospels: that Jesus’ fulfillment of particular prophecies can be perceived only in hindsight and that, therefore, the belief that Jesus fulfills prophecy is a result, not the cause, of Christian faith.

Justin’s Theory of the Divine *Logos*

Justin’s distinctive doctrine of the Word (*logos*) of God was his most productive contribution to the intellectual project of claiming the Jewish scriptures for Christianity. Drawing on the rich and respectable philosophical and theological

10. *Dialogue* 92 and 119. All quotations from Justin are from the translation by Thomas Falls.

11. *Dialogue* 38; see also 123.

12. *Dialogue* 55 and 38.

13. *1 Apology* 54.

14. *Dialogue* 90; see also 52, 112, 130.

15. *Dialogue* 76.

16. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?* 269.

17. *1 Apology* 12.

associations of the term *logos*,¹⁸ Justin developed this pregnant notion into a sophisticated foundation for his Christianizing of the scriptures.¹⁹ Equating the Word with the Son of God and the “spirit of prophecy,” the divine force that inspired all the prophetic utterances in the scriptures enabled him to see them not only as *about* Jesus, but as having been *spoken* by him in his pre-existence as the Son of God. Justin goes to great (and wearying) lengths in arguing that it was God the Son, not God the Father, who appeared and spoke to the patriarchs and Moses.

In a number of these arguments Justin quotes the gospels as the authority for his interpretations. In fact, Justin plays the gospel card all through his dialogue with Trypho, who lets this tactic pass without objection. That Trypho keeps silence on this matter is one more indication that this dialogue is fictitious and aimed at a Christian audience. But it is more than that: it also helps us see that Justin’s central concern is to work out how Christians should relate to the Jewish scriptures. Justin, the literary character in the *Dialogue*, is trying to convert Jews, but Justin the author is trying to convince Christians to take the Jewish scriptures seriously, to show them how to do that, and to stake the claim to the scriptures as Christian property.

Justin’s *logos* theory cashes out into the belief that the Jewish scriptures were not only *about* Jesus but *from* him. That belief had three remarkable and far-reaching effects: (1) it lets Justin (and other Christian exegetes) discover clues to Jesus all over the scriptures, in places where they are far from apparent; (2) it transforms the scriptures into words addressed to Christians; and, (3) it justifies the Christian claim to own the scriptures—for since Jews do not understand them, they have no moral right to interpret them.

[These prophecies] are contained in your scriptures, or rather not yours, but ours. For we believe and obey them, whereas you, although you read them, do not grasp their spirit.²⁰

The Argument from Prophecy in the *Dialogue with Trypho*

Within the scope of this paper I will focus on a few topics in this sprawling work. I start by sampling Justin’s exegesis, briefly surveying eight of his interpretations that display the various ways he discerns Christian realities encoded in Jewish texts. Then I examine in closer detail the one prophecy Justin emphasizes most: the alleged foretelling of Jesus’ virgin birth in Isa 7:14. Justin tries to overcome Jewish objections to the belief that this prophecy predicts a virgin birth, but I argue that he is wrong on every count. Then I investigate Justin’s

18. For a concise summary, see Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 85–87.

19. See Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?* 264–66.

20. *Dialogue* 29.

accusation that Jews have sabotaged scriptural passages that testify to Jesus. The charge is false; in fact, it was Christians who rewrote scriptures and created passages.

Justin's Christological Exegesis

Like all Christian (and Jewish) thinkers, Justin regards all the scriptures as prophecy. Since Moses and David were considered prophets, the writings attributed to them (the Pentateuch and the Psalms) were considered prophetic. Because Justin is convinced that *all* the scriptures testify to Jesus, the slimmest association in the wording, imagery, or symbolism of a passage with something in the Jesus story is enough for Justin to claim that the passage is about Jesus. There are many, many examples in the *Dialogue*. Here are five of them related to Jesus' death and resurrection that tumble out in rapid succession and without supporting arguments in chapter 97.

- Moses' posture during the battle with the Amelekites (Exod 17:8–13) prefigures Jesus' death. "It was no accident that Moses remained until evening in the form of a cross, when his hands were held up by Aaron and Hur, for the Lord also remained on the cross almost until evening."
- A straightforward prayer in thanksgiving for a peaceful night's sleep (Ps 3:5–6) becomes a prophecy of the resurrection. "Then he arose from the dead, as David foretold when he said, 'With my voice I cried to the Lord, and He heard me from his holy hill. I laid down and slept; I awakened, for the Lord sustained me.'"
- "Isaiah foretold the manner of his [Jesus'] death in these words: 'I have spread out my hand to an unbelieving and contradictory people'" (Isa 65:2). For Justin, "spreading out my hands" is a prophecy of the crucifixion.
- Isaiah also predicted Jesus' resurrection in these two short and cryptic oracles: "His burial has been taken out of the midst" and "I will give the rich for his death." The first is from Isa 57:2, the second from Isa 53:9. How either of these curious LXX renderings—they both differ entirely in meaning from their Hebrew originals—points to anyone's resurrection, much less Jesus', Justin does not say. Trypho neither objects nor inquires.

A few more examples of Justin's exegesis are sufficient to showcase the different kinds of connections he can make between the OT and his Christian interests.

Isaiah 33:16. This is about the rewards of the righteous. "He will live on the heights; his refuge will be the fortresses of rock. His bread will be supplied, his water assured." Justin sees a deeper, Christian meaning here. To him it is "quite evident" that this verse is a prophecy about the sacrament of the Eucharist.²¹

21. *Dialogue* 70.

All Justin needs is the word “bread.” That Justin imagines that Trypho would understand this, much less agree to it, shows that the audience in Justin’s mind is Christian.

Isaiah 33:19. Justin wrings another specious interpretation from Isaiah a few verses later. He quotes Isa 33:19 thus: “A shameless people, and there is no understanding in him who hears.” Justin turns this against the Jews, as if Isaiah were referring to his own people: “The prophecy also states that . . . they who think they know the very letter of the scriptures, and who listen to the prophecies, have no understanding of them.”²² The wording of the verse Justin quotes here has only a faint resemblance to what we know of Isaiah’s actual text, in which the “shameless people” are foreign conquerors, not Israelites, and what the Israelites fail to comprehend is not the prophet’s words, but the foreign language of the invaders.²³

Genesis 49:11a. Justin extracts two phrases from Jacob’s blessing over his son Judah and reads them as christological prophecies. “Tying his colt to the vine, and the donkey’s colt to the tendrils of the vine”

was a prophecy both of the deeds he would perform at his first coming and of the Gentiles’ belief in him. For the Gentiles, like a foal, had never been harnessed or felt a yoke upon their necks, until our Christ arrived and sent his disciples to convert them.²⁴

If Trypho were allowed to speak, he might point out that the “prophecy” does not mention a yoke and that Justin’s interpretation does not deal with the vine or the tying, the actual images in the text.

Prophecy and the Virgin Birth

One topic to which Justin repeatedly returns is the prediction of Jesus’ virgin birth. He emphasizes that the virgin birth is “an irrefutable proof to all men.”²⁵ Justin provides a number of passages in which he sees predictions of the virgin birth (see below), but the one text over which he debates with Trypho is the only one applied by the NT to the pre-natal Jesus:

Look, a *parthenos* will conceive
and will give birth to a son,
and you will name him Immanuel. (Isa 7:14, quoted in Matt 1:23)

Justin often brings up the virgin birth, and Trypho several times asks him to prove that it was foretold in prophecy. When Justin eventually gets around to

22. *Dialogue* 70.

23. Here is Isa 33:19 in the NRSV (based on the Hebrew): “No longer will you see the insolent people, the people of an obscure speech you cannot comprehend, stammering in a language you cannot understand.”

24. *Dialogue* 53.

25. *Dialogue* 84.

that, he starts by quoting all of Isa 7:10–17,²⁶ apparently because he considers that context to be crucial to his christological understanding of 7:14. After that long quotation, Justin lets Trypho articulate two objections.²⁷ The first is that Isaiah's oracle is actually about a young woman, not a virgin. In Trypho's view Justin's text of 7:14 is mistaken in its wording and meaning. Trypho's position is supported by the Hebrew text and the non-Septuagint Greek translations, which have the Hebrew and Greek words that unambiguously mean "young woman" (*'almah* and *neanis* respectively). Justin, on the other hand, quotes this verse from the LXX, which has *parthenos*, a Greek word that can, but usually does not by itself, mean "virgin."²⁸ On the basis of the objective textual evidence, Trypho's "young woman" undoubtedly reflects the original wording of Isaiah's text.

Trypho's second objection is that "the prophecy as a whole refers to Hezekiah and it can be shown that the events described in the prophecy were fulfilled in him."²⁹ Justin does not let Trypho explain this interpretation—which Justin calls a "lie"—but we can infer that Trypho understands 7:14 within both its immediate narrative context in Isa 7:10–13 (which Justin quotes) and its historical context, which is described in Isa 7:1–9 (which Justin does not quote). If those interlocking contexts are taken into account, the birth of a son announced by Isaiah in 7:14 is intended to be a sign to King Ahaz (Isa 7:10–13) of God's providence in the face of an imminent attack on Jerusalem (Isa 7:1–9). That is why Trypho, representing Jewish interpreters in general, sees Isaiah's sign fulfilled in the birth of Hezekiah, Ahaz's son and heir to his throne. Trypho's interpretation coincides with the consensus of modern critical scholars.

Justin responds to Trypho with two counter-arguments to the first objection and one to the second. None of Justin's arguments holds up to scrutiny. His first reply is not really an argument, but an adamant assertion, laced with insult, of the accuracy of the LXX's translation.

Here too you dare to distort the translation of this passage made by your elders at the court of Ptolemy, the king of Egypt,³⁰ asserting that the real meaning of the scripture is not as they translated it, but should read, "Behold, a young woman will conceive."³¹

Justin has encountered this kind of Jewish objection before, and he has no patience for it. "Whenever there arises in the scriptures an evident contradiction

26. *Dialogue* 66.

27. *Dialogue* 67.

28. Miller, *Born Divine*, 189–90.

29. *Dialogue* 67.

30. It was Jewish lore that the LXX was produced under the patronage of the Hellenistic rulers of Egypt. The story can be found in the second-century BCE *Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates*. See Law, *When God Spoke Greek*, 35–39.

31. *Dialogue* 84.

of their [i.e. Trypho's teachers'] silly and conceited doctrine, they boldly affirm that it was not so written in the original text."³²

Justin's second argument for why Isa 7:14 predicts the virgin birth is that Isaiah points to the birth as a sign from God, which it would not be if the boy were conceived naturally, because there is nothing unusual in that.³³ What Justin overlooks (intentionally?) is that Isaiah specifically intends the sign to be a sign *for Ahaz* (see Isa 7:10–13).³⁴ The birth of Jesus (virginal or otherwise) eight centuries later could not be a sign for Ahaz.³⁵ We can surmise that Trypho, like modern critical scholars, understands that the sign is expressed in the timing of the boy's birth, not in the manner of his conception, a point made clear in 7:16 (before the boy is old enough to know right from wrong, the two kings on their way to dethrone Ahaz will be as nothing). The birth must therefore be imminent if it is to be a sign to Ahaz in his present crisis.

Justin's attempt to refute Trypho's point that the prophecy in Isaiah 7 was fulfilled in Hezekiah moves the argument to a different, though deceptively similar, oracle from Isaiah 8. When Trypho challenges Justin, "Please show us how that passage [Isa 7:14] refers to your Christ, and not to Hezekiah, as we Jews believe,"³⁶ Justin's response focuses not on 7:14 but on 8:4, which he argues cannot apply to Hezekiah, but only to Jesus:

Before the child knows how to call father or mother, he will take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria in the presence of the king of Assyria. (Isa 8:4 LXX)

Justin here quotes the LXX, which could say something very different than the Hebrew text, depending on how it is taken. The LXX verse contains a grammatical ambiguity that Justin construes in a peculiar way. The ambiguity is contained in the third person singular verb "will take": who is its subject?³⁷ The common sense reading of the verse is that an indefinite "one" will take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria, not, as Justin reads it, that the child will do so, though "the child" is the closest antecedent to the verb and thus grammatically the more likely candidate for the subject of the sentence. If we accept the "one will take" option, then the LXX has a meaning quite close to the Hebrew text, which says, "Before the child knows how to call 'my father' and 'my mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria will be carried

32. *Dialogue* 68.

33. *Dialogue* 84.

34. In "Yahweh himself will give you a sign" (7:14), the "you" is plural in both Hebrew and Greek. But this need mean no more than that 7:14 is addressed to the king and his royal entourage. Isaiah also uses the plural "you" in 7:13 when he addresses Ahaz as "house of David."

35. By definition, a virgin birth could not be a sign for *anyone* (except the mother), because it would not be apparent that the child had no human father. See Miller, *Born Divine*, 166–67, 263–67.

36. *Dialogue* 77.

away by the king of Assyria." Isaiah's words in Hebrew predict that Assyria will defeat Damascus and Samaria before the promised boy is old enough to say his first words, whereas in Justin's interpretation of the LXX the child himself will overpower those two countries under the nose of the Assyrian king. In Hebrew, Isaiah's announcement is the kind of short-term prediction about military affairs that are the stock-in-trade of the prophets. According to Justin, on the other hand, Isaiah foretells a bizarre miracle in which a baby defeats two nations in the jurisdiction of a foreign king.

In arguing that Isa 8:4 (in Justin's version) was not fulfilled by Hezekiah, Justin insists that the prophecy could apply to him only if it did not contain its first clause about the baby's age. But since the prophecy says "Before the child knows how to call father or mother, he shall take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria," Justin asserts that "you cannot prove that this ever happened to any of you Jews, but we Christians can show that it did happen to our Christ."³⁸ How Justin makes the case for that last claim is fascinating and, to modern readers, utterly unconvincing. He maintains that this prophecy was fulfilled when the magi visited the baby Jesus. That argument requires some freewheeling exegesis, since the gospel story mentions neither Damascus nor Samaria nor the king of Assyria. It does, however, feature King Herod, whom, Justin says, "scripture calls king of Assyria because of his wicked ungodliness." The Bible nowhere does any such thing, which is probably why Justin provides no clue as to his source for this startling and gratuitous assertion. The best he can do is to remind us that "the Holy Spirit often speaks in parables and similitudes,"³⁹ which might be Justin's cryptic admission that the scriptures do not *actually* call Herod the king of Assyria.

What about the baby conquering Damascus and despoiling Samaria? When did the baby Jesus do that? Justin's explanation needs to be read in his own words.

"He will take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria" meant that the power of the wicked demon that dwelt in Damascus should be crushed by Christ at his birth. This is shown to have taken place. For the Magi, held in servitude (as spoils) for the commission of every wicked deed through the power of that demon, by coming and worshipping Christ, openly revolted against the power that had held them as spoils, which power the scripture indicated by parable to be located in Damascus. And in the parables that sinful and wicked power is fittingly called Samaria.⁴⁰

37. Greek, like many inflected languages, does not require a separate pronoun to indicate the subject of a verb. Here the verb *lēpsetai* can mean "he/she/one/it will take."

38. *Dialogue* 77.

39. *Dialogue* 77.

40. *Dialogue* 78, quoting Isa 8:4 LXX.

It is stating the obvious to say that this interpretation will not convince Jews, nor even Christians, except those willing to indulge the most fanciful correlations. Nothing in the Gospel of Matthew hints that the magi are in servitude to a demon. If anything, Matthew portrays them as righteous gentiles. Furthermore, Justin's scenario bends logic: if the magi were enslaved to a demon, why would that demon permit them to seek and worship Jesus? Justin seems to realize how thin his hermeneutical ice is at this point, judging from his lame assertion that "Damascus" and "Samaria" are symbolic names for evil powers. Justin allows Trypho to register his skepticism by letting him say, "The words of God are indeed holy, but your interpretations are artificial."⁴¹ (Justin could not have known that, nineteen centuries later, fair-minded readers would agree with his straw man Trypho.)

There is another irony in this exchange, one that raises troubling questions about Justin's intellectual integrity. Recall how Justin stressed the importance of literary context. Indeed, he admitted that if the prophecy in Isa 8:4 were considered out of context, Trypho's interpretation of it would be plausible. It is only when the oracle is taken as a whole, and not quoted selectively, that Justin can find a reason for applying it to Jesus—we leave aside here the problem of Justin's reliance on a dubious reading from the LXX. The irony is that, if the oracle in 8:4 is taken in its appropriate literary context, Justin's interpretation of it becomes untenable, for the child spoken of in 8:4 is identified in 8:3 as the son of Isaiah himself, a boy already born and burdened with the weird and unwieldy name "Maher-shalal-hash-baz." By severing 8:4 from 8:3, Justin is indulging in the selective quoting at which Matthew and company were adept, so it should not surprise us. But Justin's double standard is glaring; a few pages earlier he had lectured Trypho on the need to pay proper attention to context.

Is this what it seems to be: blatant hypocrisy? The only mitigating factor one might plausibly plead on Justin's behalf is that he genuinely believed that, as a Christian, he was entitled to his double standard. If so, his hypocrisy is sincere. He seemed to think that quoting out of context is wrong when Jews do it, but not when Christians do. Justin apparently saw nothing *intrinsically* improper about ignoring context. When context helps Christians to see the "right" interpretation, context should be considered; when it does not, it should be ignored. It seems that the ends justify the means.

Conclusions about Isa 7:14

Justin's robust attempt to prove that Isaiah predicted the virgin birth must be judged a failure. Justin's arguments are structured as refutations of Trypho's two objections to the Christian interpretation of Isaiah 7: first, that Isa 7:14 is about a young woman, not specifically a virgin; and second, that Isaiah's proph-

41. *Dialogue* 79.

ecy about the birth of a promised child refers to Hezekiah, son and heir of King Ahaz, to whom the oracle was delivered.

Justin counters the first objection in two ways: by stridently asserting that Trypho is wrong about the wording of 7:14, and by arguing that the birth announced in the prophecy must be a miraculous birth in order to be a sign. Justin's first assertion is nothing more than his insistence that his text of Isaiah (the LXX) is right and Trypho's text (either the Hebrew text or a literal Greek translation of it) is wrong. Despite Justin's adamant insistence on the accuracy of the LXX,⁴² anyone who could read Hebrew would disagree and would be right to do so. Justin's argument that the birth in 7:14 had to be miraculous in order to qualify as a sign ignores the verse's immediate context (Isa 7:10–13), which shows that the predicted birth will be a sign from God because of *when* the boy will be born, not because of the manner of his conception. That Justin ignores that context *deliberately* is clear from the fact that he quotes 7:10–13 in full, but does not allow it to influence his interpretation of 7:14. Justin tries to refute Trypho's second objection—that the promised sign was fulfilled by the birth of Prince Hezekiah—with a complicated interpretation of Isa 8:4, joined with a convoluted and capricious interpretation of the story of the magi in Matthew. Justin's argument here is undermined on several counts, but is decisively ruled out by the plain meaning of Isa 8:3.

Justin's Textual Sources

Scholars who have toiled at the task of comparing Justin's biblical quotations with the various second-century versions of the LXX have discovered that Justin sometimes quotes from the LXX and sometimes from some other non-LXX version. In a good number of cases he quotes and comments on two different versions of the same passage, one LXX and one not. But there is a problem: Justin thinks that his non-LXX quotations represent the true LXX, while his quotations that actually match the LXX, quotations he calls "Jewish," he regards as non-Septuagintal.⁴³ Justin refers to those biblical manuscripts as Jewish because in his day pretty much the only available copies of the OT (LXX) were produced by Jewish scribes.⁴⁴ Justin's other (non-LXX) sources for quotations were not actual copies of the Bible, but rather anthologies of proof texts made by Christians

42. Justin's insistence on the accuracy of the LXX (at least in regard to Isa 7:14) is undoubtedly rooted in the fact that the Gospel of Matthew quotes Isa 7:14 from the LXX. However, Matt 2:15 quotes Hos 11:1 in its Hebrew version, rather than from the LXX, because the latter version would make it impossible for Matthew to apply the prophecy to Jesus. It is ironic that Justin's principle of the superiority of the LXX would make Matthew's choice in 2:15 invalid.

43. "What Justin calls 'LXX' text is the text of his testimony source(s), while the 'Jewish' text is the text of his Biblical MSS" (Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 43).

44. Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 44.

for the express purpose of demonstrating that Jesus had fulfilled the scriptures. Those anthologies are known to scholars by the Latin term *testimonia* (“testimony sources”). No copy of them has survived,⁴⁵ but from what scholars can deduce from studying the many variants in how early Christian authors quote the OT, those testimonies were very free quotations, often paraphrased to make the connection to Jesus as clear as possible. The paraphrasing techniques can be described as “targumizing,” that is, mixing quotation with creative embellishment. The testimony sources probably also featured quotations that blended material from more than one passage, “composite quotations created with great care.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, the testimony sources were not simply collections of biblical material, the “quoted” passages were probably accompanied by interpretations and arguments showing how they applied to Jesus.⁴⁷

The Influence of Justin’s Sources on his Anti-Judaism

What we know about the nature of those early Christian testimony sources can shed light on Justin’s experience of and attitude toward the OT. It seems likely that Justin’s conversion to Christianity was facilitated, not by the OT as we know it, but as he received it from Christians. It came to him “in conveniently doctored form,”⁴⁸ complete with interpretive aids that “proved” how the prophetic passages were fulfilled in Jesus. In Justin’s subjective experience, then, the christological meaning of the OT seemed natural and self-evident. He might well have been genuinely puzzled why Jews who revered these scriptures could not (or would not) see their “real” meaning, which was so obvious to him. Judging from what we see in the *Dialogue*, Justin’s wonderment found two very different resolutions. First, he discovered the explanation for Jewish “disbelief” in the OT itself, in the abundant and fulsome passages that indict Israelites for their hard hearts, wanton sinfulness, and stubborn rebellion against God’s will. We have seen this before, a Christian construction of a “Catch-22” in which prophecy is fulfilled precisely by Jewish rejection of the claim that Jesus fulfilled prophecy (e.g. Acts 28:25–27). Second, Justin’s wonderment at Jewish disbelief was probably a primary motivation for his writing his huge *Dialogue*. He would gather all the christological interpretations he could find or devise, arrange them into a dialogue with an imaginary Jew, and so demonstrate to his Christian audience how right they were and why the Jews were so wrong.

45. The Coptic Psalms testimony recently discovered by Hedrick (“Vestiges of an Ancient Coptic Codex”) seems to be an exception.

46. Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 91.

47. Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 91.

48. Wilson, *Related Strangers*, 271.

If, as seems nearly certain, Justin received his Christian indoctrination with the help of testimony sources rather than the OT as we know it, we can understand his reaction to actual biblical manuscripts. We would expect Justin to regard his Christian textual sources with the strong affection and gratitude typical of mature converts, for he would revere those texts as a means by which he had found the truth and attained salvation. We should not be surprised that when Justin discovered that Jewish copies of the Bible differed in their contents and wording from his Christian sources that he would easily believe that it was Jews, not Christians, who had tampered with the texts.⁴⁹ As noted, that Christian tampering included not only freestyle paraphrasing, targum-like elaborations, and composite quotations, but also the interpolation of non-biblical passages and interpretive comments. From our perspective we can see that these Christian texts in effect rigged the game from the start. But it would be a mistake for us to see those textual manipulations as deliberate forgeries intended to deceive. The targumizing techniques evident in the testimony sources indicate that they were the work of Jewish-Christians, which we would expect a priori anyway, since only (former) Jews would have a deep knowledge of Israel's scriptures. Jewish targumists understood themselves, not as creating new meanings for the scriptures, but as faithfully transmitting their true message. Since the Jewish believers in Jesus who crafted the testimony sources inherited that understanding of how biblical interpretation is practiced, we should see their way of treating the scriptures "as an expression of genuine concern for the deeper meaning of the sacred text."⁵⁰ We take it for granted that the meaning of a text must be determined from its wording. But in the Jewish world of interpretation, which was home to both the targumists and the authors of the testimony sources, the meaning of a biblical passage was primary, its wording secondary. Rewording the Bible to help its "true" meaning shine forth was an accepted aspect of the practice of faithful interpretation. Jews, including Jewish-Christians, seemed to understand that.

But Justin did not, and neither did the other Christian authors who relied on testimony sources. Those gentile Christians did not come to the task of interpretation with Jewish presuppositions. Instead, they mistakenly assumed that the doctored texts in the testimony sources were the actual words of scripture. This fed their hostility toward Jews and led to the false accusations that they had mutilated the scriptures.

Conclusions

Analysis of the argument from prophecy in the *Dialogue with Trypho* has yielded several salient conclusions about Justin's interpretation of scripture.

49. For examples, see Miller, *Helping Jesus*, 254–55.

50. Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 91.

- His exegeses of prophecies are possible only from the presuppositions of Christian faith. Justin's examples are ample evidence that Christians found Jesus in the OT only because they already knew he had to be there and then went looking for him.
- What Justin thinks are quotations of scripture are often Christian mashups that rewrite and embellish scripture to make it say what Christians want it to.
- Justin ridicules Jews for deleting passages from scripture that are in fact Christian interpolations.
- Justin's argument for the virgin birth is a textbook example of bad exegesis. It hinges on his insistence on an ambiguous translation of the original text, a willful ignoring of literary context, a nonsensical construal of grammar, and an interpretation of the magi story that is, frankly, bizarre.

On every important point about prophecy where Justin disagrees with Trypho, Justin is wrong, despite the fact that Trypho is Justin's literary creation. The only reason Justin lets Trypho disagree at all in this shamelessly one-sided "dialogue" is so that its Christian audience can see how baseless Jewish objections really are. Persuasive as Justin's arguments surely were for ancient Christians, today they fall completely flat.

Coda: The Logic of Justin's Anti-Judaism

Whatever we might think of the cogency of Justin's interpretation of scripture, we should not doubt that he stood secure in his belief that he was on the side of truth and that the Jews are utterly wrong about the scriptures. His attacks on the Jews are ugly, to be sure, but we need to understand those attacks because they are integral to his theological project. Because it is "self-evident" that the scriptures are about Jesus, the errors of the Jews must be willful and therefore culpable. This polemic is strewn throughout the *Dialogue*; a few examples are more than sufficient to take their measure.

You Jews are a ruthless, stupid, blind, and lame people.⁵¹

You are neither wise nor understanding, but sly and treacherous; wise only for evil actions, but utterly unfit to know the hidden will of God, or the trustworthy covenant of the Lord, or to find the everlasting paths.⁵²

It is only your obstinacy that prevents you from knowing the mind and will of God.⁵³

51. *Dialogue* 27.

52. *Dialogue* 123.

53. *Dialogue* 68.

[referring to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey]: It had been explicitly foretold that the Christ would do precisely this; when he had done it in the sight of all he furnished clear proof that he was the Christ. And yet, even after those things have happened and are proved from the scriptures, you persist in refusing to believe.⁵⁴

For Justin the Jewish interpretation of scripture is a massive sin for which Jews deserve both the historical punishments God has meted out to them (the scourge of two wars with Rome, the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and the devastation of their homeland) and the forfeiture of their status as the "chosen people" to the Christians. Toward the end of the dialogue after Justin has rattled off a long list of prophecies that supposedly foretell that God will choose a new people to replace Israel, Justin hammers his point home by having Trypho incredulously ask, "Do you mean to say that you are Israel, and that God says all this about you"? Justin eventually responds,

As your whole people was called after Jacob, surnamed Israel, so we who obey the precepts of Christ, are, through Christ who begot us to God, both called and in reality are Jacob and Israel and Judah and Joseph and David and true children of God.⁵⁵

Concerning the destruction wreaked by the Romans, Justin goes so far as to imply that God had planned those punishments from the time of Abraham. According to Justin, God's purpose in requiring the circumcision of Abraham and his descendants was so that the Romans could distinguish Jews from all others and thus single them out for retribution.

The purpose of this [circumcision] was that you and *only you* might suffer the afflictions that are now justly yours; that only your land be desolate, and your cities ruined by fire; that the fruits of your land be eaten by strangers before your eyes; that not one of you be permitted to enter your city of Jerusalem. Your circumcision of the flesh is the only mark by which you can be distinguished from other men. . . . The above-mentioned tribulations were justly imposed on you, for you have murdered the Just One, and his prophets before him; now you spurn those who hope in him [i.e., Christians].⁵⁶

Not only is Justin's theory about the purpose of circumcision hateful,⁵⁷ but it also pretends—incredibly—that Judea was the only nation to be crushed by Rome's military might. Moreover, Justin is wrong that Jews were the only

54. *Dialogue* 53.

55. *Dialogue* 123.

56. *Dialogue* 16.

57. In our post-Holocaust context it is horrifying beyond words to imagine a ruthless military superpower using circumcision as a criterion by which to single out Jews for atrocities. If the claim that such a horror is the express purpose of God is not blasphemous, then what is?

people to practice circumcision, and he is well aware that many Christians did so as well.⁵⁸

Anti-Judaism is not some unfortunate by-product of Justin's christological interpretation of scripture. It is the wellspring of his entire theological project. His aim was to claim the Jewish scriptures for Christianity and, not merely to establish that Christians could and must use them, but to show that those writings were genuinely Christian. To do that it was not enough for him to argue that the Jewish understanding of scripture was inadequate, nor even that Jews misunderstand the meaning of the scriptures. The logic of Justin's theological premises drove him to assert that Jews know from the scriptures the truth about Christ and spurn it. How else to explain why God had rejected the people he once chose as his own? From within Justin's theological context, which was strongly influenced by the Marcionite controversy, the only way to justify the God of Abraham and the prophets was to de-legitimize the Jews.⁵⁹

Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* is a landmark achievement in that it forges—and articulates with eloquence and energy—an essential link between the argument from prophecy and supersessionism. That linkage, the belief that the Jews have been abandoned by God because of their refusal to embrace the messiah foretold by the prophets, remained central to the long, shameful, and sinful history of Christian anti-Judaism.

58. See *Dialogue* 47.

59. See Efromson, "Patristic Connection."

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Re-defining “Solitude”: Monastic Registers of Fictive (and Factual) Family

Lillian I. Larsen

Introduction

Vincent Wimbush suggests that “all historical interpretations, and their methods and approaches, illuminate some things . . . cast shadows over others; they foreground some things, render into the background certain others.”¹ The history of emergent monasticism might serve as a case study for such “Wimbushian wisdom.”² In scholarship shaped by a persistent propensity to treat hagiography as history, larger-than-life caricatures preserved in familiar narrative sources have been mis-taken as representative of monastic practice overall. While such interpretive emphases remain particularly problematic in treating texts describing life in the Egyptian desert, they have inversely influenced sketches of the broader monastic landscape.³ As uninterrogated and often arbitrary distinctions separate solitary and familial, desert and polis, rustic and elite, they simultaneously obscure the more particular and more nuanced threads that link a complex spectrum of diverse texts and artifacts.

With the aim of elucidating familial structures, long overshadowed by narrative depictions of larger than life solitaries, the present essay examines emergent monastic establishments through lenses akin to those which served to effectively situate proto-Christian households within a fictive and factual domestic frame. Discussion begins with (A) identifying the fictive and factual familial threads that link the *Lives* of Antony and Macrina. It then re-examines these threads in light of (B) alternately descriptive regulatory mandates (here, the *Rules* of Basil, the homilies of John Chrysostom, and the *Canons* of Shenoute). As (C) the material and legal settings in which monastic establishments found their form

1. Wimbush, “Interpreting Resistance, Resisting Interpretation.”

2. Larsen, “Pedagogical Parallels,” 1. The degree to which scholarly address of early monasticism mirrors earlier discussions of emergent Christianity is as interesting; cf. “Pedagogical Parallels,” 1–25.

3. In *Ascetics, Society and the Desert*, James Goehring offers particularly lucid discussion of this literary phenomenon; Cf. Goehring, “Dark Side of Landscape,” 136–49; Goehring, “The World Engaged,” 133–44.

as monastic material remains and late Roman legal codes render fictive and factual familial networks eminently visible, they invite (D) re-examining familiar narrative refractions (here, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* and the *Historia Lausiaca*) with new questions in mind. (E) Emergent patterns, explicitly detailed in the *Regula Magistri*, in some sense, bring conversation full circle. They simultaneously affirm the value of tracing familial forms across generations and explore a continuum that links both emergent and late-ancient Christian landscapes.

[A] Fictional *Lives* and Factual Households

In traditional recounting, competing visions of monastic family life have been shaped by two iconic narratives. The first, premised in radical withdrawal from home and family, is emblematically captured in the Greek *Life of Antony* (*Vita Antonii*).⁴ The second, anchored in active re-structuring of household roles, is recorded in the *Life of Macrina* (*Vita Macrinae*).⁵ Inversely influential, the familial models respectively associated with Antony and Macrina have traditionally been framed as, not only geographically, but ideologically disparate. However, closer analysis reveals factual threads in a fabric of fictive and factual familial formation, which links monastic expression spanning the monastic Mediterranean.

Fictive (and Factual) Family Life in Egypt: *Vita Antonii* (ca. 356–362)

Penned by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, the *Life of Antony* (variously dated between 356 and 362 CE) is among the earliest refractions of monastic life in Egypt. It is arguable that Athanasius' recounting of Antony's disavowal of family ties has also proved singularly determinative in shaping popular depictions of emergent monasticism.⁶ Among the narratives associated with ascetic withdrawal from home and family, there is little question that the scenes that introduce Antony's *Vita* retain pride of place.

For many, the storyline is familiar. Even as a child, Antony (~251–356 CE) did "not car[e] to associate with other boys." As a young adult when faced with the death of both parents, Antony iteratively divests himself of an inherited estate, giving "three hundred acres [of] productive and very fair [land]" that were "the possessions of his forefathers" to neighboring villagers. After selling the remainder of the family's "moveable" wealth, Antony arranges for his younger sister to be brought up by "known and faithful virgins." Once freed from all

4. Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* [NPNF2]. Athanasius' *Vita* is the most familiar but not the only *Life of Antony*. See Elizabeth Agaiby's detailed discussion of *comparanda* in *The Arabic Life of Antony*. See also the seminal work of David Brakke, and more recently Bernadette McNary-Zak, aimed at locating Athanasius within a broader ecclesial, geographical, and rhetorical frame.

5. Gregory of Nyssa, *Vit. Macr.* [Callahan].

6. Cf. Larsen, "Letter Collection of Isidore of Pelusium," 286–308.

household obligation, he devotes "himself, outside his house" to the disciplines of a "solitary" life.⁷

Antony pursues this "training . . . in solitude" for "nearly twenty years." When he emerges he is met by a crowd of "acquaintances . . . eager and wishful to imitate his discipline." At that point one might expect the *Vita's* protagonist to quickly reclaim his seclusion. Instead, however, Antony persuades the "acquaintances" gathered outside his remote cave to join him. As reported, among "those already monks," the "attraction of Antony's words" increased their "eagerness." Antony's teaching and example, likewise, stirred up "others" to "love . . . discipline." With Antony leading "them all as a father," cells multiplied, rising "even in the mountains . . . [and] the desert was ἐπολιόσθη (made a city) by monks, who came forth from their own people, [to] enroll . . . themselves for . . . citizenship in the heavens."⁸

Factual (and Fictive) Family Life in Cappadocia: *Vita Macrinae*

Like the *Vita Antonii*, the *Vita Macrinae* is numbered among the earliest monastic *Lives*. Various dates between 380 and 383 CE, the account is recorded, not by the bishop of Alexandria, but by Gregory of Nyssa—Macrina's sibling "according to the flesh" (κατάσαρκος). Among scholars of Late Antiquity, Macrina's storyline is familiar. In both predictable and unexpected ways, Macrina's embrace of the "solitary life" simultaneously mirrors and inverts Antony's iconic withdrawal.

As a member of the elite echelons of Cappadocian society, Macrina (330–379 CE) was betrothed at an early age. Upon the death of her fiancé, she names herself a consecrated virgin. In contrast to Antony's explicit rejection of family ties, however, Macrina's decision "to spend the rest of her life by herself"⁹ is implicitly defined by an active network of familial connection. In fact, her embrace of the "solitary life" requires that she "never . . . be separated for a moment from her mother."¹⁰

Reversing Antony—who commends his younger sister to the care of local virgins before devoting himself to discipline "outside his house"¹¹—Macrina, the eldest daughter of a wealthy family, serves as catalyst in inspiring her siblings and mother to give up their "customary mode of living."¹² Countering Antony's divestiture of the "possessions of his forefathers,"¹³ Macrina and her factual family members embrace their life of solitude within—or in the vicinity of—a sizable household estate.

7. Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 1-3 [NPNF2].

8. Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 14 [NPNF2]; cf. Larsen, "Redrawing the Interpretive Map," 1–34.

9. Gregory of Nyssa, *Vit. Macr.* 964c–d [Callahan].

10. Gregory of Nyssa, *Vit. Macr.* 964c–d [Callahan].

11. Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 3 [NPNF2].

12. Gregory of Nyssa, *Vit. Macr.* 964c–d [Callahan].

13. Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 1-3 [NPNF2].

Paralleling Antony, under Macrina's direction the community of "solitaries" expands. However, such growth does not result from attracting a population of individuals who came forth from their own people, [to] enroll . . . themselves for . . . citizenship" in a re-formulated desert πόλις.¹⁴ Rather, numbers increase through fictively re-imagining the status of household subordinates, to make them "sisters and equals rather than slaves and [servants]."¹⁵ In this factual turned fictive family, slavery has ostensibly gone out of vogue. Gregory reports that elite and non-elite share "one table, bed, and [in] all the needs of life . . . every difference of rank [is] eliminated."¹⁶ Further growth is fostered by absorption of local orphans, abandoned along regional roadsides as a result of famine.¹⁷ Fictively re-imagined, a factual family lineage is here re-defined.¹⁸

[B] Regulating Monastic Fictive (and Factual) Family Life

It is impossible to determine the degree to which the prominent themes of Antony's *Vita* have shaped perceptions of Egyptian monastic life as radically renunciatory and harshly solitary.¹⁹ It is as difficult to measure the influence of the *Vita Macrinae* in molding models of Cappadocian monasticism as intimately and benevolently familial. It is, however, Antony's embrace of the solitary life—rather than his determinative role as fictive father of an expanding monastic πόλις—that governs popular (and scholarly) perceptions of Egyptian asceticism. Similarly, it is Macrina's role as catalyst for an egalitarian reconfiguration of the elite household—rather than her embrace of the "solitary life"—that has shaped impressions of the monastic household. Balancing the persuasive muscle—and selective character—of hagiographical hyperbole, monastic regulatory

14. Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 14 [NPNF2].

15. Gregory of Nyssa, *Vit. Macr.* 970c [Callahan].

16. Gregory's detailed description bears quoting in full: "In them no anger, envy, hate, arrogance, nor any such thing was seen. . . . Their only care was for divine realities, and there was constant prayer and the unceasing singing of hymns, extended equally throughout the entire day and night so that this was both work, and respite from work, for them" (*Vit. Macr.* 970c [Callahan]); Cf. Larsen, "Early Christian Meals and Slavery," 196–97.

17. Gregory of Nyssa, *Vit. Macr.* 988A–B; cf. Elm, *Virgins of God*, 92–93; Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 74–77. One might wonder whether the community additionally absorbed young women who had been left vulnerable due to familial re-configuration—not unlike the sister left with "known and faithful virgins" in Antony's *Vita*. See complementary discussion in Farag, "Heroines Not Penitents," 21–32; Larsen, "On Teaching a New Alphabet: Female Teachers and Students in Early Monasticism," forthcoming; "Slavery in Early Monasticism," forthcoming; cf. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, esp. 54–57.

18. In further reversal of established roles, Gregory reports that Macrina introduced manual labor into the household's daily routines, convincing her mother and siblings to forgo "ostentatious existence and the services . . . to which [they] had long been accustomed" (*Vit. Macr.* 966D [Callahan]). Instead ". . . [all] share[d] the same food and lodging and all other things one needs in daily life, and there was no difference between [them]" (*Vit. Macr.* 970c [Callahan]).

19. See more detailed discussion in Larsen, "Letter Collection of Isidore of Pelusium," 286–308.

traditions offer an alternate vantage point. When examining the idealized *Lives* of larger-than-life luminaries in light of factual household structures, the *Longer Rule* of Basil of Caesarea (330–379 CE), and the *Homilies* of John Chrysostom (347–407 CE) add dimensionality to the communal ideals encountered in the *Life of Macrina*. In turn, the *Canons* of Shenoute of Atripe (385–465 CE) present something of a familial alter-ego to the solitary figure of Antony. Mitigating the impulse to mis-take hagiography for history, each elucidates common and contrasting practice, which adds life-sized depth to larger-than-life caricature.²⁰

Factual Regulation of Fictive (and Factual) Family in Cappadocia:

The *Longer Rule* of Basil

The *Longer Rule* of Basil—the sibling of both Macrina and Gregory—contextualizes Macrina's egalitarian ideals within a broader monastic frame.²¹ In contrast to Gregory's characterization of Macrina's Cappadocian household as a locus of strong familial affection, Basil "never identifies this factual affiliation."²² Neither does he affirm the importance—nor the existence—of Macrina's family of "solitaries."²³ Examined in conversation with the *Vita*, the *Rule's* reflection of practice in the community under Basil's jurisdiction, nonetheless, adds elucidating detail to both the fictive and factual parameters of "solitary life" in Cappadocia.

Not unlike Athanasius' depiction of Antony, extant correspondence describes Basil's place of monastic retreat as a "withdrawal from the world" to an "out-of-the-way place" separated from "interrupt[ion] by any external distraction."²⁴ In practice aimed at a "severance of the soul from sympathy with the body," here existence involves "giving up city, home, personal possessions, love, friends, property, means of subsistence, business, social relations, and knowledge derived from human teaching."²⁵

20. Cf. Giorda, "Monastic Property in Egypt," 1–19.

21. Two *Rules* are attributed to Basil. Most scholars premise that the *Longer Rules* (*Regulae fusius tractatae*) predates the *Shorter* (*Regulae brevius tractatae*), since the latter consistently references the former. Silvas' *Asketikon of St Basil the Great*, offers a detailed overview of the respective *Rules*. Her introduction (pp. 1–18) likewise highlights the progressive character of included regulation. The broader regulatory spectrum included in John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero's *Monastic Foundation Documents* underscores the degree to which Basil's *Rules* shaped subsequent monastic practice.

22. This is striking given that Gregory credits Macrina for Basil's "conversion" to a life of asceticism (see discussion in Elm, *Virgins of God*, 81ff.). In "Virginity and its Meaning for Women's Sexuality in Early Christianity," Elizabeth Castelli forcefully interrogates Basil's "shocking" silence. She queries: "How many women lost their places in the written record of the church because no one chose to write their biographies and because the men whose lives they influenced omitted any mention of them? How many exceptional women may have been only mentioned and otherwise lost without a trace? How many ordinary virgins are absent from the record altogether?" (p. 63).

23. Basil's silence is doubly noteworthy given that the authorship of the *Life of Macrina* is attributed to Gregory of Nyssa, the younger sibling of both Macrina and Basil.

24. Basil, *Ep.* 2 [LCL]; cf. Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 11.

25. Basil, *Ep.* 2 [LCL].

Drawing on a geographical range of relatively specific textual referents, Susanna Elm suggests that Basil's "withdrawal from the world" was situated just on the opposite side of the Iris river—"not too far away from Annesi," the site of the family home and Macrina's household expression of factually fictive familial practice.²⁶ Affirming the proximity of Basil's "out of the way" retreat, Basil is preceded in his endeavors by one factual sibling, Naucratius, who died as a young man. Additionally, his monastic establishment is also home to a fictive group of brothers²⁷ who are related "in their souls by prayers and meditation."²⁸ Not unlike Antony's associates, these brothers are zealous in "their pursuit of virtue" and guided by "written rules and canons."²⁹ In contrast to Anthony, however, Basil is not identified as father of this fictive family. Instead, he describes a household comprised solely of siblings.

As articulated, Basil's model nonetheless registers the melded identities that remain implicit to factual familial and household hierarchies. For example, in introducing his *Rule*, Basil immediately delineates parameters that differentiate the behavior of "sons" (and brothers) from that of "hirelings" and "slaves." Adherence to the *Rule* is figuratively defined relative to three dispositions that "compel . . . obedience." The first is to "avoid evil through fear of punishment and take the attitude of a slave; the second, to being like "a hireling" in seeking to obtain a reward by "observ[ing] the commandments for [one's] own advantage"; the third, to act "the son" for the "sake of the virtuous act itself and out of love for Him who gave . . . the law . . . rejoic[ing] to be deemed worthy to serve a God so good and so glorious."³⁰

Here and elsewhere, Basil's discussion of the communal status of factual slaves further complexifies the parameters that define Macrina's "manumission" of household subordinates. It likewise underscores the importance of examining the constructs that define emergent monastic *loci*, through a familial lens. Addressing the question of "bound slaves who flee to religious communities for refuge," Basil claims Paul's letter to Philemon as precedent. Affirming the enduring character of established household norms, he counsels that these individuals be returned to their masters on the premise that "although [Paul] had begotten Onesimus through the Gospel, [he] sent him back to Philemon" (Phil 1:12).³¹ Only when such resolution proves impossible does Basil recom-

26. Elm, *Virgins of God*, 63; cf. Basil, *Ep. 2*. Fedwick, "A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea," 6.

27. Cf. Elm, *Virgins of God*, 78–84.

28. Elm, *Virgins of God*, 65; cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep. 6*.

29. Elm, *Virgins of God*, 65; cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep. 6*.

30. Basil, *Reg. Fus.*, Pref. [Wagner].

31. Basil, *Reg. Fus.* 11 [Wagner].

mend that a slave be afforded refuge.³² At this point, he commissions the community to "accept in a manner pleasing to God [any] trials encountered . . . on [the slave's] behalf."³³

Factual Regulation of Fictive (and Factual) Family in Antioch:

The Sermons of John Chrysostom

The mundane details that place these fictive and factual household configurations in a common web of conversation find alternate articulation in the late fourth-century sermons of John Chrysostom (347–407 CE). Recently named "one of the great sources for the historian of everyday life in late antiquity,"³⁴ Chrysostom offers a provocative glimpse of the Mediterranean landscape in which monastic fictive (and factual) families found their form.

For example, Chrysostom's *Homily on I Timothy* arguably addresses an audience comprised of Christian householders (and their slaves). As such, it effectively locates the egalitarian ideals lauded in the *Life of Macrina* within a broader Mediterranean frame. Fictively positioning wealthy landowners as slaves relative to God, Chrysostom's address is laden with ancillary detail that brings the "jagged edges" of lived experience into sharp focus:³⁵

Beloved . . . let us . . . serve our Master, as our servants serve us. . . . They have only food and lodging; but we, possessing much and expecting more, insult our Benefactor with our luxury. . . . They receive many insults from fear of us, and endure them in silence with the patience of philosophers. Justly or unjustly they are exposed to our violence, and they do not resist, but entreat us, though often they have done nothing wrong. They are content . . . to receive no more and often less than they need; with straw for their bed, and only bread for their food, they do not complain or murmur at their hard living, but through fear of us are restrained from impatience. . . . [S]ay not they are under necessity, when [you] too

32. In a treatise included among his *Moralia*, Basil affirms the household codes delineated in Ephesians and the Pastorals enjoining slaves to "obey their masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in . . . simplicity of . . . hearts . . . as servants of Christ doing the will of God. . . ." Although he likewise instructs "masters" to be "mindful of the true Master," he softens the edge of this demand. "In the fear of the Lord and out of clemency" they are to return to their slaves "insofar as they can . . . whatever benefits they may receive from them" (Basil, *Mor.* 75.1 [Clarke]).

33. Basil, *Reg. Fus.* 11 [Wagner]; Basil's latter recommendation echoes legislation enacted under Antoninus Pius. In "The Early Church and Slavery," Henry C. Lea notes that these legal codes mandated that "when a slave was exposed to intolerable oppression, the magistrates on appeal could oblige the master to sell him on reasonable terms" (p. 536); cf. Karayannopoulos, "Basil's Social Activity," 375–91.

34. Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World*, 205.

35. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 4; cf. Larsen, "Slavery in Early Monasticism," forthcoming.

are under a necessity in the fear of hell. . . . [Why do you] not render to God as much honor, as [you] receive . . . from [your] servants.³⁶

Chrysostom concludes his summary of factual life as a slave in a fourth-century household with a sobering injunction. This is to render service to God just as slaves attend to their overlords.³⁷ Communicating the contours of a social system in which “the foundations of slavery . . . were never seriously challenged,”³⁸ Chrysostom’s enjoinders find ample support in biblical precedent. They affirm that in the fourth century—as in the first—a world without slaves remains anomalous.³⁹

Chrysostom’s remonstrance against a fictive counter-voice is perhaps as interesting. In his *Homily on Philemon* he warns of “masters having their servants taken from them . . . [as] a matter of violence.”⁴⁰ Elsewhere he links those exerting such adverse influence with a group of individuals who “under the pretense of continence [likewise] separate . . . wives from their husbands.”⁴¹ His cautions against heeding those who have “reduced [many] to the necessity of blasphemy . . . [by] saying Christianity has been introduced into life for the subversion of everything.”⁴² Effectively balancing both Macrina’s household reconfiguration and Basil’s regulatory caveats as routine absorption of house-

36. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Tim. 6.2* [NPNF1].

37. As he weaves varied layers of tradition into a skillfully threaded fabric, Chrysostom imbues his juxtapositions with apostolic authority. Citing the first of two pseudo-Pauline letters to Timothy, Chrysostom urges slaves “that have believing masters,” not to despise them “because they are brethren,” but instead to do them greater service. Asserting that slaves of “believers” are fortunate to be “worthy of so great a benefit, as to have . . . masters . . . [as] brethren,” he enjoins greater submission, not only because master and slave share familial status in the Christian community, but because masters “pay slaves the larger service.” By “furnish[ing] the money to purchase . . . sufficient food and clothing; and bestow[ing] much care upon [their slaves] in other respects,” he suggests that masters “contribute greater benefits to their servants, than servants to their masters.” Since owners “suffer much toil and trouble for [a slave’s] repose,” they ought to receive much honor in return (*Hom. 1 Tim. 6.2* [NPNF1]).

Chrysostom’s consideration of Paul’s letter to Philemon similarly registers the nebulous status of Christian slaves in Late Antiquity. His prose refracts individuals compelled to navigate the tensions inherent to straddling communal mores that named slaves as equal in the sight of God but rarely challenged the unmitigated authority of slaveholders. Encouraging slaves to give little heed to their servile status but rather attend to Paul’s “best counsel,” Chrysostom selectively cites a portion of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. Effacing any implicit ambiguity, he enjoins: “[Are you] called, being a servant? care not for it: but if even [you] . . . be made free, use it rather . . . to abide in slavery” (*Hom. Phil., Prol.* [NPNF1]; cf. 1 Cor 7:21; Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*).

38. Elm, *Virgins of God*, 87; cf. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*; Harrill, *Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity*; Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman Empire*.

39. See Chris de Wet’s particularly incisive *Preaching Bondage: John Chrysostom and the Discourse of Slavery in Early Christianity*.

40. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Phil., Prol.* [NPNF1]; cf. *Hom. Tit. 2.9*.

41. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Tit. 2.9* [NPNF1].

42. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Phil., Prol.* [NPNF1]; cf. *Hom. Tit. 2.9*.

hold hierarchies leaves little to the imagination. Recurrent adjudication of the autonomy and authority of slaves (and women) renders uniform embrace of established roles less than a simple and settled question.

Factual Regulation of Fictive (and Factual) Family in Egypt:

The *Canons* of Shenoute

Just as Basil's *Rule* and Chrysostom's *Homilies* add factual dimensionality to the fictive household "solitaries" encountered in the *Life of Macrina*, so Shenoute's *Canons* situate the radical renunciations depicted in the *Life of Antony* along a more measured continuum. While Bentley Layton has named the regulatory *canons* of Shenoute "the most extensive . . . first-hand evidence for how a Christian monastery actually worked in the early centuries,"⁴³ even the limited survey of monastic *Rules* undertaken here raises questions of whether Shenoute's refraction of his Egyptian "federation" should be deemed representative.⁴⁴ Like the *Longer Rule* of Basil, Shenoute's regulatory register offers an exceptionally vivid and detailed record of the parameters that structured one configuration of early monastic life.

Following Antony, the *Canons* name Shenoute "father" of his community. As leader of a "federation" comprised of three sub-households, this positions him as patriarch in a fictive familial structure of sobering proportions. His singular authority is supported by a familial chain of trusted elders who assist in making financial decisions and offering spiritual counsel and retain oversight over the federation's three "congregations." In administering the affairs of each, a figure known as the "Eldest" is aided by a group of "God-fearing elders." These "congregational parents" and their "seconds" retain responsibility for the sons and daughters of the community, who are in turn, siblings—that is, brothers and sisters—to each other. Cutting across such fictive familial tiers, additional delineations distinguish between ordained and lay and mark diverse degrees of ascetic commitment.⁴⁵

Alongside guidelines for addressing the Federation's fictive households, the *Canons* also include a sizable subset of regulation aimed at legislating interaction between members of the Federations, who are likewise factual family mem-

43. Layton, "Rules, Patterns, and the Exercise of Power," 46; both Basil and Shenoute appear to have formulated their instructions as they went along.

44. In *Les Règles Monastiques Anciennes (400–700)*, Adelbert deVogue provides a provocative *stema* of both the diversity and cross-pollinating commonality that characterizes a broader spectrum of early monastic rules (p. 14). The common and diverse threads that texture Thomas and Hero's collected *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents* likewise underscore the shared and distinctive fabric of emergent practice; cf. Larsen, "Meals and Monastic Identity," 307–28.

45. Layton, "Rules, Patterns, and the Exercise of Power," 53–58; cf. Layton, *Canons of Our Fathers*.

bers “according to the flesh” (κατὰσάρξ).⁴⁶ These mandates add complex texture both to the simple lines of Antony’s radical renunciation and his identification as fictive “father” of a burgeoning desert πόλις. As effectively, they blur the clear lines that have often separated the harshly “solitary” contours of life in the Egyptian desert from the organic networks of presumed affection attributed to its Cappadocian counterparts.⁴⁷

Countering traditional depictions of Egypt as a locus characterized by clear separation between fictive and factual familial networks, recurring regulation focuses on adjudicating the expression of factual familial affection. For example, Shenoute enjoins:

... if some among us have grown old and have a daughter or a sister living in the same way of life as a μοναχὴ [female solitary/monk] in the congregation, just as they too live as a μοναχὸς [male solitary/monk],⁴⁸ and they go to meet them, it is an unseemly deed for them, having grown old, to kiss their daughters. Rather they should only speak with them in the fear of God and return immediately.⁴⁹

When such interaction involves communication across fictive and factual family networks, the *Canons* are as explicit:

... for all who among us who have a mother, sister, wife, or daughter in the congregation living as a μοναχὸς [solitary/monk]—when they go to them to visit them they shall not be permitted to speak to any other woman in that place, neither the mother superior (who is) the mother of the congregation, nor any other adult woman or young girl or any other female whosoever apart from those for whose sake they have gone, by order of the father superior (emphasis mine).⁵⁰

A similar melding of fictive and factual familial regulation is employed in addressing care for the sick and/or dying:

No woman at any time in your (women’s) domain shall come to us (men) to visit those who belong to them according to the flesh (κατὰσάρξ), neither when they get sick, nor when they die. They shall not be permitted to come and visit them and go to their family as used to be the case, before our first father took pains to prevent any of you (women) from coming to us and visiting relatives of theirs according to the flesh (κατὰσάρξ), in our (men’s) domain when they were sick or for them to come to their family.⁵¹

46. As in other monastic settings, Shenoute uses descriptive nomenclature, “according to the flesh” (κατὰσάρξ), to distinguish between factual and fictive family.

47. Cf. Larsen, “Meals and Monastic Identity,” 309–15

48. In citing the *Canons*, this essay loosely follows the nomenclature used by Rebecca Krawiec in her volume, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery*. This involves translating the Coptic μοναχὸς / μοναχὴ as “male” and/or “female solitary / monk”—rather than “monk” and “nun” as adopted by Layton.

49. Shenoute, *Canon* 258 [Layton].

50. Shenoute, *Canon* 260 [Layton].

51. Shenoute, *Canon* 212 [Layton].

Troubling the radical renunciation depicted in the *Life of Antony*, each of these *canons* reflects familial bonds marked by enduring affection. They simultaneously register the complex communities threaded with both fictive and factual familial affiliations.

[C] Fictive Families in Factual Households

The material and legal settings in which monastic life found its form imbue both idealized narrative depictions and related regulatory *corpora* with factual dimensionality too. Although Egyptian monastic sites have traditionally been framed as harshly ascetic relative to the wealthy household estates of Cappadocia, closer scrutiny of excavated *loci* suggests a more textured landscape. Material remains reveal monastic locales that belie facile economic dichotomies. Similarly, late Roman legal codes complexify idealized household constructs with factual legislation that refracts tense embrace of established social stratification.

Factual Refraction of Fictive Households: Monastic Egypt

In discussing excavated remains of the monastic settlement at Esna, Roger Bagnall describes this Egyptian complex as comprised of underground atrium-style houses with floorplans not unlike those associated with the homes of prosperous Mediterranean families.⁵² He notes that, "despite . . . pervasive . . . literary sources [that] describe a self-denying way of life for ascetics in the [Egyptian] desert, many of them clearly lived those lives of self-mortification in a setting designed to remind them of wealth, not poverty." Living quarters "give the impression of being modeled after upper-class houses in towns, rather than . . . the habitations of the poor." Even simple cells are relatively elaborate "with rooms, a court, a well, and other amenities." A number of habitations include "cool rooms for the storage of dry bread, movable doors, and even glass in some windows."⁵³

The material footprint that links a collection of Theban sites in turn reflects familial structures of diverse expression. At the monastery of Epiphanius the community complex has as its center a cluster of Pharaonic tombs. Across the plain at Deir el Bahri portions of Hatsheput's temple likewise appear to have served to accommodate a community of monks. While household configurations in these settings are less structurally patent, the content of associated correspondence suggests fictive and factual familial roles that align with broader patterns.

Excavated artifacts preserve extensive communication, which underscores the close affiliations that link established networks. Not unlike Basil and

52. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 297–99.

53. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 287–99.

Naucratius' proximate withdrawal from Macrina's Cappadocian household estate (or Shenoute's register of melded fictive and factual families), a collection of ostraca provenanced to the Monastery of Epiphanius affirms a location that allows for routine interaction between fictive and factual family members. Extant missives are rich with mundane detail. An exchange between mother and son discusses the sale of wine. The same letter enlists Epiphanius' assistance on behalf of a neighbor.⁵⁴ Communication between Epiphanius and his "beloved brother" addresses delivery of a book/document signed (and/or copied) by their factual mother.⁵⁵

Networks defined by fictive familial nomenclature—father and mother, brother and sister, son and daughter—are as well attested.⁵⁶ However, if tradition has uniformly framed the attendants that share the cells of illustrious "solitaries" as self-designated disciples, brothers, and sons (and more occasionally, sisters and daughters), closer reading suggests a more complicated picture. Adding dimensionality to the nebulous absorption of slaves as siblings in Macrina and Basil's Cappadocian enclaves, numerous Theban artifacts identify the carrier of a given piece of correspondence as simply "this man of mine."⁵⁷

As suggestive is material evidence that suggests that under Shenoute's leadership the White Monastery may have granted asylum to runaway slaves.⁵⁸ Lois Farag's more recent analysis is as provocative. Leveraging a juxtaposition of textual and material referents, Farag argues that some monastic communities may have afforded protection to women forced into prostitution and slavery on account of family debt.⁵⁹

Fictive Households in the Broader Mediterranean: Late Roman Legal Codes

The descriptive detail included in a series of late Roman legal codes affirms both the common and diverse character of emergent practice. For example, two edicts of Constantine, respectively dated to 316 and 323 CE, address the status of slaves in Christian households and congregations. Affording important

54. O.MMA. 14.1.91; cf. Winlock and Crum, *Monastery of Epiphanius*: 2.84, 242 no. 336 (Plate XIII).

55. O.MMA. 14.1.97; cf. Winlock and Crum, *Monastery of Epiphanius*: 2.84, 252 no. 374.

56. Winlock and Crum, *Monastery of Epiphanius*, 1.180–83, 2.33–109, 179–283, nos. 103–518; cf. Larsen, "Early Christian Meals and Slavery," 191–203; Larsen, "Slavery in Early Monasticism," forthcoming.

57. O.MMA. 12.180.116; The text is preserved on an ostrakon this individual has presumably been commissioned to deliver; cf. Winlock and Crum, *Monastery of Epiphanius*: 2.74, 228 no. 283.

58. Albeit obscurely identified, these documents are named in Johannes Leipoldt, "Shenute von Atripe," as cited by Westermann, *Slave Systems*, 155; cf. Larsen, "Slavery in Early Monasticism," forthcoming.

59. Farag, "Heroines Not Penitents," 21–32; cf. Larsen, "Slavery in Early Monasticism," forthcoming.

context to the familial reformulations that structure the *Life of Macrina*, these edicts stipulate that slaves might be manumitted in one of two ways: "*manumissio in ecclesia*" or "*manumissio inter amicos*."⁶⁰ As summarized by Susanna Elm, "*Manumissio in ecclesia* . . . authorized Christian congregations to free their own slaves." This took place through a formalized procedure that "involved a declaration in the presence of the bishop or his representative and the entire congregation." A slave, thus freed, ". . . became a full citizen and *persona sui iuris*." *Manumissio inter amicos*, however, was less complicated and less far-reaching. Here "a [master/mistress] simply declared a slave to be [his/her] friend." This might be expressed "by letter (*per epistulam*) or by inviting [him/her] to dine at the same table (*per mensam*)." Elm notes that, while this resulted in a slave becoming "latinized . . . *manumissio inter amicos* did not result in full citizenship." As such, "former slaves . . . continued to be of a lesser rank than their former masters, not merely in social, but also in legal terms."⁶¹

Alternately detailed discussion is included in documents related to the Council of Gangra (variously dated between 325 and 381). A Synodical Letter that introduces the *Canons* of the Council echoes prohibitions encountered in Chrysostom's *Homily in Philemon* (as well as the caveats that texture Basil's *Longer Rule*). It condemns ascetic communities which encourage "slaves [to leave] . . . their masters, and . . . [act] insolently towards their masters."⁶² *Canon Three* goes one step further, anathematizing "any one [who] shall teach a slave,

60. *Codex Iustinianus* 1.13.

61. Elm, *Virgins of God*, 85–86; cf. *Codex Iustinianus* 1.13. Given the tenor of extant literary description, Elm posits that manumission in Macrina's household took the latter form. William Westermann, however, underscores the relative character of the "liberation" extended to Christian slaves. In broader study of *Slave Systems of Greco-Roman Antiquity*, he writes: "It has been suggested that the grant of the rights to manumit *in ecclesia*, as given by the State and accepted by the Church, was symbolic of an ideological rejection of the entire slave system or that it was an unexpressed protest of Christianity against an institution which was inherently contrary to the humane doctrines it represented. Quite the opposite seems to be true. Manumission in the Church furnishes another proof, if that were needed, of the complete adoption of the institution of slavery with all of its mundane formulas and practices. Nor should the fact of liberation in the Church be ascribed to a greater feeling of concern on the part of the Christians for the unfree than that which the pagan Greek cults had shown before them in their temple manumissions by entrusted sale to a god or by consecration of a slave to one of their deities. Further, it is not warranted to suppose that any noteworthy increase in the volume of manumissions followed because of the practice of Church manumission. For the three long-established processes of granting freedom were, of course, always available to the Christians if they wished to set their slaves free, just as they were to non-Christian subjects of the State. These were the grant of freedom by testament, the *manumissio* by trial with a pre-determined outcome, and the form of liberation called the *manumissio inter amicos*. In fact, the manumission *in ecclesia* seems to have spread slowly during Constantine's reign. It was not obtained in the province of Africa, for example, until . . . 401. Why this was so we do not know; but knowledge of the fact does not suggest either a widespread use of the right by the Church or even a deep interest in it" (pp. 154–55); cf. Larsen, "Early Christian Meals and Slavery," 191–203; Larsen, "Slavery in Early Monasticism," forthcoming.

62. *Canons of the Council of Gangra* [NPNF2]; cf. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 90.

under pretext of piety, to despise his master and to run away from his service, and not to serve his own master with good-will and all honour."⁶³

Mirroring heightened household polemics—not unlike those that characterize the Pastoral letters included in Christian scripture—the *Canons of the Council of Chalcedon* (451 CE) render earlier stipulations more explicit. Here any individual who receives a “slave . . . into any monastery to become a monk against the will of his master” is threatened with “excommunicate[ion].”⁶⁴ Henry Lea suggests that such legislation allowed slaves to take monastic vows, but only with their master’s consent. As long as the slave remained a monk, he or she bore the designation of a freedperson. Should this individual abandon monastic life, a slave-owner’s proprietary claims were reinstated.⁶⁵

[D] Fictional Refraction of Factual Families

Re-examining the hagiographical record through this complex household lens brings conversation full circle. It simultaneously makes it impossible to ignore the long overlooked factual and fictive family constructs that texture two of the most familiar refractions of emergent monastic life. The first of these is the compendium of vignettes loosely identified as the “Sayings of the Desert Fathers [and Mothers]” (*Apophthegmata Patrum [et Matrum]*);⁶⁶ the second is the more geographically varied *Lausiac History* (*Historia Lausiaca*) of Palladius.

63. *Canons of the Council of Gangra* 3 [NPNF2].

64. *Canons of the Council of Chalcedon* (451) 4 [NPNF2]. Canon 4 of the Council’s legislation bears quoting in full: “The monks in every city and district shall be subject to the bishop, and embrace a quiet course of life, and give themselves only to fasting and prayer, remaining permanently in the places in which they were set apart; and they shall meddle neither in ecclesiastical nor in secular affairs, nor leave their own monasteries to take part in such; unless, indeed, they should at any time through urgent necessity be appointed thereto by the bishop of the city. And no slave shall be received into any monastery to become a monk against the will of his master. And if anyone shall transgress this our judgment, we have decreed that he shall be excommunicated, that the name of God be not blasphemed”; cf. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 90.

65. Lea, “The Early Church and Slavery,” 536.

66. The most readily accessible English language collections of *apophthegmata* are those translated by Benedicta Ward. These are published in two primary compendia. The first is roughly comprised of sayings and stories included in the Greek *Alphabetikon* (ed. by Cotelier, and reprinted in Migne) and published as the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. The second, a collection of commensurate content, is organized thematically and draws on the Latin *Verba Seniores* (ed. by Rosweyde, and reprinted in Migne). At present John Wortley is re-translating these and other frequently referenced collections. Although a number of these editions include the Greek text, his renditions are theologically inflected in ways that persistently mask the linguistic threads that link diverse articulations. In secondary scholarship Chiara Faraggiana’s consideration of the collections’ transmission history remains invaluable. Lisa Agaiby’s more recent manuscript analyses are similarly significant; cf. Larsen, “On Learning a New Alphabet,” 59–77.

Fictional Refraction of Factual Families in Egypt: *Sayings of the Desert Fathers [and Mothers]*

Primarily set within the Egyptian desert, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* [et *Matrum*] have historically been read in light of the radical rejection of family emphasized in the *Life of Antony*. Examined within a household frame, however, fictive and factual familial references remain a persistent element of included vignettes. As monastic leaders are deemed *abbas* and *ammās* and attendants double as sons, daughters, siblings, and disciples, the fictional nomenclature of ascetic praxis fluidly melds with the language of factual family life. With few exceptions, "sayings" are structured around exchange between fictive fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, brothers and sisters, parents and children. As interesting, however, is recurring reference to encounters with factual mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, masters and slaves.⁶⁷

Particularly poignant are stories that refract the tensions implicit to separation from factual familial networks. This includes a range of *apophthegmata* that depict factual mothers (or fathers) seeking audience with lost sons (or more infrequently, daughters). For example:

One of the Fathers related this about Abba Poemen and his brethren: "When they were living in Egypt their mother wanted to see them and was not able to do so. So she took note of the time when they went to church and went to meet them. But when they saw her, they made a detour and closed the door in her face. But she beat on the door and cried with tears and groans, saying: 'I must see you my beloved children!' Hearing her, Abba Anoub went to Abba Poemen and said to him, 'What shall we do with this old woman who is weeping against the door?' From inside where he was standing, he heard her weeping with many groans and he said to her, 'Woman, why are you crying out like this?' When she heard his voice, she cried out even more, weeping and saying, 'I want to see you, my children. What will happen if I do see you? Am I not your mother? Was it not I who suckled you?' The old man said to him, 'If I do not see you here, shall I see you in the age to come?' He said to her, 'If you refrain from seeing us now, you will see us yonder.' So she departed full of joy and said, 'If I shall see you perfectly yonder, I do not want to see you here.'"⁶⁸

As provocative is a mother begging a fictive *abba* "to send her [factual] son out to see her":

67. In reading hagiography historically, the question of whether the particular elements included in a given narrative account might be deemed authentic or accurate can only be entertained as a matter of theoretical debate. However, in introducing their study of *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, Ronald Hock and Edward O'Neil argue that the ancient criterion of "aptness" lends real historical weight to a text's descriptive details (pp. 1–49). They premise that the range of "conventional circumstances" that occur and recur across a spectrum of source material can be assigned some measure of concrete correspondence with lived experience on the ground; cf. Larsen, "Rustic Ruminations," 21–30; Larsen, "On Learning a New Alphabet," 59–77.

68. *Apoph. Patr.* Alph. Poemen 76 [Ward].

... On another occasion Mark decided to leave Scetis and go to Mount Sinai and live there. His mother sent his abba a message, begging him with tears to send her son out to see her. So the old man made him go. But as he was putting on his sheepskin to go and take leave of the old man, he suddenly burst into tears and did not go out after all.⁶⁹

Elsewhere, a monk prioritizes fictive familial ideals over the benefits implicit to retaining factual family assets:

He also said, "there was a monk living in a cave in the desert. His relations according to the flesh let him know, 'Your father is very ill, at the point of death: come and receive his inheritance.' He replied to them, 'I died to the world before he did, and the dead do not inherit from the living.'"⁷⁰

Each of these accounts presents monastic protagonists who prioritize fictive family connection over factual familial affection. However, patterns that texture a broader range of source material—in particular, legislation included in the *Canons* of Shenoute—suggest less clear-cut resolution.

Similarly striking is narrative detail that refracts fictive embrace of less desirable household roles. For example, one *apophthegm* depicts a "brother" who dons the attire of a slave as a show of "humility":

... a brother who was good, ascetic and handsome. He came to church for the synaxis dressed in a little old *mafort* darned all over. Once when I saw him coming to the synaxis I said to him, "Brother, do you not see the brothers, looking like angels for the synaxis in church? How can you always come here in that garb?" He said to me, "Forgive me, abba, but I have nothing else." So I took him in to my cell and gave him a tunic and whatever else he needed. After that he wore them like the other brethren and was like an angel to look at. Now once it was necessary for the Fathers to send ten brethren to the emperor about something or other and he was chosen as one of the group to go. When he heard this, he made a prostration before his Father saying, "In the Lord's name, excuse me, for I am the slave of a great man down there and if he recognizes me, he will deprive me of my habit and force me to serve him again." The brothers were convinced and left him behind. But later, they learned from someone who had known him well when he was in the world that he had been head of the administration and that he had spoken as he did as a ruse, so that no-one should know this or bother him about it. So great, amongst the Fathers, was their concern to flee from glory and the peace of this world!⁷¹

The protagonist of a complementary account is introduced as a former slave, who embraces his status—and obligations, as an expression of ascetic practice:

69. *Apoph. Patr.* Alph. Mark, Disciple of Silvanus 4 [Ward].

70. *Apoph. Patr.* Alph. Cassian 8 [Ward].

71. *Apoph. Patr.* Alph. Cronius 5 [Ward].

Abba Mius . . . [Who] had been a slave and . . . had become a true reader of hearts. Every year he went to Alexandria, taking his wages to his masters. They went to meet him with great respect, but the old man put water into a basin and brought it to wash his masters' feet. They said to him, "No, Father, do not overwhelm us." But he said to them, "I acknowledge that I am your slave and I acknowledge that you have left me free to serve God; I wash your feet, and you accept my wages, which are here." They argued, not wishing to receive them, so he said to them, "If you refuse to accept them, I shall remain here and serve you." Since they revered him, they allowed him to do what he wanted; then they saw him off, giving him many provisions and money so that he could give alms for them. For this reason he became famous and beloved in Scetis.⁷²

Both the exemplary character of these accounts and the particularity of recurrent detail add important texture to Basil's regulatory codes and Chrysostom's homilies. Placed in conversation with late Roman legal codes, they add narrative dimension to legislation which addresses enslaved individuals who seek asylum in monastic settings.

Fictional Refraction of Factual Mediterranean Families: *Lausiaca History*

Applying a household lens to the fictive and factual familial threads that texture the *Lausiaca History* of Palladius is as productive. Structured as a rambling narrative travelogue, Palladius' accounts have been likened in tone to the histories of Herodotus.⁷³ Purporting to relate the lifestyles and praxis of the male and female "solitaries" whom Palladius has "seen" or "heard about," or with whom he has lived in "the Egyptian desert and Libya, in the Thebaid and Syene,"⁷⁴ his itinerary includes discussion of a number of the protagonists also featured in the *Apophthegmata Patrum (et Matrum)*. While *apophthegmatic* depictions of these individuals often underscore harsh regimens of ascetic renunciation, Palladius' narrations are more measured.

For example, Palladius devotes considerable attention to Melania the Younger—daughter and namesake of the elite Roman householder Melania the Elder.⁷⁵ In describing praxis, which mirrors the personal austerities depicted in the *Life of Macrina*, Palladius reports:

[Melania had] . . . arranged to do some of the manual work of her slave women, whom she made her associates in her ascetic practices . . . [while] dwelling in the country, sometimes in Sicily, again in Campania, with fifteen eunuchs and sixty maidens, both freewomen and slaves.⁷⁶

72. *Apoph. Patr.* Alph. Mius 2 [Ward].

73. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 32.1 [Meyer].

74. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* Prol.2 [Meyer].

75. The factual and fictive networks affiliated with this elite household are explored in *Melania*, edited by Catherine Chin and Caroline Schroeder.

76. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 61.6 [Meyer].

Palladius also notes that as an ostensible measure of austerity Melania had earlier “set free eight thousand slaves who desired freedom.” In turn, when she attempted to manumit the rest of her household entourage, they “did not want this . . . choosing rather to serve her brother, to whom she sold them for three pieces of money.”⁷⁷

Elsewhere, Palladius observes that when the fictive and factual “tall brothers,” Isidore, Pisimius, Adelphius, Paphnutius, Pambo, and Ammonius, were banished from Egypt to Palestine, “they were not allowed servants.” In a sobering reminder of the gendered hierarchies, which structured factual (and arguably fictive) family life in even the most elite households, he reports that Melania (the elder) “wore a slave’s hood [in order] to bring them what they needed at evening.”⁷⁸

The details that distinguish Palladius’ less prestigious protagonists are incidentally reported. However, the number of fictional subjects who continue to be identified relative to factual household status is difficult to ignore. For example, Palladius describes the “Christian maiden” Potamiaena as “a slave of someone or other during the time of Maximian” who was handed over to the prefect of Alexandria to be tortured after “her master was unable to seduce her.”⁷⁹ The Galatian priest Philoromus, “a most ascetic and patient man . . . was born of a mother who was a household slave and a father who was a free[d]man.”⁸⁰ The Cappadocian Sisinnius, disciple of Elpidius, is registered as “a slave by birth, but free by faith.”⁸¹

Any austerity implicit to the ascetic praxis of these individuals elicits little additional comment. Palladius likewise leaves un-addressed any familial associations that tether these less than elite individuals with factual households. In tracing the history of fictive and factual affiliations, Palladius’ priorities are clear. The ascetic habits of non-elites are decidedly less interesting than the re-configured praxis that registers congress with subordinates in fictively reformulated elite families. Complexifying larger-than-life narratives of radical renunciation, and/or benevolent amelioration, common threads instead texture a monastic fabric of fictive negotiation that at once reifies and re-configures factual household norms.

77. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 61.5 [Meyer]. Whether manumitted, sold at discount rates, or named as associates in Melania’s ascetic disciplines, the factual slaves of Melania’s (and/or her brother’s) ascetically “down-sized” household remain shadowy ciphers.

78. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 46.3 [Meyer]. The interchangeable roles assigned both slaves and women, and women as slaves, suggest that even the elite Melania’s status remains subject to an inextricable web of fictive and factual household hierarchies.

79. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 3.1–2 [Meyer].

80. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 45.1 [Meyer].

81. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 49.1 [Meyer].

[E] Fictive and Factual Families in Conversation

The compendious *Rule of the Master* (*Regula Magistri*) documents what is arguably the logical outcome of such performative ambiguity. Unlike the *Canons* of Shenoute and the *Rule* of Basil, the authorship of this regulatory corpus remains anonymous. However, fictive attribution to the "Master" affirms its household setting (and audience). While the *Rule* reflects a highly structured, late fifth/early sixth-century monastic community, it is difficult to ignore the degree to which included avenues for "practicing humility"⁸² echo earlier, emergent practice.

The Rule of the Master

In the "Master's" household, established roles are at once dissolved and instantiated. Simultaneously, the duties of factual household management fluidly meld with fictive disciplines of monastic life. Detailed description of the community's meal practice renders these tensive rhythms vividly transparent. As reported:

When the whole community along with its shepherd has come from the oratory, after the verses and prayer the abbot/[father] seats himself in his chair at table. The whole community immediately answers, "Thanks be to God," and while all remain standing at their tables the basket hanging over the abbot's/[father's] table is lowered with the pulley cord, to give the impression that the provisions of God's workmen are coming down from heaven. As soon as the basket has come down, the abbot makes a sign of the cross over the bread, breaks it, and takes first his own portion, which as he raises his hand will be blessed by the Lord; he sets out the portions for those who are standing before him at his table and who will eat with him, distributes it to them. Upon receiving it they kiss the abbot's/[father's] hand and sit down in silence.

Then he calls up the deans of the tables and gives them the portions for their whole table. After these have been dismissed, he calls up the others and gives them theirs. If, by the grace of God, the community is numerous he does the same for all the tables. Upon receiving the portions for themselves and their brothers, the deans kiss the abbot's/[father's] hands to give honor to the superior. Likewise, when they themselves make distribution to the brothers at their tables, their hands are kissed by the brothers as a sign of humility, and after each one has received his portion he sits down in silence. After all are seated, the weekly reader at table rises and receives his portion, kisses the hand of the one giving it, then hands it over to the cellarer, the weekly kitchen servers enter, receive their portions from their deans and kiss their hands. Meanwhile the cellarer, since he belongs to no deanery, receives his portions from the hand of the abbot/[father]. When he receives it, he too kisses the hand of the giver and places [the bread] on his table.⁸³

82. *Reg. Mag.* 18.8 [Eberle].

83. *Reg. Mag.* 23.1–14 [Eberle].

The ritual that marks the “Master’s” commencement of this household meal leaves little to the imagination. In elucidating the continuity that links fictive and factual familial forms, one element is particularly multivalent.

As described in the *Rule*, the basket of bread lowered through an opening in the ceiling is fictively grounded in scriptural precedent. Situated within a factual household, however, the same mechanism served as an established system for delivering food at an aristocratic banquet.⁸⁴ Lowered by slaves into the *triclinium*, the basket was received by the patriarch of the family. The elite householder then dispersed its contents to another group of slaves, who in turn served the guests. In the “Master’s” dining room these functions have been fictively (and spiritually) redefined. However, a shift in nomenclature does little to disguise the factually, functional household tasks here executed by various strata of monks.

Behind the scenes the roles accorded respective constituencies are familiar. The “weekly servers,” who facilitate distribution of the “provisions of God’s workmen . . . coming down from heaven,”⁸⁵ also “serve in the kitchen for [a period] of seven days.”⁸⁶ During this week “these brothers” likewise “take care of the monastery’s household affairs.”⁸⁷

They take off the shoes of all the brothers . . . and also repair them. . . . [D]uring the same week they clean the monastery, wash the rest places, chop the wood, bring water for the face. They pour the water on the hands of the brothers as they go in for Communion. They wash the table napkins, bath towels, face towels and the brothers’ soiled laundry during the time not devoted to cooking. Every day they ignite and extinguish the monastery’s lamps trimmed by the cellarer.⁸⁸

Detailing instruction less formally encountered in Shenoute’s *Canons* and Basil’s *Rule*, the *Rule of the Master* simultaneously registers keen awareness of the relative humility implicit in various types of work. In the Master’s fictive household, prospective (and existing) family members are explicitly barred from “heavy labor.” Rather, involvement in manual work is limited to activities conducive to “spiritual progress.”⁸⁹

84. Thanks to *Sabine Jäger-Wersonig*, director of the Austrian Archeological Excavation for responding to my query about a ceiling transept above the presiding table of an Ephesian *triclinium*. An arrangement consonant with that depicted in the *Rule of the Master* remains *in situ* in this elite Terrace House.

85. *Reg. Mag.* 23.2 [Eberle]; cf. Larsen, “Resisting a Reclining Culture,” 253–57; Larsen, “Slavery in Early Monasticism,” forthcoming.

86. *Reg. Mag.* 18.1 [Eberle].

87. *Reg. Mag.* 19.19 [Eberle].

88. *Reg. Mag.* 18–19 [Eberle].

89. *Reg. Mag.* 86. Such distinctions presage practice that will become codified in later tradition. The “master’s” mandates further commend that agricultural land be “owned under someone else’s management . . . and crafts alone, together with the garden, suffice as work in the monastery” (*Reg. Mag.* 86.23–27 [Eberle]).

Conclusions

It is arguable that the fictive and factual delineations rendered explicit in the *Rule of the Master* are apparent already in the tensions that link the *Lives* of Macrina and Antony. The same delineations mark a recurring refrain across subsequent generations of emergent praxis. As Antony relinquishes traditional ties of kinship, he assumes the role of *paterfamilias* to a fictive family of global scope. Commendation of his young sister to a community of "known and faithful virgins" presages a complementary maternal structure of similar heft. Whether invested in making the desert a city or a family of solitaries, the historical record affirms that such monastic re-formulation proved productive—generating a lineage of parents and children, sisters and brothers, claiming familial affinity and citizenship, not solely in this world but also the next.

Simultaneously, as "sons" and "daughters" double as "disciples" and "disciples" double as servants, more discrete delineations are difficult to discern. Tradition has framed the attendants that populate the cells and households of monastic luminaries the fortunate progeny of illustrious *abbas* and *ammās*. However, the detail that characterizes emergent monastic practice suggests a more complex picture. If embrace of "solitude" fictively re-defines household norms, it simultaneously reifies factual familial structures. In sum, over time and in confounding ways, narrative, regulatory, and material records iteratively affirm the degree to which emergent ideals and ideologies fictively re-constitute factual family life.

As institutional and relational norms at once dismantle and re-inscribe structural hierarchies, they mirror (and elucidate) the tensions that define both early and late-ancient Christian practice. Whether fictively or factually construed, in the fourth century, as in the first, household roles remain a persistent locus of negotiation. Refracted in legal stipulations, which belie easy categorization, they render visible shadowy landscapes of both diverse and established disposition. Even as routine absorption of familial hierarchies leaves little to the imagination, recurrent adjudication of the autonomy and authority of slaves (and women) underscores the tensive character of household reformulation. It reminds readers that renegotiating established roles perennially remains less than a simple and settled question.⁹⁰

In many respects, James Goehring's conceptual visualization of the Egyptian monastic landscape crystallizes the complex simplicity of recurrent interpretive threads. Goehring argues that the "myth of the desert"⁹¹ works "so powerfully, because it divide[s] . . . so sharply. There are no suburbs here, no grey zones

90. Whether fictively or factually depicted, such dichotomies add provocative valence to Leipoldt and Farag's respective investigations; cf. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, esp. 54–57.

91. Goehring, "Dark Side of Landscape," 137.

where one finds . . . polar opposites . . . mixed and difficult to distinguish."⁹² His study in contrasts can be as readily applied to fictive and factual household forms. Here, too, mythic constructs of harsh solitude and/or enduring familial affection have obscured shadowy "grey zones" where emergent practice remains "mixed and difficult to distinguish." Closer scrutiny of the narrative, regulatory, and material record, however, muddies late-ancient landscapes long framed as "polar opposites."⁹³ Mapping *loci*, "which can be read from many directions in many configurations,"⁹⁴ juxtaposed refractions that affirm that in the fifth century—as in the first—the household remains a nexus of existential negotiation. They mirror monastic constituencies actively and/or passively engaged in "think[ing] about, experiment[ing] with and negotiat[ing] . . . social structures, personal relationships and identity formation."⁹⁵ Formed as fictive and factual family, vowed "to engage, [if] not to agree with one another,"⁹⁶ they have become the "πόλις of God" on earth.⁹⁷

92. Goehring, *Ascetics Society and the Desert*, 73; cf. Goehring, "The World Engaged," 133–44.

93. Goehring, *Ascetics Society and the Desert*, 73.

94. Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 20.

95. Taussig, *In the Beginning was the Meal*, 67–68.

96. Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 20.

97. Larsen, "Redrawing the Interpretive Map," 1–34.

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