

PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE *HOMILIES*

THE PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE *HOMILIES*
AND
THE ANTIOCHENE POLEMIC AGAINST ALLEGORY

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Abstract

Most scholars working on the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, two related Christian novels redacted in fourth-century Syria, have been primarily concerned with source-critical questions. They have treated these texts as mere collections of sources, which are valuable for our understanding of “Jewish Christianity” in the first and second centuries. The recent works of Kelley and Reed, however, have demonstrated that these novels are important works of late antique literature in their own right, and that they have much to tell us about Christianity and Judaism in the fourth century.

In this thesis I follow their lead, seeking to understand the approach to Scripture in the *Homilies* and its relationship to broader theological issues in fourth-century Syria. I argue that the *Homilies* engages in a tacit polemic against Christians who read Scripture allegorically and reflects similar anti-Alexandrian concerns as are evident in the writings of other fourth-century theologians and exegetes from Antioch, particularly Eustathius of Antioch, Diodore of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. I suggest that this polemic becomes evident when we read the doctrine of the false pericopes in *Hom.* 1-3 together with the critique of the Greek myths in *Hom.* 4-6, and when we note the rather frequent attempts of the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* to cast Alexandria in a negative light.

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INTRODUCTION

In the centuries just before the turn of the Common Era a new kind of literature began to appear in the Hellenistic world. Authors composed lengthy adventure stories in prose, at the heart of which were “love, travel, and violence.”¹ This new genre went unnamed in Antiquity, probably because Greek literary theorists viewed it as a trivial and popular mode of literary expression.² Scholars writing in English refer to these stories as novels or romances, since these labels can be used broadly to refer to “a very wide spectrum of narrative prose.”³

Although much early Christian literature, such as the various *Acts* of the apostles, could fit this broad definition of a novel, it is the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions* which most closely resemble the extant Greek novels.⁴ These two texts were redacted in Syria in the opening decades of the fourth century C.E. They narrate the journey of the Apostle Peter and Clement of Rome from Caesarea to Antioch, their debates with the arch-heretic Simon Magus, and the providential reunion of Clement’s dispersed family. At the heart of the story is a defense of the oneness and goodness of God against the devious heretic Simon, who argues for the inferiority of the Creator, seemingly with Scripture on his side. Epistemology, how one comes to knowledge of God, is therefore a central concern of both the *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, which reject philosophical inquiry in favour of prophetic revelation (cf. *Hom.* 2.6-7). The *Homilies*,

¹ Tomas Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 3.

² Hägg, *Novel in Antiquity*, 1-4; Ben Edwin Perry, *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of their Origins* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 4.

³ Niklas Holzberg, *The Ancient Novel: An Introduction*, trans. Christine Jackson-Holzberg (London: Routledge, 1995), 26.

⁴ See Holzberg, *Ancient Novel*, 23-26. Indeed, Holzberg suspects that the Pseudo-Clementine novel is simply a Christianized version of a now lost “pagan” novel.

unlike the *Recognitions*, takes up the concomitant problem of how properly to interpret Scripture in the light of seeming inconsistencies and impious passages. The *Homilies* rejects allegorical and other non-literal reading strategies entirely, arguing instead that those passages which depict God anthropomorphically must be rejected as false interpolations (cf. 2.38; 3.47).

Both novels were written originally in Greek, although the *Recognitions* survives in full only in Rufinus of Aquileia's Latin translation. The similarities between the two have led to much speculation on the nature of the hypothetical sources employed by the redactors of both the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*. The general consensus is that both are based upon an earlier novel about Peter, Clement, and Simon, which has been termed the *Grundschrift* and dated to the third century C.E. Certain scholars, moreover, have asserted that the *Grundschrift* itself is but a composite of even earlier sources, such as the *Kerygmata Petrou*, which is supposedly a second century "Jewish Christian" anti-Marcionite source.⁵

The recent works of Nicole Kelley and Annette Y. Reed have heralded the beginnings of a new stage of Pseudo-Clementine scholarship. Scholars have long treated the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* as mere receptacles which preserve valuable traditions about Christian origins. In the preface to her monograph *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines*, Kelley remarks that "people interested in the Pseudo-Clementines were not particularly curious about the fourth century, and very few

⁵ This topic is treated in more detail in chapter one.

people interested in the fourth century were concerned with the Pseudo-Clementines.”⁶

The source-critical agenda that has so dominated scholarship on the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* for the past century and a half has led scholars to neglect the task of situating these texts within the fourth-century Syrian milieu in which they were redacted.⁷ As such, the connections between the extant Pseudo-Clementine novels and broader fourth-century theological issues have gone largely unexplored.⁸ Kelley has begun to fill this lacuna with her recent monograph, in which she demonstrates how the authors/redactors of the *Recognitions* drew upon and synthesized late antique astrological and philosophical materials to formulate a discourse about “true knowledge.”⁹ Reed, moreover, has used the emphasis upon halakhic observation (dietary and ritual purity laws), the exaltation of Moses, and the view that the Jews remain the chosen people of God in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* to show that the boundaries between Judaism and Christianity “were still being constructed, negotiated, contested, and blurred on the ground – not only in the second century CE, but also, with growing intensity, in the third and fourth centuries.”¹⁰ It is within this new paradigm of scholarship that I situate the thesis.

⁶ Nicole Kelley, *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines*, WUNT² 213 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), viii.

⁷ Kelley, *Knowledge*, 1-6; F. Stanley Jones, “The Pseudo-Clementines: Part II,” *Second Century* 2 (1982): 69.

⁸ For example, Jones, “Part II,” 74-5, notes how scholars of Arianism frequently overlook the *Homilies*, which has long been thought to have been redacted by someone holding an Arian Christology. This trend is, however, beginning to change; see esp. Kelley, *Knowledge*; Annette Yoshiko Reed, “Jewish Christianity After the Parting of the Ways,” in *Ways That Never Parted*, ed. A.H. Becker and A.Y. Reed (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 189-231.

⁹ Kelley, *Knowledge*, 27.

¹⁰ Reed, “Jewish Christianity,” 202.

In modern research, there has yet to be a comprehensive study of the approach to Scripture in either the *Homilies* or the *Recognitions*. The work that has been done on biblical interpretation in these texts focuses almost exclusively on the doctrine of the false pericopes – the belief that the written Law has acquired false interpolations, which make the Creator appear imperfect and deficient (cf. 2.38; 3.47). Scholars have asserted that this doctrine was part of the *Kerygmata Petrou*, a putative second-century “Jewish Christian” source thought to have been used by the authors/redactors of the third-century *Grundschrift*, itself a hypothetical document that has been reconstructed on the basis of the similarities between the fourth-century *Homilies* and *Recognitions*. The doctrine of the false pericopes has thus been treated as an esoteric belief of primitive “Jewish Christianity.” This claim, as I shall demonstrate more fully in the following chapter, is highly problematic, not least because there is no textual evidence for this doctrine prior to the fourth century. Unlike other elements considered to be part of the *Grundschrift*, the doctrine of the false pericopes appears only in the *Homilies* and is not present in the *Recognitions*. This fact has not deterred scholars from positing an early date for it, since the *Recognitions* is widely acknowledged to be the more “orthodox” of the two novels, and it is believed that its authors/redactors did not include the more “heretical” elements of the *Grundschrift*. Scholars such as Strecker have posited that passages such as *Rec.* 1.21¹¹ preserve vestiges of the doctrine of the false pericopes. I am, however, in agreement with F. Stanley Jones, who asserts that such passages are consistent with other

¹¹ *Rec.* 1.21: “[T]hat I [Peter] may be able to expound to you the method of our faith without any distraction, and the order continuously, according to the tradition of the True Prophet, who alone knows the past as it was, the present as it is, and the future as it shall be: *which things were indeed plainly spoken by Him, but are not plainly written; so much so that when they are read, they cannot be understood without an expounder, on account of the sin which has grown up with men, as I said before*” (my italics).

late antique Christian views on the role of tradition in interpreting Scripture and that they do not necessarily betray any acquaintance with the false pericopes.¹²

Not only does the early dating of the doctrine of the false pericopes rest on very shaky ground, but it has led scholars virtually to ignore its role in the redacted, “final” form of the *Homilies*. In my view, by reading the passages that deal with the false pericopes in isolation from the broader narrative of the *Homilies*, we have missed an important trajectory that runs throughout the work – a trajectory that is directly related to the fourth-century Syrian milieu of its authors/redactors.

In this thesis, I argue that the *Homilies* engages in a tacit polemic against Christians who read Scripture allegorically and reflects similar anti-Alexandrian concerns as are evident in the writings of other fourth-century theologians and exegetes from Antioch. This subtle polemic emerges when we consider the relationship between the approach to Scripture put forth in *Homilies* 1-3 and the critique of the allegorization of the Greek myths in *Homilies* 4-6, a textual unit thought to derive from a much earlier Hellenistic Jewish source.

Scripture is one of the central topics dealt with in *Hom.* 1-3. It is in this unit that the doctrine of the false pericopes is first introduced, during the course of Peter’s private instruction of Clement. After making the claim that knowledge of God and the nature of the soul can only be gained through prophetic revelation (2.2-11), Peter warns Clement that in each age there is a false prophet who will attempt to deceive people with heretical doctrines (2.15-18). Simon Magus, Peter claims, is the false prophet of their age, for he

¹² F. Stanley Jones, “Marcionism in the Pseudo-Clementines,” unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, November 2005.

attempts to lead people away from the worship of the one, true God so that they may worship him as a god (2.22). Peter explains to Clement that Simon's chief weapon in repudiating and discrediting his teaching about the one, good, Creator God is Scripture itself (cf. 2.37, 39ff.). It is at this point in the narrative that Peter introduces the doctrine of the false pericopes.

In 2.38, Peter teaches Clement that the

the Scriptures acquired [προσέλαβον] many falsehoods against God for this reason [λόγω τούτω]. When the prophet Moses, by the will of God, handed down [παράδεδωκότος] the law with the explanations to a certain chosen seventy in order that they might also instruct those of the people who were chosen, after not much time the written law [γραφεὶς ὁ νόμος] acquired certain falsehoods against the one God, who created [δημιουργήσαντος] the heaven and the earth and all things in them, the evil one undertaking to work this for some righteous purpose. And this took place in reason and judgment that those might be convicted who should dare to listen to the things written against God (2.38).¹³

According to this doctrine, Scripture was revealed to Moses by God for the purpose of being handed down to certain chosen individuals in each generation. The written record of the Law [γραφεὶς ὁ νόμος], however, became corrupted; passages not revealed to Moses, which contain falsehoods “against the one God,” became mixed up with the true revelation. Although God is not directly responsible for the existence of the false pericopes, he allowed the corruption of his perfect revelation to occur in order to test the character of those who claim to follow His laws.

Peter also speaks on the doctrine of the false pericopes in 3.47, during his public debate with Simon (*Hom.* 3.30-58), and there he explains further the relationship between

¹³ English translations are lightly revised from “The Clementine Homilies,” in *The Ante-Nicene Library: Volume 8*, trans. T. Smith, P. Peterson, and J. Donaldson, ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, fourth printing (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2004), 223-346. Greek text is from Bernhard Rehm and Georg Strecker, eds., *Die Pseudoklementinen I: Homilien*, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 42 (Berlin: Akademie, 1992).

revelation and writing. In response to Simon's charge that Scripture seems "to show that God is subject to every infirmity" (3.47), Peter states:

The law of God was given [ἐδόθη] by Moses [διὰ Μωυσέως], unwritten [ἀγράφως], to seventy wise men, to be handed down [παρὰδίδοσθαι], in order that the government might be carried on by succession. But after that Moses was taken up, it was written by someone but not by Moses (3.47).

In effect, Peter makes an attempt to distance Moses from the written Torah, associating him instead with a line of oral transmission. Moses, foreknowing that the Torah would be "destroyed...and often lost" (3.47), did not write it down. Conversely, those who wrote it "were not prophets" because they did not foresee its disappearance (3.47). The written Torah cannot be connected to Moses and therefore it cannot be traced back to the revelation given by God. Only the oral tradition has roots at Sinai. The manuscripts of the Torah in circulation are thus to be treated with the utmost caution, since they contain both true and false statements about the Creator. It is notable that both times Peter speaks of the doctrine of the false pericopes in *Hom.* 1-3, he does so to refute criticisms of the Creator God. This doctrine serves to explain why there are certain passages in the Bible which suggest that there are numerous gods and also which call into question the goodness of the Creator.

Nowhere does Peter ever provide a list of the corrupted passages. The key verses at issue, however, seem to be those that ascribe human emotions and weaknesses, such as jealousy and anger, to God (cf. 2.43-44). For example, Peter asserts that since "God foreknows all things, there is every necessity that the scriptures are false which say that He is ignorant" (2.50). Likewise, Peter asks rhetorically, "If He deliberates and changes His purpose (cf. Gen 6:6), who is perfect in understanding and permanent in design? If

He envies (cf. Ex 20:5), who is above rivalry? If He hardens hearts (cf. Ex 5:21), who makes wise? If He makes blind and deaf, who has given sight and hearing?” (2.43) It is striking that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* do not employ allegorical and other non-literal reading strategies to explain these problematic passages. The presumption underlying the doctrine of the false pericopes is that Scripture must be true when read in the most literal and straightforward way possible.

Hom. 4-6 is likewise concerned with sacred texts. It is, however, the Greek myths which are under discussion in this section. While in Tyre to spy on Simon, Clement encounters Appion, an Alexandrian grammarian and old family friend. Appion chastises Clement for abandoning his ancestral customs in favour of a Jewish way of life (4.7). Clement replies, however, that Greek customs are based upon impious and unseemly myths, which promote licentious behaviour. As such, they ought to be rejected. Appion attempts to offer allegorical readings of the myths to defend their value, but Clement argues that such a way of reading cannot redeem the Greek myths from charges of impiety because their narratives taken literally are not worthy of imitation (4.25). A text that speaks of the gods in an unworthy manner cannot be rescued by claims that it possesses a deeper, more righteous meaning which has been veiled by the author (cf. 6.17). In my view, it is the same logic that informs both the doctrine of the false pericopes and the rejection of the allegorization of the Greek myths.

It could, of course, be argued that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* had no knowledge of allegorical readings of Scripture and that this would explain why such a practice is never explicitly mentioned and condemned in the text. Such ignorance seems

to be unlikely. To begin with, Paul in his *Epistle to the Galatians* explicitly refers to his non-literal reading of the story of Hagar and Sarah as an ἀλληγορούμενα (4.24). It is difficult to believe that the fourth-century Greek-speaking authors/redactors of the *Homilies* would be unfamiliar with this epistle. It is, in my view, also probable that they would have been familiar with the more systematic allegorization of Scripture that was being used in Alexandria by those such as Philo, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. Eustathius, who also writes in the opening decades of the fourth century in Antioch, is well-acquainted with the practice of allegorizing Scripture and we can deduce from his *De engastrimytho* that “Alexandrian” (specifically Origenian) methods of exegesis were a source of concern for at least a segment of the population in Antioch. Indeed, it seems to be no accident that Alexandria is portrayed in the first *Homily* as a hotbed of godless philosophical speculation¹⁴ and that Clement’s allegorizing opponent Appion in *Homilies* 4-6 is an Alexandrian grammarian/magician. Alexandria is depicted as the demonic antithesis of Antioch, towards which Peter and his band of followers strive throughout the novel.¹⁵ In my view, by passing over Christian allegorical exegesis in silence, the

¹⁴ A point which is strengthened by the fact that the scene set in Alexandria is an addition of the authors/redactors of the *Homilies*. In *Hom.* 1.8-14, Clement is travelling from Rome to Caesarea to investigate the teachings of the True Prophet, when his ship is blown off-course and must make an emergency stop in Alexandria. While in this famous Egyptian city, Clement is won over by the preaching of Barnabas, but he is appalled by the way in which the Alexandrian philosophers mock Barnabas for the simplicity of his teaching. The same incident occurs in *Rec.* 1.8-11, only there it is set in Rome before Clement leaves for Caesarea. We must assume that the *Homilies* changed the setting from Rome to Alexandria and not vice versa, because in both novels the scene closes with Clement being unable to accompany Barnabas to Caesarea, needing instead to stay behind for a few days to collect some money owed to him. If Clement had only recently arrived in Alexandria as a shipwrecked refugee, it makes no sense that he would have to collect some outstanding debt. This does, however, make sense if the setting is Rome where Clement had long resided.

¹⁵ See, e.g., 11.36: “Having spoken thus, [Peter] sent the harbingers into Antioch of Syria, bidding them expect him forthwith”; 12.1: “Therefore starting from Tripolis of Phoenicia to go to Antioch of Syria...”; 20.23: “Peter, hearing this, called the multitude together to deliberate, and appointed one of his

Homilies can portray this method of interpretation as thoroughly pagan in origin and hence completely illegitimate.

It is not my intention, however, to revert to an uncritical and ultimately untenable dichotomy between the so-called schools of Alexandria and Antioch, the former characterized by its allegorical approach to Scripture and the latter by its literal approach. Instead, I am drawing upon recent scholarship that demonstrates the way in which these late antique theologians themselves rhetorically created this divide.¹⁶ Put another way, although we cannot speak of a uniform Antiochene method of interpreting Scripture, we can speak of a series of shared rhetorical moves, such as a privileging of the “literal” or “historical” meaning of Scripture and a denigration of “allegorical” readings, which appear with consistency in commentaries, homilies, and treatises penned by theologians who were active in Antioch. By reading the *Homilies* alongside the (surviving) works of Eustathius of Antioch, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and other Western Syrian Greek-speaking Christians, the concern regarding the encroaching influence of Alexandria emerges as an important feature of the theological, hermeneutical, and epistemological discourse of late antique Antioch. We may thus posit the existence of shared discursive aims, despite the existence of clear differences between the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* and exegetes such as Diodore and Theodore, who affirm the validity of the entire Scriptural corpus. The doctrine of the false pericopes, far

attendants bishop; and having remained three days in Laodicea, baptizing and healing, he hastened to the neighbouring city of Antioch.”

¹⁶ See especially Margaret M. Mitchell, “Patristic Rhetoric on Allegory: Origen and Eustathius Put 1 Samuel 28 On Trial,” *Journal of Religion* 85 (2005): 414-45; Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Peabody, Hendrickson, 2002).

from being an imported relic of primitive “Jewish Christianity,” is imbricated in the agonistic context of fourth-century Antiochene biblical interpretation.

The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to demonstrate that the *Homilies* as a whole has a coherent and consistent approach to the interpretation of Scripture, which has been shaped by the fourth-century Antiochene milieu of its authors/redactors. To my knowledge, no one has yet to read the *Homilies* alongside Antiochene biblical exegetes, and in the first chapter I shall attempt to explain why this connection has been overlooked, by setting forth the history of research on the Pseudo-Clementine novels. The focus of the following two chapters shall be a close textual analysis of the Greek text of the *Homilies*. The *Homilies*’ approach to Scripture with a particular focus on the doctrine of the false pericopes, as elaborated in *Homilies* 1-3, will be discussed in the second chapter; the treatise against the allegorization of the Greek myths, found in *Homilies* 4-6, will be the subject of the third chapter. In the final chapter, I shall draw upon the previous work on individual sections of the *Homilies* to elucidate the anti-allegorical polemic running through the work. I shall, moreover, examine other fourth-century works of biblical interpretation composed in Antioch, specifically Eustathius’ *De engastrimytho*, to elucidate points of similarity and of difference.

CHAPTER ONE

“A History of Research on the Pseudo-Clementines: The Search for the Origins of ‘Jewish Christianity’”

The Pseudo-Clementine corpus has challenged scholars and provoked heated disagreements since the *Homilies* was first published (albeit in an incomplete form) by J.B. Cotelier in 1672.¹⁷ The relationship between the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* has been a burning issue since the time of Cotelier himself and it has spawned a number of complicated and abstruse theories, the specific details of which do not concern us here. Instead, I will attempt to trace the very broad contours of the debate. Initially, scholars such as Dodwell, Schliemann, Hilgenfeld, and Uhlhorn – the former writing in the seventeenth century and the latter three in the early nineteenth – would argue over the priority of the *Homilies* or *Recognitions*.¹⁸ They explained the similarities between the two novels by arguing that one was familiar with and dependent upon the other; there was, however, no consensus regarding which came first. Although they would speculate about the use of earlier sources, such as the *Kerygma* (later referred to as the *Kerygmata Petrou*, this would not become a central concern of Pseudo-Clementine scholarship until late in the nineteenth century.

The Origins of the Source-Critical Enterprise

¹⁷ J.B. Cotelier, *Ss. patrum qui temporibus apostolicis floruerunt* (Paris : Typis Petri le petit, 1672), vol 1, 529-746.

¹⁸ See the references in F. Stanley Jones, “The Pseudo-Clementines: Part I” *Second Century* 2 (1982): 8-9.

Jones argues that it was the work of R.A. Lipsius that inaugurated the source-critical stage of investigation, which would predominate right until the present day. According to Lipsius, the similarities between the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions* could best be explained by their common use of an earlier basic writing or *Grundschrift*, which itself was a composite of even earlier sources.¹⁹ This thesis would be accepted by most scholars, but there would be almost no agreement over the character, location, or date of the *Grundschrift* for many years. Hort, for example, characterized the *Grundschrift* as an Elchasaite source from the Transjordan composed in the early third-century;²⁰ Langen, however, believed that the *Grundschrift* was written in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem in 135 in order to convince “eastern Jewish Christians” that Rome was the true seat of authority for the Church.²¹ Bigg asserted that the *Grundschrift* was an orthodox writing corrupted by the authors/redactors the *Homilies*,²² whereas Headlam portrayed it as a heretical writing that was purged by the authors/redactors of the *Recognitions*.²³ Most scholars today would date the *Grundschrift* to the middle part of the third-century and locate it in Syria. Moreover, there is a general consensus that this text contained the major elements of the romance of recognitions.²⁴

¹⁹ R.A. Lipsius, *Die Quellen de römischen Petrus-Sage* (Kiel: Schwerts'sche Buchhandlung, 1872), 14ff., discussed in Jones, “Part I,” 10.

²⁰ F.J.A. Hort, *Judaistic Christianity. A Course of Lectures* (Cambridge: MacMillan and Co., 1894), 201, discussed in Jones, “Part I,” 10.

²¹ Joseph Langen, *Die Klemensromane. Ihre Entstehung und ihre Tendenzen aufs neue untersucht* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1890), 18-89, discussed in Jones, “Part I,” 10.

²² Charles Bigg, “The Clementine Homilies,” in *Studia biblica et ecclesiastica*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 157-93, discussed in Jones, “Part I,” 11.

²³ A.C. Headlam, “The Clementine Literature,” *JTS* 3 (1902): 41-58, discussed in Jones, “Part I,” 11.

²⁴ Kelley, *Knowledge*, 11-12.

Lipsius was also influential in his claim that the *Grundschrift* was itself dependent upon an earlier source called the *Kerygmata Petrou*, which was mentioned by Clement in *Rec.* 3.74-5. There was, of course, disagreement over whether these ten books of Peter's preachings supposedly sent by Clement to James were a literary fiction. Hilgenfeld, Lehmann, and Waitz were ultimately influential in their claims, however, that "such a refined literary fiction should not be presupposed for the age in which the PsCl were composed."²⁵ On the basis of the "table of contents" in *Rec.* 3.75, Waitz proposed that the *Kerygmata Petrou* consisted of the material in *Rec.* 1-3 and *Hom.* 2-3, 16-20, and that it was written around 135 by an ex-Elchasaite.²⁶ This reconstruction of the *Kerygmata Petrou* as an early "Jewish Christian" source has most recently been championed by G. Strecker and H.J. Schoeps. In fact, Schoeps uses the *Kerygmata Petrou* almost exclusively for his study of Ebionite doctrine and practice.²⁷

As is evident from even this brief and cursory look at scholarly debates over the nature of the sources of the *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, one of the key problems with which scholars engaged was determining the precise redactional layer(s) at which "Jewish Christian" elements enter into the Pseudo-Clementine novel. The reason for this concern is the notion that the Pseudo-Clementines are valuable primarily because they can reveal to us the nature of "Jewish Christianity." Schoeps states, for instance, that "for

²⁵ See the references in Jones, "Part I," 16.

²⁶ Hans Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen: Homilien und Rekognitionen* TU, N.F., vol. 10.4 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1904), 2ff., discussed in Jones, "Part I," 16.

²⁷ H. J. Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church*, trans. Douglas Hare (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 38-117. Gerd Ludemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 169-70, has called into question, however, the certainty with which we can make conclusions about a source derived from a source that "itself must be reconstructed from our existing documents."

the reconstruction of Jewish Christian doctrinal ideas and historical views, the Pseudo-Clementine novel represents our most important source.”²⁸ In making this statement, Schoeps reveals his debt to famed New Testament scholar F. C. Baur, who set the tone for most modern research on the Pseudo-Clementines. Baur is well known for advancing the thesis that there was a conflict in the nascent Christian movement between Petrine (Jewish) and Pauline (Gentile) elements, out of which orthodoxy would later emerge. He asserted that the Pseudo-Clementines stood in historical continuity with the Petrine party and that they were reliable witnesses to the “Jewish Christianity” of apostolic times.²⁹

Baur incorrectly assigned the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* to the late second century,³⁰ but even when a later date for these two novels was established, his belief that the Pseudo-Clementine literature was a valuable mine for traditions about early “Jewish Christians” strongly persisted. Charles Bigg’s 1890 article would prove to be a turning-point in Pseudo-Clementine scholarship, most notably perhaps for his assertion that the *Homilies* should be dated to the early fourth century.³¹ He remarked that the use of *homousios* in *Homily* 16 reveals a debt to the Arian controversy and, moreover, that there is “no reason whatever to regard [this] as a later addition.”³² Waitz, Chapman, Siouville, and Schwartz accepted the fourth-century dating.³³ Although several scholars

²⁸ Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 15.

²⁹ See esp. Annette Y. Reed, “Jewish Christianity,” 197-201, who notes Baur’s influence both in the study of the Pseudo-Clementines and “Jewish Christianity” more generally. See also Jones, “Part II,” 84-96.

³⁰ Ferdinand Christian Baur, “Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom,” *TZTh* (1831): 61-206, cited in Jones, “Part II,” 86.

³¹ Charles Bigg, “The Clementine Homilies,” in *Studia biblica et ecclesiastica*, VI. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 157-93.

³² Bigg, “Clementine Homilies,” 191.

³³ See the references in Jones, “Part II,” 73-4.

would deny the relationship between the *Homilies* and Arianism, Jones remarks, “Since this time PsCl research has reached a consensus that the Christological passages in H stand in some relationship to the Arian controversy.”³⁴

This establishing of a fourth-century date did not, however, cause scholars of the Pseudo-Clementine literature to shift their focus to the fourth century. Instead, they would devote nearly all of their attention to the source-critical enterprise, attempting to get back to the second and third century sources being used by the extant novels. According to Reed, this lack of interest in the redacted form of the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* has to do with the implicit assumption that Judaism and Christianity parted ways sometime in the second century and that “Jewish Christianity,” which inhabited the hazy borderline between the two religions, had essentially died out by the fourth century.³⁵ Since Pseudo-Clementine scholars were interested primarily in “Jewish Christianity” (and the “Jewish Christianity” of the apostolic era in particular), it only made sense for them to devote their time almost exclusively to uncovering earlier redactional layers.

Bigg also proved to be influential in his claim that the *Homilies* was redacted in Syria.³⁶ Here, too, he broke with Baur, who believed that the novel was of Roman provenance.³⁷ His argument for this location was primarily linguistic, observing the

³⁴ Jones, “Part II,” 74.

³⁵ Reed, “Jewish Christianity,” 197-201.

³⁶ Bigg, “Clementine Homilies,” 190-1.

³⁷ See Jones, “Part II,” 86.

presence of several Syriac loan-words in the text of the *Homilies*.³⁸ Waitz would confirm Bigg's hypothesis, noting in addition that Rome could not have been the location of the *Homilies*' redaction, since Greek was seldom used in the fourth-century West.³⁹ Kelley, moreover, asserts that Antioch is a likely candidate for the redaction of the Pseudo-Clementine novels "because of its association with traditions about Petrine authority."⁴⁰

In my view, another compelling reason to locate the *Homilies* in Syria in general and Antioch in particular is the geographical setting of the novel itself. The novel opens in Rome and Clement makes a brief and unexpected detour into Alexandria, but the narrative unfolds as Peter and Clement journey northwards along the Mediterranean coast from Palestine to Antioch, gaining followers and establishing ecclesiastical officers along the way.⁴¹ Much of the action thus takes place in and around Syria, and Antioch is clearly portrayed as the final destination towards which Peter and Clement strive. This is particularly significant when we consider that in other accounts of the Peter-Simon Magus conflict, the events take place in Rome. Eusebius, whose *Ecclesiastical History* was written shortly before the *Homilies*, tells of Simon's overwhelming success in Rome. This success is short lived, he says, because "[c]lose on his heels, in the same reign of Claudius, the all-gracious and kindly providence of the universe brought to Rome to deal

³⁸ Bigg, "Clementine Homilies," 191: "Upon the whole it seems more likely that the author lived in some Greek-speaking part of Syria...[I]f he were not himself a Syrian it would be difficult to account for the curious Syriac words that occur, though but rarely, in his Greek."

³⁹ Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, 369-70, discussed in Jones, "Part II," 74.

⁴⁰ Kelley, *Knowledge*, 181.

⁴¹ Their route is as follows: Rome → Alexandria (1.8 the episode in Alexandria takes place in Rome in *Rec.* 1.7-8) → Caesarea Stratonis (1.15) → Tyre of Phoenicia → (4.1) → Sidon (7.5) → Beyrout (7.9) → Byblus (7.12) → Tripolis (8.1) → Laodicea (13.1) → Antioch (20.23).

with this terrible threat to the world...Peter himself" (2.14).⁴² Likewise, in the second-century *Actus Vercellenses*⁴³ Simon begins to amass a great number of followers in Rome, and Peter receives a vision instructing him to leave Jerusalem straightaway for Italy in order to challenge him.

The Doctrine of the False Pericopes in Twentieth-Century Scholarship

As one of the more unusual and striking elements of the Pseudo-Clementine literature, the doctrine of the false pericopes received a considerable amount of attention from scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century, most notably in the writings of G. Quispel, H.J. Schoeps, G. Strecker, and H.J.W. Drijvers.⁴⁴ Following the traditional source-critical approach to the Pseudo-Clementines outlined above, these scholars attempted to situate this doctrine in the context of first and second-century "Jewish Christianity."

According to Schoeps, the doctrine of the false pericopes is central to early "Jewish Christian" theology and cultic practice, for it reflects the Ebionite view of Jesus "as a reformer of the Mosaic law...[who] condemned and rejected the sacrificial cult."⁴⁵ For the Ebionites, Jesus, the True Prophet, came to reveal to humanity which portions of the Torah were genuinely part of the Sinai revelation and should continue to be followed,

⁴² Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (trans G.A. Williamson; New York: New York University Press, 1966).

⁴³ For the date, see *New Testament Apocrypha, Volume Two*, ed. W. Schneemelcher (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 275.

⁴⁴ Han J.W. Drijvers, "Adam in the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *Loyalitätskonflikte in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Carsten Colpe*, ed. C. Elsas and H.G. Kippenberg (Würzburg: Koningshausen and Neumann, 1990); Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*; Georg Strecker, *Das Judentum in den Pseudoklementinen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981); Gilles Quispel, *Ptolémée Lettre à Flora*. Les Éditions du Cerf 29 (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 11-64.

⁴⁵ Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 74.

and which were spurious additions of human hands that should be abandoned.⁴⁶ Schoeps identifies passages in the *Homilies* where the doctrine of the false pericopes is placed in the mouth of Jesus as logia from an ancient non-extant Ebionite gospel.⁴⁷ He does not provide any reason, however, why a saying attributed to Jesus must necessarily have its origin in the first or early second century.

These logia, he goes on to claim, were then used in the Ebionite *Kerygmata Petrou* as part of a sustained anti-Marcionite polemic. By asserting that the laws pertaining to sacrifice and the anthropomorphisms found throughout the Torah were later additions, the Ebionites could refute Marcion's call to throw out the Hebrew Bible as a witness to a base and imperfect deity. Schoeps dates the *Kerygmata Petrou* to the middle of the second century on the basis of its supposedly anti-Marcionite character.⁴⁸

Surely Schoeps is right in focusing on the polemical, anti-heretical context in which the doctrine of the false pericopes developed. The *Homilies* as a whole, as Reed has recently argued,⁴⁹ can be read as a heresiological discourse, with Simon Magus standing in as the devious and deceptive father of all heresies.⁵⁰ And passages such as

⁴⁶ Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 76: "This ambivalent treatment of the law was based on the assumption that some passages in the Torah were not as original as others and were in fact later falsifications. The True Prophet had instructed his own concerning these passages."

⁴⁷ Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 77-82. These logia would include *Hom.* 3.52, which is a re-working of Matthew 15:13 and *Hom.* 2.51, which is an apocryphal saying of Jesus attested elsewhere only by Apelles, the one-time follower of Marcion.

⁴⁸ Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 94-5.

⁴⁹ Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Heresiology and the (Jewish-)Christian Novel," in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Edouard Iricinschi and Holger Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), forthcoming.

⁵⁰ This claim that Simon is the father of all heresies is consistent with those made by other late antique heresiologists. Alberto Ferreiro, "Simon Magus: The Patristic-Medieval Traditions and Historiography," *Apocrypha* 7 (1996): 147-65, 158, notes that the "same anti-Gnostic writers who created the fascinating portraits of Simon Magus and Helena likewise engendered the idea of a false apostolic succession paralleling in direct opposition to the legitimate one established by Simon Peter. This concept persisted very strongly in the fourth and fifth centuries..."

Hom. 2.43-44 certainly do use the false pericopes as a way to respond to what seem to be specifically Marcionite attacks on the God of the Jewish Scriptures.⁵¹ This does not mean, however, that we must presume that the doctrine of the false pericopes is a product of the second century.⁵²

There remained a very real presence of Marcionism in Syria well into the fourth century and beyond. The Syriac *Odes of Solomon*, composed in the third century C.E., contain, according to Drijvers, a “hidden, but clearly discernible polemic against the Marcionite creator God”; in the early decades of the fourth century, Adamantius composed five dialogues against the Marcionites, Bardesanites, and Valentinians entitled *De Recta Fide in Deum*; and Ephraem, in the closing decades of the fourth century, wrote his *Prose Refutations* against Marcion, Bardaisan, and Mani.⁵³ Therefore, if we come across an anti-Marcionite element, such as the doctrine of the false pericopes, in the *Homilies* we do not need to presume that it must be a relic of some much earlier source that was contemporary with Marcion himself. Moreover, even if we can establish that this

⁵¹ For an overview of Marcion’s theology, Adolph von Harnack, *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*, trans. J. Steely and L. Bierma (Durham: Labyrinth, 1990) remains the classic. For revisions of Harnack’s perspective, see David L. Balas, “Marcion Revisted: A ‘Post-Harnackian’ Perspective,” in *Texts and Testaments*, ed. E.W. Marsh (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1980), 95-108; John Barton, “Marcion Revisted,” in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L.M. McDonald and J.A. Sanders (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 341-54.

⁵² See my forthcoming article, “The Doctrine of the False Pericopes and Other Late Antique Approaches to the Problem of Scripture’s Unity,” in *Proceedings of the AELAC Conference on the Pseudo-Clementine Romance*, in which I argue that the doctrine of the false pericopes has notable parallels in proto-orthodox heresiological discourse, especially Irenaeus’ *Adversus Haereses*, Origen’s *De Principiis* and Ephraem’s *Commentary on Genesis* and *Hymns on Paradise*.

⁵³ H.J.W. Drijvers, “Marcionism in Syria: Principles, Problems, and Polemic,” *Second Century* 6 (1987-88): 153-72, esp. 153-56. It is notable that for heresiologists such as Ephraem, unlike the authors/redactors of the *Homilies*, the issue of Scripture (particularly the status and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible) was not a direct concern (cf. 167). According to Drijvers, the “main issues in that dispute were the number of Marcionite principles [either two or three], their function and place in creation and in the process of salvation, and, consequently, their relationship to one another” (156).

element was formulated earlier, we must still consider why the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* appropriated it and to what end they used it in the redacted form of the text.

Schoeps does not provide compelling proof to justify an early dating of the false pericopes, relying almost exclusively on its connection to Marcion. He does cite Epiphanius who claims that the Ebionites do not “accept Moses’ Pentateuch in its entirety; certain sayings they reject” (*Pan.* 30.18.7). One must keep in mind, however, that Epiphanius wrote the *Panarion* in the mid-370s⁵⁴ and is the only heresiologist to make this point about the Ebionites. He is, therefore, not a reliable source in our reconstruction of early Ebionitism. Indeed, it is possible that Epiphanius derived this view from reading the *Homilies* itself, which he may have known and attributed to the Ebionites.⁵⁵ Other than this, Schoeps seems content simply to presume that the doctrine of the false pericopes is part of the *Kerygmata Petrou* and he shows no interest in the implications of this doctrine in the *Homilies* itself nor in its relevance for our understanding of fourth century (Jewish) Christianity.

Quispel uses the *Homilies*, or rather the passages from the *Homilies* that he believes to be part of the *Kerygmata Petrou*, to establish a connection between nascent “Jewish Christianity” and so-called Gnosticism, as exemplified by Ptolemy’s *Letter to Flora* (apud. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 33.3.1-7.10). The *Letter* is a Valentinian response both to “proto-orthodox” Christians, who maintain that the Law in its entirety was revealed by

⁵⁴ Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book 1* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), xvii.

⁵⁵ *Pan.* 15.1-3: “But they use certain other books as well – Clement’s so-called Peregrinations of Peter, if you please, though they corrupt the contents while leaving a few genuine items... They have made everything in the Peregrinations their own and lied about Peter in many ways, saying that he was baptized daily for purification as they are.” It is unclear, however, whether this refers to one of the extant Pseudo-Clementine novels which we possess today.

God the Father, and to Marcionites, who reject the entire Law as a product of the Demiurge. Ptolemy puts forth a complex tri-partite division of the Law: one part of the Law is to be ascribed to God, another to Moses, and a third to the elders of the Israelite community (33.4.1). Moreover, he divides the portion attributed to God into three further divisions. One division he terms “the pure legislation unmixed with evil” (33.5.1). The second division contains laws that are “mixed with inferior matter and injustice, and the Saviour [i.e., Jesus] abolished this as incongruous with his nature” (33.5.1). In the third division are laws – such as sacrifice, Sabbath observance, and fasting – which are to be rejected in their outward manifestations but have spiritual significance (33.5.2, 8-9). Quispel notices a striking similarity between the approach to the Law in the *Letter to Flora* and the doctrine of the false pericopes, and he concludes that Ptolemy was familiar with “les conceptions des cercles judéo-chrétiens sur l’Ancien Testament.”⁵⁶

Like Schoeps, he believes that the doctrine of the false pericopes was a part of the second-century *Kerygmata Petrou* and that this non-extant text was representative of early “Jewish Christian” doctrine and practice.⁵⁷ Indeed, he goes so far as to remark, “[L]a conception des péripocopes faussées, loin d’être l’invention fantasque et éphémère de quelque gnostique, remonte jusqu’aux milieux juifs qui ont vu naître le christianisme.”⁵⁸ The doctrine of the false pericopes, according to Quispel, can be traced back to the very birth of Christianity in the first century C.E. Unlike Schoeps, however, Quispel does not attempt to provide any evidence to support this claim. He treats the *Kerygmata Petrou* as

⁵⁶ Quispel, *Ptolémée*, 26.

⁵⁷ Quispel, *Ptolémée*, 23-26.

⁵⁸ Quispel, *Ptolémée*, 26, my italics.

if it were an extant source, never mentioning the hypothetical nature of reconstructing this text or the problems with presuming that we know by whom and for whom it was written.

Given my later dating of the doctrine of the false pericopes, I find his claim that Ptolemy was reliant upon “Jewish Christian” exegetical approaches to be improbable, if we can even presuppose uniform interpretive practices, which I suggest we cannot.⁵⁹ It is, perhaps, possible that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* were influenced in some way, either directly or indirectly, by the approach to Scripture in the *Letter to Flora*, but outside of the general claim that Scripture contains true and false elements, the parallels between the two are less than compelling. To begin with, the *Homilies* does not share Ptolemy’s tri-partite division of the Law, holding to a simpler dichotomy of true and false passages. The *Homilies*, moreover, is careful to emphasize that the Law was originally given by the one, good, creator God (cf. 2.38, 3.47), whereas Ptolemy attributes the divine portion of the Law to the demiurge, who is “inferior to the perfect God and subject to his justice” (33.7.6). Perhaps the most compelling reason against positing a strong connection between the two, however, relates to the *Letter*’s view of the contents of the Law given by the demiurge. Ptolemy gives the Decalogue a central place (33.5.3), but this portion of the Torah receives almost no attention in the *Homilies*. Ptolemy also includes the sacrificial laws, read allegorically, in the revealed Torah (33.5.8), which

⁵⁹ The notion of a unified “Jewish Christianity” has long been abandoned. See, e.g., Charlotte E. Fonrobert, “Jewish Christians, Judaizers, and Christian Anti-Judaism,” in *A People’s History of Christianity: Late Ancient Christianity*, ed. Virginia Burrus (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 234-54, and J. Carleton Paget, “Jewish Christianity,” *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3: *The Early Roman Period*, ed. William Horbury et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 731-75.

would be inconceivable to the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* due to their anti-sacrificial polemics (cf. 2.44).

The influential writings of Schoeps and Quispel, both published in the 1960s, exemplify two predominant trends in Pseudo-Clementine scholarship. The first is an almost exclusive focus on earlier sources. Indeed, Quispel is arguably so influenced by this approach that he does not even feel the need to provide any evidence to support his reconstruction of the *Kerygmata Petrou*. This, however, is part of a broader scholarly tendency: hypothetical sources are discussed so frequently in the secondary literature on the Pseudo-Clementines that one can easily forget how murky, tenuous, and conjectural our knowledge of them truly is. The second trend is the tendency to treat the Pseudo-Clementine literature as representative of “Jewish Christian” doctrine and practice. Both Schoeps and Quispel make the rather unsophisticated and historically unverifiable move of assuming a monolithic “Jewish Christian” interpretive community standing behind the *Kerygmata Petrou*. The interplay between these two assumptions has led to the conclusion that the doctrine of the false pericopes is a distinctive doctrine of primitive “Jewish Christianity.” As such, subsequent scholars have discounted the possibility that it could have been developed to respond to challenges faced by Syrian Christians in the late third and early fourth century.

H.J.W. Drijvers in his article “Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines” provides a more nuanced justification for an early dating for the doctrine of the false pericopes, but he nevertheless reveals his debt to scholars such as Schoeps and Quispel. He argues that the doctrine of the false pericopes is integrally connected to the

so-called law of the syzygy (Gk. σύζυγος).⁶⁰ According to the law of the syzygy, in each age there is a false and true prophet, the former always temporally preceding the latter. One who is acquainted with this law will, therefore, be able to discern which prophet speaks true doctrines and which speaks false doctrines. Drijvers argues that the “doctrine of the one righteous God, who gave the divine Spirit of foreknowledge to Adam and Christ, the True Prophet, and created the world in opposite pairs, a mixture of good and evil, true and false prophecy, true and false sayings of Scripture, forms a coherent whole.”⁶¹ He concludes that it is very “likely, if not even certain, that the doctrinal complex of the True Prophet and the false scriptural passages is an original anti-heretical construction of the author of G (i.e., the *Grundschrift*).”⁶²

His insights are far more attuned to the broader issues at play in the Pseudo-Clementines than were those of Schoeps or Quispel. In my view, he is right to propose that there is a connection between the law of the syzygy and the doctrine of the false pericopes, but his conclusion goes beyond the evidence. Simply because the law of the syzygy is part of the *Grundschrift*,⁶³ does not require us to believe that the doctrine of the false pericopes was a part of that text as well. The two are not intrinsically linked. The law of the syzygy, by definition, posits the existence of opposing *pairs* (i.e., there is a one-to-one correspondence between true and false prophets), whereas the false pericopes are simply scattered throughout the divine revelation. The law of the syzygy, moreover, was instituted by God directly at the time of creation, whereas the false pericopes

⁶⁰ H.J.W. Drijvers, “Adam and the True Prophet,” 316.

⁶¹ Drijvers, “Adam and the True Prophet,” 316.

⁶² Drijvers, “Adam and the True Prophet,” 318.

⁶³ Since it is attested in both the *Recognitions* (cf. 3.59-61) and the *Homilies* (cf. 2.15-18).

polluted the divine revelation *after* it had been given and were not inserted directly by God, even though He righteously permitted them to arise. We may, therefore, presume that the doctrine of the false pericopes was influenced by the law of the syzygy, with its emphasis upon discerning true and false properties, but the evidence does not suggest that the two are mutually dependent.

Scholarly Views on the Origin of the Dispute with Appion

Hom. 4-6, the dispute between Clement and Appion on the value of Greek *paideia*, has received a considerable amount of attention from scholars, but once again primarily for source critical reasons. Hilgenfeld, in 1848, was the first to propose that this dialogue was appropriated from an entirely independent source. He assumed that this source was the dialogue between Peter and Appion attested by Eusebius in the *Ecclesiastical History* (3.8.5), albeit in a modified form.⁶⁴ This hypothesis was followed up on nearly half a century later by Waitz, who drew attention to the focus on Graeco-Roman writers, the lack of “Christian” material (i.e., no mention of Peter, the True Prophet, or Christianity), and the different style and vocabulary in *Hom.* 4-6.⁶⁵ Scholars have generally followed Waitz’s conclusions, except for his claim that we could not know specifically what this earlier source was.⁶⁶ Only a decade later, Heintze proposed

⁶⁴ Adolf Hilgenfeld, *Die clementinischen Recognitionen und Homilien nach ihrem Ursprung und Inhalt dargestellt* (Jena: J.B. Schreiber, 1848), 221-25, discussed in Jones, “Pseudo-Clementines,” 27.

⁶⁵ Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, 252-56, discussed in Jones, “Pseudo-Clementines,” 28.

⁶⁶ Most recently, his conclusions have been echoed by William Adler, “Apion’s ‘Encomium of Adultery’: a Jewish Satire of Greek *Paideia* in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 64 (1993): 15-49. Adler has also added the insight that Appion’s companions, who are introduced respectively as proponents of astral determinism and Epicureanism (4.6), play virtually no role in the dialogue; he notes that the “subjects in which they would be expected to excel never come up again” (29).

that the source was a Jewish apology, not originally about either Peter or Clement, which included disputes between a young Jewish convert and Appion, Epicureans, and astrologers.⁶⁷ Heintze's view about the nature of the source has generally been accepted by scholars, although since then scholars have added to it the conclusion that the apology originated in Egypt.⁶⁸

If such a source does indeed exist, as it very well may, this raises the further problem of how it came to be incorporated in the Pseudo-Clementine novel, and this is a notoriously complex issue. To begin with, the dialogue between Clement and Appion appears only in the *Homilies*. Appion, Annubion, and Athenodorus do appear in the *Recognitions* (10.52), but only in the same minor role that they occupy in the *Homilies* outside of *Hom.* 4-6 (20.11, 21). In both instances, the group appears at the very end of the novel, and is involved in a sub-plot in which Clement's father, Faustus, is cursed by Simon Magus. We may, therefore, be quite certain that this episode appears near the end of the *Grundschrift*, but it far from proves that the dispute between Clement and Appion in *Hom.* 4-6 is part of the *Grundschrift*.

There is, however, some connection between *Hom.* 4-6 and *Rec.* 10.17-41. In this latter passage, there is a discourse on the foolishness of Greek, specifically Orphic, cosmogony, which is based primarily upon a critique of Greek mythology and its allegorization by philosophers. This critique, however, is considerably shorter than the one found in *Hom.* 4-6 and is in no way connected to the figure of Appion. It is,

He remarks further that the conclusion of the debate is "unexpectedly abrupt" (29, n.38) and that it is "reasonable to assume that what now survives in the *Homilies* is only one segment of a longer treatise that originally included Apion's colleagues more actively in the debate" (29).

⁶⁷ Werner Heintze, *Der Klemensroman*, 50, discussed in Jones, "Pseudo-Clementines," 28.

⁶⁸ Jones, "Pseudo-Clementines," 29.

therefore, likely that the *Grundschrift* did contain a short polemic against the allegorical interpretation of the Greek myths, which the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* worked into an existing Hellenistic Jewish apology and inserted into the narrative following the scene at Caesarea.

Even were we to concede that the dispute between Clement and Appion appeared in the *Grundschrift* and was removed by the authors/redactors of the *Recognitions*, it nevertheless remains, as Adler has demonstrated, that *Hom.* 4-6 represents an intrusion into the original narrative sequence. Adler notes that in *Rec.* 3.69, Peter sends “the twelve” (δώδεκα) ahead of him to Tripolis, while Clement, Nicetas, and Aquila accompany him to that city by way of Tyre and Sidon. In *Hom.* 3.73, the narrative unfolds somewhat differently. There is no mention of any “twelve,” but instead Peter sends Clement, Nicetas, and Aquila on to Tripolis in order to spy on Simon. It is during their sojourn in Tyre that Clement encounters Appion, Annubion, and Athenodorus and engages in disputation with them. Significantly, however, when Peter arrives in Tripolis in *Homily* 8, Clement recounts, “We were in all sixteen: Peter himself, and I Clement, Nicetas, and Aquila, *and the twelve who had preceded us*” (8.3, my italics). This sentence displays almost verbatim agreement with *Rec.* 4.3, but makes little sense in the *Homilies*, where Peter had never sent any “twelve” ahead of him.⁶⁹ It thus makes most sense to presume that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* altered the narrative sequence of the *Grundschrift*, here preserved by the *Recognitions*, in order to arrange the disputation scene between Clement and Appion.

⁶⁹ Adler, “Satire,” 29, n. 37.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate that although the *Homilies* has received a good deal of attention from scholars, nearly all of it has been source-critical. The many points of similarity between the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* led scholars to the conclusion that they are both based upon an earlier text, the *Grundschrift*, which is no longer extant. Scholars were eager to discern the contents of the *Grundschrift* as well as the earlier texts that it might preserve (i.e., the *Kerygmata Petrou*) in order to gain a better understanding of the “Jewish Christianity” of the apostolic era. This concern for the first and second century, however, led specialists to neglect the redacted forms of the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*, and the way in which these texts are shaped by their fourth-century Syrian milieu. In the following two chapters, I shall leave these source-critical questions aside and consider the logic and coherence of the narrative of the redacted, fourth-century form of the *Homilies*.

CHAPTER TWO

“*Homilies* 1-3: The Doctrine of the True Prophet and Simon Magus’ Challenge from Scripture”

In this second chapter, I shall examine in some depth the approach to Scripture in *Hom.* 1-3, with a particular focus on the enigmatic doctrine of the false pericopes. As I noted in the previous chapter, most scholars have been concerned to situate the doctrine of the false pericopes in the context of nascent “Jewish Christianity,” a problematic venture given our lack of evidence for this doctrine prior to the fourth century. Certainly there is much of value to be found in the writings of mid-twentieth-century scholars, which will be of use in the present inquiry. For example, Schoeps is quite right to point to the polemical context in which the doctrine of the false pericopes arose. Drijvers, moreover, has correctly identified an important connection between the false pericopes and the law of the syzygy. My interest in the doctrine of the false pericopes, however, lies not in “getting behind” the text of the *Homilies* to uncover earlier sources and the communities in which they might have been employed. Rather, I am here interested in the doctrine of the false pericopes as one aspect of the approach to Scripture taken by the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* – an approach that is situated within broader theological, epistemological, and polemical issues evident in *Hom.* 1-3, the opening sequence of the novel. I will suggest that these broader issues can best be understood in the context of the fourth-century Antiochene polemics against allegorical exegesis and Alexandrian Christianity.

The Problem of the Immortality of the Soul

It is in the first chapter of the first *Homily* that the central concern of the novel is brought sharply into focus. The protagonist and narrator of the *Homilies* introduces himself to the reader with the first two words: ἐγὼ Κλήμης. He is an impressive young man, a citizen of Rome who tells us that even from τὴν πρώτην ἡλικίαν he had been “able to live chastely [σωφρόνως]” (1.1). Immediately, however, Clement begins to recount his distress and despair. He asks, “When I die, do I not exist [θανὼν οὐκ εἰμί], and will no one ever remember me, while boundless time bears all the things of men into forgetfulness? And will I be without being [ἔσομαι δὲ οὐκ ὄν], or knowledge of the those who live, neither knowing nor being known, neither having been nor being?” (1.1) In other words, Clement longs to know whether or not the soul is immortal – a philosophical question which dates back at least to the days of Plato.⁷⁰ This question of the immortality of the soul, as I will demonstrate below, is intimately connected to the prophetic proclamation that there is one God alone, who is good and just, and who created the world.⁷¹ Already here in the opening lines the central problem that the *Homilies* sets out to solve is put forth.

⁷⁰ The treatise that recounts Socrates’ final days, the *Phaedo*, is devoted to this very question. Socrates asserts that the soul is immortal, for true knowledge is obscured by the bodily senses and “is only possible after death” (67a) when the soul has been freed from the body. For this reason, philosophers must disengage from the bodily senses and desires (67e). Clement’s chaste living would most likely have happened in conjunction with philosophical training.

⁷¹ The most clear and succinct statement of this doctrine occurs in 2.12-13, where Peter states, “And this is His [i.e., the True Prophet’s] doctrine and true proclamation, that there is one God [εἷς θεός], whose work the world is, who being altogether just [ὁς δίκαιος ὢν πάντως], shall certainly at some time render to everyone according to his deeds... Since, therefore, without all contradiction, God who is good is also just [ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθὸς ὢν καὶ δίκαιος ἐστίν], He shall not otherwise be known to be just [οὐκ ἄλλως δὲ δίκαιος εἶναι γνωσθήσεται], unless the soul after its separation from the body be immortal, so that wicked man, being in hell, as having here received his good things, may there be punished for his sins.”

The matter, as Clement relates, absolutely tormented him. He pondered these questions “unceasingly [ἀπαύστως],” and being unable to put them out of his mind, he began to waste away (1.2). Such grief and torment may seem odd, but the question was far from simply academic for Clement. He tells the reader that he could only live a pious and righteous life were he to be assured that the soul is immortal. For if the soul is immortal, then this opens the possibility for reward and punishment after death, and it is only the threat of divine retribution that he says can “subdue bodily pleasures [τῶν τοῦ σώματος κρατεῖν ἡδονῶν]” (1.4). In my view, we as readers are not meant to take this as demonstrating a moral weakness peculiar to Clement; rather, it is a point more generally about the human disposition towards sin. Without a guarantee of the immortality of the soul, individuals cannot be expected to live righteous lives. Hence, not only is the central problem of the *Homilies* presented right at the beginning of the text, but so too is a justification for the very enterprise of finding and disseminating a clear and decisive answer.

Clement’s question is by no means easily answered. He relates that from childhood he would frequent the schools of the philosophers “in order to learn something certain [τοῦ μαθεῖν τι βέβαιον]” (1.3). However, his experiences there turned out to be far from edifying. The philosophers were not interested in discovering the truth about any matter, but instead they sought to show off their skills. He tells us,

But nought else did I see than the setting up and the knocking down of doctrines, and strifes, and seeking for victory, and the arts of syllogisms, and the skill of assumptions; and sometimes one opinion prevailed, as, for example, that the soul is immortal, and sometimes that it is mortal. If, therefore, at any time the doctrine prevailed that it is immortal, I was glad; and when the doctrine prevailed that it is mortal, I was grieved. *And again, I was the more disheartened because I could not establish either doctrine to my satisfaction* (1.3, my italics).

In this account, philosophical discourse is portrayed as epistemologically flawed. The outcome of a debate does not at all reflect whether or not the proposition in question is true or false; rather, it reveals which party has more skill in logic, syllogisms, and grammatical arts. This polemic against philosophy and philosophers is taken up in more detail later in the first *Homily*, where it is associated more specifically with Alexandria (cf. 1.10ff).

Having failed in his attempt to discern whether the soul is immortal from the philosophers, Clement devises a more radical plan. He resolves to go to Egypt and to “seek and find a magician, and persuade him with large bribes to effect the calling up the soul...for the purpose of learning whether the soul is immortal” (1.5). Ultimately, Clement abandons this plan, heeding the counsel of a friend who warns him that the impiety of such a deed would outweigh any possible good that could come of it.

This brief episode is important for our purposes for several reasons. First, magic is here portrayed as an inadequate means of discerning truth, since one seeks the truth in order to be pious and the act of practicing magic is itself inherently impious. Clement’s friend warns him that if the magician should summon the soul of a deceased individual, thereby proving the immortality of the soul, matters “of piety will not be promoted to [him] on account of [his] making this attempt” (1.5). Secondly, it depicts Egypt as a place of corruption where the magical arts flourish. This negative description lays the foundation for a more specific and sustained anti-Alexandrian polemic that will be developed later in the *Homilies*. Alexandria is depicted on several occasions as a place where the practice of philosophy and magic converge. For example, Simon Magus, the

cunning interlocutor of the Apostle Peter, is said to have learned the magical arts in Alexandria (2.22), and in *Hom.* 4-6 we are introduced to the virulently anti-Jewish Alexandrian grammarian Appion, who, Clement later reveals, is a magician as well.

It is Clement's desire to learn whether the soul is immortal that sets the plot of the *Homilies* in motion, but it is the acting of divine providence that soon takes over and moves the action along. Clement is unable to find an answer to his question by his own agency. It comes unexpectedly, however, when an unnamed person (τις) arrives in Rome announcing that the "Son of God is come in Judea, proclaiming eternal life to all who will, if they shall live according to the counsel of the Father, who has sent him" (1.7). The messenger then goes to declare that there is "one God, whose world you unrighteously dwell in before His righteous [δικαίων ὀφθαλμῶν] eyes," and who will punish the "unbelieving" with everlasting torment and reward those who "live according to His counsel" with "His unspeakable good things" (1.7). Here a clear response to Clement's dilemma is given – the soul is indeed immortal and will be either rewarded or punished after death – and the proof of this is the proclamation that the one God who created the world is righteous and just. The unnamed messenger supplies no reason why one ought to believe that the creator God is righteous and just; Clement simply finds the prophetic revelation to be convincing. However, the defense of this doctrinal claim soon becomes the focus of the narrative.

Clement, being persuaded by the speech of the anonymous messenger, resolves to travel to Judea to investigate the matter for himself. His ship, however, is blown off

course and he arrives in Alexandria instead, once again the work of providence (1.8).⁷² Almost immediately upon arrival he has an opportunity to hear Barnabas preach. Clement tells us that he “perceived that [Barnabas] was speaking the truth not with dialectic art, but was setting forth simply and without preparation what he had heard and seen the manifested Son of God do and say” (1.9). This account is striking because, unlike his experience at the philosophical debates, Clement here straightaway perceives τὰ ἀληθῆ. Truth must be learned not from one possessing διὰλεκτικός τέχνη, but rather from one who relates simply and without pretence the teachings of a prophet. This contrast between philosophy and prophecy is present throughout the novel, and it is central to the epistemological claims of the *Homilies*. Truth, which is revealed only through divine revelation and not by any human skill, is clear and simple, and the pious listener (or reader) will know it straightaway when s/he hears it. As I shall argue in more detail below, it is this epistemology that underlies the doctrine of the false pericopes and the *Homilies*’ approach to Scripture more broadly.

The opposition between prophecy and philosophy becomes even more pronounced as we learn of the reaction of the philosophers to Barnabas’ teaching. Although the multitudes [οἱ ὄχλοι] found his teaching compelling, the “philosophers, compelled by their worldly education [ἐκ παιδείας κοσμικῆς], set upon laughing at him and making sport of him...using their great syllogistic arsenal [ὡς μεγάλοις ὅπλοις κεχρημένοι τοῖς συλλογισμοῖς]” (1.10). It is the simplicity of prophetic speech that disturbs the philosophers, because it renders useless the arsenal of rhetorical skills which

⁷² As I noted in the first chapter, the detour into Alexandria is not paralleled in the *Recognitions*. The entire sequence that involves Barnabas and the mocking philosophers is there set entirely in Rome.

presumably each one had spent many years developing and perfecting. Barnabas responds to their taunts by differentiating his own approach from theirs: “We have a commission only to tell you the words and wondrous doings of Him who sent us; and instead of logical demonstration, we present to you many witnesses” (1.10). He proclaims nothing that he devised himself. Instead, he simply passes along the teachings that he has received. Prophetic revelation leaves no room for pride, requiring neither intellectual skill nor training on the part of the speaker or the hearer (1.11).

The Inadequacy of Human Effort and the Need for a True Prophet

In *Hom.* 1.1-14, it is through Clement’s experiences that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* subtly put forth their epistemological and theological claims. Clement, for example, is unable to put the question of the immortality of the soul out of his mind. His disillusionment with philosophical discourse, moreover, prompts him to consider the limits of human understanding. Finally, he finds the simple and straightforward prophetic proclamation that there is one God, who created the world and righteously judges each person to be strangely compelling. Beginning in 1.15, however, each of these issues is explicitly taken up by the Apostle Peter in a series of private discourses with Clement.

Peter, upon first meeting Clement, begins by discussing the flaws in philosophical epistemology, using the image of a house to demonstrate why a philosopher who trusts in his own abilities to discern the truth will inevitably be led into error and confusion. He says that it is as if humanity inhabits a house that is completely filled with smoke so thick

that visibility is entirely eliminated. No one can see no matter how good his or her vision is until someone is able to open the door, dispelling the smoke and allowing sunlight to come in (1.18). In this way, human understanding is blinded by “evil instruction, wicked association, terrible society, unseemly discourses, [and] wrongful prejudice” (1.18). It is only the one Peter calls the “true Prophet [ὁ ἀληθὴς προφήτης]” who can restore sight and “enlighten the souls of all people” (1.19). God reveals truth to humanity directly through the one whom He sends as a prophet, and the burden then rests upon the followers of the prophet to carry on the message: “For if anyone else knows anything, he has received it from Him [i.e., the true Prophet] or from His disciples” (2.12).

Human understanding is so limited, Peter claims, that no matter how much study is undertaken, it cannot adequately grasp the truth of important matters. He asks rhetorically,

For how can he find the truth who seeks it from his own ignorance? And even if he find it, he does not know it, and passes it by as if it were not. Nor yet shall he be able to obtain possession of the truth from another, who, in like manner promises him knowledge from ignorance (2.6).

The main problem with the “philosophers of the Greeks, and the more intelligent of the barbarians” is that they “trust[ed] *in themselves* [ἐαυτοῖς] to be able to find it” (2.7). Then, because they are too full of pride to admit that they have failed in their quest, as will inevitably be the case, they “reject some of the suppositions that are presented to them, and they lay hold of others, as if knowing, but in fact not knowing [ὥσπερ εἰδότες, μὴ εἰδοτές], what things are true and what are false” (2.7). Philosophical training is, at its core, an exercise in self-deception. The speech of the philosophers is not complex and impenetrable because the truth itself is complex, but because they employ

sylogisms and the like to fool the uneducated masses into thinking that they are in possession of the truth, although they are in fact not. Prophetic speech, however, since it is true, has no need to be obscure or complicated, but can be set forth clearly and simply.⁷³ The contrast between the two ultimately lies in their origins; the former is of man, the latter is of God.

It is of central importance to note here that, according to the *Homilies*, the truth of prophetic discourse is readily apparent to and easily grasped by those who hear it. We need only to recall how quickly Clement and the multitudes were won over by the simple and unadorned speech of Barnabas (cf. 1.7). Clement, who had so long struggled to gain answers from the philosophers, in a moment acknowledged the truth in the speech of an uneducated Judean. This is emphasized in 2.9, where Peter remarks, “For God, as caring for all, has made the discovery concerning Himself easier to all, in order that neither the barbarians might be powerless, nor the Greeks unable to find Him. Therefore, the discovery concerning him is easy.” The truth is neither veiled nor hidden, and it certainly requires no particular skill to be understood.

My point, of course, requires qualification. The Alexandrian philosophers are not won over by Barnabas at all. Peter and Clement, moreover, encounter opponents, such as Simon Magus and Appion, who directly oppose their teachings. The truth is immediately apparent only to those who possess the proper disposition. Clement, we learned in the opening chapter, lived a chaste life since boyhood and placed no faith in his own abilities;

⁷³ Cf. Kelley, *Knowledge*, 46-57.

he strove to discover the truth concerning the immortality of the soul, not simply to adopt a position and concoct a convincing defense as did the philosophers.

In keeping with this notion of simplicity, Peter presents the doctrine of the True Prophet as follows:

And this is His [i.e., the True Prophet's] doctrine and true proclamation, that there is one God [ἐἷς θεός], whose work the world is, who being altogether just [ὁς δίκαιος ὢν πάντως], shall certainly at some time render to everyone according to his deeds... Since, therefore, without all contradiction, God who is good is also just [ὁ θεός ἀγαθός ὢν και δίκαιος ἐστίν], He shall not otherwise be known to be just [οὐκ ἄλλως δὲ δίκαιος εἶναι γνωσθήσεται], unless the soul after its separation from the body be immortal, so that wicked man, being in hell, as having here received his good things, may there be punished for his sins (2.12-13).

This doctrine accords exactly with the prophetic proclamation of the unnamed messenger in Rome (1.5), and as in that passage it is here used to demonstrate the immortality of the soul. The opening chapters of the *Homilies* have been moving towards this fundamental doctrinal statement – that there is one God, good and just, who created the world – placed in the mouth of the Apostle Peter himself, which definitively answers Clement's question and provides him with the assurance he needs to live a righteous and pious life.

Shifting the Focus: The Law of the Syzygy and the Deception of Simon Magus

It is at this point in the novel that the focus of the plot shifts. The *Homilies* began as a story about Clement's quest to discover whether the soul is immortal. But this story of the doubting Clement, being quickly resolved, turns out only to be a prologue. It allows the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* to foreground the central theological and epistemological claims of the novel and to introduce the heroes – the recently converted Clement and the wise Apostle Peter. The *Homilies* is, in fact, a defense of the doctrine of the one, good, just God against the attacks of "heretics"; and, since the notion of a just

God requires reward and punishment *post mortem*, the *Homilies* seeks also to defend the immortality of the soul. In a sense, the ending comes at the beginning – we as readers are told straightaway *what* we are to think about God and we are given a justification for *why* we ought to think this. Armed with a knowledge of the truth, the reader is then exposed to arguments against this doctrine of God, which would most likely have sounded very familiar to fourth-century Christian ears.

Immediately following the exposition of the doctrine of the True Prophet, Peter begins a brief discourse on the law of the syzygy. The world has been created according to this law, which states that “God...being Himself one, has distinguished all principles and pairs into opposites” (2.15). The “leaders of prophecy” are ordered by this law as well, which means that in each generation there are two prophets, “the first worse and the second superior” (2.15-16). The true prophet will always be preceded by a false prophet, who will attempt to deceive the multitudes and lead them astray. Heresy is an inevitable occurrence, something that has been woven into the very fabric of the world. While this might seem to be an odd notion, it accords rather well with the broader theological aims of the novel. The law of the syzygy reveals that even heresy has been foreordained and governed by the providence of the one God, who created and orders the world. Even the most vile heretic does not work outside of or against the governance of the creator God. There is no room for the notion that good and evil are forces that are equal in strength; the latter is subordinated to the former. This law, moreover, does not impinge upon the goodness of God, for He has revealed it to humanity so that no one might be deceived. Peter remarks, “And if pious men had understood this mystery, they would never have

gone astray, but even now they should have known that Simon, who now enthralls all men, is a fellow-worker of error and deceit” (2.15).

The discourse on the law of the syzygy serves also to introduce the character of Simon Magus, the novel’s villain who seeks to corrupt further the world with his false doctrines (cf. 2.15ff). Although many scholars have attempted to associate Simon with one particular figure, such as Paul or Marcion, the emerging consensus is that he represents a mosaic of heretical viewpoints.⁷⁴ This latter view makes the most sense, given that in the third and fourth centuries Simon came to be portrayed as the father of all heresies.⁷⁵ According to the *Homilies*, Simon is a Samaritan, who followed John the Baptist and schemed his way into a position of power (2.22-24). Making use of his training in the magical arts, he deceives people into worshipping him as a god (2.26). He does not, however, actually believe himself to be divine; rather, he makes such a claim for his own selfish purposes, believing that the soul is not immortal and that he will not, therefore, be punished after death for his impious deeds.⁷⁶ Simon serves as the perfect foil for Peter because, in denying the immortality of the soul, he undermines the foundation of the true Prophet’s doctrine of God. If the soul is not immortal, then God is

⁷⁴ Dominique Côté, “La fonction littéraire de Simon le Magicien dans les Pseudo-Clémentines” *Laval théologique et philosophique* 57/3 (2001) : 513-23, esp. 514-19; Mark J. Edwards, “The Clementina: A Christian Response to the Pagan Novel” *Classical Quarterly* 42/2 (1992): 459-74, esp. 462-3.

⁷⁵ See note 48 above. Also see Reed, “Heresiology and Narrativized Polemics.”

⁷⁶ Upon being warned by Nicetas and Aquila, two of his former followers who have now taken up with Peter, that to continue claiming to be a god will result in his post-mortem punishment, he replies, “I laugh at your foolish supposition, because you believe that the soul of man is immortal” (2.29).

not just; if God is unjust, then God cannot be righteous (cf. 2.13); finally, if God is neither righteous nor just, then humanity cannot hope either to be righteous or just.⁷⁷

Peter claims that Simon, who is to be located in the succession of false prophets (cf. 2.17), has been sent to ensure that the Gentiles [τὰ ἔθνη] do not turn from “the worship of idols [ἀπο τῆς κατὰ τὰ εἰδωλα θρησκείας]” to the true doctrine of God (cf. 2.33).⁷⁸ One of the ways in which Simon does this is to impress the crowds with his marvels [τέρατα], which include flying in the air and making statues walk, so that they will herald him as a divine man and thus listen to his teachings (cf. 2.33-4). His primary means of opposing Peter, however, is not through displays of power but by disputation, and Scripture becomes the prime site of contestation.⁷⁹ Simon, Peter learns, will refute the oneness, goodness, and justice of God by using the divine law as his key witness (cf. 2.39).

Peter, notably, in his discourse to Clement on epistemology, never claims that Scripture is a reliable means by which to learn the true doctrine of God. One must go to the True Prophet or his followers in order to learn this (cf. 2.11). Indeed, Scripture is only ever mentioned in the context of the dispute with Simon, and there it is treated rather ambivalently. When Peter first speaks of Scripture and its divine origin, he also introduces the doctrine of the false pericopes (cf. 2.38).

⁷⁷ This point is made rather forcefully in 2.43, where Peter asks rhetorically, “If He is unjust, who is just?...If He does evil, who shall do good?”

⁷⁸ It is noteworthy that Peter’s mission is here portrayed as being to the Gentiles, a role typically assigned to Paul in the New Testament and other early Christian literature. We may view this as a tacit polemic against Paul, whereby Peter usurps his role as Apostle to the Gentiles.

⁷⁹ This represents a rather significant modification of the Peter-Simon Magus legend, which in both the *Acts of Peter* and Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* is resolved by Peter demonstrating the superiority of his supernatural abilities.

It is, therefore, tempting to focus one's attention solely on the doctrine of the false pericopes, ignoring the *Homilies'* broader approach to Scripture, and to consider these passages in isolation from the broader context of *Hom.* 1-3, especially 1.1-2.36, in which Scripture plays no role and is never mentioned. Such an approach is, as I have argued earlier, evident in the writings of Schoeps and Quispel, although the former is more careful than the latter in considering the polemical context in which the doctrine of the false pericopes is set forth.⁸⁰

In my view, this narrow focus causes us to overlook the continuity evident in *Hom.* 1-3 and therefore to be unable to understand fully both how and why Scripture is presented in such a way. *Hom.* 1.1-2.36 is vitally important for our understanding of Scripture and the false pericopes because, as I demonstrated above, the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* tend to give the solution prior to raising the problem. Before the problem of heresy is ever even presented, the narrative articulates clearly both the true doctrine of God and the proper way of arriving at the knowledge of this doctrine. Given that Scripture plays such a central role in Simon's attack on Peter's doctrine of God, we would not, I believe, be incorrect in positing that the theological and epistemological claims presented in the early part of the novel play a key role in understanding the *Homilies'* approach to Scripture.

In my view, the decisively important theological claims are that God is one, good, and just (2.11-12) and that He foreknows and foreordains all things (1.11). Significant epistemological claims include the notion that human understanding is utterly unable to

⁸⁰ See Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, 74-82.

discern truth on its own (1.3; 2.7); that knowledge can only be gained directly from the True Prophet or his followers (1.18; 2.5-6); that philosophical discourse is a ruse, since truth is simple and straightforward (1.10; 2.7; 2.9); and, finally, that the humble and morally upright will be able immediately to discern the truth, once it has been presented to them (1.7).

The Doctrine of the False Pericopes

As I related in the introduction, it is in 2.38 that the doctrine of the false pericopes is first introduced:

For the Scriptures acquired [προσέλαβον] many falsehoods against God for this reason [λόγω τούτω]. When the prophet Moses, by the will of God, handed down [παράδωκότος] the law with the explanations to a certain chosen seventy in order that they might also instruct those of the people who were chosen, after not much time the written law [γραφεὶς ὁ νόμος] acquired certain falsehoods against the one God, who created [δημιουργήσαντος] the heaven and the earth and all things in them, the evil one undertaking to work this for some righteous purpose (2.38).

It is worth noting at the outset that the *Homilies* does accept the divine origin of the Law. Moses, we learn, at the behest of God, handed down the Law to the seventy, who were themselves entrusted with the task of faithfully disseminating this divine revelation. The fact that the Law soon thereafter [μετ' οὐ πολὺ] became corrupt serves only to enhance the claim that the Law, as it was originally received by Moses, was perfect and divine, containing nothing false. The perfection of the original revelation to Moses is also emphasized in *Hom.* 3.47, Peter's explanation of the doctrine of the false pericopes to Simon Magus. In 3.47, there is a slightly different account of the origin of the false passages: "The law of God was given by Moses, without writing, to seventy wise men, to

be handed down, that the government might be carried on by succession. But after Moses was taken up, it was written by someone, but not by Moses...but those who wrote it, being convicted of ignorance through their not foreseeing its disappearance, were not prophets.” In this account of the doctrine of the false pericopes, the Law was only to be handed down orally and became corrupt the moment it was written out. Although this slightly contradicts the claim in 2.38 that the Law acquired false interpolations slightly *after* it was written down, both accounts privilege the oral transmission of the Law and dismiss written versions as corrupt.

According to the doctrine of the false pericopes, God permitted the corruption of His perfect revelation so that “those might be convicted who should dare to listen to the things written against God [κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ γραφέντα], and those who, through love towards Him, should not only disbelieve the things spoken against Him, but should not even endure to hear them at all” (2.38). Peter asserts, moreover, that the false chapters have been added to Scripture “for the sake of temptation [πειρασμοῦ χάριν]” (2.39) and that “nothing happens unjustly, since even the falsehoods of Scripture are with good reason presented for a test” (3.4). By claiming that Scripture has been falsified in order to test the character and disposition of those who read or hear it, the *Homilies* is able to uphold the providence as well as the goodness of God.

This justification for the existence of the false pericopes also accords well with the epistemological and heresiological claim that one can only learn true doctrines from the True Prophet: “For if anyone else knows anything, he has received it from [the True Prophet] or from His disciples” (2.12). Indeed, Peter asserts that it is only by “believing

His [i.e., the True Prophet's] teaching, [that] one will know what of the Scriptures are true and what are false" (3.49). The doctrine of the True Prophet is the hermeneutical key, as it were, which unlocks the coherent message and witness of Scripture. The one who wishes to read Scripture aright and to learn the truths that it reveals must be both morally upright and an heir to the teachings of the True Prophet. The reader, however, who meets neither of these criteria and therefore derives heretical doctrines from Scripture condemns not God but himself.

Indeed, the *Homilies* celebrates the fact that the written Scripture consistently contradicts itself, since this highlights the need for the reader to submit humbly to the proper interpretive rule. Peter explains that Simon is able to produce his impious doctrine from the Torah because "the Scriptures say all manner of things [πάντα γὰρ αἱ γραφαὶ λέγουσιν], in order that no one of those who inquire ungratefully might find the truth, but what he wishes to find... Whence it must before all things be known, that nowhere can truth be found unless from a prophet of truth" (3.10-11). The doctrine of the false pericopes is introduced, therefore, as a means of defining the proper boundaries within which legitimate Scriptural interpretation must take place.

We have yet, however, to consider where exactly the problem with Scripture lies. As I noted above, Peter first introduces the doctrine of the false pericopes without specifying which portions of the Torah have been corrupted. He is more concerned to demonstrate the problem of discerning doctrine solely from Scripture and how his solution (i.e., the doctrine of the false pericopes) does not undermine the foreknowledge, goodness, and omnipotence of God. After re-stating the argument that those who are

righteous will not be fooled for a moment by the false pericopes (cf. 2.42), Peter sets forth a series of antitheses, framed as questions, which reveal what exactly is at issue in the corrupted Scriptural passages. He begins by asking, “For if He [i.e., God] lies, then who speaks truth? Or that He makes experiments as in ignorance; for then who foreknows? And if He deliberates and changes His purpose, who is perfect in understanding and permanent in design?” (2.43). Peter continues at some length with these questions, touching also upon God’s wisdom, justice, omnipotence, and goodness (cf. 2.43-4). The passage is structured so that the reader presumes that all of these anthropomorphisms (i.e., blindness, malice, injustice, war-mongering) are somewhere in Scripture attributed to the Creator God, although no specific references are here provided. We may presume, however, that many readers would be acutely aware of these charges against the God of the Jewish Scriptures from disputations with and polemics against Marcionites.⁸¹

Peter responds to this depiction of the creator God in the Hebrew Bible by setting forth the definitive rule which must shape the believer’s conception of God. He says

Wherefore, Clement, my son, beware of thinking otherwise of God, than that he is the only God [μόνος ἐστὶν θεός], and Lord, and Father, good and righteous [ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος], the Creator [δημιουργός], long-suffering, merciful, the sustainer, the benefactor, ordaining love of

⁸¹ The objection to the creator God takes on a clearly Marcionite tone when it is placed in the mouth of Simon Magus in 3.38: “And now I wish...to discuss with you from these books on the necessity of thinking that there are gods; first showing respecting him whom you call God, that he is not the supreme and omnipotent being, inasmuch as he is without foreknowledge, imperfect, needy, not good, and underlying many and innumerable grievous passions...it follows that there is another, not written of, foreknowing, perfect, without want, good, removed from all grievous passions.” Simon then goes on to give specific references to passages from Genesis that demonstrate his claims. These include God’s repentance at making humanity (6.6), his seeming ignorance of the state of affairs at Sodom and Gomorrah (18.21), and his temptation of Abraham (i.e., the *aqedah*, 22.1ff). For Marcionite doctrine in general, see, Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*; Adolf Von Harnack, *Maricon*. For the prevalence of Marcionism in late antique Syria, see H.J.W. Drijvers, “Marcionism in Syria.”

men, counselling purity... This is our Judge, to whom it behoves us to look, and to regulate our own souls (2.45-6).

This rule reaffirms what I have claimed above is the central proclamation of the novel – that there is one God, good and just, who created and orders the world (cf. 2.12-313).

This doctrinal formulation is the key that unlocks the “mystery [μυστήριον]” of Scripture (cf. 3.4), thereby demonstrating its coherence.

The Doctrine of the False Pericopes and its Late Antique Context

In my view, this notion that the unified message of Scripture is only intelligible when it is read within the proper interpretive framework is influenced by the Christian “Rule of Truth” and the Rabbinic conception of Oral Torah. Perhaps the clearest exposition of the Rule of Truth⁸² is found in Irenaeus of Lyons’ heresiological work *Adversus Haereses*. Those, he claims, who are baptized into the Church and keep the “Rule of Truth” in their hearts will understand the “hypothesis” of Scripture, which will allow them to interpret it properly and not be deceived by the malicious distortions of heretics (1.9.4). This approach to Scripture was not unknown in late antique Syria, where the *Homilies* was redacted. Ephraem, for example, in his *Hymns on Paradise*, asserts that Scripture can lead one astray if it is not read in accordance with “the keys of doctrine” (*Hymns on Paradise* 6.1).⁸³ These theologians presumed that Scripture would not yield a

⁸² See Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 17-28.

⁸³ In his *Commentary on Genesis*, in *Selected Prose Works*, trans. E.G. Matthews and J.P. Amar, ed. K. McVey (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), there are a number of passages, such as Gen 6.6 and 18.21, where Ephraem is forced to provide a non-straightforward reading of the text because of his doctrinal convictions. For example, Ephraem asserts that Gen 18.21, where God says that He wishes to go down to Sodom and Gomorrah to investigate matters for Himself, does not disclose to the reader something about God (i.e., that God is ignorant), but rather is meant to serve as an example for how

cogent and coherent message if the reader/hearer did not approach it with the proper doctrinal formula already in mind, the truth of which they secured by their claims that its origin could be traced back to the apostles themselves. This is also the approach that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* take, legitimating their hermeneutical key by placing it in the mouth of Peter.

The Rabbinic doctrine of “Oral Torah” (e.g., *m. Avot* 1-5; *Sifre Deut.* 351; *y. Peah* 2:6; *Pesikta Rabbati* 14b) established a line of oral transmission that connected the teachings of the Rabbis directly to Moses and the revelation at Mt. Sinai.⁸⁴ These oral teachings, handed down from sage to disciple, provided the proper context for the interpretation of the written Scripture; Jaffee remarks that, for the Rabbis, while “the text of Scripture is certainly there for all to read, it is understood only in context of the teaching of the Sage whose repeated teachings bring written text to life.”⁸⁵ The influence of the idea of Oral Torah is perhaps most evident in the *Epistle of Peter to James*, a document which is appended to the *Homilies*, where Peter explicitly invokes the Jewish transmission of Mosaic teaching as a model for the dissemination of his own preaching: “I beg and beseech you not to communicate to anyone of the Gentiles the books of my preachings which I sent to you, nor anyone of our tribe before trial; but if anyone has

human judges should act when investigating a case (*Comm. Gen.* 16.1). For the role of doctrine/tradition in the exegesis of Ephraem, see Sebastian P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1985), 43-51.

⁸⁴ For the development of the concept of Oral Torah among the Tannaim and Amoraim, see Martin Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism 200 BCE – 400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 84-92, 140-52.

⁸⁵ Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 70.

been proved and found worthy, then commit them to him, after the manner in which Moses delivered his books to the seventy who succeeded his chair” (1.1).⁸⁶

Despite these points of influence, overlap, and continuity, however, the *Homilies* still differs radically from other Jewish and Christian texts in its approach to Scripture. Neither the Rabbis nor the Church Fathers ever claimed that the tricky portions of Scripture were false and ought to be discarded. Oral Torah and the Rule of Truth were used, in various ways, to guide interpretation, not to mark certain passages for excision from the canon.

In claiming that those Scriptural passages which speak of God anthropomorphically are “false” (cf. 2.40), the *Homilies* tacitly rejects the non-literal reading practices which had become standard fare in Christian circles East and West. If Gen 6:6 claims that God repented at having made man, it cannot be understood as a figure of speech used to demonstrate to the reader just how grave the sinfulness of humanity truly was, as Ephraem took it to be.⁸⁷ This verse must be rejected as impiously assigning lack of foreknowledge and changeability to God (3.39). More specifically, I believe that this approach to Scripture is informed by an anti-allegorical agenda. Charles Bigg in 1890 also briefly espoused this view, but to my knowledge no scholar in the intervening century has followed up on his insight.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Albert I. Baumgarten, “Literary Evidence for Jewish Christianity in the Galilee,” in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee I. Levine (New York and Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 39-50, esp. 41-7.

⁸⁷ In his *Commentary on Genesis* he asserts that “God *was sorry* does not mean that God did not know that they would come to this, but rather that He wished to make their great wickedness manifest before the generations to come, that they had committed such wantonness that they even brought remorse to God, who does not feel remorse” (6.7).

⁸⁸ Bigg, “Clementine Homilies,” 181.

Conclusion

The *Homilies* displays an ambivalent approach to Scripture. On the one hand, Scripture is viewed as the record of God's perfect revelation that He is one, good, and just – a doctrine which is essential for the possibility of human piety and righteousness (cf. 1.4); on the other, the *Homilies* acknowledges that Scripture provides heretics and other outsiders with the ammunition they need to argue against this very doctrine of God, positing instead multiple deities and denying reward and punishment *post mortem*. The *Homilies'* solution, one that was common in late antique Jewish and Christian circles, is to deny the independent authority of Scripture, asserting that it is only intelligible if read according to the rule preserved by tradition. The necessity of this approach is guaranteed by the *Homilies'* epistemology, which denies the legitimacy of independent human inquiry, as epitomized in the Greek philosophical project, and sets up prophetic revelation as the only sure way to know the truth of things. One cannot understand Scripture if one approaches it without knowledge of the doctrines revealed by the True Prophet. The *Homilies*, in my view, also tacitly critiques “proto-orthodox” Christian approaches to Scripture with its doctrine of the false pericopes, a doctrine which seems to deny the legitimacy of allegorical and other figural reading practices.

In the following chapter, I shall consider the explicit polemic against allegory, associated particularly with Alexandria, in *Hom.* 4-6. In so doing, I hope to make stronger my case that the *Homilies*, much like other fourth-century Antiochene literature, is motivated by a concern to oppose the Christian exegetical practices that originated in Alexandria and were moving northward to Caesarea and beyond.

CHAPTER THREE

“*Homilies* 4-6: A Critique of Greek *Paideia*”

In the present chapter, we will turn to consider *Hom.* 4-6, a self-contained textual unit that relates the encounter of Clement and his old family friend Appion, an Alexandrian grammarian. The reader learns at the beginning of the fourth *Homily* that Simon, having been soundly defeated in debate with Peter, fled to Tyre, and that Peter sent Clement, Nicetas, and Aquila ahead of him to spy on the heresiarch (4.1-3). No sooner than they arrive, however, does Simon set sail from Tyre for Sidon, a development which sets the stage for a debate between Clement and Appion, who is accompanied by Annubion the astrologer and Athenodorus the Epicurean (4.6). The debate centres on the value of Greek *paideia*, which Clement calls radically into question, proposing in its place adherence to the Jewish way of life.

As I mentioned in the first chapter, there have been a number of complex theses put forth regarding the “original” form and function of *Hom.* 4-6. This puzzle is not easily solved, and to endeavour to do so here would lead us far astray from the task at hand. What I have hoped to demonstrate in detailing some of the source critical issues, however, is that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* consciously chose to include the disputation scene between Clement and Appion, whatever its origin, and to insert it in the narrative directly following the dispute at Caesarea. Even were we to concede that the material in *Hom.* 4-6 appeared in a more or less identical form somewhere in the *Grundschrift*, a contention I find improbable, we would still have to take seriously into consideration that the authors/redactors of the *Recognitions* found this sub-plot

superfluous and chose to eliminate it entirely. We would have to ask why the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* found it significant enough to include.

In this chapter, I shall attempt to highlight points of continuity between *Hom.* 4-6 and the rest of the novel, rather than points of difference, as source critics such as Adler have done. In my view, *Hom.* 4-6, with its scathing and prolonged critique of Greek *paideia*, complements and enhances the theological and epistemological claims set forth in *Hom.* 1-3, which I outlined in the second chapter.⁸⁹ Greek learning here, as in 1.1-3, is shown to be utterly inadequate for the task of inculcating virtue and shaping character; indeed, it is exposed as a corrosive and corrupting force. One must, rather, turn to the Jewish way of life, embodied in a doctrinal statement strongly reminiscent of the words of the True Prophet as taught by Peter in 2.12-13: there is “One as the Father and Creator [ἓνα πατέρα και δημιουργόν] of all this world, by nature good and just [τῇ φύσει ἀγαθὸν και δίκαιον]; good, indeed, as pardoning sins to those who repent; but just, as visiting to everyone after repentance according to the worthiness of his doings” (4.13). Once again, the solution to the problem of philosophical epistemology is a recourse to the True Prophet and his doctrine.

There is, in my view, a more specific reason why the dispute between Clement and Appion has been included directly following the textual unit at Caesarea, and this has to do with the doctrine of the false pericopes and the problem of Scripture.⁹⁰ The sub-

⁸⁹ See pp. 43-4 above.

⁹⁰ Annette Yoshiko Reed, “From Judaism and Hellenism to Christianity and Paganism: Cultural Identities and Religious Polemics in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*,” in *Proceedings of the AELAC Conference on the Pseudo-Clementine Romance* (forthcoming), suggests a somewhat different reason for the insertion of the debate with Appion at this point in the narrative, although it is not, in my view, exclusive of my claim. She argues that one of the primary aims of *Hom.* 1-3 is to contrast the religion of the

plot in *Hom.* 4-6 can be read as a commentary on hermeneutics and the role of sacred texts in education. In *Hom.* 4-6, texts are not viewed as storehouses of esoteric knowledge, which must be carefully decoded through laborious study and exegesis. Rather, their narratives provide examples, after which readers/hearers pattern their lives. Education is, fundamentally, imitation. Texts, and the systems upon which they are based, are judged on the basis of their ability to instil virtue and piety.

Clement criticizes Greek *paideia* because, he claims, it is founded entirely upon unseemly myths, which feature all-too-human gods and goddesses (cf. 4.8). It is made quite clear that attempts to redeem these myths through allegorical exegesis are futile, because this does not leave open the possibility for imitation, and it is only by imitation that virtue can be instilled (cf. 4.25). It is in the light of this hermeneutic that the doctrine of the false pericopes is, I believe, most coherently understood. Non-literal readings of seemingly impious passages of Scripture are ineffective, because believers ultimately will imitate Scripture at its most literal level. These verses must, therefore, be rejected as illegitimate and unworthy of God.

The First Encounter with Appion and Clement's Critique of Greek Paideia

The third *Homily* concluded with Peter decisively defeating Simon in debate, forcing the magician to withdraw from the city in disgrace (3.58). When Clement,

True Prophet (i.e., "truth") with competing epistemological and theological claims (i.e., "error"), which is accomplished by the introduction and explication of the Law of the Syzygy, and that *Hom.* 4-6 explores this contrast with reference to the opposition of Hellenism and Judaism. If she is right that the aim of *Hom.* 4-6 is to explicate further the contrast between Judaism/Christianity and Hellenism/Heresy, as I believe she is, then it is reasonable to suppose that a contrast between the Bible and the Greek myths, as well as the proper way of reading these texts, is also fundamentally at play.

Nicetas, and Aquila, having been sent north from Caesarea by Peter, arrive at Tyre, they learn that Simon has not thrown in the towel. Bernice, the daughter of a Jewish convert, with whom they are lodging, tells them that Simon has been impressing the crowds by making ghosts appear and causing statues to walk, and that he has “infected them with various diseases, and subjected them to demons [δαίμοσιν ὑπέβαλεν]” (4.4). With the threat of Simon here being re-established, the narrative takes a detour, and Appion Pleistoneces, “a man of Alexandria,” is introduced into the story, along with his companions Annubion the astrologer and Athenodorus the Epicurean (4.6). They are, apparently, companions of Simon, whom he left behind in Tyre as he set sail for Sidon (4.6).

It has been suggested that this Appion ought to be identified with the notorious Apion the grammarian, hater of the Jews, against whom Josephus composed the *Contra Apionem*.⁹¹ In *Hom.* 4-6, Appion is credited with a number of anti-Jewish remarks (cf. 4.7, 5.27), and Clement describes him as having an “unreasonable hatred of the Jews” (5.28). Such an identification seems, therefore, to be probable. The association of Simon Magus and Appion is attested in no other early Christian literature, however, and Adler has suggested that their supposed friendship is merely used to introduce Appion into the narrative.⁹² In my view, however, there is somewhat more to the connection. In linking Simon the magician and arch-heretic to Appion the grammarian, Annubion the astrologer, and Athenodorus the Epicurean, the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* blur the line between “heresy,” “magic,” and “philosophy,” grouping them together as co-sharers

⁹¹ See, e.g., Adler, “Satire,” 31. Cf. Edwards, “Clementina,” 462-3.

⁹² Adler, “Satire,” 31, n. 44.

in impiety against the doctrines of the True Prophet.⁹³ Indeed, as we shall see in *Homily* 5, Appion quite explicitly demonstrates the compatibility between magic and Greek philosophy, by telling Clement that he could court a woman on his behalf either by use of magic potions or persuasive speech!

Clement and Appion are also linked together, as we learn that the Alexandrian grammarian is a long-time friend of Clement's father. When Appion first arrives on scene, he greets Clement with a show of fatherly affection, boasting about him as the one "of whose noble birth and liberal education I have often told you...being related to the family of Tiberius Caesar and equipped with all Grecian learning" (4.7). This is the most full sketch we have received thus far of Clement's upbringing and training, although it certainly is compatible with the image we received in 1.1 of a young man who is wasting away because he is unable to solve a philosophical problem. Appion continues to relate, however, that Clement "has been seduced by a certain barbarian called Peter to speak and act after the manner of the Jews [τὰ Ἰουδαίων ποιεῖν καὶ λεγεῖν ἡπάτηται]" (4.7). In Appion's eyes, Clement acts "most impiously," since he forsakes his own customs for those of certain barbarians (4.7). It is, however, Appion's reproach of Clement that occasions a scathing critique of Greek customs.

Clement begins to respond to Appion's charge by differentiating between those customs which are "pious" and those which are not (4.8). If one judges them to be evil, then they ought to be rejected and others ought to be adopted in their place, even if they are of barbarian origin. When Appion demands to know why Clement has abandoned his

⁹³ See *Hom.* 5.2, in which we learn that Appion and Simon forged their alliance so that they could swap secrets concerning how best to oppose the Jews.

father's way of life, he responds by saying, "Because he believed the false and wicked myths of the Greeks [ὅτι τοῖς τῶν Ελλήνων ψευδέσι κακοῖς ἐπιστενε μύθοις]" (4.8).

This response is striking, because Clement here depicts the influence of impious myths as the fundamental problem with Greek culture and education. All the ancient customs are flawed because they are based on improper notions of the gods.⁹⁴

Clement follows up this bold condemnation by attributing the myths, the foundation upon which Greek culture has been built, to the workings of "a wicked demon [κακοῦ δαιμονος]" (4.12).⁹⁵ Under this demonic influence, he claims, the Greeks "have introduced many gods of their own, and these wicked" (4.12), so that those who wished to act impiously would be justified in doing so. For, Clement reasons, if a god is allowed to act in a certain way, then anyone can follow the example without guilt or shame (4.12). There can be, therefore, no hope of virtue in a world polluted by the examples of base and lascivious deities.

As a remedy to the toxic tales of ancient Greece, Clement proposes "the doctrine of the barbarous Jews," according to which there is one God, good and just, who created

⁹⁴ On this point, see Edwards, "Clementina," 469.

⁹⁵ The claim that Greek mythology and culture is of demonic origin dates back to the second-century apologies, especially the two penned by Justin Martyr: "And being carried away by fear, and not knowing that these were demons, they called them gods" (1 *Apol.* 5); "Since we see that these [idols] are soulless and dead, and have not the form of God...but have the names and forms of those wicked demons which have appeared" (1 *Apol.* 9); "Those who believe these [myths] we pity, and those who invented them we know to be devils" (1 *Apol.* 25); "Whence also the poets and mythologists, not knowing that it was the [fallen] angels and those demons who had been begotten by them that did these things...ascribed them to god himself, and to those who were accounted to be his very offspring [i.e., Neptune and Pluto]" (2 *Apol.* 5). See also Annette Yoshiko Reed, "The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Aetiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12/2 (2004): 141-71, esp. 159-63. Justin, however, presumes that the Greeks read their myths literally, never once claiming that they employed allegorical reading strategies; cf. Peter Widdicombe, "Justin Martyr, Allegorical Interpretation, and the Greek Myths," in *Studia Patristica* 31 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 234-239.

the world and will judge each one according to his/her deeds after death (4.13-4). This barbarian teaching will instil piety in those who follow it, for “in expectation of being judged by the all-seeing God, [one] receives the greater impulse towards virtue” (4.14). As in 1.4, it is only the existence of reward and punishment *post mortem* that allows for the possibility of living a pious life. Without such consequences, desire would surely overtake each one. And, according to Clement, not only do the Greek myths not demonstrate the consequences of immoral actions, but they in fact give license to their readers/hearers to indulge their reckless and impious desires. He cites as examples the sexual escapades of the gods, who commit adultery, and have incestuous relations with both sisters and daughters (4.16).

Clement then places the most blame on those, like Appion, who profess “to be grammarians and sophists” (4.17). For, although they ought to strive to live virtuous and continent lives, they embrace “this mythical pretext, and as imitators [μιμηταὶ] of the gods they practice unseemly things with freedom” (4.17). Indeed, they promote the myths so that they will have a justification for their wicked actions. According to Clement, it is those who grow up in the country, far away from the cities where these harmful teachings are disseminated in grammatical and rhetorical schools, who are privileged.⁹⁶ Those exposed to these stories from their youth are in the worst state of all, because “the rooted impurities cannot be easily cut down” (4.18).

Clement concludes his response to Appion’s charge against him regarding custom with a resounding condemnation of Greek *paideia*:

⁹⁶ Reed, “Religious Polemics,” suggests that this claim stems from the *Homilies*’ view that impurity is contagious. See, e.g., the series of sermons in Tripolis in *Hom.* 8-11.

Wherefore it behoves the young not to be satisfied with those corrupting lessons, and those who are in their prime should carefully avoid listening to the mythologies of the Greeks. For lessons about their gods are much worse than ignorance (4.19).

If piety is truly at issue, then Clement has established that he should be praised by Appion for abandoning Greek customs, which serve only to pollute and corrupt. The prized learning of the Greeks is a sham, shown up by the barbarous doctrine of the Jews, which teaches that “the soul must at some time receive according to the desert of its deeds” (4.22).

Appion does not dispute with Clement that adultery and the like are wicked actions which ought harshly to be condemned, but he denies the culpability of Greek culture in the spread of these vices. He first attempts to elide Clement’s critique of the myths by focusing on the place of law in Greek society. He asks, “Do not the laws of the Greeks also forbid wickedness and punish adulterers?...Let us have in our eye not the gods, but the judges, and looking to them, we shall be afraid to sin” (4.23). This response undermines Clement’s claim that the myths are the foundation of Greek culture, and Appion asserts that if humanity will only act piously under threat, then the judges ensure the existence of proper behaviour.

Clement is not, however, satisfied with this response, and he insists that by lacking omniscience, the human judges will be ineffective in establishing piety: “This is not fitting, O Appion, for he who has his eye upon men will dare to sin, in hope of escaping detection” (4.23). Human models are insufficient for instilling virtue; it is only fear of and imitation of God that can accomplish this. He notes that the one “who sets before his soul the all-seeing God [θεόν παντεποτήν], knowing that it is not possible to

escape His notice [εἰδὼς αὐτὸν λαθεῖν μὴ δύνασθαι], will cease to sin [παραιτήσεται ἁμαρτεῖν] in secret” (4.23).

This refutation leads Appion to exonerate the character of the gods, claiming that they are “neither adulterers, nor murderers, nor corrupters of children, nor guilty of incest with sisters or daughters” (4.24). The myths appear to accuse the gods of such crimes, he explains, because those ancients who composed them wish to keep their knowledge hidden. The ancients, therefore, wishing that “only lovers of learning should know the mysteries, veiled [προεκάλυψαν] them with those fables [μύθοις] of which you have spoken” (4.24). Such an explanation will not suffice for Clement, who argues that it is illogical and impious for good deeds to be veiled with “evil fables” (4.25). By doing so, the ancients have eliminated the possibility that anyone might “imitate” the good deeds of the good gods (4.25). Clement here discounts the possibility that any written record of an unseemly or immoral action can in some way be exonerated or justified. If the plain, straightforward sense of a narrative is not worthy of imitation, then it has no place in a system designed to instil virtue and piety in its students.

Clement’s Account of His Earlier Acquaintance with Appion

In the fourth *Homily*, the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* use the speeches of Clement to demonstrate, both epistemologically and theologically, why Greek *paideia* is unredeemably flawed. In the fifth *Homily*, the primary vehicle they use to demonstrate this point is a story about Clement’s boyhood encounter with the Alexandrian grammarian. In 4.23-24, Appion delivers an indignant reply to Clement’s critique, where

he claims that adultery and other crimes are most hateful to the Greeks, and that the myths in no way give license to their readers/hearers to commit such misdeeds.

Clement's story in the fifth *Homily*, however, not only has Appion praising adultery as a noble pursuit, but has him justifying this claim by the Greek myths!

On the day following the initial encounter at Tyre, Clement receives word that Appion has taken ill and will be unable to discourse on the allegorical interpretation of the Greek myths that day. Conveniently, this gives Clement an opportunity to tell a story to Annubion, Athenodorus, and the other unnamed companions of Appion about a much earlier meeting the two once had, which he had only remembered the night before (4.1-2). William Adler has argued,⁹⁷ convincingly in my view, that this story is a satire of the Antiochus romance, for which Plutarch, Lucian, and Appian are some of our earliest and best-known sources.⁹⁸ In this romance, the prince Antiochus is consumed by a lustful desire for his stepmother, Stratonice, and quite literally begins to waste away. The royal court is alarmed by the dire situation of the prince, who is near death but refuses to disclose the root of his disease. The clever physician Erasistratus, however, immediately recognizes the symptoms of love-sickness and uses a "clever lie" to allow for the prince to obtain Stratonice, thereby curing him.⁹⁹

Clement's story opens as he lies wasting away in bed, although for reasons somewhat different from Antiochus. He tells us, in a description reminiscent of *Hom.* 1.1, that from "boyhood I Clement was a lover of truth, and a seeker of the things that are

⁹⁷ Adler, "Satire."

⁹⁸ Adler, "Satire," 17. See Plutarch *Life of Demetrius* 38; Lucian *De Dea Syria* 17-18; Appian *The Syrian Wars* 59-61.

⁹⁹ For this summary, I rely primarily upon Adler, "Satire," 17-18.

profitable for the soul, and spending my time in raising and refuting theories; but being unable to find anything perfect, through distress of mind I fell sick” (5.2). It is despair of obtaining truth, not an adulterous affair, that plagues Clement. He proceeds to recount that Appion came to visit his father and began to tend to Clement, since he was “not unacquainted with medicine” (5.2). Adler notes that this is an unusual description of Appion, who is nowhere else portrayed as a physician, and he claims that the Alexandrian grammarian is here being identified with the devious physician Erasistratus.¹⁰⁰ Clement does not disclose the cause of his malady to Appion, on account of the Alexandrian’s rabid anti-Jewish views. Clement describes him as one who “exceedingly hated the Jews... [and who] had written many books against them, and [who] had formed a friendship with this Simon, not through desire of learning but because he knew that he was a Samaritan and a hater of the Jews” (5.2). Several things, I believe, are going on here. First, Clement is tacitly setting up the Jews as those who possess knowledge of the truth; one who opposes and hates them would have no interest in discovering the truth. Secondly, the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* are here able to link tightly together Appion and Simon, philosopher and heretic, by their hatred for the Jews. Hellenism is lumped together with heresy and contrasted with Judaism.

Clement, therefore, feigns the signs of love-sickness in order to trick the grammarian/physician Appion.¹⁰¹ The Alexandrian takes the bait, being thoroughly persuaded that Clement “was in love with a woman” (5.3). This appears to be a clever

¹⁰⁰ Adler, “Satire,” 34.

¹⁰¹ “And when I again groaned feignedly, as being ashamed to speak of love, by means of silence and down-looking I conveyed the impression of what I wished to intimate” (5.3).

reversal of the scene where Erasistratus correctly discerns that Antiochus is in love, although the latter wishes to keep this fact hidden. Appion tells Clement that in his youth he, too, had been in love with a woman whom he thought he would never be able even to address. But he chanced to fall in with an Egyptian magician, who “hesitated not to teach me an incantation by means of which I obtained her; and as soon as I had obtained her, by means of his secret instruction, being persuaded by the liberality of my teacher, I was cured of love” (5.3). Appion then promises Clement that he can use this same incantation to secure for him the woman he desires (5.4). This training in Egyptian magic is another way in which the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* link Appion to Simon (cf. 2.22). The former’s immersion in Greek culture has not led him to reject such deceptive practices.

Clement continues to play the part of an innocent, love-struck boy, although he carefully orchestrates the conversation so as to compel Appion to admit the existence of punishment *post mortem* in Hades. I suspect that this is a modification of the scene in the Antiochus romance where the physician Erasistratus tricks Antiochus’ father, the king, into admitting that an adulterous affair is permissible if it saves the life of a love-sick young man. The difference in the *Homilies*, however, is that the learned Greek is the one who is duped, thereby revealing the inadequacy of his education.

Clement begins by feigning enthusiasm at the prospect of gaining the love of the woman he longs for and then proceeding to ask how Appion can be so sure that the δαίμονες will obey him (5.4). The grammarian/magician responds by giving an analogy from war, that “it is impossible for a soldier to contradict his general, and impossible for the general themselves to disobey the king – for if anyone oppose those set over him, he

is altogether deserving of punishment...they yield trembling, well knowing that if they disobey they shall be fully punished” (5.5). The well-trained magician, as a “king,” can therefore compel the δαίμονες to do whatever he wishes them to do. He concludes his explanation with a statement we would expect rather to have come from the mouth of Clement: “For unless all things that are living and rational foresaw vengeance from the ruler, confusion would ensue, all revolting against one another” (5.5).

Clement wishes Appion to push this assertion beyond the human realm into the divine one, and asks, “Are those things correct, then, which are spoken of by poets and philosophers, that in Hades the souls of the wicked are judged and punished for their attempts?...And how, if these things are not so, is it possible that magic can subsist?” (5.6) Appion, unwittingly, answers in the affirmative. Wicked deeds will be judged after death. With this admission, Clement has laid the trap: “Why are we not ourselves afraid of magic, being persuaded of the punishment in Hades for adultery? For I do not admit that it is a righteous thing to compel to adultery a woman who is unwilling” (5.6). Appion begrudgingly concedes the point, tacitly condemning his own youthful actions, but rather than withdrawing his offer he chastises Clement for making “more account of your fear than your desire” (5.8). Clement has here managed to depict Appion as one who is more concerned with satisfying his lust than with pursuing piety.

But Clement does not stop there. He does not wish to depict Appion as one who is conquered by desire *in spite of* his philosophical training, but rather *because of* this very training. Clement, therefore, begins the second stage of his deception by tricking Appion into believing that he believes his actions are much less wicked if the woman

willingly consents: “And I am of the opinion that he who has persuaded a woman will not suffer so great a punishment as he who has forced her. Therefore, if you can persuade her, I shall be thankful to you when I have obtained her; but otherwise, I had rather die than force her against her will” (5.7). Appion is puzzled by Clement’s view, noting that Clement is culpable either way, but he nonetheless agrees to employ his rhetorical rather than magical skills.

Clement ensures the success of his scheme by telling Appion that the object of his desire is not easy to persuade “by flattery, for the woman is very much of a philosopher” (5.8). In this way, he compels Appion to deliver a philosophical justification for adultery, and the Alexandrian grammarian plays right into his hand. Appion writes a letter on the “encomiums of adultery,” which he begins by claiming that although “some have supposed that the action which is called adultery is evil...it is in every respect good” (5.10). He makes this assertion on his authority as a philosopher, who alone knows “what kinds of works are good or evil by nature [τῶν ἐργῶν ποῖα μὲν ἔστιν φύσει κακὰ ἢ καλὰ], and what, not being so, are accounted so by the imposition of laws” (5.10). It is the one who has been thoroughly immersed in and transformed by Greek *paideia* who is an authority on law and morality. And philosophers alone are able to see through the foolish prohibitions of “fanatical men” against acts such as adultery (5.11). In support of his claim, he cites the examples of the gods, beginning with “Zeus himself,” who often participated in extra-marital affairs (5.11). Appion, as Clement did in *Homily 4*, stresses that education is imitation, exhorting those who are philosophers, “for the sake of a good life, to imitate those who are acknowledged to be the nobler, who have had sexual

intercourse ten thousand times [καλοῦ βίου χάριν μιμεῖσθαι τοὺς ὁμολογουμένους κρείττονας, ὧν αἱ μίξεις μυρίαί γεγόνασιν]” (5.11). Here philosophical training is described explicitly as imitation of the gods as they are depicted in the Greek myths. Appion re-iterates this point after a lengthy discourse on the many sexual dalliances of Zeus (cf. 5.12-15), claiming that the fanatics who condemn adultery “spend their lives sadly, because through their zeal they proclaim those things to be evil which the gods esteem as excellent. Therefore, for the future you will be blessed, imitating the gods [μιμουμένη θεοὺς], and not men” (5.16). In Appion’s account, proper living consists in looking to the gods of the Greek myths for guidance.

For good measure, however, he also directs his female reader to the example of the philosophers, who are the noblest “among men” (cf. 5.10). He asks, “Do not the celebrated philosophers extol pleasure, and have they not had intercourse with what women they would?” (5.18) Appion focuses on three prominent philosophical schools – the Socratics, Epicureans, and Stoics – noting how their founders and certain adherents promoted adultery and promiscuity.¹⁰² He begins with Socrates, who argued that women should be common property, and his disciples Antisthenes and Diogenes,¹⁰³ who argued for the necessity of adultery. Appion discusses Epicurus next, whom he claims extolled pleasure. Drawing upon the Stoic doctrine of pantheism, he accuses Zeno of intimating that “with whomsoever a man has intercourse, it is as with himself,” thereby exonerating

¹⁰² Adler, “Satire,” 40, notes that these “crude and self-interested caricatures of the philosophers as sexual miscreants have their origin in parodies of their ethics circulated by their adversaries.”

¹⁰³ The authors/redactors of the *Homilies* are not quite correct in identifying Diogenes as a Socratic. Although he did draw upon some of Socrates’ doctrines, his own philosophical system was eclectic, and he was not indebted to one school in particular. See *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, 3rd rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 473-4.

adultery (5.18). He concludes with the example of Chrysippus, Zeno's most influential disciple, who in his erotic epistle depicts a statue in Argos "representing Hera and Zeus in an obscene position" (5.18). Adultery is acceptable because it is practiced both by the gods and the philosophers, the wisest of men, who earn their distinction by imitating them.

The letter thus concludes, with Appion having undermined absolutely everything that he said in praise of the myths and their interpretation – indeed, of Greek culture in general – to Clement at the close of *Homily* 4. As Adler notes,

In representing himself now as a literal interpreter of the myths... Apion thus personifies what Clement had earlier denounced as the most debased feature of Greek culture. Those who are raised in it learn to delight in argumentation, in pursuit of no discernible moral or spiritual end. Well-schooled in the arts of sophistry and deception, Apion 'Pleistonices' embodies everything that Clement, the Jewish convert, now loathes in the *ἔθνη* of Greek *paideia*.¹⁰⁴

Allegorical interpretation is an impotent solution to the problem of impious myth because the literal meaning of the narrative can always be exploited, even by the most learned of men, for immoral ends.

Clement pens a brief response to Appion's epistle in the guise of his fictitious love interest, in which he condemns both the Greek "gods" and Appion's exhortation to imitate their actions (5.20). To begin with, Clement offers a euhemeristic explanation for the origins of Greek deities, arguing that they "were not gods, then, but representations of tyrants" (5.23). Their tombs, he argues, can still be visited in the Caucasian mountains. To imitate the actions of Zeus, Poseidon, or Apollo would be to pattern one's life after those who were "wicked men and magicians" (5.23). Clement proceeds to argue that if one were to follow Appion's advice and to imitate the gods in all their dealings, one

¹⁰⁴ Adler, "Satire," 41.

would have to do more than commit adultery. One would, for instance, have to devour his or her own children in imitation of Kronos and Zeus (5.24). Imitation, to be sure, is the cornerstone of a proper education, but the Greek myths, which depict the horrific crimes of wicked men, are wholly inadequate for this purpose and ought to be completely rejected, as should the whole system of Greek learning which is built upon this faulty foundation.

In its place, Clement, in his pseudonymous epistle, exhorts parents to prepare their children for chastity “with instruction by means of chaste books [διὰ τῶν σωφροντιζόντων βιβλίων προπαιδεύειν], and to accustom them beforehand by excellent discourses...and in addition to this, frequently to remind them of the punishments appointed by the laws [ἐκ τῶν νόμων], that, using fear as a bridle, they may not run on in wicked pleasures” (5.25). This remark is, in my view, an oblique reference to the “books” of the Jews (i.e., the Torah) with their pious narratives and laws for proper living, enforced by appropriate punishments. This is not improbable, given that Clement goes on to conclude the letter by saying, “I, having learned from a certain Jew both to understand and to do the things that are pleasing to God, am not to be entrapped into adultery by your lying fables” (5.26). There is a definite contrast between the Jews’ knowledge of the things that are pleasing to God, preserved in their βιβλία and νομοί, and the deceptions of the Greek fables.

The conclusion of Clement’s epistle elicits an anti-Jewish tirade from Appion:

Is it without reason that I hate the Jews? Here now some Jew has fallen in with her, and has converted her to his religion, and persuaded her to chastity, and it is henceforth impossible that she ever have intercourse with another man; for these fellows, setting God before them as the universal inspector of actions, are extremely persistent in chastity, as being unable to be concealed from Him (5.27).

Appion's response indirectly demonstrates that Jewish custom is able to instil virtue and piety in those who follow it and that his own tradition has made him a manipulator and a slave of desire.

Clement's Dismissal of the Allegorization of the Greek Myths

On his third day in Tyre, Clement once again meets with Appion. Far from being angry at Clement for having shared such an embarrassing story, the Alexandrian grammarian welcomes him with fatherly affection and assures him, saying, "I was not in earnest when I wrote such things about the gods, but was concealing the truth, from my love to you" (6.1). He goes on to claim that the myths ought not be taken literally, since "the wisest of ancients...kept the path of knowledge hid from those who were unworthy and had no taste for lessons in divine things" (6.2). Rather, "such stories have a peculiar and philosophical meaning, which can be allegorically set forth" (6.2).

Appion proceeds to give an account of the origins of the universe, at the heart of which, it appears, lies an Orphic cosmogony.¹⁰⁵ The gods and goddesses are the elements that make up the world, and the myths, when read properly, provide a scientific account of how they came to be. For example, Appion maintains that Chronos did not devour his children in a cannibalistic feast. Rather, Chronos is a personification of time. When the primordial egg, the "first substance," spoken of by Orpheus was broken, the matter inside it separated out. The lowest and heaviest part, named Pluto, "sank downwards of its own

¹⁰⁵ See J. Van Amersfoort, "Traces of an Alexandrian Orphic Theogony in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions*, ed. R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseran (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 13-30.

weight” (6.6-7). This sinking downwards is, according to Appion, the meaning of the myth that Pluto (heavy matter)¹⁰⁶ was devoured by his father, Chronos (time), and explains why he is called “the king of Hades and the dead” (6.6). Likewise, Chronos’ eating of his second-born son, Poseidon, signifies the water that “flowed together after this first sediment, and floated on the surface of the first substance” (6.7). The third element, translucent fire, was named Zeus “from its glowing [ζέουσα],” and since fire ascends it was “not swallowed and made to descend by time or Chronos” (6.7). Appion also gives similar interpretations of myths concerning Pallas, Hera, and Artemis (cf. 6.8-10).

Appion suspects that his explanations of the myths are far too complex for Clement to understand, noticing that his young interlocutor “seemed not to be following what he was saying” (6.11). Quite the opposite proves to be true, however. Clement was thinking about other matters because he had heard expositions of the allegorical method many times before and “understand[s] it thoroughly” (6.11). Indeed, he is so well-versed in the tradition that he is able to produce a more full and orderly treatment of the subject than Appion had done (cf. 6.12-16). Clement assumes the role of the philosopher expounding the hidden meanings of the myths, and it is in this capacity that he rejects them along with the allegorical method of interpretation. He speaks not as one who is ignorant of their true meanings, but rather as one who knows all too well the power the myths have to pervert those who study them.

¹⁰⁶ The authors/redactors of the *Homilies* seem to believe that Πλούτων is derived from πολύ: “This they called Pluto [Πλούτωνα] from its gravity, and weight, and great quantity [πολύ] of underlying matter” (5.6). The name Pluto is, however, derived from πλούτος, because “corn, the wealth of early times, was sent from beneath the earth as his gift” (LSJ, 566).

Clement here elaborates upon his initial criticism of the allegorical interpretation of the Greek myths that he put forward in 4.25. Since these cosmological speculations could have been “clearly, profitably, and without prejudice to piety, set forth in an open and straightforward manner,” he asserts that it is most impious and foolish for one to conceal them “under crooked riddles, and overla[y] them with filthy stories” (6.17). Clement assigns little value to esoteric wisdom, a view that coheres well with the epistemology outlined in *Hom.* 1-3, in which simple and unadorned speech is said to be the vehicle of truth. To make matters worse, these hidden truths are masked by immoral tales, which have “deceived almost all men” (6.17). Appion’s account of allegorical interpretation is, for Clement, wholly inadequate because it does not allow for the possibility of imitation, which both he and Clement agree is the cornerstone of education. One learns how to act in the world by following the examples of others, and who better to imitate than the gods? The masses, being ignorant of the deeper meanings of the myths, will take upon themselves the greatest impieties by emulating the actions of the gods. As such, Clement affirms that it must not have been “wise men, but rather evil spirits, who could cover over honourable actions with wicked stories” (6.18). Even the philosophers trained in these mysteries are profoundly shaped by the literal meanings of the myths on which they were reared, which they would have internalized far before learning the deeper meanings. The example of Appion demonstrates that these learned men are, therefore, not above exploiting the literal meanings of the myths if it suits their needs.

Conclusion

Much of *Hom.* 1-3 is driven by a critique and rejection of Greek *paideia* for its inability to answer the most urgent and significant philosophical and theological questions, such as whether or not the soul is immortal. In *Hom.* 4-6, the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* continue this assault through an encounter between Clement and an Alexandrian grammarian. The heart of the problem with Greek learning and culture, as Clement perceives it, is the corpus of Greek myths. Children are exposed to these stories from their youth and continue to study them throughout the course of their education (cf. 5.18). They would learn them thoroughly, as Young points out, in order “to accumulate experiences of styles to emulate when they came later to do rhetorical compositions.”¹⁰⁷ The myths, moreover, were “expected to be morally edificatory.” The poems of Homer and Hesiod taught Greek children how to speak and to live well.

Rather than edify those who study them, Clement notes, the myths corrupt, relating stories of murder, adultery, and cannibalism. They have poisoned an entire culture, which must be rejected entirely. Appion, the spokesman for the Greeks, ultimately affirms all of Clement’s misgivings. His defense of Greek culture is primarily a defense of the myths, which he undertakes by recourse to allegorical interpretation. The literal meanings, which he admits are impious, must be ignored, and the deeper, righteous meanings must be earnestly sought. But, as we learn in *Homily* 5, Appion does not mean what he says. He offers a thoroughly literal reading of the myths to Clement’s fabricated love-interest to convince her that adultery is no crime. Allegorical interpretation allows for the possibility of multiple meanings in a text, but it does not

¹⁰⁷ Young, *Biblical Interpretation*, 78.

nullify the literal sense. Neither the learned nor the uneducated can escape the ominous spectre of the literal. As such, impious stories will corrupt. This corruption is evident in Appion, who is an adulterer, magician, and hater of piety. Allegory is, therefore, decisively rejected as a legitimate way of reading sacred texts.

In the following chapter, we shall consider in some detail the relationship between the doctrine of the false pericopes and the rejection of the allegorization of the Greek myths, in order to draw out the tacit polemic against the Christian adoption of allegorical reading strategies.

CHAPTER FOUR

“The *Homilies*’ Rejection of Allegory and Fourth-Century Antiochene Polemics”

In the previous two chapters we have looked at *Hom.* 1-3 and 4-6 mostly independently of one another, and it is the task of the present chapter to draw out the points of connection between them, thereby establishing more clearly the polemic against the Christian adoption of allegory. It also falls to this chapter to consider the relationship between the *Homilies* and other fourth-century texts composed in Antioch.

The Privileging of the Literal Meaning in the *Homilies*

In my view, there is an intrinsic relation between *Hom.* 1-3 and 4-6. Both units deal extensively with sacred texts – i.e., the Torah and the Greek myths – and the problems posed to the communities as a result of their acceptance of these texts as authoritative. The Torah and Homer both depict the divine anthropomorphically in certain places, and these passages cause no little amount of embarrassment. Peter, for instance, must explain how the Creator can be omnipotent if a story in Genesis describes Him as unaware of the events in a certain city (Gen 18:21), or how He can be unchanging if He is said to have regretted creating humanity (Gen 6:6). Appion, likewise, must respond to charges that adultery is an acceptable practice to the Greeks, since their gods are constantly depicted as pursuing illicit, sexual affairs. It is for their ability to illuminate one another that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies*, in my view, chose to

place these two textual units together, even sacrificing some narrative continuity to do so.¹⁰⁸

To begin with, in both *Hom.* 1-3 and 4-6, it is the literal meaning of sacred texts that is privileged. In the former, this is most evident in the doctrine of the false pericopes, according to which “everything that is spoken or written against God is false” (2.40). The biblical passages that suggest God experiences jealousy, rage, forgetfulness and other all-too-human failings (cf. 2.43-44) must be excised from the canon as false interpolations. There is no hint whatsoever that these texts could be read allegorically or in some other non-literal way which would render them compatible with the *Homilies’* understanding of God. Rather, they are taken in the most literal and straightforward way possible.

Likewise, in *Hom.* 4-6 there is a concern solely for the literal meaning of texts; in this case, however, the Greek myths are at issue. Allegorical interpretation is here explicitly rejected as inadequate, because it does not cover over the impious, literal narratives, but serves merely to justify their continued use in Greek society. The immoral actions of Chronos and Zeus remain indelibly etched in Greek consciousness, in spite of the more philosophical meanings “discovered” in these myths. Those who study them from youth, Clement asserts, will “engraft the impious deeds of those who are called gods into their own minds” (4.18).

Indeed, the primary pedagogical function of texts, according to Clement, is to provide *exemplum* for their readers/hearers to imitate (cf. 4.25). As we saw in the

¹⁰⁸ See chapter three, p 53.

previous chapter, this point is secretly admitted even by Appion, who encourages Clement's imaginary love-interest to follow the examples of the gods, who are the noblest "among all" (5.10). As such, it would be illogical to say, as do those who promote allegorical interpretation, that noble truths have wisely been concealed by impious or wicked stories (cf. 6.17). Such an assertion would eliminate the possibility for imitation and prevent the uneducated masses from having access to that which is most true and pious, exposing them only to immoral tales.

This emphasis, moreover, upon the literal meaning of texts coheres well with the epistemology put forth in *Hom.* 1-3. It is there asserted that truth can only be learned from the True Prophet, and not by any human system of inquiry (cf. 2.12). The philosophers err in trusting in their own abilities to discern truth, and ultimately they only learn how to win in debates (cf. 1.3; 2.7). Complex philosophical discourse, rather than being the necessary way of conveying true doctrines, is a ruse that is meant to fool the unlearned masses (cf. 1.10); ultimately, philosophers have no more claim to truth than the uneducated do. It is, in fact, the simple and unadorned speech of prophetic proclamation, readily understood by all, that is the vehicle for truth (cf. 1.10, 3.12). Given this epistemology, allegory cannot be used as a legitimate way to justify the existence of seemingly impious passages in Scripture, because it presumes that truth has been concealed and that only the learned few may gain access to it. The very meaning of ἀλληγορεύειν – "to say one thing and mean another" – undermines this epistemological

assumption. By its very nature allegory is a literary device that conceals and disguises, yielding its meaning only with the greatest interpretive skill.¹⁰⁹

The *Homilies* and “Pagan” Hermeneutics

As a mode of reading deeply embedded in the Greek philosophical and hermeneutical tradition, allegory can have no place in the religion of the True Prophet. I noted in the previous chapter that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* emphasize this indebtedness, depicting allegorical interpretation as a purely pagan innovation, which has been concocted to defend impious stories that ought not be defended. It would be an entirely inappropriate way to read Scripture for the authors/redactors of the *Homilies*. Indeed, the practice of reading texts allegorically was pioneered and developed by Greek philosophers, probably as a way of rescuing Homer and Hesiod from charges of impiety.¹¹⁰ The earliest criticism of traditional Greek mythology as morally offensive can be found in Xenophanes, a sixth century Ionian philosopher; roughly around this time, according to Porphyry, Theagenes of Rhegium wrote that Homer’s poems ought to be read as allegories and that the deities should be understood either as elements or psychological dispositions.¹¹¹ These developments spawned a long tradition of allegorical interpretation of the ancient poems, which would much later be adopted by

¹⁰⁹ In *Hom.* 6.18, Clement notes that allegories “can only be understood by much labour.”

¹¹⁰ See, e.g., Donald A. Russell, *Criticism in Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 18-19.

¹¹¹ David Konstan, “Introduction,” in *Heraclitus: Homeric Problems*, trans. D.A Russell and David Konstan (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), xiii-xiv.

Jewish and Christian exegetes, primarily in Alexandria, as a way of defending their own sacred books against charges of impiety.¹¹²

This is not to say, however, that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* were uninfluenced by Hellenistic scholarship. Despite the *Homilies*' rhetoric against pagan scholarly practices, in particular those which are associated with Alexandria, it seems to be influenced rather heavily by the activities of Alexandrian philologists, who were themselves opposed to the allegorical reading of sacred poetry.¹¹³ Work on Homeric texts first began in Alexandria in the third century B.C.E. at its great library, which flourished under the patronage of the Egyptian kings.¹¹⁴ Underlying Alexandrian editorial practice was the concept that the best Greek authors wrote with absolute and unswerving consistency. Editors, therefore, expected morphological regularity and treated syntactical deviation as the result of careless scribes.¹¹⁵ As Dawson notes, however, the expectation of consistency extended beyond grammatical matters into "thematic considerations"; Homer, Dawson continues, was "likely to have said certain things and unlikely to have said others."¹¹⁶ A line of Homer could, therefore, be omitted if the editors judged that it was unfitting for him to say. Zenodotus, the first librarian at Alexandria, eliminated most of *Illiad* 3.423-26 because he thought it unfitting that Aphrodite should fetch a chair for Helen (*apud* Aristonicus). Moreover, Odysseus,

¹¹² See especially David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

¹¹³ It is important to note that not all Alexandrian intellectuals and scholars were allegorizers, a point that can be easily overlooked given the enormous influence of Philo, Clement, and Origen upon the Western hermeneutical tradition. See esp. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 66-70.

¹¹⁴ G.M.A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (London: Methuen and Co., 1965), 123-4.

¹¹⁵ Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 66-7.

¹¹⁶ Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 67.

Zenodotus asserted, could not have told Achilles to open and close the door of the Trojan horse (*Od.* 11.525) because Achilles would not have been assigned the task of a “doorman.”¹¹⁷

We find very similar “editing” practices in the *Homilies*. Each passage of Scripture is judged against an extra-textual notion of what is “fitting,” determined by the doctrine of the True Prophet. Those portions that are found to be “unfitting” are discarded as accretions to the original revelation. If I am right in positing a connection, then we have yet another reason to suppose that the doctrine of the false pericopes is anti-allegorical, since the Alexandrian text critics were themselves opposed to the use of allegory.

It is also possible that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* gleaned this approach indirectly from the writings of Marcion, whom Robert Grant believes “knew current theories about interpolated religious documents, as well as the editorial procedures of the great Hellenistic textual critics.”¹¹⁸ Whether the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* knew that such an approach to authoritative texts originated in Alexandria or whether they learned it from Marcion or some other intermediary, it is decisively important to note that in the *Homilies* itself, text criticism of this sort is thoroughly assimilated into a Jewish/Christian framework, and it is denied any pagan or heretical origin. In other words, text criticism, according to the *Homilies*, was invented by the successors of Moses (cf. *EpPJ* 1.1-2) and passed into Gentile Christian circles via Jesus, the True Prophet.

¹¹⁷ Dawson, *Allegorical Readers*, 68.

¹¹⁸ Robert M. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1993), 34.

Such a way of approaching Scripture, unlike allegory, is nowhere attributed to pagan philosophers or heretics.

Although I am positing that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* are at least partially influenced by the Alexandrian text criticism, it nevertheless remains that there is a clear anti-Alexandrian polemic running throughout the work, which is lacking in the *Recognitions*. As I suggested in the first chapter, this polemic may be a result of the *Homilies'* Antiochene provenance. From the earliest decades of the fourth century, as I shall demonstrate below, Antiochene literature reflected a profound unease with Alexandrian Christianity, particularly its insistence upon reading Scripture allegorically in order to discern its “spiritual” meaning. The *Homilies* portrays Alexandria as a hotbed of rampant philosophical speculation and magical activity. Alexandria is the gathering place of the belligerent philosophers who ruthlessly mock Barnabas (1.9-12), the training ground of the heretical magician Simon Magus (2.22), and the home of the grammarian Appion, who so deceptively and disingenuously promotes allegorical interpretations of the Greek myths (4.4). We can, I propose, read this description as a claim that Alexandrian Christianity’s affinity for allegorical interpretation has resulted from its ill-advised collusion with a perverted pagan culture.

I have hoped with this summary to demonstrate from that the *Homilies* is concerned to establish a uniquely Jewish and Christian way of interpreting Scripture in opposition to pagan reading strategies and to critique, tacitly, those who would attempt to read Scripture according to pagan hermeneutical principles. We shall conclude by considering the points of similarity between the *Homilies'* approach to Scripture and that

taken by fourth-century Antiochene interpreters, with the intention of demonstrating further the polemic against the adoption of allegory by (Alexandrian) Christians.

Re-Thinking the Antiochene “School”: Developments in Scholarship on Fourth-Century Syria

Before turning to consider the points of similarity, however, it is necessary to say a few words on what is meant by Antiochene biblical interpretation. Until quite recently, scholars have posited the existence of opposing “schools” of theology in Antioch and Alexandria. The Alexandrians, or so the narrative goes, were allegorizers under the influence of Origen, who were preoccupied with finding the higher or “spiritual” meaning of Scripture and who showed little interest in the historical dimension of the biblical narrative. By contrast, the Antiochenes were depicted as literalists who kept their interpretations firmly grounded in the historical reality of the text.¹¹⁹ Modern patristic scholars have tended to show preference for the Antiochenes, viewing them as forerunners to the modern historical-critical method of interpretation, over against the Alexandrians, with their supposed lack of interest in historical reality.¹²⁰ Some scholars

¹¹⁹ Rowan Greer’s *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Exegete and Theologian* (Westminster: The Faith Press, 1961), esp. 86-110, is a parade example of this narrative. “Alexandrian” exegesis is synonymous with “Origenian” exegesis in his account, which he dismisses for not taking history into account at all. He claims that since Origen “was unable to take seriously the narrative, historical character of Scripture, his method fails to interpret the Bible” (92). By contrast, the “Antiochene” tradition, represented by none other than Theodore, is marked by a particular concern for the historical reality of the Biblical text. Moreover, Greer notes that despite the controversy and turmoil which existed in fourth-century Antioch, “there seems to have been a more or less constant theological and exegetical tradition” (93). For Greer, the “schools” of Antioch and Alexandria are distinct entities which possess their own coherent and unified theological and exegetical methods. Indeed, he goes so far as to note that the “Antiochene tradition...was largely uninfluenced by Origenism save by way of reaction” (110).

¹²⁰ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 166, asserts that the “problems with the now traditional account [of fourth-century schools of biblical interpretation] lie, I suggest, in the assumption that Antiochene literalism meant something like modern historicism. It assumes that their problems with allegory were just like ours,

of early Christianity, such as Robert Grant, however, were hesitant to overstate the distinction between the two “schools.” They demonstrated the places of overlap between the two, such as the similarities between Antiochene θεωρία and Alexandrian ἀλληγορία.¹²¹ They recognized that exegetes from both Egypt and Syria were seeking to discern meanings in the text beyond what can be called the “literal” level.¹²² This generation of scholarship nevertheless continued to affirm the existence of two distinct schools, which employed their own particular methods of biblical exegesis.¹²³

The last decade or so has witnessed a surge of interest in the biblical interpretation of the fourth century, and scholars have begun to problematize the Antiochene-Alexandrian divide.¹²⁴ The small area of overlap has been shown to be much larger than Grant or Froelich supposed, and Margaret Mitchell has recently questioned whether the idea of two schools is even an appropriate way to represent the landscape of the fourth

and their preference for typology rested on the same criteria as those advanced by such as Lampe and Woolcombe, namely that typology works with historical events with a family likeness. It assumes that the Antiochenes regarded Origen’s allegorical approach as out of tune with the Bible because he had no historical sense, thus anticipating the view of R.P.C. Hanson [in *Allegory and Event*].”

¹²¹ Robert M. Grant, *The Letter and The Spirit* (London: SPCK Press, 1957); see also Karlfried Froelich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 15-29, and Wallace Hadrill, *Christian Antioch* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 27-51.

¹²² Greer, *Theodore*, 93-4, wishes to associate Antiochene θεωρία with “typology,” which he regards as “the normative method of specifically Christian exegesis.”

¹²³ Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*, 30, asserts that there “were real differences between the two schools, even if they overlapped at certain points.”

¹²⁴ Robert C. Hill, *Reading the Old Testament at Antioch* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Andrew Louth, “John Chrysostom and the Antiochene School to Theodoret of Cyrrhus,” in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, ed. F. Young, L. Ayres, and A. Louth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 342-52; Margaret M. Mitchell, “Patristic Rhetoric on Allegory: Origen and Eustathius Put 1 Samuel 28 On Trial,” *Journal of Religion* 85 (2005): 414-45; John J. O’Keefe, “‘A Letter That Killeth’: Toward a Reassessment of Antiochene Exegesis, or Diodore, Theodore, and Theodoret on the Psalms,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8/1 (2000): 83-104; Joseph Trigg, “Eustathius of Antioch’s Attack on Origen: What is at Issue in an Ancient Controversy,” *Journal of Religion* 75/2 (1995): 219-38; Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2002), esp. 161-212; eadem, “The Fourth Century Reaction Against Allegory,” in *Studia Patristica* 30, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 120-24.

and fifth centuries.¹²⁵ Frances Young and Robert Hill, two influential scholars in this discussion, have continued to speak of the schools of Antioch and Alexandria, but in a more nuanced way than their predecessors. Hill asserts that we “may perhaps speak also of a ‘school’ of Antioch in the sense of a fellowship of like-minded scholars joined by birth, geography, and scholarly principles, with some members exercising a magisterial role in regard to others.”¹²⁶ In her monograph *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, Young argues that the Antiochenes were influenced primarily by the rhetorical schools in their approach to Scripture, whereas the Alexandrians betray the influence of philosophical education. But she acknowledges that it is problematic to make too much of this distinction. She writes,

There was far more overlap than most accounts of the controversy allow. They shared a common culture, and a lot of common assumptions. There was no hard and fast distinction between rhetorical and philosophical exegesis. Their common ground and common practices were very considerable and they are certainly not to be distinguished by the simple opposition ‘literal’ and ‘allegorical.’¹²⁷

She follows up on this claim by mapping out the broad array of reading and interpretive strategies employed by theologians from both locales.¹²⁸ In the wake of these revisionary

¹²⁵ E.g., Mitchell, “Patristic Rhetoric,” 414-15.

¹²⁶ Robert C. Hill, *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Commentary on the Twelve Prophets* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 1, n.2.

¹²⁷ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 183.

¹²⁸ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 186-212, identifies five kinds of “literal” interpretation (“attending to the wording; taking individual words in their normal sense; attending to the ‘plain sense’ of words in combination; discerning the overall logic of an argument or narrative; accepting the implied factual reference”), eight kinds of allegory (rhetorical; parabolic; prophetic; moral; natural; philosophical; theological; figural), four “types” (exemplary; prophetic; spatial; recapitulative), and six different reading strategies (paraenetic; oracular; lexical; explanatory; deductive; mimetic). Elizabeth Clark’s very important monograph *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), also attempts to delineate a number of interpretive strategies used by Christians, but the focus of this work is more specifically on “ascetic” reading practices and she broadens her scope to include Latin writers as well. Notably, she makes no attempt to distinguish Antiochene from Alexandrian exegesis, nor even Eastern from Western.

accounts, it is becoming increasingly difficult to speak of distinctly Antiochene or Alexandrian methods of interpretation.

Antiochenes and Alexandrians: Constructing the Divide

As many begin to challenge the firmness of the boundaries between Antiochene and Alexandrian, however, it is instructive to keep in mind where this notion of two opposing schools originated. Far from being a modern scholarly construct, the opposition of Antiochene ἱστορία to Alexandrian ἀλληγορία can be traced back to the fourth-century itself. Mitchell suggests that the traditional scholarly narrative arose from

a reinstantiation of the antithetical cast in which such interpretations were themselves presented by patristic authors, even as these same authors' exegetical practice in many ways contradicts or violates the methodological exclusivity which they vehemently defend in any single case.¹²⁹

Antiochene theologians, such as Diodore of Tarsus (d. c. 390 CE) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428), consistently polemicized against allegorical exegesis and those who made use of this method. Diodore, often credited as the “founder” of the Antiochene school, in the preface to his *Commentary on the Psalms* establishes an antithesis between “discernment” and “allegory.” Those who use discernment, he argues, use the historical sense as the foundation for their search for the “elevated sense,” whereas those who employ allegory arrive at meaning “in defiance of the context [of the text]” (16).¹³⁰ He goes on to depict his allegorizing opponents as “self-opinionated innovators...who undermine and do violence to the historical sense...for their own

¹²⁹ Mitchell, “Patristic Rhetoric on Allegory,” 415.

¹³⁰ English translation by Robert Hill, *Diodore of Tarsus: Commentary on Psalms 1-51* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), cited according to page number.

vainglory” (16).¹³¹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, moreover, in his *In Epistolam ad Galatianos* accuses allegorizers of turning “everything backwards, since they wish to make no distinction in divine Scripture between what the text says and dreams in the night.”¹³² As in Diodore’s polemic, those who read the Scriptures allegorically are shown to be innovators who have no textual foundation on which to base their claims. Diodore and Theodore also composed treatises specifically against the use of allegory; both are now lost, but one fragment of Theodore’s *On Allegory and History*, which we know to have been written against Origen, has survived.¹³³

Sadly, because most of the Antiochenes, with the exception of John Chrysostom, were branded (anachronistically) as Nestorian heretics in the seventh century, very little of their corpus survives.¹³⁴ Diodore, for instance, is said to have composed commentaries on every book of the Hebrew Bible, yet only his *Commentary on the Psalms* survives in tact. It is difficult to come to a satisfactory understanding of what precisely were the things that they found so distasteful in Alexandrian allegory; the destruction of the anti-allegorical treatises is a profound loss to our knowledge of the history and thought of the period. We must satisfy ourselves with the tantalizing traces of the polemic preserved in places such as the preface to Diodore’s *Psalm Commentary*.

¹³¹ *Allegoria* derives from *allos* (“other”) and *agoreuein* (“to speak publicly”) and means, “to say something other than what one seems to say.” See David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria*, 3.

¹³² Quoted in Greer, *Theodore*, 108.

¹³³ Maurice Wiles, “Theodore of Mopsuestia as Representative of the Antiochene School,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Volume One, ed. P. Ackroyd and C. Evans (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 489-509, esp. 507.

¹³⁴ Indeed, even in the fifth century Diodore was labelled the “father of Nestorianism” by Cyril of Alexandria (*Contra Diodorum et Theodorum* 17).

It will, therefore, be problematic to draw out precisely the connections between biblical interpretation in the *Homilies* and in the Antiochene exegetes. We will have to speak in broader terms than may at times be desirable. At the same time, however, this lack of Antiochene material makes the *Homilies* that much more valuable. With its extended polemic against allegory, situated in the context of the opposition between Judaism/Christianity and Hellenism/Heresy, it can help us to sketch a more full picture of ways of reading Scripture in fourth century Antioch, particularly in the self-conscious way that Antiochenes opposed themselves to Alexandrians.

The second difficulty with which we are confronted in attempting a comparison is the difference in genre between the *Homilies* and the Antiochene commentaries. The *Homilies* is a story, not a formal treatise on hermeneutics, and although it concerns itself with this topic, much of the typical Antiochene vocabulary is absent. Indeed, the *Homilies* provides a far less nuanced approach to the reading of Scripture than do the later Antiochene interpreters. As such, we do not find such contrasts as that between θεωρία (“discernment”) and ἀλληγορία (“allegory”); nor do we find such other commonly used terms such as ἱστορία (“history, fact, narrative”)¹³⁵ or σκοπός (“intent”).¹³⁶ The lack of this specialized Antiochene vocabulary may also be attributed to the relatively early date of the redaction of the *Homilies*, a time in which these specific terms were not yet central.

¹³⁵ ἱστορία is a multivalent term that comes to signify the literal level of Scripture in Antiochene discourse. See the entry in G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).

¹³⁶ For a helpful discussion of these terms and their use in Antiochene biblical interpretation, see Hill, *Old Testament*, 136-9.

Diodore's *Commentary on the Psalms*

Yet it is, I believe, nevertheless possible to draw out meaningful connections between the *Homilies* and the Antiochene commentaries. One of our most important extant anti-allegorical texts is the preface to Diodore's *Commentary on the Psalms*, which he composed early in his career. The polemic itself is quite brief, covering roughly a page in the English translation, but it crystallizes the Antiochene attitude towards the interpretation of Scripture. One must begin the task of interpretation by treating the text "historically and literally," although one should "not stand in the way of a spiritual and more elevated insight" (4). The exegete must establish the proper historical context in which the events narrated took place and then read the narrative in the most straightforward way possible.

For example, Diodore regards Psalm 5 as a composition of the Babylonian captivity, arguing that it "behoves the historical commentator...to give nothing priority over facts" (16).¹³⁷ He claims further that the psalmist here "speaks from the viewpoint of the people in captivity, deriving benefit from the misfortunes" (16). Diodore, therefore, understands the thrice-repeated supplication at the beginning of the Psalm to indicate that the people are "already showing benefit and promising further improvement" (17). The Psalm unfolds in this rather straightforward matter, as the song of suppliants seeking relief from their oppression. He is careful to note that nothing in this Psalm must be taken symbolically as referring to Christ or the Church, as he claims

¹³⁷ Interestingly, there is nothing in the text of Psalm 5 itself that mentions anything about the Babylonian captivity. In his desire to read the Psalm literally and according to the facts, Diodore actually imposes a false historical context upon the text, thereby making his reading anything but literal and historical.

several other interpreters have done (cf. 16). This desire to take the biblical text as straightforwardly as possible and to read as little as possible into the narrative itself reflects a similar attitude as that which underlies the doctrine of the false pericopes, which demonstrates the refusal of the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* to read seemingly impious passages in a non-literal manner.

It is true that Diodore does advocate for exercising “discernment” (θεωρία) in order to arrive at the more elevated sense of the text in question, something that seems to be opposed by the hyper-literalism of the *Homilies*. We ought not, however, exaggerate this difference. This elevated insight, he claims, must be firmly rooted in the “historical sense” (4). The literal meaning of the Scriptural text occupies a privileged place in Diodore’s rhetoric, very much as it does in the rhetoric of the *Homilies*. And this elevated sense, in practice, often turns out to be a moral application of the text in question (cf. 2) and is very rarely Christological or ecclesiological.¹³⁸

There emerge more points of continuity between Diodore and the authors/redactors of the *Homilies*, however, when we turn to his critique of allegory. Allegory, for Diodore, can have no positive connotations. He defines allegory as a type of interpretation in which the elevated sense does not line up with the literal sense: “One thing alone is to be guarded against, however, never to let the discernment process be seen as an overthrow of the underlying sense, since this would no longer be discernment but allegory” (4). Allegory is innovation with no basis in the text, which allows

¹³⁸ Only in three (Ps 2, 8, 40) of the first fifty-one psalms does Diodore find Christological references. When he does, such as in Psalm 2, it is often because a Christological reading is already to be found in the New Testament (cf. Acts 4:25-6).

interpreters to assign any meaning they wish to a particular passage of Scripture.

Likewise, the allegorization of the Greek myths is rejected in the *Homilies* because there is no real correspondence between the literal narratives of the myths and the secret cosmological truths which lie behind them. The deeper meanings appear to be almost an afterthought with no intrinsic relation to the myth, which were added so that philosophers could go on behaving wickedly and justifying themselves by appeal to the myths.

According to both Diodore and the *Homilies*, allegory turns texts into a code that must be cracked and renders meaningless the literal narrative. Indeed, the whole point of Appion's apology for allegory is that one ought not pay any attention to the literal meaning of the myths.

Finally, Diodore emphasizes the Greek philosophical roots of allegory, noting that rejecting it "rids us of pagan habits of saying one thing and meaning another and introducing absurdities" (5). The *Homilies*, too, goes to great lengths to emphasize the pagan origins of allegorical reading strategies, trading on this as a reason why it ought not be used by Christians.

Although little remains of Diodore's corpus and we are lacking an important anti-allegorical treatise of his, we nonetheless can sketch some broad points of continuity between his views on the proper interpretation of scripture and those of the authors/redactors of the *Homilies*. In the case of both, allegorical biblical interpretation is viewed as innovative and deceptive, a method of reading that turns the literal meaning of Scripture into mere code.

Eustathius' *De engastrimytho*

Diodore was not, however, the first to polemicize against the Christian adoption of allegory. Indeed, anti-allegorical sentiments can be traced right to the beginning of the fourth-century in Antioch to Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, whom scholars depict as something of an ancestor to the later Antiochene exegetes.¹³⁹ One lone work of his survives fully – the *De engastrimytho* – in which he takes Origen to task for his interpretation of the story of the Witch of Endor in 1 Samuel 28.¹⁴⁰ This treatise is roughly contemporary with the *Homilies*, being written sometime in the opening decades of the fourth century.¹⁴¹ From the scathing criticisms that he directs towards Origen, we can be certain that he was familiar with quite a few of the Alexandrian's writings.¹⁴² The *De engastrimytho* is particularly important for situating the *Homilies* in its fourth century Antiochene milieu, since it demonstrates quite clearly that at the turn of the century Alexandrian allegorical exegesis was both known and viewed as a threat by at least some segment of the Christian population in Antioch.

¹³⁹ Louth, "Antiochene School," 343.

¹⁴⁰ Eustathius' treatise has yet to be translated fully into English. The standard critical edition is José Declerck, *De engastrimytho, contra Origenem* CCSG 51 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002). Origen, *Homélies Sur Samuel*, trans. Pierre et Marie-Thérèse Nautin, *Sources Chrétiennes* 328 (Paris : Les Éditions du Cerf, 1986), 172-209. English translations are taken from Mitchell, "Patristic Rhetoric."

¹⁴¹ Young, "Reaction Against Allegory," 121, describes it as the "earliest text which attacks the use of allegory." If I am correct in my argument, then the *Homilies* may in fact be deserving of that distinction.

¹⁴² Eustathius laments that "after undertaking the task of allegorizing all the scriptures, without blushing Origen tries only with this passage to understand it on the literal level" (21.1). Taken at face value, this comment could lead one to believe that Eustathius had read all of Origen's writings. While this might be possible, the statement does certainly read like hyperbole. Nevertheless, it does show that Eustathius knew that Origen used allegory consistently and also that he may have known that Origen wrote commentaries or homilies on every book of Scripture. Moreover, in the *De engastrimytho* Eustathius makes reference to Origen's now-lost commentary on Job (21.7) as well as his interpretation of Genesis 3 (21.3-4), although his claim that Origen referred to the story of the Garden of Eden as a *μυθος* is not born out by any of our extant sources. We can, I propose, conclude that Eustathius had a fairly good grasp of the Origenian corpus, even if he had not read all or even the majority of Origen's works.

Eutropius, of whom we know nothing apart from this treatise, commissioned Eustathius to write this commentary, being “dissatisfied with the things Origen published on this topic” (1.8). This is perhaps putting it a little too mildly. Eustathius evidences not dissatisfaction with Origen, but rather disgust and utter contempt. Indeed, he taunts the Alexandrian and claims that his faulty hermeneutics lead him to commend the practice of necromancy (3.4). That Eustathius casts his interpretation of 1 Samuel 28 in direct opposition to Origen’s becomes even more notable when we consider that Origen’s sermon had been delivered some seventy-five years earlier.¹⁴³ The vehemence of Eustathius’ rhetoric indicates that Origen’s influence had become a real presence in Antioch. The *De engastrimytho* is clearly an attempt on the part of Eustathius to rid Antioch of this Alexandrian intrusion. Fortunately for us, Eustathius writes particularly what it is about Origen’s exegetical method that has him so hot under the collar.

What is especially notable about this treatise, however, is that Eustathius has not been commissioned to rebut one of Origen’s more fanciful flights of allegorical exegesis. In fact, he criticizes Origen for his *literal* reading of the passage: the Alexandrian maintains that Samuel truly was summoned from Hades and Eustathius rejects this claim! This has led some scholars, most notably Trigg, to conclude that allegorical biblical interpretation really is not the main problem for Eustathius.¹⁴⁴ Such a conclusion is, in my view, erroneous.

Origen’s sermon on the witch of Endor may very well have been selected for rebuttal precisely because it claims to read the story κατὰ τὸν λόγον (2.15). Although

¹⁴³ Mitchell, “Patristic Rhetoric on Allegory,” 422, sets the date between 238-242.

¹⁴⁴ See Trigg, “Ancient Controversy.”

Origen concedes that certain portions of Scripture have no literal value to them and ought not be taken as historically true, the story of the witch of Endor is not one of them (2.2). In fact, Origen himself argues against the competing interpretation that the witch lies about calling up Samuel – that she plays a trick on poor Saul by summoning a demon in the likeness of the prophet (3.1-5). He asserts that if the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture – a view that he assumes his opponent will share with him – then everything written therein must, by consequence, be true (4.9-16). To say that Samuel was not raised up from Hades is, for Origen, to call the Holy Spirit a liar.

What is often overlooked in Origen's sermon, however, is his move from reading the story κατὰ τὸν λόγον to κατὰ ἀναγωγήν.¹⁴⁵ The fact that Samuel was in Hades, a claim that Origen's opponents found to be unacceptable, demonstrates to the Alexandrian the impossibility of eschatological hope apart from Christ. Access to paradise was not granted to even the holiest of God's chosen people, who were held captive in the depths of Hades until Christ mercifully descended to preach his gospel.

Eustathius, however, does not overlook this move. Origen's sermon on the Witch of Endor may have seemed particularly threatening, because in claiming to begin with the "literal" and "historical" sense and only then to ascend to the more elevated meaning, it would have resembled too closely the way in which Antiochenes talked about their own method of biblical interpretation. It is Eustathius' goal to show that however much Origen may *claim* to be offering a literal interpretation, he is in fact doing anything but.

¹⁴⁵ Origen often uses the term ἀναγωγή to refer to the allegorical or "spiritual" meaning of Scripture. See Mitchell, "Patristic Rhetoric," 427-8, and Grant, *Letter and Spirit*, 98-104, 124.

As Eustathius sees it, Alexandrians and Antiochenes employ fundamentally different methods of reading and interpreting Scripture. Origen has been so polluted by allegory that even though he attempts a literal reading, he in fact “says the very opposite of what has been written” (4.6-7). Origen’s main failing, Eustathius claims, is that he attributes every word of Scripture to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. While Eustathius does not deny that the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture, he mocks Origen for not understanding that “these are not the statements of the writer, but of the woman who was acting under demonic influence” (4.6-7). In other words, the careful reader should not understand the speech of the witch to be divinely inspired. Rather, the Spirit has set it down “in a manner appropriate to her” (4.6). It is, therefore, erroneous to suppose that there could be hidden truths concealed in the words of a godless medium.

Origen, despite seeming to be a literal reader of Scripture in this instance, is even here committing what Antiochenes consider to be the cardinal sin of Alexandrian interpretation – namely, “concentrating not on the facts [πράγματα]...but on the words [ῥηόμενα].”¹⁴⁶ That is, in the opinion of Eustathius, Origen is concerned with discerning the allegorical meaning that lies behind the words of Scripture, rather than with focusing on the literal, historical reality embodied in the narrative. His insistence on finding an

¹⁴⁶ Cited in Hill, *Old Testament in Antioch*, 136. According to Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 186-212, the fundamental problem that Antiochenes had with Alexandrian exegetes is that they ignored the coherence and logic of the narrative (“ikonic” exegesis), choosing instead to treat the words as symbols which are in need of de-coding (“symbolic” exegesis). In other words, in “ikonic” exegesis, there is a “real” connection between text and interpretation, whereas in “symbolic” exegesis the words “are ‘tokens’ or ‘signs’ whose analogous relationship with what is symbolised is less clear” (210). I disagree with her that such a distinction is consistently evident “on the ground,” as it were, but I think she nicely sums up the difference as the Antiochenes themselves perceived it. Certainly, this seems to be the way that Eustathius conceives of the difference between his exegesis and that of Origen.

deeper meaning in every word in Scripture leads him to disregard the broader coherence and logic of the narrative.

For Eustathius, Origen ultimately fails in reading Scripture properly because he privileges the allegorical over the literal meaning of the text. Indeed, he mangles the narrative so as to be able to read into it whatever doctrines he so chooses. This is quite similar to the objection to allegory voiced in the *Homilies*. Appion's need to find a philosophical interpretation of the Greek myths leads him to provide an inadequate account of the shape and coherence of their narratives. What is fundamental to the arguments of both Eustathius and the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* is that allegorical reading strategies do not allow for a substantive connection between text and interpretation; the philosophical/anagogical meaning is arbitrarily forced upon the text, without any real concern for properly understanding the literal narrative. Texts are treated as storehouses of mysteries, rather than as stories from which moral and spiritual lessons can be drawn. Young notes that for Origen "scripture was a veil, a shadow, which might obscure as much as reveal...The Antiochenes found this arbitrary and insisted on attending to what we might call the internal clues to the way the text or narrative 'mirrored' the truth."¹⁴⁷ This objection to the notion that truth has been veiled or otherwise concealed was equally unsettling to the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* (cf. 4.25).

Conclusion

¹⁴⁷ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 212.

According to Eustathius, Diodore, and Theodore, one who wishes to interpret Scripture properly must always begin with the “literal” or “historical” meaning of the text. Although they concede that deeper meanings can be sought using “discernment,” the starting place of exegesis must always be the literal. They criticize Origen and the Alexandrians for what they perceive to be a lack of interest in the concrete historical reality of the biblical texts. Diodore asserts that those who allegorize Scripture effectively disregard the “underlying sense,” reading into whatever doctrine they so choose.

This privileging of the literal meaning of texts and the claim that allegorists essentially make up whatever interpretation suits their purposes can be found in the *Homilies* as well. The doctrine of the false pericopes underscores that it is the literal meaning of the text which is of importance; any passage that seems to speak against God must be decisively rejected. Moreover, the critique of Greek *paideia* rests on the claim that the literal meaning of sacred texts ought to be worthy of imitation. The myths, which relate the immoral conduct of the gods, cannot be redeemed by recourse to allegory, which is unable to dispel the corrupting potential of their literal narratives.

CONCLUSION

It is the claim of this thesis that the *Homilies* ought to be read as an early voice in the burgeoning fourth-century exegetical war between Antioch and Alexandria. When the novel is looked at as a whole, rather than as a mere repository of sources, there

emerges a coherent approach to the interpretation of Scripture, which shares with other late antique Antiochene texts a rejection of the practice of reading Scripture allegorically. This tacit claim becomes apparent when we read the doctrine of the false pericopes (*Hom.* 1-3) together with the critique of the allegorization of the Greek myths (*Hom.* 4-6).

Studies of both the Pseudo-Clementine literature and fourth-century biblical interpretation are undergoing paradigm shifts, which have made possible the present study. The work of Reed and Kelley on the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* represents a move away from the focus on source-criticism that has prevented scholars from reading these texts as coherent units and from situating them within their fourth-century Syrian milieu. Rather than being treated as collections of sources which reveal to us the nature of “Jewish Christianity” in the first and second centuries, these two novels are beginning to be looked upon as valuable sources of information in their own right for our knowledge of Judaism and Christianity in the fourth century.

Moreover, the efforts of scholars such as Young, Mitchell, and O’Keefe have demonstrated that modern conceptions of Alexandrian and Antiochene exegesis have been largely influenced by the rhetorical constructions of the patristic authors themselves. Theologians such as Eustathius, Diodore, and Theodore self-consciously portrayed their world in dichotomous terms: they were upholders of the “literal” and “historical” meaning of the biblical text against the allegorizing Alexandrians, whose interpretations had no basis in Scripture itself. This new focus on rhetoric and polemic allows us to see important points of continuity between the *Homilies* and Antiochene theologians. The *Homilies’* concern for the literal meaning of texts and its repeated criticisms of the city of

Alexandria take on new significance when viewed in the light of the fourth-century exegetical debate.

My aim in drawing out these points of continuity, however, is not to suggest that the authors/redactors of the *Homilies* were dependent upon Eustathius or vice versa. Indeed, there are considerable differences between the *Homilies* and the Antiochene Fathers, not least of which is the former's rejection of substantial portions of Scripture. Rather, I have hoped to demonstrate that all parties defined the terms according to which biblical interpretation ought to take place in quite similar ways, and that they shared particular misgivings about competing approaches, notably that perceived as "Alexandrian."

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